

PH0694665

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RECEIVED JAN 8 1979  
DATE ENTERED FEB 23 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Leon Gaspard House

AND/OR COMMON

Gaspard House Museum

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Raton Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Taos

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE

N.M.

CODE  
35

COUNTY  
Taos

CODE  
055

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Belford A. Blackman

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 2625, Raton Road

CITY, TOWN

Taos,

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Taos County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Taos

STATE

New Mexico

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

October 20, 1978

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historic Preservation Program

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Leon Gaspard House is a statement of the many facets that were combined in this fine artist. The house was built between 1926 and 1931 in a Byzantine-Pueblo Style. Gaspard designed the house and the construction was done by local people. Al Yaple from Questa was probably the contractor.

The house is of adobe and is stepped to create a two story house. The roofs were flat and only some of the original extending vigas remain. The house is now stuccoed a deep red color; however, it was a light pink in Gaspard's time.

The house in its basic forms expresses the two parts of the world that Gaspard called home. The house is centered around a great hall, a European room, reflecting the artist's years in Paris. Additionally the house is filled with furniture, textiles, rugs, and costumes which Gaspard collected in his journeys. There are some exterior features which give a "Byzantine" character to the otherwise Pueblo Revival house. At the east side of the front portal is an ogee arch window for the gallery and there are round arch windows on the second story. The wood portal has carved and painted posts and moorish arches. The extending front bay is semi-circular and has pointed arch windows. The doorways throughout the house also have pointed arches.

The rear facade maintains its Pueblo Revival character with its low massing, portal, rectangular windows with frame lintels, and extending vigas at the rear of the house. There is a low, one-story section which appears attached, but it is separated slightly. This small house is, according to the owner and director of the museum, about 120 years old. Gaspard lived in this house while constructing his house.

The front portal is the entrance porch and the front door leads into the foyer which has the three pointed arch windows and the semi-circular front. This room is a couple of steps higher than others and is separated by a screen. The wood screen is used throughout the house to close off rooms. These screens illustrate the fine workmanship the Taos craftsmen were capable of.

The house centers around the great hall, a room common to European houses. It is a large rectangular room which like the rest of the house has a viga and latia ceiling. One end of the room serves as a sitting area and the other end is a dining area. At this end is a uniquely European feature: there is a large fireplace with built-in sideboards on either side. The left sideboard has a sink set in it. Originally the fireplace was larger and the sideboards were cooking areas that the Gaspards occasionally used. Traditionally in Europe this feature served as the winter kitchen in manor houses. The floor of the Great Hall is covered with Persian rugs. These Gaspard probably inherited from his rug-merchant father. The dining room table and chairs are from the Louis XIII period. These may have been inherited from the French side of Gaspard's family. Whether inherited or purchased, the furniture came into his possession in 1920 in Paris. The walls of the room are covered with rich tapestries from various parts of Asia. Displayed on manikins are costumes that he used in his paintings. The costumes are from China, Mongolia, and other parts of Asia.

Extending from the great hall is the master bedroom, which also has tapestries displayed. The furniture includes a large bed and elaborate trunks and chests.

A gallery leading to an apartment extends across the front of the house. The room apparently was Evelyn's studio for a time and was converted to a gallery where Gaspard showed and sold his work. The room now displays some of Gaspard's work and textiles and costumes.

(CONTINUED ON CONTINUATION SHEET)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1926-1931

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Leon Gaspard

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Leon Gaspard was born in Russia in 1882. His father was a rug merchant and his mother was an excellent pianist. He grew up traveling the steppes with his father and learning the violin with his talented mother. His first love, however, was sketching both on his travels and near his home. At age 15 he was finally permitted to study art. He enrolled with a teacher by the name of Julius Penn. Studying with Penn at the same time was a young artist named Marc Chagall. Gaspard also studied art under a Greek professor named Kostandy.

Finally at the age of 17, in 1898, Gaspard was allowed to study in Paris, the artistic capitol of Europe. He first studied at the Academie Julian, then with Edward Toudouze, the painter of the frescoes in the lobby of the Opéra Comique. Finally Gaspard selected as his master Adolphe Bouguereau, an artist famous for his nude figures.

For his master Gaspard prepared canvases, cleaned brushes, framed paintings, and ran errands. In the course of doing errands Gaspard became acquainted with many of Paris' artists, among them Modigliani, Pizarro, Matisse, and Utrillo. From these contacts Gaspard gradually developed his Asiatic color and scenes, realism and French Impressionist technique.

After a few years in Paris, Gaspard's parents died leaving him without an allowance. Bouguereau suggested that he sketch Paris and sell the sketches. While sketching on the street one day he had an offer to buy all his small sketches. The buyer turned out to be George D. Pratt of Standard Oil and founder of the Pratt Institute of Art in New York. It was with these sketches that Gaspard won his first honors as an artist and began making an income.

In 1909 Gaspard was married in Paris to an American, Evelyn Adell. With the money from the sale of some sketches, Gaspard took his new wife back to Russia for a Russian marriage ceremony and a two-year horseback trip to Irbutsk in eastern Siberia.

Gaspard returned to Paris as a mature artist. He quickly became known as one of the foremost young Russian painters and began to show his paintings throughout Europe. This success did not last long as World War I broke out in 1914. He continued his sketching, this time of the horrors of war. Gaspard was a pilot for the French air corps and his plane was shot down shortly after the start of the war. He was badly wounded, but survived after five months in traction. He was released from the hospital early in 1916 and left for America to join Evelyn.

In New York Gaspard continued his success. He showed in the Vanderbilt Gallery, among others, and in March 1916 Scribner's published his war sketches in an article entitled, "A Russian Painter's Impressions of the War." Gaspard also renewed his acquaintance with George Pratt who was again generous. However, Gaspard was unable to take advantage of his successes because of his poor health. Later in the same year, a doctor advised him to go west for his health.

(CONTINUED ON CONTINUATION SHEET)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Waters, Frank. Leon Gaspard. Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1964.  
 Waters, Frank. The Sketches of Leon Gaspard. Los Angeles: Southwest Museum, 1962.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.5

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,3	44,94,2,0	4,02,718,4,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the intersection of Raton Road and a fence on the east side of the house; proceed north along the fence 932 feet; from this point proceed west along the north property line for 185 feet; from this point proceed south along the west property line for 700 feet to the intersection with Raton Road; proceed east along the north edge of the road for about 200 feet to the starting point.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ellen Threinen / Architectural Historian

December 26, 1978

ORGANIZATION

State Historic Preservation Program

DATE

(505)827-2108

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 1629

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe,

STATE

New Mexico

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Thomas W. Mel...*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

1-5-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

*Charles Adams*

DATE

2-23-79

ATTEST:

*W. J. ...*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

2-23-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET #1 ITEM NUMBER 7&8 PAGE

- #7 Off the gallery is an apartment which includes a sitting room, bedroom, and bathroom. Displayed in this room are some of Dora Kaminsky's works. She was a talented artist in her own right and was especially creative in the medium of batik. Also hung is one of her watercolors.
- At the rear of the great hall is a breakfast room which serves as an office. Next to this is a kitchen which has been modernized. The traditional Russian wall bed has been retained.
- The second story, to which there are exterior stairs from the front and back, had two rooms. There is a small bedroom at one side of the hall. Gaspard's studio is on the other side. It is a large room with a large north-facing window and smaller round arch windows on the other sides. The exterior staircases were, no doubt, to give the artist privacy.
- Behind the house are chicken coops and a small barn. Gaspard kept chickens and geese as well as a few cows and horses and he had a large garden. The well for the house, until recently the only well, is in a courtyard formed by the outbuildings. The museum continues to keep chickens and geese and the garden.
- Over the last year the museum has repaired the house and intends to continue the maintenance. They have also been collecting the furniture, textiles, and costumes that Gaspard had in the house. The museum intends to return the exterior to its original light pink.
- #8 Leon and Evelyn spent the summer of 1916 in Santa Fe. Because the town did not suit them they moved to Taos for the remainder of the year. The summer of 1917 was spent in Provincetown, Mass., popular art colony, and among the residents were Richard Miller, Charles Hawthorne, Max Bohn. Gaspard, however, kept thinking of Taos.
- Early in the summer of 1918, the Gaspards returned to Taos. Leon went to see a local character, Doc Martin, about his wound. The doc prescribed a shot of "Old Granddad" and daily fishing and hunting trips. His guide on these trips was W. Herbert Dunton, a cowpoke learning to paint. Gaspard recovered his health with his vigorous life in the outdoors.
- The Taos Society of Artists was founded in 1914 by six artists who had made Taos their home. The group was an immediate success with shows in Santa Fe and throughout the United States and Europe. The Denver and Rio Grande and Santa Fe Railroads soon began using the paintings to advertise the southwest. Because of an early rebuff by the society, Gaspard never joined and only later in life did he show paintings in Taos. Like these artists Gaspard spent a good deal of time painting the various Pueblos and their inhabitants. However, by 1920 Gaspard had tired of this, so early in 1921 he and Evelyn left for an Asian journey.
- Gaspard left Evelyn in Peking and made a trip across the Gobi Desert on horseback

(CONTINUED ON CONTINUATION SHEET #2)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE

which took more than two years. He was accompanied by a former military officer who served as his translator and protector. Among other adventures the two were captured by desert tribesmen who were superb horsemen and falconers. To ransom himself and his companion, he painted a portrait of the chief. Gaspard traveled to Urga in Mongolia, the city of the Dalai Lama. The painter was lucky enough to see the Dalai Lama and the procession which escorted him into the city and to have a private conference with the Dalai Lama. Eventually Gaspard journeyed to Siberia, more than 1500 miles from Peking. From this point in Siberia, Gaspard and his protector travelled southward to Tibet and the Himalayas and then back to Peking. The journey had lasted 2 years and four months and Gaspard covered over 3000 miles, nearly all of it on horseback. The many sketches he made became essential contributions to his painting.

Gaspard returned to Peking and his wife. He spent five months in the city painting from his many sketches. Some of the paintings he did in these months were among his best with their Asian color, clear atmosphere and light, and strange forms.

In 1924 Leon and Evelyn returned to Taos. At Taos he saw a great resemblance to the Asian desert. Many of his paintings reflect the same view of color, light, and form which his Asian works display. His trip to the Navajo Reservation reinforced this image.

Between 1926 and 1931 the Gaspards built their house in Taos. It was a blend of experiences. It was constructed of adobe and had thick walls, flat roof, and ceilings of vigas and latias. The house incorporated Asian features such as pointed arch windows. And the house included much that was European: the Great Hall with its walk-in fireplace and built-in sideboards and the furniture. The furniture was from France, some of it Louis XIII which may have been inherited from his family. Throughout the house were fabrics, rugs, and tapestries that the Gaspards collected in their travels. Both for sketching and collecting other trips were made. They went to Asia in 1925-1926 and to Europe in 1932. During this trip Gaspard went to Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. He and Evelyn were detained in Algeria longer than expected because their money was tied up by the Great Depression. By 1936, however, they were back in Taos.

After this they remained in Taos taking advantage of the rich and varied color and friendships built up over the years. Among their many friends were Mabel Dodge Luhan, D.H. Lawrence, and Nicholai Fechin, a fellow Russian painter. In 1956 Evelyn died from complications resulting from a horseback fall. Her death put Gaspard into shock which remained until he became reacquainted with Dora Kaminsky, a painter. He married her in 1958.

In 1959 he and Dora sailed from New York to Europe and Russia. Gaspard began painting avidly again and his paintings received great acclaim. Dora was an artist in her own right and she also benefited from the tour.

Gaspard died in 1964. By 1964 the artist was world-renowned and more appreciated than he had been at any time in his life. Because his artistic legacy directly involved in the Taos art circle was minimal, his house is perhaps his major artistic statement in the town.