



The Couse-Sharp Historic Site in Taos, NM.

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THE MODEST ENTRANCE to the Couse-Sharp Historic Site, on a side street in the central historic district of Taos, NM, reveals little of the wondrous world within. The 2-acre-plus museum offers visitors an incomparable look into the early days of the famed Taos Society of Artists and two of its key founders, E. Irving Couse and Joseph H. Sharp. It encompasses Couse's well-preserved, century-old home, two vintage studios filled with original art, outbuildings, a mid-19th-century chapel transformed into a gallery space, lush gardens, and the newly built 5,000-square-foot Lunder Research Center.

"The site has the unique ability to transport the visitor back in time to experience the Taos that the artists stepped into," says executive director Davison Koenig. "The lush gardens overlook the vast expanse of the Taos valley. Couse's studio remains as he left it"—the artist

died in 1936 at the age of 70—"with an unfinished painting on the easel, framed paintings filling the walls, and Pueblo pottery surrounding the space." A short stroll away, the studio built in 1915 by Sharp—Couse's closest friend—features over 30 of his paintings, along with eloquent, moving correspondence in his exquisite handwriting.

Opening on October 1, the Lunder Research Center is poised to become a major academic resource and archive on Taos artists past and present. Its Dean Porter Gallery features landscapes by contemporary Taos painter Jivan Lee through November. Other highlights on the museum's grounds include the tool-packed shop where Couse's son Kibbey, a mechanical engineer, invented the



The studio of Taos artist E.I. Couse.

Couse Mobile Machine Shop, a battlefield repair facility that played a key role in the Allies' World War II victory.

Visitors learn a wealth of "colorful stories passed down through the Couse family," notes Koenig. They may even cross paths with the delightfully welcoming Ginny Couse, the artist's granddaughter and biographer, now 90 years old, who lives at the site. For more information: www.couse-sharp.org. —Norman Kolpas