

**CALLEJONES SITE**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 1  
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

Historic Name: **Callejones Site**

Other Name/Site Number: **(LR-2)**



**2. LOCATION**

Street & Number: **[REDACTED]**

Not for publication: X

City/Town: **Lares**

Vicinity: X

State: **Puerto Rico**

County: **Lares**

Code: **081**

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_



**3. CLASSIFICATION**

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-local: \_\_\_\_\_

Public-State: \_\_\_\_\_

Public-Federal: \_\_\_\_\_

Category of Property

Building(s): \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_

Site: X

Structure: \_\_\_\_\_

Object: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Resources within Property  
Contributing

1

\_\_\_\_\_

1

Noncontributing

\_\_\_\_\_ buildings

\_\_\_\_\_ sites

\_\_\_\_\_ structures

\_\_\_\_\_ objects

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:

**Ball Courts Sites in Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands**

**CALLEJONES SITE**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  X  nomination   request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  X  meets   does not meet the National Register Criteria.

William D. Lopez  
Signature of Certifying Official

July 13, 1999  
Date

SHPO - Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property   meets   does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau



**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register SLR
- Determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- Determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- Removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

John Little  
Signature of Keeper

9/2/99  
Date of Action

**CALLEJONES SITE**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic: **Domestic  
Religion**

Sub: **village site  
ceremonial site**

Current: **Agriculture**

Sub: **agricultural field**

XXXXXXXXXXXX

**7. DESCRIPTION**

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: **N/A**

MATERIALS:  
Foundation:  
Walls:  
Roof:  
Other:

**CALLEJONES SITE**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Page 4****Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.****Introduction:**

[REDACTED] is a prehistoric village site containing the remains of one stone lined *batey*, or ball court and a stone lined terrace feature (see Figure 1). Ceramic analysis has identified both Ostiones and Capá style sherds, indicating the site dates from "the end of a transition from the former style to the latter", or Rouse's Period IVa (ca. AD 1000 to 1250) (Alegria 1983:96)

**Environmental Setting:** In 1937, when the Callejones Site was first described by Irving Rouse, of Yale University, it was found to be situated

[REDACTED].

The plateau was noted as being planted in coffee in 1937.

**Previous Archeological Investigations:** Prior to the visit to the Callejones Site by Irving Rouse, of Yale University, in 1937, the site had been visited by Samuel K. Lothrop and had produced material associated with the *batey* ball game. According to Alegria,

It was known to Lothrop (n.d.) and several local collectors who, according to Rouse, had removed several stones bearing petroglyphs from the court. Rouse was informed that the owner of the site had found a stone collar and other artifacts near the southeastern corner of the court [1983:95].

During Rouse's 1937 investigations at Callejones, he noted the main ball court was actually rhomboidal, instead of rectangular, to conformed to the contours of the plateau (see Figure 1) (Rouse 1952:474). The east and west sides of the main ball court were "lined with walls of earth and stones, but the two (north and south) ends are open" (Alegria 1983:95). According to Alegria, in his book *Ball Courts and Ceremonial Plazas in the West Indies*,

At the time of Rouse's visit [1937], little remained of the eastern wall except some scattered round stones and a slight rise in the ground, which he thought was material thrown up during the leveling of the court. The western wall was better preserved. Here the hillside had been cut to a depth of 2 m, and the resulting [earthen] embankment had been terraced with two rows of stones. These two rows, standing one above the other, are both composed of large thin slabs nearly 2 m high; Rouse compared them to a grandstand. They

**CALLEJONES SITE**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

were set for half of their height into the ground. Although none showed carving, previous visitors to the site are said to have carried off petroglyphs from among these slabs (Rouse 1952:474). Rouse notes that on the northwestern side of the court, erosion had begun to eat away the edge of the plateau and, apparently to prevent this, a crude wall of small river stones had been erected there [1983:95].

Rouse noted the presence of prehistoric ceramics to the east and north of the ball court. According to Alegría,

Two pits were excavated by Rouse [in July of 1937] in which he found 150 sherds of Capá pottery style and only 6 of Ostiones style. Only 26 sherds are from open bowls, as compared to 75 from constricted bowls; 55 are unidentifiable. The associated artifacts include a fragment of a griddle, a stone celt, a celt hammer, a piece of coral, 2 broken stalactites, a fragment of charcoal, and 24 flint chips [1983:95].

The Callejones Site is interpreted as a transitional Ostiones/Capá, or Period IVa (AD 1000 to 1250) prehistoric habitation and ball court site (Alegría 1983:96).

On October 15, 1996, Dr. Mark R. Barnes, Senior Archeologist, of the National Register Programs Division, with the National Park Service's Southeast Regional Office in conjunction with Mr. Miquel Bonini, Puerto Rican State Archeologist, accompanied by Geraldine Toste and Grisel Rosa, staff archeologists with the Puerto Rican State Historic Preservation Office visited the Callejones (LR-2) ball court site in Lares Municipality, to evaluate the site for National Register eligibility. It was found that the stone lined ball court was still intact and scattered prehistoric artifacts were noted throughout the site.

The alignment of the ball court is substantially the same as noted in 1937. Fourteen (14) stones on the west side (see Photos 1-2) and four (4) stones on the east side of the ball court were located. Many of these stones were 2 meters in height and still standing in an upright position. The retaining wall to the west of the ball court is still intact and six (6) large stones were noted in place. The stone terrace formation in the northwest part of the site was found to be made up of at least three stone terraces (see Photo 3). This terrace feature is probably prehistoric, but could have been possibly built in the twentieth century to prevent erosion of the area for the cultivation of coffee.

**Site Integrity:**

[REDACTED] which may have removed some of the stones of the ball court. This construction activity certainly appears to have removed the area of Rouse's Excavation 2 unit. [REDACTED]

**CALLEJONES SITE****Page 6**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Overall, the site is in good condition. The ball court and western retaining wall are still defined, as is the stone terrace feature to the northwest of the ball court. Surface artifacts of a prehistoric nature were noted throughout the site during the October 1996 site visit indicating a good probability of intact deposits for future investigations.

**CALLEJONES SITE**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally:\_\_\_ Statewide: X Locally:\_\_\_

Applicable National Register Criteria: A\_\_\_ B\_\_\_ C\_\_\_ D X

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A\_\_\_ B\_\_\_ C\_\_\_ D\_\_\_ E\_\_\_ F\_\_\_ G\_\_\_

Areas of Significance: **Archeology - Prehistoric**

Period(s) of Significance: **Ostiones/Capá, or Period IVa (AD 1000 to 1250)**

Significant Dates: **N/A**

Significant Person(s): **N/A**

Cultural Affiliation: **Pre-Taino, Taino**

Architect/Builder: **N/A**

**CALLEJONES SITE**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Page 8****State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**

**Summary Statement of Significance:** *Batey*, or Ball Court Sites in the American possessions in the Caribbean are significant prehistoric ceremonial resources. They first appear in the Early Ostiones or pre-Taino Period (AD 600 to 1200), with the majority of them dating from the Late Ostiones or Taino Period (AD 1200 to 1500). Early sixteenth-century Spanish descriptions of ball courts and the ball game, both called *batey*, indicate they were the central feature of the larger Taino villages. From these descriptions it is clear that the intent of the ball game was for settlement of disputes between Taino chiefs, and had a ceremonial oracular function, in addition to recreation. The ball courts also represented not only a certain degree of technological competence in their construction, but also a political and organizational ability to oversee their execution, probably at the level of a chiefdom.

The Callejones Site is complex site containing a central plaza, ball court, and habitation site, which exhibits a particularly interesting *batey* construction technique. Ball courts are usually rectangular in shape, however, the small plateau on which the Callejones ball court is built forced the builders to skew the shape of the ball court into a rhomboid shape. In addition, the builders had to excavate nearly 2 meters of earth on the west side of the ball court in order to achieve a flat surface area. The west side of the ball court was so steep the builders also constructed a stone retaining wall west of the *batey*. To the northwest of the site is a stone terrace feature, consisting of at least three stone terraces. Surrounding the *batey* on the north and east sides are the areas of habitation.

Current research on ball court sites includes topics such as; settlement patterns; identification of the area of origin for the introduction of the ball game and ball court into the Caribbean; clarification of dating of ball court sites; and ethnohistorical study of the role of the ball game in the sociopolitical context of Taino culture. The following research topics might be addressed in future investigations at the Callejones Site.

a. Settlement Patterns - Additional archeological surveys to locate ball courts sites are needed to determine if the present distribution of these resources are correct. The majority of known ball courts in the Caribbean are found in the mountainous areas of Puerto Rico. This distribution pattern may be skewed by historic agricultural activities in the coastal areas of Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands that have been subjected to land modification which has masked the occurrence of ball court sites.

Extensive field research and radiocarbon dating of archeological sites containing ball courts still is required before reliable diachronic patterns of settlement in the early Ostionoid and Taino Periods can be determined. Considering the length of time

**CALLEJONES SITE**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Page 9**

archeological investigations have been conducted on prehistoric sites in Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands little is known about large, coastal village/ball court sites, possibly due to destruction of such sites by colonial and post-colonial agricultural activity. Additionally, little is known about the nature of sites that occur in interior mountainous or upland areas. Investigation of these would contribute much to an understanding of site function and intra- and inter-regional relationships.

- Are there differing patterns of the distribution of ball court sites typical of coastal and inland areas?
- Do settlement patterns of ball court sites change through time? Are these affected by long-term climatic change and/or sea level fluctuations?
- Do interior sites concentrate along major streams as indicated by Alegría or is this a product of our unsystematic site records?
- Were some ball court sites occupied seasonally, or year-round, or during periods of ceremonial activities?
- How do the village sites associated with ball courts vary through time? For example, how far back in time do ball courts and associated village sites extend? Is there a time difference between coastal and inland sites?
- What is the specific nature of public architecture (e.g., ball courts, houses for the chiefs and religious structures (*caney*), petroglyphs, alignment of stones, plazas, etc.) at these sites and how do they change through time?

b. Chronology - Alegría (1983) has provided the most comprehensive work for the occurrence of ball courts in the Caribbean to date. He shows that ball courts began to show up in the archeological record ca. AD 600, with the beginning of the early Ostionoid Period and continue and expand in the Taino Period (ca. AD 1200). This dating is based on ceramic chronology and a few radiocarbon dates gathered from past archeological investigations.

Considering the ongoing nature of the refinement of chronology and dating of sites and artifacts in the Caribbean it is assumed that the traditional view of ceramics and settlement patterns will be enhanced by the construction of local scale environmental chronologies. For example, recent geological advances allow the construction of localized sea level and rainfall curves for the Holocene Epoch. Fluctuations in sea level or rainfall translate into significant changes in the coastal and mountain/upland environments and resources available to prehistoric peoples in Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands.

- How should paleoenvironmental continuity and change over time be investigated?
- How do the paleoclimatic and paleoecologic records relate to patterns of settlement, subsistence, and ultimately political organization?
- How can ceramic, bone, shell, and stone artifact types be refined to permit their use in chronological studies?
- What is the nature of the earliest occurrence of ball courts and ball game paraphernalia in Puerto Rico, and what is the place of origin for this activity?

c. Social and Political Organization - Little archeological information exists to complement the ethnohistoric documents of the early sixteenth-century Spanish colonial accounts of ball courts and the ball game. Alegría (1983) and Stevens-Arroyo (1988) offer testable models of cultural development. There is a need for large-scale excavation to generate significant data sets before such issues can be resolved.

- What is the form of prehistoric political organization? For example, is the historic Taino complex political organization of *caciques* employing the use of *batey* games and divination using *zemis*, a prehistoric feature as well?
- How does political organization change through time?
- What are the archeological correlates of complex sociopolitical organization?
- Can social status be detected through dietary and dress preferences?
- How early and at what frequency do large construction projects, such as ball courts, appear in the archeological record?
- What is the extent and nature of Taino political alliances? How far back in time do these alliances extend?
- Is there a prehistoric trade network that links the political organizations on Puerto Rico?
- How do the nature and boundaries of prehistoric networks shift through time?
- What roles do the mountain and coastal ball courts sites play in the trade/exchange networks?

**CALLEJONES SITE**

Page 12

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES****Alegría, Ricardo E.**

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**Fernández de Navarrete, Martín**

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**Fewkes, J. W.**

- 1907 *The Aborigines of Puerto Rico and Neighboring Islands*. Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington.

**Las Casas, Bartolomé de**

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**Lothrop, Samuel K.**

- n.d. Archaeological Sites in Puerto Rico. Manuscript on file at the Yale University Department of Anthropology, New Haven.

**Mason, J. Alden**

- 1917 Excavation on a New Archaeological Site in Puerto Rico. In *Proceedings of the Nineteenth International Congress of Americanists*. Washington.
- 1941 *A Large Archaeological Site at Capá, Utuado, with Notes on Other Porto Rican Sites Visited in 1914-1915*. Scientific Survey of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Vol. 18, Pt 2. New York Academy of Sciences, New York.

**Oviedo, Gonzalo Fernandez de**

- 1851 *Historia general y natural de las Indias*. 4 Vols. Madrid.

**Picó, Rafael**

- 1974 *The Geography of Puerto Rico*. Aldine Press, Chicago.

**Rainey, Froelich G.**

- 1940 Porto Rico Archaeology. In *Scientific Survey of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands*, Volume 18, Part 1. New York Academy of Sciences, New York.

**Rodríguez, Miguel**

- 1995 Los Bateyes de Trujillo Alto: Un Nuevo Centro Ceremonial Indígena en Puerto Rico. In *Proceedings of the XV International Congress for Caribbean Archaeology*, pp. 27-44. Published by the Center for the Advanced Study of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

**CALLEJONES SITE****Page 13**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**Rouse, Irving**

1952 *Porto Rican Prehistory*. Scientific Survey of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands, Vol. 18, Pts 3-4. New York Academy of Sciences, New York.

1992 *The Tainos, Rise and Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus*. Yale University Press, New Haven.

**Stahl, Agustín**

1889 *Los Indios Borinqueños: Estudios Ethnográficos*. Puerto Rico.

**Stevens-Arroyo, Antonio M.**

1988 *Cave of the Jagua, The Mythological World of the Tainos*. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

## Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # \_\_\_\_\_
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # \_\_\_\_\_

## Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office **Puerto Rico**
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other(Specify Repository): González Family  
Santiago Apartado HCO1  
4506 Barrio Callejones  
Lares, Puerto Rico 00669

**CALLEJONES SITE**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

**Page 15**  
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/Title: **Mark R. Barnes, Ph.D.**

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Southeast Regional Office, NPS  
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Street/#: **100 Alabama Street, S.W.**

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State: **Georgia**

ZIP: **30303**

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(404) 562-3244 - FAX  
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Date: **June 24, 1997**

Additional assistance in the preparation of this nomination provided by:

**Mr. Miguel Bonini, State Archaeologist  
Ms. Geraldine Toste, Staff Archeologist  
La Fortaleza  
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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 99001022

Date Listed: 9/03/99

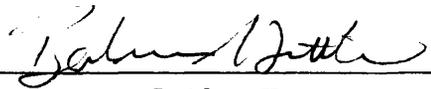
Callejones Site  
Property Name

Lares  
County

PR  
State

Ball Court/Plaza Sites of Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands  
Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

9/22/99  
Date of Action

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

The following information was provided by Hugh Tosteson of the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office. Item 1 is to be added to the significance statement, Item 2 to the site description, and Item 3 to the geographical information.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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1. Callejones is a complex site containing a central plaza, ball court, and habitation site, exhibiting a rhomboidal shape, which varies from the usually rectangular shape for ball courts. This suggests that the siting itself prefigured any consideration of establishing the ball court, whose design was adapted to the small plateau where it is located. This is reinforced by the extent of the terrain modification undertaken in order to level the ball court area, including stone terraces to counter the steeper side slopes. The fact that this site is interpreted as a transitional Ostiones/Capá, or Period IVa (AD1000 to 1250) prehistoric habitation and ball court site (Alegria 1983: 96) places it at the beginning of the known development of ball courts and chiefdom society lends it great research potential. These elements, addressed through excavation of the site, could address the following specific research topics, as identified in the MPS and individual nominations:

- a. Were some ball courts occupied seasonally, or year-round, or during periods of ceremonial activities?
- b. How early and at what frequency do large construction projects, such as ball courts, appear in the archaeological record?
- c. What roles do the mountain and coastal ball court sites play in the trade/exchange networks?

2. See accompanying sketch map for additional information required.

3.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)