

Guidebook



EL RANCHO DE
LAS GOLONDRINAS

The Southwest's Premier Living History Museum



Welcome to the Ranch of the Swallows

"Bienvenidos a El Rancho de Las Golondrinas," a welcome which has been extended to passing visitors over the centuries by its inhabitants, the Spanish settlers of Las Golondrinas. Life at this outpost in the vast Spanish empire was different from the way we live now. Allow us to introduce you to this lost country life, the plants and animals used to sustain life and culture, the variety of buildings for living and working, and the ways of creating all the things needed for survival that the Spanish settlers and their descendants employed and enjoyed—such as

textile weaving, hide tanning, milling, worshipping, blacksmithing and the planting of crops. Join us on a journey to the past and let this booklet be your guide to the buildings and activities of El Rancho de Las Golondrinas.

Along the way please stay on the paths and watch for low doors and high thresholds—parts of the past that might come as a surprise. Above all we ask that you enjoy your visit, ask questions on your journey, follow this map and guidebook, take pictures and treasure your memories.

History

People have lived in this idyllic little valley from precontact times until today, drawn by the presence of water as natural springs formed the marshlands or *ciénegas*, from which the region derives its name. Native inhabitants farmed the fertile valley, planted corn, beans and squash and hunted in the mountains and eastern plains. This life was irrevocably changed when the Spanish came to the region, led by Don Juan de Oñate in 1598, and followed by the founding of Santa Fe by Don Pedro de Peralta.

In 1680, the Pueblo People successfully drove the Spanish from New Mexico. Although remnants of a pre-revolt Spanish rancho exist in the area, it was not until Don Diego de Vargas returned in the early 1690s that Spanish settlements were reestablished with permanent success in La Ciénega valley.

El Rancho de Las Golondrinas was an independent enterprise where the inhabitants raised or created almost all of the things needed to survive. They harvested both corn and wheat that the mills would turn into flour. From their sheep they obtained the wool for cloth and clothing as well as meat. The fields were watered by the *acequias* (irrigation ditches) which are the same waterways seen throughout the ranch today.

Important tools for the ranch and farm were made from iron brought to the region from Mexico proper. Homes and other buildings were built using adobe made from earth and timber obtained from the nearby mountains. Any extra goods created were important to the survival of the ranch as they could be sold or bartered for other necessities not made in New Mexico.

El Rancho de Las Golondrinas was strategically located on the Camino Real, the Royal Road that extended from Mexico City to Santa Fe. The ranch provided goods for trade and was a place where the caravans that plied the road would stop on their journey coming from or going to Santa Fe. It was a *paraje*, an official rest stop for travelers.



El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro

By 1821, the Santa Fe Trail was open for trade and more goods were carried down the Camino Real to the markets in Mexico. Again, El Rancho de Las Golondrinas was important to this newly opened trade route. By the time the American Army of the West took possession of New Mexico in 1846, this area was enjoying relative prosperity. But eventually, the ranch was forgotten, the land divided up and its history largely lost to time until a few visionaries saw in it an avenue to a new life as a special place to explain a significant part of the past—that of life in Northern New Mexico.

For more information about the families who settled Las Golondrinas, see page 32.

Las Golondrinas Becomes a Museum

Leonora Curtin Paloheimo—known for founding Santa Fe’s Native Market to help save and reestablish traditional craft forms and techniques and to provide local artisans with a source of income during the Great Depression—bought the ranch property with her mother in 1933. After their marriage in 1946, Leonora and her Finnish husband, Yrjö Alfred (Y.A.) Paloheimo, saw the potential in the old ranch as a site for an outdoor living history museum.

Both Leonora and Y.A. devoted themselves to transforming the property into a place where visitors could physically engage with the rich culture of the region and become immersed in the history of New Mexico. Existing historic buildings were restored, period structures were erected and historic buildings were brought in from other sites around New Mexico. The museum officially opened its doors in the spring of 1972 and over time has grown into New Mexico’s premier living history museum. Today the museum promotes and preserves the cultural heritage of Northern New Mexico, while at the same time building a better understanding of the lasting influence of those cultures in the Southwest and the rest of the country. In 2022 the Museum was placed on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Join us in exploring this past through its land and buildings, through its Native inhabitants, through the many tasks of the early European settlers, through the important crafts of the region, and through the celebrations of life that have graced these hills and valleys over the centuries.



Left to Right: Leonora Scott Muse Curtin, Y.A. Paloheimo and Leonora Curtin Paloheimo at Las Golondrinas in 1948



34
WETLAND
.15 MILES

SIERRA
HOMESTEAD

PICNIC
TABLES

BURRO
FIELD

CREEK CROSSING

PERFORMANCE
FIELD

ENTERTAINMENT
SPACE

STEEP H

MODERN RESTROOMS

PORTA-POTTY

FIRST AID

INFORMATION

ATM

WATER STATION

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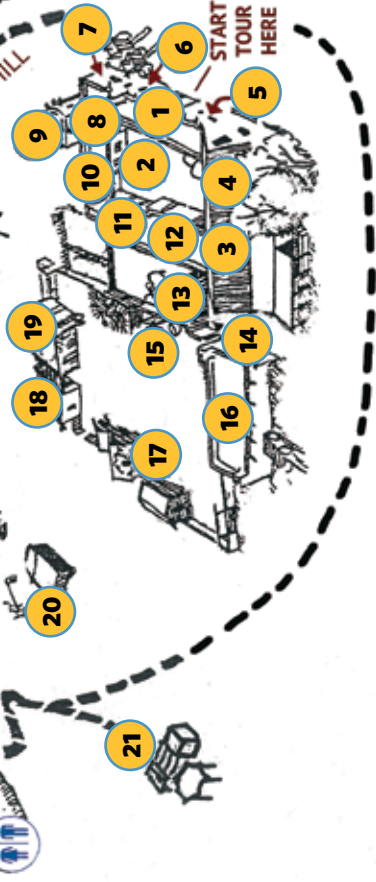
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ADMINISTRATION

INFO BOOTH (FESTIVALS)

FOOD SERVICE AREA

ARTIST PLAZAS

PRIVATE PARKING ONLY

LODGE

PARKING

VOLUNTEERS ONLY

MUSEUM SHOP

PLAZA SALAZAR

ENTRANCE

PRIVATE

EXHIBIT HALL

EDUCATION CENTER

WALK



1. Zaguán

Start Your Tour Here

Las Golondrinas Placita (1-12)

You are standing in front of the large wooden double doors leading to the *Golondrinas Placita*. Outside you see *carretas* (large carts with wooden wheels) piled with goods for the journey on the Camino Real. A large door (*puertón/portón*) opens for wagons and animals while the small door (*puerta de zambullo*) is used by individuals. Enter through the covered entry (*zaguán*) leading to the *placita* (little plaza). Once inside you are at the heart of the ranch where visitors were welcomed, women worked on their countless domestic tasks, men performed their trades, and children were raised within the protection of the thick adobe walls.

1 Zaguán Covered Entryway

After entering the large wooden double doors you are standing in the middle of the *Golondrinas Placita*, a reconstructed example of an 18th century Spanish

Period home. Built as a defensive structure and positioned on the Camino Real as both a ranch and *paraje* (stopping place), this dwelling would have housed an extended family, their servants and guests. The various rooms around the inner courtyard were used for both living and working. Large gates allowed big carts and livestock to enter for protection. The high walls with few exterior windows and a secure watchtower (*torreón*) are testaments to the real dangers faced by settlers from raiding Native tribes.

Rooms surrounding the *placita* make up the square defensive exterior walls, which are made of adobe plastered with mud.

Doors are hand hewn with a stout and substantial appearance. While on average, 18th century Europeans and their New World counterparts were slightly shorter than we are today, door height was not dictated by this fact. Rather, the doors are small for a number of other practical reasons: they require less material to make, preserve structural integrity

of walls, help to maintain heat in a room and provide high thresholds to keep rain, snow, mud and leaves from entering. Smaller doors also offer some defense by forcing you to both stoop down and step over the threshold when entering a room or building. Whatever the reason, **please watch your head** as you explore the many rooms and buildings at El Rancho de Las Golondrinas.

2 **La Placita, La Noria, Los Hornos** **The Little Plaza, The Well, The Ovens**

Here, in this open space called a *placita* (little plaza), there is a well (*noria*), which provides easy access to water. The *hornos* (earth ovens) are where the family and their servants and enslaved Natives spent much time cooking. The *horno* came to Spain from the Moors in North Africa and later to New Spain with Spanish settlers. *Hornos* were used to bake and roast many foods such as bread (*pan*), sweet bread (*dulces*), sprouted wheat and sugar pudding (*panocha*), corn for *chicos*, roasted green chile and roasted meat.

3 **Capilla** **Chapel**

4 **Sacristía** **Sacristy**

The large peaked-roof structure with stone walls is the chapel and sacristy. Believed to have been built in the 18th century, this is one of the oldest buildings at El Rancho de Las Golondrinas. Originally covered with a traditional flat roof, the current peaked tin roof was added sometime after 1880, as more building materials became available with the coming of the railroad. You will notice the original *vigas* (large beams) that supported the flat roof still extending from the top of the exterior wall.

Prior to its transformation into a chapel, it was used as a barn. Currently it represents a New Mexican Hispanic chapel as used in the 19th to the early 20th centuries. In 1994, 11 artists working in traditional styles constructed the main altar screen. Later, 14 *santeros* and 2 tinsmiths made the 14 Stations of the Cross.



2. Placita with Well and Ovens



2. Hornos



3. Chapel



3. Chapel



4. Sacristy



5. Kitchen

During the Spanish Period, a large room such as this would have served as the formal living room (*sala*). Celebrations and *fandangos* (Spanish dance parties) would have been staged here and large community and political meetings held in this room. Distinguished guests would also use this room for lodging.

The Sacristy, also known as the Vestry, just beyond the large double doors, is where items for various religious occasions would have been stored and where the priest would hang and change vestments. This type of room could contain items still in use, but also objects no longer needed and too precious to throw away. These types of rooms are common in churches all over the world, serving as storage, changing room and church archive all at once. This room is also known as the Founder's Room and is where the first meeting of the Colonial New Mexico Historical Foundation was held in 1971. Like many back rooms, it is not meant to be seen, it is a brief glimpse into an aspect of the everyday.

5 **La Cocina** Kitchen

Enter the kitchen through the door behind the beehive-shaped ovens known as *hornos*. The kitchen was a hub of activity. The owner, his honored guests and family, would be served in the family's quarters. Servants and enslaved people would eat in the kitchen or have a quick meal as they went about their business. The food served was a mixture of Spanish and Native American dishes as settlement created a culinary fusion, blending the food traditions of both cultures. Tortillas of corn and flour, ground on the *mano y metate* (grinding stones), a modest amount of meat, squash, beans and chile were the mainstays. Spices, salt and special foods such as chocolate or sugar were carefully stored and protected. Cooking was done in an open fireplace with a platform above for storage.

The kitchen is full of tools and equipment. Serving pieces such as tin-glazed earthenware (*majolica*), silver plates and eating utensils, glassware and pewter were all used to serve the owner's family. Servants

might share a pot of food using a tortilla as a utensil or a simple unglazed earthenware plate and cup. Metal was scarce, so all vessels and other tools made of metal were especially valuable. The log *harinero* is a storage bin for grain. Low stools and benches were used for both sitting and for the preparation of food. The practice of eating family-style while seated at a table was not a part of life before the 19th century in various parts of the world. As was typical of the time, meals were a task, not an event and often taken on the go. Men, women and children often ate separately or in stages.

6

El Cuarto de Recibo Reception Room

The reception room, directly adjacent to the large entry (*zaguán*) and across from the kitchen, was the realm of the man of the house. Once inside you will see that the windows looking into the *placita* are large, allowing air and light into the rooms, while the exterior windows are small for defensive purposes and are covered with selenite to allow light in. The roof is supported by large beams (*vigas*). The ceilings are a mix of round *latillas* (poles) and *rajas* (rough shakes) laid across both squared and round *vigas*.

The ranch was far more than a home and served as the center of a business enterprise. There was a need for space to work and for transactions of a wide variety to take place, precious commodities to be stored and documents to be prepared. Here the ranch owner could greet visitors arriving at the *paraje* during their journey and offer honored guests a room. Since he might be the only one who was able to read or write, this space housed precious books and a desk (*escritorio*) to write upon and store important papers. Heaped about the room would be goods either coming from or going to the rest of New Spain. Since the ranch produced surplus woolen goods, the rancher was involved in the merchant trade by exchanging his surplus for such things as newly arrived luxury goods or tools and items that could later be sold or bartered. In general, this entry room served as the main office, special storage and guest room.



5. Kitchen



6. Entrance to Reception Room



6. Reception Room



7. Family Room



7. Family Room



8. Zaguán al Torreón

7 **El Cuarto de Familia** Family Room

Through the double doors is the family room. This most-protected location was the inner sanctum, ruled by the lady of the house. Here she stored her precious belongings and raised her children. The room is characterized by the use of a variety of textiles for warmth, comfort and decoration and would be the place where women would gather to work and socialize. Along the walls were *banco*s (built in benches) and bedding stuffed with fleece, used for both sleeping and sitting. During the day, these comfortable mattresses were folded and used for sofas as the women worked on their many projects. This is also where the ranch owner's wife schooled her children and taught catechism. Like the entry room, a small fireplace provided heat and could be used for some modest cooking, although most of the serious food preparation took place in the kitchen. Servants would serve meals in this room as the family sat upon their rolls of bedding or upon low stools. The chests (*cajas*) were not only for storage but could also be used for serving and as work surfaces. Few pieces of additional furniture graced the room, although a chair or two might be reserved for special guests. A small altar area in the room was maintained for the family's private worship.

8 **Zaguán al Torreón** Tower Entrance Room

9 **Torreón** Tower

Beyond the single carved door is the entrance room to the tower (*torreón*). *Torreones* were a common sight throughout Northern New Mexico during the Spanish Period. Settlers were responsible for defending themselves, as the soldiers of the *presidio* (fort) could not be notified in time to protect their fellow citizens. These towers provided a place for the Spanish to retreat while under attack.

These multipurpose structures were also used for storing food, water, tack and weapons such as *escopetas* (Spanish muskets), but since gunpowder was constantly in short supply settlers also used bows,

arrows and lances. On the upper level a sentinel stood watch and was ready to warn others of approaching danger by any means available, including blowing a horn, beating a drum, shouting or ringing a bell. Field workers would run for the protection of the walled *placita*, while others would enter the *torreón* to fight off the enemy.

While both the Spanish and Native tribes raided each other, one such attack was documented by Franciscan priest Fray Francisco Atanasio Domínguez. On Thursday, June 20, 1776, a party of Comanche warriors attacked ranches in La Ciénega, killing nine men and boys and taking two young children captive. Antonio Sándoval, the owner of El Rancho de Las Golondrinas, lost his 19-year-old son José Sándoval and nephew Santiago Mascareñas who were killed as they tended crops.

10 **La Dispensa (10)** **Storage Room**

The small door in the back corner of the *placita* leads to the storage room. Infrequent wagon trains from Mexico, drought and raids made it imperative to take measures to store and stock provisions. Starvation was a very real possibility and times of famine would stalk the fledgling settlement. Wild game and domesticated animals were an indispensable source of protein. The triad of corn, beans and squash provided the most important foodstuffs, and these were stored in great abundance by the settlers and guarded in the *dispensa* (storage room) from both pests and humans alike.

Preservation of food was limited to salting, smoking and drying; canning and bottling were to come much later. Seed storage was another significant use for the *dispensa*. Like the settlers on the Atlantic coast, the Spanish would turn to Native Americans, in this case their Pueblo neighbors, when they had failed to adequately harvest sufficient quantities of food. The Pueblo people in turn would seek Spanish wheat and livestock when provisions ran low.



9. Torreón



10. La Dispensa



10. La Dispensa



11. Weaving and Spinning



11. Weaving and Spinning Rooms



12. Captives' and Servants' Room

11 **Talleres de Hilar y Tejer (11)** **Weaving and Spinning Rooms**

The doors along the back wall of the *placita* by the *ramada* (arbor) lead to the weaving and spinning rooms. These rooms show how the Spanish settlers carded, spun and wove wool to make rugs for the floor, blankets for the bed and horses, and clothing—including *sarapes* (blankets or shawls worn by men) and *rebozos* (shawls worn by women). These woven goods and sheep were the most important commodity exported from New Mexico. Today the weavers at El Rancho de Las Golondrinas continue this tradition.

Wool was either left its natural color or prepared with natural dyes. Dyestuffs were typically grown on the ranch, but brilliant blues such as indigo and rich reds using cochineal (*cochinilla*) were imported from Mexico over the Camino Real.

The looms are all later examples or reproductions. The large four-harness beam loom is an accurate reproduction of a Rio Grande loom. These looms were multiple harness “walking” beam looms, meaning that the weaver stood while weaving and operating the treadles, essentially “walking” on the treadles.

Weaving was predominantly done by men, while carding and spinning was done by women. Spinning was almost exclusively done using a *malacate* (spindle). The weights or whorls for the spindles were often fashioned from broken pottery. Large bench-type spinning wheels (*ruecas*) were also used, but there was a certain practicality to *malacates* in that they could be used anywhere.

12 **El Cuarto de los Cautivos y los Criados** **The Captives' and Servants' Room**

The captives' room is the door along the back wall, by the *zaguán* leading out of the far side of the *placita*.

The history of enslavement, captivity, peonage and servitude in New Mexico is a long and difficult story. Raiding and stealing of humans, especially women and children, was common among many tribal groups and Spanish settlers. Human trafficking in New Mexico was intense, went on for centuries and had a profound effect upon all levels of the population. One of the terms given for those who were separated from their

tribes was *genízaro* (detrribalized Native American). By some estimates almost one-third of the population of the area consisted of people with some form of mixed ancestry and/or separation from their original people through captivity, enslavement and peonage.

The lives of these individuals were very much dependent on the luck of the draw. They could be treated harshly or brought into the family in a modest way; however, their labor and care was still at the discretion of their owners. Few of the enslaved peoples of this settlement were of African heritage. At the ranch the servants/enslaved peoples slept in the kitchen or in their working quarters. The upright loom was used by native women. Their knowledge of weaving allowed them to make textiles that could be bartered for other goods.

Other women and children shared this room—their sleeping/working quarters are not markedly different from those of the rest of the family, but all that you see belonged to the owner family, not to the captives.

13 **Corrales, Caballeriza y Gallinero** **Corrals, Barn and Chicken Coop**

After passing through the *zaguán* at the back of the *placita* you will enter the corral area. They house the same types of animals that would have been raised on an early New Mexican *rancho*. Raising animals was a necessity for every household as domestic sheep, goats, pigs, cows, horses, burros, mules and chickens provided food, milk, transportation and fertilizer. Skins were used to make brain-tanned leather, and sheep provided wool used by weavers. Horses, mules, oxen and burros were respectively trained to be ridden, pull plows and serve as pack animals. The animals here are churro sheep. Sheep were extremely important animals in early New Mexico. The Spanish settlers raised flocks of churro sheep imported from Spain. Their fleece was low-lanolin, long, silky and ideal for hand-spinning.

In 1540 the first sheep were brought to New Mexico with Don Francisco Vasquez Coronado's expedition and were used to feed the soldiers, but by 1598 when the animals returned with the Spanish, the sheep were utilized as more than food. Herds of churro sheep and the products made from their wool



12. Captives' and Servants' Room



13. Barn



13. Corral with Churro Sheep



13. Sheep Shearing at Spring Festival



14. Tool Shed



15. Butchering Area

sustained the settlement. Pueblo Natives already had a tradition of growing, spinning and weaving cotton. In the early 17th century Pueblos learned how to use wool obtained from the Spanish, while still using their traditional upright looms. Wool quickly became integral to Pueblo weaving traditions that were later passed on to the Diné (Navajo). As flocks flourished, the sheep were driven south for barter and sale. Flocks continued to grow in the following centuries, as did the production of wool and woolen goods.

The wool from these sheep is sheared, washed, carded, spun, dyed and woven into textiles by our weavers as a part of our sheep-to-blanket program. The dyestuffs are grown here, and many of the textiles you see at the ranch were woven here.

14 **Fuerte Tool Shed**

The tools in this room were indispensable to keeping the ranch working. Tools for everything from sowing and harvesting in the fields, care of animals, maintenance of the buildings and equipment, food preparation and more can be found in this room. Forged iron tools were brought with the earliest European settlers, soldiers and priests, as were trained blacksmiths. Iron tools continued to be both imported and made here, and they were continually repaired and repurposed as material wore away through use.

15 **Area de Matanza Butchering Area**

Through the gate you will enter the Baca Placita. The butchering area will be on your right. Both wild and domesticated animals provided meat for the table. The large wheel (*malacate*) was used to raise the carcasses for skinning and quartering. Nothing was left to waste. The skins were brain-tanned and made into clothing or bartered for other needed goods. The meat could be eaten fresh or preserved (dried, salted or smoked) and stored in the *dispensa* (storage room) for later use. Horns would be fashioned into drinking cups or signaling horns, and bones were carved into tools and buttons.

The animal blood was made into *morcilla* (blood sausage) or mixed with clay and applied to household floors to make them hard and smooth. A large kettle was used to render lard into tallow for cooking or to make candles and soap.

16

Casa de Manuel Baca y Delgado **House of Manuel Baca y Delgado**

The Baca house, dominating the north end of this *placita*, is representative of a typical two-room house in Northern New Mexico from 1821 to 1880. This home portrays life during the Mexican Period and the American Territorial period, until the arrival of the railroad to the region. The Baca Placita illustrates the gradual decrease of hostilities by raiding Native groups, allowing New Mexicans to abandon the protective style of the earlier *placita* arrangement. Without the need for a walled compound, buildings became separate structures and spread out over the property. Large exterior windows were incorporated into designs, and buildings took on a less-cloistered atmosphere.

This home is believed to have been built in the 1800s by the Baca family. Manuel Baca y Delgado, born around 1824, was from a well-to-do family and is believed to have lived in this house. He was involved in the sheep and mercantile business and was an influential figure in Santa Fe. He served as a captain in the 2nd Regiment of the New Mexico Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War, fighting at the battle of Valverde in 1862. Later in life he was referred to as Don Manuel, a testament to his standing in the community.

The Baca House is a typical 19th century Northern New Mexico home before the introduction of the railroad and is characterized by its simple two-room construction with few doors or windows. This home shows the transition between life on the frontier and the gradual changes that occurred after Mexican Independence and the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821. Construction of the home reflects a mixture of local and imported materials. The windowpanes would have come over the Santa Fe Trail, while some of the bricks, called *terrones*, are peat cut from nearby marshes.



16. Casa de Manuel Baca y Delgado



16. Casa de Manuel Baca y Delgado



16. Casa de Manuel Baca y Delgado



16. Casa de Manuel Baca y Delgado



17. Storage Building and Root Cellar

In the entryway are tools and supplies. The bedroom, like many rooms, was multipurpose, serving as sleeping quarters and a sitting room for any number of tasks. The most prominent feature of the room is the Empire-style daybed, indicating influences of French Empire furniture (via Mexico City) had reached the area during the Mexican Period (1821-1846). Even so, raised beds (*camas*) as we know them were a rarity in the region until well into the 19th century, since most of the sleeping was done on wool mattresses that were then rolled up and placed around the room during the day and used as seating. This room with its squared ceiling beams (*vigas*) and window with glass panes shows the dramatic changes that occurred when new building materials were introduced following the opening of the Santa Fe Trail.

The kitchen would have been a place of great activity for cooking, congregating, eating, storage, sewing, repairing tools and harnesses, and even sleeping. The construction of this room is different from the bedroom and is earlier. The windows are fitted with wood shutters (*contraventanas*) and bars (*rejas*). The hooded fireplace is typical of Northern New Mexico homes and is a direct descendent of Spanish hooded fireplaces. The hood shelf would have been used to dry vegetables and meat. While various theories exist regarding the unique bell-shaped form of the hearth, its shape most likely served a couple of functions, including increased heat reflection, smoke ventilation for the charcoal brazier, and open-hearth cooking by allowing meat to be suspended and roasted. The built-in charcoal brazier would have been used throughout the seasons even though cooking was usually done outside during the summer.

17 **Dispensa y Soterrano** **Storage Building and Root Cellar**

The log storage buildings located around the *placita* were needed for the safekeeping of supplies. Foodstuffs that needed to last throughout the winter were stored in the *soterrano* (root cellar), with fruits and vegetables carefully packed between layers of straw or sand. Grains were placed on shelves in well-sealed ceramic jars. Farm implements, tack and equipment were stored in the *dispensa* (storage building).

18 **La Hojalateria** **Tin Shop**

This vertical-log-constructed building represents a tin shop, generally found in the towns and cities of New Mexico. This building is dedicated to the Delgado family of tinsmiths from Santa Fe.

New Mexican artists are well-known for their fine tinwork. When the American army and traders came in the 1800s, they brought food and oil in tin cans, discarding them along the New Mexican countryside. This metal was salvaged by local craftsmen and worked into beautiful objects such as frames, candle-holders and decorative boxes. Often these craftsmen would set up a workshop similar to the one displayed here. This beautiful craft lives on today and is a part of New Mexico's artistic legacy.



18. Tin Shop

19 **La Tiendita** **General Store**

The general store, a log building with glass window-panes, is located across the *placita* from the Baca House. While this was not a store that existed at El Rancho de Las Golondrinas, it does represent a New Mexican general store from the late 19th century. This building, like all of the log structures on the ranch, was brought here from another location in New Mexico. If you look closely you can see metal tags on the logs that were used to put the building back together in the correct order. This particular building is from Trampas, New Mexico, and was operated as a store and post office from the early 1900s until 1940.

With the coming of the railroad to New Mexico in the 1880s, a flood of goods came to the shelves of stores. Whereas a few of these items were available before at high prices, there was now an abundance of more affordable goods. Items for sale would include kerosene lamps, dyes, seed packets and tools, all with labels in English.

Of equal importance was the role that small stores played in the gathering of raw materials and basic products of the land. In the case of outlying stores like La Tiendita, the goods gathered were wool and wool products. These local products were transported, along with livestock, back to towns like Santa



18. Tin Shop



19. General Store



19. General Store



20. Sorghum Mill



21. Hide Tanning Area

Fe and even Las Vegas, New Mexico, home of the mercantile empires of the Ilfeld Company, Brown & Manzanares and Otero, Sellers & Company. These companies not only stocked the shelves of little stores but also gathered the products of the ranch that would then be shipped via the railroad back East. The quantities of inexpensive manufactured goods from the East had a great influence on the New Mexican Territory and Hispanic culture in much the same way American goods, for better or worse, influence foreign cultures today.

20 **La Melasera** **Sorghum Mill**

The metal rollers and long horizontal pole make up the Sorghum Mill. Syrup made from sorghum cane was a luxury for New Mexicans. The crop was introduced to the territory in the mid-19th century and quickly became a staple of local culinary traditions. This syrup provided sweetening in a variety of recipes, since sugar and honey had to be imported from Mexico and later, from the Eastern states. Early on, the cane was pounded in a trough to release the juice. This labor-intensive process was later replaced, using metal rollers turned by burros. The juice was rendered by boiling and pressed through a sieve to remove impurities. Often large gatherings were a part of the sorghum harvest and it took on a festive atmosphere. Families would often work together for days until all of the syrup was safely in jars that were later buried into the cool dirt floors of kitchens for preservation throughout the year. The leftover crushed cane was fed to the animals.

21 **Taller de Cuero** **Hide Tanning Area**

This adobe structure and large ramada overlooking the agricultural fields is the hide tanning area.

Tanned deer, elk and buffalo hides were used to make pants, shirts, jackets, botas (leggings), moccasins and blankets. These tanned hides were often shipped south on the Camino Real and became a major trade item between the Spanish and Native groups.

The traditional hide-tanning process involves four basic steps:

1. Scraping, to remove hard connective tissue and hair.
2. Application of a softening agent by soaking and/or rubbing with animal brains or plant material.
3. Stretching to break down and continue to soften the fiber.
4. Water resisting and/or coloring by suspending over a cool smoky fire. Resin from smoke adheres to the hide and makes it remain soft when exposed to water and stay soft when it dries. Smoke from different types of wood produces different colors. Coloring may also be achieved by soaking the leather in plant material or rubbing it with clay.



21. Hide Tanning Area

22 **Acequia Madre Mother Ditch**

This *acequia* is the main irrigation ditch, which brings water to Las Golondrinas and La Ciénega valley. Small lateral ditches cut perpendicular to this main ditch are called *sangrías* and are used to irrigate the fields and power the mills. This *acequia*, named Acequia de La Ciénega, was built prior to 1739 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Spanish word *acequia* comes from Classical Arabic "*as-sāqiya*" meaning "the water conduit." The Moors brought the technology to Spain during their more than 700-year occupation of the Iberian Peninsula. The technology was adopted by the Spanish and utilized throughout their conquered lands in the Americas.

Water has been called the lifeblood of New Mexico. Some of the earliest community organizations were devoted to the distribution and use of irrigation water. Each community's main *acequia* has its own name and is the common property of the *parciantes*, who are members of that *acequia* association. Each member has a responsibility to share the cost and labor involved in maintaining the ditch, according to established rules, customs and *acequia* laws. Spring-cleaning of the *acequia* is an important event shared by all water users, because a clean *acequia* is essential for the efficient use of a very limited and valued resource.



22. Acequia Madre



23. Wheelwright Shop

23 **Carretería** **Wheelwright Shop**

While not original to the ranch, this wheelwright shop dates from the mid-1800s and was originally a mill located just outside of Truchas, New Mexico. Carts, carriages and wagons would have been repaired here. Wheelwrights were skilled tradesmen specializing in blacksmithing and carpentry, and were skilled in the fabrication of parts for wagons and their repair. Wheelwrights would even work with skilled carpenters like the one located next door. Wheelwright shops serviced a variety of customers either in town or at ranches.



24. Carpenter Shop

24 **Carpintería** **Carpenter Shop**

Carpenters were highly skilled craftsmen specializing in the fabrication and repair of furniture and other items made from wood, such as wagons and tools. Carpenters were always in high demand and may have worked with wheelwrights, like the one next door, to repair wagons. Here you can learn how to make dovetail joints, use a draw knife or even drill holes using a hand cranked drill.



25. The Fields of Traditional Crops

25 **Las Milpas** **The Fields of Traditional Crops**

Stretching across the bottom of the valley is the field used to grow crops that were common in the area, from pre-Columbian times through the American Territorial Period. Corn, wheat, sorghum, beans, squash, chile, melons, tomatoes, garlic, onions and tobacco are some of the plants grown each season. Seed saving was an important aspect of Spanish Period agriculture. The finest specimens of vegetables would have been selected, dried and the seeds removed for planting the following season. Wild plants that would thrive in and around the cultivated fields were also considered very valuable and harvested for their medicinal benefits and as edible foodstuffs.

26 **Molino de Talpa** **The Talpa Mill**

Right next to the crops is a lone log structure known as the Talpa Mill. This mill, with its horizontal wheel, was brought from the little mountain town of Talpa, New Mexico. Built in the early 1800s, it is the most primitive mill on the ranch and is currently not in working order. The method of grinding grain was crude compared to later mills, but it is an example of how New Mexicans made good use of available materials. This handmade mill served the people of Talpa for many years. After the water turns the grinding stone, it runs back into the field, irrigating the crops.



26. Talpa Mill

27 **La Herrería** **Blacksmith Shop**

This log structure with its large double doors is the blacksmith shop, but was originally a barn in El Guique, New Mexico. The blacksmith or *herrero* was vital to life in early New Mexico and was present on the northern frontier as early as 1598. In the 1700s, the armorer, a specialized blacksmith attached to the Presidio in Santa Fe, was often an officer, indicating the importance of the position. Here was the *fragua* (forge) and *yunque* (anvil) where most of the tools were made and repaired. This forge is made of adobe and the handmade *fuella* (bellows) is of wood and leather. The anvil and the iron for tools and *herraduras* (horseshoes) were imported up the Camino Real from Mexico. These came in the form of ingots or bricks of iron. Fuel for the forge was typically wood charcoal. The blacksmith was well trained, serving for many years as an apprentice before becoming a master. As an inventor and artist fabricating the tools needed on the northern frontier, he had to be an expert metalworker. When no raw iron was available, tools were made from old horseshoes, spoons from old tools, nails from old spoons and so on. No scrap of iron went to waste as it was continually reused. The blacksmith often served as the *herrador* (farrier) as well, keeping the hooves of the horses shod and in good condition. In addition, he may also have acted as the veterinarian.



27. Blacksmith Shop



27. Blacksmith Shop



28. Golondrinas Mill

28 **Molino de Las Golondrinas** **Golondrinas Mill**

Situated next to the *acequia* (irrigation ditch) and overlooking the performance field is the Golondrinas Mill. This mill is originally from Truchas, New Mexico, and was purchased from the Padilla family in the late 1960s. This reconstruction is believed to have been built in the location of the original El Rancho de Las Golondrinas mill mentioned in wills and documents from the 18th century. Next to the Golondrinas Mill is a **descanso** (resting place), a common sight in New Mexico. While no one is buried here, the crosses memorialize the death of a loved one.

29 **La Escuela de Ratón** **The Ratón Schoolhouse**

This log schoolhouse was built in 1878 and was brought here from Ratón, New Mexico. Early schooling in New Mexico was done at home, by the church, or sometimes by sending youths east to schools in the United States or south to other parts of Mexico. Those students sent to the United States provided an invaluable service as interpreters after the Americans began governing the region in the mid-19th century.

Later in that century a school system was established. Built as a home, this small two-room cabin was converted into an English language schoolhouse, becoming one of the first in Ratón, New Mexico. However, in a typical New Mexican one-room schoolhouse, all ages were taught together in Spanish. Later, English was added to the curriculum, eventually becoming the primary language of instruction. Most of the students were males as were the *maestros* (teachers). The second room was lived in by the schoolmaster or later by the schoolmarm. Teaching focused on the basics: *lectura, escritura, aritmética y moral* (reading, writing, arithmetic and morals).

30 **Tapeste de Teñir** **Dye Shed**

This simple covered space with adobe hearth and chimney is the dye shed. It looks like an outdoor kitchen, but actually serves as a place to heat the large vats used to dye wool. After shearing the sheep,



29. Ratón Schoolhouse



29. Ratón Schoolhouse

wool had to be carefully washed with yucca root soap to remove the lanolin. Once cleaned the wool was carded and spun—only then was it ready to be dyed. Dye materials included plants found in the region as well as imported dyestuffs such as brazilwood, indigo and cochineal.

A variety of mordants were used to prepare the fibers for the dye. The skeins (*madejas*) of yarn would then be hung to dry, ready to be woven into blankets, floor coverings or to make garments. El Rancho de Las Golondrinas was bustling with these activities, as they were an important source of revenue.

31 **Huerto, Viñedo y Almacén de Vino** **Orchard, Vineyard and Winery**

Fruit abounds at Las Golondrinas during good years. The types of fruit available during the Spanish period included apples, apricots, peaches, cherries, pears, plums, melons and grapes. The growing of grapes for making wine was active and wine production began as early as 1629, making New Mexico the earliest wine-making region in the United States. Carefully tended vines were of Mission grapes, a New World hybrid developed in Mexico. Wine was made using traditional methods and tools not substantially different from those used by the Romans thousands of years ago. New Mexican wine was used for sacramental purposes, enjoyed at the table and even distilled into brandy.

32 **Morada de Nuestra Señora de La Paz** **Penitente Meeting House of our Lady of Peace** **No photography inside, please.**

The adobe building high on the hill overlooking the ranch is the *morada*. The Brotherhood of Our Father, Jesus of Nazareth, a fraternity of men known as the *Penitentes* (the penitent ones), is an important group of lay members of the Catholic Church known for their good works benefiting the community. They are also known for their penitential celebrations during Holy Week, including reenactments of the Passion of Christ.

The *Penitentes* were born from the roots of Spanish religious fraternal orders and have existed in various forms in New Mexico from at least the 18th century.



30. Dye Shed



31. Grapes being crushed for wine at the Harvest Festival



32. Morada de Nuestra Señora de La Paz



34. Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve

It wasn't until Mexican Independence in 1821, when Catholic officials withdrew Franciscan priests from the area, that the Penitente Brotherhood as we know it today began to take shape. In the absence of priests, the lay order provided spiritual and social aid to fellow community members, work that continues to this day.

This chapter house, or *morada*, is a reproduction based upon the south *morada* at Abiquiu, New Mexico. It was built in 1972 with the help of that *morada's* *Hermanos Penitentes* (Penitent Brothers) who continue to play an active role in the interpretation of this exhibit. This *morada* has a chapel, dining room and a small inner storeroom. The works of art associated with the Penitente Brotherhood include life-size sculpture used during reenactments, crosses with symbols of the Passion and a figure of La Doña Sebastiana—a skeletal image seated in a cart with a raised bow and arrow—a figure meant to remind the viewer of the fragility of life and its possible sudden and swift end.

33 Loma de Calvario, Camposanto, Descanso Calvary Hill, Burial Ground, Resting Place

The hillside is symbolically called *Calvario* or Calvary, the site where Jesus was crucified. Next to the *morada* are *camposanto* (burial ground) crosses, representing a cemetery and a *descanso* (resting place) with crosses memorializing the death of loved ones.

34 La Ciénega Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve

The Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve lies in an open piñon-juniper woodland, connecting the grasslands of the Galisteo Basin and Rio Grande River Valley to the wooded Sangre de Cristo mountains. The preserve's natural spring, or *ciénega*, provides an oasis for migratory birds and butterflies, as well as a habitat for nesting songbirds, coyotes, bobcats and other wildlife. The environment also hosts a rich and diverse variety of plant life. The abundance of water is what has drawn humans to this area for millennia and the evidence of activity here is astounding. Additional information on this wetland is available upon request.



35. Big Mill from Sapelló

35

El Molino Grande de Sapelló The Big Mill from Sapelló

The largest mill at Las Golondrinas was originally built and used by the Pacheco family in Sapelló, New Mexico, and later operated by the Leger family. This style of mill didn't come to New Mexico until the late 19th century. Its machinery, which was manufactured in Buffalo, New York, was shipped to New Mexico by railroad in the 1880s.

This mill ground flour for the soldiers at Ft. Union until the fort closed in 1891. The reconstruction, with original machinery, began operating at Las Golondrinas in 1972. In 1991 a new handmade oak wheel replaced the deteriorated original pine wheel. Flumes and aqueducts bring water from springs in the hills. After turning the wheel, the water flows into a small *rió* before making its way back into the *acequia*.

When the mill is not in use, the water is diverted into the tree-lined millpond. During certain museum programs, the mill grinds flour from wheat.

Flour was ground and sifted into different grades:

- Fine (*Flora Fina*)
- Medium (*Semita*)

- Coarse (*Harina Despajada*)
- Bran for animal feed (*Salvado*)

Sierra Homestead (36–43)

After crossing the bridge you enter the *Sierra* (mountain) Homestead. The village is comprised of buildings that are not original to the ranch, but are arranged to show what life was like in the high sierras of Northern New Mexico. This particular group of homes and outbuildings would have housed a young couple with children and their elderly parents. The homes also show a progression of construction beginning with the *Casita Primitiva*, when the family first came to the high sierras, and ending with the Mora House as the family became more established. So step off the ranch for a moment and make your way deep into the mountains.

By the 1800s New Mexicans began to populate the lush fertile mountain areas as they became safer, following the Comanche Treaty of 1786. Many buildings used logs in their construction, since wood was readily available in these areas. Roofs that were pitched to accommodate the heavy snowfalls of the mountain regions sometimes replaced flat roofs

common in the construction of adobe homes in the valleys. These peaked roofs also offered storage space in the attic. Many of the log structures at the ranch show the unique Hispanic method of corner timbers with double-notch joints. This building type finds its antecedents in Mexico and made its way to the region in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

36

Casa de Mora Mora House

Here you are standing in front of a large adobe home with a covered porch running its entire length. Mora is a town on the eastern slope of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in New Mexico. This long house was typical of homes built after the arrival of the Americans, since its open style signaled the end of the period of raiding and warfare. This structure is based upon homes in the Mora region and may contain some original woodwork, but overall it is a re-creation, not a relocated structure.

The *portal* (covered porch) provided a shaded work-space as well as an area for resting and relaxing after a hard day's work. The tall board-and-batten pitched roof was typical of mountain homes. Outside there are two exterior doors, one into the entryway and another into the kitchen. This accommodates the comings and goings associated with kitchen-related domestic work (cooking, fetching firewood and water, collecting food from the root cellar, taking washed clothes out to dry) without family members having to walk back and forth through the house.

Inside there is no central hallway, so each of the rooms is accessed by traveling through one room after the other. The doors, doorways and windows are another testament to the easy access that the mountain villagers had to milled lumber. Many of the goods found in this home were store purchases rather than the exclusively homemade products of the past. With the coming of the railroad to New Mexico in the 1880s, large quantities of inexpensive goods became



36. Mora House

available, even in the little mountain towns dotting the Sangre de Cristo range. This influx of manufactured goods had a great influence on the long-standing culture of New Mexico and would have a profound influence on the traditions of the region.

37 **Casa de la Abuelita** **Grandmother's House**

This small log home with a pitched roof was the home of Isabel Sandoval Quintana well into the 20th century and was moved here in the 1970s from Truchas, New Mexico.

Next door to the young family is the small home of the grandmother (*abuela* or *abuelita*) living close to her daughter's home. The elderly were highly honored members of the community and family. As a guardian of traditional domestic skills, the grandmother was an invaluable resource. Given a pitched roofed home of her own, she could work at sewing, embroidery, spinning and other crafts, passing this knowledge onto her granddaughter with whom she shares this modest home. Abuelita has a wealth of knowledge about the folkways of the past, including the medicinal plants and practices of the mountain areas. For the benefit of her family and friends, she prepares herbal remedies (*remedios*) serving as a *curandera* (healer).

Her furniture is sparse and simple, but by the late 1800s, she has a nice bed brought in by the railroad and a cast iron heating stove. The manufactured items you see here were all newly introduced when rail transport became the method of bringing an abundance of goods to New Mexico. Note the decorative mica-stenciled (*estarcido*) walls.

38 **Trochiles y Gallineros** **Pigpens and Chicken Coops**

This structure is originally from Trampas, New Mexico and would have housed pigs and chickens, protecting them from the many predators found in mountainous regions.



36. Mora House at the Sierra Homestead



37. Grandmother's House



37. Grandmother's House



39. Casita Primitiva



40. Corral



41 and 42. Storage Building and Root Cellar

39 Casita Primitiva A Simple Home

This log structure with a flat roof is the *Casita Primitiva*. It was built in 1850 by Juan Augustín Sandoval and was moved here in the 1970s from Truchas, New Mexico.

At the Casita Primitiva the *abuelo* (grandfather), lives close to his son's home. Here we see an elderly man who, like *abuela*, is also devoted to the traditional ways of life. As in the past, he prefers to sleep on a wool mattress on the floor rather than using a raised bedframe. He is devoted to making *santos* (saints), in this case *bultos* (wood statue of a religious figure), although sometimes he makes *retablos* (painting on wood of a religious figure) as well as working with straw inlay. He has a chair and table that he uses as his work area and a box filled with his tools. On the table are his grinding tools for the creation of pigments and examples of his colors, binders and gesso. He uses religious prints as his models.

A typical small home of the region would have all the necessities and would be dry, warm and surprisingly comfortable despite its simplicity. With packed earthen floors, mud plaster and a ceiling of *vigas* and *latillas*, this home was almost identical to homes of the valley, except it has logs rather than adobe for the walls—essentially a log cabin covered in mud plaster. As practiced for centuries, the mountain folks used woolen mattresses as furniture for both sleeping and sitting. Cooking took place in the corner fireplace, but the *abuelo* most often ate with the rest of the family in the Mora House. Note the decorative mica-stenciled (*estarcido*) walls.

40 Corrales Corrals

This structure is originally from Trampas, New Mexico. Constructed from the abundant timber of the mountain forests, it would have protected sheep, goats and cattle.

41 Dispensa Storage Building

This large peaked-roof building is the *dispensa*. Out-buildings like this were essential and used to store tools, sheep hides, drying herbs and more. This building is originally from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

42 **Soterrano Root Cellar**

This log *soterrano* built into the hillside is the root cellar, packed with jars of preserved vegetables and fruits. Some foods such as squash, carrots, potatoes, apples and other fruits and vegetables were covered with layers of sand and straw to preserve them. This *soterrano* is originally from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

43 **Oratorio de San Ysidro Saint Isidore Chapel**

On top of the hill is a small *oratorio*, a private family chapel, dedicated to San Ysidro, the patron saint of farmers and adopted saint of El Rancho de Las Golondrinas. The chapel is decorated simply with an altar and a retablo (painting on wood of a religious figure).

During the museum's Spring Festival there is a procession in which the *bulto de San Ysidro* is carried to the oratorio in hopes that San Ysidro will bless and guard the crops growing in the fields. A *bulto* is a wood statue of a religious figure.

At Harvest Festival, the *bulto* tours the fields while thanks are given for the bountiful harvest and is returned to the *Golondrinas Placita* chapel.

44 **Casa del Pastor Shepherd's Cabin**

This cabin was built in southern Colorado and was eventually moved to El Rancho de Las Golondrinas. Flocks of churro sheep were brought north from Mexico and raised on the plains of the northern frontier. Sheep were extremely useful animals as a food source and for their fleece and skins, which could be traded for other products. Flocks continued to grow in the following centuries, as did the production of wool and woolen goods. Shepherds took their flocks into the high mountains to graze in the summer. Some shepherds had little cabins such as this one, to protect them from the elements.

By the early 20th century, the sheep and wool industry had declined greatly because of the introduction of affordable goods brought by the railroad, over-grazing and the loss of grazing lands.



43. Oratorio de San Ysidro



43. Bulto de San Ysidro



44. Shepherd's Cabin



45. Barela Mill from Truchas

45 **Molino Barela de Truchas** **The Barela Mill from Truchas**

Nestled on the side of a hill off the beaten path is the Barela Mill, constructed from logs cut high in the *sieras* (mountains). This mill comes from the mountain village of Truchas and is listed on the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties. It has a horizontal wheel that could be operated off the force of water from an *acequia* (irrigation ditch) as opposed to the fall of water for an overshot wheel like our larger Sapelló Mill. There were many of these small family-operated mills throughout New Mexico. This style of mill was common until the mid-19th century when newer, more efficient technology reduced the need for these smaller mills. This mill is one of the few Hispanic horizontal wheel mills in operation in the United States.

Mills were operating in New Mexico by the early 1600s, showing up in official letters and accounts of the time. Here can be seen the *canoas* or flumes (cut from logs) bringing water to turn the mill wheel and grinding stone. The miller controlled the flow of grain onto the stones. He regulated the revolutions of the grinding stone and the shaking of the sifter separating the flour into coarse or fine grind by using a brake to control the speed of the waterwheel. The mill, once owned by the Barela family, was meticulously restored in 1991 and operates today.

46 **La Ciénega del Torreón** **Torreón Wetland**

This wetland area and ponds are filled by natural springs. The surrounding trees provide cover and habitat for migratory birds, songbirds and other wildlife. There is also a variety of plant life that spills down the hillside following the seeping water. Historically, the ponds were used to water the fields below, but now serve to support this delicate ecosystem.



46. Torreón Wetland



47. Torreón (Archaeological Site)

47 **Torreón Tower (Archaeological Site)**

Torreones (Defensive Towers) were built as refuge from attack, and the numerous torreones in La Ciénega valley would have provided protection for Spanish settlers. Archaeological excavations suggest that this *torreón* was most likely built in the 18th century and was used for defense, storing crops and possibly later as a private residence. Archaeological fieldwork was completed in 2010, and the foundations seen here have been rebuilt over the original foundations.

Visit the Torreón in the Golondrinas Placita (9) for more information on Torreones and their use in Spanish Period New Mexico.

48 **La Casa De Pino The Pino House**

Built around 1920 by Elfego Pino, this was the home of the Pino family for about 14 years. It is believed that the plans for the home were purchased from a catalogue and built using adobes instead of a timber frame. This house shares characteristics with other homes owned

by the Pino family here in La Ciénega valley. The Pino House was included as part of the sale of El Rancho de Las Golondrinas to the Curtin family in 1934 and housed the ranch foreman and their family. When the living history museum was founded on the property in 1972, the building transitioned to dormitory space for demonstrators and later offices for the museum. Today it stands as a testament to the families that have called Las Golondrinas home and is currently undergoing restoration. In 2019 the home was placed on the Historic Santa Fe Foundation's Register of Historic Places.



48. The Pino House



More about the families

Between 1694 and 1701, lands were granted at the “old Pueblo de La Ciénega” by Don Diego de Vargas.

One of the eastern boundaries is described as “Peñasco Blanco de Las Golondrinas.” While this is not a direct reference to a rancho of the same name, it is currently the earliest known reference using the term Las Golondrinas and indicates its long association with this area.

For thousands of years countless Ancestral Puebloans have called this place home. Over the centuries a number of European family names have been associated with La Ciénega and El Rancho de Las Golondrinas.

Determining exact historic boundaries for a place

called El Rancho de Las Golondrinas has proven difficult, yet it is important to remember that real people lived here even if some of their names have become blurred over time. We know that one of the settlers who accompanied Don Diego de Vargas during the Reconquest at the end of the 1600s was Miguel Vega y Coca, a young man whose descendants were early settlers and longstanding residents of the valley. Baca, Terrus, Sandoval, Delgado and Pino are just a few of the family names that have an association with La Ciénega and what we today call El Rancho de Las Golondrinas. All of these families are recognized as having a place in the history of the ranch.

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