

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 15 1975

DATE ENTERED SEP 5 1975

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Pueblo of Isleta (Tuei)

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

13 miles south of Albuquerque, New Mexico, on the west  
bank of the Rio Grande

CITY, TOWN

U.S. 85

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Isleta

\_\_ VICINITY OF

First

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New Mexico

35

Bernalillo

001

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Living

Pueblo

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Pueblo of Isleta (Office of the Governor)

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Isleta

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Bernalillo County Courthouse (Office of the County Clerk)

STREET &amp; NUMBER

415 Tijeras N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Albuquerque

STATE

New Mexico

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

April 7, 1972

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

State Planning Office

CITY, TOWN

200 W. De Vargas, Santa Fe,

STATE

New Mexico

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

Originally constructed about 1613 and at that time dedicated to San Antonio de Padua, the massive adobe church of San Agustín still dominates the north side of the plaza of the Pueblo of Isleta. Partially burned during the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, the walls of the nave were found standing by Diego de Vargas during his 1692 reentry of New Mexico. The church and a large convento adjoining on the east were rebuilt in 1709-1710 and renamed San Agustín since the Isletans who had accompanied the Spaniards to the El Paso region during the Revolt remained there and kept San Antonio as their patron saint of Ysleta del Sur.

In spite of numerous changes to the roof and facade throughout the years, the basic structure remains the same, and hence San Agustín is one of the two oldest churches in New Mexico, sharing this title with San Estévan de Ácoma.

Franciscan Visitador Francisco Atanasio Domínguez described the church thus in his famous inspection of 1776:

The church is adobe with walls nearly a vara [about 33 inches] thick, with the door to the south. From there to the ascent to the sanctuary it is 34 varas long, 9 wide and 8 high. The ascent to the sanctuary consists of four steps made of wrought beams, and from there to the center it measures 6 varas, with the same width as the nave and as much higher as the clerestory demands. There is a choir loft like those mentioned before. On the Epistle side there are three windows with ordinary gratings facing east, and one in the choir. The main door is squared, with two new leaves installed by Father Junco's efforts, and no key. It is 3 varas high by 2 wide.

The nave is roofed by forty wrought and corbeled beams, and the clerestory rests there where it reaches the sanctuary. From there on, eight beams like those mentioned roof the sanctuary. As we enter the main door, the baptistry is to our right under the choir loft, extending outside the church wall. It is an ordinary room with a small window to the south and a two-leaved door without a key to the church....

On top of each of the front corners of the church is a turret, one of which contains a middle-sized bell, which the King gave, and it is a good one... The church floor, bare earth, its interior like that of a rather dark wine cellar... (Adams and Chavez, p. 203)

The present facade has been substantially altered from this description. The truncated, but extremely massive, buttresses of adobe and rock on both sides of the front entrance, begun about 1900, present the most obvious change. A walkway, covered with a veranda roof and railing, ran across the entire facade on top of the buttresses until the mid-1930's. The removal of this roof about that time left the buttresses unprotected until 1959 when a parapet with drainage canales was constructed. The four large stone buttresses on the west wall were also probably built about 1900.

The adobe turrets described by Domínguez in 1776 had crumbled by the 1870's and the bell was hung within an adobe arch which had been built atop the center of the facade. A small triangular adobe rise replaced the arch by 1881 and the bell was suspended within one of the first of a series of

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1598 -

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The southern Tiwa-speaking Pueblo of Isleta, in existence when Don Juan de Oñate led the first settlers into New Mexico in 1598, is today the largest New Mexico Indian Pueblo. Today, as in the 17th century, the Isletans are still noted for the excellence and diversity of their agricultural productivity.

Fray Juan de Salas was assigned to the Pueblo of Isleta in 1612 and the next year reported to his Franciscan Order authorities in Mexico City that he had begun the construction of the mission church of San Antonio de Padua. In the following decades, the Indians of Isleta were spared many of the conflicts which arose between the Spanish conquerors and other Pueblo groups, and hence took no active part in the great Pueblo Revolt which exploded on August 10, 1680 simultaneously around Santa Fe and in the Rio Abajo (Lower River) areas. Lt. General Alonso García, alcalde mayor of the southern district, which included the present Albuquerque area, gathered together the some 1,500 settlers, including seven friars, who survived the initial attack and on August 11 led them into the Pueblo of Isleta, which had taken no part in the uprising. However, emissaries from the rebel Pueblos were soon in evidence and three days later García, believing that the Spaniards in the upper Rio Grande had been exterminated, led his colonists south towards the El Paso settlement taking with him some Isletas as well as loyal Piros from the Pueblos of Sevilleta, Alamillo, Socorro and Senecú. Those Isletans who did not join him fled the Pueblo in fear of the rebels. Governor Antonio de Otermín and the small band of survivors from the north, who had fought their way out of Santa Fe, entered Isleta September 3 and found the Pueblo deserted. The two bands of refugees later reunited at the mission of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe del Paso.

In November, 1681 Otermín undertook the first of several unsuccessful attempts to reconquer New Mexico. The Pueblo of Isleta which had been reoccupied by its members who had fled this village the preceding year, surrendered peacefully, and the expedition pushed northward as far as Cochiti before being forced to retreat and fell back to Isleta, where Otermín found that some of the Indians had again fled to the rebels. On January 1, 1682 the governor burned the Pueblo and continued his retreat to El Paso taking with him 385 additional loyal Isletans.

During the twelve years exile in the El Paso region, several settlements were established on both sides of the Rio Grande for both Spaniards and Pueblo Indians. That of the Isletans was variously known as Santísimo Sacramento, Corpus Cristi and finally San Antonio de Ysleta del Sur or "Ysleta of the South" to distinguish it from the original Pueblo.

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Spanish Archives of New Mexico, I, Nos. 178, 466, 681, 684, 695, 1368, 1381, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, N.M.  
 Adams, Eleanor B., Bishop Tamarón's Visitation of New Mexico, 1760. Albuquerque, 1954, pp. 70-71.  
 Adams, Eleanor B. and Fray Angelico Chavez, The Missions of New Mexico, 1776. Albuquerque, 1956, pp. 202-208. (Continued on Cont. Sheet #

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 155 sq. acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,3	3,4,5,9,15,20	3,8,6,4,3,4,0	B	1,3	3,4,5,9,1,0	3,8,6,3,6,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,3	3,4,4,9,17,0	3,8,6,3,6,9,0	D	1,3	4,4,4,9,9,0	3,8,6,4,3,5,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

344

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael P. McCachren, Archivist I

ORGANIZATION

State Records Center and Archives

DATE

June 18, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

404 Montezuma Street

TELEPHONE

827-2321

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

Thomas Withers Nelson, State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

7-7-75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

9/5/75

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

SEP 4 1975

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CONTINUATION SHEET #1 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 5

successive pairs of square-shaped, wood-frame belfrys each with pyramidal roof and containing single-slatted windows on all four sides. A 1922 photograph shows twin elaborate wood-frame belfrys each topped by four spires encircling a taller fifth center spire. About 1910 a corrugated iron pitched roof was built over the centuries-old flat roof. This roof, with front gable and window, and rounded at the rear, supported a smaller third belfry on the rear in which the bell had been housed. Crosses were affixed on top of all of the spires as well as over the gable. At the time of the removal of the veranda roof in the 1930's all of the spires were taken down except for the two tallest center spires at the front.

The latest construction begun in 1959 by the Santa Fe architectural firm of McHugh and Hooker, Bradley P. Kidder and Associates resulted in the removal of the worn wood-frame belfrys and their replacement with a pair of Pueblo-style concrete block belfrys, open at four sides, each with a low-pyramidal roof. The bell is now hung in the second adobe arch to be built atop the center of the facade. The pitched roof of the nave was likewise removed thus allowing for the reactivation of the transverse clerestory window above the main altar and the construction of a parapet with drainage canales on all sides of the structure.

The pair of large wooden doors open directly into the nave. A small doorway located just before the sanctuary railing on the epistle side leads from the nave into the new sacristy. Access to the choir loft was originally gained directly from the second story of the once-extant convento which adjoined the church on the northeast side. With the gradual deterioration of the convento an exterior flight of plank-construction steps was built to the same choir entrance located behind the northeast turret. An interior staircase was later built to the choir loft, thus eliminating the need for the original entrance which was blocked up in the recent renovation.

Early fenestration in this particular structure consisted of the traditional transverse clerestory window, the window on the southeast facade which illumined the choir loft, and three windows along the northeast wall of the nave. The clerestory window has remained intact throughout the history of the edifice, though it has only recently been returned to use following the removal of the pitched roof. Originally little more than rectangular slits fitted with solid wood shutters, the window illuminating the choir and the single remaining window on the northeast side of the nave were enlarged, splayed to the inside and fitted with wood frames and sashes as early as the 1870's. The two later windows cut into the southwest wall are of similar size and construction.

The original earthen floors of the rectangular-shaped nave and square-shaped sanctuary have been covered for a considerable time by plank flooring which is kept in good condition and repair. Many of the forty wrought and  
(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 6

corbeled vigas (beams) of the nave roof and the eight above the sanctuary date from the 1709-1710 restoration and are in good condition. The traditional latias (peeled branches laid perpendicular to the vigas) have been used in the present renovation of the flat roof.

The main adobe altar which is set at the rear of the sanctuary, and the smaller altars facing out on either side of the sanctuary proper, are much the same as described by Domínguez in 1776. Many of the religious images are likewise those listed in 1776 and have been placed in the several niches carved out of the nave walls in the recent renovation.

No longer standing were two important buildings attached to the east wall of the nave and briefly described by Domínguez. The first was the large two-story convento or friar's residence which was attached to the southeast facade of the church. This building stood intact as late as the 1870's. Three adobe arches at the front supported a second-story gallery with corbeled posts and railing. The area served as an atrio or outside chapel even after the disappearance of the second-story by the early 1880's. Rare examples in adobe construction, the arches too disintegrated by 1910. The small sacristy attached at the northeast corner of the church during the Spanish period was allowed to deteriorate also, but a new sacristy was built on this site in the 1959 renovation. The area between the sacristy and the convento contained a large corral, stables and other such enclosures of which no trace remains. A low front wall now separates the church from the plaza proper. (SEE Attached xeros copies of photographic record).

Although Isleta has always presented the traditional pueblo concentration of residences in houseblocks around the plaza, the existence of greater farming acreage has long caused many of these Indians to build their homes apart from the village itself. This tendency was noted by Domínguez as early as 1776:

The pueblo consists of three beautiful blocks of dwellings, separated from one another at the corners, which are located in front of the church and convent, and form a very large plaza there to the south of them. Outside the plaza at various distances all around there are some twenty houses which would be as large as one block, or tenement, of the plaza if they were all together. Everything is of adobe, very prettily designed and much in the Spanish manner. (Adams and Chavez, p. 207).

The older houses surrounding the plaza are still of the traditional adobe-style construction and resemble those noted by Lt. John G. Bourke during his visit to the pueblo in November, 1881 as being "nearly all one-storied--adobe: doors opening on ground." His description of an interior view of one of these dwellings and its furnishings is as follows:

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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CONTINUATION SHEET #3

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 7

A great pile of red and blue corn lay in front of door; the house like all of Isleta was built in Mexican style. Stoves and tables begin to appear in Isleta, but the low stools, common to all the pueblos, have not yet been displaced by comfortable chairs. Saints' pictures and rude wooden statues of San Antonio and others in tin cases on the walls. . . Saw two windows of selenite: . . . (NMHR, 13; 196).

Frame windows and doors had begun to replace the traditional roof and early window slits covered with selenite even at this early date. Wood floors and other modern construction innovations have continued to be installed in many of the older plaza-oriented dwellings which were, however, permitted to fall into a deteriorated condition but are presently being refurbished and returned to full use. Although modern appliances have largely replaced the earlier open and hooded interior fireplaces, grain is still ground on the metate and a very fine bread baked in the numerous hornos (outside ovens) still in evidence throughout the pueblo.

The large round kiva south of the plaza described by Bourke as ". . . the one 'estufa' of Isleta: this is mostly all over ground, circular, 14 paces in diameter, 8'6" high," is still a distinguishing landmark of the Pueblo of Isleta.

The tendency of the inhabitants to occupy their houses away from the plaza has continued to the present, causing Isleta to be the largest of the existing pueblos in actual ground acreage. This growth continues with the appearance of numerous houses and other structures of modern construction and design.

However, the plaza remains an area vital to the daily and ceremonial life of the Indians of the Pueblo of Isleta, despite their continued scattered growth, as evidenced by the forcible removal of the resident Catholic priest by the Isletans in 1967 on the grounds that he had attempted to claim jurisdiction over their ceremonial use of this area. A priest has been allowed to return to the Pueblo only in the present year (1975).

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CONTINUATION SHEET #4 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 8

In late August of 1692 General Diego de Vargas led a small army of Spanish and Indian auxiliaries out of El Paso for the successful reoccupation of New Mexico. He found the Pueblos south of Santa Fe, including Isleta, deserted, but the nave of the church was still standing and in good condition. The Indians from Ysleta del Sur did not return to New Mexico with the reestablishment of Spanish control in 1693 but remained in the El Paso region and their mission church in that area continued to bear the name of San Antonio as the patron. With the reoccupation, the scattered Isletans within New Mexico, joined by some who had fled to the Hopi in 1680, gradually returned to their village. The northern Pueblo of Isleta was reestablished in 1709-1710 and given the patron saint name of San Agustín de Isleta. The mission church, the nave of which had survived the revolt, was rebuilt and thus shares with San Estevan de Acoma honor of being one of the two oldest churches in New Mexico.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, Isleta was one of the most prosperous of the New Mexico Pueblos and as the population expanded, many families lived in dwellings scattered away from the main plaza. Both Bishop of Durango Pedro Tamarón, in 1760 and Franciscan Visitador Fray Francisco Atanasio Domínguez in 1776 noted the excellence of Isleta crops and orchards. The latter has given a more complete description:

The Indians of this pueblo have arable lands of every quality for a league upstream, a league downstream, and as far on either side as such lands extend. As has been said, they are irrigated from the aforementioned river, and from all of them they get very copious crops of everything planted. There are many orchards of fruit trees as well as vinestocks, and they usually make a little wine. (Adams and Chaves, p. 207)

An equally complete description of Isleta more than 100 years later was written by Lt. John G. Bourke who visited the pueblo for several days in November, 1881. He, too, noted the abundance of agricultural products raised by the Indians:

Wine, home-made, was offered us. I drank a tumbler full and found it excellent. He said they raised, and I have eaten, peaches, apples, melons, cherries, plums, apricots, pears,--also wheat, maize, chile, alverjones, frijoles. Have cows, goats, sheep, burros, & horses, in some quantity,--enough for their own wants. Eggs and milk are plenty and in general use... Our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the man's wife with refreshments of hot coffee, onion scrambled with eggs and excellent bread and peach "turn-overs." (NMHR, 13; 194).

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CONTINUATION SHEET #5

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In common with other pueblos, Isleta experienced encroachment on her lands during the 18th and 19th centuries, especially from the "Lo de Padilla" grantees, as the non-Indian population in the fertile Rio Grande Valley below Albuquerque expanded. During the 1870's the membership was augmented by the addition of a conservative faction from the Pueblo of Laguna, including the cacique (religious leader), who left Laguna after a bitter quarrel with the "Progressive" faction in that pueblo. During much of its recent history, the internal affairs of Isleta have also been characterized by a division between its older conservatives and younger progressives. On occasion, there has also been a sharp cleavage between the Pueblo council and the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church over clerical authority and ownership of the church of San Agustín, resulting in the expulsion of the resident priest by the Pueblo Council in 1965 for interference in native religious customs and the closing of the Church by then Archbishop John Peter Davis. Better relations with later councils, however, caused Archbishop Davis to reopen the Church of San Agustín in June, 1974 prior to his retirement. A resident priest has again been recently assigned to Isleta by the new Archbishop, Robert F. Sanchez.

Some 170,000 to 180,000 acres of land comprise the present Isleta reservation. The governors and council members are elected for two-year terms by vote of all adult members of the Pueblo.

SOURCES

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(See Continuation Sheet #6)

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