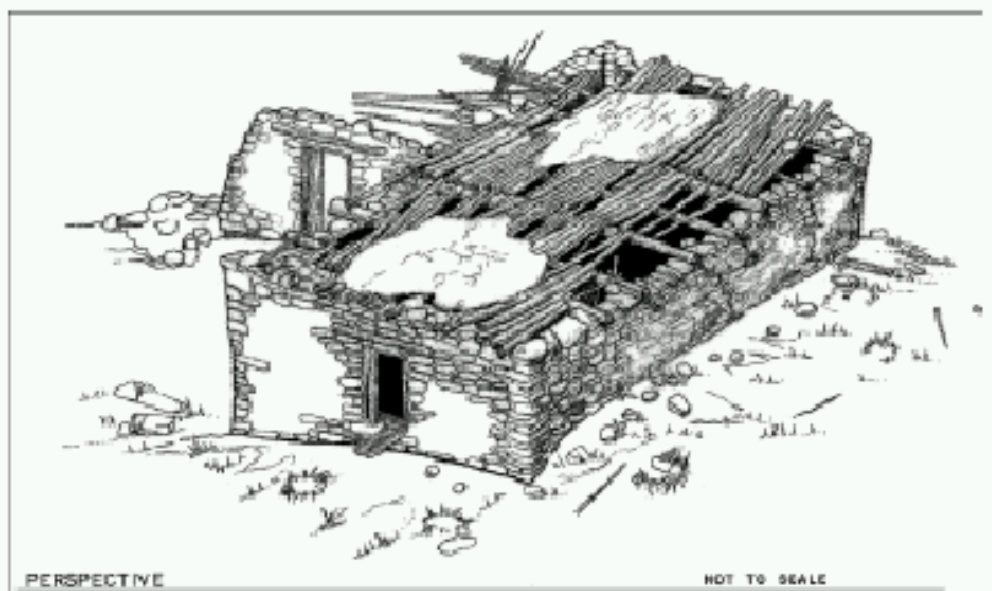


LARGO CANYON HOMESTEADS

Largo Canyon is located in a remote portion of northwestern New Mexico and is a tributary to the San Juan Basin like the nearby and better known Chaco Canyon. The area has a long history that includes pre-contact Puebloan settlements and later Navajo settlement. Less known are the historic homesteads that were settled in the Largo Canyon area from the 1870s through the 1930s. These homesteads were based on grazing sheep and cattle and small-scale farming. The Bureau of Land Management, Farmington Field Office, supported a Multiple Property Listing for the National Register to recognize and advance the preservation of what remains of this now-abandoned community. The remnants of the Largo Canyon historic settlement include stone homes, homesteads, ranches, a school, a trail/road, a cemetery, and a trading post.

Between 1870 and 1940, a total of 41 homestead patents were granted ranging in size from 40 to 640 acres, with a total of about 200 people known to have lived in the area during this period. The homesteaders were predominately Spanish American (67 percent) and Anglo-Americans (32%). These homesteaders can best be characterized as different family groups who lived on dispersed farms and ranches. Ranching was dominated by sheep and cattle, and farming was mainly subsistence farming of corn, beans and vegetables. The community also served as an important supply stop for the main travel route from the San Juan region to Abiquiu and ultimately Santa Fe. The only community spaces of the Largo Canyon settlement included a school, a church, a cemetery, and three trading posts that operated at different times. This tenuous ranching- and transportation-based community did not outlast the economic conditions of the Great Depression. However, construction of State Highway 44 (present US Route 550) in 1927, which bypassed the old route to the San Juan region via Abiquiu and which left the Largo Canyon community further isolated, may have been the primary factor in the area's depopulation. By the 1940s, the area was essentially uninhabited by the homesteaders.



Martin Apodaca Homestead in Largo Canyon area. Stone-masonry construction and viga-and-latilla-style roof. Illustration courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Martin Apodaca Homestead, HABS NM-201-A.