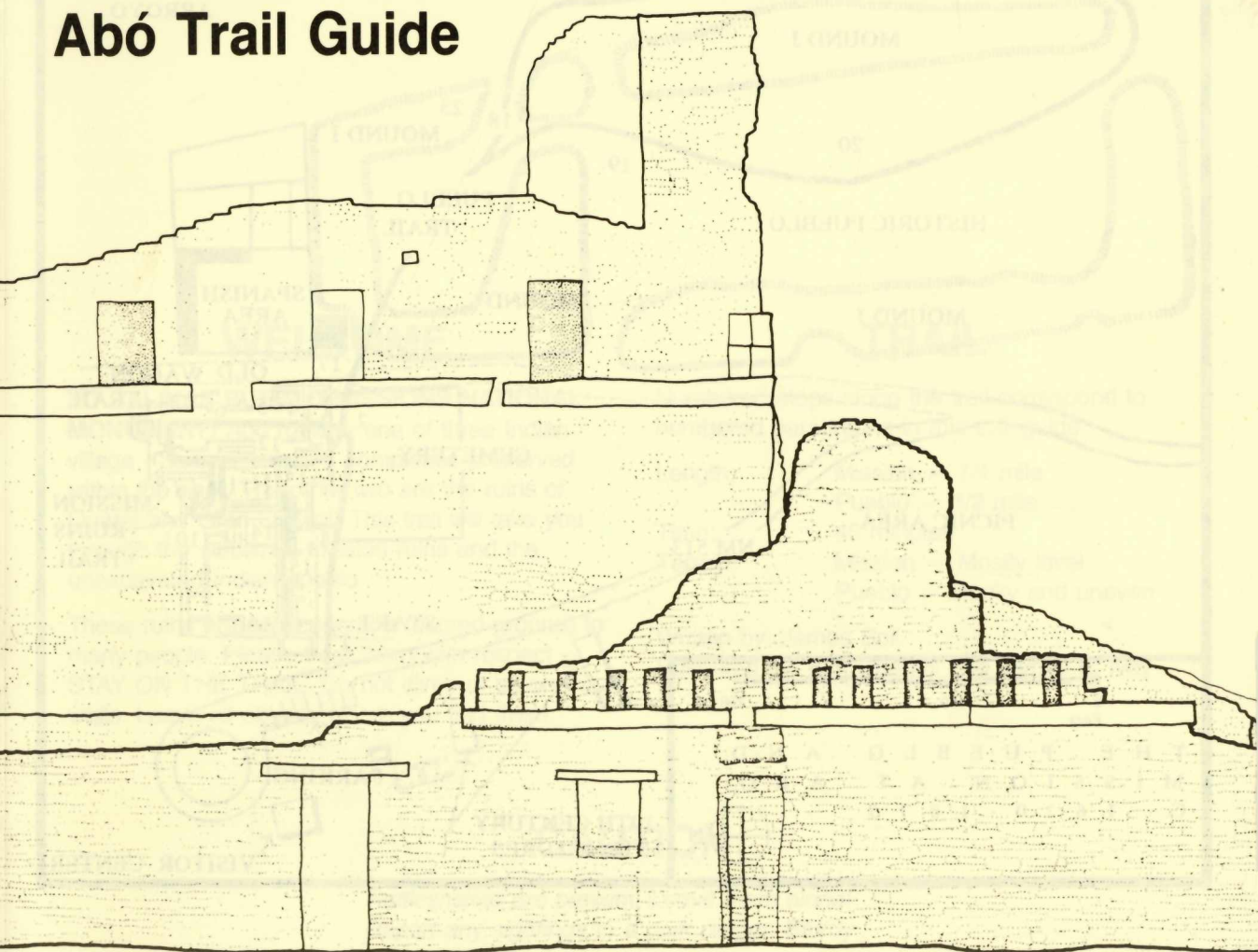
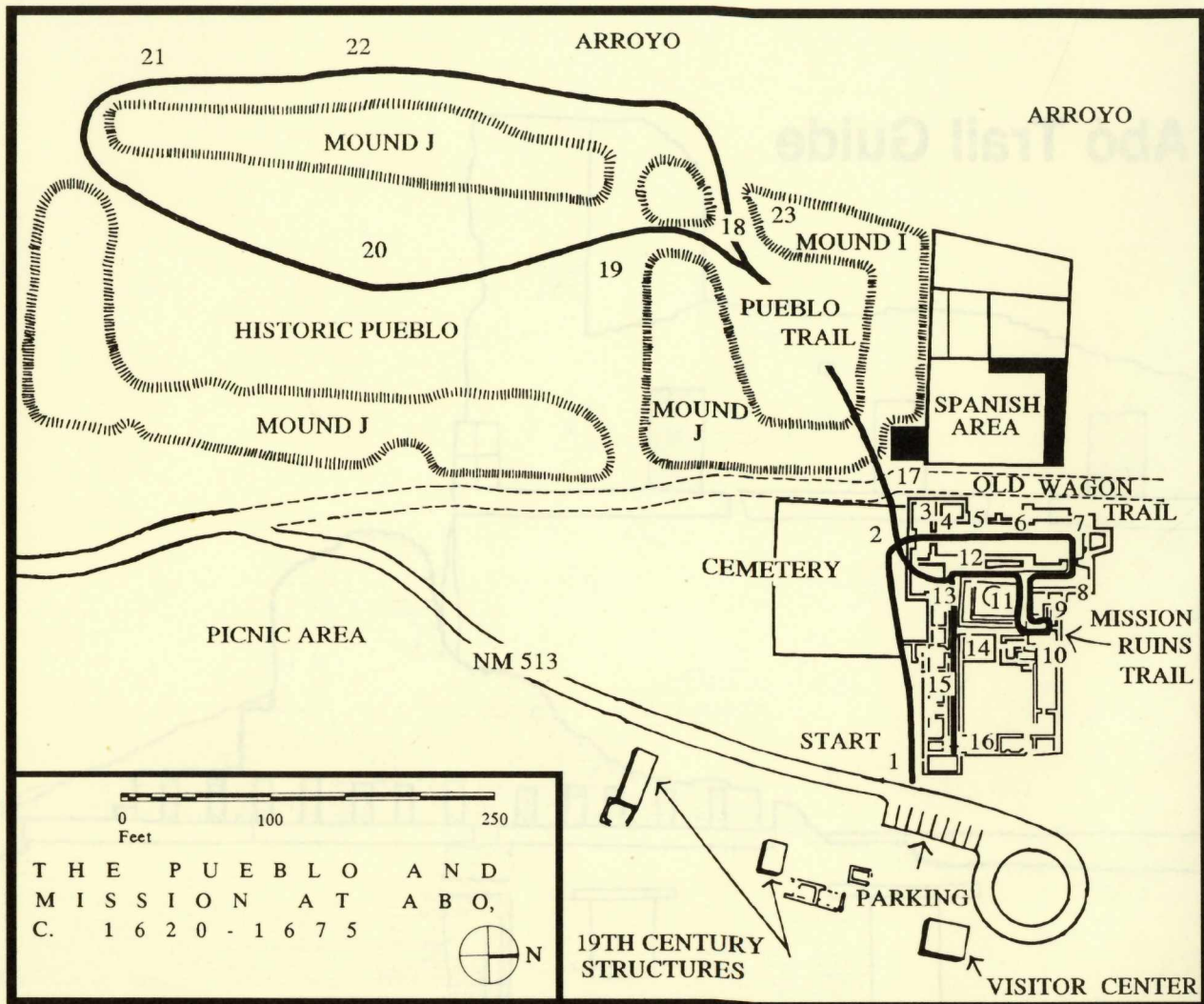


Salinas Pueblo Missions

Abó Trail Guide



CREDIT: LEONARD M. KLIWINSKI, HABS



WELCOME

TO SALINAS PUEBLO MISSIONS NATIONAL MONUMENT: Abó ruins is one of three Indian village - Spanish mission complexes preserved within the park. The other two are the ruins of Quarai and Gran Quivira. This trail will take you through the stabilized mission ruins and the unexcavated Indian pueblo.

These ruins are *tierra sagrada* (sacred ground) to many people. Please treat them with respect - **STAY ON THE TRAIL**. Do not climb or sit on the walls. Leave all objects where you find them.

TRAIL

Numbered stops along the trail correspond to numbered paragraphs in this trail guide.

Length: Mission = 1/4 mile
Pueblo = 1/2 mile
Time: 45 minutes
Terrain: Mission = Mostly level
Pueblo = Rocky and uneven

Written by: James Boll
Illustrated by: Kirk Hughey and James E. Ivey

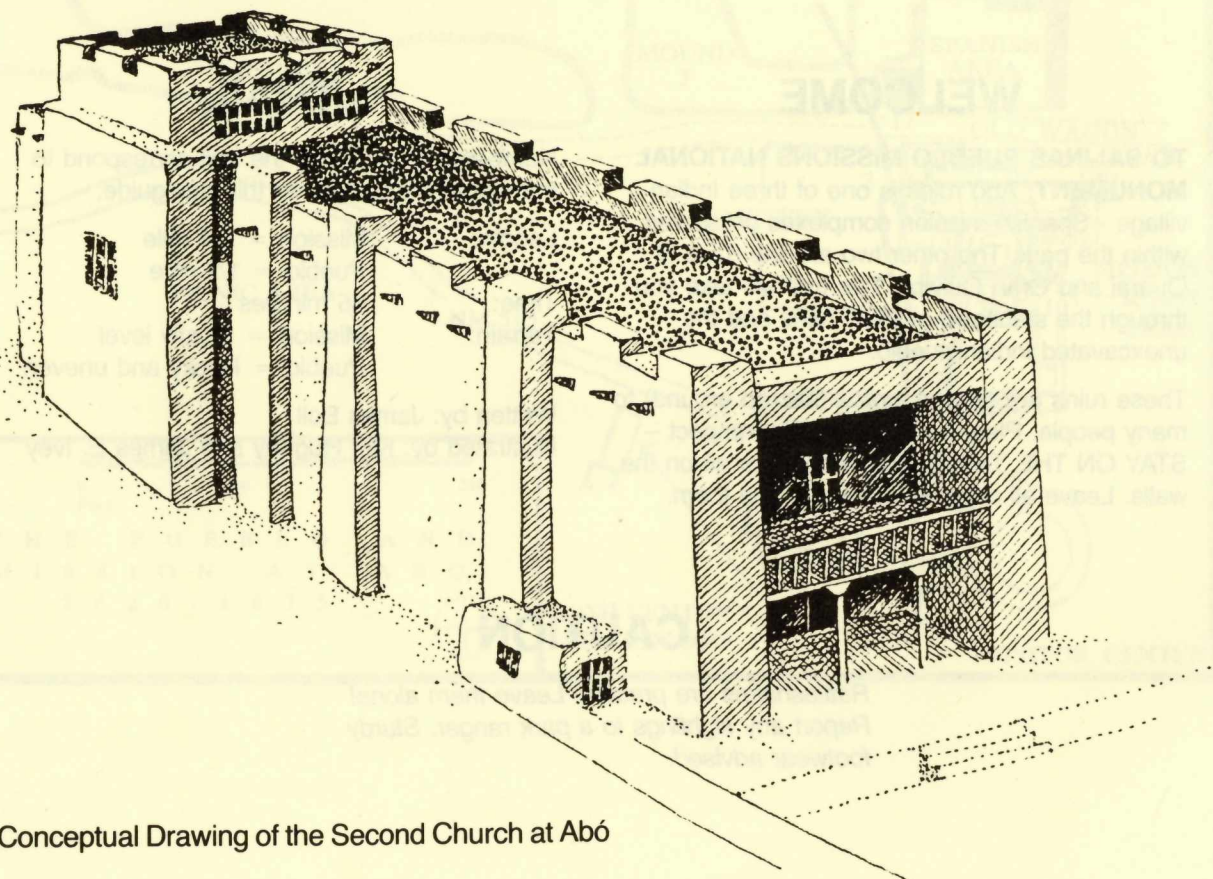
CAUTION

Rattlesnakes are present. Leave them alone!
Report any sightings to a park ranger. Sturdy footwear advised.

1

MISSION SAN GREGORIO de ABÓ

The chanting of voices and ringing of mission bells once echoed down this hushed valley. For five centuries the Tompiro Indian village of Abó prospered here. From 1622 until about 1673 Franciscan priests lived and worshipped here as they struggled to "civilize and Christianize" the Indians of this remote northern frontier of the Spanish Empire. But, just fifty short years after the collision of these two vastly different cultures, both pueblo and mission were abandoned. Today, the crumbling walls of the Mission San Gregorio stand silent watch over catcus-covered mounds – all that remains of the pueblo of Abó.



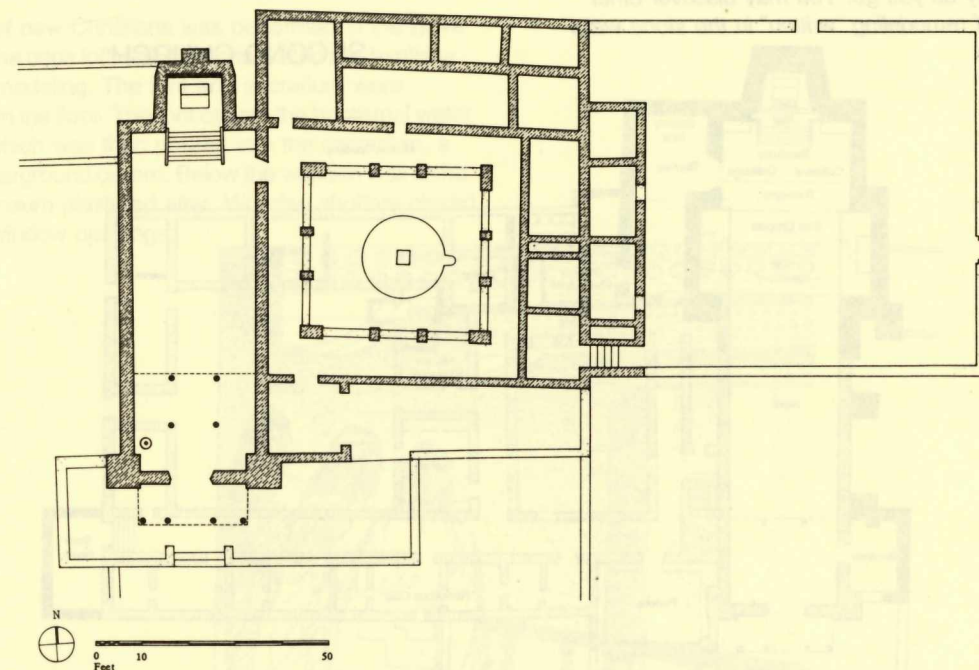
Conceptual Drawing of the Second Church at Abó

2

TWO CHURCHES

This was the second church at Abó. It was completed around 1651. The first church was built on this same site between 1622 and 1627 by Fray Francisco Fonte, Abó's founding father. It was but twenty-five feet wide and eighty-three and a half feet long.

In 1629 Fray Francisco de Acevedo arrived at Abó to assist Fonte by overseeing the **visitas** (preaching stations) at the nearby pueblos of Tenabo, Tabira and Las Humanas (Gran Quivira). A trail led south and east from here, along Chupadera Mesa. Weekly, for thirty years a priest led Abó's choir on a seven hour hike to conduct mass at the southern Tompiro pueblos. Abó was thus the head of one of the largest missionary operations in New Mexico.



Plan of the Mission at Abó, c. 1630

FIRST CHURCH

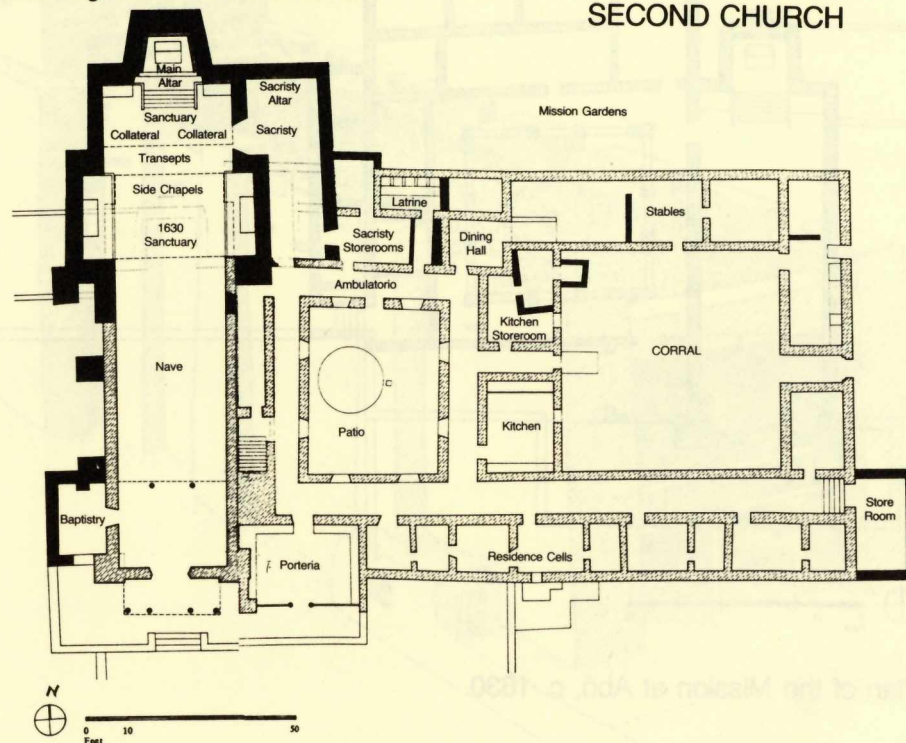
3

ENLARGING THE FIRST CHURCH

Acevedo stayed at Abó for thirty years. When he became **guardian** (head priest) in 1640, he was already convinced of Abó's need for a church more befitting such an important mission. Having built churches at Tabira and Las Humanas, he was an accomplished designer and builder. Rather than select a new site, as was typical, he chose to enlarge the existing church. First he added two exterior buttresses and a baptistry to support this thin sandstone and mud-mortar wall as the roof was raised. Another buttress, the bell tower, was also added. On the east, the convent was modified to provide support. This was a more sophisticated design than the brute mass of most missions of the 1600s. A crenelated roof parapet gave the appearance of a medieval castle.

Look closely as you go. You may discover other evidence of remodeling "written" in the stone walls around you.

SECOND CHURCH



Plan of the Mission at Abó, c. 1670

4

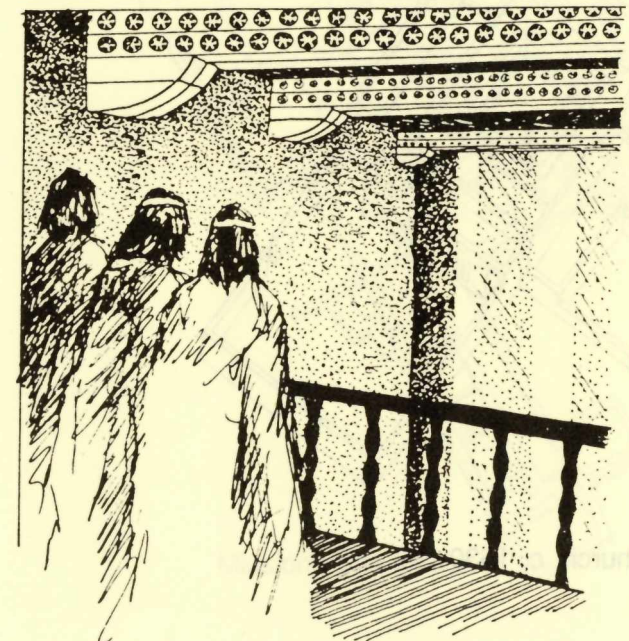
CHURCH FACADE

European design and Indian construction methods and materials dictated the style of early Spanish missions. A splayed entryway allowed double doors to swing back on iron pivot hinges letting in more light and allowing easy access. Outside was a **portal** (roofed porch). Above, was a balcony with a window to light the choir loft located just inside over the entrance. The two round stone footings in the nave floor held pillars which supported the choir loft. Before 1640, the choir climbed a wooden ladder in the nave to reach the loft.

5

BAPTISTRY

Baptism of new Christians was performed in the **nave** beneath the choir loft until Acevedo added this baptistry during remodeling. The font and sacrarium were centered in the floor. The font caught the baptismal water and oil, which was then poured into the sacrarium, a small underground cistern. Below the wooden wall niche was a gypsum plastered altar. Wooden shutters closed splayed window openings.



6

NAVE

Here, the congregation stood or knelt to pray — there were no pews. The floor was packed earth. These three-foot thick walls were also part of the early church. Originally they stood twenty-eight feet high. Using a complex reconstruction design, Acevedo raised them to thirty-four feet. Plastered white, they apparently had red, blue, and black European and Indian designs.

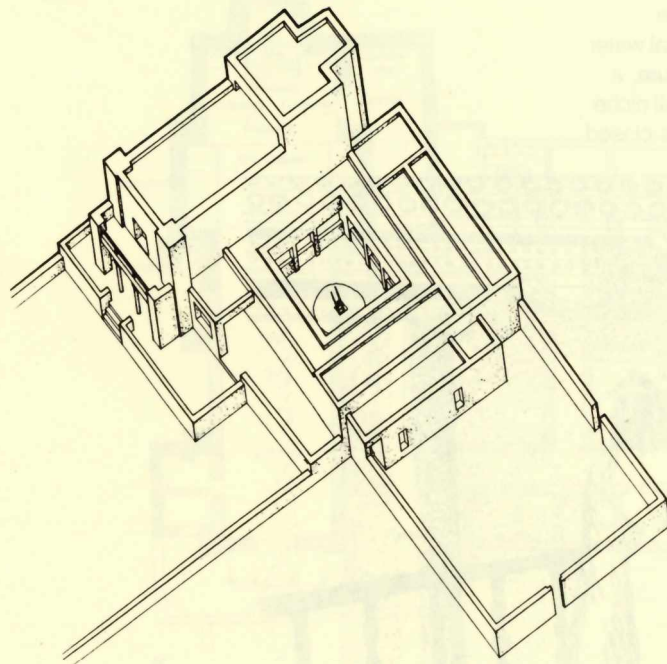
Acevedo demolished the north wall of the first sanctuary and lengthened the church nearly fifty feet. The National Park Service has reconstructed the foundation of that north wall to help us visualize the size and appearance of Fonte's earlier church.

7

A NEW SANCTUARY

Three raised stone altars and two transeptlike side chapels were built into the sanctuary of the remodeled church. The new apse probably contained a high altar on a central platform backed by a **reredo** (ornamental panel) shipped in from Mexico City. Behind railings in each side chapel was another altar. Look high on the wall of the east side chapel for some original plaster. Twenty-two feet above the sanctuary, an elaborate system of catwalks and balconies led to the bell tower.

Shafts of brilliant New Mexico sunlight flooded the sanctuary through a south-facing transverse clerestory window, a feature unique to New Mexico churches. This was done by raising the ceiling of the sanctuary about eight feet above that of the nave.



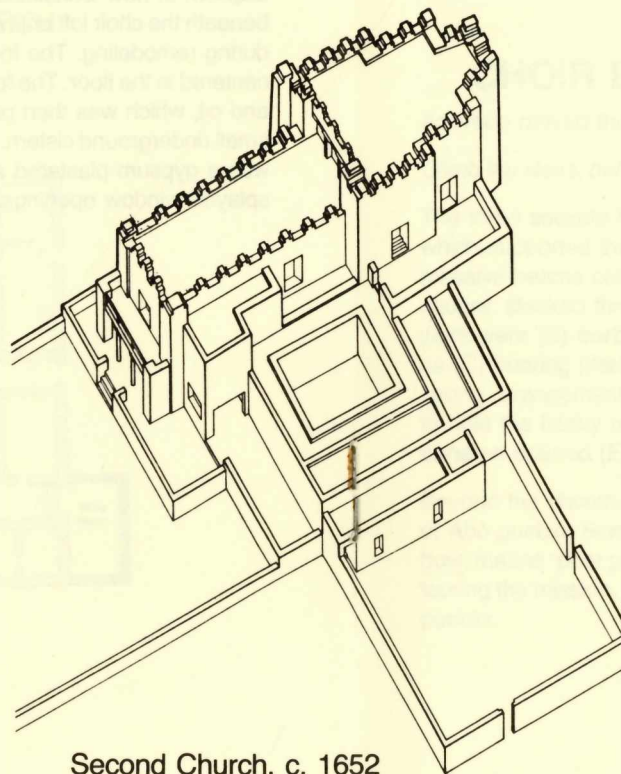
First Church, c. 1630

8

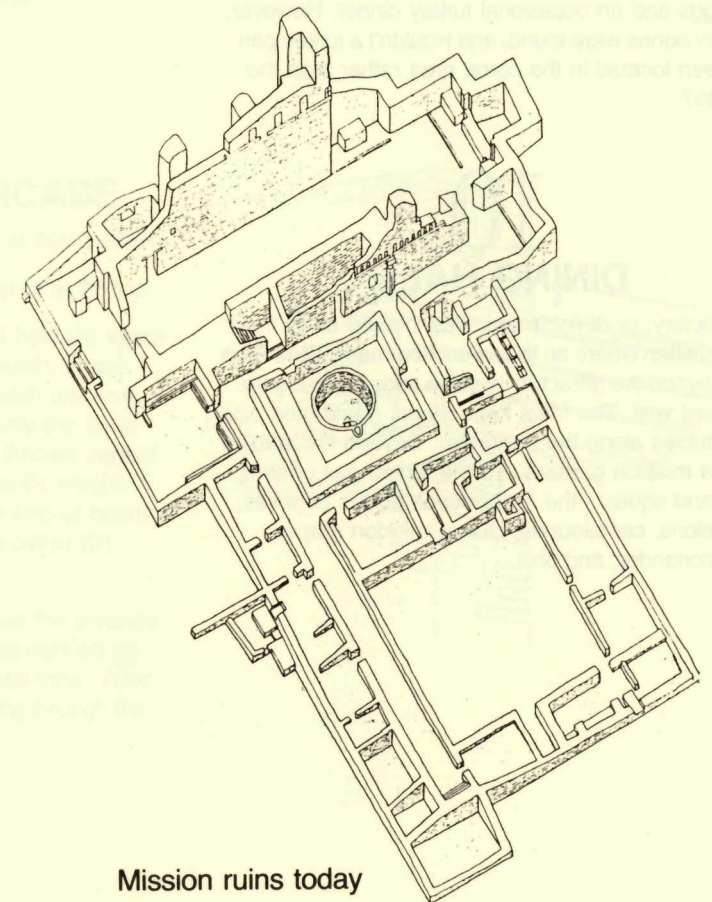
SACRISTY

During renovation Acevedo greatly enlarged the sacristy and added a small altar for private devotionals along its north wall. Here, the priest donned his elegantly embroidered robes in preparation for the mass. Vestments, vessels, and the communion wine were kept under lock and key. Furniture and items for special religious celebration were probably stored in adjoining rooms. The sockets high in the wall to your right held roof beams. Casts in the mortar revealed that the vigas were carved with geometric floral designs, probably by Indian carpenters from Pecos.

MISSION OF SAN GREGORIO de ABÓ



Second Church, c. 1652



Mission ruins today

9

LATRINE?

This pit with poles across it may have been a latrine. If so, it was probably a late addition to the convento — the stonework and use of adobe brick does not measure up to the workmanship of Fray Acevedo, who left Abó in 1659. The timbers probably supported partitions between stalls. Entry was down a hallway from the **ambulatorio** (roofed corridor).

Some have suggested this was a turkey pen. During excavation, archeologists found layers of gray fecal matter with egg shells and pieces of square ceramic "pans" scattered throughout. Indians used turkey feathers for warm cloaks and may have also eaten the meat. A European priest surely would have enjoyed fresh eggs and an occasional turkey dinner. However, no turkey bones were found; and wouldn't a turkey pen have been located in the corral area rather than the convento?

10

DINING HALL

The refectory, or dining room, was located away from the hot kitchen where an Indian cooked meals (See Stop #14). Beyond the refractory was the corral, with a gate in the east wall. The friars kept sheep, goats, and pigs in the stables along the north wall. Beyond the stables were the mission gardens. To the Indian diet of corn, beans, and squash, the Franciscans added peaches, watermelons, cantaloupes, plums, mission grapes, wheat, coriander, and chili.

11

THE CENTER OF MISSION ACTIVITY

The convento was home, office and school. Here the priests lived, taught Indian converts, and conducted church business. This ambulatorio surrounds the central plaza. Sunlight from the open patio filtered into the dimly lit passages through splayed windows and doors.

A kiva, or Indian ceremonial chamber, centered here appears to have been built at the time of the first church and convento. It was later partially filled with trash, possibly during Acevedo's renovation of the convento. It is puzzling to find this symbol of the native religion in the midst of the Franciscan mission. Why was it here? No adequate explanation has yet been found.

12

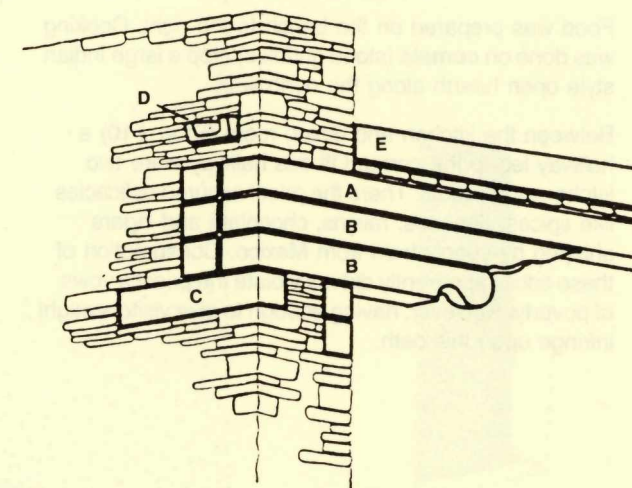
CHOIR LOFT STAIRCASE

Acevedo moved the choir loft entrance to this location.

Climb the stairs, but be careful of the drop-off at the top.

The three sockets high in the nave wall held (A) **vigas** which supported the roof of the new church. These massive beams consisted of six logs, each one foot square, stacked three pairs high. Probably the lower pairs were (B) **corbels**. The horizontal timbers served as (C) bearing plates to distribute the roof's weight. A strong arrangement, requiring only nine sets of beams to hold the heavy roof. Wooden gutters called (D) **canales** drained (E) a packed dirt roof.

Beyond the church entrance you can see the mounds of Abó pueblo. Some say the name, pronounced ah-bow, means "poor place"; others say "water bowl." After touring the mission, you may enjoy walking through the pueblo.



13

PORTERIA

This enclosed porch was the convento's reception area. Its floor was flagstone rather than adobe like most other mission rooms. Benches eased the wait for those who had business with the priest. Inside the door from the porteria, in the corner to your right, was a large fireplace. Rock walls radiated heat into the ambulatorio, even after the fire was out.

The friars usually employed several Indian converts. Besides the **portero** (keeper of the gates) the mission's work force could include: a bell ringer, a few sacristans, a cook, women to grind corn, cleaning boys and a gardener. Some of them probably lived in the convento.

14

KITCHEN

Food was prepared on the bench to the right. Cooking was done on **comals** (stone griddles) atop a large Indian style open hearth along the north wall.

Between the kitchen and dining room (Stop #10) a hallway led to the corral. Off this hallway were two kitchen storerooms. There the priest secured delicacies like spices, almonds, raisins, chocolate and cigars shipped by supply train from Mexico. Consumption of these tidbits apparently did not violate the priest's vows of poverty. However, having enough to give visitors might infringe upon this oath.

15

RESIDENCE CELLS

The friars lived in these rooms, added by Acevedo in the late 1650s. Before then this was simply a covered walkway and the friars lived in several small rooms near the kitchen.

Each cell had two rooms, a main room often used as an office, and a smaller alcove for sleeping. Selenite found here suggests that there were outside windows glazed with this local material. The large cell next to the porteria was home for the guardian. Later a doorway was opened between it and this cell to form a single suite. A formal porch also appears to have been added to provide a private entrance. However, this small outside room could have served as a *posa* (courtyard chapel), a common feature of sixteenth century churches in "Mexico."

16

HARD TIMES

The floor of this room is much lower than the rest of the convento. Steps leading to what was the roof indicate a hatchway entrance, common in food storage rooms to keep out pests and thieves. During the severe famine of 1667 — 1672 missions with surpluses shipped supplies to villages where reserves had run out. Weekly, the priest rationed food to the starving pueblo. This room may have been added or modified at that time to protect food and seed supplies from both Puebloans and Apaches.

Please return to stop #13 and exit through the porteria to the pueblo.

17

SPANISH ROOMS IN THE PUEBLO

Fray Francisco Fonte arrived at Abó in 1622. Needing a place to live, he purchased several pueblo rooms in this area and built several more. These excavated rooms reveal Spanish influence. Was this Fonte's convento?

Later, this may have been the center of civilian and/or mission trade. Indians had long traded salt from the saline lakes to the east and piñon nuts from the foothills. Spaniards expanded this commerce. The road from Quarai and other mountain Tiwa pueblos appears to have passed between the church and this compound. It then went west through Abó Pass to join the Camino Real (King's Road) near the Río Grande. Every three years a wagon train loaded with mission supplies arrived from Mexico City. Trade goods for the return trip were stockpiled at Abó. Salt, for example, was much in demand at Santa Barbara in Mexico. There it was used in the "patio" silver smelting process. These rooms, along with the walled yard to the north, may have been the storage and staging area of this Spanish trade center. An organ for the church was one item purchased from trade income.

18

PUEBLO HOUSE MOUNDS

These rubble hills are the collapsed pueblo house-mounds outlined on the map below. The mounds have different shapes (easier to see on the map than on the trail). The earliest structures were I- and L-shaped room blocks built on the other side of the arroyo. Later house blocks were E-shaped and, finally, rectangular. The most recent ones were here, near the mission.

The pueblo has not been excavated, so it requires some imagination to visualize. Take the trail to your left, and perhaps your mind's eye will see what used to be.



19

HISTORIC PUEBLO

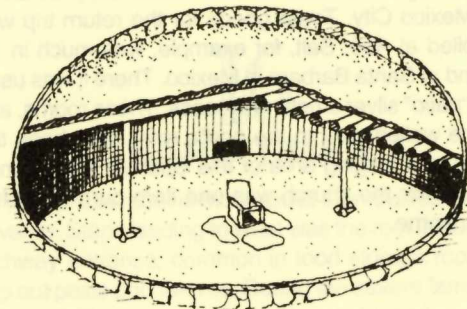
This area, "Mound J" on your map, is actually a plaza surrounded by room blocks. When the Spanish arrived they found an estimated eight hundred Indians living here on the east bank of the arroyo. "Mound I," where Fonte purchased his convento, was also occupied. This area is, therefore, known as the Late Phase or Historic pueblo. It was occupied from about 1500 until the mission and village were abandoned around 1673.

20

LA PLAZUELA

This was the central plaza of the historic Abó pueblo. Judging from the size of "Mound J," most of the pueblo was probably two stories high. The circular depression to your right was a kiva. Kachinas were a major part of the Tompiro religion. At first priests were prudently tolerant of native religious activities, referring to the kivas as "estufas" or sweat rooms. Eventually, however, they could no longer abide the "pagan" rites. Serious conflicts occurred as Kachina masks were smashed, dances were forbidden, and kivas were destroyed.

The walls to the left of the kiva are the remains of houses from the 1800s built with stones from the ruins.



Kiva

21

WATER

For over a thousand years nature has drawn people to Abó. There were permanent springs, perhaps even within the pueblo. But flow varies in this semi-desert climate. More water was secured by a series of small catchment basins along this arroyo. The Tompiros often made rock dams to conserve these intermittent pools and to trap fertile soil, creating agricultural terraces. The Abó Formation sandstone, which breaks easily into good building blocks, is exposed here and throughout the area.

22

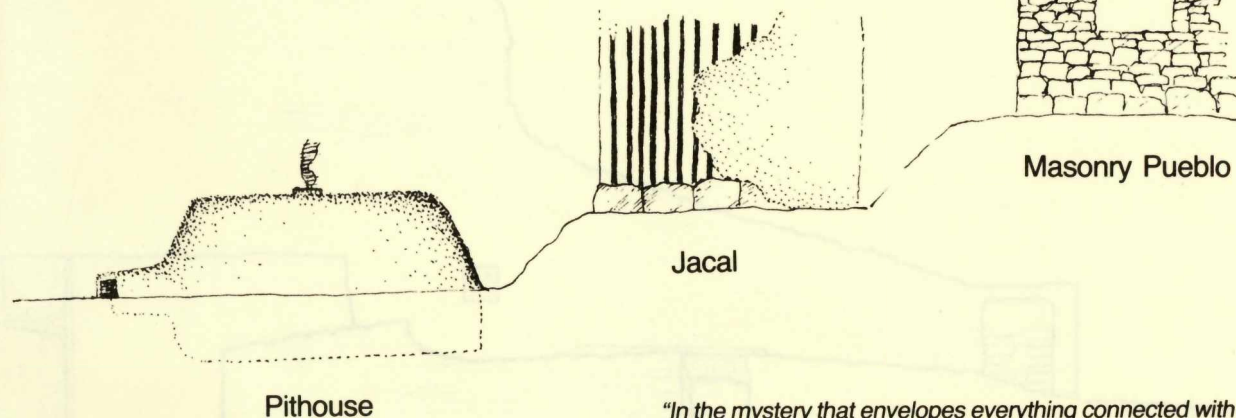
PREHISTORIC PUEBLO

Beyond the arroyo are the unexcavated mounds of the prehistoric pueblo. By A.D. 950, Abó Pass was inhabited by Mogollon pithouse builders from the south. By 1150 these wanderers began to congregate into small scattered villages in places like Abó. They made a gray-paste pottery called Chupadera Black-on-White and a corrugated utility ware.

Anasazi groups from the west apparently "invaded" Abó pass around 1350. A crude form of hybrid jacal/Anasazi style masonry pueblo suddenly appeared and Chupadera B/W was replaced by glaze painted pottery. The people banded together into a few large pueblos; one of them was here. Whether the Anasazi blended with the local population or returned west is unclear.

A short trail though the prehistoric Pueblo begins across the arroyo. It encircles Mount B, the largest Mound at Abó, and returns to this point. Mound B contains two, perhaps three plazas surrounded by mostly single-story house blocks, and at least five kivas.

Flash floods are common. Do not attempt to cross the arroyo if there is running water.



Pithouse

Jacal

Masonry Pueblo

23

ABANDONMENT

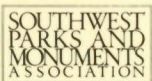
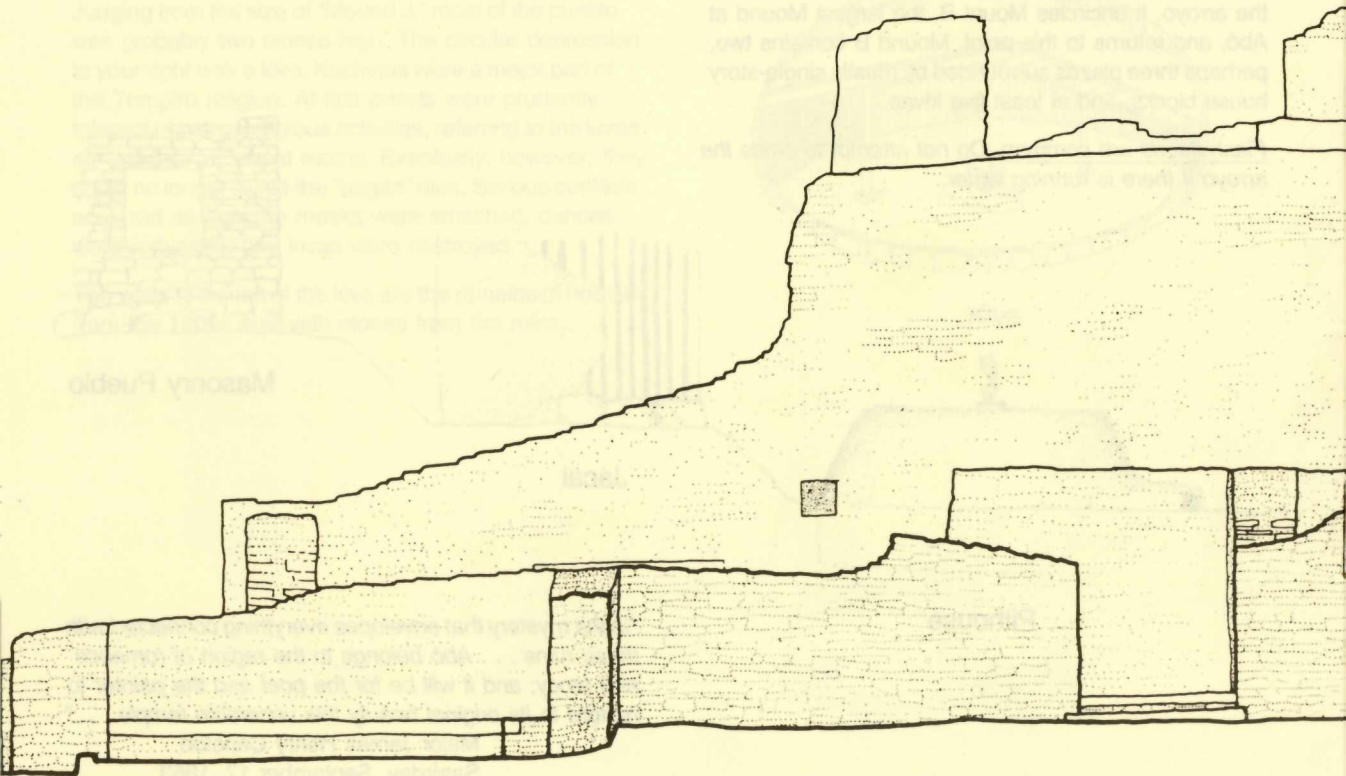
The decision to abandon Abó was not an easy one. For the priest it meant possible loss of Christianized Indian souls. For the governor it meant lost revenue and loss of control. But, by the 1670s, the combined pressures of drought, famine, disease, and Apache uprisings made life here intolerable. Many of the Tompiro refugees moved in with kin at the Piro pueblos on the Río Grande, near present-day Socorro. During the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, most of them accompanied the Spanish south to El Paso del Norte. There they established the pueblo of Socorro del Sur, never again to return to Abó.

"In the mystery that envelopes everything connected with these ruins . . . Abó belongs to the region of romance and fancy; and it will be for the poet and the painter to restore to its original beauty this venerable temple . . ."

Major James Henry Carleton
Saturday, September 17, 1853

National Monument
National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior

LA PLAZUELA



Abó Trail Guide

The drawing depicts the Abó ruins, a large, multi-story structure with various openings and a smaller building to the right. The main structure has a large, irregular opening on the left side and a smaller one on the right. The right side of the main structure features a series of small, rectangular openings. The smaller building to the right has a series of small, rectangular openings. The drawing is a black and white line drawing, showing the outlines and some internal details of the ruins.

CREDIT: LEONARD M. KLIWINSKI, HABS

This interim trail guide is made available through Southwest Parks and Monuments Association in cooperation with the National Park Service.