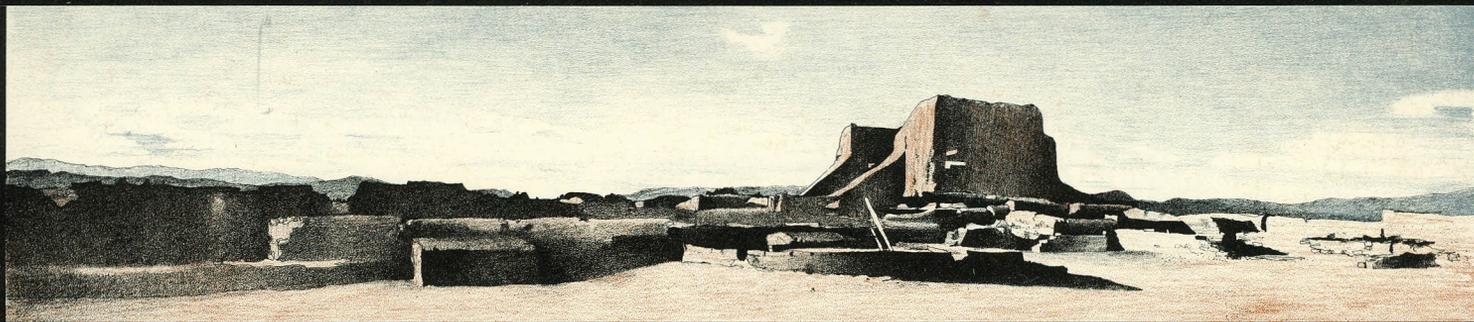
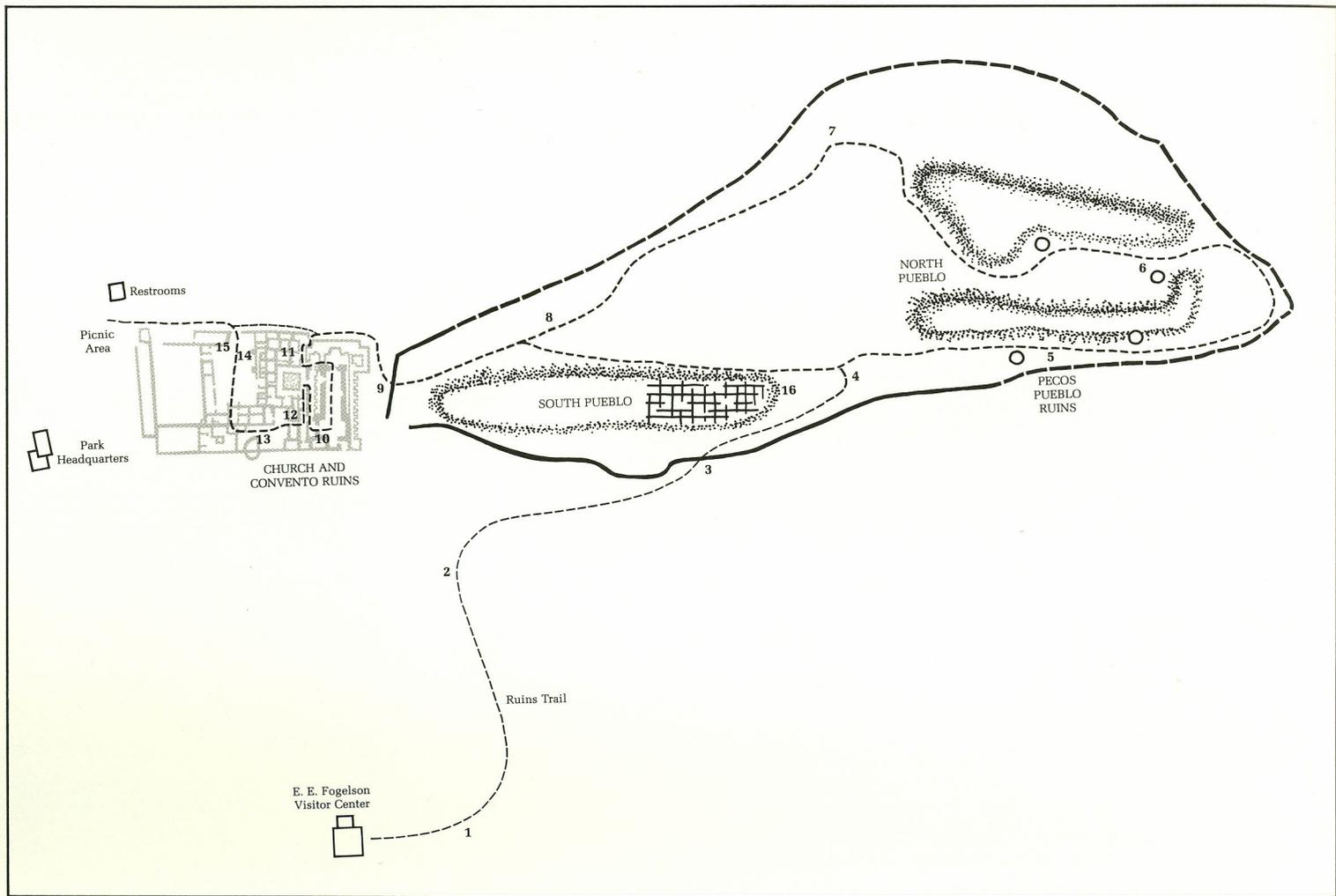


P E C O S



A TRAIL GUIDE TO
THE NATIONAL
MONUMENT, N.M.



TRAIL MAP

Welcome to Pecos National Monument

TRAIL

Length: One and a quarter miles

Time Required: 45 minutes to 1 hour

Terrain: Gentle slope

RULES

Broken pieces of pottery called "pot sherds" will be found throughout the area. Please do not disturb them, but leave them for future visitors to enjoy. No collecting of natural or cultural materials. Walls are very fragile. Please do not climb or stand on them. Pets are allowed. Please keep them on a leash.

WARNING

Stay on the trail. If rattlesnakes are found, please do not disturb. Report sightings to a Park Ranger.

TO USE THIS GUIDE

Numbered flagstone markers along the trail correspond to numbered stops in the trail guide.

Enjoy your visit!

CREDITS

Written by A. William Creutz and Ann Rasor

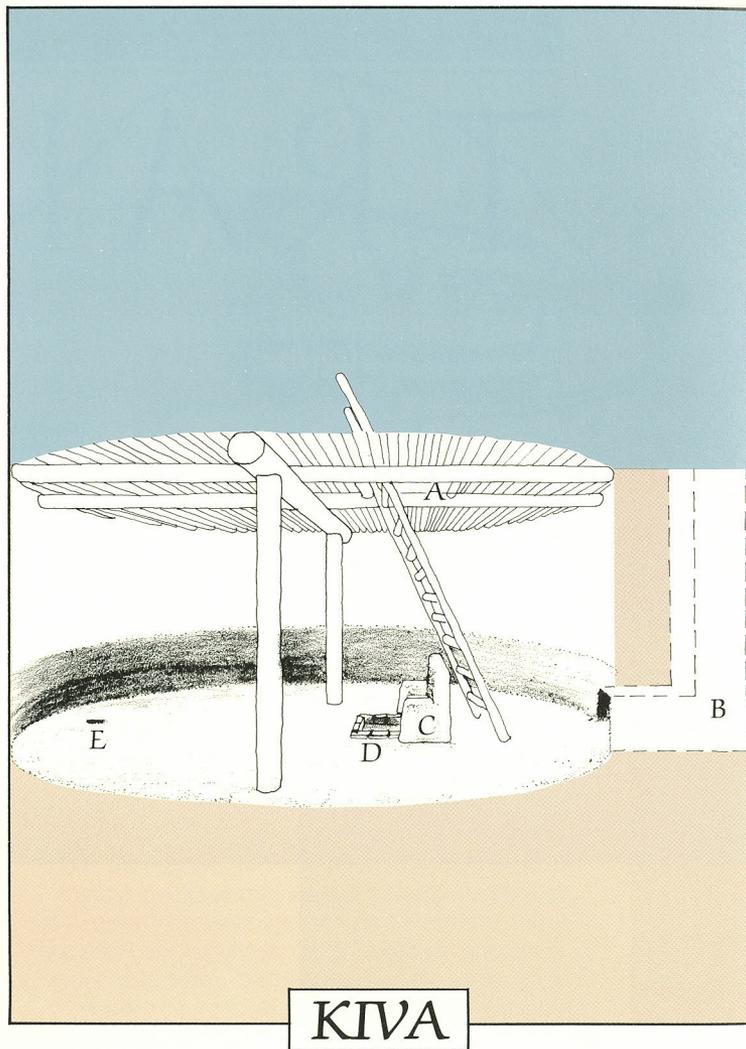
1

City Slightly and Strong

The story of Pecos is one of change, and of a people flexible enough to meet this change, preserve traditions and survive for centuries in this mountain valley. On this ridge are the buried houses of the main characters of this story—the Pueblo people of Pecos.

Pecos, in its heyday, was a thriving village of “2000 souls,” a trading place for Plains Apaches who pitched their tipis in the field in front of you, and a military power that prided itself that “no one had been able to subdue them while they subdue what pueblos they will.”

Here in the fall of 1540, a Spanish expedition was welcomed with the music of drums and birdbone flutes. The Spaniards said their king wished the Indians to be his subjects and to know the Christian God. The Pecos’ lives would be changed forever . . .



2

The Mission

In 1598, the Spanish returned to settle. With the settlers came Franciscan priests who established the mission now in ruins above you. But that is a story to be told later . . .

3

The Boundary

This wall around Pecos Pueblo served as the “city limits.” During the day, visiting Plains Indian traders could come inside to conduct business. At night, though, they had to stay outside this boundary.

4

Pueblo Ceremonial Room

Climb down the ladder into this reconstructed kiva, a place where rituals were performed to insure the well-being of the Pueblo people. Various kiva societies conducted different kinds of ceremonies . . . to increase game, insure a successful hunt or harvest, or to cure the sick. Rows of loom anchors (twig loops imbedded in kiva floors) show that kivas were also workrooms, where men wove the kilts and sashes worn by dancers.

Pecos Pueblo has over 20 kivas. They share some similar features: (A) an entryway through the roof which also served as a chimney; (B) a ventilator shaft to conduct fresh air into the room; (C) a deflector to shield the fire from drafts; (D) a firepit; (E) and a sipapu—a small hole symbolizing the Pueblo people’s emergence from the underworld in their beginning. Many Pueblos regard the kiva as a model of their universe, with the sipapu representing the below, the kiva floor symbolizing this world, and the roof entry representing the above.

5

The Trash Mound

Here the trail rests on trash and debris accumulated from centuries of people living in Pecos Pueblo. These trash deposits attracted A. V. Kidder to Pecos and his excavations at the pueblo began here:

It was obvious that we were digging in the greatest rubbish heap and cemetery that had ever been found in the pueblo region . . . the slope stretched away to the south for nearly a quarter of a mile.

The beds of rubbish were repositories for ashes, house sweepings, table leavings, broken pottery, and discarded implements. They served as well for the burial of the dead . . . caused, apparently by no disrespect for the departed, but rather by the fact that the heaps offered as a rule the only soft earth for grave digging in a land of bare rocks and hard-packed clays.

—A. V. Kidder, 1924

Excavations in the east trash mound ca. 1915.

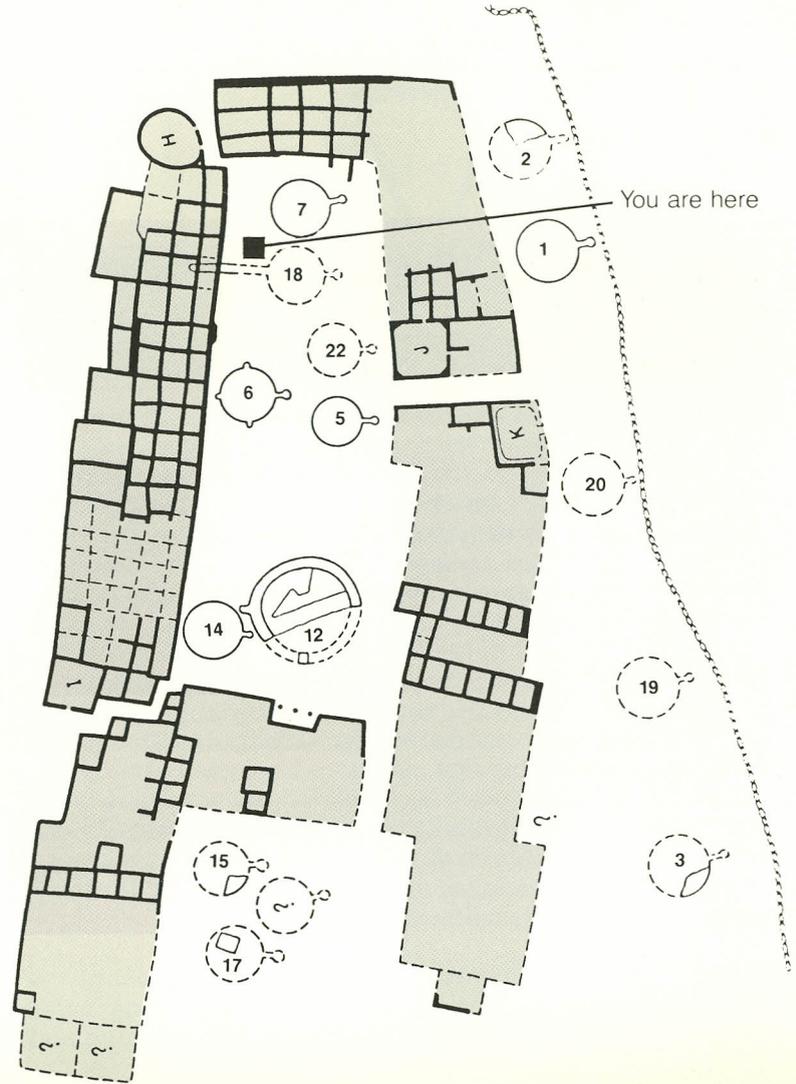


6

The Mighty Village

The mounds surrounding this plaza contain the remnants of the once mighty village of Pecos. In the 1400s a quadrangle of over 600 rooms, four to five stories high would be towering over you. (The top of the present mounds are at about the second story level.)

This map from A. V. Kidder's "Archaeological Notes" shows the fortresslike construction of the pueblo at its peak population. Because the plan is so symmetrical, Kidder believed that the pueblo was "designed in advance and constructed as a unit." A series of porches running along the second and third stories served as upper story passageways. "One can go over the top of the whole village without there being a street to hinder," reported an observer in 1540. The many kivas, however, were not all built or used at the same time. The now-roofless kiva before you (#7) must have been an important one. Evidence shows it was in use for at least two hundred years.



7

Making A Living

Pecos thrived because it had an excellent location. The wide expanse of the Pecos Valley provided plenty of farmland. Two year-round sources of water were nearby—Glorieta Creek, below you, and the Pecos River, one mile east. Spanish observers also reported springs and reservoirs near the pueblo. In addition, the commanding view of the entire valley alerted the Pecos to anyone approaching from the Rio Grande Valley or the Great Plains.

Here, at 7000 feet, frost comes early. The growing season can be short for corn, beans and squash, the principal crops. A successful harvest depended on generations of experience. Crops were planted throughout the spring so that an unexpected late frost would not kill all the young plants. Hundreds of one-room “field houses” throughout the upper valley show that watchful eyes were always on the crops. With plantings came ceremonies to insure the earth’s fertility and, during summer, to bring rain.

The Pecos did not depend on farming alone for their livelihood. They took advantage of wild foods growing in the valley and the mountains, and hunted elk, deer, antelope, and small game in the forests and plains nearby.

Whether through trade or through careful plantings, the Pecos had food to spare when the Spanish arrived. One observer reported tens of thousands of bushels of corn stored in the pueblo.

8

A New Presence

The Franciscan priests arriving with the Spanish brought change to the Pueblo world. A priest assigned to Pecos had one goal: to teach the Indians to become Catholic subjects of the Spanish empire. To help him accomplish this goal, he built, worked in, and centered his life around the “mission” —whose ruins lie directly ahead.



9

The First Church

The first great Pecos Church, completed in 1625 under the supervision of Fray Andres Juárez, was an impressive monument to the missionary effort. Its foundations are visible here under the standing walls of a later church. They stretch 150 feet from altar to entrance, and are 22 feet thick in places. The foundations of the altar area are to your right, the entrance to your left—a reverse of the later church's layout. An estimated 300,000 forty pound adobe bricks were used. This church's rows of exterior buttresses, white-washed walls, and six bell towers is quite a contrast to the pueblo it served.

Fray Juárez faced many difficulties in building the Pecos mission. The Indians had to be taught a new way of building (with adobe brick), and be introduced to a huge new kind of religious structure. The new religion itself was foreign, too. To the Pueblos, the Christian concept of a single church representing one god contrasted with their many kivas centered around the rhythms and harmony of nature.

This church survived 55 years of service to Pecos. During the Pueblo revolt of 1680 the Indians set fire to the roof and toppled its massive walls.

10

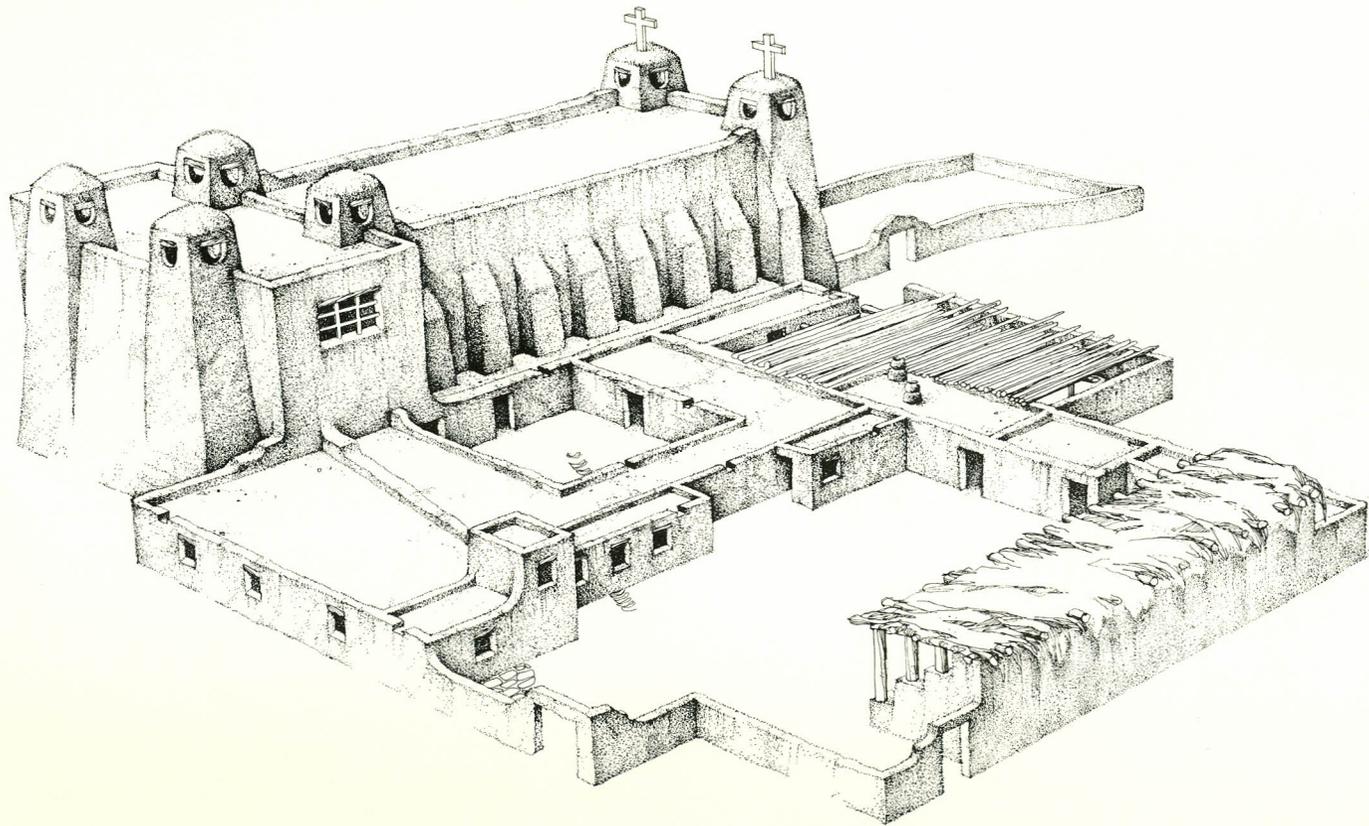
The Last Church

Fray José de Arranegui completed this last Pecos church by 1717. Less ambitious than the one it replaced, this church served a smaller population. Wind, water, and vandalism have reduced it to a shell. However, much of the original adobe remains in the main transept walls. The timbers above the doorway are what is left of beams supporting the roof. If you look closely you can see decorative carving on them. The Pecos Indians were taught woodworking by the friars and soon excelled at it. Their talents were in demand throughout Northern New Mexico.

As you leave the church through the doorway on the right you will enter the convento which housed the priests and mission activities. Back then, walking from here through the convento would have involved finding your way through dim passageways and into small, sparsely furnished rooms.

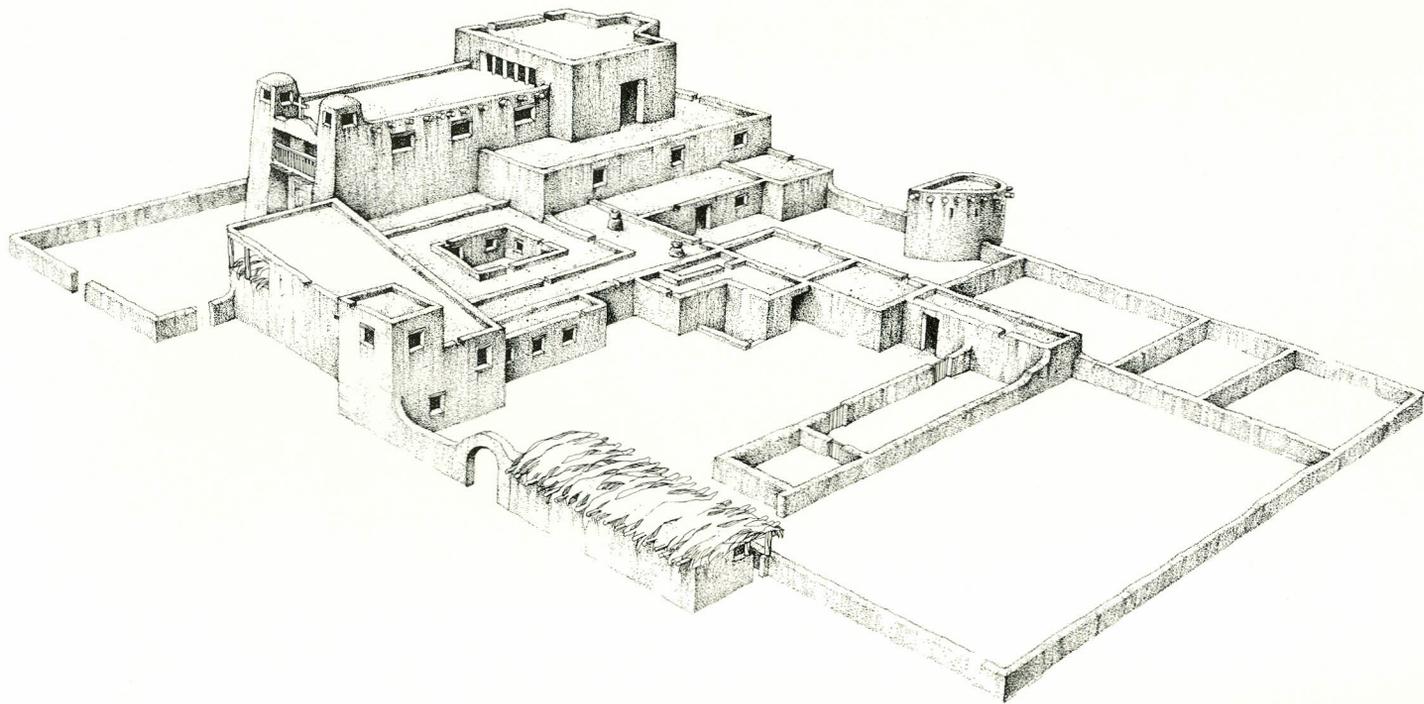
See the following pages for illustrations of both churches.

MISSION OF OUR LADY OF



17TH CENTURY

THE ANGELS OF PORCIÚNCULA



18TH CENTURY

11

Heart of the Convento

This open flagstone patio marked the heart of the convento. The walkway around it was covered. Rooms surrounding it had various uses. The kitchen and dining room were at the far left corner. Rooms with fireplaces were sleeping rooms, while others may have been workrooms or storerooms. The plan of the rooms you see now is the final form of the convento, developed over many years of rebuilding and remodeling.

The drain in the patio is original and dates from the first convento. Water ran off the sloped roof of the passageway into the patio and collected in the drain which led to a cistern at the other end of the convento.

12

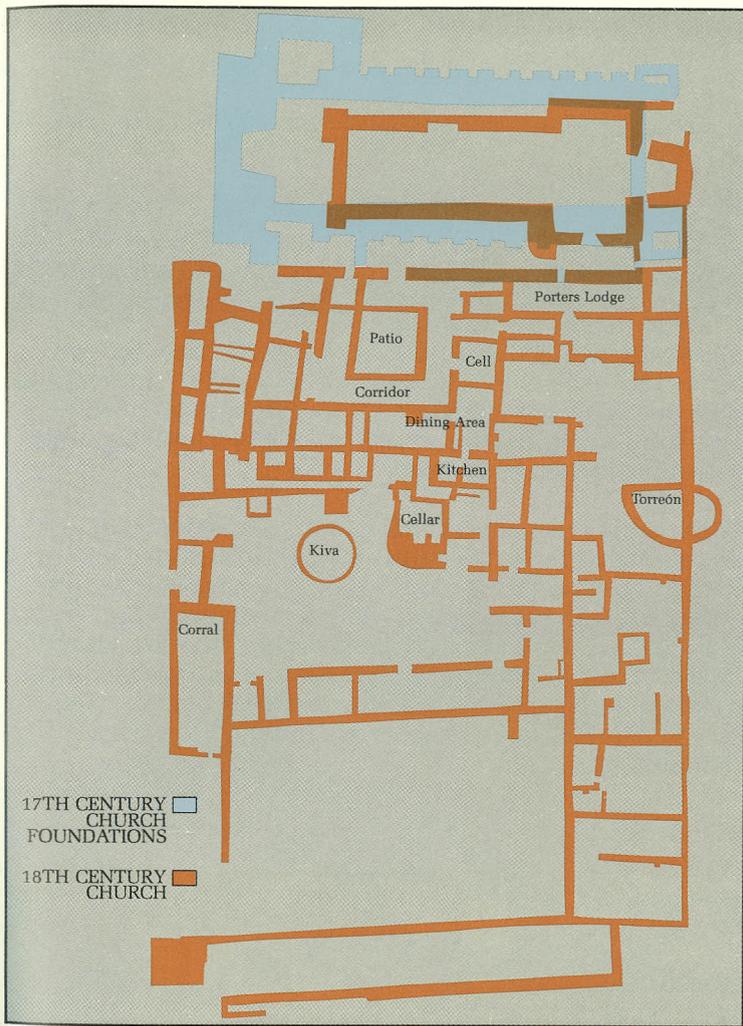
The Porters Lodge

As you entered this convento room in the 1600s you were greeted by the portero. This was the portería (porters lodge), the first mission's business office and reception area. The portero, usually an Indian neophyte or new convert, slept here to guard the convento at night. Special status, like portero, was awarded to Indians as a way of integrating them into Christian society. Neophytes also served in the convento as interpreters, cooks, bellringers, and servants.

13

Ramada & Torreón

Here is evidence of one of the first structures built in the convento and one of the last. The small rings of stones in front of you mark where posts were set in the ground to support the



roof of a ramada, or brush shelter. Visitors to the first church tied their horses here in the shade.

The large foundation to the right of the ramada supports was built a century and a half later. It is the base of a D-shaped torreón or watch tower. During the Comanche raids of the mid-1700s, the gates of the pueblo were fortified and Spanish troops were stationed near the convento.

14

Symbol of the Revolt

A kiva in the convento? Here is a physical symbol of the Pueblo Revolt.

During the early mission efforts, many pueblos were willing to accept the Christian god as another supernatural being, but not to worship him exclusively and abandon their traditional rituals. To the missionaries, the kivas were houses of “idol worship.” When New Mexico suffered from drought, famine and disease in the 1660s, the Pueblos felt the Spaniards had upset the natural order. Native ceremonial activity grew vigorous; the Spaniards responded with force. In 1657, after 50 of their religious leaders were punished, the Pueblos began organizing in secret. The Pueblo Revolt of August, 1680

became one of the most successful rebellions by native people against Europeans.

When the revolt erupted, the Pecos burned and destroyed the first mission. This kiva, built with the adobe rubble, was placed here in the middle of the convento as a symbol of defiance and an attempt to regain the natural order. When the Franciscans returned to rebuild 12 years later, they buried this kiva.

15

Corral

This original cobblestone floor was an easy-to-clean, well-drained floor for corralling livestock. The other half of the roofed corral held feeding troughs. Its location at the edge of the convento with the gate at the far end made it easy to go to and from the fields.

In addition to livestock raising, the mission also supported itself through trade. The Spanish exchanged metal tools and livestock for piñon nuts, hides, and cotton blankets (mantas) woven by the pueblos.

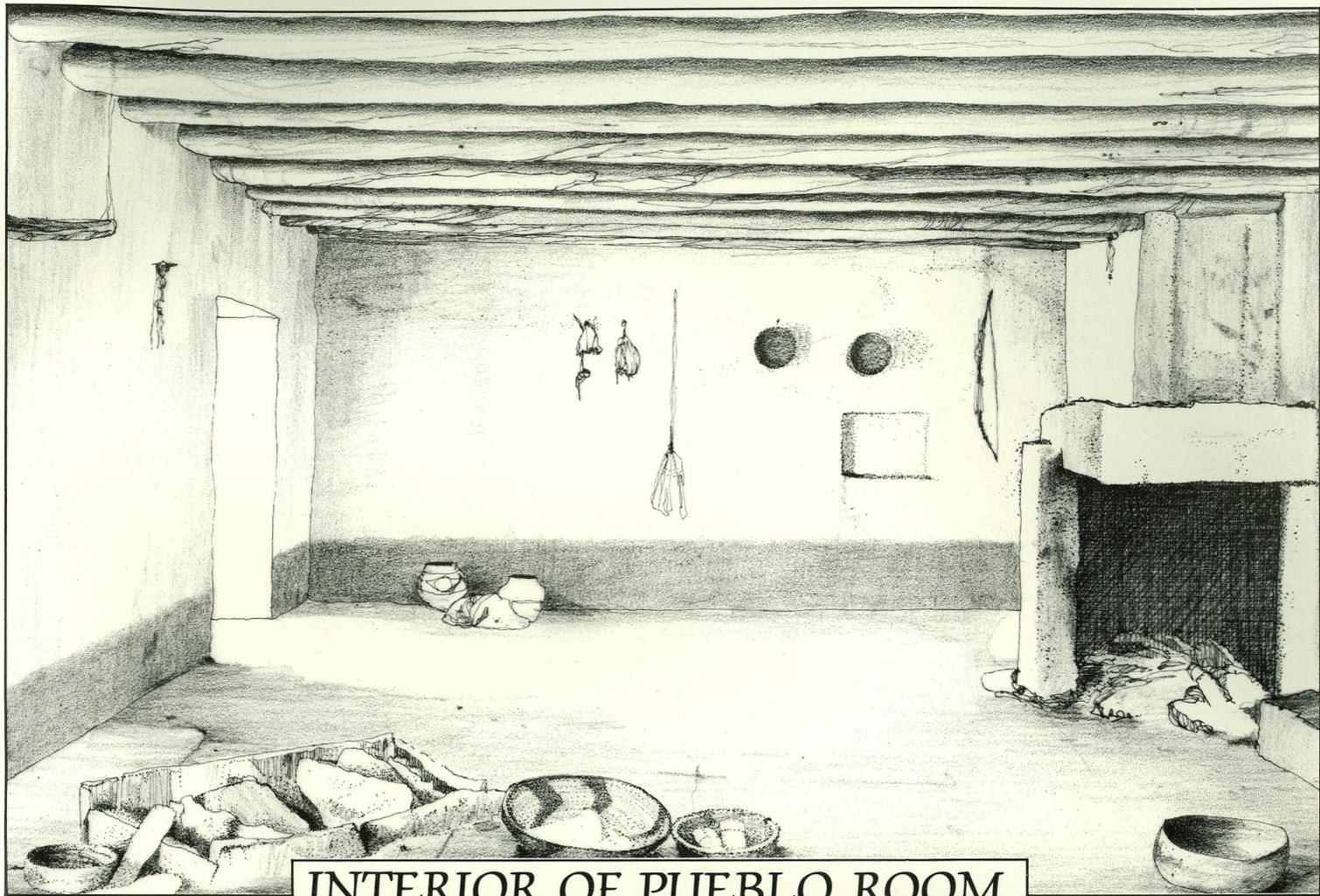
WHEN YOU EXIT THROUGH THE CONVENTO GATE,
TURN RIGHT TO RETURN TO THE VISITOR CENTER

16

South Pueblo

Because it is so close to the mission, some archeologists believe South Pueblo was a separate community, more allied with the Spaniards than the more traditional North Pueblo. Two-thirds of the pueblo remain in the unexcavated mound extending toward the church.

These walls and doorways tell us much about the living arrangements in South Pueblo. In this multi-storied pueblo, a family occupied rooms on all levels. Rooms opening to the outside were living quarters, while those opening only into other rooms were for sleeping and storage. Doorless ground floor rooms were entered through the roof and used for trash disposal. Today these rooms seem cramped, but they were easy to heat and the Pecos were not burdened by many furnishings.



INTERIOR OF PUEBLO ROOM

Epilogue

The Pecos fell victim to circumstances beyond their control. The population severely declined in the 1770s. The Comanche threat led to abandonment of farm land. This, coupled with a drought, caused famine. Hundreds died from epidemics and some simply moved away. By 1800, new Hispanic settlements in the valley had taken over the

trade that had made Pecos prosper.

In 1838 the last Pecos left this home and walked to their cousin-pueblo of Jemez, where their descendents live today. In this sense, Pecos has not been abandoned at all—the pueblo and its people have simply parted company.

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

