

GRAN QUIVIRA



Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument

Gran Quivira Unit of Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument was established in 1909 and covers 610 acres (244 hectares).

Description of trail

Length: ½ mile

Time: ½ hour

Terrain: slightly graded

Rules

Climbing on walls is prohibited. The original mortar is only one to two inches (2.5 to 5 centimeters) from the surface. Children should stay with persons responsible for their safety. Please do not disturb the potsherds found along the trail. No collecting of natural or cultural material is allowed.

Warnings

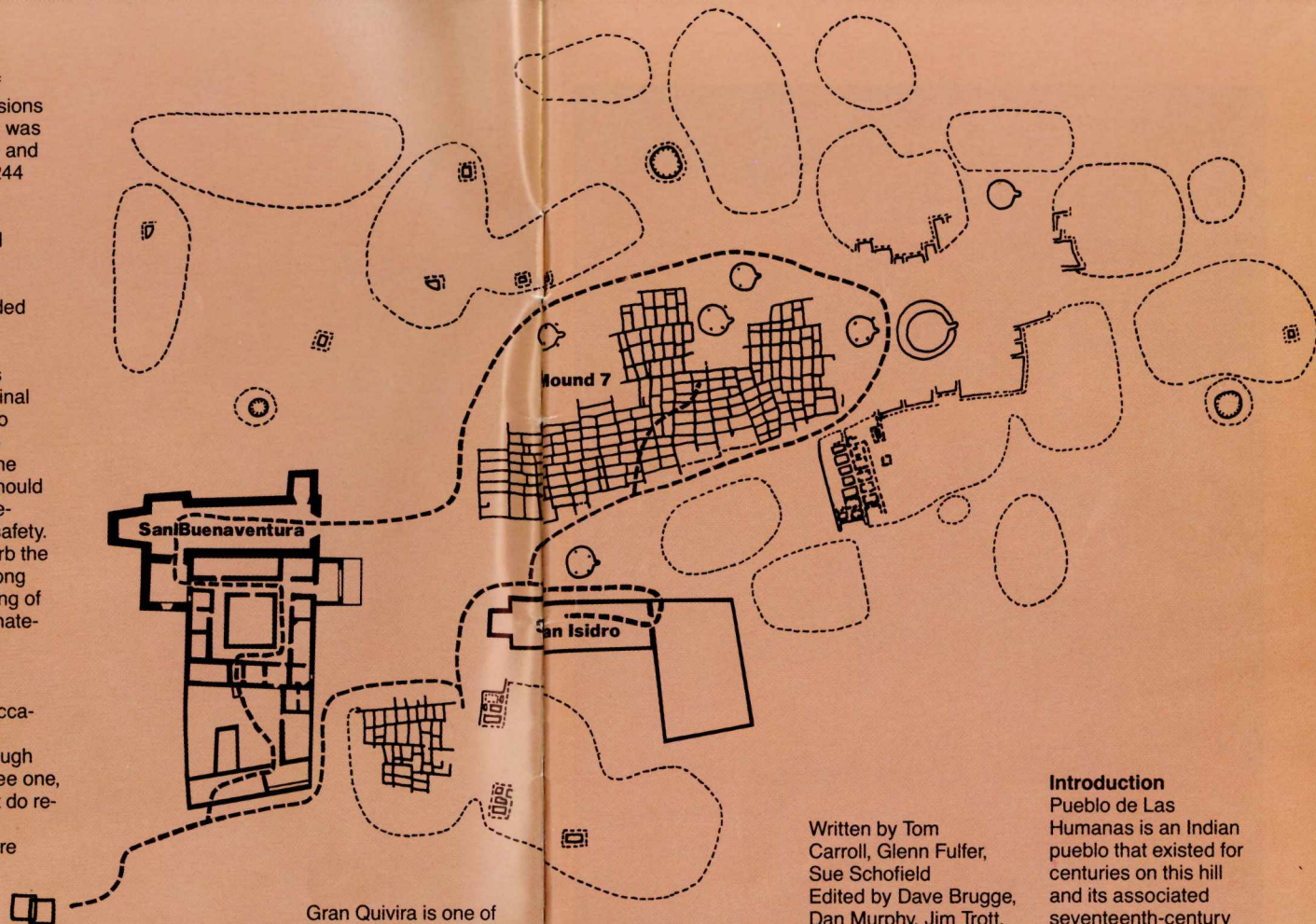
Rattlesnakes are occasionally seen in the area from April through November. If you see one, do not disturb it but do report it to a ranger. Bull snakes are more common than rattlesnakes.

Deep rooms are near the trails and in the apartment complexes. Use caution when approaching these open structures.

How to use this guide

Numbered stops along the trail correspond to numbered stops in the trailguide.

Gran Quivira is one of three mission sites in Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument. Nearby are Abó and Quarai.



Published by Southwest Parks and Monuments Association in cooperation with the National Park Service.

Written by Tom Carroll, Glenn Fulfer, Sue Schofield
Edited by Dave Brugge, Dan Murphy, Jim Trott, Margaret Franzen

Designed and illustrated by Lawrence Ormsby and Carole Thickstun

Introduction

Pueblo de Las Humanas is an Indian pueblo that existed for centuries on this hill and its associated seventeenth-century Spanish Franciscan mission ruins. On this walk you will see ruins of the Indian village and the mission buildings.

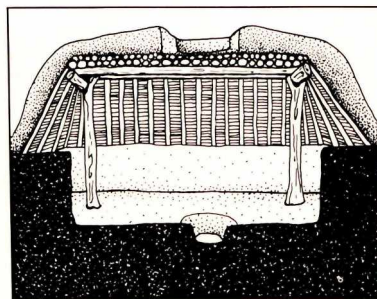


PHOTO RUSS FINLEY

1 The ruins of the old mission church dominate the ridge in front of you. The path will lead through the Indian village and the mission compounds.

The natural scene here is essentially the same as when prehistoric Indians occupied it, except for these trees close to the pueblo and the heavy cover of brush. The continual demand of a living pueblo for firewood and construction materials usually meant that the area for up to several miles around was stripped of trees.

Beneath the sand on the south slope of this ridge the presence of remains of many pithouses (partially belowground dwellings) has been suggested by recent archeological surveys. Apparently the occupation of this hill began very early. The dates for this pithouse village probably extend from A.D. 700 or 800 to about A.D. 1300. The population during the pithouse period may have been large enough to account



for the 1,500 or so people who later lived in the masonry houses. The occupants of these pithouses were most likely Jornada Mogollon peoples whose primary settlement area extended to the south.

This early Mogollon culture was one of four major cultural strands to be woven into the history of this pueblo. Later influences from the Anasazi and Plains cultures contributed to the evolution of life here. European contact in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries signaled the beginning of the meeting between the New World and the Old World. The story of these people continues today in both Mexico and the States.

2 This low area on both sides of the trail is one of several quarries where the Indians collected limestone to build the three thousand or more masonry rooms on the hill. The natural availability of limestone, and its tendency to break into roughly rectangular blocks, meant that building stones were not a problem here.

3 The soil beside the trail here is darker than it was at the beginning. This dark coloring is the result of trash accumulation through the centuries. Apparently these deposits have enriched the soil and thickened vegetation.

4 The small hill in front of you is one of the Pueblo Indian house complexes which has collapsed, been covered by wind-blown soil, and then further hidden by the growth of plants.

There are perhaps 100 rooms in the upper level of this mound, 37 of which have been excavated. All of the mounds you see here are buried house blocks.

5 You are in one of the later plazas of the pueblo. The masonry pueblo around you dates from about A.D. 1300 to the early 1670s. There are twenty-one major mounds here, only one and one-half of which have been excavated.

Spanish records indicate the original name of the pueblo was Cueloze. The Spanish, however, renamed it Pueblo de Las Humanas, which means the town of Indians with stripes painted or tattooed over their noses. We do know that such striping is characteristic of Plains Indians. There are many examples of faces with stripes over the nose in the pictographs (rock paintings) of this region.

Plazas were and are busy places in pueblos. Besides being town squares with much social bustle, they are also working

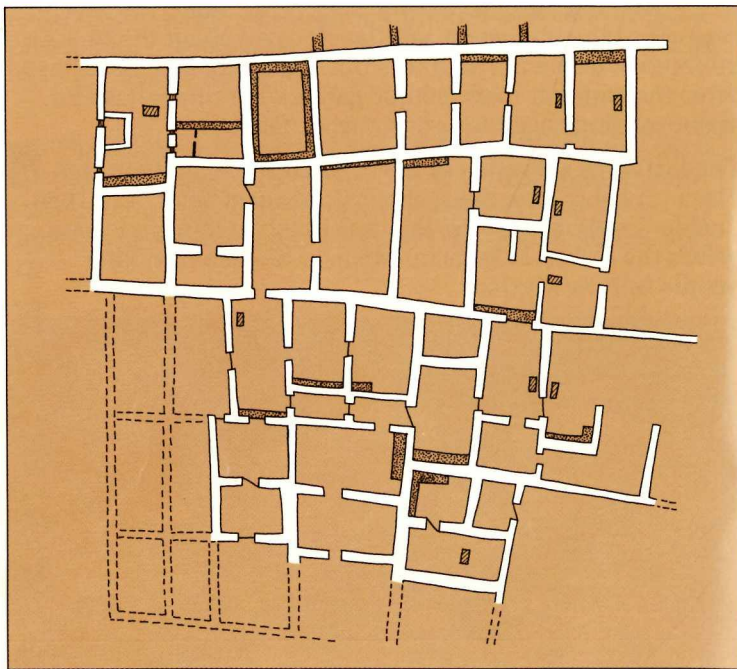
places. People cooked here, made pottery, fashioned tools, held ceremonies, and kids played while dogs barked. There were about ten thousand inhabitants in this region the Spanish called "the Salinas Jurisdiction." This name was given because of the important salt flats located about thirty-eight kilometers to the north of this pueblo. There may have been three thousand or more people gathered at this village for major religious occasions or for trade fairs.

The last large gathering of the original inhabitants in this plaza probably took place about eight years before the 1680 Pueblo Revolt against the Spanish and two hundred years before the arrival of large numbers of English-speaking people in New Mexico.



PHOTO RUSS FINLEY

HOUSE A



6 This marker locates what seems to be the northern edge of an older house complex beneath the excavated rooms in front of you. Notice that the ground begins to rise at this point from the level of the plaza, a good indication that subsurface structures are present. All of the Indian houses that have been excavated in the pueblo have had remains of earlier houses underneath.

The walls of this lower level of rooms can be partially seen

inside the excavated rooms. They were used as part of the foundations for later walls and as benches and shelves.

7 The walls in this roomblock (House A on the maps) are two stones wide, with no central core. The mortar is crumbly and weak and it appears that it was scraped from the surface of the ground around the house. This construction is typical of pueblo architecture here from the 1550s to the 1670s.

The rooms and doorways are small by modern standards, but during cold weather they required only minimal heat from the small hearths (firepits) you can see inside the rooms. The high threshold of the doorway stopped cold drafts along the floor and also strengthened the doorway. A small room could be spanned with shorter, more readily available beams. Remains of plaster were found in most of these rooms. From excavations in other sections of the pueblo we know that many household chores were conducted on the rooftops and in other locations outside of the houses.

This roomblock seems to have different sections. The half toward the plaza has two rows of rooms, each row having doorways between the rooms but not to the adjoining row. The other half of the house has generally smaller rooms, with no particular pattern. It is interesting to speculate what this implies. Rooms and apartment arrangements can reveal a great deal about social organization and cultural evolution. From debris found here we know this roomblock was abandoned just before the abandonment of the pueblo. The people probably moved into the unexcavated rooms just behind you and threw trash into the deserted rooms. *(To examine these rooms more closely, you may wish to take the dead end path to the left. Stop number eight is on the east side of the plaza.)*

FIRST CHURCH

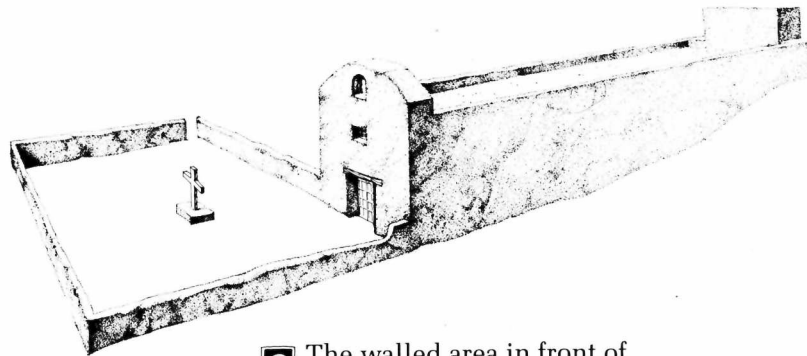
8 Historical records indicate that two early Spanish expeditions may have reached the Pueblo de Las Humanas. In 1598, Don Juan de Oñate accepted the obedience of the village to the Spanish King, and tribute was probably collected. Spanish records also indicate that three major battles with “Jumanos” Indians occurred between 1599 and 1601.

Fray Alonso de Benavides was responsible for the first missionary effort at the pueblo when he climbed this hill and preached a sermon in one of the plazas introducing the new religion. The day was April 4, 1627 — Saint Isidore’s Day. This conversion, or permanent missionary effort, was thus dedicated to San Isidro, Archbishop of Seville.

Two years later Fray Francisco Letrado became the first resident priest at Las Humanas. Letrado continued conversion efforts and “established there a convent and a fine church.” This “fine church” was probably a small temporary chapel housed in a remodeled room of Mound 7, the pueblo house block on your left.

On this site, near Mound 7, Fray Letrado then began construction of the first permanent church at Las Humanas. However, after two years he asked to be transferred to the remote and challenging Zuni Pueblo. With his departure, until the arrival of the next resident priest in 1659, Las Humanas was served as a *visita* or preaching station from Abó Pueblo (25 miles north). Around 1636, Fray Francisco Aceveda of Abó completed this church and named it in honor of San Buenaventura.

(Station nine is at the entrance to the church).



9 The walled area in front of the church is the *campo santo*, probably for religious burial of Christian Indians.

The masonry structure in the center may have been the base for a cross.

In stabilizing the walls of this cemetery a mass burial was found along the west wall, possibly one result of the four-year famine in the late 1660s: “There were pueblos, as instance Humanas, where more than 450 died of hunger.” Diseases Europeans carried to the New World were a major part of the story of New Mexico and undoubtedly of this pueblo.

The sides of the large entrance into the church were beveled so that when the doors were swung completely open, a maximum amount of light could enter, and groups of people could come and go more easily. This is typical of European doors and windows of the period.

In stabilizing the church two subfloor burials were found just within the entrance. Both were extended at full length and on

their backs in the Christian manner. Both these burials and those in the *campo santo* were re-interred.

The roof of the church was 15 or 20 feet (5 or 7 meters) above the floor, probably with a small choir loft over the door inside. Flat rocks on the floor mark where posts may have supported the choir loft. The walls were plastered white and decorated with red and black, as indicated by pieces of plaster found by archeologists.

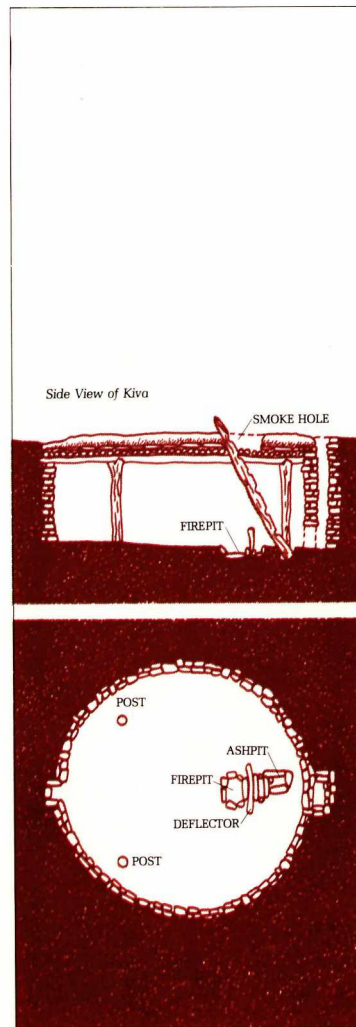
The round masonry pedestal just inside the doorway may have been the base of the sacrarium or baptismal font.

10 Although treasure hunters vandalized this end of the church centuries after its abandonment, enough was left to guess at some of the features.

The relatively thin side walls of the church and the extreme width of the nave may have provided insufficient support for the heavy roof. Support posts along two lines lengthwise in the church probably helped to hold up the roof.

11 The Pueblo Indians practiced their own religion for centuries before Europeans arrived in the New World. Today, many Southwestern Indians continue these traditions although influenced by Christianity to varying degrees.

This room is a kiva, an Indian underground ceremonial and social chamber. Clans and various societies each had their own kivas. Members, mostly men, performed religious ceremonies and rituals here. They also carried out initiation rites and religious instruction. They offered prayers for everything contributing to the general welfare such as good rainfall, health, crops, and hunting. Members of the kiva also used it as a clubhouse and workroom.



The kiva had a flat wooden roof, covered with a layer of dirt. Four posts to support the roof were set in holes in the floor. A square roof opening provided access by ladder. This opening, the only entrance, also served as a smoke hole for the firepit in the floor near the east wall. What appears to be a chimney on the east wall is really the opposite, a ventilator shaft that would draw fresh, cool air down into the kiva, as smoke and heat rose and escaped through the entrance hole. If the ventilator shaft let in too much air, the Indians reduced the draft by leaning a flat stone in front of the opening.

Noticeably absent from all these frontier pueblo kivas is the *sipapu*. In the Anasazi culture this shallow, central depression in the kiva floor represented the entrance from the spirit world.

MOUND 7

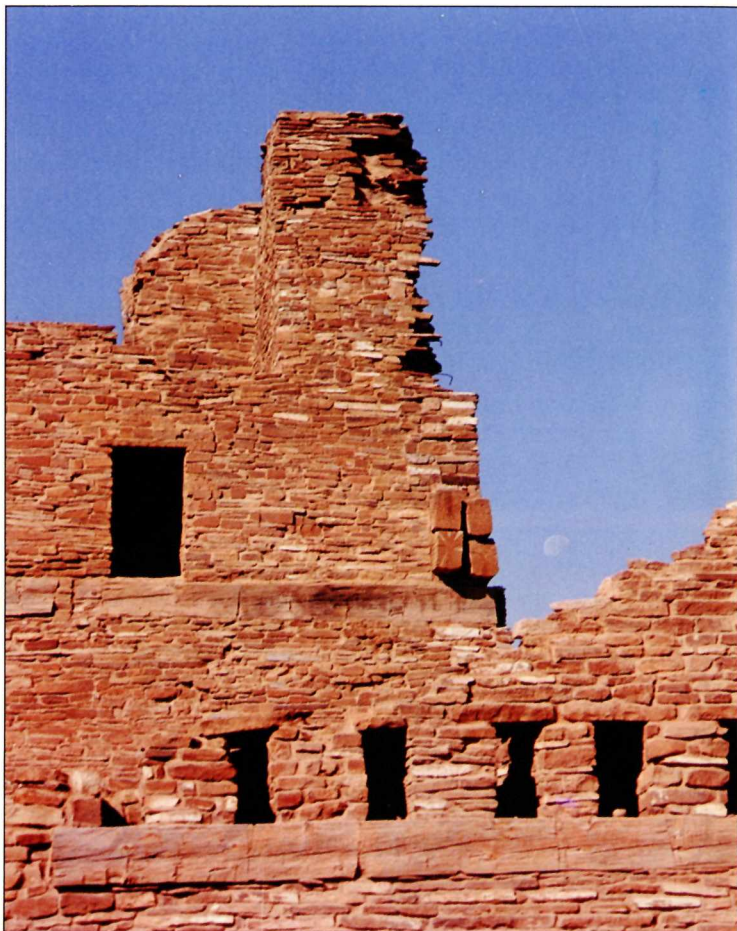


PHOTO RUSS FINLEY

12 This was the simple chapel and *convento*, or offices and living quarters, that Fray Letrado used while at the pueblo. Fray Letrado apparently modified eight Indian rooms by widening the doors and windows. Later he added the eight larger exterior rooms you see in front of you. You may enter these rooms through the large doorways but remember to be careful as the walls are very fragile, even though they look strong.

Fray Letrado left these rooms to undertake the conversion of Zuni Pueblo, where he was killed by the Indians while exhorting them during one of their ceremonies. Today, at El Morro National Monument near Zuni, you can see an inscription left by a military party from Santa Fe en route Zuni to avenge Fray Letrado's death.

13 These stairs lead you on top of Mound 7 (and markers 14, 15, and 16), the largest Indian house mound here and the only fully excavated one.
(On top of this mound is a steep drop so please watch your step.)

14 While much of the cooking was done outside, indoor fires were also common. A room containing a firepit is a central feature in a family's apartment.

The firepit below you is covered by a griddle which was used for cooking. Today in many pueblos a special thin corn bread called *piki* is made on such griddles. This type of bread was noted in early New Mexican historical documents.

15 Before excavation, the height of this mound seemed to indicate a multi-storied pueblo. Instead, excavation showed the upper rooms, used in the 1500s and 1600s, were

built on top of rooms dating from the 1300s. A further surprise was that while the plan of the more recent structure is basically rectangular, the earlier rooms were laid out in a circular pattern.

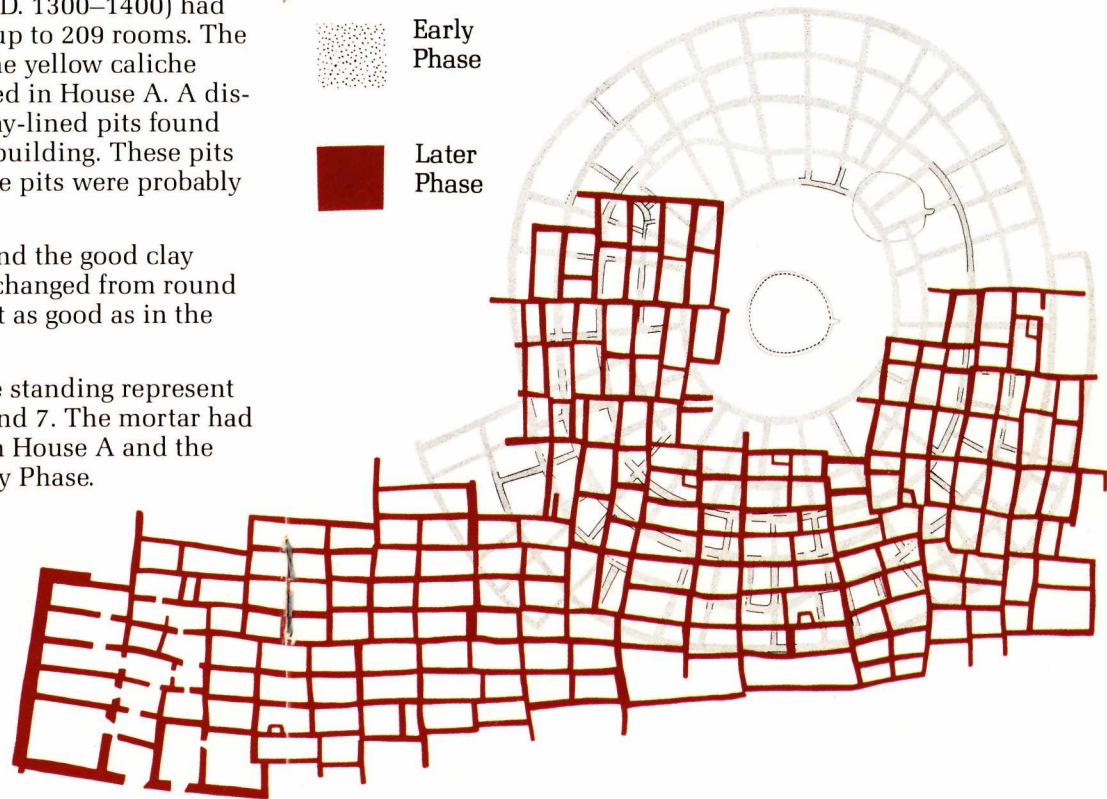
You are standing on top of one of the late rooms looking “through” the floor into a lower room, which is three hundred years older. The older room was filled with trash and debris.

The Early Phase circular house block (A.D. 1300–1400) had five or six concentric circles containing up to 209 rooms. The early masonry work was excellent and the yellow caliche mortar more durable than the mortar used in House A. A distinctive feature of this period was the clay-lined pits found underground around the exterior of the building. These pits have been backfilled to protect them. The pits were probably used as cisterns.

The Middle Phase (A.D. 1400–1500) found the good clay mortar still in use but the room pattern changed from round to rectangular and the rock work was not as good as in the Early Phase.

The rectangular rooms on which you are standing represent the Late Phase (A.D. 1550–1670) of Mound 7. The mortar had changed to the same ashy mortar used in House A and the rock work was not as good as in the Early Phase. The source of the yellow clay had become hidden by the earlier buildings.

The major construction initiated at Mound 7 about 1550 was contemporaneous with two other major alterations at the pueblo: the beginning of a new pottery style and the occurrence of cremations along with the earlier flexed burial practice. The three phenomena seem to indicate major cultural changes were taking place. A possibly significant event during this period was the presence of the 1540–1542 Coronado expedition in New Mexico.



16 This is Kiva C; it has a remarkable history. Apparently the Indians performed ceremonies here for more than 300 years. They first built the kiva at the center of the early circular house block. At a later time, it became necessary to build the retaining wall you see above the kiva to keep debris from falling onto the kiva roof. Later still the rectangular house block partially enclosed this kiva. (Please return to the steps and take the trail to your left.)

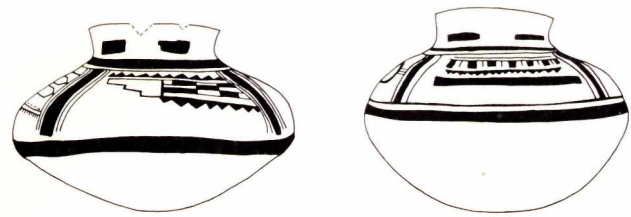


PHOTO RUSS FINLEY

17 While pueblo men made tools and weapons, the women prepared food for family meals as well as for religious offerings. They ground corn into meal on a *metate*, a flat slab of stone. They put a cloth or basket under the low end of the metate to catch the grain, and knelt with the metate sloping away from

them. With the *mano*, or hand stone, they ground the meal to the desired fineness. Three stones together, such as these, usually were of increasing fineness for successive grindings: coarse, medium, and fine. It was backbreaking work, but the women could work together, possibly moving rhythmically to the music of flutes, and no doubt discussing life in the pueblo.

18 This room appears to have been a ceremonial room like a kiva even though it was located within the house complex. Like a kiva it had plastered walls which were sometimes painted. There were at least nine layers of plaster, the bottom layer having painted lines and dots. Included among



the artifacts found in this room were a wooden feather box, a small rod-like stone fetish, a paint stone, two small lion effigies, a coiled basket and a complete pot. The room appears to be associated with Kiva D (the first kiva you saw) and there are signs the kiva was deliberately destroyed. This may explain how this room came to be. There are five similar rooms in this mound and each appears to be related to the five other kivas around the mound. The evidence indicates all of these kivas were destroyed in the 1660s when missionaries actively attempted to combat the native religion. It seems likely these special rooms within the mound served as hidden ceremonial chambers where Pueblo religious traditions could continue unobserved by the priest. They may have also been used to store sacred objects for the associated kivas.

19 This plaza is one of several you would expect to find in a village of this size. It appears to have been surrounded by porches. It is probably in this plaza that Fray Benavides explained the new religion in 1627.

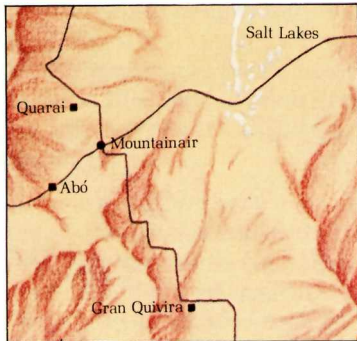
You may have noticed that there is no surface water in this area. There was probably none during the long Indian occupation. However, Spanish records tell us there were thirty-two wells about one kilometer from the pueblo. In the shallow basin one kilometer west of here are traces of a possible well. The shallow basin itself will hold water for some time if there is adequate rainfall.

Studies of trash in the mound show that approximately half of the food came from hunting. Bison, antelope, and deer were the most important meat sources. Corn and beans, the major agricultural products, were planted to the south in the sandy loam. The Indians learned early to plant their corn at least eight inches (twenty centimeters) deep to take advantage of the deep moisture retained from winter snows and spring storms.

Las Humanas was the major regional trading center with the Plains Indians. It was on the fringe of the Rio Grande Pueblo world and near the territory of the nomadic Indians from the prairies. Pottery, corn, cotton, and pinyon nuts were exported from the villages to the plains. In turn, bison meat, hides, and other products moved from the plains to the pueblos. So close was the relationship of Las Humanas to the Plains Indians that it appears a part of the pueblo's population was from the plains.

A special feature of the Salinas Jurisdiction was the salt lakes to the north. Oñate reported the salt was a major trade item in New Mexico. The Indians ate the salt and also used it to

cure meat. After the Spanish settled, they used Indian labor to carry the salt from this region down to the Rio Grande where it was carried in carts to the silver mines in Chihuahua. Salt was necessary in the "patio" process to smelt silver.



20 This kiva is one of a kind at the Pueblo de Las Humanas. The bench inside this kiva, when excavated, had a hard adobe floor covered with an inch of burned wood and charcoal. The roof of the kiva probably extended about two feet (0.6 meters) above the level of the plaza. The opening to the east may have been the entrance. Perhaps in some way this large kiva was for the whole community, while the smaller ones were used by the societies. There is much discussion over the use of these large kivas, many of which have been found at other locations.

Walking now back to the west you will pass beside a semisubterranean kiva, various mounds, another kiva where you will have a good view of the limestone bedrock, and through a small plaza before you reach the last Franciscan church begun at the village.

SECOND CHURCH

21 For centuries the Indians of Las Humanas traded with nomadic Indians from the plains who came and went with the seasons. They were used to new ideas and different peoples. While the visitors themselves were not usually a permanent addition to the pueblo, many of their ideas became a part of the Las Humanas cultural tradition.

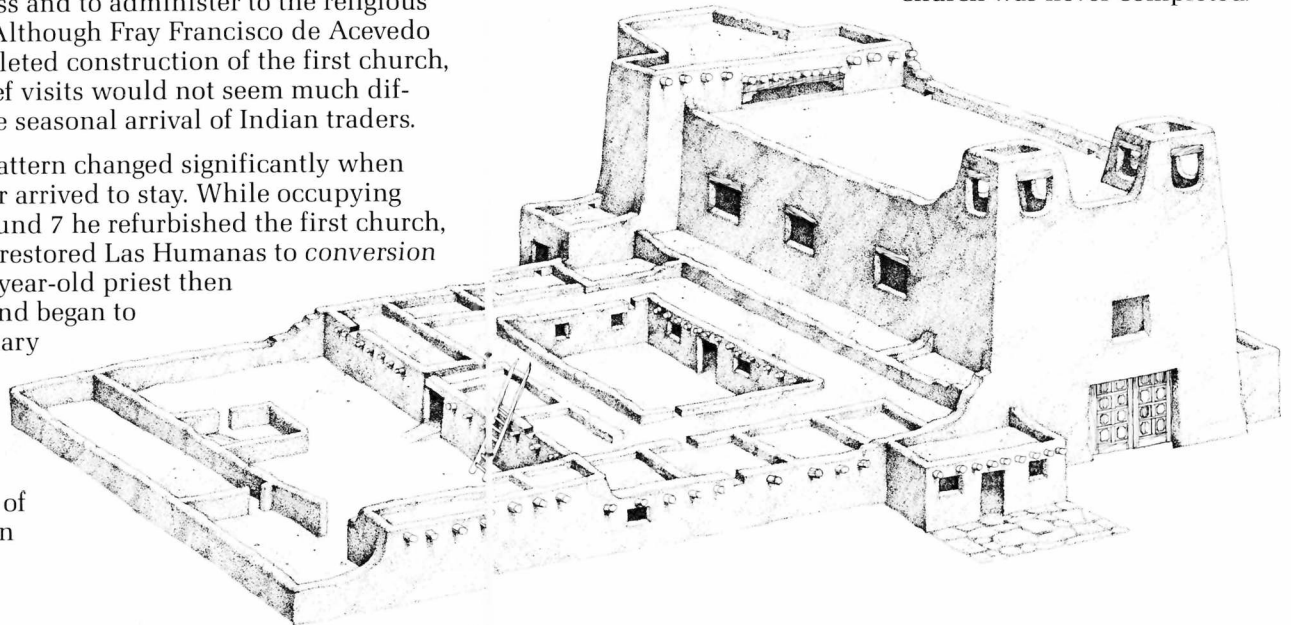
Early contacts with the Spanish priests followed much the same pattern. Certainly Father Letrado seemed a permanent part of the pueblo when he began work on the first church, but soon he too left. Priests from other pueblos came periodically to hold mass and to administer to the religious needs of their charges. Although Fray Francisco de Acevedo of Abó eventually completed construction of the first church, to the Indians these brief visits would not seem much different in nature than the seasonal arrival of Indian traders.

However, in 1659 this pattern changed significantly when Fray Diego de Santander arrived to stay. While occupying the old *convento* in Mound 7 he refurbished the first church, San Buenaventura, and restored Las Humanas to *conversion* status. The twenty-two-year-old priest then organized the Indians and began to build this large missionary complex.

Santander's plan followed the conventions of most other New Mexican missions of the period. Construction began on a cruciform

church with attached office and living quarters. The large room on the right as you enter was to have been the baptistery. Overhead, a choir loft was planned; large holes in the upper part of the walls supported the beam at the front of the loft.

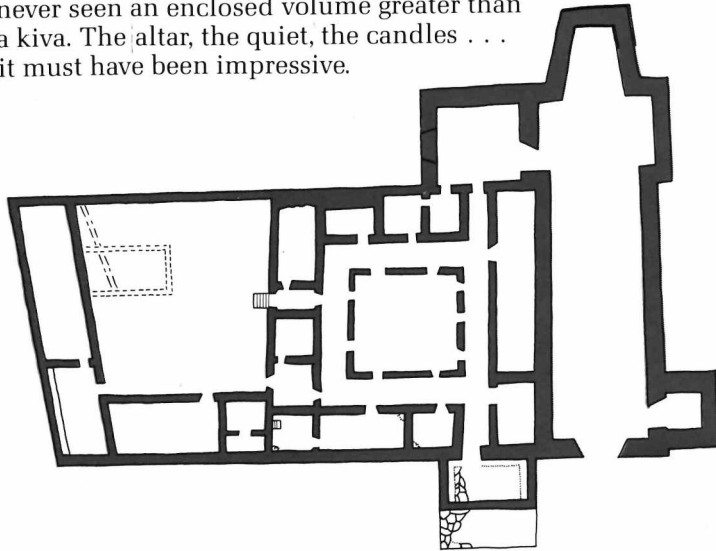
Fray Diego completed enough of the *convento* to live in. But, before work on the church was finished, he was seriously injured in an accident from which he never fully recovered. Santander left Las Humanas in 1662. Although he was replaced by an unknown friar, this church was never completed.



22 The cross-shaped floor plan of this church is typical of larger Spanish churches. Plans called for the main altar to be located in the apse at the far end of the church, with side altars at each end of the transept. The overall outside length of the church is almost 140 feet (forty-three meters), with walls five to six feet (1.5 to 1.8 meters) thick. The floor level of the transept is approximately eight feet (2.4 meters) above grade.

If you have a companion, you will find you can hear each other from opposite ends of the church, even speaking in very low voices. Superlative acoustics were essential if the priest was to be heard by a large congregation.

It is hard to imagine the effect this large building must have had on an Indian, who perhaps had never seen an enclosed volume greater than a kiva. The altar, the quiet, the candles . . . it must have been impressive.



23 This was to be the sacristy, where the priest prepared for church services. Storage cupboards for robes, utensils, and other items used in the mass were typically kept here and in the sacristy store room (stop 24).

The doorway to your left leads to the convento, which was at least partially completed and occupied by Santander. This was a traditional convento arrangement, unlike the small convento where Fray Letrado lived.

24 The large room through the door to the left may have been the sacristy storeroom or a study hall for the convento. Square holes high in the wall are sockets for the roof timbers or vigas. The pine logs for these vigas probably came from the Mesa Jumanos, about twelve miles (twenty kilometers) to the east where old stands of yellow pine may be seen today.

25 The patio to your right was open to the sky and is typical of European architecture. Here the priest could find peace and solitude and escape from the pressures of his life for short periods — perhaps in meditation or in tending to a small garden plot.

The beveled window openings would have allowed light to enter the surrounding corridor as well as to give those inside a view of open space.

26 Walk through the corridor out to the porch. This was the entrance to the convento; historians call it a porter's lodge. This was a convenient place to wait to see the priest.

(Please go back along the corridor and turn left at the next corridor.)

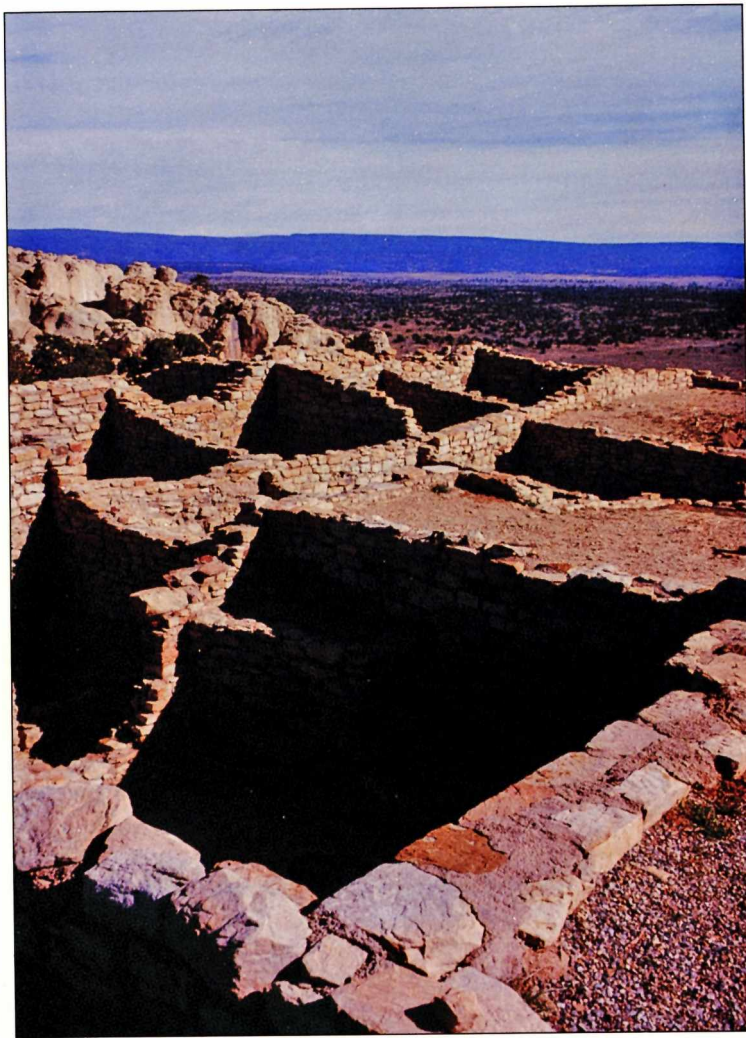


PHOTO RUSS FINLEY

27 For a decade following the departure of Padre Santander, his successors at San Buenaventura mission sporadically continued work on the second church. The convento was eventually completed, but workmanship was rather shoddy. Recent evaluation of evidence, including the amount of debris found within the church, suggests that the walls of the church never extended much above their height today. Since a church is not dedicated to a saint until it is finished, this church was probably never named. In all likelihood, the first church was still in use when Las Humanas was abandoned in 1672.

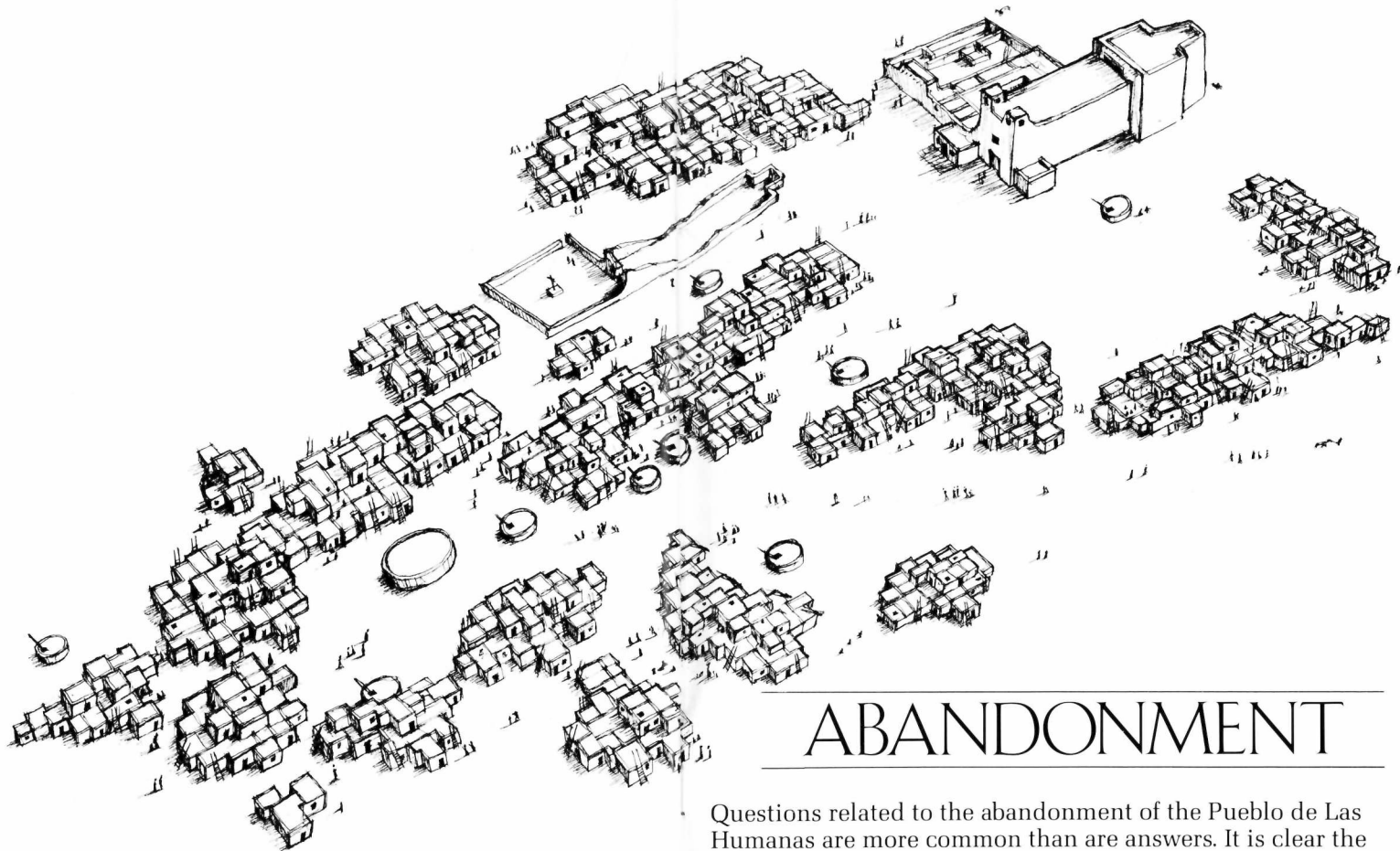
28 This was a corral. We know the priests kept sheep and goats, some oxen, and possibly a few horses. Rooms around the corral served as stables, work areas, etc.

The Park Service has added the steps into the corral. Evidence was found that a ramp had once connected the corral-work area to the rooms in the convento.

29 This stone-lined ditch was built as a drain for the corral three hundred years ago. Today it serves the same purpose. The small rectangular walls may have been an inner corral or pen, or perhaps a separate room for slaughtering.

30 The bench in this room seems to be perfect for a work bench.

Please follow the trail back to the Visitor Center, where exhibits tell more about this pueblo's story. The park ranger will be glad to start the forty-minute film, *Excavation of Mound 7*. This award-winning film is narrated by archeologist Alden Hayes, the person who was in charge of the 1965–67 excavation here and who wrote *Excavation of Mound 7*.



ABANDONMENT

Questions related to the abandonment of the Pueblo de Las Humanas are more common than are answers. It is clear the reasons for the abandonment of this pueblo, and of the whole Salinas Jurisdiction, are many.

Pressures experienced by the people here (famine, disease,

drought, the need to pay tribute, labor requirements, cultural conflict, nomadic Indian attacks, etc.) were also felt by many other groups in New Mexico, and yet they did not leave their ancestral homes. The most important question is probably, what was in the minds of the people? From what we have been able to determine in other pueblos, there are frequently divisions in thinking within each pueblo. Las Humanas does not appear to be an exception, but only the most limited of historical investigations have been undertaken on this area.

Certain characteristics of the Salinas region may have contributed to a greater susceptibility to pressure: very large population; general dependence upon rainfall for agriculture, as surface water was scarce; dependence upon hunting (when compared with other pueblos); and high exposure to Apache groups. If there was a more delicate balance of cultural and environmental factors here than elsewhere in New Mexico, that would help account for the decision of the people to join relatives along the Rio Grande.

With the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, the remnants of the Salinas population fled with the Spanish to the El Paso area, although some undoubtedly had moved to other pueblos during the long, continued exodus of hundreds of people. In the dispersion, the people have probably gone along varying paths of cultural adaptation and change. By the late 1800s they were no longer considered a distinct ethnic group.

NAMES

We cannot be sure what the Indians who lived here called their village. One early Spanish rendering of the Indian name has come down as *Cueloze*. The name *Las Humanas* was first given to this village in 1598 by Oñate, the colonizer of New Mexico. There is considerable variation in the spelling of the name Humanas: documents reveal *Humanos*, *Jumanas*, *Jumanos*, *Xumanas*, and *Xumanos*. The name *Gran Quivira* is a recent addition to these ruins; no Indian who lived here ever heard it! Two hundred years after abandonment — as *Las Humanas* — the gray walls of the pueblo appear to have become the misplaced location of the legendary Quivira, the rich city Coronado looked for (but of course failed to find) out on the Great Plains in 1540. There is no legitimate indication that there was ever any treasure at this pueblo or the mission.

The naming of the churches is a subject mired in ambiguity. Apparently, since there was no church in 1627, Fray Benavides dedicated only the *conversion* (permanent missionary effort) at Las Humanas of San Isidro. Fray Letrado continued this “effort” in 1629 when he established a temporary chapel in a pueblo room. Since it did not have a permanent altar, this chapel would not have been dedicated. The first permanent church was completed by Fray Acevedo of Abó in 1636. It was dedicated to San Buenaventura. A second church was begun, but never completed. Thus, the first church, San Buenaventura, was the only church ever named at Las Humanas.

Southwest Parks and Monuments Association was founded in 1938 to aid and promote the educational and scientific activities of the National Park Service. As a nonprofit organization authorized by Congress, it makes interpretive material available to visitors by sale or free distribution. All net proceeds support the interpretive and research programs of the National Park Service.

SOUTHWEST
PARKS AND
MONUMENTS
ASSOCIATION