

(Oct. 1990)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

RECEIVED
AUG 14 2005

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio and Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: La Lomita

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 146 Kit Carson Road **NOT FOR PUBLICATION:** N/A
CITY OR TOWN: Taos **VICINITY:** N/A
STATE: New Mexico **CODE:** NM **COUNTY:** Taos **CODE:** 055 **ZIP CODE:** 87571

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

for Jan W. Beall
Signature of certifying official

Aug 8, 2005
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

for
Signature of the Keeper
Carlson R. Beall

Date of Action

9.28.05

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Buildings

| NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY: | CONTRIBUTING | NONCONTRIBUTING |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|
| | 2 | 1 BUILDINGS |
| | 1 | 0 SITES |
| | 0 | 0 STRUCTURES |
| | 0 | 1 OBJECTS |
| | 3 | 2 TOTAL |

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: The Couse house is listed as a contributing resource in the *Taos Downtown National Register Historic District* (1982), along with the original Joseph Henry Sharp House. The latter is not included in the current nomination because of its different property ownership and a significant loss of integrity. Although the district nomination included the Luna Family Chapel as part of the Couse House, it is a distinctly separate building and, therefore, treated as a new contributing building in this nomination. Joseph Henry Sharp's Second Studio was not designated in the district nomination and is treated as a new contributing building in this nomination. Equally, the Lower Shop is not designated in the district nomination and is counted here as a new noncontributing resource. The other two resources (the terrace garden and the stone circle) were not discussed in the original nomination, and are considered in this nomination as new resources. Only the Couse House and Studio, discussed in the original nomination, is not entered in the above count.

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

Narrative Description

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: DOMESTIC: single dwelling, residence
 OTHER: artist studio

CURRENT FUNCTIONS:
 DOMESTIC: single dwelling, residence
 EDUCATION: library (archive)
 RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: LATE 19th CENTURY AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Mission (Revival) and Pueblo (Revival); **OTHER:** New Mexico Territorial

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION STONE
 WALLS STUCCO; ADOBE
 ROOF SYNTHETICS: Rubber
 OTHER N/A

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-19).

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: ART; ARCHITECTURE

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1908 - 1953

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1909; 1911; 1913; 1914; 1929; 1931

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: Couse, Eanger Irving and Sharp, Joseph Henry

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Unknown

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8 -20 through 8-25).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-26)

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- State historic preservation office (*Historic Preservation Division, Office of Cultural Affairs*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: approximately 2.1 acres

UTM REFERENCES Zone Easting Northing
 1 13 448749 4029148

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-27)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-27)

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Ernest E. Leavitt

ORGANIZATION: Couse Family member

DATE: December 2003
 Updated April 2004

STREET & NUMBER: 12301 E. Broadway

TELEPHONE: 520-298-4535

CITY OR TOWN: Tucson

STATE: Arizona

ZIP CODE: 85748

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see attached U.S.G.S. *Taos* Quadrangle 7.5-minute series topographic map).

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-28 through Photo-30)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS N/A

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: The Kibbey W. Couse Trust (c/o Elizabeth A. Couse & Virginia Couse Leavitt)

STREET & NUMBER: 146 Kit Carson Rd. (P.O. Box 3303)

TELEPHONE: 505-751-0369

CITY OR TOWN: Taos

STATE: NM

ZIP CODE: 87571

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Section 7 Page 5 Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Description

The Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios are composed of the home and studio of artist Eanger Irving Couse and the two studios of artist Joseph Henry Sharp.¹ This complex is made of a number of contiguous and discontinuous buildings built at different times between ca. 1835 to 1931 and constructed of differing materials. Sharp's first studio, the Luna Family Chapel, is the oldest buildings and adjoins the Couse house, but is a distinct property. His second studio is a separate building situated to the northwest. Both Sharp studios are now part of the Couse property. One building, the Lower Shop, is considered noncontributing, as it has experienced changes that have affected its integrity and is not directly associated with either artist. The terrace garden, constructed between 1910 and ca. 1920, additionally contributes to the character of the property. Together, the Eanger Irving Couse house and studio and the two studios of Joseph Henry Sharp have retained their integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling and association.

Setting

The Couse property is a triangular piece of land that lies on the south side of Kit Carson Road (U.S. 64) at its convergence with Quesnel (formerly Ojitas) Road within the Taos Downtown National Register Historic District (NRHP 1982), and one block east of Taos Plaza. The Couse house is the only domestic structure within that block of Kit Carson Road. Although most of the other buildings are historic, they have all been converted to commercial use as galleries, shops and restaurants. The Couse property overlooks a separate 19.8-acre pasture (not included) to the south of Quesnel Road, also owned by the Couse family, and purchased by E.I. Couse in 1923-24 to retain the view. Although a somewhat rural ambience is afforded to the Couse house looking south across the pasture, the current setting of the property is distinctly small-town urban.

Couse House and Studio

The dominant building on the site is the Couse House and Studio, a roughly T-shaped plan (Figure 7-1) (Photos 1-3). The house, composed of several building evolutions, is largely made of adobe, and is of single story construction with flat roofs. Shaped parapets reminiscent of the Mission Revival style grace its north, south and east elevations; the sloping roof of Couse's 1909 studio extends above the house's roofline at the south tip of

¹ The two studios of Henry Joseph Sharp are considered for eligibility under Criterion B. Sharp's primary residence (current Mission Gallery) is located just north of the Couse property. Dramatic alterations to the residence have affected its integrity and its ability to convey its historical significance. Sharp's first studio, the Luna Family Chapel, and the new studio (Second Studio) are now part of the current Couse property. The Second Studio was Sharp's primary studio during the period of significance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Section 7 Page 6 Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

the "T"(Photos 2 &3). There appears to be no foundation under the older parts of the house, while stone and concrete foundations are evident in later sections. The building was given a hard plaster or stucco surface on most of the exterior walls, except under the porches, in the 1960s. The flat roofs have been covered with a heat-applied, rubberized roofing material (Brae) since 1982.

From its Spanish origins in 1839, the original orientation and main entrance of the house faced to the south, with an entry from Quesnel Road. The Couses' lawn and garden are located on that side. The Couses changed the main entry to their property to the north side in 1913 by creating an arched gateway opening toward Kit Carson Road to the north (Photo 1). The main house is approximately 108' along its east/west axis and 141' along its north/south axis.

Evolution of the Couse House and Studio

The various parts of the Couse house, beginning with Pedro Luna's 1830s house, were constructed by different owners of the property in the architectural tradition of their time. All the original deeds exist for the home and help identify subsequent owners, the dates of ownership, and the builders of each section of the house.² From this documentation, it is known that the original portion of the house was constructed in 1839 as the home of Pedro Luna. Today, this portion comprises the Couse Dining Room/Living Room (Figure 7-2).³ Pedro Luna built the home against the south wall of a chapel constructed by his close relative, Juan de Luna. Sharing a common wall, the small house established a property line between them. Pedro's home made use of unpeeled beams to build the roof. Although most of the bark has come away over the years, it is still visible where the logs enter the adobe walls. The original ceiling was made of split cedar or *cedros*, laid from beam to beam,

² Earlier owners of what is now the Couse property are important to the community of Taos and Northern New Mexico. The earliest buildings on the site are the Luna Chapel built by Juan de Luna ca.1835 as a family chapel and the small house of Pedro Luna built against the chapel's south wall in 1839, to which Pedro added a wing to the south very soon after. Within the next ten years the property was sold to Adam Peterbough, who sold it to James H. Quinn in 1851, a lawyer from Maryland and a business partner of Lucien Maxwell. Maxwell held the immense Maxwell Land Grant in Northern New Mexico. Quinn was present at a convention on October 10, 1848, when territorial representation was considered. Quinn also acted as Scout Captain over 40 Pueblo Indians and Mexicans when Kit Carson and United States Army Dragoons were in pursuit of renegade Jicarilla Apaches in 1854. Before his death in 1857, he had remodeled the house in the New Mexico Territorial style and adding to it an east wing. He also purchased a strip of land bordering his property on its west side on which a small house existed. Padre Martinez had originally given this property to Cristina Sandobal. Quinn's agent sold his house and property to a Spanish couple, Maria Beningna Trujillo and Manuel Gomez. In 1862 they in turn sold it to Father Gabriel Ussel, who had replaced the famous Padre Antonio Martinez as parish priest. Through Bishop Lamy of Santa Fe, Ussel established a boys' school on the property for two years in 1864 under the Christian Brothers. The Luna Family Chapel, which had been acquired by the Diocese of Santa Fe in 1863, was used as part of the school. When Ussel was transferred to Walsenburg, Colorado in 1876, he sold the house to George Smith, a Civil War veteran and carpenter, but the chapel remained with the Diocese. When Smith died in 1907, the house was left to his housekeeper, Filomena Martinez who sold it to the Couses in 1909.

³ Much of the description here is condensed from Ernest E. Leavitt's "The Couse House in Taos, A History." This document provides a thorough description and historical evolution for each building, room, structure and landscape feature of the Couse property.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Section 7 Page 7 Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

packed tightly together and covered with mud to form the roof. These cedros were lost in 1981 in the process of removing the dirt of the old roof in order to lessen the weight on the sagging beams.

The owner in the 1850s, James H. Quinn, built a new wing in the New Mexico Territorial or Greek Revival style using beaded, mill sawn rafters and ceiling boards, and installed a fireplace imported from the East. The wing, comprising the current offices at the east end of the "T," had two rooms with an entry between them in the center of the south façade (Figure 7-2). Quinn also remodeled the older part of the house in the same style. The remodeling installed at least five six-over-six, double-hung sash windows, three of which remain in the east wing with their original shutters (Photo 3). Evidence also points that two windows existed in the south wing from this period and were reused when Couse built his studio. Quinn introduced interior paneled doors and 6-foot wide, open porches with chamfered square posts (Photo 3). These posts were mortised into 8" x 8" pine sills along the east wing or into paired 2" x 6" sills along the south wing. The posts supported a sloped wood roof of 1" x 8" rough-sawn fir boards. Later owners put other roofing on top of these members. The porches had a fascia board with molded details that are no longer evident. There is no evidence of a foundation under the ca.1855 wing of the house.

After purchasing the property in 1909, E.I. Couse added the studio in 1909, incorporating the southern half of the south wing and expanding it to the south and east (Figure 7-2). The studio was given a high roof, sloping to the south to accommodate a large, north facing, multi-paned, studio window of shingled glass (Photos 2-4). In this studio, still containing Couse's personal effects, the artist would paint one of his models who arrived at 8:30 am in the morning to take advantage of the strong morning light (Figure 7-4)(Photos 5-7). A sloping roofed porch surrounded this new construction. The studio roof and the porches were covered with Oregon cedar shingles by the Couses, but later these were covered with asphalt shingles, then Fiberglas shingles. The Couses modified the roofline of their house with arched parapets in the California Mission style, beginning in 1911 (Figure 7-5)(Photos 2 & 3). The entry porch, a frequent gathering place for the Taos Society of Taos Artists, was added in 1913 in the same style (Photo 2).

In 1914 a large garage (current Workshop) of adobe and wood was added against the studio's west side with windows and workbenches along the north and west walls, and a large sliding door providing access from the south (Figure 7-2). In 1929, a sunroom with kitchenette and bathroom was added to the south end of the studio for winter living. For heat, a cast-iron stove was installed. This one-story addition (current Lab), with basement, is built of concrete block (Photo 8). The basement had two spaces, one for a coal bin and the other with wall shelves for storage and a small boiler for heating water in the sunroom facilities. Coal was used in the cast-iron stoves and in a cast-iron hot water heater in the main kitchen. This kitchen heater has been replaced but still exists in storage. The sunroom has a flat wood roof and a stucco exterior to resemble adobe plaster.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Section 7 Page 8 Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

There are eleven contiguous single-paned, double-sash windows on its east, south and west sides. Its interior features plastered interior walls and oak floorings.

When Mrs. Couse died in 1929, their son, Kibbey, and his family came back to Taos to care for his father. More bedroom space was needed so a west wing (current Bedroom/Living Room) in 1931. The new adobe brick and wood construction forming the west arm of the "T" incorporated a small structure in the back yard being used by E.I. Couse to make his picture frames (the previous Sandobal house) (Photo 9). A laundry room was added to the kitchen. Kibbey Couse converted the sunroom and the garage into a chemistry laboratory and a machine shop, adding a roofed area, open to the south, of stucco on wood framework with a large shingled glass west window. In these spaces he created the prototype of a mobile machine shop that he later manufactured in New Jersey (Photo 10). He built a small adobe brick garage (current Garage) with a flat board roof over pine beams, as a replacement for the garage/workshop, against the south end of the sunroom/laboratory on a foundation of mortared stone (Photos 8 & 11). To the west is a carport of a recent vintage. While the carport postdates the E.I. Couse period, it does not greatly alter or distract from the historical integrity of the house and studio.

Lower Shop

At the same time, Kibbey Couse constructed a large building, known as the Lower Shop, south of the garage, to be a factory for manufacturing the mobile machine shops in Taos (Photo 12). With his father's death in 1936, however, he decided to carry out this plan in the East, leaving most of the equipment behind. His tools and machines still remain at the house (Photo 10). The Lower Shop, cut into the side of a ravine, is one story below the level of the house. A stone retaining wall formed its east and north sides. The west and south sides were of adobe brick with large, wood-frame, shingled glass windows. A large sliding door opened to the south with access to Quesnel Road (Photo 13). The north end connected to the main house by an interior set of stairs going further down from the basement of the sun room/laboratory. Because of deterioration from neglect, the Lower Shop building was renovated in 1982 following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. At that time, the structure was upgraded to code with engineered wooden rafters, Saltillo tile floors, and wood-framed glass windows and doors on its west side, and electricity installed with an electric sub-floor heat, plumbing with a sink and toilet, and a Brae roof covered with pea gravel occasionally used for parking. The interior was subdivided with frame and sheetrock walls into seven rental studios, each with exterior doors. Through the process original configuration of the building was retained but specific period details were altered (Figure 7-3). This building is approximately 104' x 16' on the north/south axis and 21' x 40' on the east/west axis.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 9 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Interior

When the Couses bought the house in 1909 they added the studio as well as fir tongue-and-groove flooring over the dirt floors and designed built-in benches for their living room (Photo 14). Original Couse furnishings in this room and the dining room have been retained and the walls remain whitewashed with adobe plaster (see Photos 15-17). Original furnishings in the dining room include an Arts and Crafts-style table; a mid-nineteenth century marble-topped side cupboard; a Queen Ann-style side table with cabriol legs; a ca. eighteenth century tall chest of drawers; and other Couse era furniture. Together, the entry, the studio, and the dining room and living room remain as used and furnished by the artist and his wife. Additionally, the garage/workshop remains as Kibbey Couse left, with the tools and equipment in the same position when he shut down the operation in 1937.

Luna Family Chapel

The oldest structure on the Couse property is the Luna Family Chapel or *oratorio* built of adobe by Juan de Luna in ca. 1835 in the Spanish Colonial manner (Figure 7-6)(see Photo 18). The roofs are flat and supported by pine *vigas*; the walls are 33" thick. Sharp replaced the chapel roofing in 1912 with circular sawn boards covered with dirt. The material of the original roof is unknown. Pedro Luna built a small adobe brick house against its south side in 1839, to which he added a south wing shortly after. Although sharing a common wall, these two structures had separate property ownerships until 1954, when the property formerly owned by Joseph Henry Sharp passed to the Couses. Sharp purchased the chapel from the Diocese of Santa Fe in 1909 to convert into a studio. From 1915 to 1991, the Luna Family Chapel was used for storage. Since then it has been the studio of Elizabeth Couse. A gas heater and electricity were installed without impacting the original structure. Except for these changes, the building remains the way Sharp modified it when he bought it from the Diocese of Santa Fe in 1909. As part of the modification he added two large windows, a tongue-and-groove fir floor and a fireplace. Later he installed a concrete vault with a bank vault door for secure storage. The bronze Spanish bell, dated 1868, was bought by Sharp at the Pueblo for \$100 and placed in the chapel façade (Figure 7-6) (Photo 18). Sharp used this building for six years and called it "The Studio of the Copper Bell."

Second Sharp Studio

Just northwest of the Lower Shop across a gravel parking area is Joseph Henry Sharp's second studio, a picturesque two-story building composed of adobe (Figure 7-7)(Photo 19). The earliest portion of this building dates to ca. 1860. Sharp enlarged the building in 1915 to two stories with a loft and a large multi-paned shingled glass, studio window. As such, the building reveals two distinctive portions. The second story, containing a loft, displays an irregular pattern of wood frame windows with exposed *vigas* above on the north and sides elevations. A rounded parapet crowns the roof. The lower story section displays a regular pattern of two-over-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 10 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

two, double-hung windows and large wood entry doors at the south elevation, formerly a garage. A large shingle glass window providing plentiful light to the studio dominates the north wall. The studio was hard plastered in the 1960s but the stucco was later removed from the lower walls, as its weight was destabilizing the structure. The parapets remain covered with stucco to counteract deterioration by rain and melting snow. The building is entered through a courtyard. Wood entry doors open to the studio, a large double-height room illuminated by windows on the north, south and east. Supported by posts and vigas, is a sleeping loft above the studio. Considerable repairs were required in 1995 including upgrading of the plumbing, heating and electricity, but the building still retains its original character. The east part, that was Sharp's garage, was upgraded into a kitchen. Currently the space is used as an artist residence and studio. The building is 54' on the north/south axis and 42' east/west.

Landscape Features

As early as the summer of 1909, the Couses began to landscape the property. This included terracing the southern slope of property into what was to become Virginia Walker Couse's garden (Figure 7-8). By the summer of 1910, some lawn terracing had been done and beds of flowers bordered the porches and vines began to be trained up the porch posts. The early plantings were nasturtiums in the beds and morning glory vines on the posts. In 1920 the terrace retaining walls were created of local black limestone (Photos 3). Flowers including iris, peonies and oriental poppies followed the edge of the lawn. On the terraces below, Mrs. Couse grew cutting flowers. Walkways and a garden seat were added of the same material. Together, the terrace garden and terrace walls are treated as one contributing site.

An irrigation ditch system, bringing water from the town's *acequia* on Kit Carson Road, was created on the property. Although non-functional now, it was still active into the 1970s. Evidence of its structure and its components still exist but are not included in the nomination.

The landscaping of the north or Kit Carson Road side of the property was a joint Couse/Sharp project undertaken after the Couses obtained, by trade with Sharp in 1917, the portion of Sharp's land east of the Luna Chapel. In 1918 the area was leveled, giving Sharp a lawn and garden beside his chapel and next to his house, and providing the Couses formal access to Kit Carson Road through a stone post entrance with large, decorative wooden gates. The Couses added an ornamental stone circle inside the gates in (Figure 7-6). Today, the portion that was Sharp's garden is a parking area. The area landscaped by the Couses still remains. The stone circle (noncontributing), however, had been removed in the 1950s but was restored in 1997, based on period photographs and using the original stones that had been put aside nearby (Photo 1).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 11 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Summary of Integrity

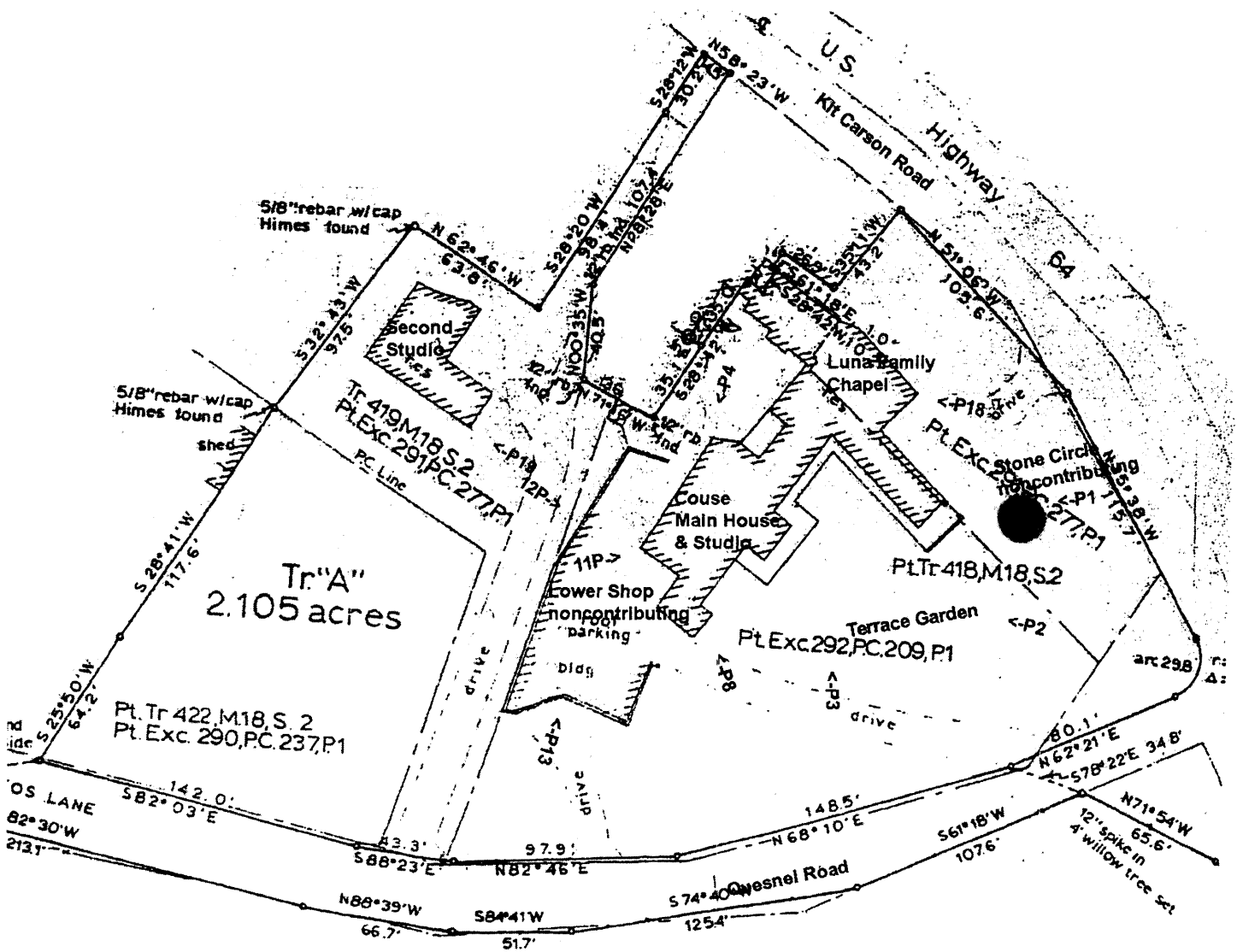
The Couses made changes and improvements to their property over the years, but this activity ceased when the artist died in 1936. Datable photographs in the Couse Archive document these changes. There have been no building additions to the complex since his death, although the house was hard plastered in the 1960s and the roofing materials have been upgraded since then. By the 1960s, the fine details of the arched parapets were badly eroded and stucco was applied over their remnants. At present, the original plumbing and electrical systems exist from their installation in 1928 with limited upgrading and some additions. Couse's son, Kibbey, used the property as a summer residence, allowing no change to his boyhood home in his lifetime, and his heirs have continued this practice, keeping the original structures, with Couse's furnishings and collection intact. The house has remained with the Couse descendants to the present time. Since 1991 E. I. Couse's granddaughter, Elizabeth Couse, has made her home in the west wing.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Section 7 Page 12
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Figure 7-1 Property Sketch Map (not drawn to scale; interior photo angles not depicted)



^North

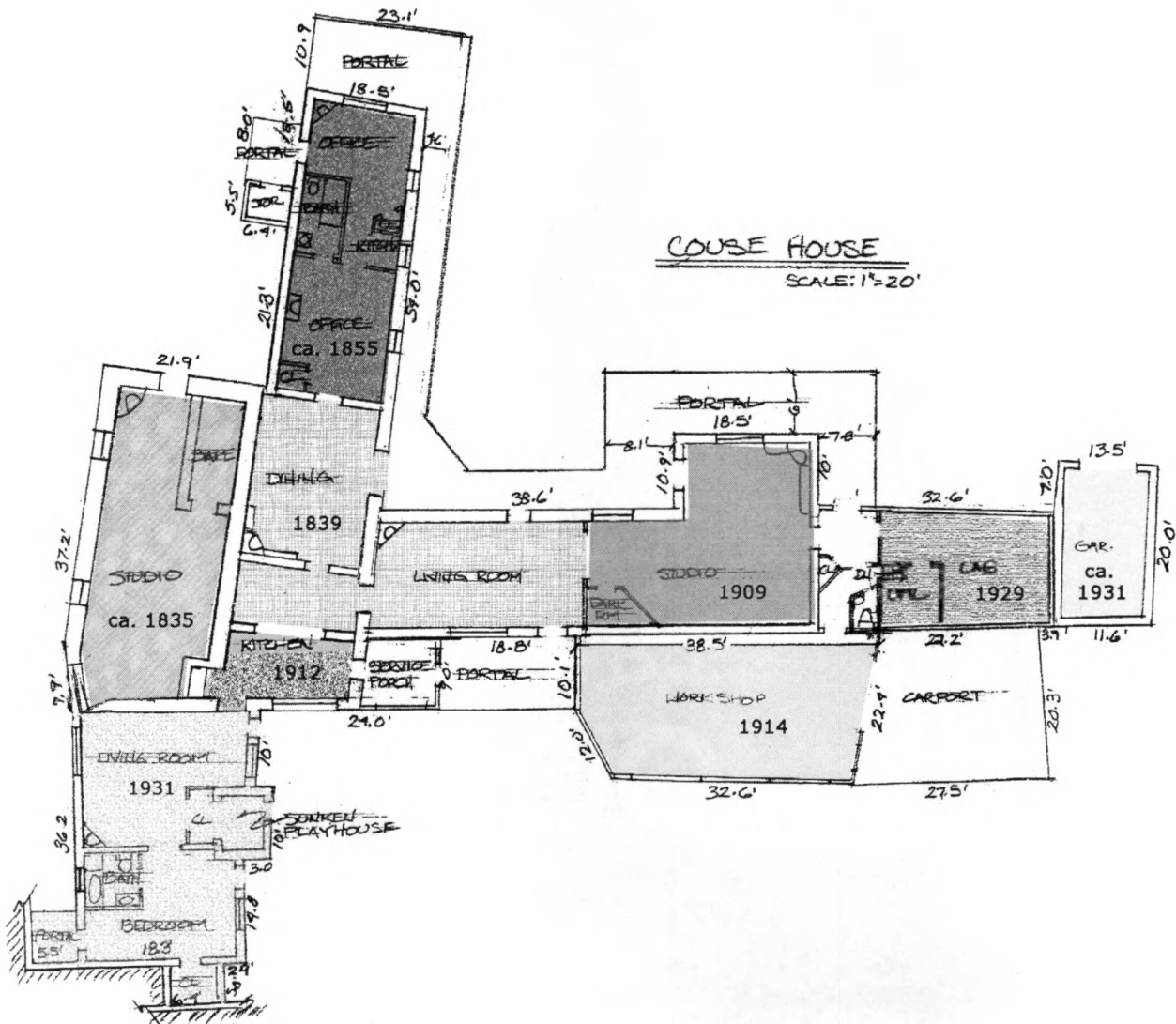
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 13

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Figure 7-2 Evolution of Main House and Studio (shaded colors represent major building chapters; overlapping periods are not shown)



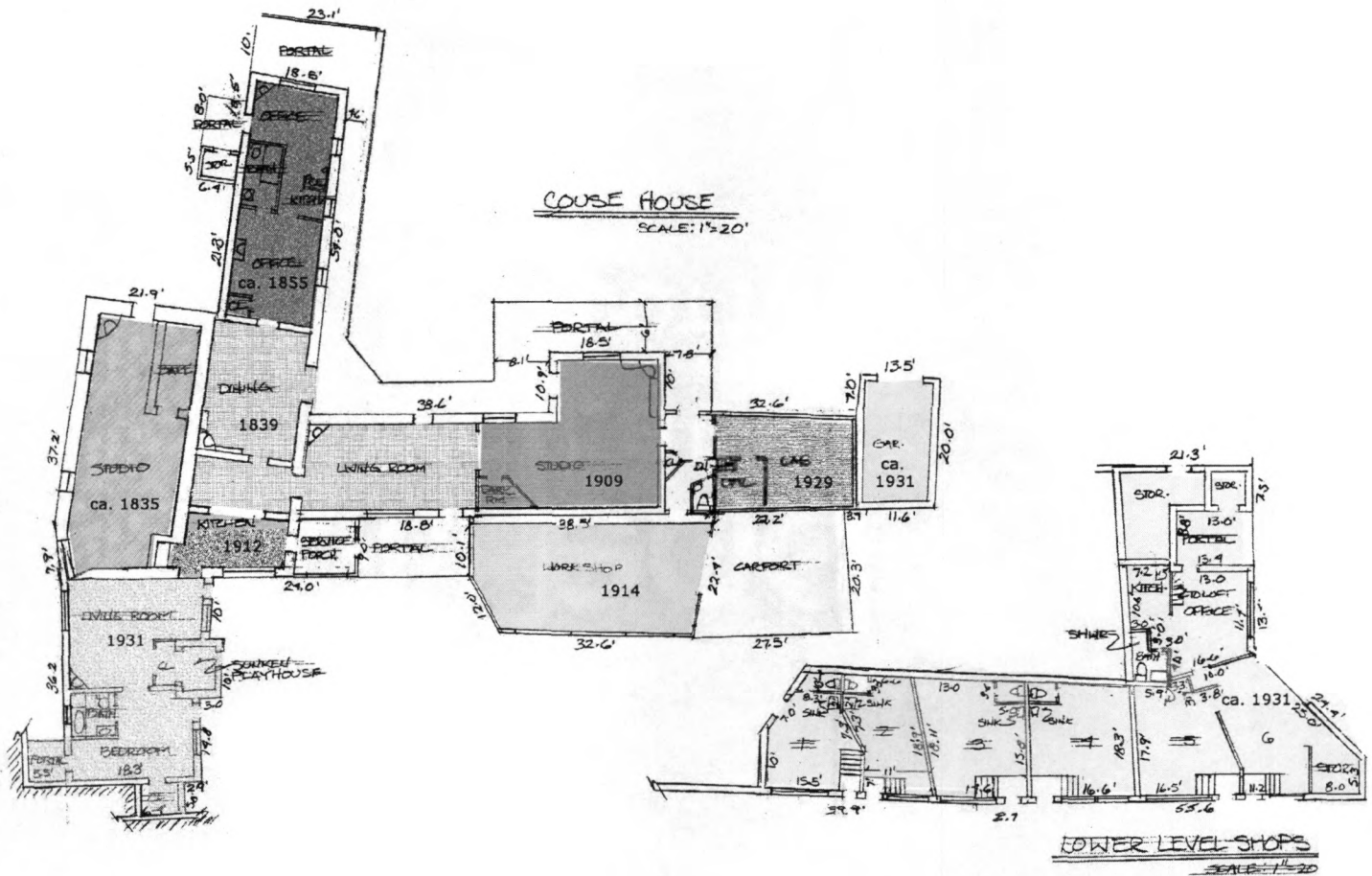
< North

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Section 7 Page 14 Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Figure 7-3 Main House and Studio and Lower Shop



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 15 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Figure 7-4 E. I. Couse Studio, 1909 (courtesy Couse Family Archives)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 16 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Figure 7-5 View of Couse House and Studio, 1913 (courtesy Couse Family Archives)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 17 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Figure 7-6 Luna Family Chapel, date unknown (courtesy Couse Family Archives)

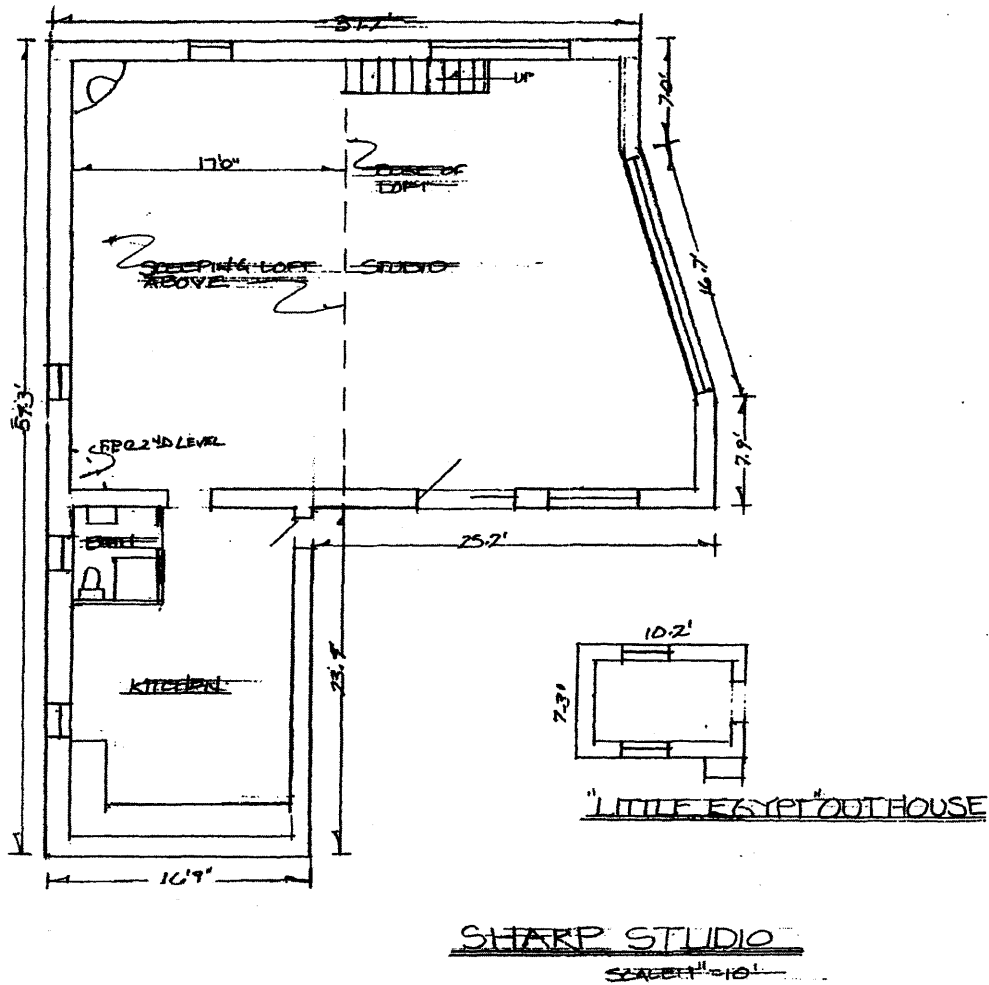


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 18 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Figure 7-7 Floor Plan of Joseph Henry Sharp's Second Studio



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 19 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Figure 7-8 View of Garden, 1920 (courtesy Couse Family Archives)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

8 Page 20 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios Section
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Significance

The home and studio of the artist Eanger Irving Couse (1866-1936) are historically important because of Couse's prominence as an American painter and as a founder of the Taos Society of Artists. Arriving in Taos in 1902, Couse was primarily interested in the authentic depiction of American Indians. Trained in the European Academic tradition, Couse's painting of Native Americans routinely garnered him awards and national recognition. The house that Couse purchased in 1909 had a long history. Situated next door to fellow artist's Joseph Henry Sharp's studio, a former family chapel, the home had its origin in the 1830s. Couse greatly changed the house, building a studio and adding curvilinear Mission Revival-style parapets. The compound of adjoined buildings and studios became the permanent home of Couse and his wife and two children in 1928, and served as a meeting and informal gathering place for the Taos Society of Artists between 1915 and 1927. Equally significant are the two studios of Henry Joseph Sharp (1859-1953). Sharp, one of the first Anglo-American artists to paint in Taos, is considered the founder of the Taos Society of Artists. Also a painter of Native Americans, Sharp concentrated his efforts on capturing the disappearing Plains Indian. As Couse's primary studio and permanent home from 1928 until his death in 1936, the house and studio are eligible under Criterion B, at the state level, as the property that best represents the productive years of Eanger Irving Couse. As the properties that best illustrate Henry Joseph Sharp's productive years in New Mexico, his two studios are eligible at the state level under Criterion B.

Historical Background

Loosely formed in 1915, the Taos Society of Artists (1915-1927), included painters Joseph Henry Sharp, E.I. Couse, Bert G. Phillips, Ernest L. Blumenschein, Herbert Dunton, Walter Ufer, E. Martin Hennings, Victor Higgins, and others, were mainly Eastern migrants who were inspired to paint Taos' scenery and native cultures. The large porches of the Couse house were a gathering place for the early artists meeting on Taos Society of Artists' business, critiquing each other's work, or simply socializing. Because of the Society's nation-wide touring exhibitions, Taos became recognized as an art destination, expanding the tourist focus that is largely the economic base for the town today. Patrons visited the artists in their studios, and the Couse house shows what that experience would have been like. The close proximity of their homes and the warm association between the Couses and the Sharps, who lived next door, led to the sale of Sharp's property to the Couses, finalized in 1954. The personal relationships between the artist's family and the Taos Pueblo models he employed, and who came regularly to the house, continues in the ties that still exist among the descendants of both.

Eanger Irving Couse (1866-1936)

Born in Saginaw, Michigan in 1866, Couse made his first trip to Taos in 1902 with his wife Virginia and his eight-year-old son Kibbey after a recommendation from fellow artist Henry Joseph Sharp. In coming to Taos,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

8 Page 21 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios Section
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Couse was continuing his interest in painting Native Americans. Growing up in a remote logging area, Couse was exposed early to the Chippewa and Ojibwa Indians of Northern Michigan. They were as art historian Mary Carroll Nelson wrote “his earliest subjects on which he exerted an innate talent for drawing.”⁴ Couse at this time had no academic training, but instead worked as a house painter to acquire the means to study art formally. At age 18, Couse left home and moved to Chicago, attending the Art Institute for three months before his money ran out.

Couse spent the next two years, 1885-1887, as a student at the National Academy of Design in New York. At the Academy Couse won several student exhibition awards, before returning to Saginaw. In 1887, Couse made a voyage to Europe where he studied under Joseph-Nicolas Robert-Fleury and Adolphe-William Bourguerea at the Academie Julien. Couse trained in the Academic style, became a disciple of the tradition, which would later influence his portraits of Native Americans. While in Paris, Couse married in 1891 fellow student Virginia Walker, the daughter of a prosperous Washington state rancher. After their stint in Europe, the couple returned to the United States, making a visit to Washington, where Couse painted Klikitat, Yakima, and Umatilla Indians.

The Couses’ returned to France, living in Etaples, a coastal village where son Kibbey was born in 1894. Continuing to paint in a style reminiscent of the Barbizon painters, Couse painted local fishing and pastoral scenes in low-key pastel colors. While in France, Couse met future Taos Society of Artists members Joseph Henry Sharp and Ernest L. Blumenschein. In their conversations, Sharp and Blumenschein described the Indians of Taos Pueblo, and “their relative isolation and pageantry.”⁵ Returning to New York, Couse set up a studio, and traveled once again to the Northwest. Based on their recommendation, Couse and his family made a trip to Taos in 1902, an important year for the artist, as he became an Associate of the National Academy of Design and winner of the First Hallgarten Prize for his painting the *Peace Pipes*.⁶

Shrewdly, Couse maintained his studio in New York City, painting portraits to earn his living, but spent his summers in Taos sketching Native Americans. Couse’s love of his primary subject matter, the Native American, would later pay off, as American sentiment shifted to the West, and especially the perceived notion of the vanishing Indian. Soon by the Santa Fe Railway purchased his works to be used in their advertising and calendars. Using live models — often Taos Pueblo residents John Concha and Ben Lujan — Couse’s work of the period depicted a scantily clad male Indian in native costume, crouching in profile or squatting on his heels, and often lit by moonlight or firelight, dramatizing his muscular form.⁷ Though in hindsight, this type of portrayal could be viewed as a romanticized notion of the Noble Savage, Couse’s depictions were sympathetic

⁴ Mary Carroll Nelson, *The Legendary Artists of Taos*. New York: Watson-Gutpill Publications, 1980: 42.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios Section

Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

8 Page 22

and displayed an accuracy for detail. Welcome in Taos Pueblo society, Couse conveyed a close knowledge of sacred rituals and daily routines.

Couse created over his long career nearly 1,500 oil paintings, many in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Art, the Milwaukee Art Center, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the National Gallery of the Smithsonian Institute. Critical evaluation of his work after his death remains positive, but places the depiction of his subject within the context of the times. In 1963, art critic Van Deren Coke wrote: "Couse had an obvious sympathy for his subjects and although he may have been a victim of a taste of sentimental idealism, there is nevertheless, a sincerity and technical proficiency which must be admired as artifice of a high order."⁸

Joseph Henry Sharp (1859-1953)

Neighbor and fellow artist, Joseph Henry Sharp, shared Couse's love for his subject, devoting most of his life to painting Native Americans in their natural setting. Born in Bridgeport, Ohio, in 1859, Sharp became first exposed to Indians on his boyhood farm home in West Virginia. Orphaned at 13, Sharp went to live with an aunt in Cincinnati, where, though poor, became a successful student at first the McMicken School of Design, and later the Cincinnati Art Academy. In 1886, Sharp left for Europe where he studied in Munich under Carl Marr at the Royal Academy. After returning to the United States to take a position at the Cincinnati Art Academy, Sharp made a visit to Taos in 1893. Enamored with the landscape and the Pueblo Indians, Sharp publicized the town's qualities in popular magazines of the day, leading to an emigration of Eastern artists to the remote village.

In the late 1890s and early 1900s, Sharp concentrated his work on recording the fading lifeways of the Plains Indians at Crow Agency, Montana. Starting in 1897, he began to spend short periods in Taos each summer. Sharp also maintained a studio in California, where in 1902, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, purchased 80 of his Native American portraits. Though first renting a studio, in 1908 Sharp bought property on Kit Carson Road. The following year he acquired land east of his house on which stood the Luna Family Chapel. His first wife Addie died in 1913, and two years later Sharp married his former wife's sister and built a new studio behind his home. The Sharps and Couses maintained a close friendship during the period due their proximity and mutual interests.

Sharp died in Pasadena, California, in 1953, a few days before his 94th birthday. Though Sharp was never elected to the National Academy, his faithfully recorded portraits of Indian chiefs resulted in winning a number of prizes, and having his works in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution, the Butler Institute of American Art, the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of Art, Tulsa, and the Cincinnati Museum of Art.

⁸ Ibid: 44.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

8 Page 23 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios Section
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

The Couse Foundation

In March 2001, the Couse Foundation was established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to preserve the Couse property. That same year the house and studio became a National Trust Association Site, sharing honors with the historic homes and studios of Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton, Jackson Pollack, N.C. Wyeth, and others. The home and studio will become an historic house museum open to the public. It is also intended that an educational institute will be formed by the Foundation to train students in historic preservation, art history, and other appropriate regional studies.

The home Couse purchased on Kit Carson Road in 1909 best reflects the home-life and influences on Couse's work during his mature artistic career. Because the house and studio have remained essentially unchanged from the time of the artist and contain his original furnishings, collections and archive, the home is a window on the life of such an artist and his colleagues, and a reflection on his time in the remote artist colony of Taos. It is the only early artist's home and studio in Taos still intact from the period. The two studios of Joseph Henry Sharp, the workshop and important inventions of Couse's son, Kibbey Whitman Couse (1894-1978), and the impact of former owners, important *Taoseños* in their own right, enhance the significance of the property.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

8 Page 24 The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios Section
Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Figure 8-1 *A Vision of the Past*, E.I. Couse, 1913 (courtesy Butler Institute of American Art)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios Section
8 Page 25 Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Figure 8-2

Ration Day at the Reservation, Joseph Henry Sharp, 1919 (courtesy Butler Institute of American Art)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry,

Studios

Section 9 Page 26

Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Bibliographic References

Leavitt, Virginia Couse. *Eanger Irving Couse - Image Maker For America*, Exhibition Catalogue for Eanger Irving Couse – Image Maker For America, Albuquerque Museum, 1991.

Leavitt, Ernest E. *The Couse House in Taos – A History*. Unpublished draft manuscript, May 2004.

Nelson, Mary Carroll. *The Legendary Artists of Taos*. New York: Watson-Gutpill Publications, 1980.

White, Robert R. *The Taos Society of Artists*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983.

Many other sources have contributed to the information in this application, but most important of these has been the Couse Family Archive. The archive includes, among other important documents, all the original deeds of both the Couse and Sharp properties as well as 10,000 Couse photo studies of models and photographs of the house from 1909 to the present.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios
Section 10 Page 27 Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the nominated property is recorded officially in the Office the Taos County Clerk as follows: Tract A, a certain tract of land located within the Taos Pueblo Grant and located within Section 17 of Township 25 North, Range 13 East, described as Part of Exception 291, Private Claim 277, Parcel 1; and Part of Exception 290, Private Claim 237, Parcel 1; and Part of Exception 292, Private Claim 209, Parcel 1 of the 1915 U.S.G.L.O. Survey of the Taos Pueblo Grant and also described as Part of Tract 418, Map 18, Survey 2; and Tract 419, Map 18, Survey 2; and Part of Tract 422, Map 18, Survey 2 of the 1941 New Mexico Reassessment Survey.

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundary includes the entire parcel historically associated with the main house and studio of Eanger Irving Couse and the first and second studios of Joseph Henry Sharp. The altered residence of Joseph Henry Sharp is located on a separate parcel and is not included.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry,

Studios

Section Photo Page 28

Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Photo Log

The following information pertains to all photographs unless otherwise noted:

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio and Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios

Taos, County: Taos, New Mexico

Name of photographer: George S. Marcek

Date of photograph: September 2003

Location of negatives: Couse Family Archives

Photo 1 of 19

North elevation of East Wing, Entry gate and Stone Circle

Facing Southwest

Photo 2 of 19

South Elevation of East Wing and East Elevation of South Wing and Entry Porch

Facing West

Photo 3 of 19

South Elevation of East Wing and East Elevation of South Wing and Terrace Garden

Facing Northwest

Photo 4 of 19

North Elevation of E.I. Couse Studio and Kibbey Couse Work Shop

Facing Southeast

Photo 5 of 19

Interior of E. I. Couse Studio and Shingled Glass Window

Facing North

Photo 6 of 19

Interior of E. I. Couse Studio

Facing Northeast

Photo 7 of 19

Interior of E. I. Couse Studio

Facing south

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry,

Studios

Section Photo Page 29

Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Photo 8 of 19

East Elevations of Sunroom Apartment/Laboratory Porch and Small Garage
Facing Northwest

Photo 9 of 19

South Elevation of West Wing
Facing Northeast

Photo 10 of 19

Interior of Kibbey Couse Machine Shop (Work Shop)
Facing Northeast

Photo 11 of 19

Sunroom Apartment/Laboratory Porch and Small Garage
Facing Northeast

Photo 12 of 19

West Elevation of Lower Shop
Facing Southeast

Photo 13 of 19

South Elevation of Lower Shop Showing Sliding Door
Facing North

Photo 14 of 19

Interior of Couse Living Room
Facing North

Photo 15 of 19

Interior of Couse Dining Room
Facing West

Photo 16 of 19

Interior of Couse Dining Room
Facing Northwest

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio & Sharp, Joseph Henry,

Studios

Section Photo Page 30

Taos, Taos County, New Mexico

Photo 17 of 19

Interior of Couse Dining Room

Looking East

Photo 18 of 19

South and East Elevation of Luna Family Chapel

Facing Northwest

Photo 19 of 19

South Elevation of Joseph Henry Sharp Second Studio

Facing Northwest