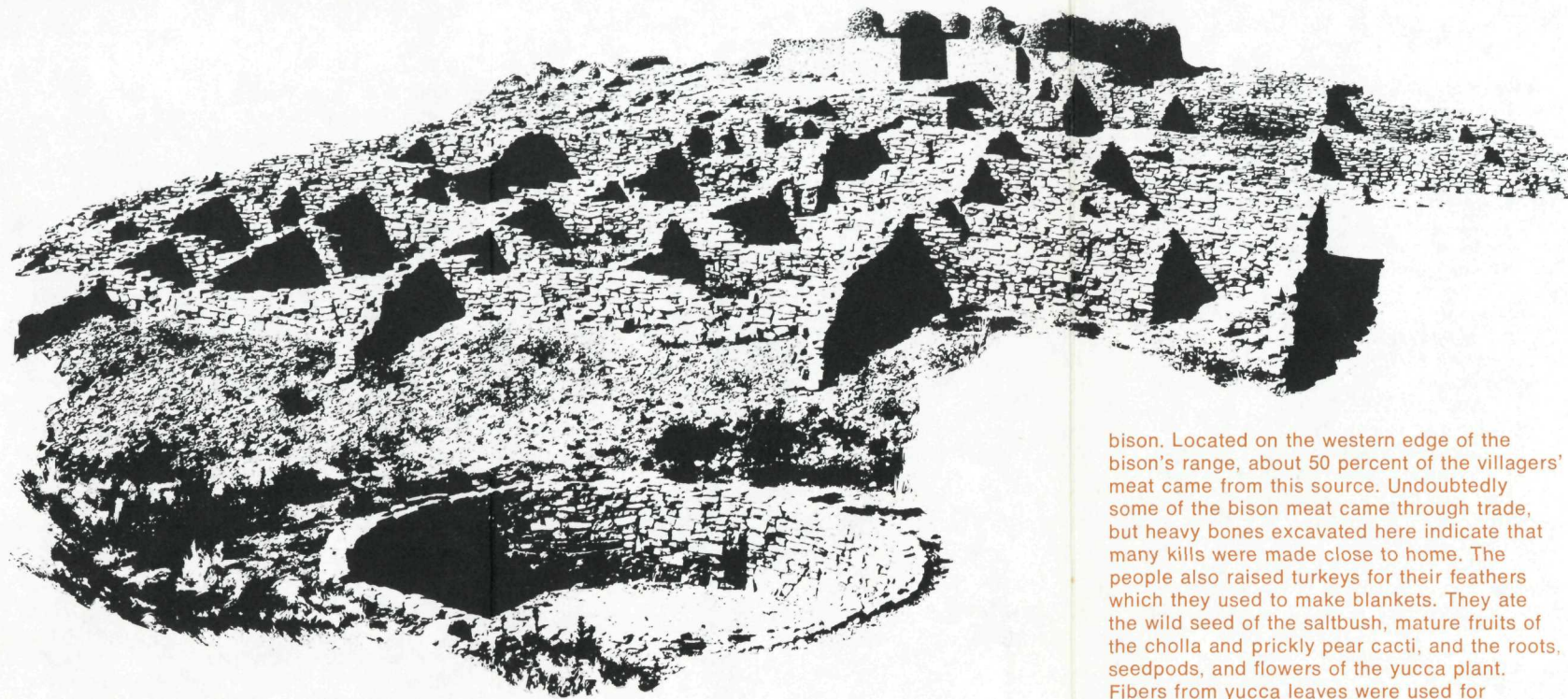


# gran quivira



Here on a ridge atop Chupadero Mesa in central New Mexico stand the ruins of an Indian pueblo and two 17th century Franciscan mission churches. More than 1200 years ago the first Indians came into the area. Through the centuries different groups came into contact with one another, passing on and adopting various cultural traits. In the 17th century the Spaniards arrived and made their contribution. Though the physical structures put up by these different people are now in ruins, the blending of cultures is visible yet today in the American Southwest.

#### The Indians at Gran Quivira

Mogollon. Anasazi. What are they, or who are they? They are the names of two groups of people who lived in the American Southwest from about 800 to 1400. The Mogollon (pronounced Mug-ee-yown) lived in present-day southern Arizona and New Mexico, and the Anasazi lived in the northern area of those two States.

It has always been easy to lump all the original inhabitants of North America into one category and call them Indians. But that is as misleading as making no distinction among Europeans, Asians, or any other group of people. And the Mogollon and Anasazi were two very different peoples amidst a whole galaxy of Indian cultures in North America.

The Mogollon did not do much farming but did gather wild plants, hunt small game and make brown and red pottery. Toward the year 1000 the Mogollon came under the influence of the Anasazi, whose culture was marked by fine basket making and pottery, highly developed religious and social structures, and food gathering and farming. Soon the Anasazi civilization pervaded many aspects of Mogollon life and within a century little trace remained of their old ways.

The people of Gran Quivira (They called it Cueloze.) lived in the area where these cultures met and blended. Here at the northeast corner of the Mogollon and southeast corner of Anasazi cultural areas, Gran Quivira was marginal to both. The earliest evidence of people is the small clusters of pithouses built partly above ground and dating from 800. The occupants of these dwellings made plain brown pottery, did some farming, and relied on hunting and gathering for most of their food, like the Mogollon.

In the 12th century, Anasazi influence began to creep in and soon came to predominate. A distinctive pottery made of light gray clay and decorated with black designs was introduced from the northwest and became the common local ceramic type. It is known as Chupadero (for the mesa) black-on-white.

Techniques of housebuilding began to change. Instead of individual family pithouses, people began to build post and adobe structures above ground. Finally they developed masonry community houses, with several families living in the same structure. The pithouse idea was retained, however, in the Anasazi kiva, the underground ceremonial chamber. By the 1300's the culture of the Gran Quivira was very similar to that of most other pueblos in the Rio Grande Valley. One of the earliest community houses at Gran Quivira was a circular structure with a kiva at the hub and the concentric circles of rooms radiating out from it. The structure was used for about 75 years and then abandoned. This house was a variation of the



Masonry construction represents the final building development at Gran Quivira. Limestone was easily obtained, for it underlies the entire area. The mortar consisted of a sandy material mixed with earth, ashes, and fibers. Today the ruins are stabilized.

more popular arc or D-shaped houses that were being built throughout the Southwest. The style died out when more rectangular designs came into use.

Around the middle of the 16th century another set of changes took place in the village. At least one of the structures underwent major rebuilding and enlargement. A new type of pottery appeared. And besides continuing the old practice of burying the dead, cremation came into use. What caused these major changes in such a conservative culture? The most plausible explanation is that a new group of non-related people moved in, although no one knows who they were or where they came from. Again Gran Quivira found itself the home of two cultures that were blending to form a third. The new form did not dominate either of the older ones, but it did create an environment in which previously unrelated customs could live together.

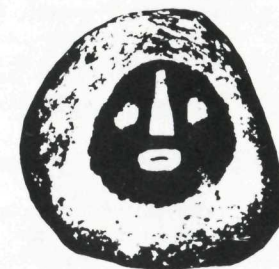
The village which in the 17th century had become the largest in the region had an economy based on farming, hunting, and gathering. The Indians grew corn, squash, and beans, and they hunted deer, pronghorn, and smaller creatures such as quail and rabbit. The most important source of meat, however, was the

bison. Located on the western edge of the bison's range, about 50 percent of the villagers' meat came from this source. Undoubtedly some of the bison meat came through trade, but heavy bones excavated here indicate that many kills were made close to home. The people also raised turkeys for their feathers which they used to make blankets. They ate the wild seed of the saltbush, mature fruits of the cholla and prickly pear cacti, and the roots, seedpods, and flowers of the yucca plant. Fibers from yucca leaves were used for sandals and basketry, and its roots for soap.

Located at the junction of cultural areas, the village also stood where the sedentary Pueblo cultures of the Rio Grande Valley met the nomadic Indians of the plains to the east. Gran Quivira became a trading center. Corn and cotton, perhaps, were traded for bison meat and hides, and cultural ideas no doubt were exchanged. This trade was not all with tribes to the east; excavations have turned up jewelry made of shells from the Gulf of California and a Macaw skeleton from Central America. Arrowpoints, knives, drills, bone awls for basket-making and sewing, bone fleshing tools for preparing hides, and scrapers of obsidian, chalcedony, and chert were produced locally. The obsidian came from the north. Flint tools came from areas to the southeast—present-day Texas. Stone axes for cutting pinyon and juniper roof beams were made locally and also imported from pueblos to the north that specialized in making fine stone axes. Although they manufactured plain cooking pots and slipped and painted pottery vessels, much glazeware and other pottery that struck their fancy was imported. In short, a lot was done locally, but there was great interchange with the outside world.

In this semiarid region, water was a major problem. Garden produce, wild plants, animals, and the people themselves depended upon irregular summer storms and unpredictable water tables. Shallow wells 5 to 8 meters (15 to 25 feet) deep were dug in the sandy valley about one kilometer (0.7 miles) west of the pueblo, and collecting basins were constructed by damming arroyos. Springs, if any, were not plentiful, and the wells and basins often dried up.

So the people built and lived, planted and harvested, worked and died. The entry of the Spanish conquistadors and the Franciscan padres would be another meeting of cultures in the Gran Quivira area.



Important in Pueblo religious life were stone or wood representations of spirits or deities. Few are left today because Spanish missionaries destroyed most native religious paraphernalia. In *Excavations in a 17th Century Jumano Pueblo*, Gordon Vivian says "the natural black cobble was covered with a heavy lime deposit and the features were produced by cutting away unwanted portions of the deposit—white eyes, nose, and mouth—in low relief on a black face."

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#### For Your Safety

Do not allow your visit to be spoiled by an accident. While every effort has been made to provide for your safety, there are still hazards which require your alertness and vigilance. Exercise common sense and caution. Help protect this historic area. Take nothing but pictures; leave nothing but footprints.

#### Administration

Gran Quivira National Monument, established in 1909 and containing 247 hectares (611 acres), is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Mountainair, NM 87036, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

### The Coming of the Spaniards

The advance of the Spaniards into New Mexico was only one facet of a general worldwide expansion by Europeans. Explorers of many nationalities could be found on all continents. Following the explorers were the colonists. 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 the present Mexico-United States border. Tales of vast wealth to the north in a land called Quivira began to circulate in Mexico City. Soon the Rio Grande Valley became the main route of exploration into many parts of the Southwest.

The first Spanish expedition to explore New Mexico, that of Francisco Coronado in 1540, set up headquarters for two years in the vicinity of present-day Albuquerque. From there parties ventured eastward into the Great Plains in search of the fabled riches. The riches turned out to be non-existent, but the story and the name Quivira have lingered through time.

At the end of the century came Don Juan de Oñate. His party entered New Mexico not to explore and depart, but to stay. In October 1598 Oñate set out on a reconnoitering journey down the Salinas Valley. During this trip he visited three villages of the Humanas Indians, one of which he reported as being large. He named it Pueblo de las Humanas. This is the first definitely known visit to Gran Quivira by any European.

By 1609 Oñate and others were advising King Philip III to abandon New Mexico. The expected mineral riches had not materialized, and the

The ceramic candlestick is evidence of the Spanish influence in the pueblo and was perhaps used in religious services. It was found in the rubble of the same kiva where the stone face was discovered.



climate and terrain made agriculture difficult. New Mexico was costing money and contributing nothing to the great silver fleets that annually left for Spain. What Oñate and the other advisers were saying was true, but the King had other factors to consider. The Pope had specifically charged the Spanish Crown with the task of Christianizing the natives of the New World, and the Franciscans argued that the King must maintain the missionary effort there regardless of the expense. Philip III was a very religious man; during his reign about one-third of the population of the country was in the service of the Church, mostly due to his urging. Thus the Franciscans' view prevailed and for the remainder of the 17th century New Mexico was maintained as a missionary effort, largely at the expense of the crown.

In 1627 Father Alonso de Benevides preached a sermon in the plaza of Pueblo de las Humanas and reported to his superiors that "the whole pueblo was converted." Whether the Indians knew it or not is an open question. Two years later Father Francisco Letrado arrived. He directed the construction of the *convento* (the priest's living quarters and classrooms), and a small church named San Isidro. But in 1632 he moved to the Zuni pueblos.

Letrado was not immediately replaced at Las Humanas and for 28 years the pueblo was a *visita*, a branch of the mission of San Gregorio de Abo, 32 kilometers (20 miles) northwest. Then in 1659 Father Diego Santander was assigned to the pueblo. It was probably Santander who, finding Letrado's small structure in total disrepair, built the massive San Buena-ventura with its attached *convento*. He left in 1662, and Father Joseph de Paredes served from 1666 to 1669. He apparently was the last priest to hold the post, for the records give no further names from his departure until the abandonment in the 1670's.

What effect did the early Spaniards have upon the pueblo people? The most obvious impact was upon the material culture. Wheat and wheat bread were introduced. Cattle, goats, and sheep, the latter providing wool for weaving, became a fixed part of the economy. New

pottery forms and designs began to appear. The Indians learned the use of metal. One of the most enduring results was the introduction of the horse which revolutionized the inter-tribal balances of power as modern weaponry was to do later. And an elective governor system, intended to replace the native religious council and priests, was set up, but without much success. The Spaniards probably had a bigger impact on the Indians than any other group with which they had come in contact. The Indians, as in every case before and since, evaluated the ways of the newcomers and took and used what seemed beneficial.

For three centuries now the Pueblo de las Humanas has been abandoned. The reasons are complex and not fully understood. The immediate, primary cause was the severe 1666-70 drought, accompanied by famine and pestilence. Increasing raids by Apaches who had become much more mobile with the introduction of the horse also destroyed much of the population. To what extent the overlay of a new culture contributed to these emergencies or affected the ability of the pueblo to respond to them is not known. It is a difficult question to answer from the distance of three centuries.

### About Your Visit

From U.S. 60 you can reach the park by turning south at Mountainair and driving 42 kilometers (26 miles) on N.M. 14. From U.S. 380 you can turn north at Carrizozo and drive 90 kilometers (56 miles) via U.S. 54 and N.M. 14 which is unpaved for 63 kilometers (39 miles). Or you may turn north on N.M. 41 at Bingham which is unpaved for 66 kilometers (41 miles). But you should use both these roads only in good weather. Stop first at the visitor center which contains archeological and historical exhibits. The 30-minute walk through the ruins of the Indian pueblo and the mission churches begins at the visitor center. You can borrow or purchase a self-guiding tour folder for the walk. Arrangements can be made for guided tours for organized groups.

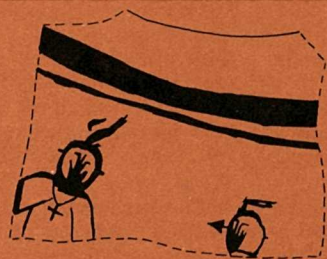
A picnic area is available, but there is no campground. Meals and lodging can be obtained in nearby towns.

### We're Joining the Metric World

The National Park Service is introducing metric measurements in its publications to help Americans become acquainted with the metric system and to make interpretation more meaningful for park visitors from other nations.



This room was the friar's quarters. The curved log set into the walls supported the hood above the fire.



Religion, as among modern Pueblo people, probably permeated every facet of ancient Pueblo life. Many spirits, some good, some bad, some indifferent, some powerful and some weak, peopled their world. The Indians believed that the forces of nature—wind, rain, fertility of plants, reproduction of animals—could be controlled by the proper performance of rites taught to them long ago by the spirits and handed down from generation to generation. The whole way of life from birth to death—planting and harvesting of crops, hunting, warfare—was closely intertwined with religious beliefs and ritual performances. Katchina dances in which masked dancers impersonated spirits were held to secure good fortune for the village.

The extent of lasting Spanish religious influence is difficult to determine for religion is a very personal thing. The supernatural beings of the Indians were not usually replaced; Roman Catholic saints were simply added to the roster. A piece of decorated pot (above) excavated at Gran Quivira shows a Katchina wearing a crucifix. The church became another center of worship sharing a place with the kiva and its rites. To this day the church and the kiva co-exist in most living pueblos.

