

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries-complete applicable sections

** Note: This is an exact transcription of the original Nomination form from 1981 **

1. Name

Historic Governor Bent House

And/or common

2. Location

street & number not for publication?

city, town Taos vicinity of congressional district 1st

state New Mexico code 35 county Taos County code 055

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Otto T. Noeding

street & number

city, town Taos New Mexico state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Taos County Clerk's Office

street & number 105 Albright St Suite F

city, town Taos state New Mexico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Cultural Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date March 21, 1969 federal state county local

depository for survey records New Mexico State Planning Office

city, town Santa Fe state NM 87503

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved-date: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

An excellent example of a 19th century New Mexico residence, the Governor Bent House is a one-story, U-shaped, 150'x 80' adobe dwelling erected in the village of Taos. Known as Don Fernando de Taos during the Spanish, Mexican and early Territorial periods of New Mexico history, the town stands on a sage covered plain mid-way between the gorge of the Rio Grande to the west and the towering Sangre de Cristo Mountains on the east. Now occupied by an art gallery, a museum and several rentals used as apartments and office ~the Bent House is located on Bent Street one block north of the Taos Plaza, the traditional center of the community. Both the house, whose nucleus was constructed prior to 1835, and the street are named for Charles Bent, first "governor" of New Mexico after U.S. Occupation in 1846. One of the town's older neighborhoods, tree-shaded Bent Street is no\.; occupied by a variety of commercial enterprises including real estate offices, apartments and tourist attractions such as galleries, shops and restaurants.

Constructed around a patio with sidewalls contiguous to the adjoining structures, the traditional New Mexico style, the Bent house is now divided into two segments separated by a narrow passage leading into the placita between the art gallery and the museum. The present owner believes, however, that the two portions were joined at one time by another room, probably destroyed by fire, which formed the building's southwest corner. Extending along Bent Street and shaded by a narrow portal (porch) over the sidewalk, the larger portion contains the gallery in the west half and a real estate office to the east. Behind the latter, three small apartments and, storage area form the east side of the placita. On the opposite, or west side are the museum and a fourth apartment. The placita's north side is partially enclosed by a heavy adobe buttress which braces the east wall of the museum building; formerly the opening thus formed led to corrals and outbuildings behind the house.

Made of adobe bricks covered with adobe colored plaster, the building's 30" thick outer walls are reinforced by a concrete foundation of recent construction. The flat roof is drained by sheet metal canales (spouts) which protrude through the firewall towards the street. Under the portal, the two doors and two windows which face Bent Street are decorated by carved wooden framing in a diagonal design particularly popular in the Taos area of northern New Mexico. Ten years ago, to provide more display space in the gallery, a 10'x20' addition was put on to the north which eliminated part of the lawn and planting in the placita. Other changes have been minimal.

Set at right angles to the street in the southwest corner of the building, the entrance to the gallery opens into a small 10' square room with exposed log vigas, New Mexico beams, in the ceiling. The door is half glass over wood panels. Of similar construction, the new addition is to the north, but here the vigas are of rough-sawed lumber and the ceiling is made of unfinished boards rather than the plaster found in the smaller room. The walls are hung with the works of prominent members of the Taos art colony including Walter Ufer, Emil Bistram, Gene Kloss and W. Herbert "Buck" Dunton. To provide proper illumination for the pictures, all the windows are covered by shutters and both rooms are lighted by fixtures attached to the vigas, Traditional New Mexico corner fire places were built in each room but both have been supplanted by gas heaters. East of the smaller room, a bathroom and storage area separates the gallery from the real estate office.

A cement walk flanked by planting leads past the gallery entrance to the museum doorway, which is very similar to the one described above. Again, the rooms are small with low ceilings but here the original vigas have been covered with sheet rock and lath. The floors also appear to have been replaced, probably in the

1920s. There is an unusual jog in the west wall which protrudes into the adjoining building and it is at this point that members of Charles Bent's family are said to have dug their way through the adobes to the house next door to escape the attacking rebels at the climax of the Taos revolt in 1847. Bent family memorabilia and other contemporary household items, weapons and tools are displayed about the museum and on its walls. Notable among these are a leather trunk, believed to have belonged to Governor Bent, and a large arm chair brought over the Santa Fe Trail as a gift from Bent to Kit Carson's family, and later returned to Bent's survivors when the household was reestablished following the rebellion.

Although the interior of the Bent House has been repartitioned at various times to accommodate commercial occupants, including a hotel and apartments, the old building still retains much of its 19th century aspect. Proud of its historic importance and long tradition in Taos, the present owner, Mr. Otto T. Noeding, has maintained the property in excellent condition hoping that it will continue as a Taos landmark for many years to come.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance – Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archaeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archaeology-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 type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other/specify
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific Dates –

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance

Situated in the northern New Mexico town of Taos, the Governor Bent House was the scene of events which marked the climax of the bloody Taos Rebellion of 1847. In January of that year Mexican nationalists and Indians of the Pueblo of Taos joined forces to express their hatred for the new U.S. government in New Mexico imposed the previous summer by military forces under Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny. On the morning of January 19 the revolutionists broke into the governor's residence one block north of the Taos plaza after a night of harangues and sporadic violence. Governor Bent was killed and scalped in full view of terrified family members who were spared. The governor's assassination was the high point of the revolt which was quickly put down. Today the house where Governor Bent died remains to recall these historic events.

The eldest of eleven children, Charles Bent was born November 11, 1799 at Charleston, West Virginia to Silas and Martha Kerr Bent. In September 1806, the family moved to St. Louis where Silas Bent was employed as a surveyor in the newly purchased Louisiana Territory. After less than a year in this position, the elder Bent was named to the first of a series of judicial appointments, eventually serving on the Supreme Court of the Territory of Missouri from 1813-1821. At that time St. Louis was the headquarters for the burgeoning fur trade of the Rocky Mountains and was also the jumping-off place for exploring expeditions bound for the Far West, a milieu which strongly attracted Charles Bent. Despite his family's comfortable circumstances, which permitted some higher education for Charles at Jefferson College, Cannonsburg, Pennsylvania, adventure beckoned to the west and in the early 1820s Bent entered the fur trade.

Historians do not agree on Bent's early activities in this industry but it is evident that he was employed by the Missouri Fur Co. which had been taken over by Joshua Pilcher in 1820. Unable to compete with its powerful rival, the American Fur Co., Pilcher's group was bankrupt by 1825. It was quickly reorganized, however, and Charles Bent became a full partner, joining such legendary figures as Lucien Fontenelle, William Vanderburgh, Andrew Drips and Pilcher. Unfortunately, financial success continued to elude the partnership and by 1829 Bent was drawn to a new venture, the trade with Mexico over the Santa Fe Trail. In the spring of that year he joined a Caravan of 38 wagons forming at Round Grove, a popular rendezvous 40 miles west of Westport, Missouri. Despite his inexperience, Bent was elected captain of the train and was responsible for its defense during a dangerous Indian attack made by 500 Kiowas while traversing the Cimarron branch of the Trail.

The Indians were repulsed with the aid of a detachment of U.S. cavalry under Major Bennett Riley and the caravan made its way to Taos with an escort of "Mountain Men" led by Ewing Young before continuing on to Santa Fe. The following year, Bent began a long business association with Ceran St. Vrain, a native of the St. Louis area and veteran of the fur trade then living at Taos. Known as Bent, St. Vrain and Co. the new partnership rapidly became one of the strongest mercantile enterprises in the Southwest. In 1833 a new dimension was added to the company business with the construction of the famous Indian trading post in southeastern Colorado, Bent's Fort. Situated on the north bank of the Arkansas near present La Junta, its development was supervised by Charles Bent's younger brother William who then directed the trade carried on there with the Arapahoes, Cheyennes and other tribes of the southern plains. With its luxurious living quarters surrounded by a 14' high adobe wall, the fort was a magnet for soldier and civilian, trapper and Indian for over fifteen years. In August, 1849 it was destroyed by William Bent when negotiations for its purchase by the U.S. Army proved unsatisfactory.

Soon after the formation of the Bent/St. Vrain partnership, Charles Bent established his headquarters at Taos. By 1835 he had begun a lifelong relationship with Maria Ignacia Jaramillo, a young widow from a prominent Hispanic family of New Mexico's *Rio Arriba* (up-river) region. The couple established themselves in the small adobe residence north of the Taos plaza, now known as the Governor Bent House, which Ignacia had purchased June 3, 1834 from Maria Petra Montoya. The couple became the parents of five children of whom three survived infancy, Alfredo, Estefana and Teresina. In 1840 Ignacia purchased for 32 pesos a large room from the adjoining house to accommodate their growing family. During this era, Bent, the acknowledged leader of New Mexico's growing Anglo population, became active in New Mexico politics. He also acquired an illegal interest in several large land grants of doubtful validity made in the 1840s by Mexican Governor Manuel Armijo to Bent's friends, notably Charles Beaubien and Guadalupe Miranda, Civil Secretary to Armijo. These activities earned him the bitter animosity of Padre Antonio Jose Martinez, the parish priest and dedicated Mexican nationalist, who decried the growing influence of the outsiders.

Following the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846 Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny left Fort Leavenworth, Missouri in June of that year, at the head of a U.S. military force known as the Army of the West to secure New Mexico and California for the United States. On August 18, he marched into the Santa Fe plaza where New Mexico was officially surrendered without a shot fired. One month later, September 22, Kearny, acting under the orders of the Secretary of War, established a civil administration for the "Territory" headed by Charles Bent as governor. Believing the region pacified and the situation well in hand, the general then left Santa Fe for California leaving Colonel Sterling Price with a regiment of Missouri Volunteers in charge of military affairs in New Mexico. Although the majority of the Mexican and Pueblo Indian population accepted the change in government, some citizens with strong nationalist feelings were unreconciled to the new regime. A coterie of influential New Mexicans, many of whom had held positions of authority under the previous Mexican sovereignty, began planning a revolt to take place on Christmas Eve but the plot was betrayed and its instigators forced to flee. Bent issued a statement urging the populace to remain calm and then, believing the danger passed, left Santa Fe for his home in Taos despite the warnings of friends who were aware that the Rio Arriba was the center of insurgent sentiment.

In the Taos area the dissidents were joined by the Indians of the Pueblo of Taos who were embittered over recent attempts by Bent, Beaubien and their allies to claim sacred tribal lands as part of the grants made by Ex-Governor Armijo. Their fears may have been inflamed by Bent's enemy, Padre Martinez. When Bent arrived on January 18, 1847 he was met by a group of angry Indians who demanded the release of two members of the Pueblo previously jailed for theft. Ignoring their protests, Bent continued on to his residence for a reunion with his family. That night a mob of *insurrectos* which included both Mexicans and Indians broke into the jail, released the prisoners and killed Sheriff Stephen Lee, Prefect Cornelio Vigil and District Attorney James Leal.

At daylight the next morning, the rioters converged on the governor's residence and, when their intention became apparent, Bent tried to reason with them. Meanwhile, the women of the house including Ignacia Jaramillo, her daughter Rumalda de Luna by her former marriage, who had married mountain man Tom Boggs, and Ignacia's sister, Josefa Jaramillo, wife of the famous scout Kit Carson, tried frantically to tunnel through the adobe wall into the adjoining house. Although their efforts were successful, they were to no avail for the dissidents broke into the house and Charles Bent was killed and scalped. The women and children were spared although two older boys, Ignacia's brother, Pablo Jaramillo, and Narciso Beaubien were discovered hiding nearby under some straw and were also killed.

The next day the rebels attacked Turley's Mill in Arroyo Hondo, eleven miles north of Taos where, after a brief siege, the establishment was burned and seven Anglos killed. Violence also occurred at other points in northern New Mexico including the village of Mora east of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and on the Rio Colorado north of Taos. The rebellion was short-lived, however. Colonel Price's Missouri Volunteers, reinforced by a company of Mountain Men commanded by Bent's partner, Ceran St. Vrain marched north from Santa Fe to chastise the rebels. Engagements were fought at Santa Cruz de la Canada, at Embudo, and, finally at the Pueblo of Taos which ended the revolt less than three weeks after it began. Following Bent's death, Ignacia Jaramillo retained the house in which he had been killed. Another child, also named Rumalda, was born in 1850. In June, 1865 Ignacia's residence was the scene of the marriage of Teresina, Ignacia's daughter by Bent, to Alois Scheurich a German-born merchant who had come to Taos as U.S. Army sergeant and stayed on after his discharge in 1858. When Ignacia died in 1883, Scheurich was named executor of the estate and, after a considerable delay, conveyed the Bent House to three granddaughters, Alice Clara, Ignacia and Margarita Ritc, who were the children of Rumalda Jaramillo and Charles Ritc. Like Scheurich, Ritc came to the Taos valley as a soldier and later joined his compatriot in a merchandising and freighting business.

In 1900 the house was sold to newspaperman Frank Staplin who had recently moved his journal, The Cresset, to Taos from the mining town of La Belle in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the east. Two years later Staplin sold the property and during the next two decades it changed hands several times until 1920 when it was purchased by Ida May Gee from Doctor Thomas P. Martin, a prominent Taos physician. Recently widowed, Mrs. Gee converted the structure into a hotel, boarding house and dining room which she managed in conjunction with a similar enterprise located elsewhere in Taos. After maintaining the hotel for 13 years, Mrs. Gee sold it in 1933 and the building was then rented for apartments by a series of owners until the mid-1940s when it was acquired by the present owner Otto T. Noeding and his brother-in-law, Phil Lovato. In 1955, Noeding bought the Lovato interest and during the next few years converted the west portion of the house into a museum and art gallery which he operates today.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Abstract Of Title, Governor Bent House, in possession of owner, Otto T. Noeding, Taos, New Mexico.
Jaramillo-Bent-Scheurich Family papers, State Records Center and Archive, Santa Fe, N.M.
Territorial Archives of New Mexico, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, N.M.
Territorial Census Reports: 1850, 1860, 1870 and 1880.
Anderson, George B. History of New Mexico: Its Resources and People. Vol. I, Los Angeles, 1907.
Dunham, Harold H. Charles Bent, The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West. Glendale, 1965.
LeRoyHafen ed., Vol. II
James, Rebecca Salsbury. Allow Me to Present 18 Ladies and Gentlemen and Taos, N.M. 1885-1939. Taos, 1953.
Lavender, David. Bent's Fort. New York, 1954. Reeve, Frank D. ed. "The Charles Bent Papers," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XXX, Nos. 2,3 and 4, April, July, October, 1955.
Twitchell, Ralph Emerson. History of the Military Occupation of New Mexico from 1846 to 1851. Danville, 1909.
Walter, Paul A. P. "The First Civil Governor of New Mexico under the Stars and Stripes," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. VIII, No.2, April, 1933.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.326 acre
Quadrangle name Taos Quadrangle scale 1:24,000
UTM References
A 13 | 448640 | 4029210 B | |
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at a point on the north side of Bent Street which is also the southwest corner of the nominated property and proceeding in a northerly direction along the west boundary of the property for a distance of approximately 160' to an alley which forms the north boundary of the property; thence in an easterly direction along the south side of said alley for a distance of approximately 90'; thence in a southerly direction along the east boundary of the property for a distance of approximately 160'; thence in a westerly direction along the north side of Bent Street to the point of beginning.

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	John O. Baxter, Archivist		
organization	State Records Center and Archives	date	March 1, 1978
street & number	404 Montezuma	telephone	505-827-2321
city or Town	Santa Fe	state	New Mexico 87503

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification Form

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is: ___ national X state ___ local

As the designated Historic Preservation Officer for the National 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____
Title _____ date _____



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
EDUCATIONAL FINANCE AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

SANTA FE
87503

December 4, 1978

Mr. Otto T. Noeding
Box 153
Taos, New Mexico 87571

Dear Mr. Noeding:

We have been informed by the Director of the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Mr. Chris T. Delaporte, that the Governor Bent House was entered in the National Register of Historic Places on November 16, 1978. You will recall that I wrote to you about our intention to nominate this property, and that you returned the acceptance letter. If you have questions about the opportunities for restoration funding, tax credit, etc. which are made available by this registration, please let me know.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your assistance to us in the nomination process. Participation by the owners of historic structures is the indispensable basis of this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Thomas W. Merlan".

Thomas W. Merlan
State Historic
Preservation Officer

TWM:dg



Be it known that

Governor Bent House

Has this day been declared

A Registered Cultural Property

State of New Mexico

Bruce King

Governor,
State of New Mexico

David W. King

State Liaison Officer
for Historic Preservation

Albert W. L. ...

Chairman,
Cultural Properties