Archaeological Monitoring of Building and Site Improvements at the United States Courthouse and the Federal Oval, Santa Fe, New Mexico

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Museum of New Mexico

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF BUILDING AND SITE IMPROVEMENTS AT THE UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE AND THE FEDERAL OVAL, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

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ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

From August to November 1996, the Office of Archaeological Studies, Museum of New Mexico, conducted a monitoring program of building and site improvements at the United States Courthouse and the Federal Oval (LA 114261). The monitoring program established that subsurface material across the Federal Oval grounds was shallow and confined to a cultural layer varying from 20 to 50 cm below the surface. Artifacts recovered from the cultural layer represented low-density and highly mixed refuse ranging from the prehistoric Coalition period through early Statehood period material. Two archaeological features discovered by the monitoring program relate to Santa Fe's Territorial period. A large refuse pit is interpreted as the trash-filled artificial pond built for the 1883 Tertio-Millennial Fair. A spoils pit seems to be filled with stone dressing debris related to Territorial period construction either at the Courthouse or possibly the penitentiary. The debris may even relate to a razed structure, but this was not confirmed by the present project. Both discovered features preserve intact deposits likely to yield important information on Santa Fe's Territorial period.

Museum of New Mexico Project 41.629 (Federal Oval)
GSA Projects #RNM94010/SR#244 and #RNM95017

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INTRODUCTION

At the request of Mr. Milburn Smith of the General Services Administration (GSA), Region 7, Fort Worth, Texas, the Office of Archaeological Studies, Museum of New Mexico, conducted a monitoring program of building and site improvements at the United States Courthouse and the Federal Oval. Land- altering improvements included digging a dry well drainage system, exposing and waterproofing the stone foundation of the building complex, and installing new landscape sprinklers. A sample of the various mechanically dug trenches was monitored to evaluate the nature of subsurface materials in the project area.

Archaeological survey and monitoring was performed by OAS archaeologist Charles A. Hannaford. The monitoring extended intermittently from August to November 1996, with an expenditure of 13 person-days of observation.

The project is situated in Township 17N, Range 9E on unplatted land within the City of Santa Fe Grant (Fig. 1). The U.S. Courthouse is specifically located at Federal Place, and within the Federal Oval. LA 114261 was originally assigned for work at Grants Park (Wozniak 1992a, 1992b), but the site area has been expanded to include the entire Federal Oval. The property is administered by the Federal Government, and the United States Courthouse is listed on both the *National Register of Historic Places* and the *State Register of Cultural Properties* (National Register File 244).

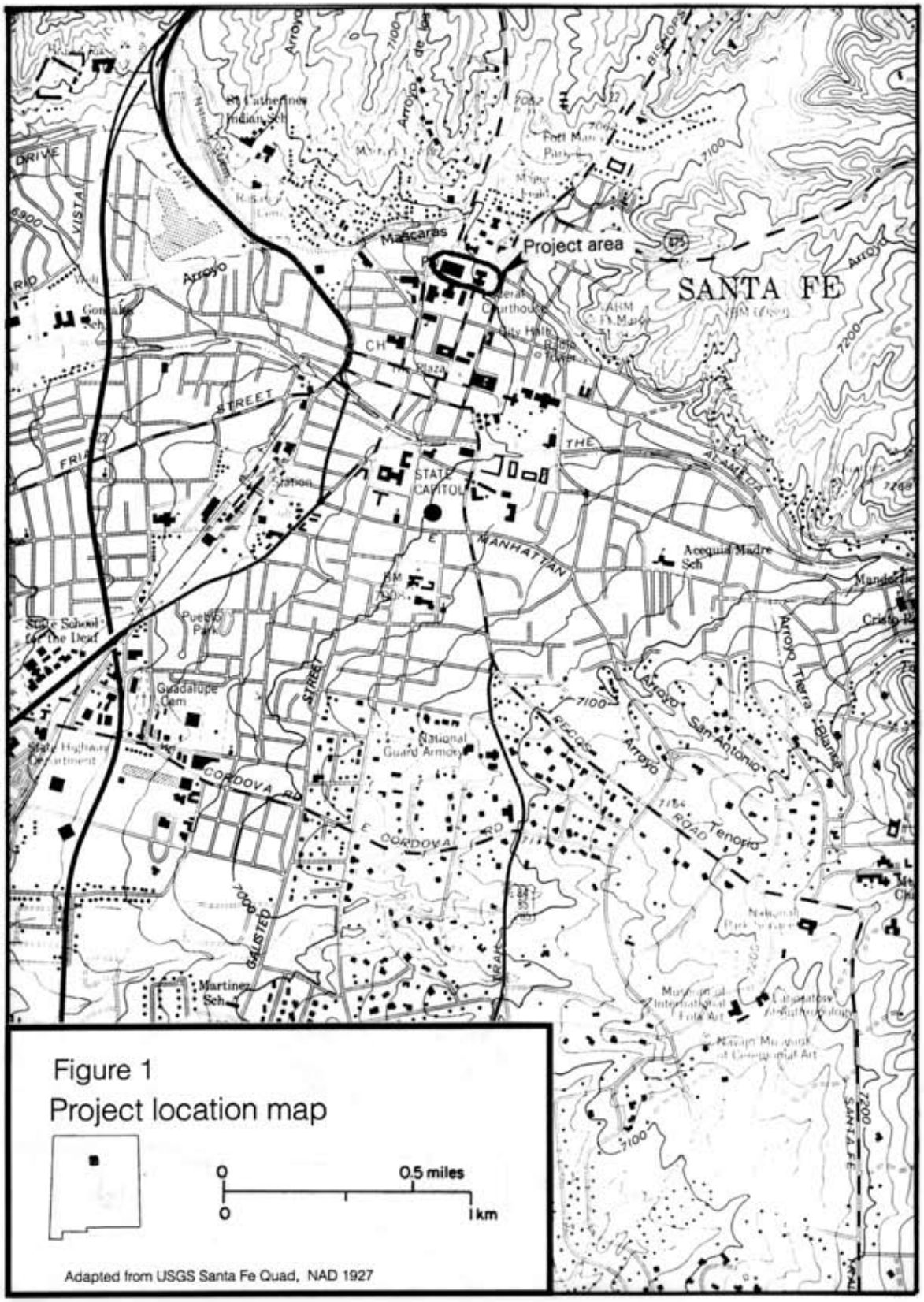

Figure 1
Project location map

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The project area is located within the Historic Downtown District of Santa Fe as defined by the City of Santa Fe Archaeological Review District Ordinance. The district contains the oldest inhabited section of Santa Fe, and the project area is literally surrounded by concentrated historic and prehistoric resources. The Federal Oval is located specifically within the Fort Marcy Historic Neighborhood. This locality was formed by a succession of military and governmental installations beginning with the Spanish Colonial and Mexican Palace of the Governors and presidio, and followed by Fort Marcy and the Territorial Capitol (Sze and Spears 1988:52). The Federal Oval encompasses one of the larger open areas in the core downtown district potentially containing subsurface remains of nearly four centuries of European occupation, as well as earlier Pueblo settlement.

New Mexico Cultural Resource Information System (NMCRIS) files at the State of New Mexico's Historic Preservation Division, Archeological Records Management Section, show two small projects in the immediate vicinity of the Federal Oval. Wozniak (1992a, 1992b) investigated Grant Park at the west end of the Federal Oval, and Tigges (1989) monitored a utility trench north of the U.S. Courthouse. These projects provide pertinent overviews concerning the prehistoric and historic utilization of the Federal Oval locality.

The earliest recorded prehistoric settlements in the area date from the late Developmental period (A.D. 1000 to 1200). These ancestral Pueblo farmers cultivated fields along the Santa Fe River, and constructed jacal surface structures associated with subterranean pit structures. Mineral-painted Kwahe'e Black-on-white is the hallmark ceramic type. Sites from this time period have been recorded along the less developed north terrace of the Santa Fe River.

The KP site (LA 46300) is a late Developmental period site discovered during the construction of condominiums on the low terrace just above the northeast corner of the Federal Oval (Wiseman 1989). Surviving architectural elements included a trash-filled pit structure with a human burial, and suggestions of an associated surface room block. The trash-filled pit structure included a wide range of artifact types, and indicated abandonment of the structure prior to abandonment of the locale. The surviving architectural elements combined with the wide range of artifact types characterize a rather substantial residential occupation in close proximity to the project area.

Several large villages were established along the Santa Fe River during the following Coalition period (from A.D. 1200 to 1325). Santa Fe Black-on-white, decorated with carbon pigment, is the most common ceramic type from this period. Adobe wall stubs, midden deposits, and human burials from a large village have been documented under City Hall, the adjacent parking lot, and Sweeney Gymnasium. This adobe pueblo (LA 1051, also LA 4450-#3) is of undetermined size, but may be as large as Pindi Pueblo (LA 1), which has several hundred rooms. Recovered ceramics from the site consistently support a relative ceramic date of A.D. 1200 to 1450.

Other Coalition period architectural remains and midden deposits have been documented along the terrace rise east of the Scottish Rite Temple, extending to the terrace top and the Cross of the Martyrs. Extensive Coalition period remains surround the project area, and midden deposits

have been recorded to a depth of 2 m below the surface in the vicinity of City Hall. Developmental period architectural remains were found underlying the extensive Coalition period material during the excavation of Pindi Pueblo lower on the Santa Fe River, and a similar settlement pattern may be conjectured for the City Hall site.

During the initial Spanish settlement of Santa Fe, the area of the Federal Oval was open farm or grazing land, and later may have encompassed the north end of the presidio. The original presidio was laid out in the standard quadrangular design, and the northern room block was almost a quarter of a mile north of the Palace of the Governors, somewhere in the vicinity of the Federal Oval.

A small Spanish fort known as the La Garita site (LA 608) was built on a rise near the head of Washington Street, and just east of the Scottish Rite Temple. The site dates from around the Pueblo Revolt to the 1880s and included a mortuary chapel and cemetery. The Garita was once a promoted tourist attraction, variously associated with a Pueblo Revolt period kiva, Spanish torreon and fortress, jail, death house for condemned criminals, a place of execution, a Mexican customs house, and a United States Army guardhouse (Ellis 1978:4). The legendary Garita was the subject of preservation concerns by both the Historic Society and Santa Fe Board of Trade as early as 1906, but the cultural remains are now buried beneath condominiums.

The land now containing the Federal Oval was public grounds acquired by the United States from the Mexican government under the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The U.S. Army refurbished aspects of the presidio and renamed it Fort Marcy. In 1866, Lincoln Avenue was cut through the original presidio entrance, and aligned with the Territorial Capitol under construction since 1852 at the north end of the compound. A stone monument to Kit Carson was erected at the north termination of Lincoln Avenue, and directly in front of the south entrance to the United States Courthouse (Historic Santa Fe Foundation 1982:88). The monument was constructed in 1885 and unveiled to an audience of 5,000 from Santa Fe and other parts of New Mexico.

National Register File 244 details the history of the United States Courthouse (Purdy 1972). Money was allocated by the U.S. government in 1851 for the construction of a capitol building for the new territory of New Mexico. Because of fund shortages caused by the Civil War, the half-built structure was neglected until the summer of 1883 (Fig. 2).

An 1879-1884 photograph documents the unfinished building shell and also shows the Acequia de Muralla passing in the present vicinity of North Federal Place between the Scottish Rite Temple and the U.S. Courthouse (Snow 1988:44). This acequia dates prior to 1766, and a lateral ran south down present Washington Street. The photograph portrays the area of the west Federal Oval as a barren, level landscape totally void of vegetation. No surface features are apparent in the photograph.

A Territorial period cemetery was established north of the project area at roughly the present location of the Scottish Rite Temple (Fig. 2). The walled cemetery appears on various historic maps, but unmarked outlying graves have been encountered as far west as the Montgomery and Andrews Law Office Building. This area was essentially the northern outskirts of town at this time, and I expect that additional unmarked graves may extend as far west as the Rosario Cemetery.

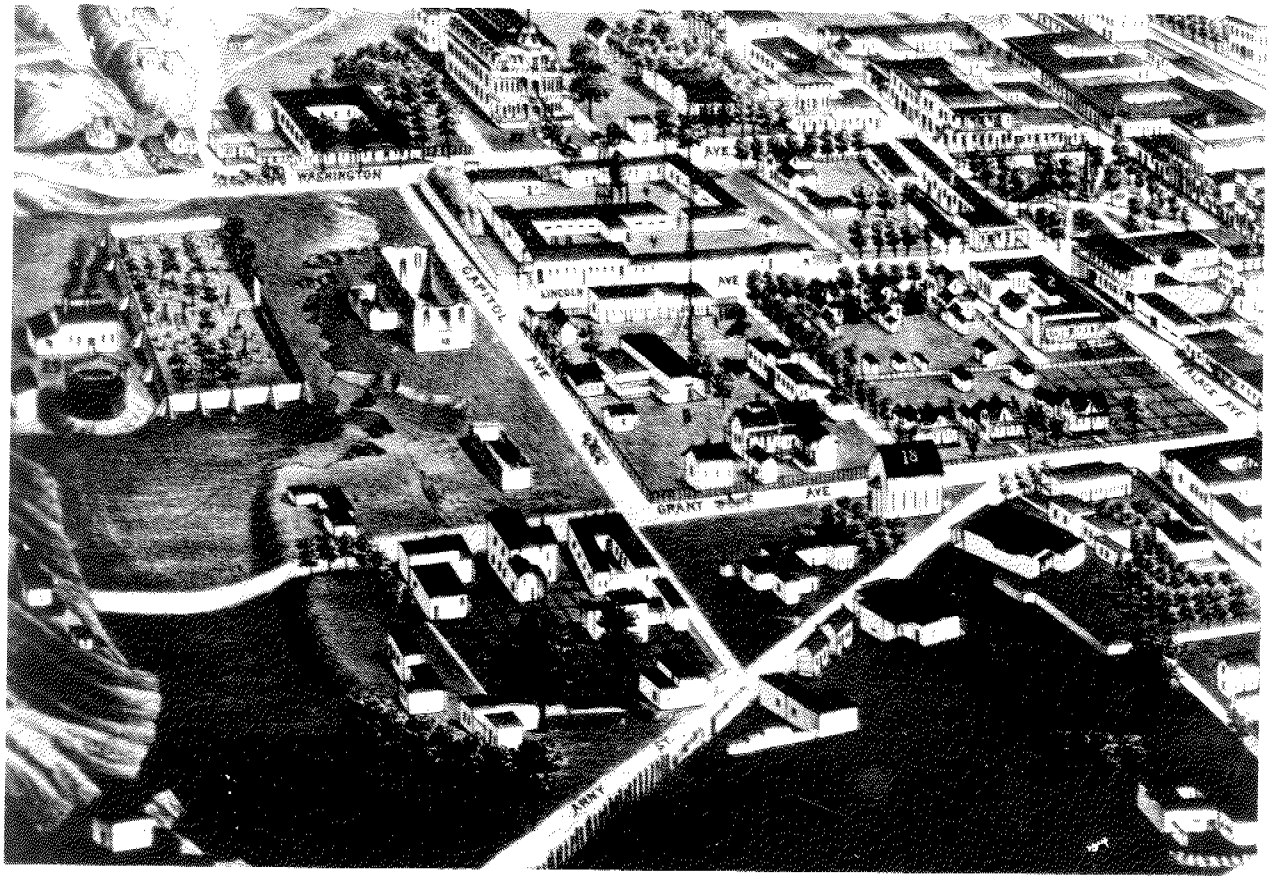

Figure 2. Detail from J. J. Stoner's "Bird's Eye View of Santa Fe, New Mexico," 1882. (Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, Neg. No. 23306.)

In 1883, prominent citizens chose the grounds of the neglected capitol building as the site for Santa Fe's great Tertio-Millennial celebration (Twitchell 1924:401-420; Mauzy 1935:17-23; Ellis 1958:121-135). The fair was intended as a celebration of the mistaken notion that the city had been founded 333 years previously, in 1550, an historical inaccuracy bemoaned by the pioneering Southwest archaeologist Adolph Bandelier (Lange and Riley 1996:90). The grounds were cleared and bladed since the area had been previously excavated for adobe-making and was also the receptacle for city refuse (Purdy 1972).

The six-week exposition was advertised throughout the East, and marked Santa Fe's first attempt to attract Eastern tourists. Festivities included reenactment of Vargas's entry and other pageants of the conquerors, as well as large-scale celebrations of Indian lifeways, including chicken pulls and tribal dances. More than a thousand Pueblos, Navajos, Utes, and Apaches participated in the event. The principal chief of Zuni narrated the tribal tradition of the coming of the white man from the steps of the capitol building with early ethnologist Frank Cushing as interpreter. Chief San Juan, of the Mescalero Apaches, explained in a speech that not all of his people could attend the celebration because some of them were out fighting the U.S. Army (Ellis 1958:129).

The incomplete capitol building was given a temporary roof to house out-of-town Indian participants, and the building was used as a backdrop for a staged battle between the Indians and Coronado's forces. A race track about one-third of a mile long was laid out around the grounds, and was the scene of horse, mule, and burro races. Several exposition halls were constructed, as well as an artificial pond and an Indian village (Fig. 3).

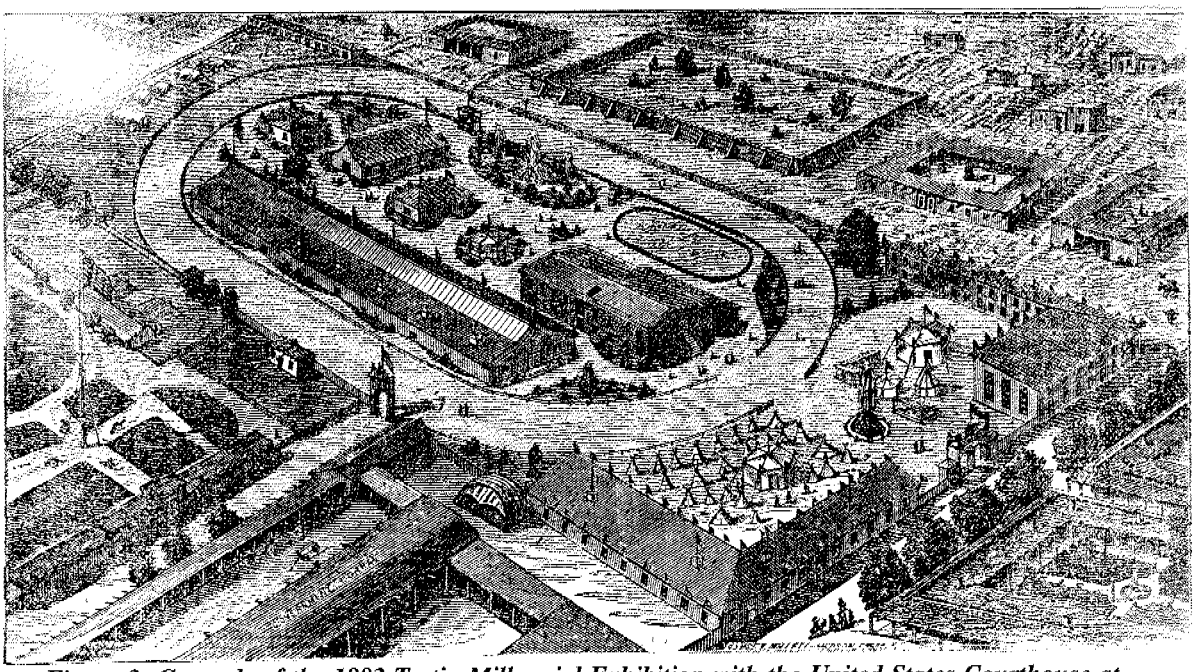

Figure 3. Grounds of the 1883 Tertio-Millennial Exhibition with the United States Courthouse at center right and artificial pond just to the north. (Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, Neg. No. 10994.)

The capitol building was finally completed in 1889, together with the stone wall and iron fence around the inside rail of the Tertio-Millennial race track, creating the Federal Oval. This surviving nineteenth-century relic continues to influence traffic flow in the downtown district. The building was never used as a capitol, but became instead the United States Courthouse. Built of native New Mexico stone quarried from Hyde Park and Cerrillos, the courthouse stands today as one of the few remaining examples in the Southwest of imposing public buildings constructed in the Greek Revival architectural style.

Construction of the northern wing of the United States Courthouse was in progress from 1926 to 1929. The basement of the building was dug by hand, and water springs encountered by the workmen caused delays in the basement excavation (Tigges 1989). Historic photographs show that construction stone was dressed on site, and chipping debris was mixed with backdirt thrown out around the edges of the excavation. This mixed backdirt was subsequently shoveled in around the foundation.

RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

The project area is discussed in reference to trench monitoring at the east, south, and west sides of the Federal Oval. With the exception of the area of Feature 1 at the northeast corner of the courthouse, no trenches were monitored on the north side of the building complex.

The sprinkler trenches were mechanically dug with a ditch-witch. The narrow trenches were about 17 cm wide, and varied from 60 cm to 1 m deep. The monitoring program consisted of observing the mechanical excavation of the trench network and inspecting the exposed backfill and soil profiles for evidence of subsurface cultural deposits. Soil profiles of the deeper, narrow trenches were often difficult to observe. The monitor relied on the nature of the exposed backfill and artifact content to evaluate the lower portions of the deeper trenches. An effort was made to either record or collect all exposed artifacts. Obviously not all artifacts were recovered from the unscreened fill, but the assemblage should provide a reliable understanding of both the range and density of artifact occurrence.

The foundation of the United States Courthouse was exposed for waterproofing with a backhoe. The foundation trenches measured 2.0 to 2.5 m wide, and ranged in depth from 1.30 to 2.20 m below the surface. The monitoring program consisted of observing the mechanical excavation of the foundation trenches at the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners of the building complex. The exposed trenches were examined for evidence of subsurface cultural material, and each bucket of backfill during the excavation operation was visually inspected for artifacts. Subsurface cultural material was only encountered at the northeast corner of the building complex. This material is included with the Territorial period refuse pit exposed at this locality (see Feature 1 below).

The vertical dry well shafts designed to facilitate drainage away from the courthouse were drilled with a large truck-based mechanical auger with a 6-ft-diameter bit. The exposed shafts were visually examined for evidence of subsurface cultural material, and all artifacts observed in the backfill during the drilling process were collected.

Modern Ground Surface

The Federal Oval is covered by blue-grass lawns with large mature deciduous trees on the east, south, and west sides of the grounds. The north side of the complex is primarily paved parking. The asphalt paving and grassy lawns effectively mask the ground surface and evidence of past human activities in the project area. The grounds were intensively examined prior to the proposed construction, but observed cultural material was limited to a thin scatter of Territorial period glass and ceramics exposed by a recently dug water-line trench at the northeast corner of the courthouse. Material exposed on the surface of this unmonitored trench was the initial indication that subsurface deposits were present in this area of the Federal Oval (see Feature 1 below).

East Oval Excavations

The East Oval is an area of grassy lawn and large trees bounded by the courthouse on the west and Palace Avenue on the east. The area measures about 67 m (east-west) by 91 m (north-south). Two dry well shafts, selected sprinkler trenches, and Courthouse foundation trenches were monitored at this locality (Fig. 4). The trench monitoring resulted in the discovery of a large Territorial period refuse pit (Feature 1), and established that subsurface cultural fill across the East Oval was mixed and shallow. While the entire network of sprinkler trenches was not monitored during excavation, all open trenches and backfill were visually examined for cultural material. The trench network provided extensive horizontal coverage of the East Oval, and no buried archaeological deposits were observed in the unmonitored trenches.

An unmonitored electric line trench dug with a backhoe extended the north-south length of the courthouse (Fig. 4). The soil profile was identical to stratigraphy encountered in the other miscellaneous trenches, substantiating the shallow 35 to 50 cm depth of the cultural layer. The underlying natural layer of alluvial sandy clay extended to the bottom of the trench at a depth of 1 to 1.15 m below the surface, and no cultural material was observed. This trench transected the north-south width of the Territorial period refuse pit, and artifact counts from the feature would have increased had the trench been monitored.

Primary Dry Well Shaft

The primary dry well shaft had a diameter of 1.8 m, and was drilled to a depth of 6.7 m below the present surface. Monitoring of this shaft excavation provided the initial look at subsurface fill in the project area. The profile had two principal soil layers. Layer 1 was the cultural layer extending from the surface to a depth of 35 to 50 cm below the surface. The cultural layer was characterized by a matrix of lightly stained sandy clay with low-density and highly mixed artifact content.

Layer 2 was a massive undifferentiated layer of unstained sandy clay extending from a depth of 50 cm to the termination of excavation at nearly 7 m below the surface. Gravel was infrequently observed near the base of the excavation, but the layer was almost entirely free of rock content. No cultural material or staining was observed, and the layer is considered sterile. The shaft established that the cultural layer in the East Oval was shallow. The water table was not encountered by the shaft, and the black, organic *cienega* clay commonly found east of Washington Street was not observed (Tigges 1990:75-84).

The small recovered assemblage is a collection of mixed prehistoric and historic artifacts and includes examples of both the earliest and latest artifacts encountered on the project (Table 1). A single Kwahe Black-on-white sherd is the only artifact recovered from the late Developmental period, and a complete 1920s perfume bottle is from the early Statehood period. The recovery of the perfume bottle at the bottom (50 cm below the surface) of the cultural layer demonstrates the mixed nature of the material.

Temporary Dry Well Shaft

A temporary shaft was initially dug about 2 m west of the main shaft. This shaft measured 1.8 m

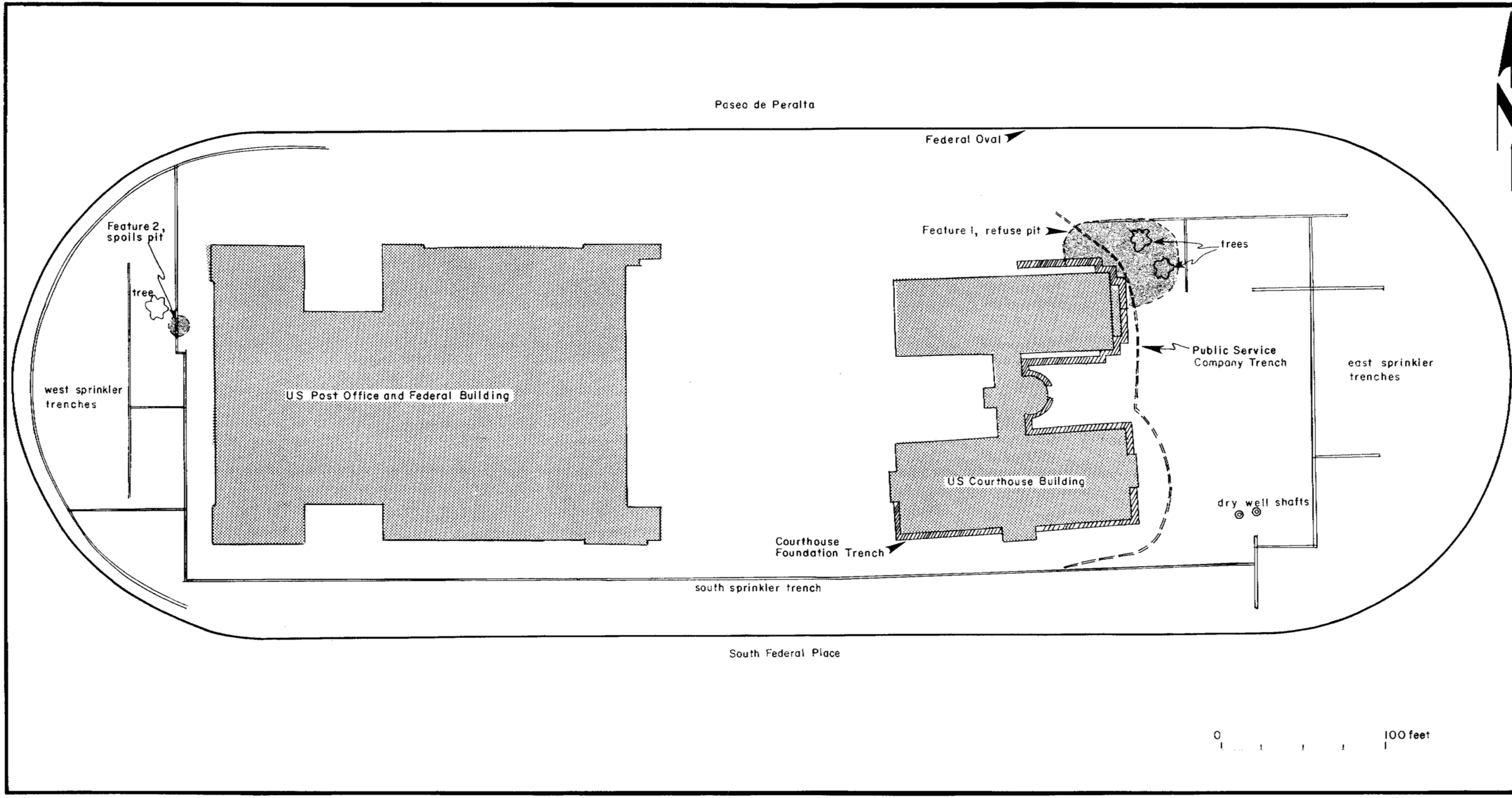

Figure 4. Plan map of project area.

Table 1. Artifact Inventories by Provenience

Artifact Type	Proveniences					
	Refuse Pit Feature 1	Dry Well Shaft	East Oval Trenches	West Oval Trenches	South Oval Trenches	Total
PREHISTORIC						
Kwahe'e Black-on-white		1				1
Santa Fe Black-on-white	6		2	2	31	41
Pindi Black-on-white		2				2
Undifferentiated white ware				5	8	13
Smeared Indented		1				1
Undifferentiated corrugated ware	3	1	2	2	10	18
Polished stone		1				1
Mussel shell fragment					1	1
TOTAL	9	6	4	9	50	78
SPANISH COLONIAL						
Mexican Majolica (Aranama tradition)				3		3
Mexican Majolica indeterminate			1			1
Tewa Polychrome	9		1	11	3	24
Powhoge Polychrome			2			2
Puname Polychrome?					1	1
Plain micaceous ware	5			1	3	9
Micaceous sherd shaped into two-holed button	1					1
Unidentified Late Glaze	1					1
Kapo Black	2					2
TOTAL	18		4	15	7	44
TERRITORIAL						
Beer bottle bases/applied lips	22	1		4	4	31
Wine/champagne bases/applied lips	9				1	10
Applied lip bottle closures (probably from paneled bitters bottles)	13				1	14
Applied lip bottle closures (indeterminate contents)	8					8
Soda water bottle (torpedo base)	1					1

Artifact Type	Proveniences					
	Refuse Pit Feature 1	Dry Well Shaft	East Oval Trenches	West Oval Trenches	South Oval Trenches	Total
Ink bottle (complete)	1					1
Glass stopper (flat head type)	1					1
Pressed glass (salt dish and indeterminate fragment)	2					2
Acid Etched glass (pitcher?)	1					1
Window glass	2					2
Decorated soft paste white ware (tableware); hand-painted floral design	5					5
Decorated soft paste whiteware (tableware); banded design	2					2
Decorated soft paste whiteware (tableware); molded and gilded design	2					2
Undecorated soft paste white ware (tableware)	33		1		3	37
Undecorated hard paste Hotel china (tableware)	7					7
Undecorated porcelain					1	1
Stoneware (salt glaze) jug	1					1
Stoneware (salt glaze) ginger beer	2				2	4
Stoneware (salt glaze) jar	2			1		3
Stoneware (yellow glaze) Bowl	4					4
Stoneware (brown glaze) jar	2					2
Earthenware (unglazed) indeterminate form	2					2
1867 nickel	1					1
45-70 internally primed rifle cartridge	1					1
Horse shoes (used)	7					7
Mule shoes (used)	12					12
Iron wedge (wood splitting?)	1					1
Iron handle (unknown function)	1					1
Square nail	1					1
Rubber eye-dropper bulb	1					1
Bone letter opener fragment	1					1

Artifact Type	Proveniences					
	Refuse Pit Feature 1	Dry Well Shaft	East Oval Trenches	West Oval Trenches	South Oval Trenches	Total
Domestic cattle bone	22					22
Domestic pig bone	1					1
Domestic sheep bone	2					2
Fowl bone	1					1
TOTAL	174	1	1	5	12	193
STATEHOOD						
Threaded-cap perfume bottle ca. 1920s		1				1
UNDIFFERENTIATED TIME PERIOD						
Domestic cattle bone		1	1		7	9
Domestic sheep bone					2	2
TOTAL		1	1		9	11
GRAND TOTAL	201	9	10	29	78	327

in diameter and was dug to a depth of 90 cm below the surface. The soil profile was identical with that described for the primary dry well shaft. No artifacts were recorded from this dry well shaft.

Sprinkler Trenches

The excavation of about 183 m of sprinkler trenches was monitored across the East Oval (Fig. 4). The selected trenches provided roughly a north-south transect through the center of the area. Additional trenches were monitored in the vicinity of the Territorial period refuse pit in an effort to define the horizontal extent of this buried feature. Artifacts recovered from trenches running through the refuse pit are provenienced with the feature.

The cultural layer across the East Oval ranged from a depth of 20 to 50 cm below the surface. Staining was consistently light with little charcoal content. The recovered assemblage was limited to ten dispersed artifacts, with a density of about 1 artifact per 18 m of trench. The small and mixed assemblage consisted mainly of Prehistoric and Spanish Colonial sherds typical of the downtown context. Conspicuous is the near absence of Territorial period artifacts, especially considering the discovery of the large Territorial period refuse pit at this locality. Occasional brick and mortar fragments were noted in the trenches, but architectural debris was infrequent.

Refuse Pit (Feature 1)

The only feature discovered at the East Oval is a large refuse pit located at the northeast corner of the courthouse building (Fig. 4). Territorial period glass and ceramic fragments were exposed on the surface of a recently dug waterline trench passing through the area, suggesting the presence of

subsurface material. However, there were no other surface indications for the feature. Trench monitoring revealed that the north wing of the courthouse cut through the feature, and the pit has been transected by a variety of both older and more recently dug utility trenches passing around the corner of the building.

The pit is an estimated 10 m (north-south) by 20 m (east-west) based on profiles exposed by the courthouse foundation trench, the unmonitored electric line trench, and two sprinkler trenches (Fig. 4). The top of the feature is located just below the lawn. The north and south sides of the pit taper inward as they descend to a level center depth of about 1.80 m. The east and west sides of the pit were not as clearly defined, but I conjecture a similar profile. The pit was dug into the natural layer of alluvial sandy clay. The symmetrical basin-shaped profile suggests a formal, rather than a haphazard excavation. No cultural materials were noted below the bottom of the feature.

The pit was completely filled with trash midden characterized by grayish brown sandy clay interspersed with numerous ash, charcoal, and coal and furnace-clinker lenses. Artifact frequency was moderately high, and artifact sizes were normally large. I estimate artifact frequency in the entire volume of the feature to be in the thousands.

The cultural debris was apparently discarded as secondary refuse to fill the open pit. Cultural debris was confined to the interior and did not spill out around the edges. There was no indication that material was actually burned in the pit. The deposit is considered as a single cultural layer, although the charcoal and ash lenses suggest multiple dumping episodes. Finer stratigraphic control was not attempted. Artifact types are primarily of Territorial period origin and their distribution throughout the deposit suggests accumulation of material over a rather short period of time.

An assemblage of 201 artifacts was collected from the refuse pit (Table 1). Artifact counts would have been higher, but the electric line trench transecting the feature was not monitored. I believe that the relative range of artifact types and frequencies, however, are represented by the recovered assemblage.

Territorial period artifacts account for over 85 period of the assemblage. The lower frequencies of prehistoric and Spanish Colonial artifacts were mixed throughout the deposit, and were apparently discarded with the predominantly Territorial period refuse. Glass bottles were the most numerous artifact type and provided the most diagnostic material for dating the deposit. All of the bottles exhibit manufacturing techniques suggestive of an 1880 to 1903 time frame. The most common makers' mark was from the Missouri Glass Company (M G Co) observed on ten bottle bases. This company was in operation from 1859 to 1911, and the applied lip technology on the recovered bottle closures attests to a pre-1903 manufacture (Hannaford and Taylor 1995). I base the broadest date range for the deposit of ca. 1860 to 1900 on the prevalent occurrence of these bases.

The artifact types can be grouped in three primary functional categories. Most prevalent is the Indulgence category represented by alcohol/liquor/soda bottles. Beer and champagne bottle fragments are the most prevalent artifacts in the feature. This context suggests that the various tonic and bitters bottles may be related to this category considering the "medicinal" doses of alcohol they contained.

Domestic equipment was commonly represented by various Euro-American ceramics and pressed glass used for both table ware and food preparation. Butchered cattle bone was the most frequently encountered food-related item, and rib and leg bones were the dominant elements.

Horse and mule trappings were the final noticeable artifact category, represented by the abundance of horse and mule shoes. The single square nail recovered from the deposit was probably a horseshoe nail.

Architectural debris was nearly absent from the deposit with the exception of rare brick fragments. The only other construction-related artifacts were two pieces of window glass.

The feature obviously functioned as a Territorial period refuse pit sometime between 1860 and 1900. Explaining the original function of the pit is more difficult, but the location at the northeast corner of the courthouse may shed some light on the feature. This was the location of the artificial pond built on the grounds of the 1883 Tertio-Millennial Fair (Fig. 3). The profiles of the pit suggest a formal excavation, and I conclude from the location that the feature represents this artificial pond. Linda Tigges (1989) advanced that a cobble alignment observed in a utility trench about 12 m west of the feature might be related to either the Tertio-Millennial racetrack or pond (LA 114240). Sprinkler trench profiles indicate that the area between the cobble alignment and the large refuse pit are sterile, and that the features are not connected. It is my contention that the cobble alignment may relate to some aspect of the fair, but postulate that the artificial pond correlates more closely with the large pit discovered at this locality.

I could not detect silty sediment in the soil profiles that might suggest the presence of water in the feature. Perceptible alluvial sediment may not have accumulated over the short six-week duration of the fair, however. I am uncertain how long after the closing of the fair the pond may have been left open, but the cavity was apparently soon utilized as a convenient refuse receptacle. The recovered artifact assemblage conforms with the 1883 date of the fair. The high frequency of beer and champagne bottles, horse and mule shoes, cattle bone, and table ware may even relate to horse and mule racing, barbecuing and other fair festivities. Additional cultural debris may have originated from a variety of downtown settings. Use of the pond as a refuse pit would narrow the proposed temporal affiliation of the deposit to 1883-1900.

South Oval Sprinkler Trench

The South Oval is an area of grassy lawn bounded by the Post Office and the United States Courthouse on the north, and the sidewalks and pavement of South Federal Place on the south. The area measures about 162 m (east-west) by 15 m (north-south). The excavation of a single 162-m-long (1 m deep) trench running east-west through the center of the area was monitored. The trench should be representative of subsurface fill at this locality.

The trench displayed a soil profile similar to that encountered in the other areas of the Federal Oval. The cultural layer extended from the grass roots of the lawn to a depth of 40 to 60 cm below the surface. The cultural layer was characterized by lightly stained sandy clay with low-density and mixed artifact content. Occasional charcoal flecks were scattered throughout the layer, but there was no evidence of lenses, middens, or features. Architectural material was limited to infrequent brick and mortar fragments, and cobbles were rarely observed. The cultural layer was

followed by the layer of unstained sandy clay thought to represent sterile soil. Deeper foundation trenches at the southeast and southwest corners of the courthouse confirmed that this layer extended to a depth of at least 1.70 m with no cultural content.

The recovered assemblage consisted of 78 artifacts, with a density of about one artifact per 2 m of trench. Prehistoric artifacts account for over 60 percent (n = 50) of the assemblage (Table 1). The preponderance of Santa Fe Black-on-white sherds indicates that the prehistoric material is associated with the Coalition period occupation of the nearby City Hall Site (LA 1051). The higher frequency of prehistoric artifacts at the South Oval demonstrates the close proximity of the pueblo, and the prehistoric material was encountered over the entire length of the trench. The assemblage represents extramural low-density refuse scatter north of the village. Noticeably absent from the assemblage is lithic material or other artifact types, considering the nearness of the large site. The only other artifact type outside of pottery is the single unshaped mussel shell fragment thought to be associated with the prehistoric component. The prehistoric material is mixed with a low-frequency sprinkling of Spanish Colonial and Territorial period artifacts.

West Oval Sprinkler Trenches

The west oval is an area of grassy lawn bounded by the Post Office Building on the east and Grant Park on the west. The area measures about 82 m (north-south) by 30 m (east-west). The excavation of all sprinkler trenches at this locality was monitored. This consisted of about 315 linear meters of trenches (Fig. 4). The trench network provided extensive horizontal coverage of the area, but the definite vertical extent of cultural material was not resolved from these shallow sprinkler trenches. The trench monitoring resulted in the discovery of a single feature and established that subsurface cultural material was sparse at this locality.

The trenches revealed similar soil profiles across the West Oval. The cultural layer consisted of lightly stained sandy clay with mixed artifact content extending from the grass roots of the lawn to a depth of 40 to 50 cm below the surface. All recovered artifacts were associated with this layer. The cultural layer was followed in the deeper trenches by a layer of unstained sandy clay extending to a depth of at least 1 m below the surface. The layer appears to be culturally sterile, but not enough was exposed across the West Oval to verify this assertion.

The low-density artifact assemblage is composed of mixed prehistoric, Spanish Colonial, and Territorial period materials (Table 1). Artifact density averaged only about one artifact per 11 m of trench. No artifact concentrations or midden deposits were noted. Sparse charcoal flecks were present throughout the cultural layer, and architectural debris in the form of cobbles, adobe, or brick was rare. Spanish Colonial period sherds account for nearly half of the artifacts from this locality, and the three Aranama- style majolica sherds suggests this material may date from around the 1800s. However, the three main temporal components represented by the artifacts are thoroughly mixed, and no intact stratigraphy was noted.

Spoils Pit (Feature 2)

The only feature was a basin-shaped pit estimated to measure about 5-by-5 m (Fig. 4). The top of the feature was located just below the lawn, and there was no surface indication of the pit. The

feature was transected by two sprinkler trenches, which indicated a depth of at least 1 m; however, the actual bottom of the pit was not delineated. The pit is filled with construction debris in the form of unshaped fragments of jumbled fossiliferous limestone and metamorphized sandstone. The largest pieces measure about 40-by- 25-by-15 cm, but the majority of the material was smaller dressing spalls. Cement mortar was mixed throughout the deposit and adhered to some of the stone. There was no integrity to the jumbled stone, and no other types of construction debris were observed. There were no artifacts associated with the deposit.

I interpret the feature as a pit secondarily filled with building stone spoils; however, I can not dismiss the possibility that the debris represents the site of a razed architectural element. An unroofed and unidentified building does appear in the general vicinity of the Post Office Building on the J. J. Stoner 1882 lithograph (Fig. 2). This may be the stone walls of a penitentiary begun next to the capitol in the 1850s (Sze and Spears 1988:46). I lean away from the interpretation of an architectural feature because of the absence of other types of architectural artifacts, but the narrow sprinkler trenches may present an incomplete depiction of the deposit. The stone in the deposit matches the building stone from the United State Courthouse. This suggests that the deposit dates to the Territorial period construction of the courthouse, or the penitentiary. Dressing spalls and possibly dismantled sections of the buildings may have been used to fill pits and depressions on the grounds.

Wozniak (1992b:6-11) encountered several spoils pits in Grant Park just west of the feature. Deposit contents ranged from furnace clinkers to construction debris including sandstone, brick, clay, and broken concrete. Some of the sandstone matched material used in the construction of the low stone wall surrounding the Federal Oval. Wozniak (1992b:11) characterized the spoils pits as the propensity for depositing miscellaneous building materials and other inconvenient debris in pits before the paving of the property.

Courthouse Foundation Trenches

Foundation trenches monitored around the perimeter of the courthouse building were sterile except for the northeast corner of the north wing. This corner had been constructed through the Territorial period refuse pit, and artifacts collected from the trench are tabulated with the feature.

The foundation trenches displayed soil profiles identical with those observed across the grounds of the Federal Oval. Usually only about the outer 50 cm of fill was unaffected from the original foundation excavations and subsequent long-term maintenance activities. Occasional stone dressing spalls and roofing slate fragments were mixed with the fill, but no artifacts were observed. The formal foundation footing of the north wing of the courthouse was encountered at a depth of 2.20 m below the surface. The older courthouse building lacked a formal footing, and the stone walls simply rested on the natural layer of sandy clay. The trench along the north wall in the east alcove was dug to 1.30 m below the surface, while the east and south foundation trenches were dug to the base of the walls at about 1.70 m below the surface.

Summary

The purpose of the monitoring program was to evaluate the nature and extent of subsurface archaeological materials encountered by site improvements on the grounds of the Federal Oval. The Federal Oval is located within Santa Fe's Historic Downtown District, and the locality is central to the entire sequence of prehistoric and historic settlement of the city.

In general, the monitoring program established that subsurface material across the Federal Oval grounds was shallow and confined to a cultural layer varying from 20 to 50 cm below the surface. Artifacts recovered from the cultural layer represent low-density and highly mixed refuse ranging from the prehistoric Coalition period through early Statehood material. The material is typical downtown refuse that has been mixed by long-term urban development. In addition to substantial land alteration connected with the construction of the courthouse and post office buildings, the entire grounds was traversed by a variety of both known and forgotten utility trenches, including a complex sprinkler network dating from the 1930s or 1940s. No intact artifact concentrations or stratigraphy was evidenced across the grounds, and architectural debris was uncommon. Considering the downtown setting of the Federal Oval, the monitoring program established that archaeological material across the grounds was sparse.

Two archaeological features were discovered by the monitoring program. Both features are related with Santa Fe's Territorial period. A large refuse pit found at the East Oval is interpreted as the trash-filled artificial pond built for the 1883 Tertio-Millennial Fair. A spoils pit found at the West Oval seems to be filled with stone dressing debris related to Territorial period construction either at the courthouse or possibly the penitentiary. The debris may even relate to a razed structure, but this was not confirmed by the present project. The features have been impacted by previous construction and utility trenches, but still contain intact deposits important for increasing knowledge of Santa Fe's Territorial period. These localities especially should be considered in the planning of future land-modification projects in the Federal Oval.

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