

THE LUNA PROJECT

Contents

Brief Timeline

Life in Taos in the 1800s

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY of the Full Report

Brief Timeline of Historical Events and the Luna Family in Taos NM

E. Jane Burns

9/30/25

1800s

In 1802, the Luna Family moves from Santa Fe to Taos with two children in tow. One is Juan Nepomuceno who eventually builds the Luna chapel.

1814- Juan Nepomuceno Luna (b. 1795) appears as one of the original landholders in the Arroyo Hondo Land Grant.

1820s

1821- Mexico declares independence from Spain.

Santa Fe Trail opens in 1821, bringing incredible wealth to northern New Mexico and facilitating the fur trade that thrives in the 1820s and 30s.

At the height of the fur trade in Taos, two Luna daughters marry prominent merchant/fur traders (1826 and 1829). Also in 1829, Jose Rafael Luna (brother #3) marries Ignacia Jaramillo, sister of Josefa Carson, thus establishing ties with prominent Taos merchants and traders like Charles Bent and Ceran St. Vrain.

1826- Padre Martinez, Kit Carson and Ceran St. Vrain all arrive in Taos.

1829 and 1830- The first Luna silversmiths are born in Santa Fe: Raphael Luna and Jesus Luna. They eventually move to Taos where they make and sell filigree jewelry, establishing a line of Luna silversmiths that spans the nineteenth century.

1830s

1832- P. Martinez sells to Cristina Sandoval what becomes known as the Sandoval lot, a small piece of property just west of what will become the Luna chapel.

1833- The Penitente Brotherhood (Los Hermanos) is officially consolidated in Taos County.

1834- The Taos morada is built at end of Morada Lane.

1835- The Luna chapel is built.

1839-The Luna house is built.

1837- Peak of the fur trade.

1840s

1846-48- Mexican-American War ends with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

declaring that “New Mexico” belongs to the US.

1846- Charles Bent becomes Provisional Governor of the New Mexico, residing in Taos.

1847- The Taos Revolt of Hispano and Pueblo allies against the American military occupation of NM. Bent is among those killed. The Kit Carson Cemetery is built and named The Military Cemetery.

1850s

1850- New Mexico officially becomes a U.S. Territory. The Territorial Period begins.

1851- Jean Baptiste Lamy arrives to head the church in Santa Fe.

1851- The Luna house is sold for the first time; sales continue until 1909 when Virginia Couse buys it.

1857- Padre Martinez is excommunicated by Bishop Lamy.

1847-69- The children of Rafael Luna, the first Luna silversmith, are born in Taos. Two of them become silversmiths in their own right.

1870s

1870- Felipe Guttman y Luna is born. His mother is Petra Luna, daughter of the silversmith Rafael Luna. Eventually, Felipe Guttman owns a shop on the plaza selling, among other things, filigree jewelry made by the Luna family jewelers.

1890s- Rafael Luna’s grandchildren are born. Two are jewelers and a third is the well-known furniture maker Max Luna.

Life in Taos in the 1800s

E. Jane Burns

4/25/25

Despite the substantial influx of wealth created by the opening of the Santa Fe Trail, the majority of New Mexicans continued to farm and ranch at a subsistence level from 1821-1880. In Taos, most respondents to the US Census of 1850, 1860 and 1870 indicate "Farm Laborer," "Laborer," or "Farmer" as their occupation. The increased economic activity that benefitted the more prominent residents in Taos produced few changes for those working the land.

Taos Probate Records show the predominance of a system of barter among rural residents. A typical entry in the Taos County Probate Records from 1845 reads:

IOU

Gregorio Padilla owes Santiago Gallegos 6 goats and 6 sheep by April 1, 1845.
(nmarchives.unc.edu/repositories)

Even hunters and trappers of costly buffalo hides lived in a barter economy, as seen in this IOU from September 5, 1842:

Carlos Beaubien and Teofilo Forcier promise to pay to Don Blas Trujillo 15 good buffalo hides for the use of 5 mules on a trip of 35 days to the Kiowas. They also agree to pay the same Don Blas 15 more good hides for 20 flasks of whiskey. (p. 4 Taos County Probate Book 3).

Economic opportunity was mostly limited to those who were well-connected, owned large amounts of land and raised large herds of sheep.

Consider, for example, the Indenture dated 7 July 1853 between Charles BEAUBIEN of Taos County of 1st part and Lucien B. MAXWELL, Joseph PLEY and James H. QUINN of the same county of 2nd part; for \$500 paid to QUINN by 2nd parties; half of a certain tract in Taos County known as Sangre de Cristo claim granted to Louis LEE and Narciso BEAUBIEN by Gov. Manuel ARMIJO... beginning on the Rio Grande one league south of the mouth of the Costillo following the Rio Grande to a point one league north of the mouth of the river Trinchera, then east parallel to said Trinchera to the highest point of the mountain, then south along a ridge of mountain to the point of beginning... containing arable lands of the Costilla, Calebra, Trinchera, Sangre de Cristo and Indian Creeks.
Signed- Charles BEAUBIEN

Census records also indicate a fair number of Taos County residents listing their occupation as “Merchant” or “General Merchant Retail.” Some, like Peter Joseph De Teves and Ceran St. Vrain, record substantial amounts of wealth.

But not all businesses succeeded.

Taos County Probate Records, 9 October, 1861 (p. 178) lists a Bill of Sale “from Melchoir WERNER for \$8100, the amount of his indebtedness, to the firm of SCHWARZKOFF and DEBRU and Co. of San Francisco.” It includes instructions “to transfer all property and goods in attached schedule (exhibit A) as well as goods belonging to me in my store situated on the right hand corner of the street running from main plaza to the spring and known as my store in said town of Taos.

The inventory from Werner’s failed business gives a sense of commodities that were available on the Taos plaza in 1861:

Schedule A:

1800 yds calico, /50 yds plaid, 30 yds damask, 120 yds lawn, 1 1/2 doz shawls, 5 doz rebozos, 12 doz coats, 10 silk and cotton handkerchiefs, 2 doz shirts and drawers, 6 doz vests, 5 doz pants, 40 pieces of piece goods-cottons, cambrics and flannels, 3 doz cans fruit, 3 doz hats, 24 bowls, 10 doz plates, 7 doz shoes, 1 1/2 doz boots, 1 show case containing fancy goods, 2 kegs nail, 150 pounds apples, peaches, cinnamon, cloves, peppers, 5 boxes chewing tobacco, axes, handles, looking glasses, hoes, spades, hosiery, oils, pomades, 5 kegs white lead, notions and toys, 3 1/2 sacks of coffee, 18 sacks sugar, 1 doz straw hats, jackets, overshoes, suits, 2 bags of shots, gloves, manta, /pieces canvas, sieves, 1 meat cutter, comforters, buckskin, artificial flowers, 1 rifle, 5 bosom shirts and wool cards, 1 doz augers and bits, 1 gold dust scale, lot of tumblers, 3 counter seals, 1 lot of tin ware, and 1 lot of screws and planes.

In addition to merchants and traders, agricultural workers and land speculators, Census records from 1850-1870 show the following occupations mentioned by one or more respondents in Taos:

Saddler

Soapmaker

Carpenter

Peon

Hunter

Blacksmith

Taylor

Driver

Teamster

Adobe Mason

Wagon Driver

Plasterer

Weaver

Fiddler

Cook

Priest

Shoemaker

Shepherd

Baker

Musician

Servant

Clerk

Clerk in Store

Washerwomen

Distiller

Master Carpenter

Grocer

Butcher

M.D.

School master

Sawyer

Judge US District Court

Rope Dancer

Confectioner

Rope Maker

Major Domo

Milliner

Machinist

Indian Agent

Goldsmith (1)

Silversmith (4 or 5)

Indian Trader

Hat Maker

Herder

Millstone Maker

Keeping House

Senator in Legislature

Physician

Freighter

Hotel Keeper

School teacher

Voyager

Traveler

A number of respondents note distant places of origin:

Joseph Clouthier	General Merchandise Retail	Quebec
------------------	----------------------------	--------

Frederick Muller	General Merchandise Retail	Rhenish Province, Germany
------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------

Lucian/ Lucien Stewart	Clerk in Store	Vermont
------------------------	----------------	---------

Mortiz Bielschusky	Clerk in Store	Breslan (?)
Jose Maria Anglada	Clerk in Store	Andalucia, Spain
Estevan des Georges	Gardener	Puy de Dome, France
M. Fisher	Merchant	Prussia
Maurice Abbott	General Merchandise Retail	Prussia
Antonio Sintes	Confectioner	Minorca
Pape Isorgus/ Gorgus	Cattle Merchant	France
John Byrne	Clerk in Store	Ohio
Julius Friedman	General Merchandise Retail	Silesia (Poland)
James Wagner	Miner	New York
Santiago Larranaga	Watchmaker	N.M.
John Treglovin	General Merchandise Retail	Cornwall, England

There was also a schoolteacher from Kentucky, a hotel keeper from Connecticut and a Navajo weaver.

Luna family members who appear in the Census list their occupations as either shopkeepers or silversmiths.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Luna Project

E. Jane Burns

September 2025

The full 42-page report is available on request

Actually, there are two Luna families. Descended from a common ancestor, the members of each family are half-siblings. During his earliest days in Taos, E.I. Couse crossed paths with both branches of Lunas.

TWO ANECDOTES

Not long before Couse and Virginia bought the house on Kit Carson Rd. (1909), they bought a small residence that had been owned previously by A.R. Manby and conveyed to Juan Santistevan, then to Thomas P. ("Doc") Martin. Doc Martin sold the place on Pueblo Road to J.M. Edgington in 1904, who in turn sold it to Couse in 1906.

The deed for that sale describes the building (now part of Starr Gallery on the Paseo del Pueblo Norte) as being bounded on the south by "property owned by Mrs. Emiliana Luna."

Emiliana Luna was the granddaughter of the man we know as Juan de Luna, builder of the Luna Chapel. She is part of the first Luna family.

Emiliana Luna would have been elderly by 1906. She was buried in the Kit Carson Cemetery in 1908. But it is likely that Couse saw her or even knew her as a neighbor. According to her obituary, she was living at her "residence" on Pueblo Rd. when she died. (1)

An earlier incident establishes an encounter between Couse and two members of the second Luna family. In an interview with Dewitt Lockman in 1925, Couse explained that when he and Virginia first arrived in Taos in 1902, the year before they stayed at the Martinez place, they rented rooms in a building behind the Colombian Hotel (currently La Fonda). Couse states "there were 2 Luna sisters there." Bert Phillips, who lived next door to the Couses, had arranged the rental from Felipe W. Guttman. Guttman's mother was a Luna.

In this case, Couse is clearly acquainted with members of the Luna family and identifies them by their surname.

The "Luna sisters" he mentions are not part of Juan de Luna's direct line. They descend instead from (Jose) Rafael Luna (b.1829), the first filigree jeweler in Taos. The sisters are most likely (Jose) Rafael's unmarried daughters, Maria Benita Luna (b. 1853) and Maria Hilaria Luna (b. 1861). (2).

Their father and Juan de Luna are half-brothers.

THE FIRST LUNA FAMILY

Juan Nepomuceno Luna, who built the chapel (ca. 1835-37), and Pedro Antonio Luna, who built the house (ca. 1837-39), belong to the first Luna family. They are brothers, although separated by 17 years.

Their parents, Don Rafael Antonio Luna y Baca (b. 1773) and Dona Maria Antonia Tafoya (b. 1778) marry in 1793 in Santa Fe, NM and subsequently have eleven children born between 1794 and 1819. (3) The three oldest children (including Juan Nepomuceno) are born in Santa Fe. Most of the rest are born in Taos. The youngest son is born in San Juan.

Ancestors of this family can be traced back to 1697. (4)

Three Luna men are listed in the 1850 Census as “shopkeepers”--Pedro Antonio (b. 1812), his youngest brother, Jose Ygnacio (b. 1819), and Juan Nepomuceno’s son Juan Rafael (b. 1822). No known occupation has been found for Juan Nepomuceno, but he is one of the original landholders in the Arroyo Hondo Grant of 1815 and is named in historical accounts as having participated in the fur trade.

Both Juan and Pedro along with their brother Jose Ygnacio marry women from San Juan (which means, at the time, San Juan Pueblo). Juan’s son, Juan Rafael, also marries a woman with ties to San Juan. Some of these spouses have family ties to other pueblos as well.

Some Luna family members marry into prominent Hispanic families: one brother (Jose Rafael, b. 1809) marries into the Jaramillo family. His daughter, Romaulda, is in the house with her mother, Ignacia Jaramillo Luna, when Governor Bent dies. Juan’s granddaughter Emiliana has a natural child with the very wealthy and influential Antonio Joseph (son of Peter Joseph de Teves).

Some of the Luna women marry into Anglo or French-Canadian families prominently involved in trade. One of Juan and Pedro’s sisters (Maria Paula) marries an established merchant/ trader in Taos: Ricardo Alexander Branchi. Another sister (Maria Dolores) is briefly married to the famed merchant/trader and business partner of Charles Bent: Ceran St. Vrain. One of Juan’s nieces (Maria Luisa) also marries St. Vrain (he married 4 times) and another niece (Romaulda) marries an extremely wealthy trader and rancher, Thomas Boggs.

THE SECOND LUNA FAMILY

The second Luna family exists because Juan and Pedro’s father, Don Rafael Antonio Luna, marries again in 1821 (he’s 47), and has four children with his second wife, Maria Guadalupe Trujillo (b. 1793, Picuris Pueblo). Two of those children, (Jose) Rafael (b. 1829) and Jesus (b. 1830) become silversmiths who inaugurate a line of 4 generations of Luna silversmiths in Taos. The last two of the Luna filigree jewelers, Jose Rafael (b. 1890) and Antonio “Adonais” (b. 1899), were brothers of Max Luna, the renowned furniture maker in Taos.

These silversmiths would have made the kind of fine filigree jewelry sold by Felipe Guttman y Luna at his shop in Taos as advertised in *La Revista de Taos*, 1906. That is, delicate ornaments made of fine gold or silver wire coiled in patterns and soldered into a heavier framework. Guttman himself was a filigree jeweler. This is the same Felipe Guttman who rented rooms to Couse and Virginia behind the Colombia hotel in 1902. He uses the name

Guttman y Luna because his mother was Petra Luna, daughter of Taos's first filigree jeweler.

According to oral tradition, suitors of the late 1800s were expected to provide their fiancées with sets of filigree jewelry that might include a necklace and earrings, a rosary and a brooch or two. As one commentator put it "these [jewelers] were busy people."

Although filigree jewelers at this time were designated as "plateros" or "silversmiths," they worked predominantly in gold.

INCOME FOR THE LUNAS

Although we have no records of how the Lunas made a living in the early decades of the nineteenth century, we know that the art of making filigree jewelry was well-established in New Mexico by the 1830s when the Luna chapel and house were being built.

We also know that in Santa Fe, filigree jewelry was often created in family-based *talleres* or workshops set up by local merchants. (Robin Gavin 66-67. Spinosa, 45-50). J.S. Candelario, for example, employed filigree jewelers who made items for sale in his Curio Shop (1885-1914). The Yontz store in Santa Fe is said to have hired 10 filigree workers in the 1890s.

Could it be that the Lunas of Taos followed a similar tradition on a smaller scale? It seems entirely possible that Rafael Luna and his descendants created jewelry in stores run by their Luna relatives, that is, the "shopkeepers" Pedro Antonio Luna and his brother Juan Ygnacio Luna along with Juan Rafael, Juan Nepomuceno's son. In fact, they may have all worked out of Felipe Guttman's store which advertised "filigree gold and silver jewelry, clothes made to order, and Indian curios."

An additional source of income for the Luna family might have been sheep or cattle raising on family land. Juan Nepomuceno was one of the original landholders of the Arroyo Hondo Land Grant. Exactly what he did with the land is unknown. But it would potentially have provided access to pastureland as early as 1815. In addition, it appears that the Lunas retained the nineteen-acre pastureland adjoining their house on Kit Carson Rd. long after the house was sold in 1851. It wasn't until 1899 that a Luna descendant, Luisa Branch (Juan Nepomuceno's niece), sold the property stretching from the Canon Rd. (now Kit Carson Rd.) to the acequia on Los Pandos. That land had remained in the Luna family for more than 60 years, from at least 1835 to 1899.

The Lunas could have combined silversmithing and shopkeeping with sheep raising, much like the silversmith described by Elizabeth Boyd as follows:

“One early settler of Los Pinos, Colorado, who was a skilled artisan of filigree work, became rich by combining this skill with a mercantile business and grazing large flocks of sheep” (pp. 286-90).

Add to this the fur trade, which flourished in the 1820s and early 30s in the Taos area and began to peak around 1837. It is at this time (1837) that Rafael Antonio Luna is recorded as serving as *alcalde* of Taos (also in 1831), an influential position that could have generated income from illegal trading for the Lunas. Typically the *alcalde* received 10% of the customs duties collected, along with whatever bribes were paid.

We know that aspiring traders sought his endorsement, the same way they often sought marriage alliances with local families (Brooks, 230). As the chief magistrate of the town, the *alcalde* had considerable judicial, legislative, and executive duties, exercising much greater authority than a modern-day mayor. The *alcalde* presided over meetings of the town council, heard minor legal cases, and administered the day to day operations of the town government (*On the Edge*, 50). In Taos, the position of *alcalde* was especially key to the fur trappers’ success.

After independence from Spain, the border between New Mexico and the United States, which had been a barrier to trade under Spanish rule, became a source of revenue. Mexican tariff policy and trade laws offered New Mexican officials opportunities to collect customs duties from American merchants. The tariffs also gave American merchants a motive to smuggle goods or bribe officials, problems that inevitably involved the *alcalde* of Taos (*On the Edge*, 52). Although it was the *alcalde*’s responsibility to enforce the laws that foreigners, or *extranjeros*, sought to circumvent (*Edge*, 59), the *alcalde* also often stood to gain significantly from the trading.

THE LUNA HOUSE

We’ve known for some time that in 1909, Joseph Henry Sharp purchased the Luna Chapel so he could use it as an art studio, and E.I. Couse purchased the adjacent house (originally the Luna house) as living quarters for himself and his wife, Virginia. What we did not know until recently is that Couse nearly missed the opportunity to buy the property at all. Apparently Sharp almost scooped it up for himself.

A humorous letter from Bert Phillips (in Taos) to Couse (in New York) documents the event.

In 1909 Phillips was serving as Couse’s representative in Taos, brokering the deal to buy what was then called “the Smith place” (now the Couse house). When Sharp also became interested in buying the property, Phillips effectively cut him out of the deal. It is thanks to this intervention, at least as Philips tells it, that Couse was able to buy the house at all (for \$1200).

This letter offers a glimpse into the final stage of the long saga leading from the building of the house and chapel in the 1830s to their purchase by Couse and Sharp respectively in 1909.

Dendrological studies show that two rooms abutting the chapel were built by Pedro Luna in 1939: the current Couse dining room and part of the kitchen. Pedro Luna added a third room (the Couse sala/living room) soon thereafter, also in 1939. (5)

The first extant document that mentions the house dates from long after its construction. It is a deed penned in 1851 that records the transfer of “a dwelling house,” originally built and owned by Pedro Luna, from Adam Peterbough to James H. Quinn (sometimes referred to as Santiago Quinn).

In the process of certifying Quinn’s purchase, this deed explains that the house is bounded on the north by a chapel built by Juan Luna and owned by his heirs.

The deed records a:

“ . . . transfer of the land on which there is a dwelling house built and formerly owned by Pedro Luna and bounded on the north by a chapel, built by the deceased Juan Luna and owned by his heirs, to the said James H. Quinn, his heirs, executors, and administrators or assignees forever.. . ” (6)

To date, we know next to nothing about Adam Peterbough. There’s no documentation regarding how or when Peterbough obtained the house or how long he had owned it before the sale to Quinn. He may simply have been an estate agent involved in the sale.

Quinn, on the other hand, is well-known.

Licenciado Quinn, as he is often called, was a lawyer from Missouri and a business partner of Lucien Maxwell who held the immense Maxwell Land Grant in northern New Mexico. At one point, Quinn oversaw Maxwell’s business while the latter recuperated from a gunshot wound in the neck (EL).

Quinn was also a soldier and a politician. He came to New Mexico in 1846 as a Private in Company A, Battalion of Light Artillery, Missouri Volunteers, commanded by Captain Richard H. Weightman. On the establishment of a civil government in New Mexico under General Kearney, Quinn was named attorney for the southern district (October 1846). Two years later, he was a member of the convention which petitioned Congress for a speedy organization of a territorial government in New Mexico. In 1849 he was appointed prefect of Taos County. In 1850, he was elected president of a convention called to frame a constitution for “the state of New Mexico.”

And in 1854, Quinn was named Scout Captain of a company of New Mexico volunteers, over 40 Pueblo Indians and Mexicans, who helped Kit Carson and U.S. Army Dragoons pursue renegade Jicarilla Apaches.

James H. Quinn owned the Luna house for about 6 years: from 1851 to his decease in 1857. Ernie Leavitt thinks it was Quinn who added the two rooms to the east of the dining room in 1855.

The Luna House 1857 and Beyond

Over the next 50 years or so, ownership of the Luna house is transferred four times, passing through an interesting cast of characters. It is sold first to neighboring landowners, Manuel Gomez and Maria Benigna Trujillo (husband and wife) before being purchased by a French priest who keeps it for 14 years. The priest (Gabriel Ussel) sells the house in 1876 to a Civil War veteran and carpenter, George Smith. Smith is buried at Kit Carson Cemetery across from his housekeeper, Filomena Martinez, who inherits the house in 1907. Previously, Filomena Martinez was married to Carlos Angel La Varta (Labarta/Lovarto) who was born in Madrid, Spain around 1841. La Varta's mother was born in Paris. This European man of Spanish and French descent who immigrated to the U.S. and married a Mexican woman (Filomena) is said to have worked as a "carriage painter" in Taos (1880 Census).

It is Filomena Martinez who, after much haggling with both Couse and Phillips, sells the house to Virginia W. Couse in 1909.

A series of deeds, beginning in 1851 records the repeated transfer of the property (see Report on the Luna House: Appendix).

THE LUNA CHAPEL

The Luna Chapel has been described alternately as an *oratorio* of San Antonio de Padua, a family chapel, an abandoned church, Padre Martinez's church and a Penitente morada. (7)

The Luna chapel was in fact dedicated to San Antonio de Padua as are many *capillas* or small community chapels in the Taos area (La Loma Chapel, for example). These places of prayer are often called *oratorios*. So, yes, this chapel could accurately be called an *oratorio* of San Antonio de Padua.

Phase One: The Luna Chapel as a Family Chapel (1835-1863)

The Luna chapel differs from most other *capillas* in the Taos area because it is attached to a house. The two structures actually share a common wall. Although the family sold the house in 1851, they retained ownership of the chapel from 1835 to 1863, when Juan

Nepomuceno's son, Juan Rafael Luna, turned the chapel over to the archdiocese in Santa Fe. Before that, the chapel was in the possession of the Luna family for close to 30 years.

It seems reasonable to assume that during this time, the chapel functioned, at least to some extent, as a family chapel.

It is unclear whether the Luna family reserved the chapel for family worship alone or whether they welcomed community members to join them for prayer services in the *oratorio*. Did they commission *santos* to be made for the chapel's interior, perhaps also hanging on the walls German prints in locally made tin frames that were popular at the time? Did they hire someone to embellish a simple altar for the chapel? We know that a number of accomplished *santeros* were working in the Taos area in the 1830s including the famed Antonio Molleno and Jose Rafael Aragon.

As to why the Luna family would have built the chapel and house in the 1830s, it is possible that by that time they had accumulated enough capital, perhaps largely from their involvement in the fur trade, to finance these endeavors. As one historian explains, despite increased economic activities created by the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821, "Even the *ricos* did not accumulate significant amounts of liquid capital or credit *until the 1830s*."

Phase Two: The Luna Chapel Owned by the Archdiocese (1863-1909)

During the second phase of the chapel's existence, from 1863, when the archdiocese acquired it, until 1909, when Joseph Henry Sharp purchased it for use as an art studio, the structure was no longer a family chapel.

We know very little about how the chapel may have been used during this 50-year span.

We do know that in 1862, the year before the archdiocese acquired the chapel, Padre Ussel, a French priest hand-picked by Bishop Lamy in Santa Fe, bought the Luna house. He then established a Christian Brothers school for boys using the chapel and portions of the house as classrooms. The school remained open from 1864-1867, when the two visiting priests who were running it resigned. They gave as reasons for their departure low attendance and what they deemed to be lousy food.

What happened to the chapel once the boys' school closed? Was it simply abandoned, as one journalist has suggested, or just unused until Sharp took it over in 1909?

And what happened to the contents of the chapel that would have dated from the era when the Lunas owned the structure?

Judging from the condition of the chapel when Sharp acquired it, it seems someone must have been taking care of the physical property. Possibly descendants of the Luna family? Or interim owners of the house? Possibly even members of the Hermandad or Penitentes?

Who Were the Penitentes?

Many members of the Luna family were married and baptized in the Guadalupe church in Taos where Padre Martinez served as pastor from 1826 to 1857. At the same time, other services were offered to the community of Taos by the lay religious brothers of the Hermandad (La Fraternidad Piadosa de Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno) also sometimes called Penitentes. Some of their services, like the *velorio* or wake, could have been performed in a private *oratorio* like the Luna chapel.

This does not mean that the Luna chapel can be understood in any sense as a “Penitente *morada*” nor that it was “Padre Martinez’s church.”

Penitente Moradas

Penitente *moradas* have a distinctive shape and precise function not shared by the Luna chapel. They are typically low lying, elongated adobe buildings often situated on a hill near a *campo santo* (cf. Truchas, Abiquiu, Taos, Arroyo Hondo). *Moradas* usually stand well apart from other buildings. They are designed in the shape of a simple home to represent the unadorned beauty of God’s “dwelling place” as it is reflected on earth. That’s what the term *morada* means. Unassuming structures inside and out, *moradas* are typically composed of two rooms: an *oratorio* containing an altar reserved for prayer and a living/meeting space where initiated members eat, pray, listen to exhortations and study Catholic theology. The *morada* is a place to contemplate Christ’s suffering in the hope of attaining atonement *for all people*. Members of the public do not regularly participate in events inside the *morada*, except by invitation.

The *morada* is also a chapter house, a place not just for congregation and prayer but also for the regulation of members of the Hermandad (Brotherhood). The Confradia is a highly structured organization with a Rule and Regulations to be followed along with an oath that requires “service to God through Christ’s teachings” and a number of other “brotherly” actions: observance of the Ten Commandments; leading a humble life like Jesus; avoidance of discord; shunning worldly temptations such as saloons; practicing charity and mutual love toward Brothers; aiding in times of illness or anguish; pardoning, tolerating and respecting one another.”

At the same time, Los Hermanos were committed to reenacting the Passion and death of Christ, which involved self-flagellation. This is where we come to the only material evidence suggesting how the Luna chapel might have been used. There are blood stains on

the chapel's ceiling. We know that flagellation was part of some Penitente rituals, especially those during the Lenten season. Flagellation can also be part of the *velorio* or wake typically held at the home of a deceased family member in the community.

During the Lenten Season, "the *morada*, or "home," becomes the center from which processions to *calvarios*, *campo santos*, *oratorios*, and churches weave a kind of sacred network around the community (Weigle, 190).

To be sure, these rituals and processions would have continued in the community of Taos long after the Luna chapel was taken over by the archdiocese in 1863. It is entirely possible that the Hermanos used the chapel at some time to perform public services.

Could that be the source of the blood stains on the ceiling?

Notes

1. The obituary also states that she was "well known to all Taosenos for belonging to one of the oldest families in the valley" (La Revista de Taos, Aug. 20, 1909). There is a discrepancy between the date on Emiliana's tombstone in the Kit Carson Cemetery indicating she died in 1808, and the obituary, which gives the date of death as 1809.
2. Maria Hilaria is described at the time of her death in 1933 as being a landlady of apartments (death certificate). Cf. reference elsewhere to the "Luna Building."
3. Ana Maria Tafoya is sometimes listed as Maria Antonia Tafoya
4. Raphael Antonio's parents, Domingo de Luna (ca. 1719-1773) and Maria Baca (born ca. 1752), married in Santa Fe in around 1766. Domingo's first wife was Josefa (Josefita) Lucero de Godoy (b. ca. 1733). Domingo's parents (Raphael Antonio's grandparents), married in Albuquerque in 1718. They were Antonio de Luna (1697-1729) and Maria Jacinta Palaez (1703-1776). The oldest known relative in this family line is Antonio's mother, Georgia Luna (b. 1697).
5. The "dwelling house" built by Pedro Luna, previously thought to have only 2 rooms, is noted by Ernie in his application for National Historic status in 2004 to contain 3 rooms. Apparently dendrological studies confirmed that after building the rooms equivalent to the current dining room and kitchen, Pedro Luna added a third room: the current sala/ living room. Ernie dates them all to 1839 (see map in his application).
6. The Luna property purchased by Quinn actually includes, in addition to the house built by Pedro Antonio Luna, a small house located to the west of the chapel. A letter from Padre Martinez documents its existence (see Appendix for report on the Luna Chapel). The padre had sold the land to Cristina Sandoval in 1832 to build a small house. This structure was used by Couse in later years to build picture frames.

7. *Harper's Weekly*, May 26 (1894): 489. The reference to Padre Martinez is from an undated newspaper article in Ernie's files, "Letter to Buzz" by Quid Nunc.