



On the trail with Kit Carson

Text by Steve Fuhlendorf

BACKGROUND FOR YOUR TOUR

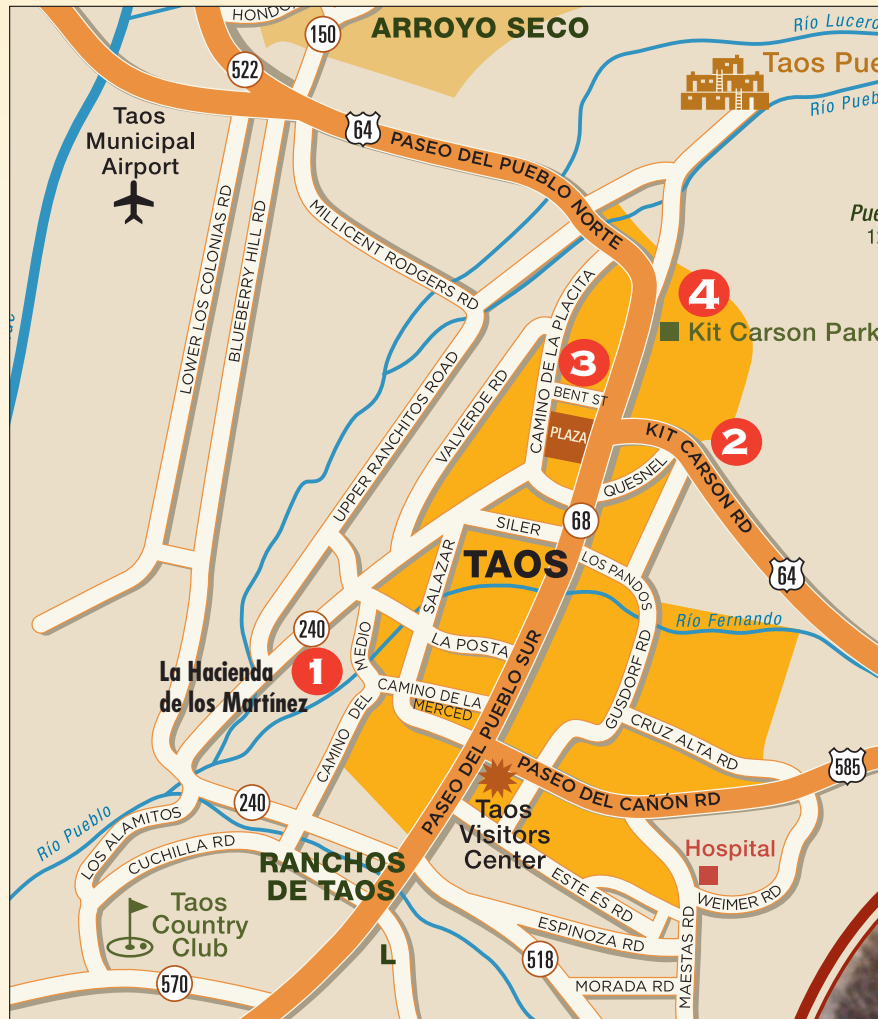
Kit Carson was one of the most important characters in the history of the west from the 1830's to 1860's. Carson called Taos home on his many travels as an early fur trapper and trader, a guide for John C. Fremont, an Indian Agent, livestock producer, military man, plus husband and father. Traveling the west you will find Kit's impact by the many towns bearing his name, including Nevada's State Capital, Carson City and Carson, Calif. His many exploits were chronicled in the "dime novels" of the day. He went on three journeys with Fremont and trapped from Canada to Mexico. His ability to communicate with the American Indians made his services in constant demand. In fact, he was Indian Agent in Taos for a time. No matter where he traveled his love for family always brought him home to Taos. Join us as we explore the Taos of the mid-1800's. For more information call the Kit Carson Museum at 505-758-4945.

1. LA HACIENDA DE LOS MARTÍNEZ RANCHITOS ROAD

When Kit Carson was first in Taos, La Hacienda de los Martínez would have play an important role in his preparations for his journeys. At the trading post he could arrange for supplies and livestock key to survival on the slow treks throughout the west. The Martínez Hacienda is said to be the end of El Camino Real (The Royal Road). It was established as a trading post in 1804, the same year Lewis and

■ FOR SUMMER/FALL EVENTS GO TO www.taoschamber.com

Clark went up the Missouri River on their famous journey. By this time Taos had already celebrated its bi-centennial. (One hour)



2. KIT CARSON HOUSE 113 KIT CARSON ROAD

Kit Carson was the most famous of the "mountain men" to settle in Northern New Mexico. These fur trappers were the first Anglo-American to explore the American west. Born in Kentucky in 1809, Carson was a trapper, guide, Indian agent and Army officer. In 1861, Carson began the final stage of his career as a military officer, first in the Civil War and later in the campaigns of the Indian Wars. In 1843, when he married Maria Josefa Jaramillo, daughter of a prominent Taos family, Carson bought a single-story adobe house on what was to become Kit Carson Road. The Carson Home is owned and operated by the Bent Masonic Lodge. On a visit to the Kit Carson Home and Museum you will have the opportunity to see many examples of life in the mid-1800's. Interpretive tours are held throughout the day, lead by ancestors of Carson himself in the typical dress of the day. (Two hours)

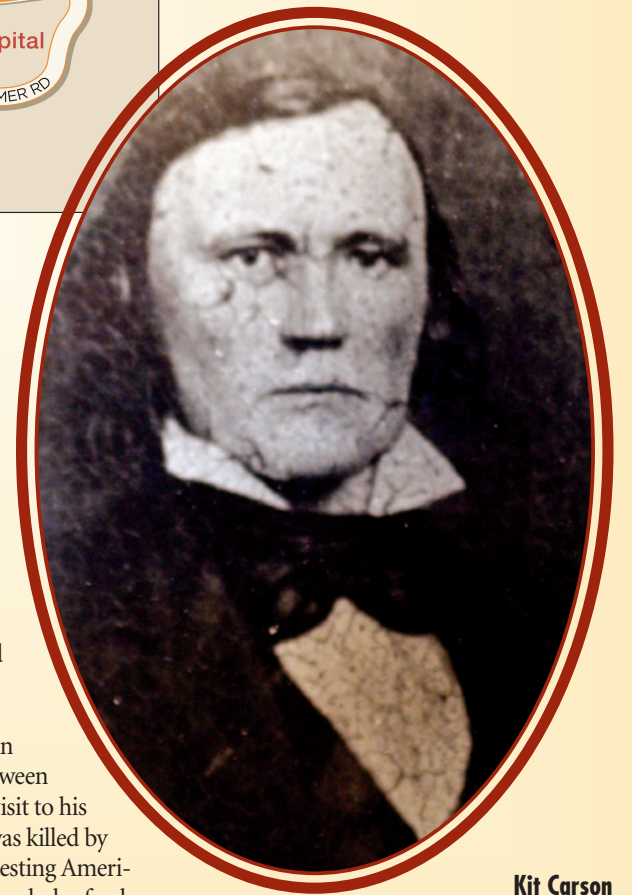
3. GOVERNOR BENT MUSEUM BENT STREET

Kit Carson visited the home of his brother-in-law and good friend, Governor Charles Bent, on many occasions. Bent was a trader, owned wagon trains and also owned trading posts in Santa Fe and Taos. He was appointed the first Governor of New Mexico in 1846 when New Mexico became an American territory during the war between the U.S. and Mexico. On a visit to his home in January 1847, he was killed by an angry mob that was protesting American rule. It was the result of a clash of cultures and a reaction against the upstart Anglo-Americans who took over what had

been American Indian, then Spanish, and briefly, Mexican. Kit Carson was out of town when his friend was killed, but his wife Josefa was a witness to the tragedy and was forced to flee to avoid the mob. (One hour)

4. KIT CARSON MEMORIAL CEMETERY AND KIT CARSON PARK

Carson raised eight children in Taos, including two adopted American Indian children. He retired and moved to Boggsville, Colo. in 1868 to farm near his relatives. He died at age 59, a month after the passing of his beloved wife, Josefa. His remains were moved back to Taos and he is buried in the Kit Carson Memorial Cemetery in Kit Carson Park. (30 minutes)



Kit Carson