

FOLLOWING THE WARPATH: Seboyeta

Seboyeta is purposely misspelled at the demand of (who else?) the federal gov'mint. The Post Office insisted that, since there was already more than one Cebolleta on the New Mexico postal routes, there could not be another. ("Little onions" or "stinking grass" is apparently popular with both Hispanics and Native Americans; Chicago means much the same thing.) The locals were a pragmatic and enduring people, and probably not a dozen of them, including the village priest, could reliably spell the town's name in any case. They obediently changed the spelling to Seboyeta and they remain there today, while the Post Office slowly collapses beneath the growing weight of the federal behemoth. To further confuse the innocent traveler, while it's Seboyeta on the New Mexico DOT highway map and the Cibola NF map, the village stubbornly remains Cebolleta on the New Mexico recreational map.



Today's Seboyeta, like Schliemann's Troy, is layers of ruins built upon and partly with the rubble of earlier epochs. Over the years buildings have been added on and expanded, collapsed, shored up and haphazardly repaired, abandoned and repurposed, all with whatever materials – stone, adobe or scrap lumber – lay to hand.

In a town with such a gaudy history, one would hope to find a biker bar along the lines of Tarantino's *"From Dusk to Dawn,"* or at least a run-down and dusty convenience store. Sadly, there is neither *bodega* nor *cantina* in Seboyeta today, nor any other evidence of commercial endeavor closer than the slowly turning blades of giant wind turbines silhouetted on the ridge above town.



A quick cruise of the town reveals only fragments that might once have been part of the town's formidable defenses.



Photos of the more picturesque ruins give the impression that Seboyeta is a ghost town. Far from it, the town is still occupied and the surrounding hills are dotted with mobile homes and some sturdier houses. The church is beautifully kept and obviously the pride of the community.



North of town, tucked in a grotto at the head of a pretty little side canyon, is



Los Portales (the porches or entryways) a shrine to Our Lady

Just to the south of where Seboyeta drowns in the sun, cars and trucks are highballing through on Interstate 40, bound hell-for-leather east to OK City or west to LA. Tumbleweed (the invasive *Kali tragus*) dries up and blows away across the desert, chasing the wind. The native plants dig deep roots and stay put, praying for rain.