UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION

STATE: New Mexico
COUNTY: Mora

1. NAME

COMMON: La Cueva Historic District
AND/OR HISTORIC: La Cueva, La Cueva Ranch

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Junction of State Highways 3 and 21, six miles southeast of Mora.
CITY OR TOWN: Mora
STATE: New Mexico

3. CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>CHECK BOX</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
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<td>Private</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PUBLIC ACQUISITION: Public Acquisition: In Process

PRESENT USE:
Agricultural
Commercial
Educational
Entertainment
Industrial
Military
Museum
Religious
Scientific
Transportation

PUBLIC ACQUISITION: Public Acquisition: In Process

PRESENT USE:
Agricultural
Commercial
Educational
Entertainment
Industrial
Military
Museum
Religious
Scientific
Transportation

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: William Salman
STREET AND NUMBER: P. O. Box 1251
CITY OR TOWN: Las Vegas
STATE: New Mexico

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Mora County Clerk's Office
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: Mora
STATE: New Mexico

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties
DATE OF SURVEY: 1/8/1970
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
State Planning Office
STREET AND NUMBER: 200 W. De Vargas
CITY OR TOWN: Santa Fe
STATE: New Mexico
La Cueva Historic District consists of a gristmill, mercantile store and storage buildings, ranch house and out buildings, and San Rafael Church. Built probably in the 1870's, La Cueva Mill is a two-story stone and adobe structure. The stone foundation for this massive mill was laid on natural rock formations. The first story is constructed of rough-hewn, random-sized stone blocks laid unevenly with thick and untrimmed mortar. The second story is of adobe and is crowned with wood siding which is positioned to form the walls of the attic on the eastern and western side of the mill. The sloping roof is of corrugated metal. The exterior of the mill is in good condition but in need of mud plaster. The numerous windows are now boarded. Although much of the mill machinery has been removed from the interior, the water wheel is still in position. The interior walls are plastered with mud and are in fair condition. The floor consists of wood planks. Large hand-hewn timbers were employed in the construction of the attic floor.

The mercantile and storage buildings are also of adobe construction with corrugated metal roofs and were probably erected at the same time as the mill. At present, these buildings are in better condition than the mill.

The house, sometimes referred to as "the Romero House," is a two-story adobe structure constructed shortly after Vicente Romero founded La Cueva around 1851. A unique portal, also two-story, was constructed across the entire facade. The home is in excellent condition.

San Rafael Church built in the latter years of the century of adobe and wood construction served as a family chapel for the Romeros and later owners of the ranch. The exterior of the church is in need of repair, although, the windows are in good condition. The chapel was last used in the early 1950's and the main door is now boarded.
La Cueva Ranch was established about 1851 by Vicente Romero in the center of the Mora Land Grant. This extensive community grant had been conceded to the heads of families by Governor Albino Perez in 1835. Although, a settlement had existed at "Lo de Mora" since 1818. Vicente Romero was not a grantee, but had purchased the shares of several original grantees or their descendants, among them: Pedro Chacón, Miguel Mascareñas, Francisco Sandoval, Maria Dolores Romero (not related to Vicente), Mateo Sandoval and several other small claimants.

On his 33,000 acre ranch, Romero built a two-story home in the 1850's. By the 1870's the mill and warehouses had been added. The family chapel dedicated to San Rafael was built somewhat later. He also laid out an elaborate irrigation system which still serves the needs of the valley. Romero became a prominent freighter and sheepman. Legend has it that he spent much of his time sleeping in caves while tending his flocks which accounts for the origin of the name La Cueva, "the cave."

The 1870 census lists Vicente as 46 years of age and his wife, Josefa, as 38. They had three sons, Rafael, Antonio and Jose María. By March of 1880, Vicente Romero was dead and ownership of the land had passed to his wife and oldest son, Rafael. On September 1, 1883, Rafael along with David C. Dewel and Charles Thomas Clark White incorporated La Cueva Ranch for a fifty year period. The first company was capitalized at #150,000. Dewel owned a third of the interests and White and Rafael Romero owned the remaining stock. Later, Dewel and White purchased the interests of Rafael and his mother. The purpose of incorporating the ranch in 1883 was stated in the articles of the association of the La Cueva Ranch Company as follows: "The objects for which said corporation is formed are to acquire, hold and sell ranch property and other real estate and to operate the same to construct and operate irrigating ditches and to improve lands in connection therewith to raise, buy and sell livestock of all kinds and to engage in merchandising, milling and farming all in the territory of New Mexico."

(See Continuation Sheet)
### 9. Major Bibliographical References


Interview of James H. Purdy with Helen Guerin, 1400 Cerro Gordo, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 13, 1972. (Mrs. Guerin was a resident of Las Vegas, 1921-1970). (See Continuation Sheet)

### 10. Geographical Data

#### Latitude and Longitude Coordinates Defining a Rectangle Locating the Property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corner</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>SE</td>
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<td>SW</td>
<td>35° 56' 28&quot;</td>
<td>W105° 15' 00&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Approximate Acres of Property:** 47 Acres

#### List All States and Counties for Properties Overlapping State or County Boundaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Code</th>
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</table>

### 11. Form Prepared By

**Name and Title:**

James H. Purdy, Archivist 1

**Organization:**

State Records Center and Archives

**Street and Number:**

404 Montezuma

**City or Town:**

Santa Fe

**State:**

New Mexico 35

**Date:**

11-17-72

### 12. State Liaison Officer Certification

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

- National
- State
- Local

**Name:**

David W. King

**Title:**

STATE PLANNING OFFICER

**Date:**

FEBRUARY 6, 1973

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**National Register Verification**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

**Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation**

**Date:**

5/25/73

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**ATTEST:**

**Keeper of the National Register**

**Date:**

5/23/73
About 1908, Hugh Loudon and Major A. W. Whitmore bought the stock which had originally belonged to Romero and his mother. In 1908, the ranch was listed as the second largest in the Territory in the amount of area under cultivation. About 4,500 head of cattle were also pastured on the ranch during the winter months. P. W. Shufeldt, who had worked for the Wriggly Chewing Gum Company in British Honduras, purchased the ranch in the 1930's. The mill had been operated until the mid-1920's and was then idle for a decade. Shufeldt reactivated the mill and converted it to more modern machinery. Flour was ground as late as 1949 when the mill was finally shut down. After Shufeldt died in 1948, his wife, Wilhelmina, sold the ranch (with the exception of the cemetery, church and land around the church which she gave to the Catholic Church) to William Salman. The mill and warehouses have been used for storage and the Romero house has become the residence of David Salman, the State Representative from Mora-Union-Harding Counties.

Interview of James H. Purdy with State Representative David Salman, La Cueva, New Mexico, November 15, 1972. (Representative Salman lives on La Cueva Ranch).

Original documents on the Mora Land Grant are found in the files of the Surveyor General of New Mexico, Case #32. State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

U. S. Census 1870, Mora County, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Records of Incorporation, Territory of New Mexico, III, 1883. State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

L. Bradford Prince, Land Grant Papers, Mora Grant. State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES
DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

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La Cueva Lake
Red Lake
Horse Lake

Gravel Pit
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<td>TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Property boundaries where required.</td>
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<td>2. North arrow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Latitude and longitude reference.</td>
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