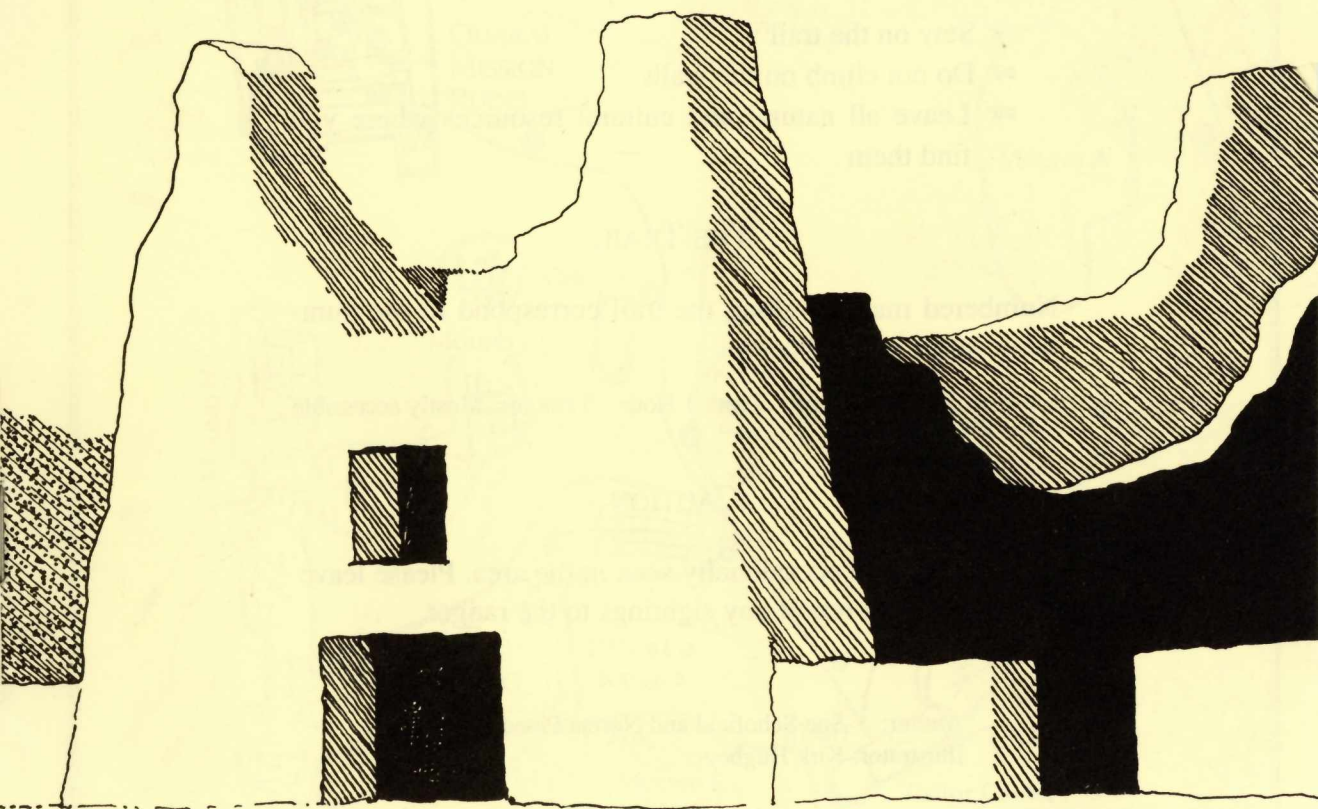


Salinas Pueblo Missions

Quarai Trail Guide

An edifice in ruins . . . but so tall, so solemn, so dominant of that strange lonely landscape. . . On the Rhine it would be a superlative; in the wilderness of the Manzano it is a miracle.

—Charles F. Lummis
Land of Poco Tiempo



WELCOME TO

SALINAS PUEBLO MISSIONS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Quarai is one of three Spanish Mission/Indian Pueblo sites within the park. Nearby are the ruins of Abó and Gran Quivira. In 1981, Quarai and Abó were merged with Gran Quivira to form a new national monument. This trail takes you through the unexcavated Tiwa Indian village and seveneenth-century Franciscan Mission ruins of Quarai.

Please help preserve these ruins for future generations.

- ☞ Stay on the trail
- ☞ Do not climb on the walls
- ☞ Leave all natural and cultural resources where you find them

THE TRAIL

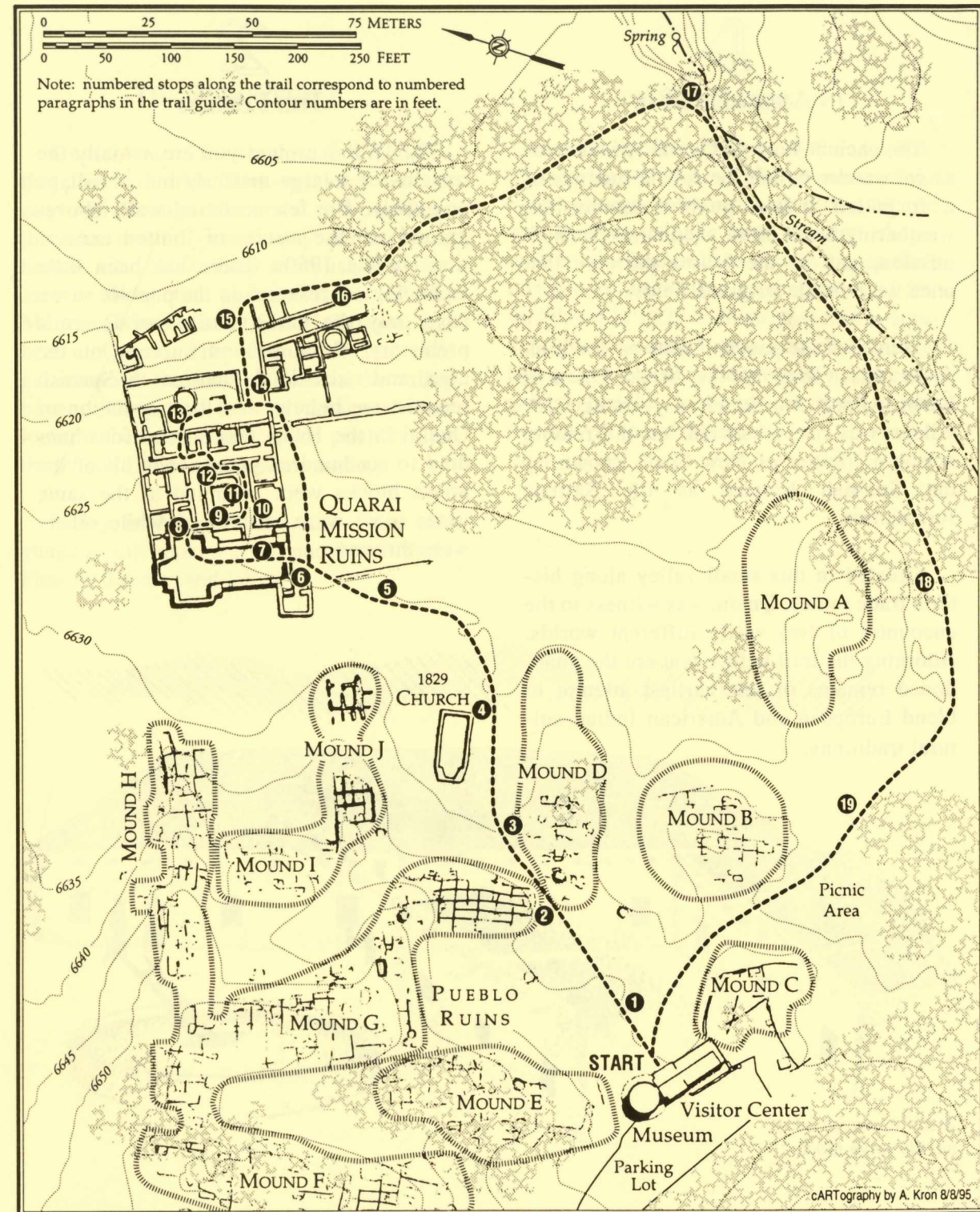
Numbered markers along the trail correspond to the numbered stops in this booklet.

LENGTH: .5 mile (.8 km) TIME: 1 Hour TERRAIN: Mostly accessible

CAUTION

Rattlesnakes are occasionally seen in the area. Please leave them alone and report any sightings to the ranger.

Author: Sue Schofield and Norma Pineda-Plog
Illustrator: Kirk Hughey



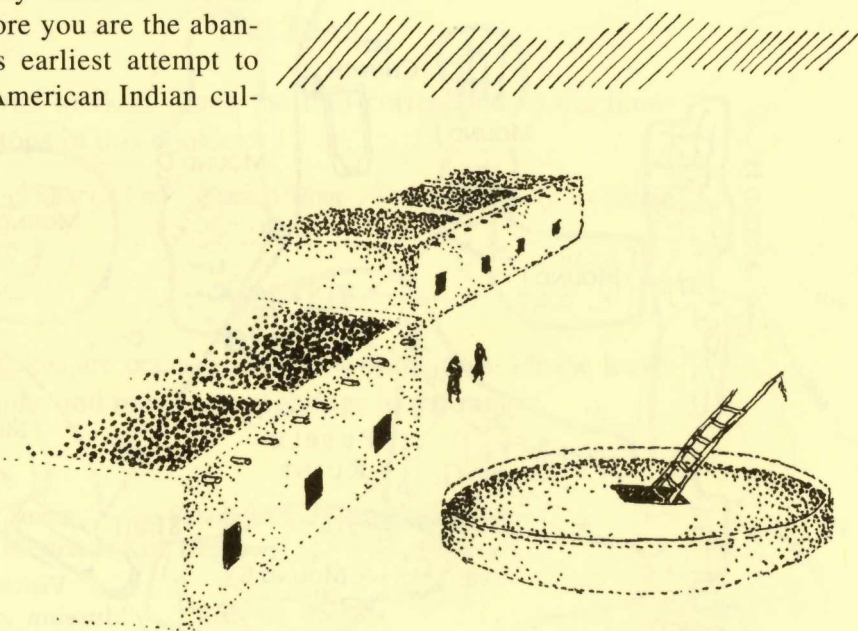
1

IN ANOTHER TIME

The ancient story of Quarai speaks to us as we wander beside the rubble mounds of a forgotten Indian pueblo, among the weathering walls of an abandoned Spanish mission, and in the fallow pastures that once were fertile irrigated fields.

Turn back the pages of time as you look down this valley to the broad Estancia Basin. Almost four hundred years ago this village was one of several on the remote northern frontier of New Spain known by the Spanish Empire as the Salinas Jurisdiction.

Situated in this small valley along historic trade routes, Quarai was witness to the encounter of two vastly different worlds. Adorning the trail before you are the abandoned remains of this earliest attempt to blend European and American Indian cultural traditions.



Artist's conception of pueblo room block

2

THE PUEBLO

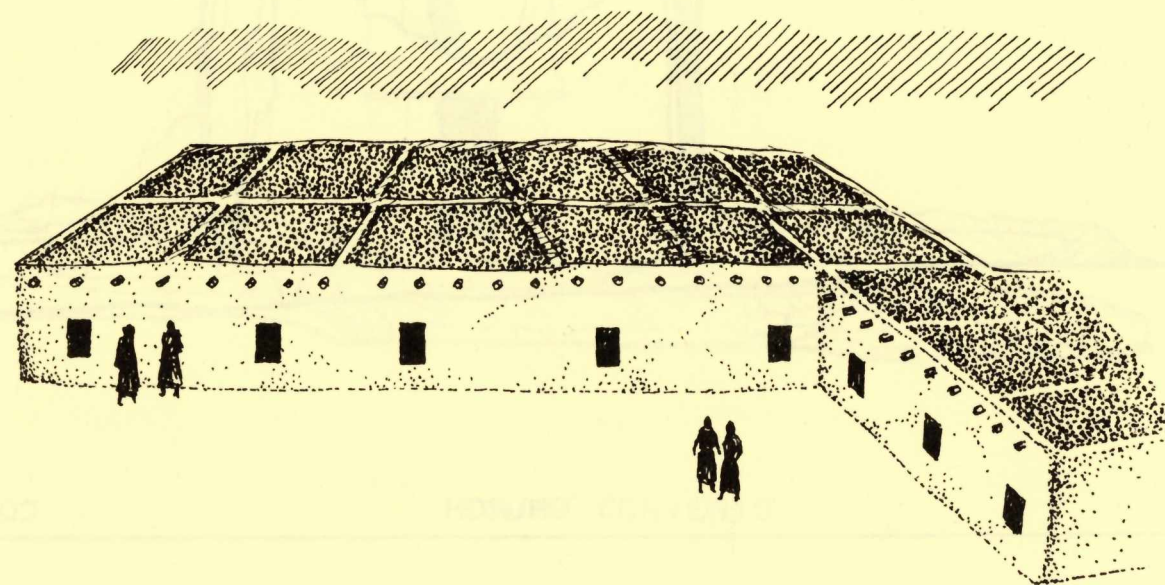
The "hills" around you are actually the remains of a large masonry indian village or *pueblo*. The few scattered walls above-ground are the results of limited excavations in the 1950s. There has been little archeological research in the pueblo, so we have only the barest outline of Quarai's prehistory. From ground surveys of the area, and occasional mention in Spanish records, we believe that the population of Quarai in the 1600s was around four hundred to six hundred people. Not all of the house blocks were occupied at the same time; some were abandoned while others were thriving.

3

THE TIWA PEOPLE

Quarai was on the southeastern fringe of the pueblo world. Tiwa-speaking Indians migrated through mountain canyons from the area around present-day Albuquerque before A.D. 1300. They established settlements along the eastern slope of the Manzano Mountains at Chilili, Tajique, and here at Quarai. They farmed, hunted, and gathered salt from saline lakes in the valley beyond. They also took advantage of their location between Rio Grande pueblos and the Plains Indians to become traders.

Today in New Mexico, the Tiwa language is still spoken at the pueblos of Taos, Picuris, Sandia, and Isleta.



4

1829 CHAPEL

Archeologists uncovered the foundations of this chapel in 1959. Because of the simple design and small size (20' x 50'), it was thought to have been the first chapel built by the Franciscans as they began their missionary work. However, a series of letters dated in 1829 indicate that this is actually the foundation of a church begun in that year by local residents and never completed. Instead, a church was built in the nearby village of Manzano.

5

LA PURISIMA CONCEPCION

Before you stands the church of Nuestra Senora de La Purisima Concepcion de Cuarac, enduring symbol of the early Spanish presence in this valley. Quarai is probably a later phonetic spelling of Cuarac. The red sandstone walls, once protected by adobe plaster, are forty feet high on foundations seven feet deep and six feet wide. The interior length of the church is one hundred feet. The nave is twenty-seven feet wide, and the transept fifty feet.

Since we have no plans or drawings of these early Franciscan missions, we must envision how they looked by studying the physical clues which remain. The square holes above the entry are sockets for beams. They hint that a porch extended across the front of the church, although no traces of it remain. The splayed entrance held wide doors which swung inward on iron pivot hinges providing light and easy access.

Fray Juan Gutierrez de la Chica was the priest here in 1628 and he probably started construction of the church. Although

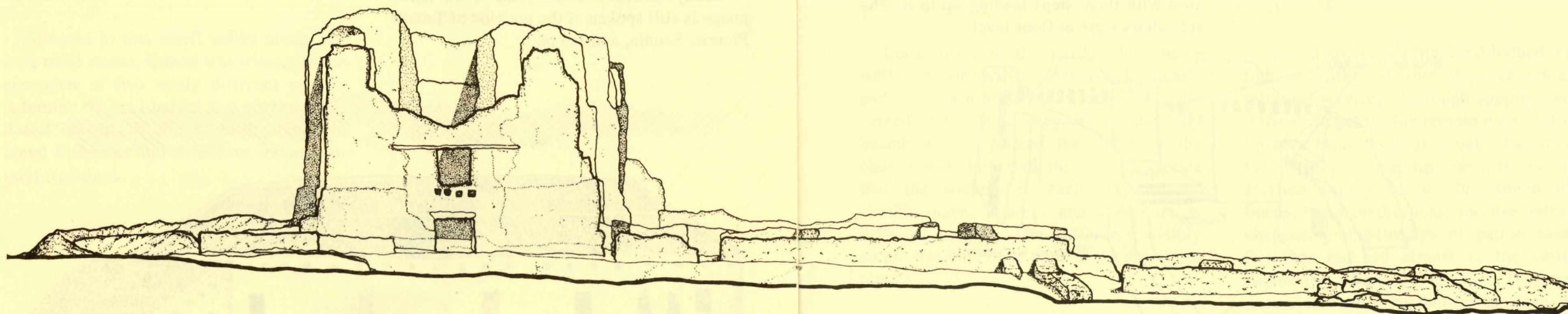
Quarai was on a frontier, remote from the hearth of the Spanish Empire and the Catholic Church, every detail of the church's conception and construction reveal careful planning and attention.

These massive stone walls enclosed a vast space which contrasted sharply with the modest rooms familiar to the Indians.

6

BAPTISTERY

In the room to your left people were baptized as Christians before they entered the sanctuary. It was added for this purpose shortly after the main church was completed. The original baptistery was located beneath the choir loft, inside the church entrance. But, that was quickly deemed to be an awkward arrangement. To the right is the walled *campo santo*, or final resting place, of the baptized.



CHURCH

CONVENTO

SOUTH CONVENTO

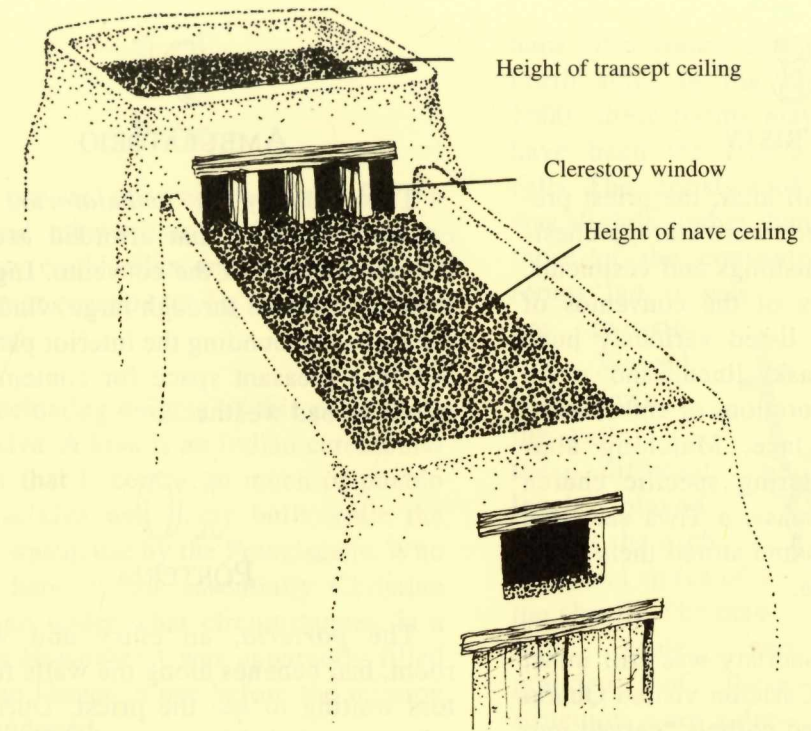
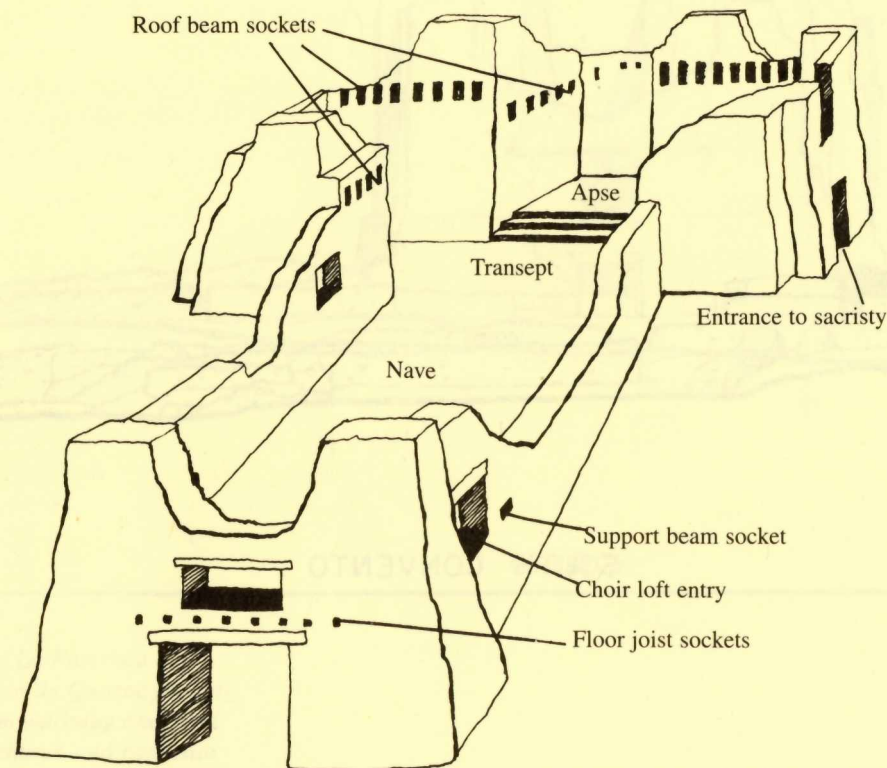
Section of La Purisima
Concepcion de Quarac looking
north from walkway and field
south of church and convento

CHURCH INTERIOR

You are directly beneath the choir loft. The square sockets that held the outside porch roof also held the floor joists of the choir loft. On their opposite end, the joists were supported by a large square beam which fitted into the single sockets on the side walls. The low ceiling thus formed created an antechamber. Initially, the baptistery was located here. The large opening high on your right was the choir loft entrance. Access was from a second-story room with a landing outside the entry.

At your feet is part of the original flagstone floor. The walls, plastered white, had painted dados at waist height. Typically the dados were bands of stripes and patterns painted in red, black, yellow, and blue. Above them, religious paintings hung along the walls.

Continuing into the nave, the ceiling height soared to the top level of the rectangular sockets high along the side walls. Parishioners assembled here for mass. Toward the front, this space opens out into the side arms of the transept and then narrows again to form the apse. The overall shape of the church was that of a cross. In each arm of the transept there was a small altar. The main altar was centered in the apse with three steps leading up to it. The side altars were at floor level.



Look again to the top of the church walls. The long narrow sockets held *corbels* and *vigas* or roof beams. Corbels were the carved and painted supports for the long beams which spanned the width of the church and supported the ceiling. Notice that the sockets in each area of the church—nave, transept and apse—are at different heights. This difference visibly emphasized the three parts of the cruciform church.

The variance in height between the nave ceiling and the higher transept ceiling allowed for a transverse clerestory window. This window extended across the width of the church at the point where the transept arms cross the nave. The southern exposure caused a broad swath of light to illuminate the sanctuary and altar.

The altar—raised high and bathed with light—was the cynosure of the church and religious services. Although supplies were difficult to get in this remote corner of the Spanish Empire, altars usually had lavish furnishings. Shipping records of the Mission Supply Service list Rouen altar linens, brass candlesticks, incense burners, chalices, and paintings of patron saints. Retablos reached almost to the ceiling behind the main and side altars. They were decorated with richly painted carvings, bits of reflective mica, statues, and small portraits of saints. These items were probably made in Mexico, disassembled, and shipped to the mission. Against the white plastered church walls, the altars stood out in lush detail.

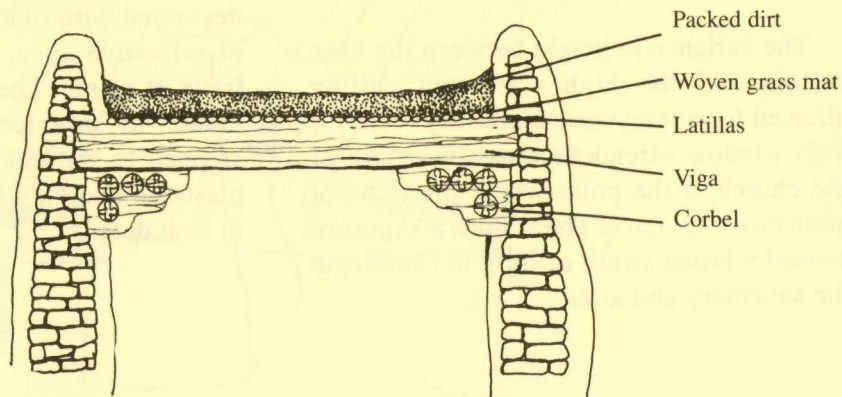
8

SACRISTY

Here, using a small altar, the priest prepared for mass. There were storage chests filled with altar furnishings and vestments. A sacristy inventory of the conventos of Tajique and Chilili listed variously hued robes of silk damask, linen, and wool. Many items had decorations of embroidery, drawn work, and lace. Matching altar linens were used during specific church celebrations. After mass, a Tiwa sacristan removed these items and stored them away until the next service.

The roof of the sacristy was still intact when Major James Carleton visited Quarai in 1853. He described corbels "carved into regularly curved lines and scrolls" which supported smooth square beams. *Latillas* of small finished poles were laid in a herringbone pattern across the beams. Probably the church ceiling and other convento rooms were similarly constructed.

From the sacristy you move into the convento proper. Do not climb on the walls or dislodge any rocks or mortar. **Be careful of loose rocks.**



9

AMBULATORIO

This hallway, or *ambulatorio*, was a covered walkway that afforded access to the other rooms of the convento. Light and fresh air entered through large windows in the walls surrounding the interior patio providing a pleasant space for contemplative strolls in bad weather.

10

PORTERIA

The *porteria*, an entry and waiting room, had benches along the walls for visitors waiting to see the priest. During the mission period this was probably a roofed porch open to the south. The enclosing front walls you see today were added at a later time. A Christian Indian held the position of *portero*, similar to a receptionist. His duties also included keeping an eye on the mission grounds, locking and unlocking all entrances and maintaining quiet during services.

11

PATIO

This private, open air patio was for the priest and others living in the convento. Here they could relax and meditate in the sunshine or perhaps tend a small ornamental garden.

A fascinating enigma of this patio is its square kiva. A kiva is an Indian ceremonial chamber that is central to much of pueblo life. This kiva was likely built while the mission was in use by the Franciscans. Who built it here in this essentially Christian place, and under what circumstances, is a mystery. However, it was apparently filled in and no longer in use before the mission was abandoned.

12

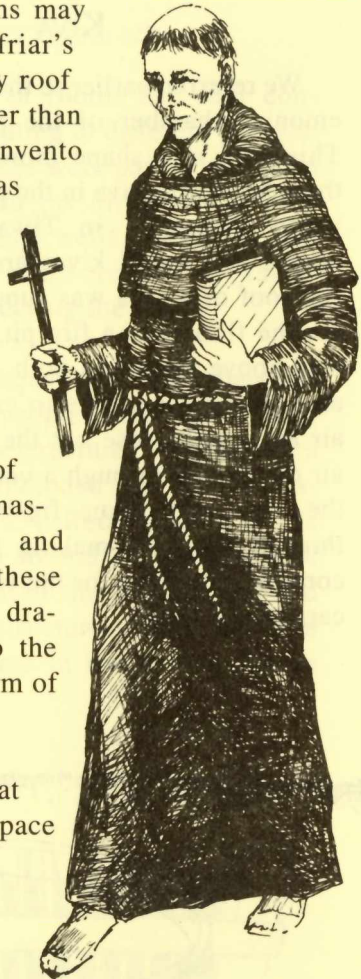
CONVENTO

Entering this corridor you move from the public to the private areas of the convento. Here we find the kitchen and refectory, store rooms, and sleeping quarters for mission workers.

Recently acquired photographs dating to 1890 provide more details of convento construction. The outside row of rooms had ceilings that were 13 feet high. The rooms along the wall where the convento adjoined the church were of varying heights. During its lifetime, the convento underwent several modifications. A second story was added to the rooms northwest of the sacristy and per-

haps other rooms along the north side. In the late 1600s these rooms may have been the friar's cells. The sacristy roof was slightly higher than those of the convento rooms but it was not two-storied. Viewed from down the valley, these different levels played against the high walls and spires of the church. The massive scale and grandeur of these structures were a dramatic contrast to the earth-hugging form of the pueblo.

The convento at Quarai also had space set aside for the use of the Inquisition. At least three of Quarai's priests also served as heads of the Inquisition in New Mexico. Investigations were conducted separately from routine mission business.



13

KIVA

We referred earlier to the kiva as the ceremonial chamber of the pueblo religion. This kiva is a shape more familiar to us than the square kiva in the patio of the convento. However, in Tiwa pueblos both square and round kivas are common. The flat roof of a kiva was supported by posts. On the floor was a fire pit, and the hatchway above served as both an entrance and an opening for smoke to escape. As warm air and smoke rose out the hatchway, cool air descended through a ventilator shaft on the east side. Thus fresh air circulated through the kiva making it a reasonably comfortable place for the various activities carried out below.

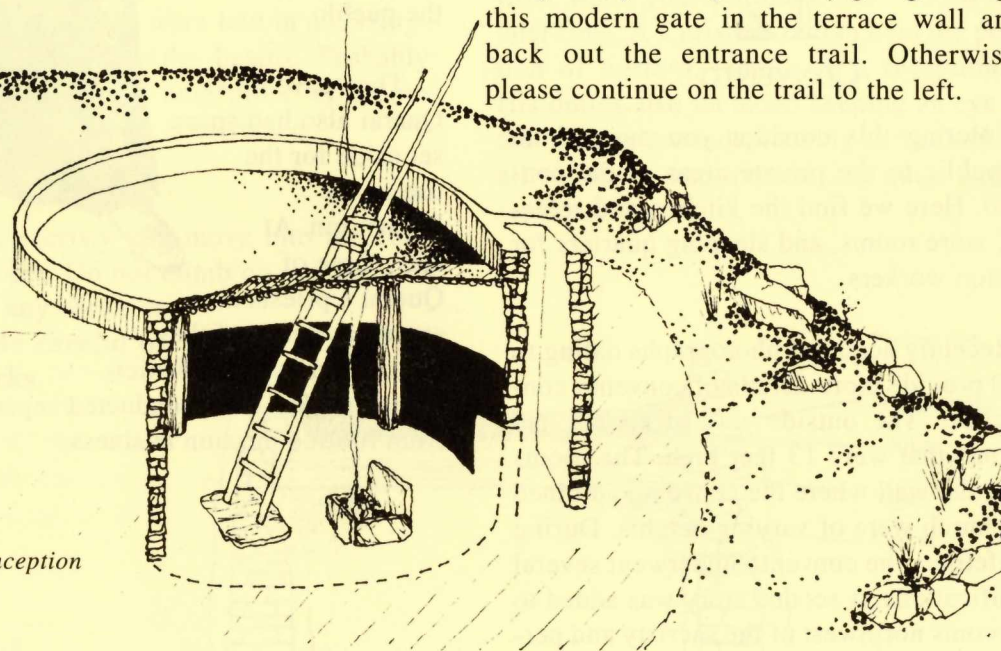
This kiva was here before the church and convento were built. It was buried by mission construction, implying that the Spanish structures were built on a mound of pueblo ruins similar to those you see along the trail today. It was never in use during the mission period.

The architectural contrast between these tiwa and Spanish structures is clear; and it suggests an even greater gulf between the social and spiritual worlds of the cultures which created them.

14

RETURN TRAIL

If you would like to return to your car at this point, you may do so by going through this modern gate in the terrace wall and back out the entrance trail. Otherwise, please continue on the trail to the left.



Artist's conception of a kiva

15

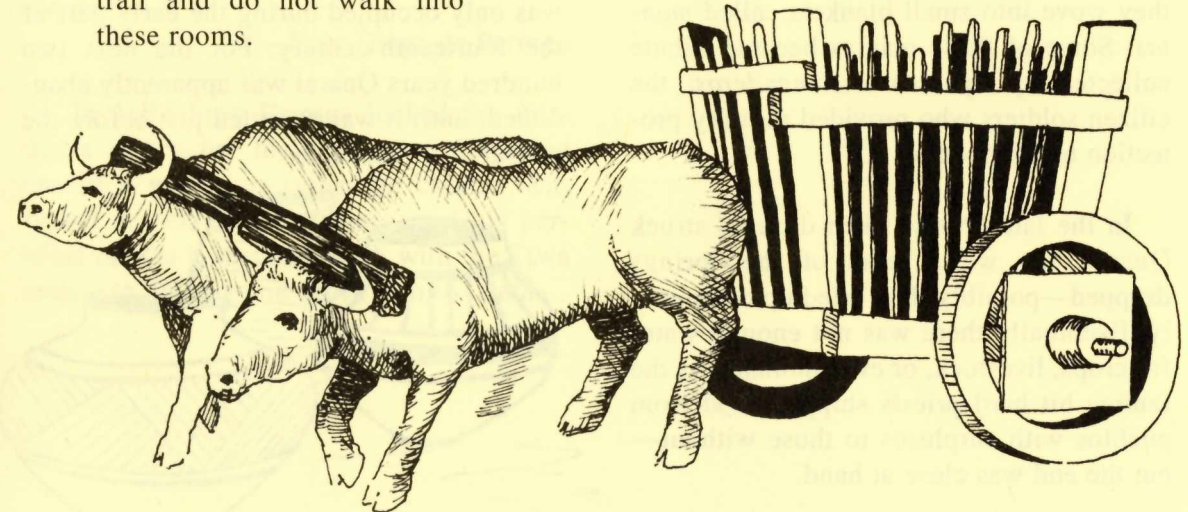
MISSION GARDENS

These terraces and courtyard were probably filled with gardens and fruit trees. The unexcavated outer wall, built for protection and containment, established the mission boundaries. During attacks people and livestock could be brought into the walled courtyard for protection.

These excavated rooms are only part of a large mound. They were Spanish and served as the stables, hay sheds, equipment barns, and animal pens—all essential to the mission's economic and agricultural programs.

Just ahead the trail passes through a low rock wall that may have been part of the stables.

The lower compound is closed so please stay on the trail and do not walk into these rooms.



The Spanish integrated oxen and other livestock into the daily farming routine of the Tiwa-speaking Indians

16

RESETTLEMENT

This complex of rooms had four construction phases dating to different periods. The long thick walls were part of the same convento courtyard (as discussed at Stop 15). The remaining walls, including the round foundation of the *torreon*, or watchtower, were built during the 1800s.

Less than a century after the abandonment of Quarai, people were again using the valley and its structures. There was a Spanish garrison stationed near the old mission from 1751-1754. Reoccupation of the old mission began around 1800. These new Spanish settlers used the foundations and walls of the old structures. Some of these later buildings were in use as recently as the 1880s.

This stream and several nearby springs played a critical role in the settlement and use of this valley. To support a large pueblo in a dry land, it was essential for both early native people and later Spaniards to settle near water.

There are records of a seventeenth-century irrigation system at Tajique but, as yet, no such accounts have been found for Quarai. However, old terracing and a nineteenth-century *acequia*, or irrigation ditch, that supplied Punta de Agua from here suggests that the mission also had an extensive irrigation system.

With adequate water for crops and humans, the Indians also pastured mission livestock, probably in the surrounding hills. Along with corn, beans and squash, the Tiwa people evidently grew cotton, which they wove into small blankets called *mantas*. Some of these mantas became tribute collected by Spanish *encomenderos*, the citizen soldiers who provided military protection to the pueblo.

In the late 1660s, when drought struck Quarai, the water level of the springs dropped—possibly they dried up completely. Eventually there was not enough water for crops, livestock, or even humans. As the famine hit hard priests shipped food from pueblos with surpluses to those without—but the end was close at hand.

Artist's sketch reflecting typical styles of ceramics found at Quarai

Based upon recent field work done by Arizona State University, we know that this southern-most mound, called Mound A or South Mound, was the earliest room block occupied at Quarai. The only glaze ware pottery found here was Glaze A, dating from the early A.D. 1300s. At all the other mounds at Quarai, only glaze wares from the Glaze E and F periods dating to the late A.D. 1500s were found. These later ceramics were apparently produced here and at Abó. An early black on white ceramic tradition was also identified from Mound A, but not from any of the other mounds.

In addition, the masonry work and adobe walls unearthed at Mound A were considerably more sophisticated than for any other room block. Stones were small, tabular, and much more carefully placed. The evidence also suggests that Mound A was only occupied during the early part of the fourteenth-century. For the next two hundred years Quarai was apparently abandoned, until it was resettled just before the arrival of the Spanish.



By the 1670s, the people of Quarai were suffering all the problems of drought, disease, famine, and hostile tribes that plagued the Salinas Jurisdiction as a whole.

The drought and famine continue. Many are sick, some are dying. I am giving charity to the natives. Provisions stored for just this case are pitifully low. We have received more cattle and other provisions for the Spanish Soldiers and the natives. The terror and outrages continue. Some are leaving every day. Fray Francisco de Ayeta the procurator general and the custodian of the provinces of New Mexico was to bring us carts of supplies and reinforcements, but I have decided that we can wait no longer. We must leave, all two hundred families, and go north to Tajique where there is a mission and settlement. If that, too, is unprotected, we will go on to Isleta to be with other Tiwa-speakers.

—Fray Diego de Parraga

In 1677 Fray Parraga locked the mission's doors for the last time. Climbing aboard a wagon carrying the church bell, sacred vessels and vestments, and his personal effects he headed north with the Tiwa people to Tajique and shortly on to Isleta.

Today these ruins yield clues to the relationships between Spaniards and the Salinas pueblos. What affect the Spanish had upon pueblo life is also hinted at by the archeological information unlocked here at Quarai. Many remnants of life in that time still survive as part of the cultural tradition that is New Mexico today.

**National Monument
National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior**

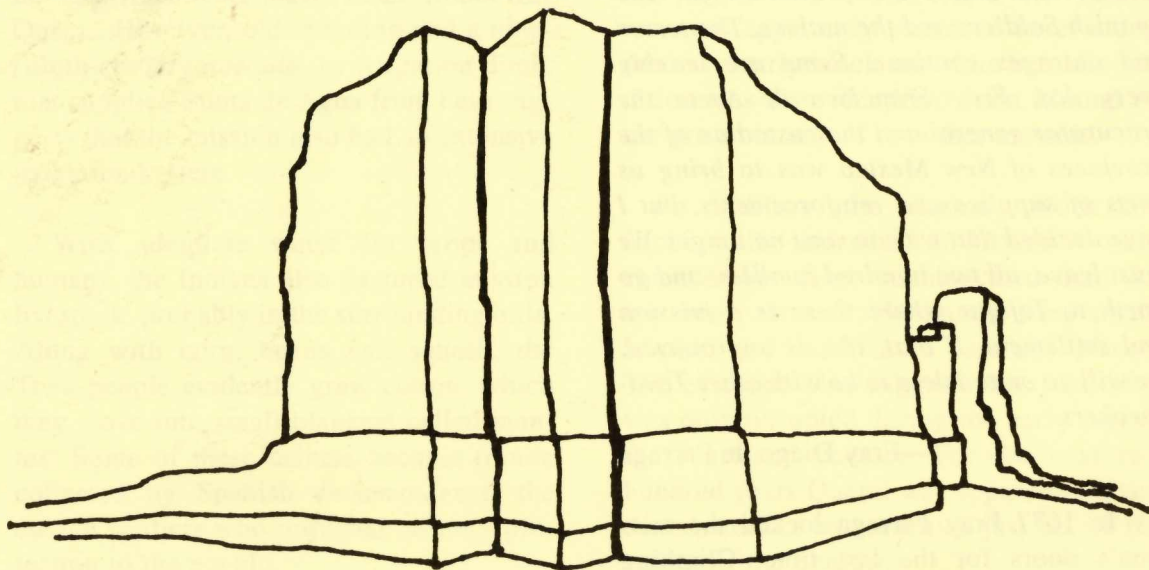


Illustration of La Purisima Concepcion de Quarac courtesy Dr. Perry Borchers

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