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# Hacienda de los Martinez



circa 1804

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La Hacienda de los Martinez is divided into two placitas or courtyards. The front placita was reserved for the family and servants and would have been the principal work area of the Hacienda. The ground would have been swept clean to resemble the packed earth floors found in many of the rooms. For the most part, during the 1820 time period people lived much of their lives out of doors. The rooms were used only during the worst weather. Everyday the courtyards would have been a hive of activity with folks working and processing wool and leather, baking and cooking, mending equipment, and any number of other home and farm activities.

- 1. SALA** This room was the primary living area for the Martinez family. The sala would have served as a living room, dining room, classroom and even bedroom for the family. It must be remembered that furniture was at a premium on the Spanish frontier in the early 1800s, thus the sparse look of the room. All lumber had to be cut, hauled and adzed into usable lumber with only minimal hand tools. The large chests are made from single boards, some over 16" across. Imagine the work that went into just making the boards!
- 2. BEDROOM** The small room may have served as Severino's and Maria's bedroom. The fireplace is unique in the house for both its shape and location in the middle of a wall compared to the more typical corner position. Personal altars like the one here were common to every home. Religion was more than a belief; it was a matter of daily life and provided the necessary spiritual strength to endure the hardships of the rugged frontier life.
- 3. CHAPEL** Hand-adzed beams and fancy corbels suggest this room was special. The Martinez' would have had the resources to provide a chapel for themselves and the surrounding community to be used for baptisms, weddings and daily prayers.
- 4. GRANERO** The granary has three large bins for the storage of grains. Food storage and production were essential to survival and constituted a daily pursuit. The summers were the primary time to grow and store food that would have to last throughout the long cold winters. The large bins, which may have been much deeper originally, would have been used to store wheat, corn and barley.
- 5. TRADE ROOM** Martinez' merchandise, some brought from Chihuahua while more came from the United States after 1821, was displayed and sold here. The Hacienda was a commercial hub and possibly the first year-round mercantile operation for the Taos Valley. Goods from the surrounding area were brought here by both Hispanic and Indians to barter for the imported trade goods (i.e. iron, cloth, tools, or that special hat). While specific functions have been assigned to the various rooms, quite likely every room served at least in part for storage—thus helping to explain the eleven-foot ceilings throughout the structure!
- 6. LA COCINA** This busy kitchen would have had to feed hungry family members, servants and visiting traders that could number from 15 to 30 or more people. The 'shepherd's fireplace' is a remarkable construction as the lower level was to be used along its entire length for cooking. Coals from a large fire in the main chimney area would have been scooped up and placed under the cooking pots, the smoke being drawn along the bottom of the platform and into the flue. The deck provided a warm place to sleep on those cold Taos winter nights. Herbs and dried foods were both processed and stored in this room as well.
- 7. LA DISPENSA** This room was originally used as a large refrigerator. The thick adobe walls maintain a constant cool temperature. The small window near the ceiling was opened to vent out any heat. When this portion of the home was constructed there would have been only a

single small door to the room. At some point after Severino's death the double door facing the courtyard was added. (The doorway to the next room was constructed during the restoration of the building to allow for more access to the Sala Grande.)

**8. SALA GRANDE** The hand adzed floor, which was the only wooden floor in the Hacienda, was especially made for *fandangos* (Spanish dance parties). Community and political meetings also were held in this room.

**9. 10. & 11. CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC** These three rooms were probably used by Severino's sons and daughters when they became adults and needed their own accommodations. (Today they serve as a storage area, a modern kitchen for Museum events and a staff bathroom.)

**12. VISITOR'S ENTRANCE** The tiny room is part of the four rooms constructed in 1804 and may have supported a second story *torreón* or watchtower as a defense against possible Indian attacks. The ground level room was used for storage. The door to the outside would not have been part of the original construction.

**13. VISITOR'S CENTER** Also part of the 1804 home, this room was used as a sala and sleeping quarters for family members when they first came to Taos and before the Hacienda was expanded.

Primarily the servants used the second or rear placita that was connected through the beautifully arched passageway. The passageway also served as a breezy area to hang meat to cure.

The rooms surrounding the back placita were used as housing for the servants, storage facilities, and work areas where the servants produced various trade (i.e. socks, blankets, jergas or rugs, etc.). Some of these rooms may have not been enclosed and were used to keep livestock.

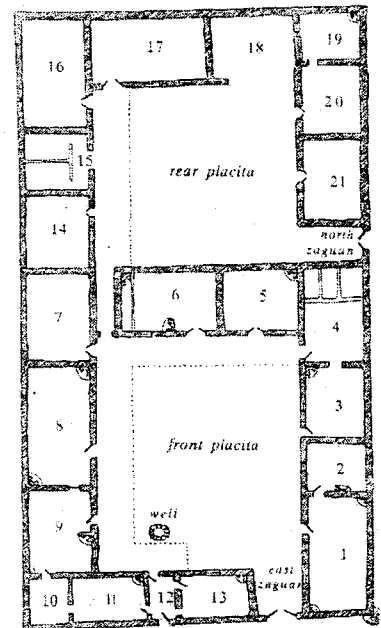
**14. FURNACE and UTILITY ROOM** Closed to the public. The original use of this room and some of the others in the rear courtyard are not known as this part of the Hacienda was reconstructed based on archaeology—nothing remained of the original structure except for the small fragment of wall found in Rooms 16 and 17. (Today the Hacienda has radiant heat in the mud floors powered by the furnace in here.)

**15. PUBLIC RESTROOMS** One of the most frequently asked questions about the Hacienda is "Where were the bath rooms?" The simple truth is there weren't any! During late Spanish Colonial times people either used chamber pots or they went outside to accommodate their elimination needs. Bathing was almost unheard of and disease and lice were extremely prevalent. Even the use of outhouses did not become common until the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**16. WEAVING ROOM** Looms and the weaving of churro wool were fundamental to the economic survival of New Mexico as woolen goods provided the most important trade goods that could be sent to Chihuahua in exchange for the sorely needed manufactured goods and a few luxury items. The production of sheep and the processing and manufacturing of woolen goods employed the majority of the people in the area.

**17. SANTOS DISPLAY ROOM** This room now houses the Museum's spectacular collection of northern New Mexican *santos* (painted boards or sculptures of the saints) and religious items. The deep faith of the Hispanic people lies at the core of their ability to have survived the rigors of the Spanish Colonial frontier. The *santos* are a very real expression of that faith and are a direct link with the celestial beings they represent and God. Daily life was easier to accept if there was some way to counterbalance and understand the hardships and chaos that were inherent to frontier life--these powerful figures helped fulfill that role in the lives of the people.

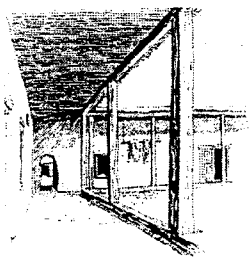
**18. BLACKSMITH'S SHOP** Iron was a rare and precious commodity in frontier Taos. So



much so that Martinez accounted in his will for every nail and bit of iron he owned. Since he didn't mention any blacksmithing tools indicates to us that there was no blacksmith shop until sometime later when his son took over the family ranch and business after Severino's death in 1827.

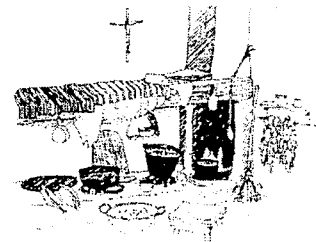
**19. & 20. SERVANT'S QUARTERS** These two rooms would have housed the Martinez family's servants. During the archaeological excavations of the rear placita the only indication of a fireplace was found here. Throughout the Spanish Colonial, Mexican Republic and American Territorial periods, the use of Native American slaves and servants was a common practice. Almost every Hispanic household, regardless of how poor, probably had at least one native servant.

**21. TACK ROOM** The small room displays horse tack and ox farming equipment. We know from Severino's will that he owned large herds of horses and oxen that he used to work the extensive ranching and farming operation that also was centered at the Hacienda.

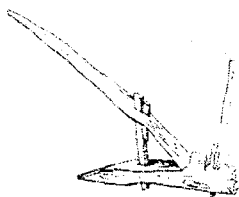


Throughout the 1700s New Mexico had suffered from continuous Comanche raiding—the economy was at a standstill and the province was in danger of collapsing. In 1786 a permanent peace was established with the Comanche and the once threatened province began to flourish and assume a new and totally unique Hispanic identity within the Spanish Empire. The citizens of New Mexico began to express a new entrepreneurial spirit not based on the old Spanish class system but centered more on individual achievement. Among these emerging *vecinos* (citizens) was don Antonio Severino Martinez. In 1803 Antonio Severino Martín (later changed to Martinez, the plural form of Martin)

came to Taos and purchased 66 *varas* of land (a vara is roughly equivalent to a walking pace or 33 inches) along the Rio Pueblo that ran to the ridge top to the west. In the spring of 1804 he brought his wife, María del Carmel and their family from their home in Abiquiu to Taos. The front four rooms (10,11,12,13) of the Hacienda were the humble beginnings of what would become an important commercial and political hub for the Taos Valley. By 1827, the year of Severino's death, the Hacienda had grown to encompass 21 rooms enclosing two *placitas*, or courtyards. The *casa mayor* (great or main house) now referred to as an *hacienda*, with its two-foot thick adobe construction and windowless exterior walls had been designed to serve as a refuge for family and neighbors against possible Indian raids (no attacks against the structure were ever recorded). Valuable livestock, particularly horses and mules, could have been driven through the heavy *zagan* gates, into the protective *placitas* until such raids were over. Much of Severino's wealth came from his commercial trade ventures with Chihuahua, Mexico, and after 1821, with



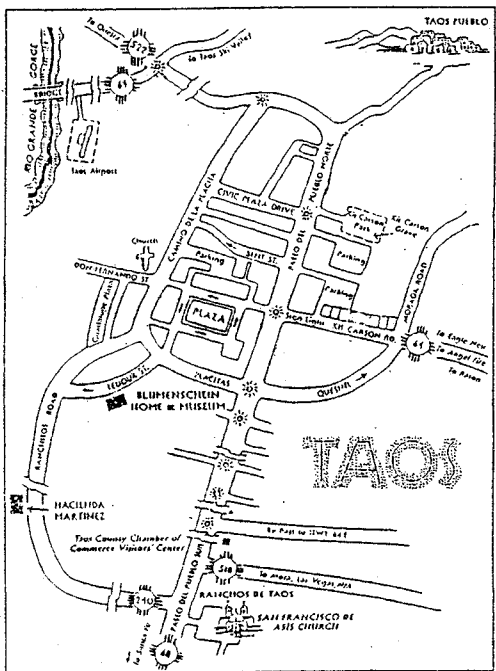
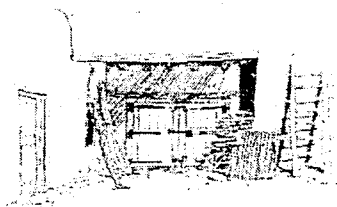
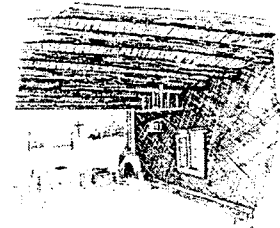
America over the Santa Fe Trail. Severino owned caravans of pack mules and horses that he used to transport raw and finished wool in the form of blankets, rugs, socks and clothing, as well as processed animal hides and other *efectos del pais* (products or goods of the land) on the arduous round trip journey to Chihuahua. On the return trip he brought back finished goods such as iron, cotton, silk, medicines, books, retablos, Majorca ceramics and numerous other manufactured wares to sell or barter to the local people.



In Severino's later years he turned his attention toward politics, holding the important office of *Alcalde* or mayor for the Taos area under both Spanish and Mexican governments. On Severino's death the *Hacienda* was taken over by his younger son, Pascual Bailón, who further increased the family's holdings and influence in the area. The eldest son, Antonio José, on the

death of his young wife, became a priest and later emerged as the legendary spiritual and social leader of the northern Rio Grande area. Both Padre Martinez and his brother Pascual Bailón served in the New Mexico Legislature under both the Mexican and United States flags.

Until the mid-1930s, la Hacienda de los Martinez was occupied by the direct descendents of Severino. It then changed hands several times and continued to fall into further disrepair until 1961 when Jerome Milord and his family began an extensive reconstruction of the ruin. In 1972 the Museums acquired the building and three and one half acres of the original land from Milord. Nearly ten years later, the Hacienda had been restored to its former eminence as a monument to the late Spanish Colonial era in northern New Mexico. Working from Severino's will, all attempts had been made during the restoration to keep the Hacienda as accurate to the 1820s time period as possible. Hand-adzed beams and floorboards, mud plaster and hand-forged door hardware are evidence of the skill and care that went into the restoration. Most of the floors are made of adobe mud and sealed with boiled linseed oil (traditionally, a mix of mud, ox blood and wood ash was used to make hard, non-dusting floors). The roofs are supported by large *vigas* (beams) that are in turn covered with either *rajas* (split cedar boards) or *latillas* (aspens poles). On top of the sticks, layers of grasses, cattails, or *chamiso* (sage) were placed and 24 inches or more of earth piled on top as the final covering from the elements. The shuttered window openings, which would have been considerably smaller than the current ones (based on more recent scholarship), would have been totally open or covered by oiled rawhide or the occasional sheet of mica.



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