Abó Pueblo and Mission (Abo State Monument)

Abó Pueblo, possibly referred to by the Spanish entrada of Chamuscado and Rodriguez in 1581, probably was first visited by Antonio de Espejo with a small group of men in 1583, at which time it was estimated to contain 800 inhabitants. In 1598, Juan de Oñate, the first governor of New Mexico, assigned Father San Francisco de Miguel to Pecos Pueblo, from where he also administered neighboring pueblos, including Abó. After three years Father Miguel returned to Mexico, and what, if any, imprint he left on Abó is not known. Evidently he accomplished little, since the people of Abó killed two soldiers who had deserted and were making their way to Mexico in the same year Father Miguel departed. Oñate sent one of his lieutenants, Vicente de Zaldivar, to chastise the people of Abó for these killings, the actual battle occurring at a neighboring pueblo.

Known missionary work began at San Gregorio de Abó about 1622, but the first guardian, Father Francisco Fonte, was not assigned until 1626. Other guardians were assigned to the large pueblo, which was reported to have 1,580 people in 1641, off and on up to the time of the abandonment of the pueblo around 1672. The missionaries brought about several changes in the Indian way of life through the introduction of the new religion, improved agriculture, new domestic animals and plants, new ideas in architecture, and Spanish goods.

The church at Abó is presumed to have been constructed by Father Francisco de Acevedo, beginning in 1629, and served these Tompiro-speaking Indians until drought and Apache attacks brought about the abandonment of the pueblo in the early 1670's. The inhabitants joined their Piro-speaking relatives on the Rio Grande, and at the time of the Pueblo Rebellion of 1680, a number of them joined the Spaniards in their retreat south to settle at El Paso del Norte.

Sandstone walls of the mission structure still stand roof-high in many places. Preserved as a state monument since 1938, the church was excavated and stabilized in 1938 and 1939. Only a small part of the nearby pueblo has been excavated, but ceramic... (Continued on Supplementary Sheet)
1. Ruins of San Gregorio Mission church, Abo, from the front (south), prior to rehabilitation.

Photos 1–4 by Francis Gott, November 1935.
2. Church ruins, Abo, November 1935, from the northwest (altar end and starboard side).
4. Pueblo (foreground) and church (seen from front and starboard) ruins, Abo, November 1935, from southwest. Original beams may be observed halfway up the tower at left.
5. Church from the front (south), after stabilization.

Photo E. K. Reed, October 29, 1940.
6. Church from the north (altar end), after stabilization. October 29, 1940.
7. Church from the west after stabilization.
   October 29, 1940.
8. Abo Mission from the east after stabilization. October 29, 1940.
9. Church from the southwest after stabilization. October 29, 1940.
10. Nave of the Abo church, looking toward altar end. October 29, 1940.
Kiva in court of monastery.
12. Church and convento during excavation.
May 1939.
15. Excavation of the convento.
Kiva in foreground. May 1939.
18. Chimney in convento, as found. May 1939.
7. Importance and Description (Continued)

Evidence indicates occupation from about the late 1200's.
(This site was recommended by the General Land Office in 1916 for a National Monument. An adverse report was submitted by the National Park Service on April 19, 1933, and the project was disapproved by the Director on May 5, 1933. This site, however, retains a high potential toward contributing to our knowledge of Indian acculturation of Spanish culture in the 17th century, since the pueblo ruins have not been excavated.)
Reproduced from J. P. Toulouse, The Mission of San Gregorio de Abajo, p. 3.