

# Gran Quivira

NATIONAL MONUMENT  
NEW MEXICO



# Gran Quivira

## National Monument

*Impressive stone ruins of a frontier Spanish mission that was abandoned in the latter part of the 17th century*

As a tangible expression of the colorful wave of Spanish power and authority which swept over New Mexico in the 17th century, Gran Quivira National Monument stands as a memorial to the mission system which was to convert and Christianize the Indians, preparing them for religious control by the secular clergy. Franciscan missionaries, who were regular clergy, formed the vanguard of the church and European civilization, and their influence has been permanent in the Southwest. Later, Spanish settlers were to exploit economic resources, and Spanish government was to exercise political control.

As one of the best known of the early Franciscan chain in New Mexico, Gran Quivira, in its preservation for present and future American generations, signalizes a great and memorable era of American history.

Gran Quivira National Monument contains 21 ruined house mounds of Indian pueblos and ruins of two mission churches. The earlier church is known as San Isidro, and the later, larger one is known as San Buenaventura. The latter dominates the hilltop and was one of the largest mission structures in New Mexico. It contains the church and an

adjoining convento. The convento is divided into living quarters and corrals. At one time, sheep, goats, and a few cattle were kept in the corrals.

### PREHISTORY

The early occupation in the Gran Quivira area is characterized by the remains of plain brown pottery and pithouses made of timbers, thatch, and mud. The latter were partially dug into the ground. Later these people constructed pueblos of stone.

The earliest Indian pueblo on the monument, founded about A. D. 1300, was located on the south side of the hill just below the larger and later town. It was handy to tilled fields in the lowlands surrounding the hill. By the 1600's this village had become the largest in the region.

Water was a problem then as now. The Indians solved this as best they could by digging shallow wells at the base of the hill, about 1 mile west of the pueblo.

In addition to Pueblo Indian remains, there are traces of another group. These people were the Apache, a nomadic people who alternately traded with and attacked the



*Chupadera black-on-white pottery once used by Pueblo Indians in the town near the mission.*



*Sacristy door and window from the chapel of the larger mission.*

sedentary Indians. The Apaches are the only aboriginal people still in the region; they live on the Mescalero Reservation, 50 miles distant.

### HISTORY

The first Spanish expedition to explore New Mexico, that of Coronado in 1540, did not visit this region. The expeditions of 1581 and 1583 reached this section, but apparently neither party actually visited Gran Quivira.

The first specific reference to Gran Quivira was made in 1630 by Fray Benavides, a Franciscan missionary. He called the pueblo the "Village of the Humanas," and referred to the smaller church there as having been built by Father Francisco Letrado in 1629 and dedicated to San Isidro. Later Humanas, or Gran Quivira, was administered from the mission of San Gregorio de Abo, some 40 miles to the north. In 1659, Father Diego de Santander was assigned to Humanas, and construction on the larger mission building, known as San Buenaventura de las Humanas, was completed by him.

The Franciscans had a pronounced influence upon the Pueblo Indians. They stimulated trade with Mexico, Europe, and with the pueblos farther north. They imported wine grapes from Europe and cultivated them and made wine from them; they also introduced domesticated sheep, goats, cattle, and horses. Pottery was imported from Puebla, Mexico; and porcelains from China by way of the Pacific and Mexico. In the pueblos the aboriginal pottery was adapted to the tastes of the missionaries.

### ABANDONMENT

The pueblo and mission at Humanas were abandoned sometime between 1672 and 1675 because of Apache raids, drought, and crop failures.

The people first moved to the Rio Grande Valley, in the neighborhood of Socorro. A few continued on down to El Paso del Norte, where, in 1680, they were joined by those from Socorro, who had fled with the Spaniards from the Pueblo Revolt of that year.

Since its abandonment, Gran Quivira, as it later came to be known, was visited only in the last century by expeditions of treasure seekers and Army explorers. For many years it has been known as a city of mystery, but in recent years many of the mysteries have been cleared away by the finding of early documents in Spanish and Mexican archives.

### HOW TO REACH THE MONUMENT

You can reach the monument from Mountainair, N. Mex., on U.S. 60, over State Route 10, a distance of 25 miles; or from Carrizozo, N. Mex., on U.S. 54, over State Route 10, a distance of 56 miles.

### ABOUT YOUR VISIT

You may obtain free guide service from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Be sure to visit the archaeological and historical exhibits which are on display in the Visitor Center.

The monument contains a picnic area. Meals and lodging may be obtained at Mountainair or Carrizozo.

*San Buenaventura mission ruins crown the hilltop.*



The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.



*The nave of San Buenaventura after more than two centuries and a half of abandonment.*

**RELATED AREAS**

Other areas of the National Park System commemorating the Spanish period in the Southwest are El Morro National Monument, N. Mex.; Tumacacori National Monument and Coronado National Memorial, Ariz.; and Cabrillo National Monument, Calif.

**MISSION 66**

Mission 66 is a program designed to be completed by 1966 which will assure the maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources of the Na-

tional Park System in such ways and by such means as will make them available for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

**ADMINISTRATION**

Gran Quivira National Monument, established on November 1, 1909, and containing 611 acres of Federal lands, is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Gran Quivira, N. Mex., is in immediate charge.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Stewart L. Udall, *Secretary*  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*



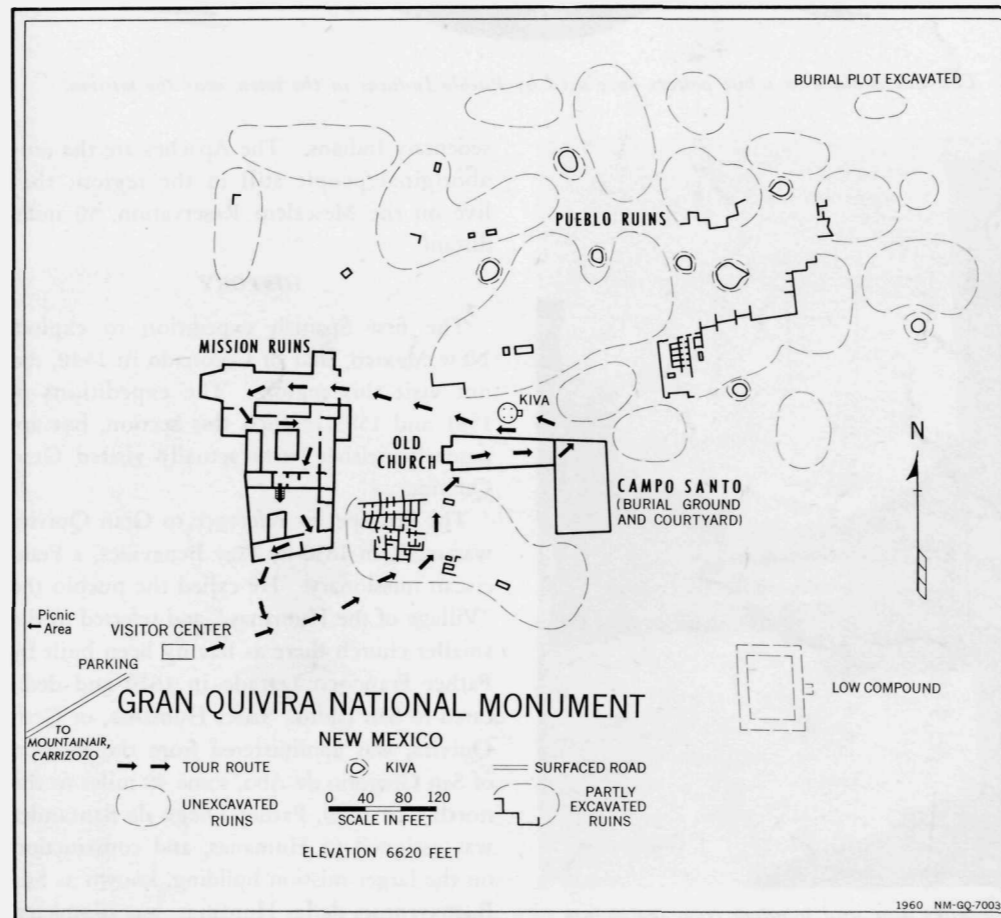
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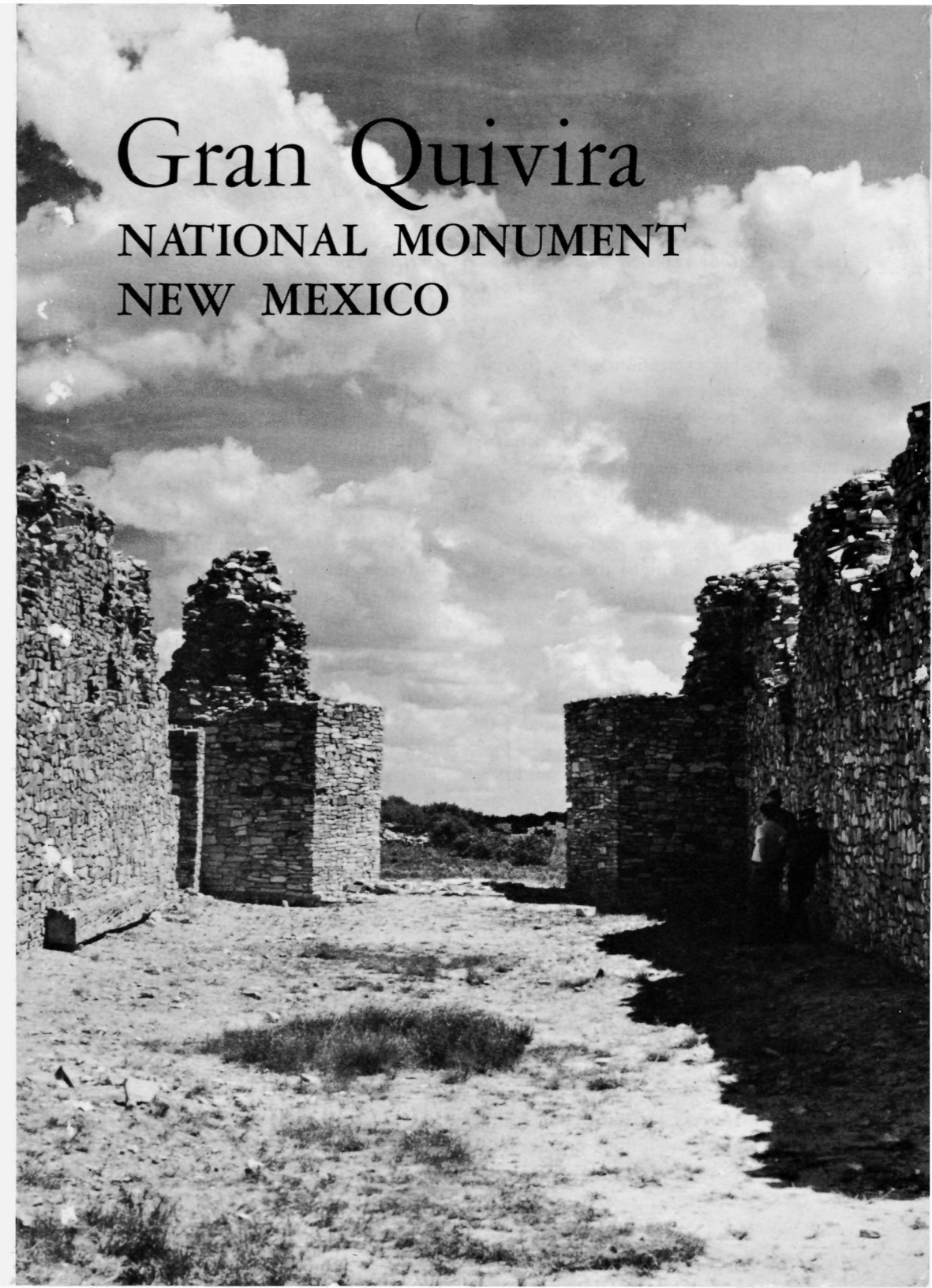
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Revised 1961

Cover: Ruins of the Mission Church

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