

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC QUARAI

AND/OR COMMON

Quarai State Monument

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER on secondary road about 1 mile west of Punta de Agua

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Punta de Agua

☒ VICINITY OF

First

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

New Mexico

CODE

35

COUNTY

Torrance

CODE

057

**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☒ SITE☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☐ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☒ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS☒ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE**☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☒ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☒ MUSEUM☒ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☒ OTHER grazing**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME State of New Mexico

(Mr. Tom Caperton, current chief of Monuments Division, Museum of New Mexico)

STREET &amp; NUMBER

P.O. Box 2087

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico 87501

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**Also: Torrance County Courthouse,  
Estancia, New Mexico

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

State Lands Office

STREET &amp; NUMBER

P.O. Box 1148

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

New Mexico Archeological Survey

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Museum of New Mexico

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe, New Mexico

STATE



Quarai before Excavation and Stabilization



1. Quarai: on approaching. (From near the road). The church faces south (to the left). Monastery ruins on east (toward the spectator) of the church. Pueblo ruin mounds to right and behind. Manzano Mountains in right background.

Photo Erik K. Reed,  
April, 1937.



2. The church of Quarai, from the pueblo ruins, looking East.

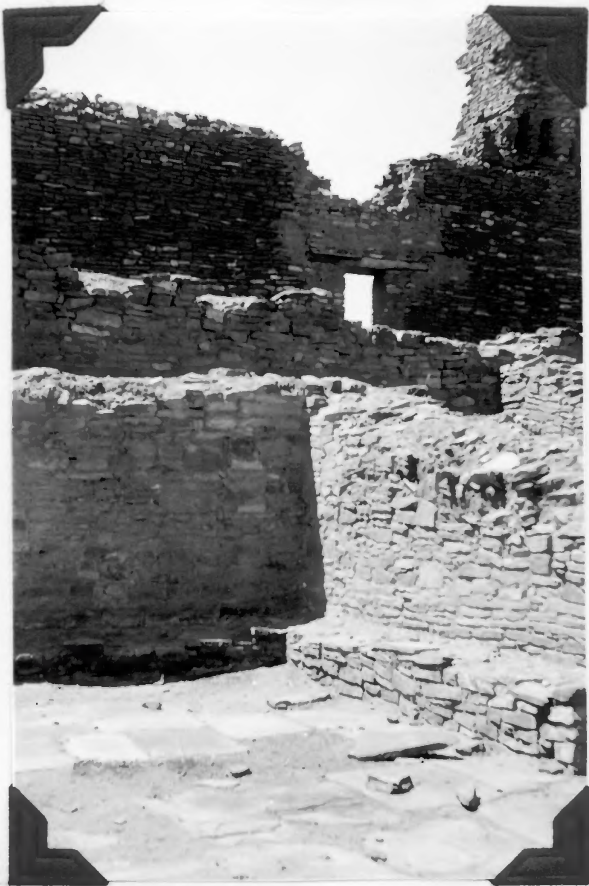
Photo Erik K. Reed,  
April, 1937.



3. The front of the nave, Quarai (looking south through the main door). Note beam-holes; window at right.

Photo Erik K. Reed,  
April, 1937.





4. A portion of the monastery and of the east wall of the church, Quarai. Note flagstone floor in foreground; window.

Photo Erik K. Reed,  
April, 1937.



5. The northeast corner of the church, Quarai. Note rows of beam sockets, flagged floor, remnants of plaster, bad vertical crack.

Photo Erik K. Reed,  
April, 1937.



6a and b. Details from figure 5.

Photos Erik K. Reed,

April, 1937.

Note: the work done since these pictures were taken has not materially affected the appearance of the area; no work yet done on church.





7. View showing, from front to back,  
recent outlining of a major portion  
of the pueblo ruin, excavated sec-  
tion of the pueblo, and west side  
of the church.

Photo Erik K. Reed,  
May, 1939.



9. Room in southwest portion of the monastery. Note bench, believed to be for communicants waiting to see the priest, flagstone floor, peculiar structure in corner. Walls have been stabilized (top courses relaid in bitudobe, some minor rebuilding).

Photo Erik K. Reed,  
May, 1939.



10. Round kiva in eastern portion of monastery area, with puzzling partition wall with a door partly filled, and with a terrace-enclosing monastery wall across the top of this partition wall.

Photo Erik K. Reed,  
May, 1939.

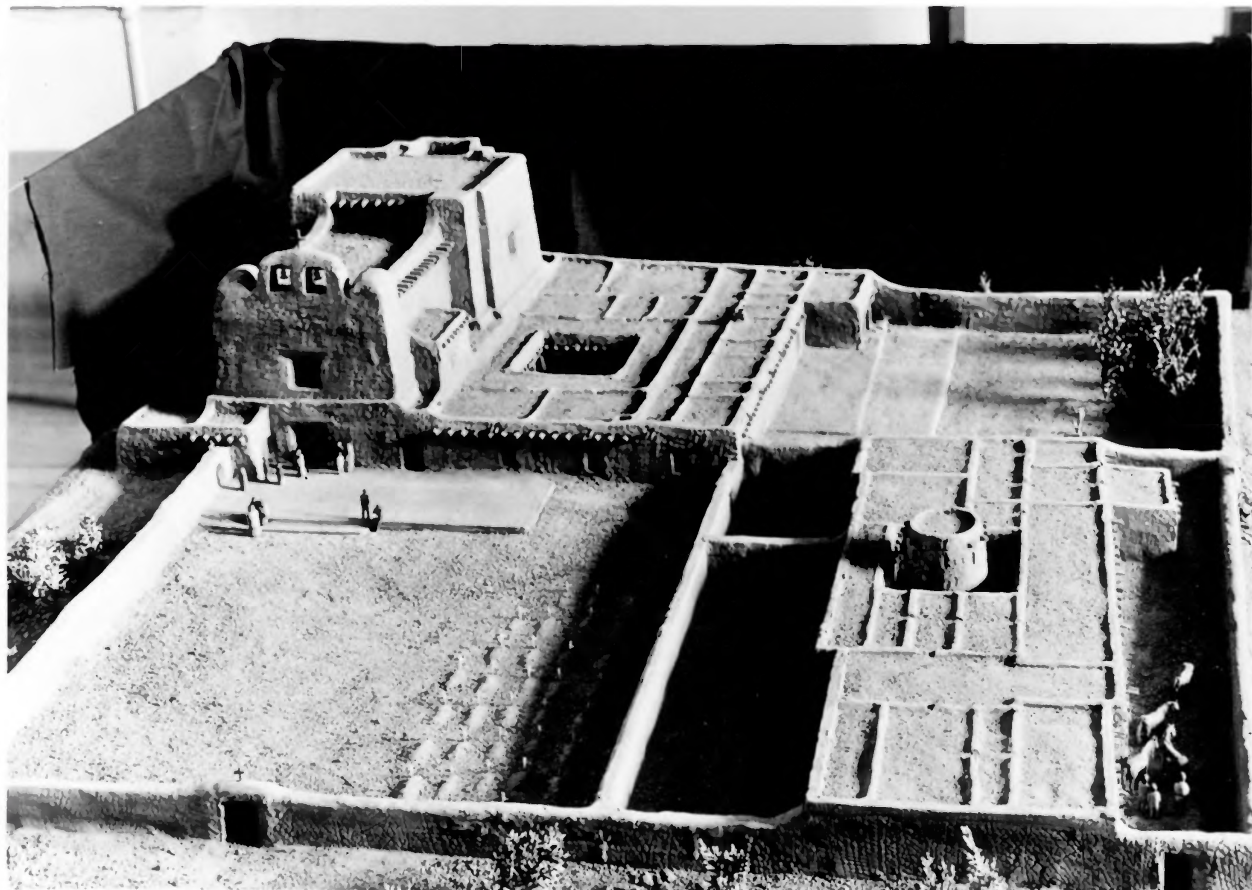


La Purisima Concepcion de Quarai Mission, Quarai State Monument,  
New Mexico. Interior of church. Photo by A. H. Schroeder,  
November 12, 1955. Negative in Southwestern Archeological  
Center, National Park Service, Globe, Arizona.





La Purisima Concepcion de Quarai Mission, Quarai State Monument, New Mexico. Looking north, church and convento. Photo by A. H. Schroeder, Nov. 12, 1955. Negative in Southwestern Archeological Center, National Park Service, Globe, Arizona.



La Purisima Concepcion de Quarai Mission, Quarai State Monument, New Mexico. Model in the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe. Photo by Natt N. Dodge, July, 1943. Negative in Southwestern Archeological Center, National Park Service, Globe, Arizona.

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☒ RUINS  
☒ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Quarai is located at the intersection of several draws in the gently rolling land close to the eastern base of the Manzano Mountains about a mile west of Punta de Agua, New Mexico. The red sandstone of the ruins contrasts with the green pinyon/juniper/grassland vegetation along the sides of the draw. Periodic flooding has contributed to the nature of the vegetation. A grove of cottonwood trees lies in the southeastern part of the site while cholla dominates the ruin mounds of the unexcavated pueblo. To the east of the site stretches the dry flat desert plain and to the west rise the Manzano Mountains. Cholla, juniper, and western wheatgrass are common within the boundaries of the site, while pinyon is rather rare, perhaps because it was used extensively for building, firewood, and food by early inhabitants. Abo Pass through the mountains lies just south of Quarai.

The site basically consists of the ruins of a small prehistoric settlement, a small church, a large 17th century pueblo, and a 17th century Spanish (Franciscan) mission and church. Petroglyphs have been found in the southern portions of the site. The accompanying map shows the locations of these archeologically significant areas within the landmark boundary.

The earliest known occupation of Quarai is represented by a small mound measuring 75 feet by 100 feet, south of the larger ruins complex. Adobe walls have been noted to occur within this mound. Judging from the pottery types which this area has yielded, archeologists believe that occupation first occurred about 1250 A.D. and continued until the end of the 14th century. The area then appears to have been uninhabited or only sporadically occupied for about 200 years.

The main pueblo ruins have been dated by pottery types to about 1600 A.D. or slightly later. Probably totaling something like 1000 rooms, this extensive pueblo must have measured about 300 feet by 400 feet. With two or three stories arranged in a compact style around five or more small plazas, the complex could easily have housed the 600 or 700 people who lived there according to historic documents.

A small single nave church without transepts lies on the eastern edge of the extensive pueblo ruins. The interior of the church measured 20 feet by 50 feet, and no interior features could be distinguished. Although an exact date for this church is unknown, it has been suggested that it was built in the 1620's or somewhat earlier (Wilson, 1973).

At the north end of the historic pueblo was the mission--including the convento (monastery) and the large church called Nuestra Senora de la Purisma Concepcion de Cuarac (Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception of Cuarac). Cuarac is the 17th century Spanish spelling for Quarai. The ruins of the church indicate that it was constructed in red sandstone in the form of a Latin cross. Built ca. 1630, the church is about 108 feet long and 28 feet wide while the transept has a length of 50 feet. The walls of the church, averaging 4 1/2 feet in width, are as wide as ten feet at the base and now rise to a height of 20 feet; they may have

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES probably 1250-1400 A.D., BUILDER/ARCHITECT  
possibly occupied 1400-1600 A.D.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE definitely 1600-1675 A.D.

Located near the eastern base of the Manzano Mountains about a mile west of Punta de Agua, Quarai consists of a small prehistoric settlement, a large 17th Century Tiwa pueblo, a small 17th century church, and a large 17th century mission and church. Occupied in historic times from about 1600 to 1675, Quarai helps to document the acculturation processes which occurred during this early contact period. The pueblo was also the ecclesiastical headquarters of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in New Mexico. As such, it played an important part in the conflict between the clergy and the laity--the missionaries and the governors--which was raging in New Spain at that time. From both the archeological and historical records, Quarai provides insight into this conflict and its effect on the Native American population.

### HISTORY

The earliest known occupation at Quarai is represented by the south mound. Dating from about 1250-1350 A.D. as indicated by the quantities of Chupadera black-on-white and Rio Grande Glaze A (glaze I) pottery types, this prehistoric settlement was abandoned by 1400 A.D.; for none of the later glazed pottery types are present. Some earlier black-on-white types and some intrusive wares from farther west--such as St. Johns--have been recovered from the site.

From present archeological work, the locality appears to have remained unoccupied for almost 200 years. Indeed the date of the founding of the historically known pueblo of Quarai is the subject of controversy. Some archeologists believe that more extensive excavation will support the theory that the site was occupied sporadically between 1400 and 1600 A.D. while some historians believe that the pueblo may have been settled around 1609 after a decree by the Viceroy of New Spain ordering the concentration of the Indians into fewer settlements "to facilitate their administration."<sup>1</sup> At present, the general consensus of opinion merely indicates that Quarai was occupied prior to Spanish contact. It was probably mentioned in the 1581-82 reports of the Chamuscado/Rodriguez expedition, the first such Spanish expedition to visit any of the Salinas pueblos. The Espejo expedition of 1583 probably did not stop at Quarai. Although the name Quarai is not mentioned, some evidence suggests that Onate did visit the site during his 1598 trip; and in 1601, a

<sup>1</sup> quoted in John P. Wilson, Quarai, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, p. 3, reprint from El Palacio, v. 78, no. 4, 1973.





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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Quarai

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

Originally measured about 40 feet in height. A small side altar is located in each transept, and large carved vigas spanned the walls and supported the roof. The main altar may have been destroyed by a Spanish governor in search of the burial of a priest in 1759. There is evidence that the church was burned, but it is unknown whether the event occurred before or after its abandonment.

The monastery ruins, likewise of red sandstone, cover an area nearly twice as large as the church. The remains of the monastery walls rise to between 4 and 6 feet. Of particular interest is the kiva located in one of the patios of the monastery area during 1939. The church and a few rooms of the convento had flagstone floors, and it is probable that most of the interior of the mission complex was plastered with white gypsum, and occasionally painted. As revealed by the excavations, the plan of the convento and its positioning next to the church can be seen on the accompanying Map D.

EXCAVATIONS

Major archeological investigations and stabilizations have occurred at Quarai since 1913 when the School of American Archeology (now the School of American Research of the American Institute of Archeology) excavated rooms in the south mound and found about 20 burials either within or adjacent to the structures. In the years that followed, archeological surveys were conducted, and from late 1934 to early 1936 a major development program sponsored by the CCC program was instituted by the University of New Mexico and the Museum of New Mexico. Although owned by the state since 1913, it was at this time (1935) that Quarai became an official State Monument administered by the Museum of New Mexico. The large church was excavated yielding burials on the floor with burned roof debris over them. Excavation of 17 of the convento rooms revealed evidence for rebuilding or possible reoccupations. Initial stabilization of the church was accomplished. With the exception of some more work in the south mound and a few test pits, little excavation occurred in the pueblos.

The next round of intensive excavation occurred from late 1938 to 1940 as part of the WPA and NYA programs. The north and northeast walls of the large pueblo were traced, and a plaza area was discovered and articulated. Over 20 more convento rooms were excavated, again indicating the rebuilding and reoccupation of the structure. Other activities of these excavators included further investigations of the south mound, stabilization of many convento rooms, and capping of the walls of the church.

Additional work in 1959 involved repair of the mission church as well as excavation within the large pueblo ruin. It was during this investigation

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET Quarai ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

that the smaller church was discovered, excavated, and stabilized. The most recent work at Quarai in 1972 involved major stabilization of the church and convento carried on with the help of Federal matching funds.

Aside from pottery of native manufacture helpful in the dating of the site, the excavations at Quarai have yielded metal objects such as iron celts which illustrate some of the ways in which the newly arrived Spaniards affected the Indians. A Spanish porcelain bowl is one of the more unusual objects unearthed from the site. Although the church and convento have been thoroughly excavated much of the earlier south mound as well as most of the large pueblo ruin remain for future investigation.

MODERN STRUCTURES

A visitor center including a small museum and caretaker's residence was built within landmark boundaries in 1970. Associated with the residence are several fenced areas used as animal pens and gardens by the caretaker. A dirt road leads to the visitor parking lot, and there are footpaths leading to the ruins. A fence surrounds the part of the landmark presently owned by the State of New Mexico. The privately owned portions of the site are used for such activities as gardening and grazing and contain widely dispersed residences and fences which do not severely compromise the integrity of the site. Although all of these structures are within landmark boundaries, they do not contribute to the national significance of the property.

CONDITION AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

In general, Quarai is in good condition, and the present caretaker, on his very limited budget, has expressed a keen interest in the upkeep of the property. For years, the National Park Service has been considering the acquisition of the site as a national monument in conjunction with Abo and Gran Quivira. The State offered to transfer the site to the federal system in 1961. If and when this transfer occurs, the National Park Service development plans include the relocation of the present visitor and housing area outside of the historic vista and the blazing of different trails to the site as well as increased attention to the stabilization needs of the ruins.

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CONTINUATION SHEET      Quarai      ITEM NUMBER      8      PAGE      2

skirmish between the Spaniards and the Indians resulted in the partial burning of a pueblo called Acolocu, which, if not Quarai, was at least in its immediate vicinity.

The missionary work in New Mexico became intensified about 1610. Fray Alonso de Peinado, stationed at his newly established mission at Chilili, was among the first to work directly in the Salinas region although previous efforts beginning as early as 1598 were conducted from headquarters at Pecos pueblo. Although no direct mention of Quarai is made during this early period between 1610 and the late 1620's, the pueblo was definitely occupied at that time, and it has been conjectured that the first church at the site dates from the 1620's or perhaps a little earlier.

The first specific mention of Quarai by name occurs in 1628 with a reference to Fray Juan Gutierrez de la Chica as resident at the "Querac" convento. It is unknown whether Fray Juan or the subsequent priest who arrived in 1623 supervised the building of La Purisma Conception. Tree ring dates from two roof beams indicate that the trees for the construction were cut in 1630.

During the 17th century, New Mexico was a remote outpost of Spanish rule primarily maintained for the missionary work. There were never enough priests to fill every station and sometimes even the larger missions such as Quarai lacked resident fathers. Nevertheless 6 priests other than Fray Juan are known to have served at Quarai. Fray Estevan de Perea arrived at his post there in 1633 and remained until his death (no earlier than 1639). It was at this time that Quarai became an important ecclesiastical post, for Perea served as the powerful head of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in New Mexico and was the supreme ecclesiastical authority in that area. As such, he was in direct contact with the tribunal in Mexico City and has been called the Father of the New Mexican Church.

Fray Juan de Salas was the resident priest at Quarai in 1643, and he, too, represented the Inquisition in New Mexico. There is no record of his arrival at or departure from this mission, but it is probable that he served there from Perea's death until 1650. Then, in 1650, Fray Geronimo de Llana assumed charge of Quarai where he probably served until his death in 1659. Fray Geronimo was buried in the church and about 1669, a later priest moved his body to a place near the main altar to preserve it from dampness. In 1759, Governor Francisco Antonio Marin del Valle visited Quarai to obtain Fray Geronimo's remains but was supposedly told by an Indian that the people at Quarai had disinterred Fray Geronimo when they moved to Tajique and had reburied him at their new pueblo. The Governor thus allegedly obtained the bones from Tajique.

Fray Nicolas de Freitas was appointed guardian at Quarai in 1659, probably



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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

Quarai

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

3

replacing Fray Geronimo. Throughout the whole of this mission period, the church and the state conflicted over a variety of matters. When Fray Nicolas became resident priest at Quarai, the controversy was at a peak, and the Salinas region was a primary battlefield. The alcade mayor for the Salinas area, Captain Nicolas de Aguilar, under the direction of Governor Lopez de Mendizabal, flagrantly exploited the Indians and harrassed the priests. Under the pressure caused by this situation, Freitas resigned in 1660. Subsequently, Aguilar and the governor were tried by the Inquisition, but Aguilar countered the accusations by stating that Freitas had once tried to kill him.

The following years at Quarai are not very well known. Fray Franciso de Salazar is mentioned as serving there in 1663, 1666, and 1668, and Fray Diego de Parraga was known to be the resident priest sometime in the early 1660's and again in 1672.

Quarai probably had between 600 and 700 occupants. There was extensive farming near the mission; and an old orchard near Manzano north of Quarai may date to the Spanish missionary period. The Indians were exploited through the encomienda system whereby each pueblo had to pay an annual tribute consisting of agricultural products to the Spanish soldier-settlers in return for protection from enemies. Despite these strong church and state forces which tended to destroy much of the culture of the Indians, they still held on to some of their important traditions, as evidenced by the presence of the kivas at Quarai.

By the middle of the 1660's, widespread raiding by the Apaches and severe famines caused disaster throughout much of New Mexico. Quarai and the rest of the Salinas area suffered especially, and by 1678, all six of the pueblos in the Salinas area (including Quarai) were abandoned. The inhabitants of Quarai allegedly first left for Tajique; but by the time of the Pueblo Revolt of 1689, they had apparently joined the pueblos of their linguistic kinsmen along the Rio Grande. The village of Quarai along with Tajique, and Chilili, two of the other five Salinas pueblos, was probably occupied by Tiwa speakers, while the rest, Abo, Las Humanas (Gran Quivira) and Tabira, were Tompiro-speaking communities.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Quarai was occasionally used as military quarters. Between 1751 and 1754, Governor Velez Cachupin stationed men at "Coara" (Quarai) to patrol against Apache raids. In 1846, Lieutenant J. W. Abert passed the site and described it. Major James H. Carleton added to this description on a visit in 1853. During the Civil War, Quarai may have been a military camp. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw a variety of visitors to Quarai including Adolph Bandelier. By 1913, work had begun on the excavation of the well-known site.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

Quarai

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 1

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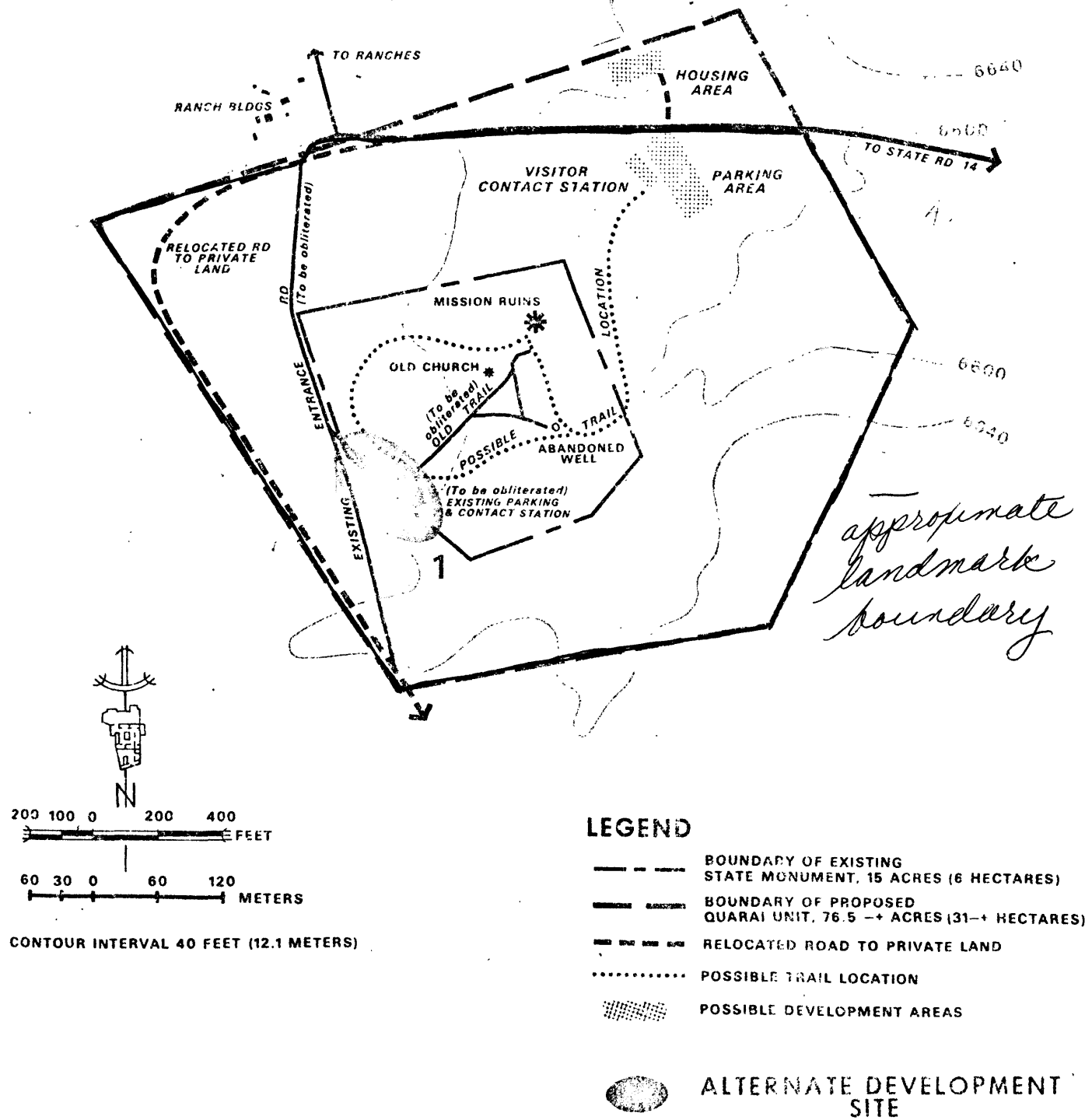
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CONTINUATION SHEET   Quarai                      ITEM NUMBER   10                      PAGE   1

Refer to Maps A, B, and C for a clarification of the boundary description. Beginning at a point on the southern right-of-way of the secondary road to Punta de Agua about .6 miles generally west of said road's intersection with State Route 10, the boundary proceeds southeast at an angle of about S 29° E for about 700 feet, then southwest at an angle of about S 26° W for about 1015 feet, then southwest at an angle of about S 81° W for about 1180 feet, then northwest at an angle of about N 32½° W for about 1730 feet to its intersection with the southern right-of-way of said secondary road leading to Punta de Agua, and then in a generally eastern direction along the southern right-of-said road about .5 miles to the point of beginning.

The boundary has been drawn to enclose the mission and pueblo ruins as well as the petroglyphs. The east, south, and west boundaries correspond to the boundaries of the proposed National Monument. These lines were based on a careful determination of the extent of the cultural material by the Southwest Regional Office of the National Park Service. The road has been chosen as the northern boundary, for the relevant cultural material is confined to the south of it.



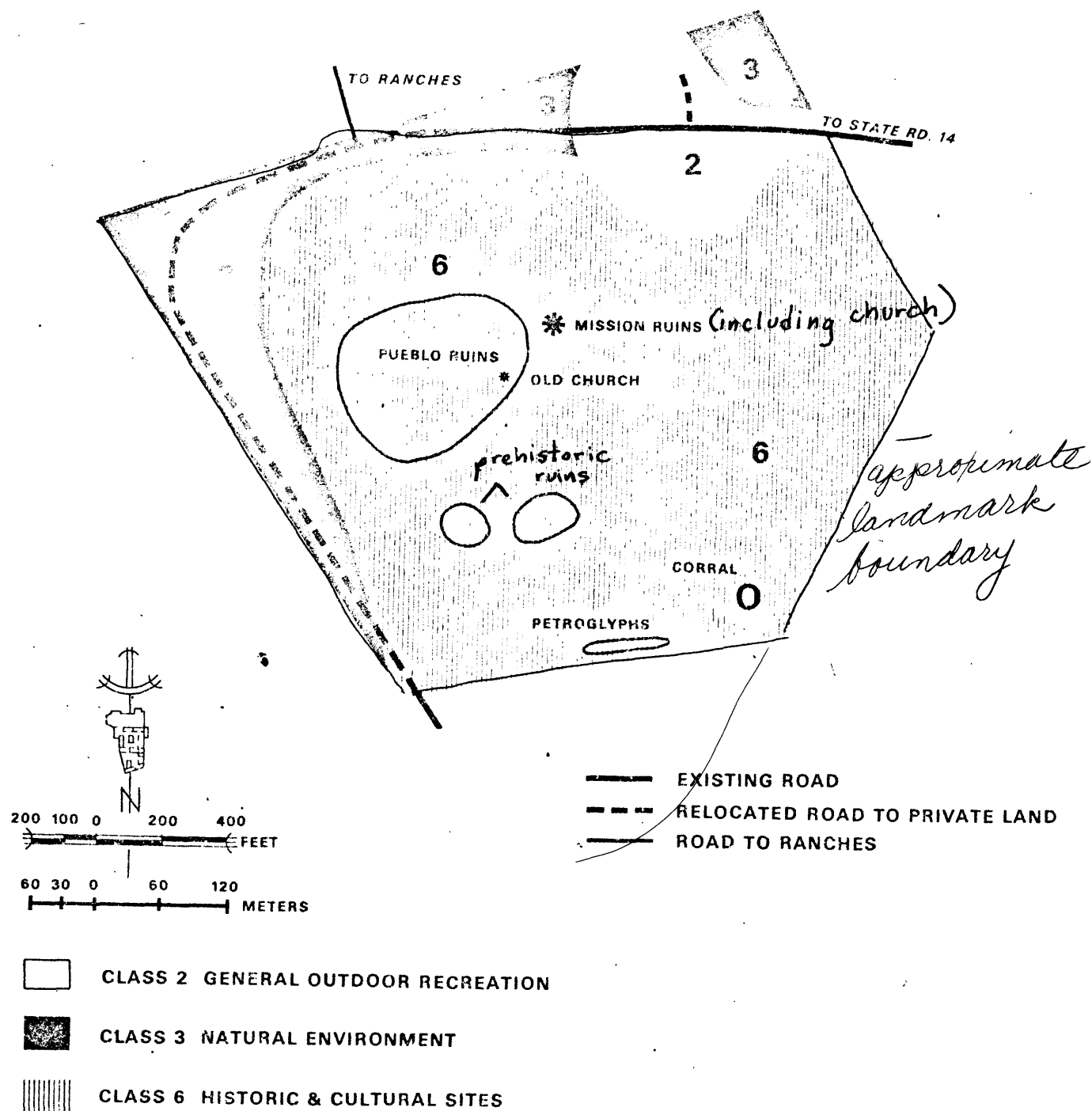
# **QUARAI UNIT** **PROPOSED SALINAS NATIONAL MONUMENT**

Map B

313 20013

PLATE 14



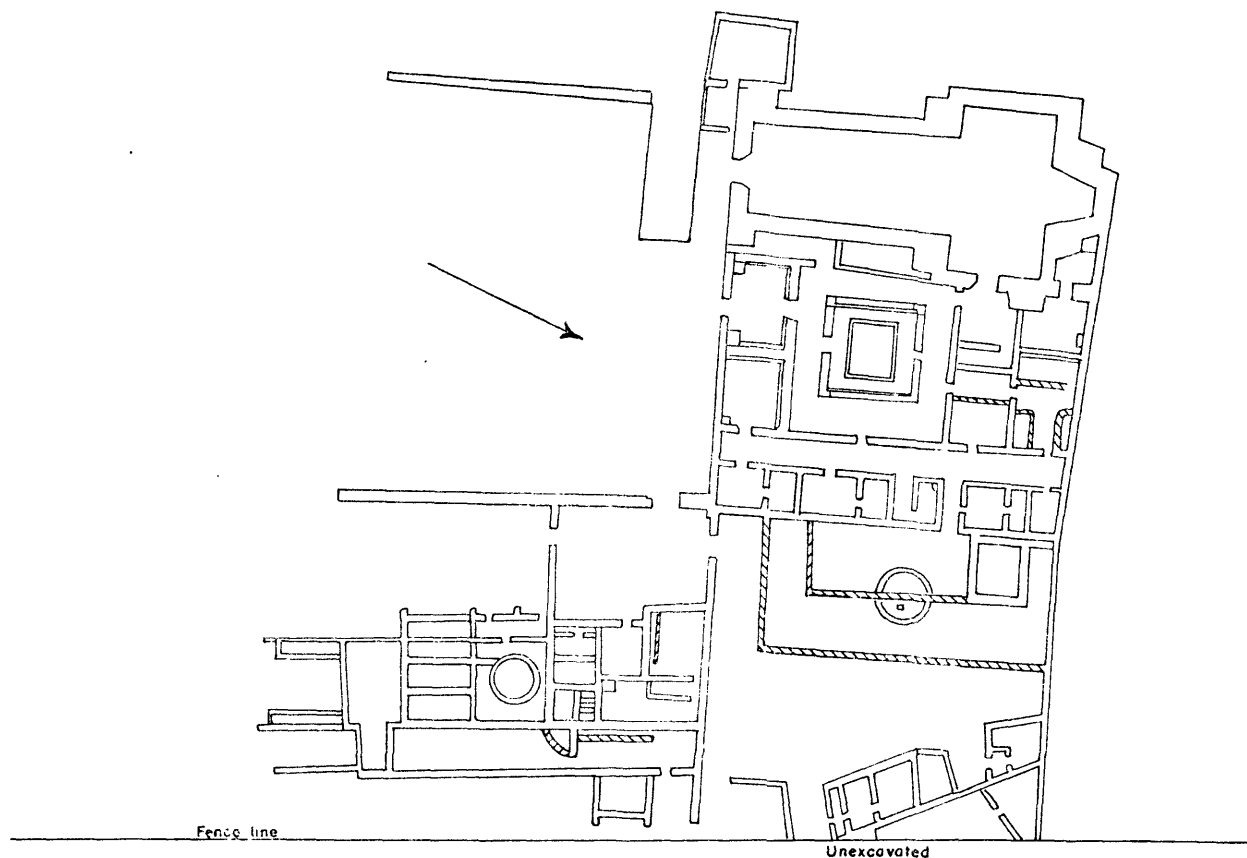


# LAND CLASSIFICATION QUARAI UNIT

Map C

PLATE 11

313	20010
OCT 74	DSC



*Quari Mission and Convento. This map incorporates minor architectural changes as found during the 1972 stabilization activities.*

Map D

From: John P. Wilson, 1973, Quarai, Museum of New Mexico,  
Santa Fe, reprinted from El Palacio, v. 78, no. 4