

# GRAN QUIVIRA

NATIONAL MONUMENT • NEW MEXICO



## ABOUT YOUR VISIT

From U.S. 60, you can reach the monument by turning south at Mountainair and driving 26 miles on N. Mex. 10. From U.S. 380, turn north at Carrizozo and drive 56 miles via U.S. 54 and N. Mex. 10 (unpaved for 39 miles). You can also reach the monument by turning off U.S. 380 at Bingham and driving north on N. Mex. 41, but you should use this road only in good weather.

The visitor center contains archeological and historical exhibits. You should visit it before taking the self-guiding Mission Trail, for it will help you understand what you will see on this 20-minute walk through the ruins of the mission churches and the Indian pueblo.

A picnic area is available, but there is no campground. Meals and lodging can be obtained at nearby towns.

Help protect this national monument. **Take nothing but pictures; leave nothing but footprints.**

## ADMINISTRATION

Gran Quivira National Monument, established on November 1, 1909, and containing 611 acres, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Route 1, Mountainair, N. Mex. 87036, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States, now and in the future.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

☆U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1970-435-395/21

REPRINT 1970



*On a ridge atop Chupadera Mesa in central New Mexico stands San Buenaventura, a 17th-century Franciscan church abandoned long ago. And near it is the Indian Pueblo de las Humanas, which surrounds another Franciscan church, San Isidro. These ruins are preserved in Gran Quivira National Monument.*

## THE EARLY PEOPLE

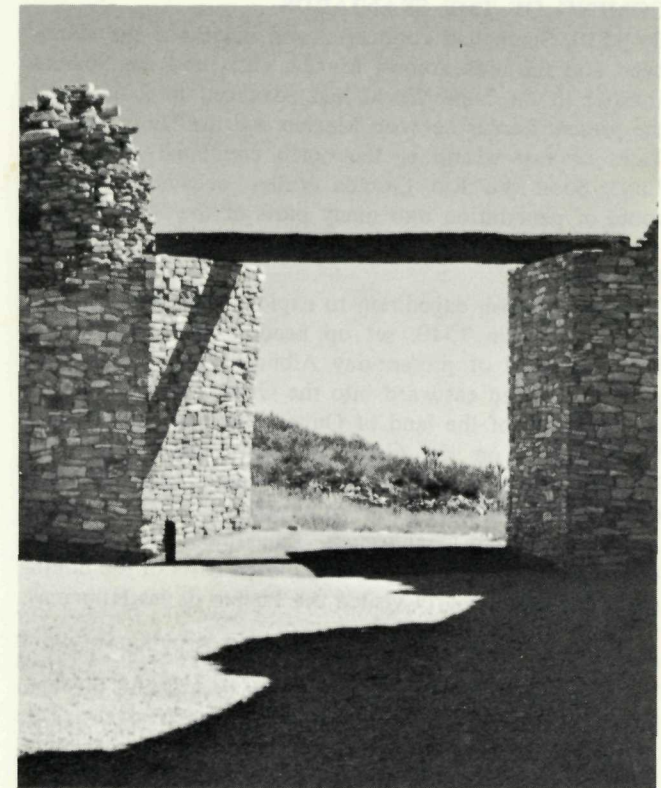
The Indians who once occupied the land between Gran Quivira and the Mexican border belonged to a group known as the Mogollon (Mug-ee-yown). The earliest evidences of these people in the Gran Quivira area are small clusters of pithouses built partly above ground, which date from A.D. 800. Evidently these people farmed only on a small scale, relying upon hunting and gathering for most of their food. Their handcrafts included plain brown pottery.

In the 1100's, pottery made from a light-gray clay and decorated with black designs was introduced to the Mogollon by Indians from the Pueblo area to the west. Active trade relations with people in the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico and the later movement of large numbers of Pueblo people into the Galisteo basin to the north also had a pronounced influence upon Mogollon life. It was during this period that black-on-white pottery became popular, and the kiva, an underground ceremonial chamber involving new religious concepts, was adopted. Building styles changed too—from individual family dwellings to community houses with several families living side by side. By the 1300's, the culture of Gran Quivira was similar to that of the pueblos in the Rio Grande Valley.

The oldest community house in the monument, located on the south slope of the ridge, was constructed about 1300. It was a one-story rectangular structure of coursed masonry with a central plaza entered through a narrow passage in its eastern side. Later this house was abandoned, and larger one-story buildings of grayish-blue limestone were erected on the ridge. By the 1600's, this had become the largest village in the region.

The village, later named Pueblo de las Humanas by the Spaniards, had a farming-hunting-gathering economy. The Indians grew corn, squash, and beans, and they hunted deer, pronghorn, and smaller creatures such as quail and rabbit. They gathered wild seed of the saltbush, mature pods of the cholla and pricklypear cactuses, and the roots, seeds, flowers, and tender stalks of the yucca plant. Yucca leaves were used for sandals and basketry. The people traded with the Plains Apache—corn for buffalo meat and hides.

They made arrow points, knives, drills, and scrapers of obsidian, chalcedony, and chert; bone awls for basket making and bone fleshing tools for preparing hides; and stone axes for cutting the juniper roof beams of the houses. They fashioned both plain cooking pots and slipped and painted pottery vessels.



In this semiarid region, water was a major problem for these ancient people. Garden produce, wild plants and animals, and the people themselves were dependent upon the vagaries of summer storms and unpredictable water tables. They dug wells 15 to 25 feet deep in the sandy valley about three-quarters of a mile west of the pueblo, and constructed collecting basins by damming the arroyos. Springs were not plentiful, and the wells and reservoirs often dried up.

The religion of these people was animistic: plants and animals, as well as men, had souls. They believed that the forces of nature—wind, rain, fertility of plants, reproduction of animals—could be controlled by the proper performance of rites long ago taught them by the spirits and handed down from generation to generation. The whole way of life—the planting and harvesting of crops, hunting, warfare, birth, and death—was closely interwoven with religious beliefs and ritual performances.

Thus the Pueblo de las Humanas (Gran Quivira) awaited the next episode of history: the entry of the Spanish conquistadors and the Franciscan padres.



### COMING OF THE SPANIARDS

By 1530, Spain had conquered and colonized the Caribbean and the area around Mexico City, and the Spanish frontier in the New World had advanced to a line near the present border between Mexico and the United States. Tales of vast wealth to the north circulated in Mexico City. Soon the Rio Grande Valley became the main route of penetration into many parts of the Southwest.

### Conquest

The first Spanish expedition to explore New Mexico, that of Coronado in 1540, set up headquarters for 2 years in the vicinity of present-day Albuquerque. From there parties ventured eastward into the Great Plains, in search of the riches of the land of Quivira (now known to have been located on the Great Plains in central Kansas). Exploratory trips were also made south along the Rio Grande, some 40 miles west of Pueblo de las Humanas.

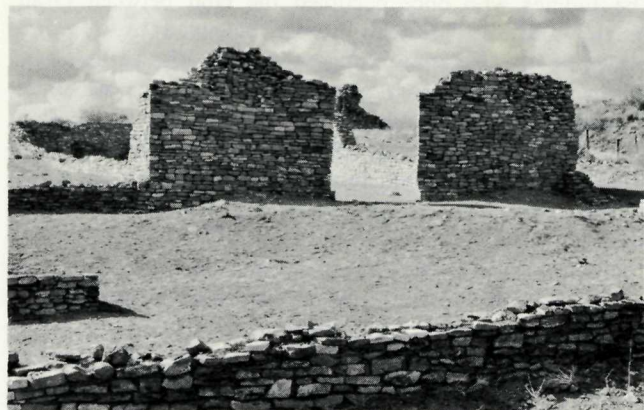
The Rodriguez-Chamuscado Expedition of 1581 and the Espejo Expedition of 1583 explored parts of the Southwest, but neither party visited the Pueblo de las Humanas.

### Conversion

The Spanish crown sought to develop its colonies through Christianized natives inculcated with Spanish ideals. The agents for accomplishing this task in New Mexico were the Franciscan missionaries: The padres visited pueblos, introduced Catholicism, and established missions. The mission, encompassing more than just the church, was an entire community comprising farming and grazing lands, as well as an industrial and agricultural school, weaving rooms, tanneries, and the center for religious instruction. It sought to replace the economic, religious, and political way of life of the Indian with that of the Spaniards.

In October 1598, Don Juan de Oñate set out on a reconnoitering journey up the Rio Grande Valley. During this trip he visited the villages of the Humanos Indians and recorded three pueblos, one of which he reported as being large. This is the first known visit to Pueblo de las Humanas by Europeans.

Records of Spanish missionary activity at Gran Quivira are scanty. In 1626, the pueblo is first mentioned as a *visita* of the mission of San Gregorio de Abo, 20 miles northwest. The next year, Fray Alonso de Benavides entered the Humanas pueblo on the Day of San Isidro. He later reported that in 1629 Father Letrado, who was assigned here for 2 years, built a very fine church dedicated to San Isidro. Between 1631 and 1659 the pueblo was again administered from the mission at Abo. In 1659,

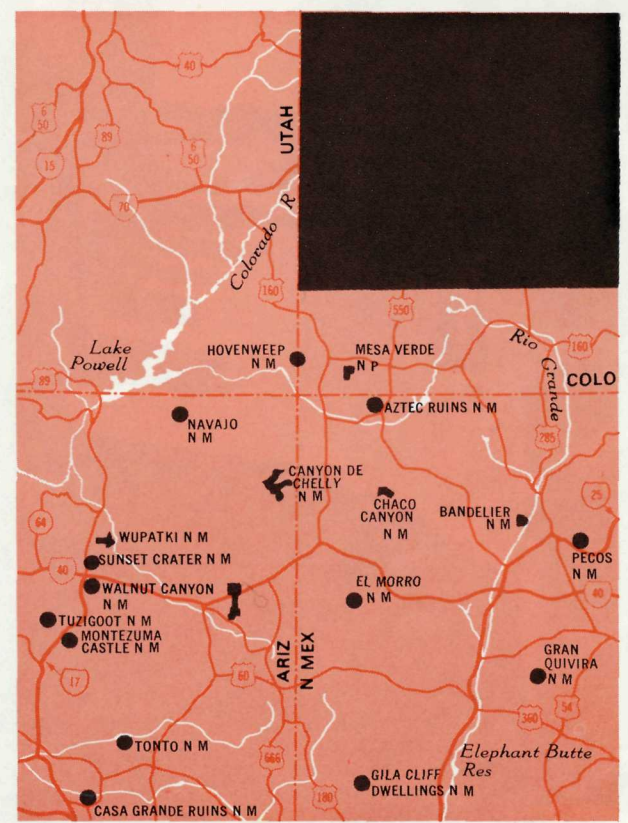
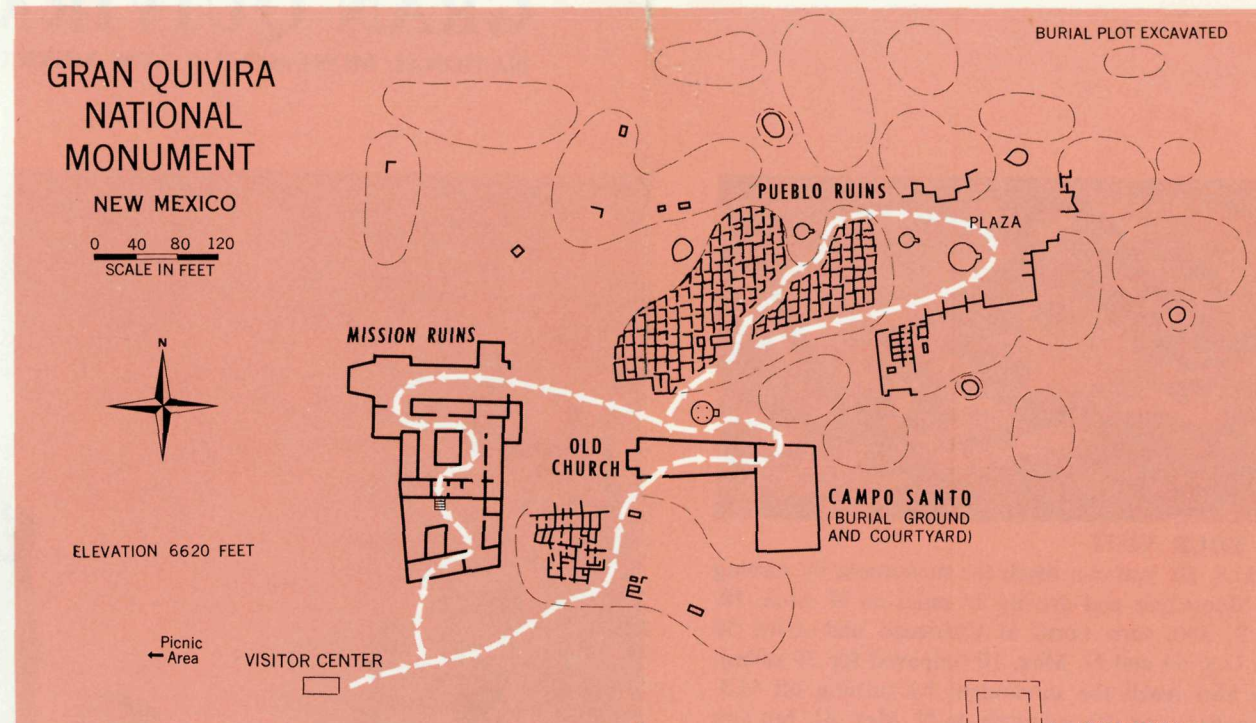


Father Diego Santander was assigned to the pueblo. He rededicated the mission to San Buenaventura and enlarged the church facilities. He left in 1662, and in all probability the mission once more became a *visita* of Abo. Father Paredes was assigned in 1666 and remained in charge until 1669. There are no records indicating that any priest served here between that time and the abandonment of the pueblo in the early 1670's.

A severe drought in 1666-70, accompanied by famine, pestilence, and increasing Apache raids on the village, destroyed much of the population. Sometime between 1672 and 1675, the pueblo was abandoned, and the Indians still remaining there moved to the Rio Grande Valley in the vicinity of Socorro, joining a people who spoke the same language. A few of them continued to El Paso del Norte where, in 1680, they were joined by those from Socorro who had fled with the Spaniards during the Pueblo Revolt of that year.

What effect did the early Spaniards have upon the Pueblo people? The most obvious effect was in the realm of material culture. With the introduction of wheat bread came the beehive oven, not known before Spanish times. Cattle, goats, and sheep, the latter providing wool for weaving, were made a part of the economy. New pottery forms and designs began to appear. An elective governor system, intended to replace the native religious council and priests, was instituted, but without success.

The actual extent of Spanish religious influence is difficult to determine. The supernatural beings of the Indians were not usually replaced; rather, Catholic saints were simply added to the roster. Cults containing both native and Catholic elements sprang up, and the church became another center of ceremony, sharing a place with the kiva and its rites.



SOUTHWEST ARCHEOLOGICAL AREAS



SOUTHWEST REGION