



THE COVER

In the center of the town of Taos in northern New Mexico, on narrow Ledoux Street, stands a complex of old adobe buildings known as the Harwood. The first installation of these buildings was built as early as 1813. It was the home of one Smith H. Simpson, a compadre and employee of Kit Carson. Simpson acquired the property when he married into the prominent Valdez family. Simpson is known for receiving permission from the United States Army to fly the U.S. flag twenty-four hours a day during the Civil War, after he nailed it to a tall cottonwood pole and vowed to shoot any Southern sympathizers who dared remove it.

Bookplate courtesy of Taos Public Library.

The house was purchased by Elizabeth (Lucy Case) and Burt (E. Burrit) Harwood in 1916. The Harwoods were artists who had lived in Paris for many years and continued in Taos their habit of opening their home to other artists. They opened their home for informal cultural events and created a small gallery for exhibits. Elizabeth Harwood had a small personal library from which she loaned books. The Harwoods added a second story onto their home, the town's first second story on a residential building, as well as electricity.

In 1923, after the death of her husband, Elizabeth Harwood formally established the Harwood Foundation, which hosted lectures, plays, and musical events. Artists were able to rent studios and apartments in the building on Ledoux Street. The lending library continued to grow through donations. A fee was charged to become a member of the foundation, but no one was ever denied use of the library. Community members began to contribute local art and artifacts to the foundation, as well as books. One very prominent benefactor of the foundation's library was Mabel Dodge Luhan, the East Coast socialite and art promoter who claimed northern New Mexico as her own and introduced such influential artists as Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams to the American Southwest. Luhan made sure that the library had both bestsellers and classics, and her gifts make up much of today's special collections.

In 1936 Elizabeth Harwood realized that the foundation would not be able to survive for very long on its existing funding and bequeathed it to the University of New Mexico, with the understanding that the community would continue to receive the same services. Taos was a tiny and isolated community, and Harwood meant to ensure that the area would continue to benefit from the cultural and educational programs she had initiated.

The University became owner of the buildings and the collections, and began an extensive remodeling of the property. A space specifically for the library was added at this point. The renovations and additions were designed by John Gaw Meem, the prominent architect renowned for his projects and renovations in the Spanish Pueblo revival style of adobe building design. This style became exceedingly popular in New Mexico, as city planners and homeowners began to desire properties which combined the architectural characteristics of both colonial Spanish-American homes and the nearby ancient Pueblo Indian multistory complexes. It was more than a fad, however; earlier, the city of Santa Fe, with tourism and economic development in mind, had encouraged restoration and building in the Spanish Pueblo revival style with tax credits and even mandated the style in certain older areas of town. Meem was a leading force behind the restorations of the Franciscan mission churches, San

Esteban de Acoma and El Santuario de Chimayo as well as numerous other historical buildings throughout New Mexico.

In 1940 a grant from the Carnegie Corporation awarded to the University of New Mexico helped establish the Taos Community Project, an experimental program of community-based planning, cooperative action, and education. The Harwood served as the headquarters for the project. One of the greatest successes to come out of the project was New Mexico's first bookmobile. The bookmobile brought library services to communities all over Taos County. It held about eight hundred books, rotated from the main collection at the Harwood, and also a movie projector for showing educational films. The bookmobile came equipped with loudspeakers and a projection screen, and even a portable generator for film showings in those villages without electricity. In the winters one isolated village even received its reading material by "book-horse" when snowfall cut off road access for the little red wagon, as the bookmobile was called. Under the guidance of the mobile librarian, eleven communities set up branch libraries that continued to thrive after the closure of the project a few years later. These branches were run by villagers who first received several weeks of library training at the Harwood.

The Harwood's circulation jumped in the first year of the outreach program from 10,712 to 38,279. The film showings were immensely popular as well, and over 50,000 people attended these in the year 1941–42. The Taos County Project workers took advantage of these well-attended showings and often took the opportunity to address the crowds on other aspects of the project, such as the new hospital, irrigation plans, or other farming issues. After the project closed, the bookmobile and its services had become so valued by the people of the county that funds required to keep it in operation were allotted from county and village budgets. Adjacent Rio Arriba County was so impressed that it contracted with the Harwood Foundation for similar service (J. T. Reid, *It Happened in Taos* [Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1946], 44).

The bookplate for the Harwood probably originated about this time, in the early 1940s. The bookplate measures 2 7/8 inches wide and 3 1/4 inches high. It reads, "Public Library, The Harwood Foundation." The words "Taos, New Mexico" frame a square bordered by a broken line. The large "H" and "F" are outlined in the same punctuated border. The capital letters are free imitations of Lombardic lettering, while the small letters are taken from Gothic forms. The block is a woodcut view of what may be the outside of the Harwood, or any number of John Gaw Meem's buildings. It is a classic Spanish Pueblo revival scene—thick, sunbaked, adobe walls, a wooden ladder rising to somewhere outside the border of the image. Vigas and latillas, wooden roof supports, are visible on the second story and above the portal.

The initials of the artist, Gustave Baumann, appear in the lower corners of the block, "G" in the lower left-hand corner and "B" in the right. Baumann was a German-born painter who came to New Mexico in 1918 by way of Indiana and Chicago. Unlike many of the artists who came to the Southwest during this period, Baumann stayed and became one of the most prominent and distinctive of New Mexico's artists. He was an internationally known master of woodblock printing whose works have hung in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Baumann's prints of Southwestern landscapes reveal a wonderful ability to capture the colors of the desert, mountains, canyons, and cacti. The design of the bookplate may have been conceived by one Willard "Spud" Johnson, a writer and associate of Mabel Dodge Luhan and yet another transplant to the Southwest. Johnson is more known for his satirical publications than for the fact that he was director of the Harwood from 1944 through 1947.

During the nearly fifty years of its management by the University of New Mexico, the Harwood continued to grow, both in terms of its collections and in its role as a community center. The buildings of the Harwood were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and renovated again in 1977 through a federal historical preservation program.

In 1984 the University of New Mexico returned responsibility and control of the library portion of the Harwood to the town of Taos. At this point it helps to think of the Harwood in two parallel tracks—the Harwood Public Library, a department of the town of Taos, and the Harwood Foundation, a museum whose buildings are as historically significant as its collection. The University retained ownership of the building and the museum holdings, by this time an invaluable collection of Northern New Mexican arts, containing treasures ranging from Pueblo pottery to traditional Hispanic religious art, to paintings of the Taos Society of Artists. Some controversy resulted from the university's reluctance to adequately finance a museum in such a high-maintenance building which produced no income.

Numbering approximately thirty thousand volumes, the library remained in its original home but became fully funded by the town of Taos, which was now required to pay rent to the University of New Mexico. Shortage of space for the growing collection spurred the movement for the library's relocation. In the summer of 1996, the Taos Public Library moved out of the Harwood and into a new \$2.2 million facility with twice as much space, a real parking lot, and room to grow. The parking lot may have been the best reason for celebration, as the narrow old street and tiny parking lot on Ledoux Street made for inconvenient parking.

The new building echoes the architecture of its predecessor in a more subdued and predictable fashion. The library now employs twelve people

and has an active Friends of the Library program which was instrumental in the campaign for the library's move to a new site. Special collections include a collection of Scottish Genealogy on permanent loan from the Clan MacLeod. The general collection, numbering over forty thousand volumes, is especially strong in the areas of general fiction, art, and Southwest studies.

The buildings on Ledoux Street remain the home of the Harwood Foundation, which has expanded into the space vacated by the library. The space has been remodeled, and only memory indicates that a public library ever lived there. Spacious white-walled galleries have replaced cramped rooms of handcrafted furniture and stuffed bookshelves. The Harwood's collection of Spanish Colonial furniture, Rio Grande tinwork, paintings from the Santa Fe and Taos art colonies, and traditional Hispanic religious art are renowned. The museum archives contain over seventeen thousand photographs and more than sixty linear feet of documents pertaining to the history of art in New Mexico. And although the library has moved down the street, it can be said that Elizabeth Harwood's dream of providing artistic and intellectual inspiration to her adopted home has been a complete success.

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