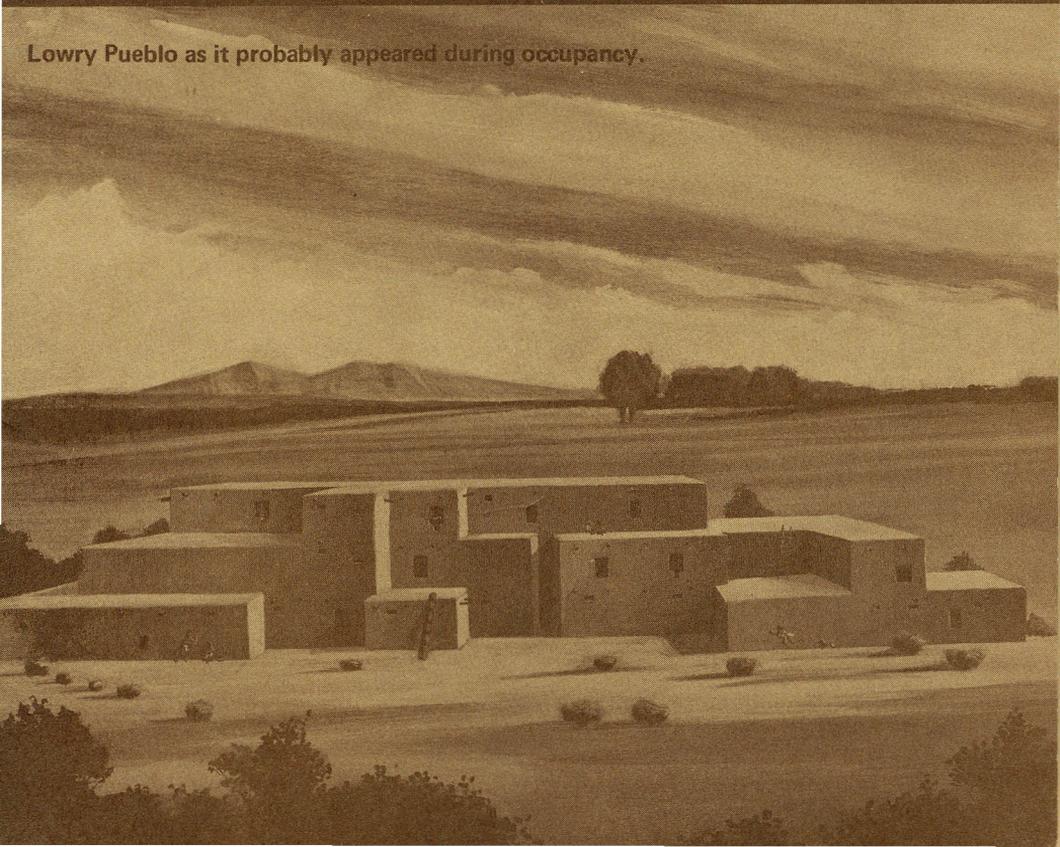


DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF  
LAND MANAGEMENT

A NATIONAL  
HISTORIC  
LANDMARK

# LOWRY PUEBLO RUINS

Lowry Pueblo as it probably appeared during occupancy.





## LOWRY PUEBLO RUINS

Welcome to Lowry Pueblo Ruins National Historic Landmark.

On your visit you will tread pathways made nearly 1000 years ago by a people now vanished into antiquity.

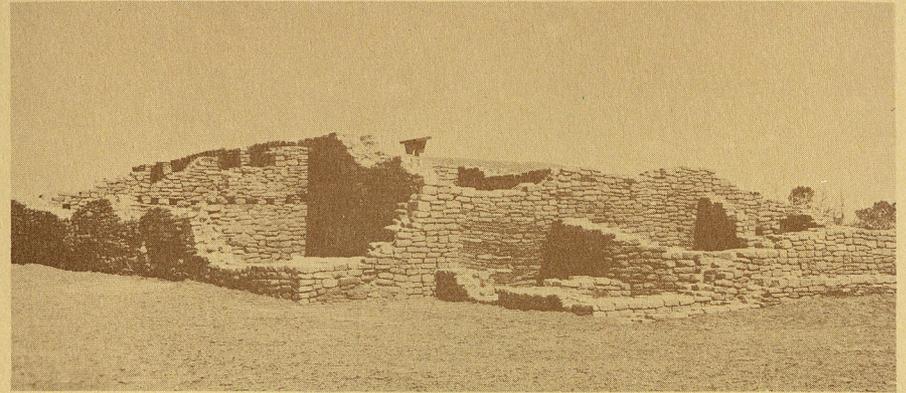
Lowry Indian ruins, named after George Lowry, an early-day homesteader, is shrouded in mystery as silent as its ancient walls. Who were its people? Where did they come from? Where did they go? Why did they occupy and abandon the pueblo repeatedly before leaving it permanently?

Although much about them remains unknown, they did leave a wealth of evidence of a once-flourishing civilization.

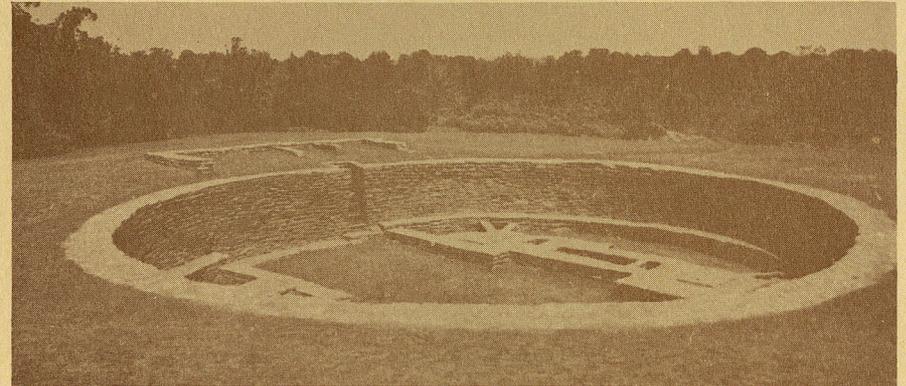
Lowry Pueblo was constructed by the Anasazi (Old Ones) Indians about 1075 A. D., or slightly earlier, on the ruins of abandoned pit rooms of an earlier culture of the eighth century. The inhabitants were farmers who raised corn, beans, and squash. They supplemented their diet and provided material for tools by hunting. Stone working and pottery making were important industries.

Lowry was used for living quarters and religious ceremonies by a community of 50 to 100 Indians and contains one of the largest Great Kivas, or ceremonial chambers, yet found. The ruins contain about 40 rooms including the Great Kiva and eight smaller kivas, and once stood three stories high. It is believed the pueblo was occupied intermittently for a period of 100 to 150 years, being abandoned for the last time before a great drouth struck the southwest in 1276-1299. Perhaps the gradual decrease in moisture preceding the great drouth forced the dwellers to move. Perhaps increasing population made it impossible to live from the land. Apparently it was not because of enemy action as the lack of any defense structures indicate the Indians had no fear of attack. The Anasazi seem to have left in a leisurely and voluntary manner since no signs of violence, destruction by fire, hurry, or disorder have been discovered. Whatever the reason, no one knows for sure.

Lowry Pueblo started as a very small village of a few rooms and two kivas. Then it was deserted for 10-20 years, and again occupied and



Partial view of the Ruins today.



The Great Kiva partially uncovered as it is seen today.



Lowry Ruins during restoration prior to dedication.

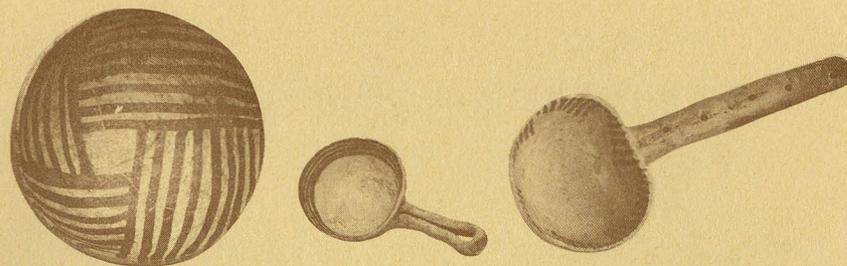
deserted repeatedly. It is apparently the only pueblo in the immediate region—and there were many hundreds of ruins scattered throughout the area—to be repeatedly occupied and abandoned. It is thought that the people reoccupied the pueblo because its Great Kiva was considered a holy place of major importance which attracted people again and again.

It is worth noting that, although the total span of occupancy was for a relatively short time and periods of occupancy were for a very few years at a time, the Indians feverishly remodeled, modified, and expanded the pueblo on at least six or seven occasions. Sometimes old rooms were used for storage or even refuse, and filled with dirt and debris while similar new rooms were constructed nearby. It was modified for the last time about 1106 A. D. It is also interesting to note that during the latter periods of occupancy, construction was of a



mixed and degenerate type of masonry, indicating later Indians had lost some of their building skill or were indifferent to uniform construction. This is reflected in varying size and shape of rooms and doorways, and differences in height and type of floor levels and roofs.

Little, if anything, was known of Lowry until after World War I. It apparently was first officially reported and photographed in 1919, although early-day explorers passed that way on several occasions. In 1776 the Dominguez-Escalante Great Basin Expedition camped nearby. In 1859 the Exploring Expedition from Santa Fe, N. M., passed within a few miles of the site, and other explorers reported on other Indian ruins of the area in 1874-1877. Surveyors, making Hayden's 1881 Atlas of Colorado, must have passed over it, or within an eighth of a mile of it, but wind and time had done their work well. Covered with vegetation and buried under tons of silt and rubble, it remained unnoticed by explorers, surveyors, and cowboys who came later.

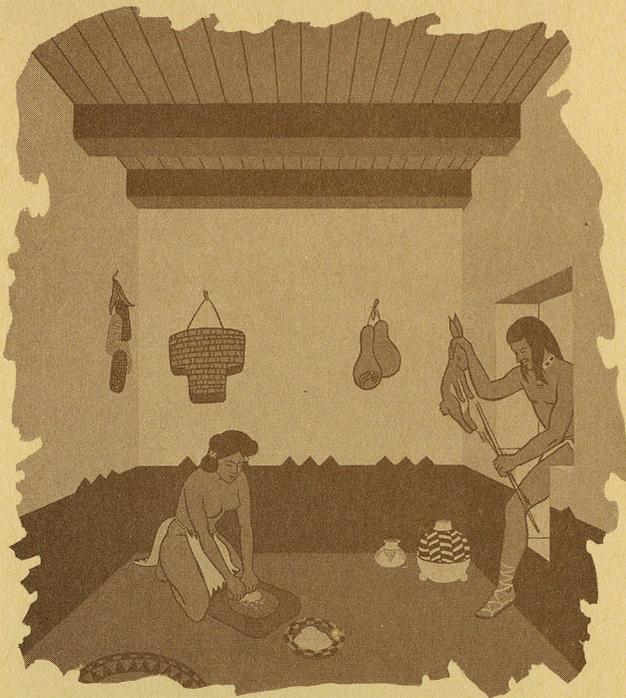


In 1928 Dr. Paul S. Martin, Chicago Field Museum of Natural History, examined and described Lowry Pueblo. He returned in the early 1930s to excavate and record his findings. Dr. Martin and his workers uncovered, studied, and charted more of the pueblo than can be seen now. Hidden beneath the visible ruins are several kivas and rooms. And beneath these are even more ancient remains of primitive pit houses. Lowry was a campsite long before it became a major central community.

Then for a third of a century the project and the ruins were again abandoned and the wind worked at reburying Lowry. In 1965 efforts to excavate and preserve Lowry were renewed. As the site is on Public Land, administered by the U. S. Bureau of Land Management, BLM sponsored the project through a contract with the Anthropology Department of the University of Colorado. After more than two years of carefully uncovering and restoring the ruins, Lowry Pueblo was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark October 17, 1967.

Lowry Pueblo is one of nearly a 1000 Indian ruin sites on Public Land in the Cortez-Dove Creek area. There are thousands more throughout the Four Corners region of southwest Colorado, southeast Utah, northeast Arizona, and northwest New Mexico.





Indians at home in Lowry Pueblo.

## The Antiquities Act

Lowry Pueblo Ruins are yours to enjoy as part of the heritage of the nation's land. But please leave them as you found them for others to enjoy too. The Antiquities Act of 1906 prohibits anyone but authorized institutions from disturbing any prehistoric ruins on Government lands.



Indians during ceremony in the Great Kiva.

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of Land Management, an agency of the Department of the Interior, is charged with the administration of the 457 million acres of Public Land remaining in our nation. These lands are what remains of the vast Public Domain which once included all the land west and north of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers (except Texas and Hawaii) plus Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

Much of what was once the Public Domain has gone into private ownership under the Homestead Act and other laws, or has been transferred to states; or to railroads to help our western expansion; or set aside for national parks, forests, monuments, and other purposes.

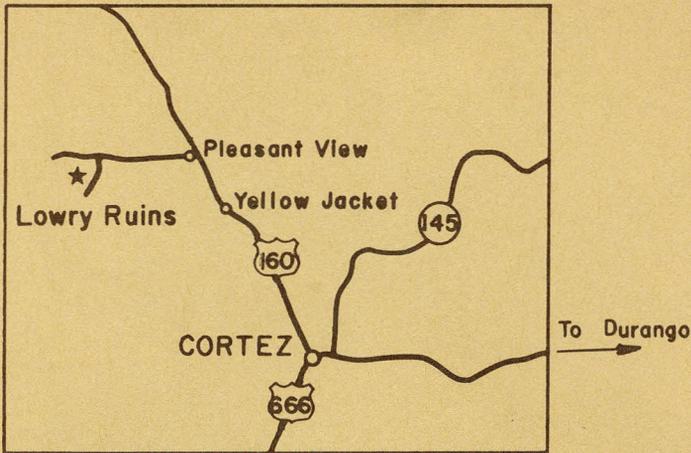
What is left, a varied land extending from the tundra of Alaska to the deserts of Arizona, is an area larger than England, France, Spain, and Italy combined. It is a valuable public asset containing a wealth of natural resources, ranging from forests and grasslands to mineral-rich lands, and lands of scenic splendor, and archaeological value. BLM is the public's steward for conservation, management, development, and preservation of this land under a program of multiple use to bring about sustained yields of forest products, grass, water, wildlife, minerals, recreation and other resources.

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Created in 1849, the Department of the Interior—a department of conservation—is concerned with the management, conservation, and development of the nation's water, wildlife, mineral, forest, and park and recreational resources. It also has major responsibilities for Indian and Territorial affairs.

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the department works to assure that nonrenewable resources are developed and used wisely, that park and recreational resources are conserved for the future, and that renewable resources make their full contribution to the progress, prosperity, and security of the United States—now and in the future.

To Dove Creek  
↙



Located in Montezuma County, in the southwest corner of Colorado, Lowry Pueblo Ruins are nine miles west of U. S. Highway 160 at Pleasant View, or 32 miles northwest of Cortez. In the same general area are Mesa Verde National Park, Hovenweep National Monument, and the Four Corners where the boundaries of Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico meet.

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