FRANCES CANYON PUEBLITO

One of the largest and best preserved Navajo Pueblos, was occupied after the Pueblo Revolt in 1680. This revolt broke the Spanish hold on pueblo villages along the northern Rio Grande. When the Spanish regained control in 1692, many pueblo groups fled westward to seek refuge with the Navajo. This period is called the Gobernador Phase by archaeologists.

Excavations at Frances uncovered copper bells, European trade beads, a bone whistle, Spanish tack ornaments, a metal cross, and weaving tools. The structure originally contained twenty-three ground-floor rooms, twelve second-story rooms, and three third-story rooms. Structural features include vigas and latilla roofs, loom fittings, peg holes, plastered walls, and hooded fireplaces.

The structure's tower sits on the sandstone edge of a mesa overhanging a Frances Creek tributary. The Pueblo's defensive nature is demonstrated in its location along a mesa edge. In the tower's small, downward-slanted openings for lookout, and in a first-floor defensively placed trap doorway. This doorway made unwanted entry to the upper rooms impossible. Tree-ring dates suggest the site was occupied in the latter half of the Gobernador Phase, probably between A.D. 1720 and 1750.

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) team of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service, under the direction of historical architect Thomas Kehran and historian Greg Hendrick. Documentation was completed during the summer of 1990 at the HABS field office in Farrington, New Mexico by project supervisor Roger Redmond and architectural technicians Mira Metzinger, Evan Miles, and Rodney Shaw. Archeological consultation was provided by Bureau of Land Management archaeologists Stephen Fossberg, Luann Jackson, and Manton Sotoporo!
Reference