

Mission San Juan De Capistrano, Habitation A  
Berg's Mill-Graf Road  
Berg's Mill Community  
San Antonio  
Bexar County  
Texas

HABS No. TX-321 C

HABS  
TEX  
15-SANT, V,  
3C-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MISSION SAN JUAN DE CAPISTRANO,  
HABITATION A

HABS  
TEX  
15-SANTV5  
3C-

HABS No. TX-321 C

- Location: Berg's Mill-Graf Road, Berg's Mill  
Community, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.
- Present Owner: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio.
- Present Use: Public museum.
- Significance: Although reconstructed, Habitation A, or Indian quarters, is a typical component of a Spanish Mission complex built during the period of Texas frontier.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1760s.
2. Original and subsequent owners: See History section of Mission San Juan De Capistrano, HABS No. TX-321.
3. Original plans and construction: The original "pueblo" or Indian quarters were temporary shelters of brush and mud erected along the east and west walls of the Mission Plaza. In 1789, it was said that the quarters were rebuilt and were houses of stone laid in mud mortar. During the mid 1850s the quarters fell into gradual disuse and ruin. In 1968 it was reconstructed.

B. Historical Context: See Mission San Juan De Capistrano, HABS No. TX-321.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The original appearance of this structure is not known as it has been in ruins during modern times. Essentially it is a simple rectangular stone building with the dominant architectural feature being the exterior fire-box and chimney on the north elevation.
2. Condition of fabric: The walls are sound and the overall condition is good in that this building is undergoing extensive reconstruction at present.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This house is about 16' x 54'.
2. Foundation: The original foundations were the lower masonry wall courses carried about two feet below grade to stable soil. During the present reconstruction, reinforced concrete has been used to strengthen the foundations.
3. Walls: The walls of the house are of rubble sandstone and lime mortar.
4. Structural system, framing: Load bearing walls; typical wood ceiling and roof framing for reconstructed roofs.
5. Porch: The present porch is a reconstruction. It is not known whether there was an original porch. The porch supports are roughly fashioned 4"x 4" cedar timbers.
6. Openings
  - a. Doorways and doors: The entrance doorway is a masonry opening. The original door is no longer extant.
  - b. Windows: Only the window openings remain: One in the east wall of the major room, one in the west wall of that room, and one in the west wall of the adjoining smaller room. These are all about three feet wide.
7. Roof: The present reconstructed roof is of wood framing supporting a corrugated metal sheathing which in turn is covered with thatch.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: This small house is made up of two adjoining rooms thus forming a small rectangular structure. The rooms are back to back with a central doorway connecting them.
2. Floor: The present floor is a reinforced concrete slab. The original was undoubtedly hard-packed earth.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: The rubble walls were originally plastered and portions of plaster are still to be found. The ceilings are, of course, reconstructed.
4. Fireplace: Simple stone raised hearth, 2'-2" splayed opening.
5. Doors: The original doors have long since vanished. No reconstructed doors have been hung as yet.
6. Trim: No wood trim. It is unlikely that the original had wood trim.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: This house forms the northwest corner of the Mission compound and runs north to south.

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Architecture Survey  
1969

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The San Antonio project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in the summer of 1968, and was made possible with funds from HABS and two sponsors, the Bexar County Historical Survey Committee and the San Antonio Conservation Society. Under the direction of James Massey, chief of HABS, the project was carried out by Wesley I. Shank (Iowa State University), project supervisor, and by student assistant architects, Charles W. Barrow (University of Texas); Les Beilinson (University of Miami); William H. Edwards (University of Illinois); and Larry D. Hermsen (Iowa State University) at the HABS field office in the former Ursuline Academy buildings, San Antonio. John C. Garner, Jr., director of Bexar County Architecture Survey, did the outside work on the written documentaries. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D. C. office, edited the written data in 1983, for preparation of transmittal to the Library of Congress. Dewey G. Mears of Austin, Texas took the documentary photographs of the San Antonio structures.

PART IV. OTHER INFORMATION

For a photograph of the Habitation A, see Mission San Juan De Capistrano, Habitation B, HABS No. TX-321 D.