

Gran Quivira Village Trail



**GRAN QUIVIRA NATIONAL MONUMENT
NEW MEXICO**

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GRAN QUIVIRA NATIONAL MONUMENT

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CONSERVATION — YOU CAN HELP

If you are interested in the work the National Park Service is doing, and in the cause of conservation in general, you can give active expression of this interest and lend support by your membership in one of the numerous conservation organizations, some of which are: Wilderness Society, 2144 P Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037; National Parks Association, 2000 P Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036; and the National Wildlife Federation, 232 Carroll St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20012. The addresses of additional conservation organizations may be obtained from the ranger.

RATTLESNAKES

If you are lucky, you might see a rattlesnake on your tour of the ruins. They frequent the area from April through November. However, they are not as serious a threat as you might believe. If you see one, do not disturb it, but please report it to the ranger.

NOTICE

You are entering an Historic area preserved in as natural a condition as possible. These inherent natural conditions can be hazardous to you. While every effort is made to provide for your safety and comfort, you must remain alert and exercise individual caution. You are responsible for your safety and your children's safety.

Gran Quivira Village Trail

Welcome to Gran Quivira National Monument. This booklet will tell you the story of the mission churches and Indian pueblos if you will stop at the numbered rocks along the trail that refer to the numbered paragraphs in this book. Please stay on the trail.

PLEASE LEAVE THE RUINS AS YOU FIND THEM. IT IS ILLEGAL TO COLLECT FRAGMENTS OF POTTERY, BONE, STONE, OR PLANT SPECIMENS, TO MARK ON OR DEFACE THE WALLS, OR TO DISTURB THE NATURAL OR HISTORIC FEATURES.

1. The countryside around you is essentially unchanged since this village was occupied between A. D. 1000 and 1670, but it was more denuded at that time. Now lands that were once cleared for crops or living areas have grown over with grasses and trees.

The Indians who lived at the Pueblo of the Humanas (the historic name), closely related to the Pueblo Indian groups living along the Rio Grande to the west, were farmers and lived in masonry houses. About 350 years ago, men of the village worked the broad level fields to your right (south), to carefully cultivate crops of corn, beans, and squash.

2. The excavated 36 room unit before you, occupied by several families when the Spaniards first came into the area, was abandoned in the middle 1600's.

The rooms and doorways are small by modern standards, but the occupants were only a few inches shorter than the Indians of today. The women stood about 5' or 5'1" and men about 5'5" or 5'6". Some of the skeletal remains were of taller people, perhaps Plains Indians or their descendants who married into the village. Smaller rooms are easier to heat and small doorways easier to cover to block drafts.

Most of these rooms, including the one in front of you, could have housed three or four people fairly comfortably.

The entire family would not have slept in one room. Married children, of course, had another apartment, and unmarried boys may have slept in another room, on the open rooftops, or in the kiva (KEE-vah) one of which you will see later. Remember, too, that a crowded room on cold winter nights is warmer than one that is only half filled.

The rooms near the center that did not get direct light and air probably were used to store the harvest and seeds for next year's crop.

3. You are now in a plaza or courtyard, with an unexcavated section of rooms behind you (east). You may step into some of the rooms if you like, and try them out for size.

Originally, the walls were built with mud mortar. Once we excavated the rooms, the walls were exposed to rain and wind. To prevent erosion and further deterioration, lime mortar grout was pointed in. We did not take the walls apart; the original mortar is still inside them, and the lime mortar just keeps it from washing out.

See picture below, showing a room after excavation, and *before* stabilization. At top of next page, notice the same room *after* stabilization had been done.

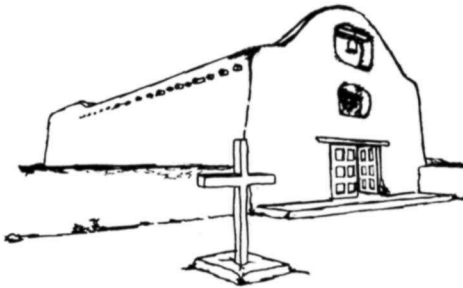
After excavation





After stabilization

4. From here you can see many of the ruins which are a part of the aboriginal community. There are 20 house complexes covering about 17 acres. A population of 1000-2000 people may have lived here during most of the Spanish occupation.



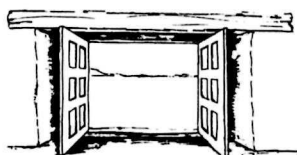
*San Isidro Church
as it may have appeared about 1630.*

5. You are now in the nave of San Isidro Mission Church, built about 1629.

This structure is typical of early mission churches, consisting only of the nave (main hall of the church) and the apse (the recessed section at the west end, where the altar was).

Though no written record of the activities of this church has been found, we can suggest the use of some of the mis-

sion features. The priests kept religious vestments and sacred utensils in small storage rooms, and the low walls near the apse may represent these rooms. The pulpit is normally located on the right side of the church as you face the altar, and perhaps the low walls there were part of such a structure. The walls of the church were plastered white and probably decorated with red and black.



6. The large door in this east wall was the only entrance to the church. The sides of the doorway 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 (see sketch).

The flat stones on the floor west of the doorway mark the location of wood pillars used to support the wood and adobe roof. The roof of San Isidro was about 15 or 20 feet above the floor. A small choir loft was above the door inside the church.

The round masonry pedestal, just inside the doorway, may have been the base of the sacrarium. It probably stood waist-high and was plastered.

In front of the church is a walled churchyard. Skeletons found beneath the surface indicate that this was the Christian cemetery.

7. This is a kiva, an underground ceremonial room. Clans (kin groups) and various societies often had their own kivas. The members, mostly men, performed native religious ceremonies and rituals here. They offered ceremonial prayers for good rainfall, health, crops, hunting, and, in fact, for everything contributing to the general welfare of the people.

Members of the kiva also used it as a clubroom and workroom, and for initiation rites and instruction.

The kiva had a flat wooden roof, covered with a layer of

packed mud. Four posts to support the roof were set in holes in the floor. A square opening in the roof provided access by a ladder to the floor. This, the only entrance, also served as a smokehole for the firepit in the floor near the east wall. What appears to be a chimney on the east wall is really just the opposite. The Indians had learned that a



ventilator shaft would draw fresh, cool air down into the kiva as the smoke and heat rose and escaped through the entrance hole. The ventilator shaft often let in too much cool air, and the Indians reduced the draft by leaning a flat stone in front of the opening. In the wall across from the ventilator shaft is a small niche, perhaps for some special ceremonial object.

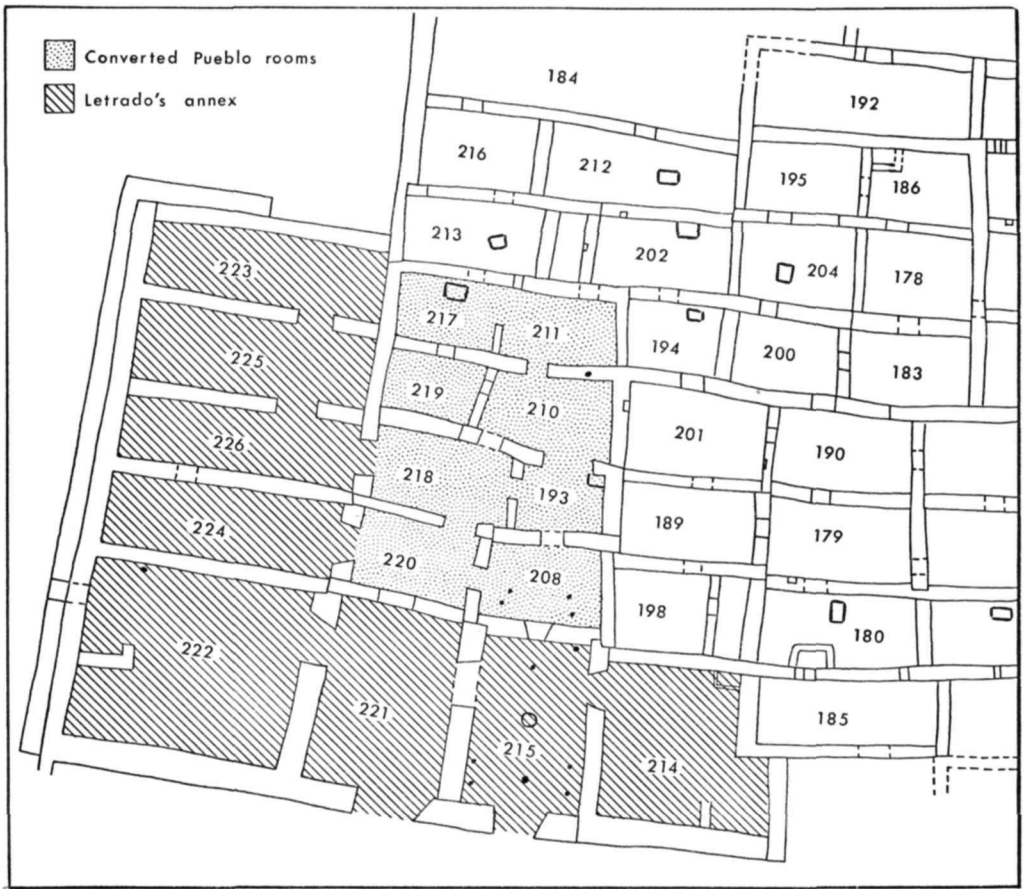
The small stone face on exhibit in the visitor center was found in this kiva.

8. The priest who served San Isidro evidently took over some unused rooms on the end of this house unit for his residence. He remodeled doors and windows to conform to his wishes. Later, he added the eight larger rooms, making certain that the doors went down to the floor and that the windows had beveled sides to provide more light.

(Please see map diagram on next page.)

9. This dwelling was the largest single complex in the village. It contains more than 200 rooms, not counting the priest's apartment. Even so, only about a tenth of the entire village may have lived here. Again, most of the inner rooms were used for storage. Only the outer row of one or two rooms would have been living quarters.

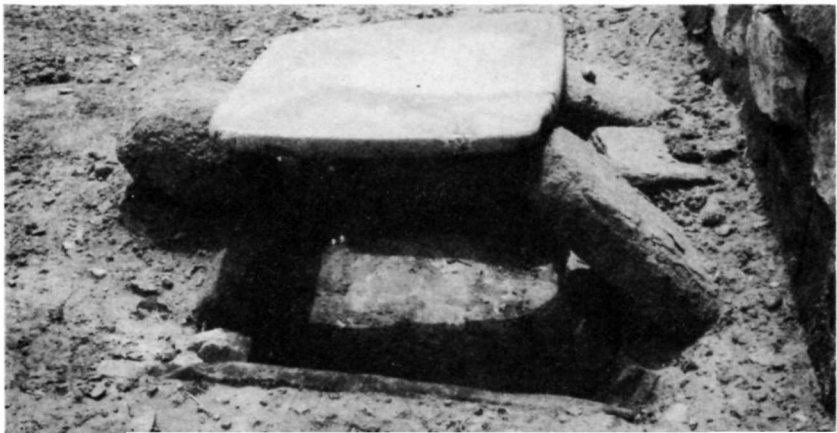
10. While much of the cooking was done outside, indoor fires also were used. The firepit below you was set up with a stone griddle called a *comal* (ko-MAHL). New *comales* were carefully treated with piñon pitch and cactus



The "missing convento" of San Isidro.

juice, and the surface was rubbed down between applications, giving the stone a black, glossy finish. Such comales are still used in modern pueblos to make a special kind of bread that is as thin as tissue paper.

Comal in place over a firepit.



11. When preparing to excavate this mound we expected to find a multi-story pueblo, rooms stacked on rooms. Instead, we discovered that the upper rooms, used in the 16th and 17th centuries, were built partly on top of the ruins of rooms dating from the 14th century. A further surprise was that while the plan of the more recent structure is basically square, the earlier rooms were laid out in a circular pattern. This does not necessarily mean that the entire village was abandoned for a while. Certain parts of pueblo villages are often allowed to fall into disuse as new sections are built.

12. The dividing walls of the earlier rooms all point toward this kiva. Kivas are usually built in an open plaza, and rooms are not built on top of a kiva unless it has been abandoned and filled in. Since this kiva was important in the 1300's, and rooms built in the 1600's were built around it, it was probably in use with periodic renovation for more than 300 years.

13. Pueblo houses are often built around a central plaza, a place for work, informal meetings, and public ceremonial activities. Kivas are usually found in these plazas, but the large kiva in front of you is unusual. We cannot satisfactorily explain the broad ledge all the way around it. It might have been an encircling bench, like the ones sometimes used in the big kivas along the Rio Grande.

14. Much of the daily life here centered around stone. These people depended on stone for their dwellings as well as for most of their tools. Stone axes like those in the visitor center were made by grinding on rocks such as these, which we have put here so that you might try to make a stone axe yourself. If you keep at it long enough, you can make a fine one.

15. Pueblo men made tools and weapons, and the women prepared the food for the family, for eating as well as religious offerings.



Metate bins in place in a room.

The women of the house ground corn into meal on a *metate* (muh-TAH-tay), a flat slab of stone. They would put a cloth or basket under the low end of the metate to catch the grain, and kneel with the metate sloping away from them. Then with the *mano* (MAH-no), or hand stone, they ground the meal to the desired fineness. This was a good chance for the women to work together, making light labor to the music of corn-grinding songs, and no doubt trading a little gossip.

16. The large stones seen here were used for shaping and polishing stone axes. Feel how smooth they were worn through countless hours of work.

The top of the hill provides a good view of the surrounding countryside. You may have noticed there is no surface

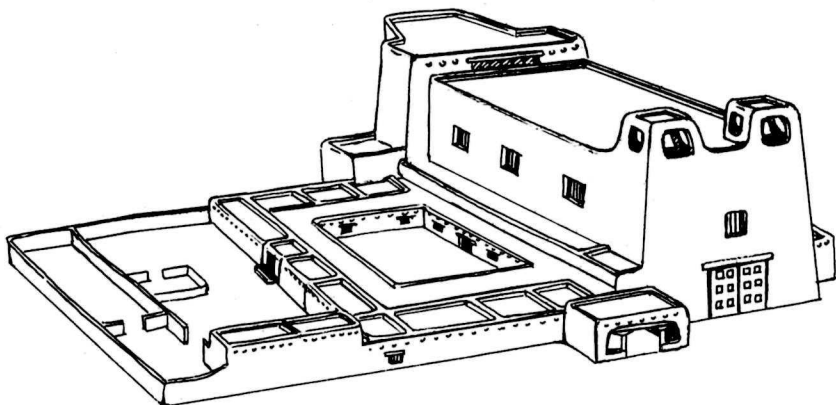
water in the area, and there was none 300 years ago when this was a living community. Old Spanish reports say water was taken from wells at Las Humanas. Recent investigations have revealed traces of a possible well in the shallow basin a quarter-mile west of the ruins.

17. During the period from 1631 to 1659, when there was no resident priest at the pueblo of the Humanas, Father Acevedo traveled from Abó to hold regular services here. Then, in 1659, Father Diego de Santander was appointed resident priest here, and the large church of San Buenaventura was probably built or completed under his direction.

The large room to the right was the baptistry.

Overhead, at this end of the church, was a balcony or choir loft. The large holes in the upper part of the north and south walls supported the beam at the front of the choir loft, which was possibly reached by a stairway or from outside the church. The nave was lighted by two or three small windows high on the south wall and perhaps a clerestory window in the roof near the altars.

Great ceiling beams, larger than the one over the front door, spanned the roof. They were spaced two or three feet apart. Most of these beams were ornamentally carved.

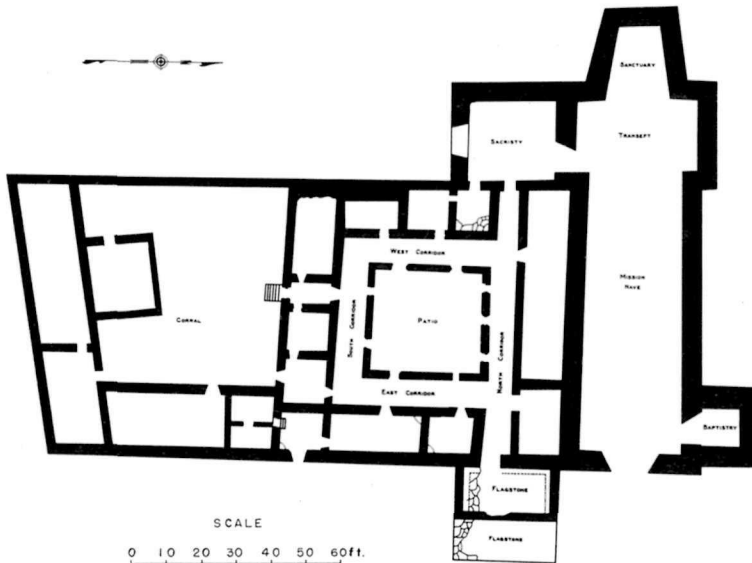


*Mission Church of San Buenaventura
as it may have appeared about 1665.*

Please go to the other end of the church

18. Notice the cross-shaped floor plan of this church. Many of the larger Spanish mission churches were built in this shape. The altar was in the sanctuary (see floor plan) and the two transepts probably contained side altars.

The overall length of the church (outside) is almost 140 feet. The walls are between 5 and 6 feet thick.



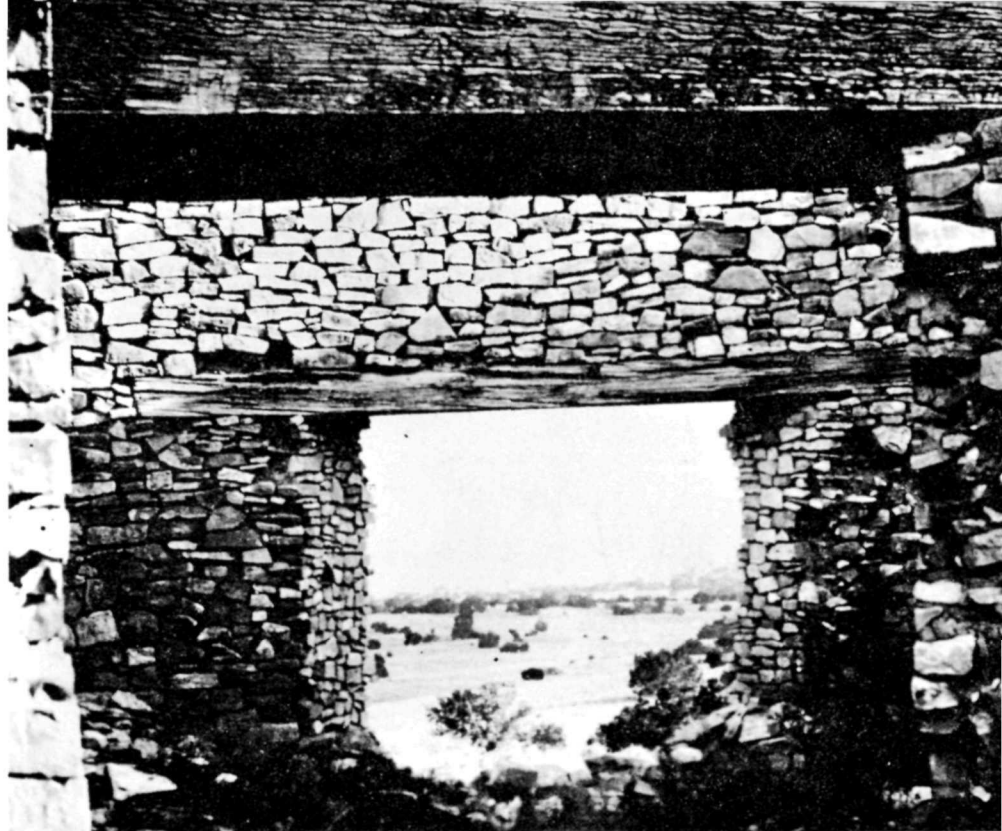
Floor Plan, San Buenaventura Mission Church

Please go through the door to your left

19. This is the sacristy, where the priest prepared for services in the church. Robes, utensils, and other necessary items were stored here, and it may have been used as a small library. (see photo at top of next page)

Please go through the door into the corridor

20. The large room through the door to your left may have been the dining hall or study room for priests and workers of the church. It was probably lighted by torches or



Photograph taken in 1890, looking toward the sacristy window from the nave of San Buenaventura. The wooden timbers are originals. Note the carving on the closest one.

Courtesy of the Southwest Museum

candles, as there is no apparent means of getting daylight into this interior room. The square holes high in the wall are sockets for the roof timbers or *vigas* that once spanned the room.

21. The patio to your right is typical of building plans of the period. Around it are the rooms that make up the *convento*, living quarters for the priests, and classrooms for teaching Spanish and Catholicism.

The sloping sides of the windows indicate that all the corridors surrounding the patio were roofed. In conventos that were in use for some time, the patios were usually beautified with flower gardens and were places where priests spent time in thought and meditation.

22. Walk through the corridor to the porch. This was the entrance to the convento. Log benches around the walls of the enclosed porch furnished a waiting place outside the church and convento for those who wished to see the priest.

The church was built so that it faced a plaza of the pueblo. This was undoubtedly done as much for the convenience of communication between the church and pueblo as it was for defense against raiding Apaches.

Please go back to marker 22, then turn to your left

23. These rooms are believed to have been the priest's private apartment. You can see the remains of a fireplace in one corner. The curved fireplace log supported a hood and chimney, a wall of stone and mud that sloped in toward the corner. (See sketch). Corner fireplaces were introduced by the Spanish.



Fireplace as it originally looked.

When the mission was originally excavated in 1923, a layer of white plaster was found on the walls of this room and the next room south. If you look in the next room, you can see that it, although much smaller than the first, had two fireplaces. The holes in the walls that held the fireplace beams are still visible in two corners of the room.

The third room, up the steps, was two stories high. The lower rooms had no outside doors and must have been entered through a hatchway in the floor of the upper room. There is no exact evidence for the use of these rooms. The lower ones may have been planned for food storage. Could this room, with two fireplaces, have been a kitchen?



*Fireplace in Padre's quarters, San Buenaventura Mission,
after excavation, 1923-4.*

*Steps and plastered walls in Padre's quarters,
after excavation, 1923-4.*



Please go on around the corridor to the top of the steps

24. This yard was the corral for the livestock of the mission. The rooms around the corral were probably used as stables and for the storage of food for the animals.

25. This stone-lined ditch was built as a drain for the corral. Today it serves the same purpose for which it was built 300 years ago. The rectangular walls to your left may have been an inner corral or pen, or perhaps a separate room for butchering.

26. This region once had a number of Indian villages within several miles of each other. Each had a large section of land cleared to grow crops. The untilled land was used as a source of wood for the roofs of the houses and for fires. Anything that burned was gathered for cooking and heat—cactus, juniper, woody shrubs. Think how much firewood 1000 people would use in one year — then remember, this area was occupied for at least 500 years. By the time these people finally left Las Humanas, there probably was not a tree within hundreds of yards, and very few large shrubs anywhere close. There are still no piñon pines in the monument.

The life of these people began and ended with the land, and so does our tour. Please follow the trail back to the visitor center. If you have not yet done so, you will enjoy stopping there where exhibits tell more about the Pueblo of the Humanas. Cold drinking water and restrooms are available in the visitor center building.

PLEASE RETURN THIS BOOKLET BEFORE YOU GO; OR, IF YOU WISH, YOU MAY PURCHASE IT AND TAKE IT WITH YOU.

If you have any questions, please ask a Park Ranger. The National Park Service invites you to come again.

FURTHER INFORMATION

ABANDONMENT. Throughout the seventeenth century, the Apaches were becoming more and more a menace to the Pueblo Indians in this area. Raids became increasingly frequent as the Apaches were able to steal more and more horses from the Spaniards. On horseback the Apaches could travel farther, strike faster, and make a getaway with more haste than they ever could when they had to raid on foot. In 1666, another misfortune befell the Indians. Beginning in that year a drought struck, and was to last several years. In one year alone, 1668, 450 Indians at Gran Quivira died of starvation caused by the drought. The Apache became still worse; prodded, no doubt, by their own lack of food and game due to the drought, and emboldened by the weakened condition of the Pueblos. A widespread epidemic in 1671 might also have been largely caused by the drought conditions. By 1672, almost all the Apaches in the area were raiding and pillaging, and between that year and 1675, a number of villages were abandoned, including Gran Quivira, Abó, and Quarai. Many of the Indians of Gran Quivira went to live at the closely related pueblo of Socorro, on the Rio Grande. However, all the Pueblo Indians south of Albuquerque, including the survivors from Gran Quivira, were driven south to the vicinity of El Paso during the Pueblo Rebellion of 1680. Their descendants, through intermarriage with other Indians and Spanish, lost their identity by the late 1700's and the Piro language which they formerly spoke has become extinct.

NAMES. The name Gran Quivira (kee-VEE-rah) was first applied to these ruins between a hundred and a hundred and fifty years ago. In the days of early Spanish exploration, the term Gran Quivira was used to refer to areas that were supposed to contain great riches, such as the legendary Quivira in the plains of Kansas. No great riches were ever found in the Southwest, and it is unlikely that any ever existed. The early Spaniards who knew of this

village called it Humanas, and there is no indication that there was ever any wealth here. However, fantastic stories of supposed great riches buried in these early missions were very common, and this mission was no exception. About a hundred years after abandonment, unfounded stories began circulating about great wealth here. Of course, no riches were ever found, but this did not stop the local people in those days from calling these ruins Gran Quivira.

The name Humanas was first given to this village in 1598 by Oñate, the colonizer of New Mexico. There were some Indians called Jumanos who lived on the plains southwest of here, and apparently this pueblo took its name from these Indians. A Spanish document of 1634 states, "Among the pueblos of this nation there is one very large one . . . called that of the Xumanas, because this nation often comes to it to barter and trade." There is considerable variation in the spelling of the name — Humanas, Humanos, Jumanas, Jumanos, Xumanas, and Xumanes — but practically no difference in the pronunciation.

The smaller mission was named San Isidro in honor of St. Isidore, Archbishop of Seville, because Fray Alonso de Benavides had preached to these people and began their conversion on St. Isidore's Day, April 4, 1627, and had dedicated the village to San Isidro.

The name San Buenaventura was first applied to this village by Fray Acevedo, the resident priest at the mission of Abó. There was no resident priest at Gran Quivira from 1631, when Father Letrado left, until 1659. During this period, Gran Quivira was served in religious matters from Abó. Father Acevedo changed the feast day of Gran Quivira from San Isidro to that of San Buenaventura, July 14.

OTHER AREAS OF INTEREST NEAR GRAN QUIVIRA

Abó and Quarai State Monuments, about 35 miles northwest of Gran Quivira, contain interesting Spanish mission ruins dating from the same period as those at Gran Quivira.

El Morro National Monument, about 200 miles northwest, contains hundreds of old Indian, Spanish, and American inscriptions.

White Sands National Monument, 115 miles south, and Carlsbad Caverns National Park 250 miles southeast, are areas of unusual geologic interest.



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