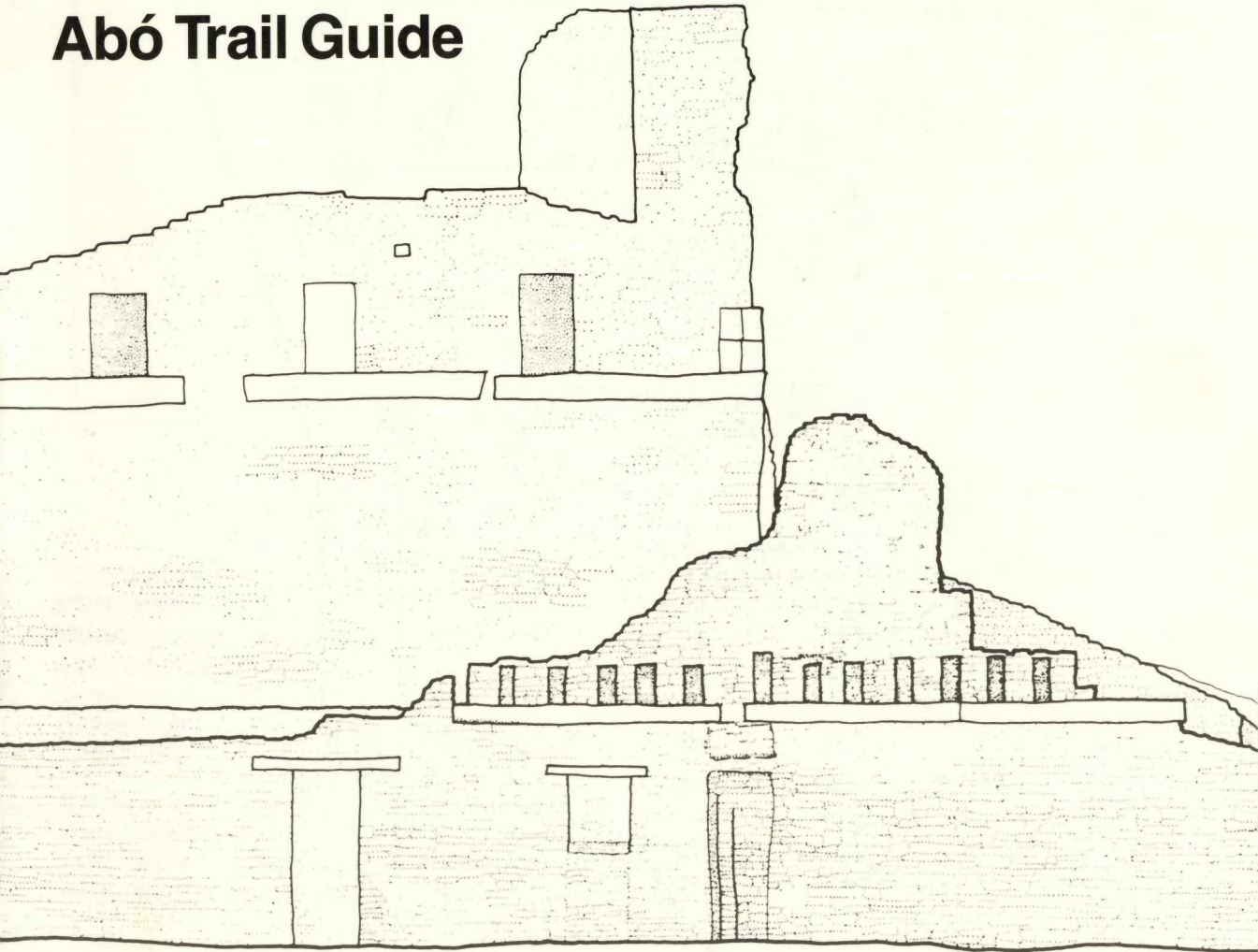
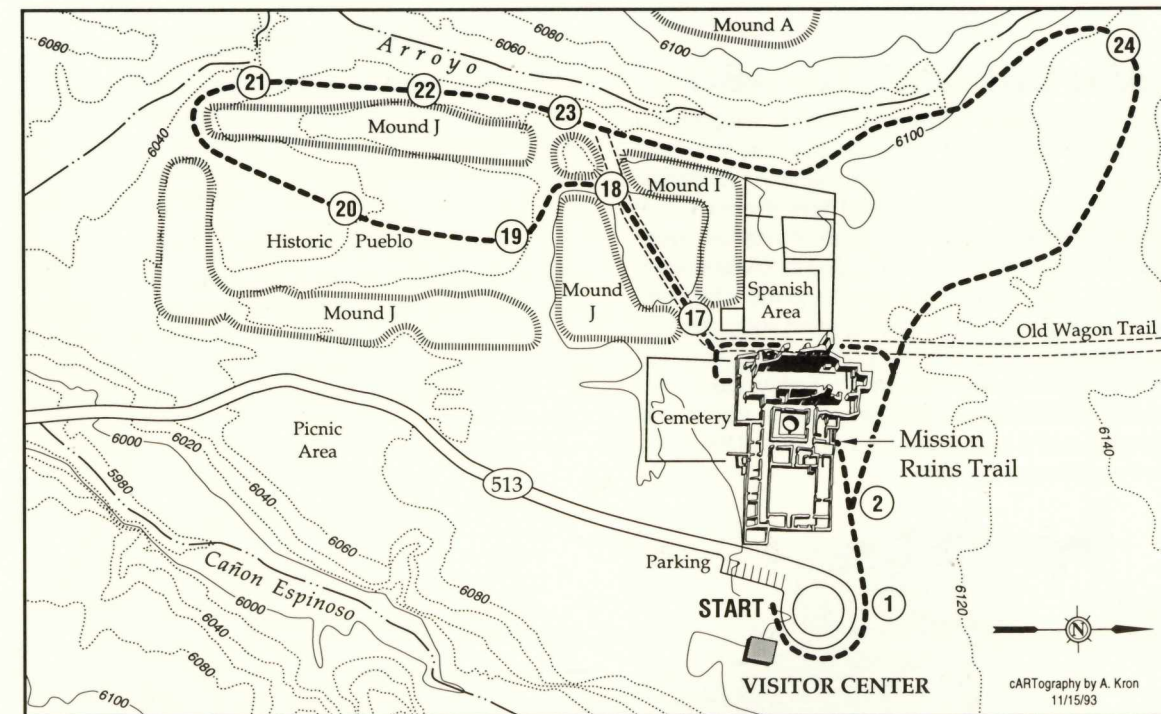
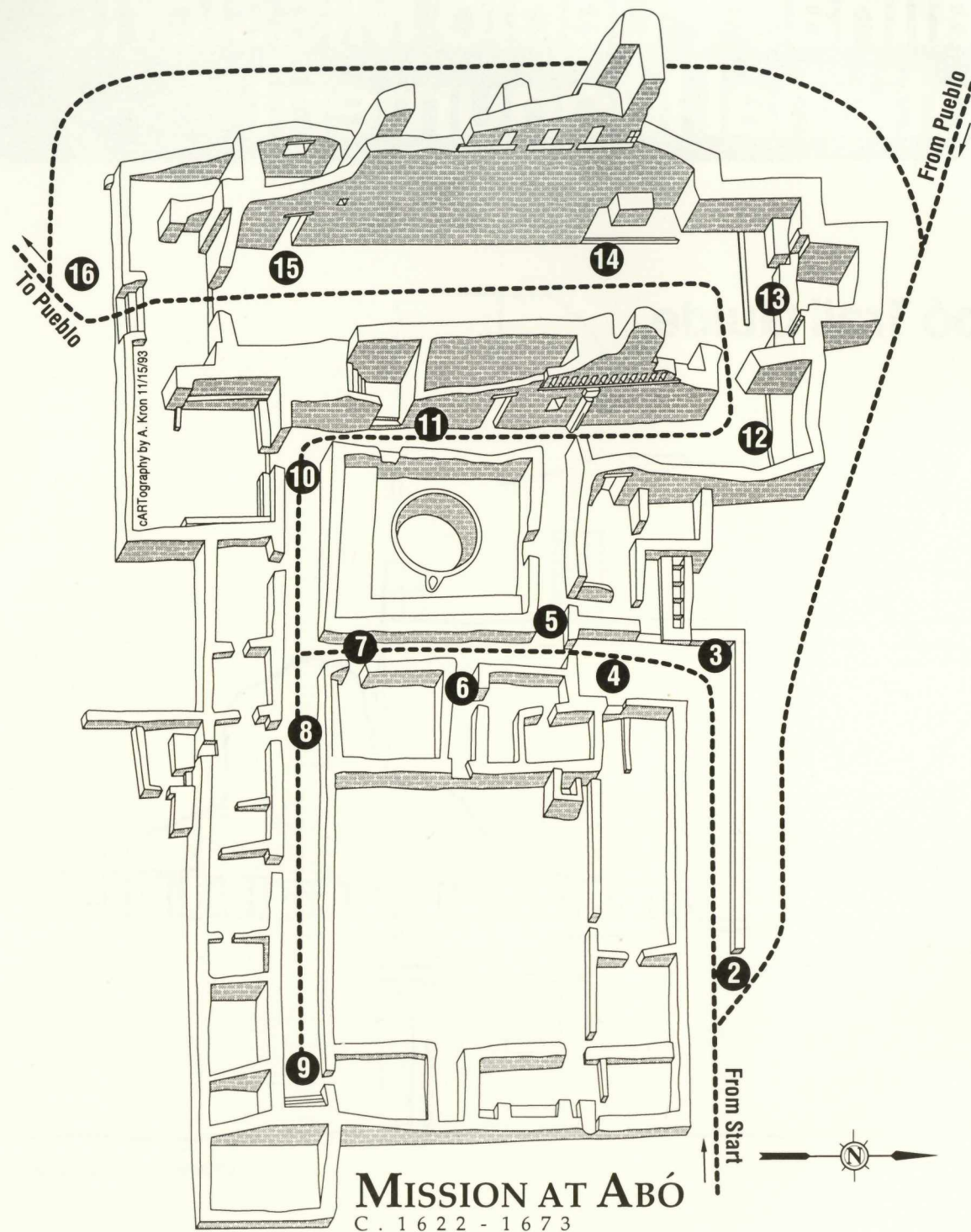


Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument

Abó Trail Guide



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 takes you through the mission ruins and unexcavated Indian pueblo of Abó.

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 guide.

Length: Mission Trail = ¼ mile
Pueblo Trail = ½ mile
Time: 45 minutes
Terrain: Fully Accessible

Author: James Boll
Illustrator: Kirk Hughey and James E. Ivey
Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)
drawings: Leonard M. Kliwinski

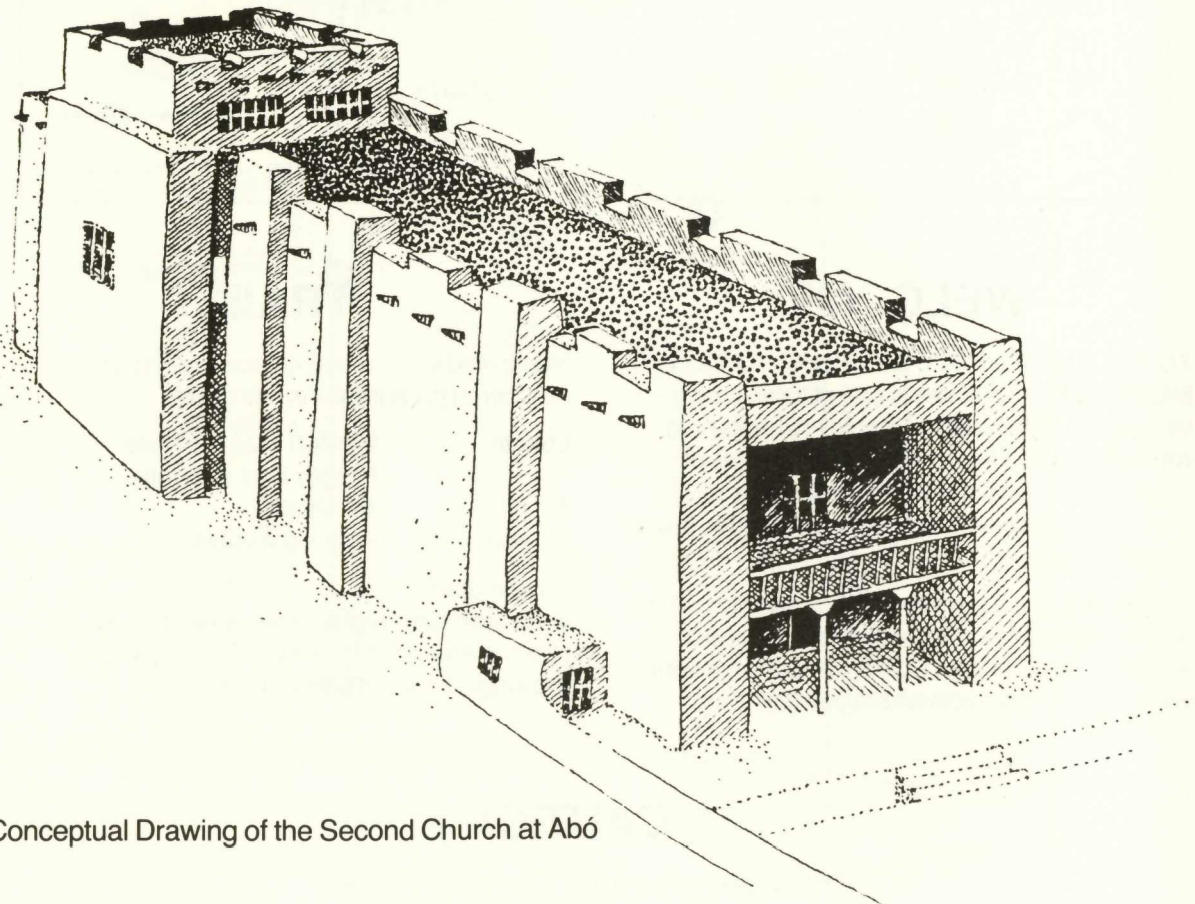
CAUTION

Rattlesnakes are present. Leave them alone!
Report any sightings to a Park Ranger.

1

MISSION SAN GREGORIO de ABÓ

The chanting of voices and ringing of mission bells once echoed down this hushed valley. For over five hundred years, beginning in the early twelfth century, Tompiro-speaking Pueblo Indians prospered here. From A.D. 1622 until about A.D. 1673 Franciscan priests also 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 this encounter of these two vastly different cultures, both village and mission were empty. Today, the crumbling walls of *Mission San Gregorio de Abó* stand silent vigil over the cactus-covered mounds of the ancient unexcavated pueblo.



Conceptual Drawing of the Second Church at Abó

2

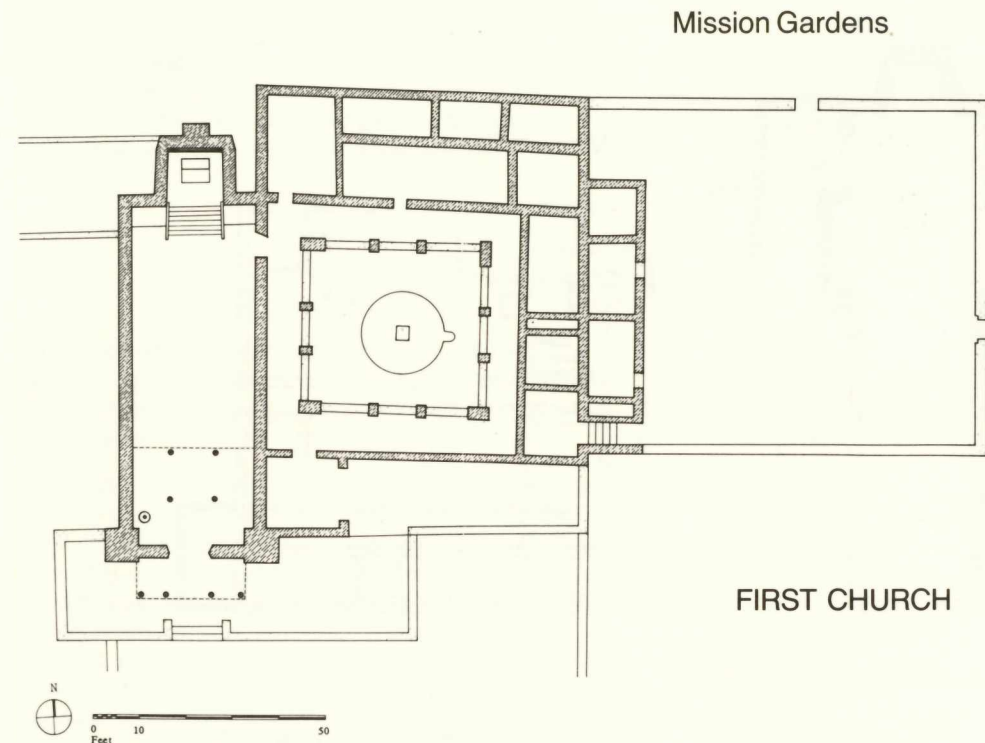
TWO CHURCHES

The church before you is the **second** church of Abó. It was completed about 1651 by Fray Francisco de Acevedo. A much smaller **first** church was built on this site between 1622 and 1627 by Fray Francisco Fonte, Abó's founding father.

In New Mexico it was rare for more than one priest to be stationed at a mission. However, in 1629 Fray Acevedo arrived at Abó to assist Fonte when Abó assumed guardianship of the *visitas* (preaching stations) at several nearby pueblos. This made Abó the head of one of the largest missionary operations in New Mexico.

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 earlier built churches at several nearby pueblos, he was an accomplished designer and builder. Rather than select a new site, as was customary, he chose to expand the existing church.

Look closely as you go, you may discover evidence of this remodeling "written" in the stones around you.



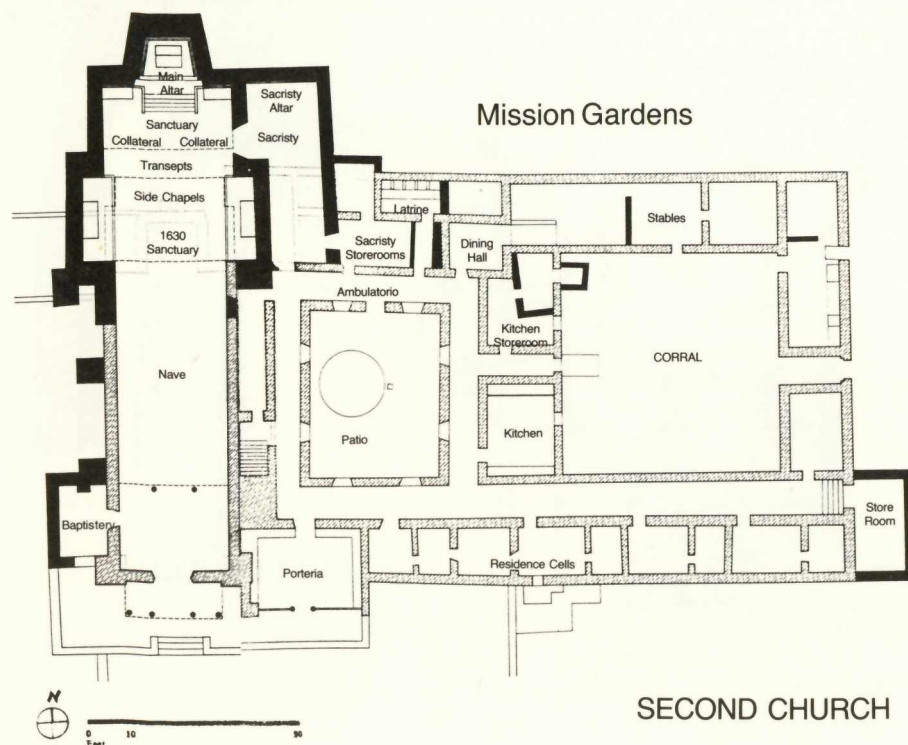
Plan of the Mission at Abó, c. 1630

3

CENTER OF MISSION ACTIVITY

You have now entered the *convento*. This was the priest's home, where he lived, taught Indian converts, and conducted church business.

Through this doorway came produce from the mission gardens which grew just behind you, outside this north convento wall. These walled gardens sustained priests and Indians alike, adding to their diet peaches, watermelons, cantaloupes, plums, mission grapes, coriander, chile, and more. Beyond the gardens cattle grazed and fields of wheat rippled in gentle valley breezes.



Plan of the Mission at Abó, c. 1670

4

DINING HALL

Through the years, this room had several uses. It became the dining hall, or *refectory*, during Acevedo's renovation. It was located well away from the hot kitchen (Stop 7).

The pit behind you, with poles across it, may have been a latrine. If so, it was a late addition to the convento. The stonework and use of adobe bricks 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 corridor from the *ambulatorio*.

Others 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 about, but no turkey bones. Indians used turkey feathers for warm cloaks and may have eaten the meat. A European priest would surely have enjoyed fresh eggs and an occasional turkey dinner. But, wouldn't a turkey pen have been better located in the corral area rather than the convento?

5

AMBULATORIO

A roofed hallway, or *ambulatorio*, surrounded the mission's central patio. Sunlight from the open patio filtered into dimly lit passageways through splayed windows and doors.

The **KIVA**, or Indian ceremonial chamber, in the patio appears to have been built at the same time of the first church and convento. It was later filled with trash, possibly during Acevedo's renovation. It's puzzling to find this symbol of Indian religion in the midst of a Franciscan mission. Why was it here? It may have served to help the Indians in the transition from their kivas to the above-ground church. But no one really knows.

6

CORRAL

At the far end of this hall steps led down into a corral where the priest kept cows, sheep, goats, and pigs in stables along the north wall.

Off this hallway, between the dining room (Stop 4) and the kitchen (Stop 7), 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 available to give visitors might have infringed upon this oath.

7

KITCHEN

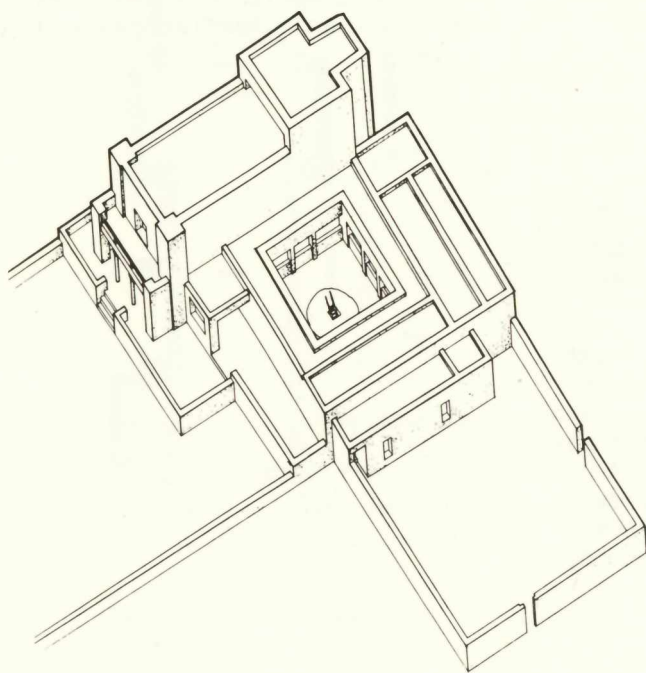
Here, on the bench to your right, an Indian cook prepared food from the mission's gardens and fields. Cooking was done on *comals* (stone griddles) atop a large Indian style open hearth along the wall to your left.

8

RESIDENCE CELLS

Following Acevedo's renovations, the friars lived in these rooms. Earlier, 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 these rooms had outside windows glazed with this local material. The large cell next to the *porteria* (enclosed porch) was home for the guardian. Later a doorway was opened between it and this cell to form a comfortable suite. A porch also appears to have been added to provide a private entrance. However, this porch might instead have been a courtyard chapel, or *posa*, a common feature of seventeenth century churches in Mexico.



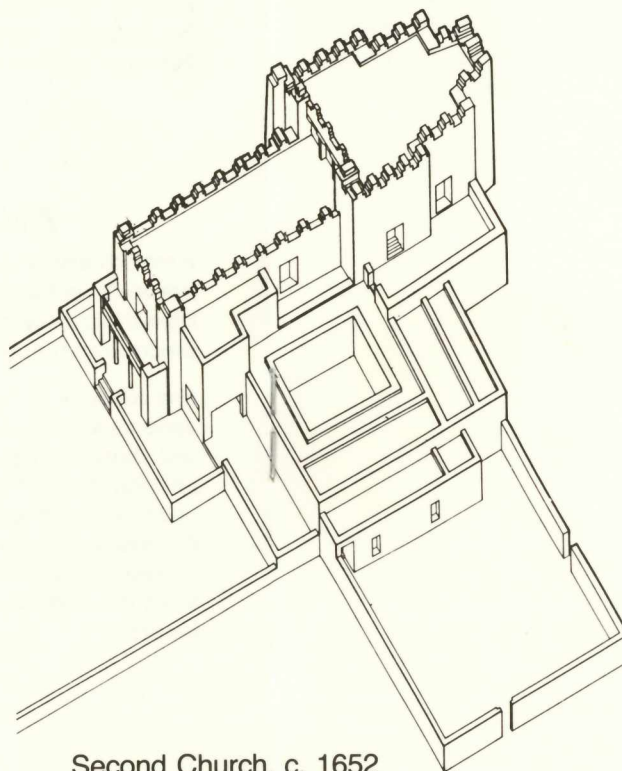
First Church, c. 1630

9

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 to 1672 missions with surpluses shipped supplies to villages where reserves had run out. Each Sunday the priest rationed food to the starving pueblo. This room may have been added or modified at that time to safeguard these food and seed supplies.

Please go back down this hall to Stop 10.



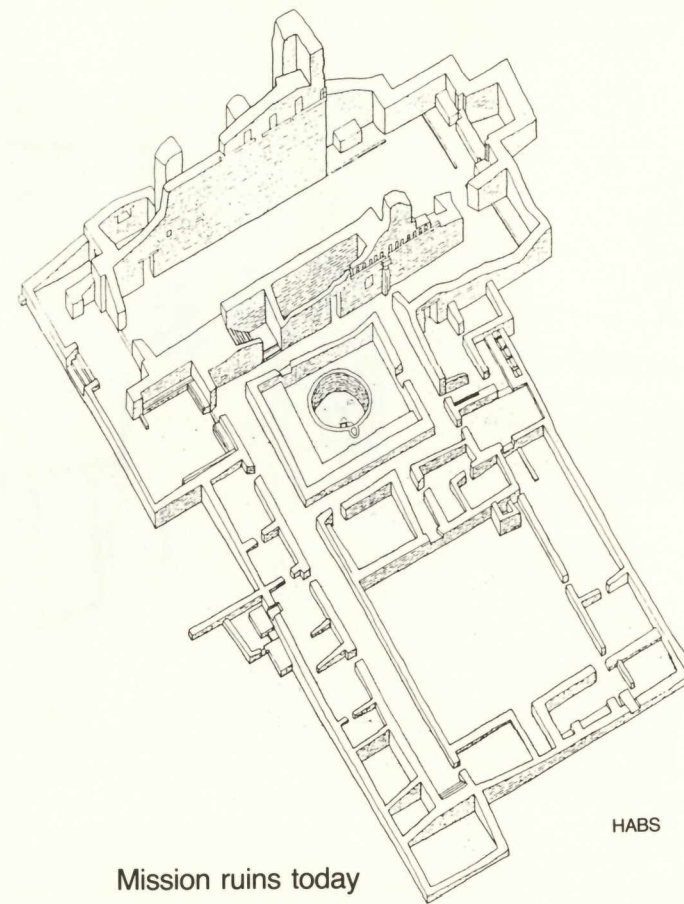
Second Church, c. 1652

10

PORTERIA

This was the mission's reception area. Its floor was flagstone, rather than adobe like 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. Stone walls radiated heat into the ambulatorio, even after the fire was out.

The mission usually employed several Indian converts. Besides the *portero*, or "keeper of the gates," there was usually a bell ringer, a few sacristans, a cook, women to grind corn, cleaning boys, and a gardener. Some of the men probably lived in the convento.



HABS

Mission ruins today

MISSION OF SAN GREGORIO de ABÓ

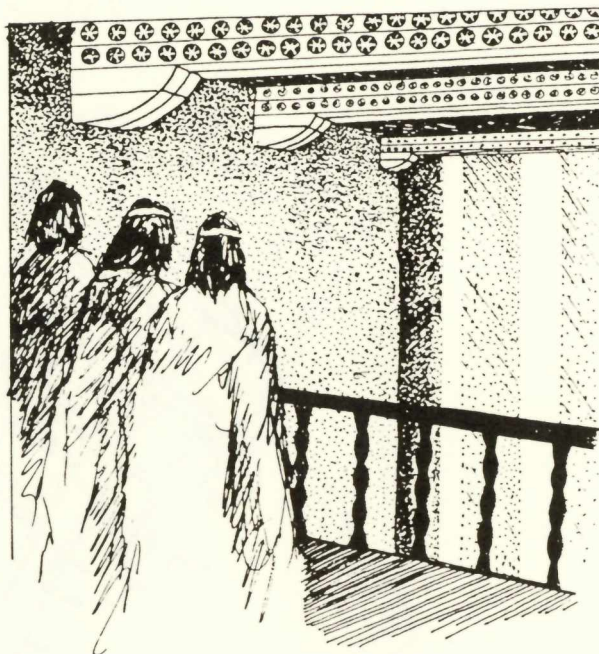
11

CHOIR LOFT

When Acevedo renovated the Abó church, he moved the choir loft staircase from its original location inside the entrance of the church, to this location.

Caution: These steps are NOT SAFE. Please DO NOT CLIMB THE STAIRS.

As visita headquarters, Abó was accountable for the souls of converts at the neighboring Tompiro missions of Tenabó, Tabira, and Las Humanas (Gran Quivira). Weekly for thirty years the Abó choir accompanied the priest on a day-long hike southeast along Chupadera Mesa to conduct mass at these remote southern pueblos.



12

SACRISTY

When Acevedo enlarged this sacristy he added a small altar along the north wall for private devotionals. 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. But the wine was reportedly so weak, that it occasionally froze in the chalice. The sockets high in the wall to your left held roof beams, or *vigas*. Casts in the mortar revealed that the *vigas* were carved with geometric floral designs, probably by Indian carpenters from Pecos.

13

A NEW SANCTUARY

Acevedo demolished the sanctuary wall of the first church and lengthened the nave nearly fifty feet. The National Park Service has reconstructed the foundation of that sanctuary wall to help us visualize the size and appearance of Fonte's earlier church, which measured but twenty-five feet wide by eighty-three and one-half feet long.

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

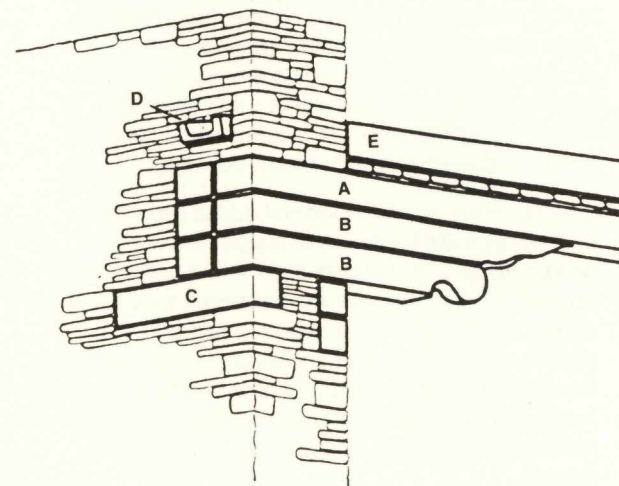
By raising the ceiling of the sanctuary eight feet above that of the nave, Acevedo flooded the main altar with shafts of brilliant New Mexico sunlight. These transverse clerestory windows were unique to New Mexico churches.

14

NAVE

Here, the congregation stood or knelt to pray — there were no pews and the floor was packed earth. These three-foot-thick walls were part of the early church. They originally stood twenty-eight feet high. Using an elaborate reconstruction design, Acevedo raised them to thirty-four feet. Plastered white, they were probably decorated with red, blue, and black European and Indian motifs.

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



15

BAPTISTERY

Baptismal ceremonies were performed here for new Christians. Centered in the floor were the font and sacrarium. 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.

Prior to Acevedo's renovation, baptisms were performed in the nave, beneath the choir loft. The two round stone footings in the floor held pillars which supported the choir loft. Before the 1640 expansion, the choir climbed a wooden ladder here in the nave to reach the loft.

16

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 open on iron pivot hinges, letting in more light and providing easy access. Outside was a *portal* (roofed porch). Above the entrance was a balcony with a window to light the choir loft located inside. Wooden shutters covered splayed window openings.

During renovation, Acevedo first added two exterior buttresses and a baptistery to support the thin sandstone and mud-mortar walls as the roof was removed. A third buttress, the bell tower, was also added. On the east, the convento was modified to provide support. This was a more sophisticated design than the brute mass of most missions of the period. A crenelated roof parapet gave the appearance of a medieval castle (shown on Second Church sketch, page 8).

17

**SPANISH ROOMS
IN THE PUEBLO**

When Fray Francisco Fonte arrived at Abó in 1622, needing a place to live, he purchased several rooms in the pueblo. These rooms reveal Spanish influence. Was this Fonte's first convento?

Later, Abó may have been a center of Spanish trade. The road from Quarai and other mountain Tiwa Pueblos probably passed between the church and this compound, then headed west through Abó Pass to join the 1,500-mile-long *El Camino Real* (The King's Road) near the Rio Grande.

These rooms, along with the walled yard to the north, may have been the storage and staging area for this Spanish trade. Every three years wagons loaded with mission supplies arrived from Mexico City. Trade goods for the return trip were stockpiled at Abó. An important commodity was salt from the saline lakes to the east. Salt was much in demand at Santa Barbara in Mexico, where it was used in silver smelting. One item purchased with trade income was an organ for the church.

The pueblo has not been excavated, so it requires some imagination to visualize. Take the trail to the left and let your mind's eye see what used to be. To return to your car, take the trail to the right.

18

ANCIENT VILLAGE OF ABÓ

These rubble hills are the collapsed pueblo house mounds shown on the map on page 2. First occupied by 1150, Abó became a pottery and trade center after 1400. The Tompiro Indians traded pots, salt, nuts, and surplus agricultural products to nearby Pueblos and Plains Indians for supplies needed by a growing village. By 1640, a Spanish census recorded more than 1,500 people at Abó, but this number may have included the visitas as well.

19

LA PLAZUELA

This was the central plaza of the Late Phase or Historic Abó pueblo where construction began around 1600. Judging from the size of these mounds, most of the buildings were probably two stories high.

Abó was a pottery manufacturing center. Over time pottery styles changed, mirroring the cultural transformations surrounding Abó. Prehistoric gray pots indicate close ties to the Mogollon farming culture which prospered between 200 B.C. and A.D. 1450 around what is now the Arizona, New Mexico, and Mexico borders. The Mogollon influence eventually gave way to a more advanced Anasazi culture. Abó's pottery reflected this new Anasazi influence, which was evident in the increased quality, complexity, and color of their craft. Still later, Spanish missionaries encouraged production of utilitarian soup bowls in Salinas redware. Potsherds found today are important clues to Abó's past.



20

NATIVE RELIGION

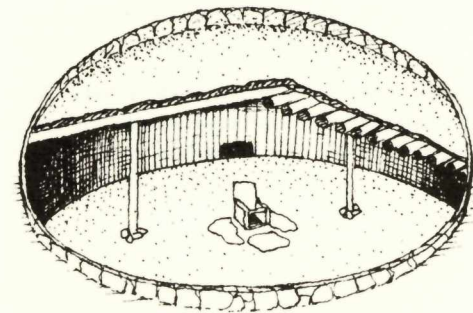
This circular depression was a kiva. Kachinas, wooden figures or masks carved in the likeness of supernatural beings, were a major part of the Tompiro religion. At first priests were prudently tolerant of native religious activities, referring to the kivas as *estufas*, or sweat rooms. By the 1660s, 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 a house built in the 1800s with stones from the mission.

21

ARROYO EMPEDRADO

For over one thousand years nature has drawn people to Abó. Some say the name, pronounced ah-BO, means "poor place," while others say "water bowl." There were permanent springs, perhaps even within the pueblo. But flow varies in this semi-desert climate. More water was captured by a series of small catchment basins along this "arroyo paved with stone." The Tompiros often made rock dams to conserve these intermittent pools and to trap fertile soil, creating agricultural terraces where beans, squash, and corn were grown. The red sandstone and shale of the Abó Formation breaks easily into rectangular blocks. These blocks, which provide the basic building material for the mission and pueblo, are exposed here and throughout the area.



Kiva

22

PREHISTORIC PUEBLO

By the year 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 brown corrugated utility ware.

Anasazi groups from the west apparently "invaded" Abó Pass around 1350. At that time a hybrid form of jacal/Anasazi-style masonry pueblo suddenly appeared, and Chupadera Black-on-White was replaced by glaze painted pottery. The people banded together into a few large pueblos, one of which was here. Beyond the arroyo are the unexcavated mounds of the earliest Abó pueblo. Whether the Anasazi blended with the local population or returned west is unclear.

23

HISTORIC PUEBLO

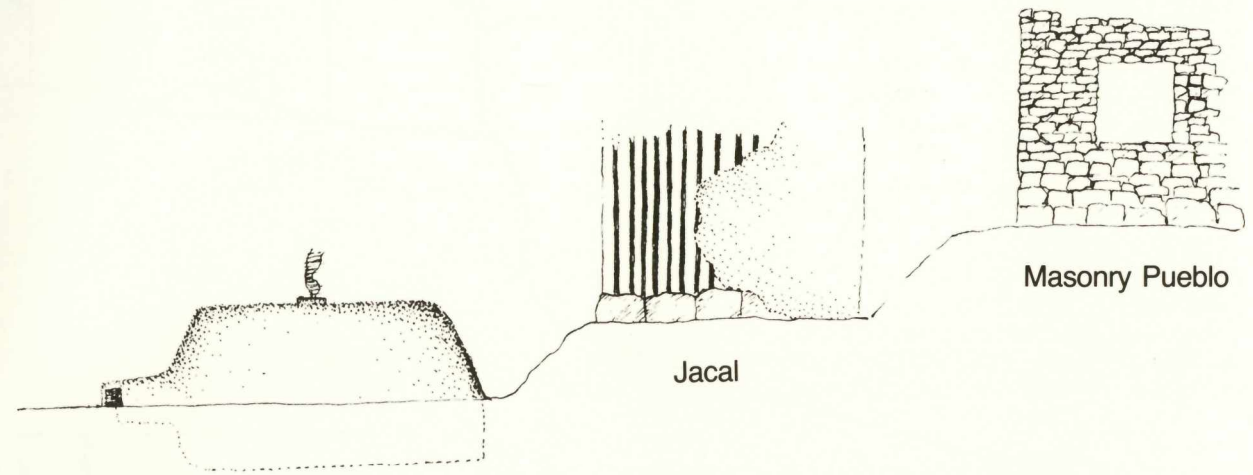
The earliest pueblo house blocks at Abó were "I-" and "L- shaped" structures built on the other side of this arroyo. Later house blocks were "E- shaped" and, ultimately, rectangular. You have been walking through "Mound J," which is actually a plaza surrounded by several rectangular house blocks.

When the Spanish arrived in 1622, they found an estimated eight hundred Indians living here on the east bank of the arroyo. "Mound I," to your left, where Fonte purchased his early convento, was also occupied. Thus, this area is known as the Historic pueblo. It was occupied from about 1500 until the mission and village were abandoned in 1673.

24

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 to the Piro pueblos on the Rio 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.



Pithouse

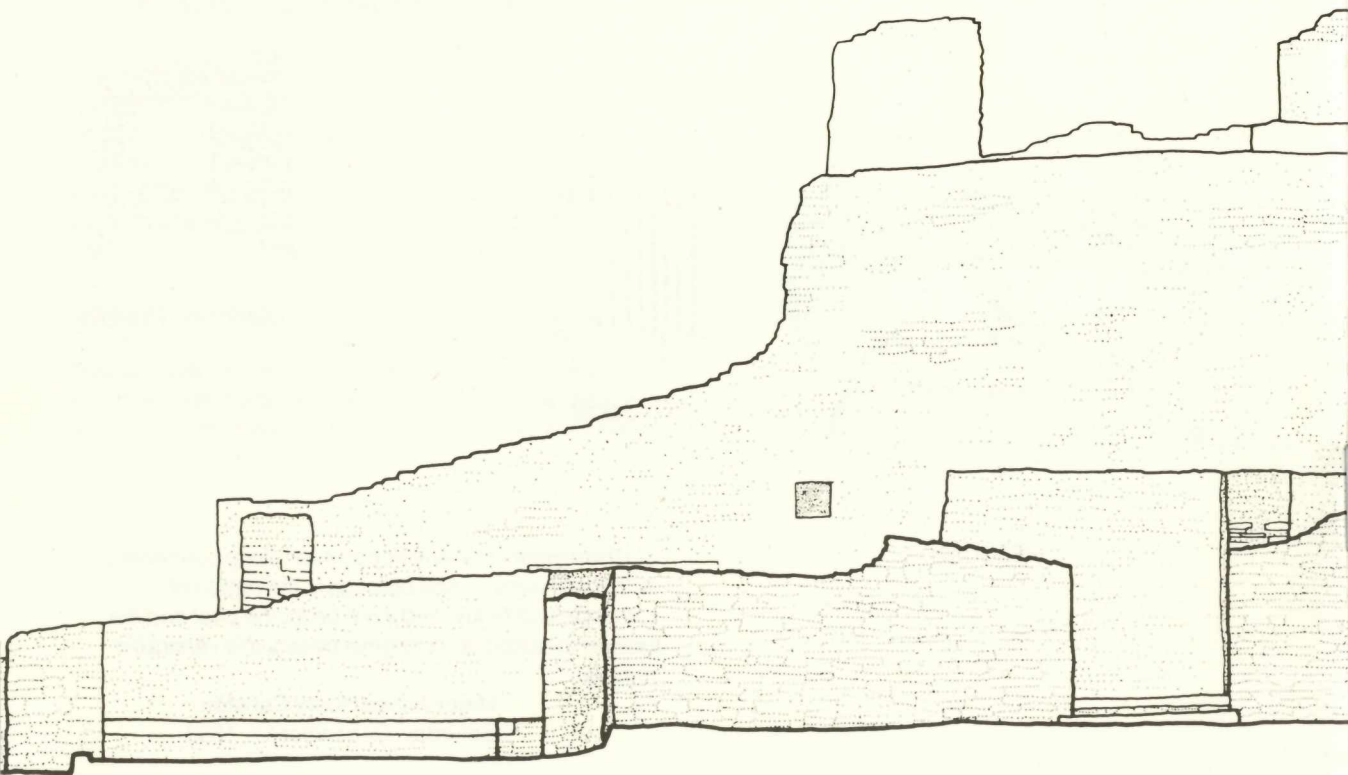
Jacal

Masonry Pueblo

"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, December 17, 1853

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



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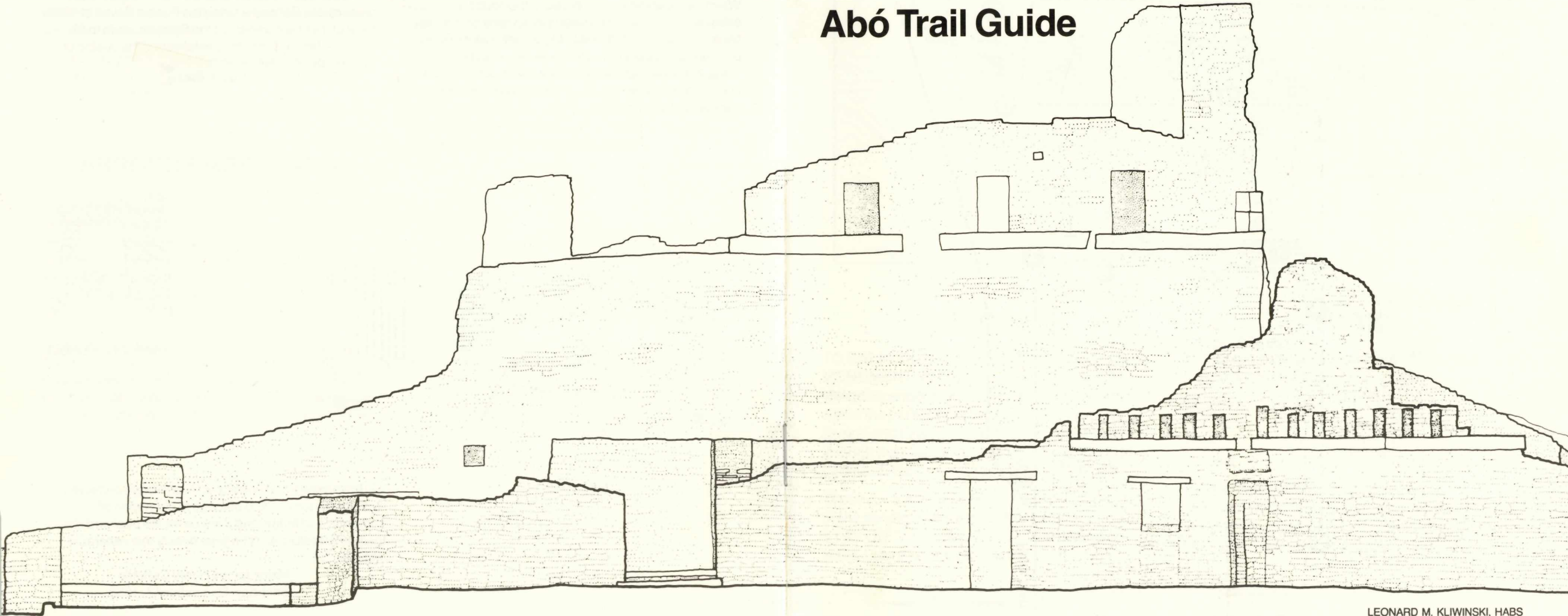
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