



*Aztec Ruins*  
NATIONAL MONUMENT  
*New Mexico*



*A general view of the great excavated pueblo, or main Aztec ruin, looking southward across the Animas River valley.*

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## THE COVER

A section of the western face of the main ruin at Aztec Ruins National Monument. Representative of the Classic Period of growth in the Puebloan Civilization, this ruin is characterized by multi-storied many-celled rooms and numerous underground ceremonial chambers (kivas). The section shown graphically presents an unusual view of most of the dominant features unique to this ruin, including the decorative darker strip of banded masonry, square cornered doorways, stone ax-hewn exposed round beam ends, and double-storied construction.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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# AZTEC RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT

*Excavated and unexcavated ruins of prehistoric Pueblo Indian "apartment houses"*

FOR more than 400 years before the landing of Columbus in the West Indies, during the late medieval period of Europe, the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest, whose descendants still live in the Hopi, Zuni, and Rio Grande pueblo villages, were building great urban centers, or "apartment houses," of stone and timber.

Lying between the gigantic pueblos of Chaco Canyon and the famous cliff dwellings of the

Mesa Verde, the valleys of the San Juan, La Plata, and Animas Rivers in northwesternmost New Mexico were, like Chaco Canyon and the Mesa Verde, heavily populated in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Several large towns similar to those of Chaco Canyon were situated on these streams. The most important and best known of these sites is the cluster, miscalled the "Aztec Ruins" on the Animas River about 15 miles above its junction with the San Juan.

The "Aztec Ruins" of New Mexico have no particular connection with the Aztecs who dominated the valley of Mexico in the late prehistoric period and until the coming of the Spaniards in the early sixteenth century. Like other similar sites throughout the northern Southwest, these are the ruins of the former homes of the modern Pueblo Indians, especially those now living in the valley of the Rio Grande. The name "Aztec" was probably applied by early settlers in the locality. Neither the Aztecs, nor their predecessors in southern Mexico, the Toltecs, nor the equally famous Mayas of Yucatan and Guatemala ever spread north to the Southwest.

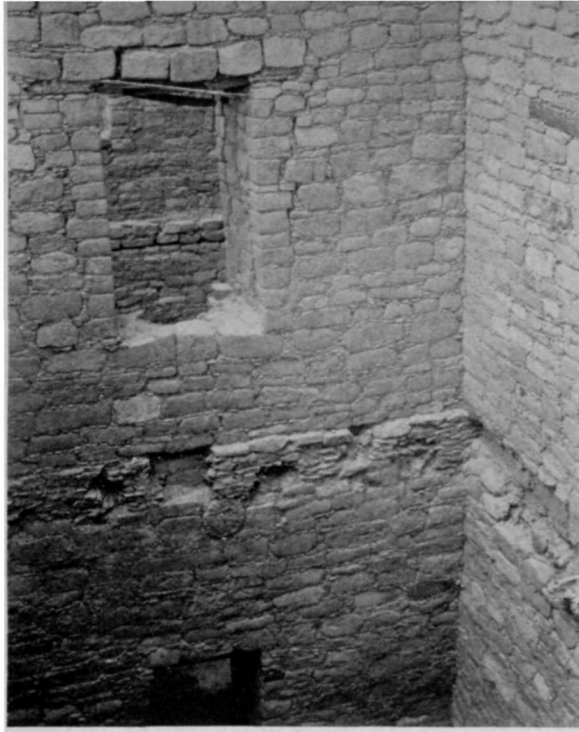
This group of unusually interesting and important prehistoric sites is set aside as a Federal reservation, administered by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior, for the benefit, enjoyment, and inspiration of the people of the United States. The ruins are displayed and interpreted for present-day visitors and also protected and preserved for future generations. They con-

stitute an inspiring memorial to the industry and capacity of the early Indian inhabitants of New Mexico and a spectacle both instructive and interesting.

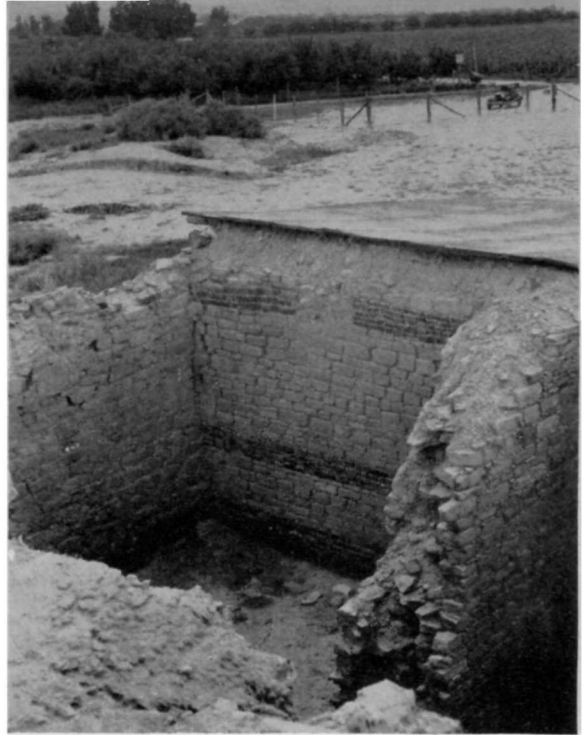
Largely excavated and stabilized, the main Aztec Ruin, with 800-year-old original ceilings still in place, its restored kivas, and its museum of specimens found in the site, is a fascinating exhibit from prehistoric times. Also included within Aztec Ruins National Monument are another large site and three smaller ones, unexcavated ruins covered over by the accumulation of centuries. Preserved for possible future scientific study, these sage-grown mounds, less interesting now than the developed main ruin, are of great potential interest and importance.

*Southeastern corner of the main ruin, showing the cobblestone masonry which is evidence that the pueblo was once occupied by Mesa Verde people.*





*The squared corners of the doorways and the stone ax work on the exposed beam end are of special interest in this view of a portion of the ruins.*



*An exceptional view of banded masonry in one of the rooms of the ruins. Three bands of dark green stone at the base, seat level, and ceiling were constructed for ornamental purposes. It was necessary to bring the green stone from a distance of 25 miles.*

## *The Prehistoric Pueblos*

THE NATIVE INDIANS of the northern Southwest can be traced back for nearly 2,000 years by archeological studies. The steady, and relatively rapid, development of their culture, or way of life, can be observed. This dates back 1,500 years ago and earlier, when they were wandering hunters, with primitive houses, only slightly developed agriculture, no bows and arrows or axes, and very crude pottery or none at all, to the advanced civilization achieved by the eleventh century and maintained from then on despite reduction of population and abandonment of many areas.

The prehistoric people of the northern Southwest are called by archeologists the Anasazi. Their civilization, both primitive and developed, is known as the Anasazi culture, and the ruins of their homes, Anasazi sites. The word is Navajo, meaning "ancient enemies." The Navajo Indians call the ruins "Anasazi houses." Archeologists use the abstract, technical term "Anasazi" instead of simply saying "Pueblo" to avoid possible confusion with the other meanings of the Spanish word "pueblo." In effect, the word "Anasazi" as used by archeologists means simply "prehistoric ancestors of Pueblo Indians," or cultural remains thereof.

Other groups, probably also ancestral to the modern Pueblos, are little known but are generally considered as more or less distinct from typical Anasazi. These include the various groups known to archeologists by their characteristic brown ware found on prehistoric sites occupied by them in southern New Mexico and central Arizona.

The so-called Hohokam culture of southern Arizona is quite different from the Anasazi-Pueblo general group, and the modern Pima Indians may possibly be descendants of the Hohokam.

Finally, the various Apache tribes, including the Navajo, are latecomers to the Southwest and entirely different from these indigenous groups. Apache history and prehistory are little known, although studies of Navajo archeology have recently been made.

The brown-ware groups affected the Animas Valley only slightly, some of the trade pottery coming from their area, and Aztec is not concerned with the distant Hohokam. The Navajo may have had something to do with the final abandonment of Aztec by the Anasazi, and, while the time of Navajo arrival in the Southwest is uncertain, it might have been as early as the end of the thirteenth century.



## THE EARLY ANASAZI

About 2,000 years ago, a primitive hunting people, called the Basket Makers from their most developed craft, learned to raise corn and to imitate in unfired mud the pottery vessels of the more advanced people somewhere to the south, from whom they had probably gotten the corn.

Nothing is known directly of these happenings, or of the hunters themselves, but something very like that must have occurred. A tree-ring date of 217 A. D., the earliest such date known, has been obtained from a cave in southern Utah in which remains of the Basket Maker culture already include both corn and crude mud pots. These traits, therefore, appear to be 17 centuries old, and some margin of time for their arrival and spread must be allowed.

Possibly the Basket Maker hunters were descendants of the people who used throwing-darts like those of the Basket Makers to hunt the giant ground sloth at an unknown early date, as evidenced at Gypsum Cave near Boulder Dam National Recreational Area, in Arizona-Nevada.

By about 475 A. D. (there are several tree-ring dates of that time from Basket Maker caves in the region of Canyon de Chelly National Monument in northeastern Arizona) the Basket Makers were living in simple wattle-and-daub houses in the caves, and had acquired by trade well-fired polished redware pottery from a different people farther south in the Southwest. Soon they began making fired pottery themselves, and improved their dwellings and their agriculture.

The second known Anasazi period, characterized by rough gray pottery and more or less circular pit houses, is called Modified Basket Maker and is dated approximately between the fifth and seventh centuries.

Toward the end of this period, still more new features appear: the bow and arrow, the stone ax, cradleboard-flattening of the back of the head, "slipping" and polishing of pottery and elaboration of designs on the painted pottery. These characterize Anasazi culture of the Developmental Pueblo Period, in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. These traits probably came in from areas to the south, where they seem to occur earlier than in the Anasazi.

A shift in dwelling type also occurred. Instead of living in the pit house and using rows of rectangular surface structures of stone for storage,

they began to live in contiguous rectangular surface structures, retaining the circular semisubterranean pit house as the kiva. By the tenth century the change to small stone pueblos of a number of rooms each with one or more kivas was complete.

## THE CLASSIC PERIOD

In the eleventh century—later in some parts of the northern Southwest; possibly somewhat earlier in others, but generally after 1000 A. D.—the numerous little scattered villages developed into, or were replaced by, fewer and larger multistoried settlements. These great pueblos were virtually single structure cities, each with a population of several hundred living together in an apartment house. They were usually arranged around one or more plazas, with numerous kivas, some in the plazas and others incorporated in the main structure.

Aztec Ruin is an excellent example of the Classic Period pueblo, a typical large apartment house.

*One of the unusual T-shaped doorways in the ruins.*



three-storied, around a plaza, with numerous kivas. It was built early in the period, during the first quarter of the twelfth century. Tree-ring dates from Aztec fall mostly between 1101 and 1121 A. D.; later dates probably represent repairs or additions.

So far as shown by the material culture; that is, the tools and other objects which have been recovered, the civilization of the Classic Period, from approximately 1050 to between 1275 and 1300 A. D., was not essentially different from that of the Developmental Pueblo Period. The bone and stone tools, weapons, and ornaments were the same, and the pottery, while readily distinguishable by details, especially designs of the painted ware, was made the same way and was a continuation of the similar earlier pottery. The architecture, except for the great increase of size of buildings, was not actually different, as it utilized no new principles or methods. The congregation into large towns and urban life must have had important effects on social and ceremonial organization, however, and much more intensive agriculture is implied by the great size of many settlements.

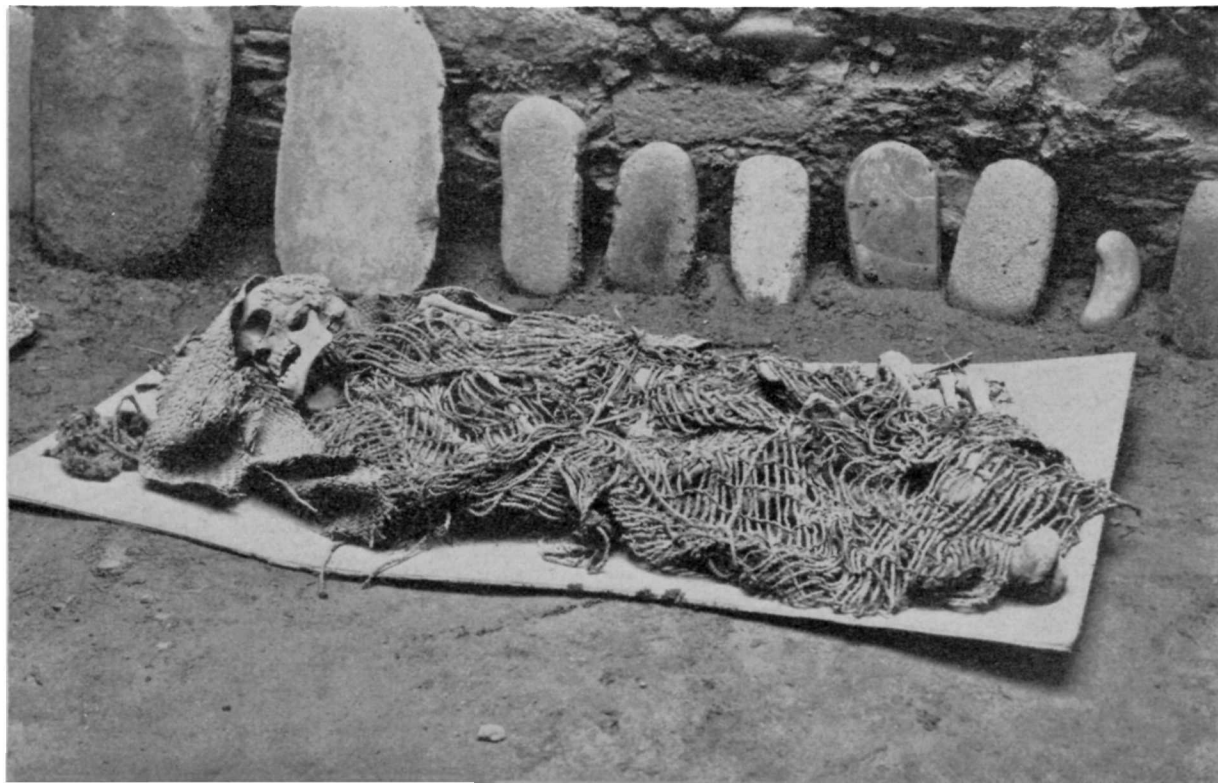
#### CHACO AND MESA VERDE CLASSIC PHASES

The thinning out of occupation with the concentration of population into large centers decreased the general uniformity of Anasazi culture by permitting local specialization. Each major center developed its peculiarities in architecture, pottery, and other traits.

The Chaco Canyon, with several great pueblos close together, was one of these major centers; the Mesa Verde became another. The sites along the upper San Juan and its tributaries, including Aztec, were affiliated, in early Classic times, with the Chaco Canyon focus of culture, and yield the distinctive Chacoan types of black-on-white pottery of the twelfth century. Architecturally, the Aztec ruin is Chacoan, similar to Pueblo Bonito and Chetro Kettle in Chaco Canyon National Monument.

In the thirteenth century, the Mesa Verde reached its climax, great cliff dwellings being built in its caves, and the distinctive Mesa Verde black-on-white pottery and other traits spreading to the San Juan, to Chaco Canyon, and even into northeastern Arizona in the region of Canyon de Chelly. The late occupation at Aztec, like that in Chaco Canyon, represents this Mesa Verde Period of the thirteenth century. The sequence is demonstrated by the fact that Chaco type material is consistently found underneath Mesa Verde material. The other major ruin at Aztec, the big unexcavated site, appears to be entirely of Mesa Verde type, and to have been built in this period. Tree-ring dates from Aztec of 1239 and 1251 presumably represent the Mesa Verde occupation. Most of the pottery and burials found at Aztec are of Mesa Verde type, so that this occupation was no brief episode.

*An interesting burial as found in the ruins.*



## THE END OF THE CLASSIC PERIOD

Toward the end of the thirteenth century, Aztec and the Mesa Verde and Canyon de Chelly and the Tsegi seem to have been abandoned, and the Anasazi withdrew from the entire San Juan drainage. Perhaps they were forced out by the excessive drought known from the tree-ring record to have occurred between 1276 and 1299 A. D. Other factors may have contributed to the abandonment; for instance, the Navajo and other Apache tribes may have come into the Southwest about this time and commenced their historic warfare with the Pueblos.

The people of Aztec and the Mesa Verde undoubtedly went, for the most part, southeastward to the Rio Grande, where the modern pueblos represent both Chaco Canyon and Mesa Verde descendants, judging by cultural comparisons and archeological relationships.

## PREHISTORIC PUEBLO LIFE

Before the coming of the Spaniards, the native southwestern Indians had no livestock, no writing, no wheels, no metals, and only a few crops. With only stone and bone tools, but with diligence and ingenuity, they worked out a way of life so successful that after more than 300 years of contact with Spanish and American cultures it still survives in essentials.

The Anasazi were basically farmers, raising corn, beans, and squash, and supplementing this diet by hunting deer and rabbits. Crops were planted with the use of digging sticks; game was hunted with the bow, arrowpoints being deftly chipped from chert or chalcedony and other materials with an antler flaker.

The houses were built of masonry with adobe mortar and roofed with timber, willows, and earth. Often tabular sandstone was shaped into small rectangular blocks with axes or mauls of harder stone. The fine masonry was undoubtedly plastered over with adobe, in general. Red and white wall plaster was found on many walls of rooms in Aztec.

Pottery was made by hand, i. e., without a potter's wheel, for various uses, such as rough or corrugated dark-gray cooking vessels, large jars for carrying and storing water, painted bowls for "tableware."

Cotton was grown, in at least some areas, and woven into blankets and kilts; sandals were fash-

ioned of yucca or other plants; skins continued to serve as garments. Tools for dressing hides and other purposes were made from bones of animals.

Birds were hunted for feathers evidently rather than for food. Eagles, turkeys, hawks, and parrots obtained by trade from Mexico were probably kept alive for some time for their feathers to be used in ceremonial regalia.

Widespread trade relations are evidenced by the occurrence in each area of pottery types made in other areas, by ornaments of seashell from the Gulf of California, by the bones of macaws, and by copper bells from Mexico.

Anasazi social and religious organization can only be surmised. Like the modern Pueblos, they may have had matrilineal clans, their religion undoubtedly was a pantheistic one, and rituals performed in the kivas and plazas probably were masked dances. The dead were buried, usually in a flexed position, wrapped in matting and accompanied by mortuary offerings and personal belongings.

*A doorway in the main ruin, showing an ancient curtain made of reeds, one of the rarest finds at the monument.*





*Examples of pottery from the monument's museum collection. Thin, smooth edges and depressed bottoms indicate that it is of the Chaco type.*

The remains at Aztec exemplify well the culture outlined as that which the Anasazi evidently practiced. A community of Anasazi lived at Aztec for an extended period, and probably thrived. Conditions for Anasazi life would have been excellent, although the Animas Valley probably was barren then as now. The river was a permanent supply of water, and irrigation could be carried on easily. The winters were mild. Game and wild plants for food and other uses were abundant within a reasonable distance. The building materials, sandstone, adobe, and wood, for pueblo construction were available.

Evidence of various aspects of typical Anasazi life was found in the excavation of the pueblo, such as corncobs and other remnants of vegetal foods; unworked bones of game animals and of plumage birds; awls and other bone tools; stone axes and hammers; grinding slabs; chipped stone knife blades, arrowpoints, and reed arrows, locally made; black-on-white painted pottery, "corrugated" gray pottery, and black-on-red and polychrome pottery which may have been acquired by trade; coiled and twilled baskets; fragments of woven cotton cloth, and of rabbit fur cloth, and turkey feather cloth; yucca leaf sandals; beads and pendants of turquoise and other colored stone and of abalone and other seashells; a few parrot or macaw bones, a macaw feather; three copper beads and a copper bell; and actual burials, that is, skeletons with offerings.

## *The Ruins*

THE MAJOR PUEBLO is largely excavated and stabilized; the great kiva in the plaza of the main pueblo is a restoration. The excavation of the pueblo was performed between 1916 and 1921 by the well-known archeologist, Mr. Earl H. Morris of Aztec, N. Mex., now with the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D. C. Restoration of the great kiva was carried out, under Mr. Morris' direction, by the National Park Service in 1934.

Periodic minor stabilization has been required ever since excavation, even though considerable repair and rebuilding were done immediately by Mr. Morris. A thorough program of complete stabilization by the National Park Service was commenced in the summer of 1941.

The other sites included within Aztec Ruins National Monument have never been excavated and consequently are not of as much interest to visitors.

### THE MAIN PUEBLO

The main Aztec ruin is a great pueblo of some 500 rooms, much of it standing two and even three stories high. The over-all dimensions are approximately 360 by 280 feet. About three-fourths of





*A burial bundle and associated artifacts as found in the ruins.*

the building is cleared; portions of the west and central wings, perhaps a hundred rooms, remain unexcavated. The pueblo is a stone building of excellent masonry, made from small slabs of sandstone with mud mortar. Original ceilings in 24 first-story rooms are to be seen in place, surviving intact since their construction 800 years ago.

The ground plan of the building is in the form of a rectangular **U**, or an **E** without a middle arm, so that the two arms—the east and west wings of the building—partially enclose a large plaza in front of the central wings. The fourth side of the plaza was completed by a front wall, consisting of a single row of rooms now largely disintegrated. The plaza is approximately 180 feet by 200 feet.

There are about 20 small- and normal-sized kivas incorporated in the building itself. In addition, there are two larger kivas in the plaza, each a separate structure. One of these is simply a rather big kiva of normal type, the roof of which has been restored. The other is a very large and important structure, a great kiva or superkiva, which has been completely restored. Still other kivas were found in the minor structure on the west of the ruin.

The main pueblo has many other interesting details in addition to the excellent masonry, the original ceilings, and the kivas. The small doorways are notably well made and include **T**-shaped doors, as in Mesa Verde cliff dwellings, and corner doorways like those in Chaco Canyon pueblos. A

willow mat, reminiscent of a venetian blind, is still visible almost in place in a door leading from an excavated room into an unexcavated one. On a surviving patch of original plaster on one wall there are several pictographs.

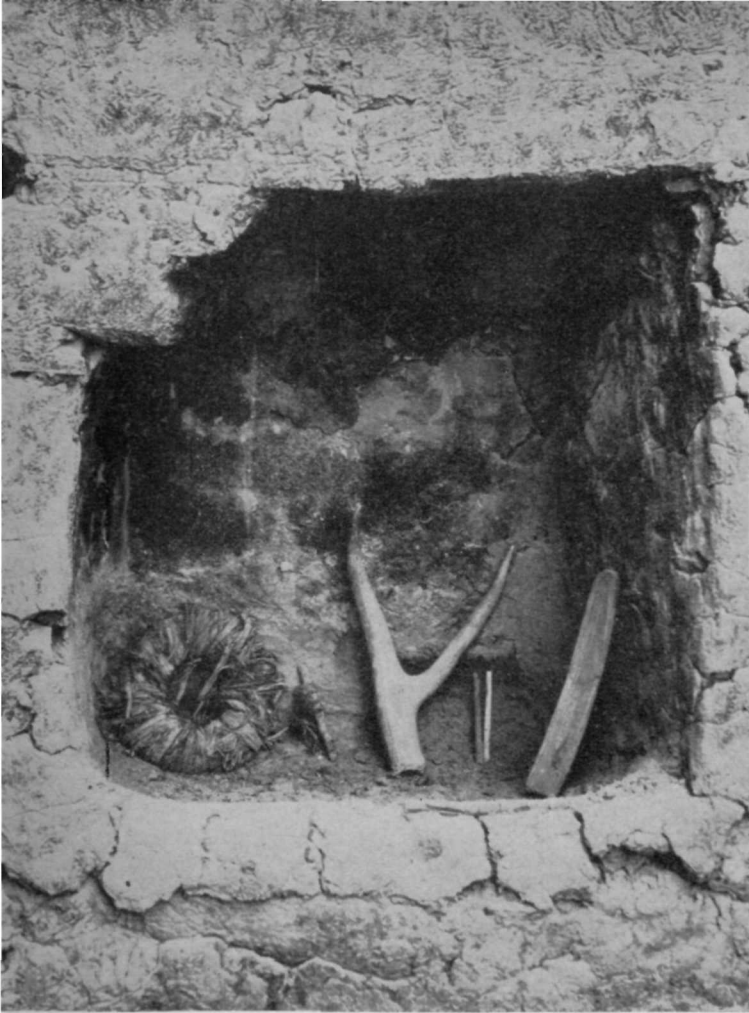
#### KIVAS OF THE AZTEC RUIN

The normal kivas are small circular rooms, primarily intended for ceremonial uses, incorporated into the main structure, mostly in the first story. There are, however, at least two second-story kivas. The Hopi Indian word "kiva" is used in the Southwest for ceremonial chambers in all pueblos, ruined and occupied.

Kivas of the typical Anasazi ruined pueblos of the San Juan drainage and in the modern Rio Grande pueblos are circular. Those of the Little Colorado drainage, prehistoric and modern, and of districts still farther west and south are rectangular. Modern kivas are rectangular at Acoma also, as well as at Zuni and in the Hopi towns.

The kiva is generally considered a survival, for ceremonial use, of the ancient semisubterranean pit house dwelling, inasmuch as the typical Anasazi pit houses were circular and those farther south were mostly rectangular.

Prehistoric kivas of the Anasazi sites of the San Juan region are typically semisubterranean circular structures of masonry, with ventilator, firepit, and



*Primitive household articles which were discovered when this niche was opened in the wall of one of the rooms.*

deflector, with a bench, often niches, usually pilasters, and other characteristic features. The kiva, like the circular pit house from which it was probably derived, was entered through a hatchway in the roof by a ladder.

In the large pueblos of the Classic Period kivas are generally incorporated in the building and are actually above ground. Yet a semisubterranean effect was produced by setting the circular kiva within a square room and filling the space at the corners with dirt and by retaining the roof entrance. Today the circular kivas of most of the Rio Grande pueblos are entirely above ground and are separate structures not incorporated in house blocks, but nevertheless they are entered only through the roof. The rectangular Hopi kivas are still subterranean, with roof entrance.

The two kivas of the main Aztec ruin, which are actually second-story rooms, were theoretically un-

derground chambers and were entered by a ladder through a hatchway in the roof.

The majority of the Aztec Ruin kivas are similar to those of Chaco Canyon pueblos, with no important difference in the details of the bench and pilasters, the ventilator, deflector, firepit, etc. Others are of the Mesa Verde type, with a wedge-shaped recess over the ventilator producing a keyhole-shaped ground plan.

A method of roofing the kiva is shown in the restored roof of the underground kiva in the plaza. Timbers were piled up in cribwork from the pilasters.

#### THE RESTORED GREAT KIVA

In addition to numerous kivas of normal type, one or two superkivas, or great kivas, occur at many large Classic Period pueblos, especially in Chaco Canyon. Superkivas are not found in the Mesa Verde or in the Canyon de Chelly and Tsegi areas. The great kiva, or superkiva, differs from ordinary kivas in many details in addition to size, having several distinctive features which occur consistently in all the known examples. The great kiva in the plaza of the main Aztec ruin, which exemplifies the type excellently, was the first example to be excavated. One of the unexcavated sites in the monument may prove to be another example.

The great kiva is a very large circular chamber, its floor sunk several feet into the ground, enclosed by a concentric ring of small surface rooms. One of the surrounding rooms is larger than the others, and quite distinct in details, evidently an antechamber or altar room. It has a doorway to the outside and a steep little stairway down into the kiva. Directly opposite this room is another nearby vertical stairway, with a passage to the outside. There is no evidence of a roof entrance, in contrast to the smaller normal kivas.

The kiva proper is surrounded by 14 little peripheral rooms. These rooms all have inner and outer doors, with a ladder reaching from each inner door down to the floor of the kiva. On the south side of the kiva, opposite the altar room, is a large T-shaped doorway which was probably the main entrance. On the north a door opens from the altar room into the courtyard, making a total of 16 outside doors at the ground-level of the courtyard.

The roof of the kiva was supported by four columns, square pillars built of masonry alternating



*A view of the old kiva, or underground ceremonial chamber, and the northeastern section of the main ruin.*

with layers of small poles. Two masonry rectangular vaults, each  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet long,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide, and about 3 feet deep, are situated between the east and west pairs of pillars on either side of the main north-south axis of the building. The function of these is unknown. Although charcoal was found in them, they were not fire vaults for burning offerings. The charcoal did not extend to the bottoms of the vaults and obviously resulted from the burning of the structure, representing the fallen roof.

A masonry box 5 feet square, between these vaults and the south pair of columns, evidently was a fire altar. This box was found filled with fine white ash. A row of poles just south of this altar supported a screen, hiding it from possible view through the south entrance. A rectangular block of masonry, backed by three slender posts, was probably an altar of some sort in the antechamber; hence the designation "shrine room."

Evidence was found that, as in the restoration, the walls were plastered with adobe and the lower portions painted red, the upper portions white.

The great kiva was evidently a major ceremonial chamber for the important rituals affecting the whole community. The small kivas probably belonged to the various societies and ceremonial organizations.

The great kiva was constructed late in the Chaco Period of occupation, and may have been used during part of the Mesa Verde Period. Nine or

more replasterings of the floor suggest a fairly long period of use. Before the end of the Mesa Verde occupation, however, this sacred structure was merely a place to throw trash. Refuse deposits were accumulated inside it. Then it was left entirely disused. Plaster fell from the walls and sand blew in. Finally, the roof burned and collapsed, and the walls tumbled in.

Rebuilt accurately through careful study of evidence of structural details recognized during the excavation, the great kiva is now, as a restoration, an interpretive exhibit of the first order, an awe-inspiring replica of an ancient sacred ceremonial structure.

#### EXCAVATED ADJACENT STRUCTURES

Just west of the main ruin, a low mound called by Mr. Morris the "Annex" proved upon partial excavation to be a small, one-story, pueblo structure, or group of structures. Ten kivas were excavated in it, and the existence of others observed. Evidently a Chaco Period building, a small pueblo of good sandstone masonry, had been torn down here, and long afterward small kivas and cobblestone houses built over its remnants by the Mesa Verde people. The cobblestone masonry of the Mesa Verde Period was plastered with adobe, usually painted white or, more often, red.

## BURIALS

Nearly 200 burials were found in the excavation of Aztec. Most of them were encountered in refuse accumulations within rooms of the pueblo. Nearly all had been buried in a flexed position, with the knees drawn up, only a few being flat on the back. Flexed burial in rooms is characteristic of the Mesa Verde Period, and of the burials with offerings the great majority were accompanied by Mesa Verde pottery. Many burials had offerings of bone and stone tools, baskets, and ornaments, as well as pottery. The bodies were generally wrapped in matting, often also in feathercloth or cotton blankets.

An unusual and interesting example of prehistoric surgery is afforded by one of the burials found. The left arm had been broken close to the wrist and had been wrapped in six wooden splints. Other injuries are evident, as from a fall from a height and the person had died before the bones began to heal.

The physical type of the prehistoric Anasazi as revealed by skeletal material and mummies is much the same as that of modern Pueblo Indians, and they were undoubtedly closely similar in appearance to the modern Pueblos. Anasazi skulls from periods later than Basket Maker times are flattened

at the back, presumably by the pressure in infancy of a hard cradle. An extreme type of this deformation, widespread in the Chaco-Mesa Verde area, is believed to have been deliberate rather than accidental.

It is of interest to note that the skeleton accompanied by the richest assortment of grave goods found at Aztec was that of an exceptionally tall man, whose stature of 6 feet 2 inches is very unusual among Pueblo Indians, prehistoric or modern, who were almost always short, though often chunky. This individual must have been of importance in the community, to judge by the amount and variety of burial offerings.

## ARTIFACTS

The excavation of Aztec Ruin not only cleared the building so that architectural features are revealed, it also produced a large quantity of specimens indicating other aspects of prehistoric Anasazi life at Aztec. Representative specimens of different categories are on display in the monument museum, together with general interpretive exhibits.

The pottery found consists mainly of three types. Unpainted gray "corrugated" globular jars, with short recurved necks and wide mouths, represent cooking vessels. The distinctive Mesa Verde type of black-on-white bowls is abundant. The earlier Chacoan black-on-white type of painted pottery is also well represented.

*Primitive pictographs on the northern side of the plaza.*





Varieties of red pottery are trade material from different localities. Black-on-red bowls with white decoration on the outside are evidently from the Little Colorado area. The earlier black-on-red bowls, without white paint, probably also come from that direction. An orange bowl, with designs painted in red and black and with a small handle, may have been made in the region of Navajo National Monument in the Tsegi drainage. Two brown "corrugated" bowls with polished black interior are probably from southwestern New Mexico.

Beads and other ornaments of seashell from the Gulf of California, of turquoise from the Rio Grande Valley, of copper, and of walnut shells also testify to widespread trade connections. Local stone too was used for beads, especially gilsonite, a black mineral resembling jet.

Stone axes and hammers, and other tools, were made from hard pebbles in the stream gravels. Slabs of local sandstone were used for various uncertain purposes as well as in building construction. Metates and manos for grinding corn were made both from sandstone and from river boulders. One grooved hammer was discovered with the original handle still in place.

Arrowpoints, drills, and knifeblades were chipped of flintlike materials such as jasper and chalcedony. The knives include unusual forms as well as leaf-shaped blades, and there were a few complete with the handle still attached.

The bone implements are mainly sharp-pointed awls of several varieties. A number of broad-bladed scrapers include one which may originally have been decorated with inlaid bits of turquoise. The most abundant type of bone artifact, however, was not a utilitarian tool, but the little tubes made from wingbones of large birds, of uncertain purpose. Many of these were found as burial accompaniments, in groups of six to thirty, evidently having been tied in bundles.

In addition to fragments of well-woven cotton cloth, many strands of feathercloth and furcloth were found. To manufacture these, cords were wrapped with turkey feathers or strips of rabbit skin. Blankets of these materials have been found in earlier sites. Apparently the furcloth was still being made centuries later, for one of the first Spanish documents on the Southwest, in describing the Hopi pueblos, refers to what could well be the making of cloth with strips of rabbit skin.

Sandals plaited of yucca leaves, and others woven of yucca leaf cord, were also discovered at Aztec. Sandals of the second type were decorated both by woven designs in false embroidery and by painted designs by the use of cord dyed black, red, and yellow.

Four peculiar objects resembling snowshoes unearthed here are of unknown function.

A broken piece of bow and several arrows were found, in addition to the numerous chipped arrowpoints. The reed arrows have wooden foreshafts, and the opposite end of the shaft was plugged with a short piece of wood for the nock. Three feathers were attached with wrappings of sinew. The arrowshafts were decorated with bands of red, green, or black paint.

*Ancient pueblo ladder at Aztec Ruins, one of the six remaining intact in the Southwest.*



## HISTORY OF THE RUIN

In 1775, Fray Francisco Dominguez and Fray Silvestre Velez de Escalante made a great exploring trip northward from Santa Fe across southwestern Colorado and through Utah, seeking an overland route to California. They heard of great ruins on the lower Animas, and the map prepared by their companion Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco indicates these ruins. The statement is entered on the map near the mouth of the Rio de las Animas that "Here occur ruins of large settlements of ancient Indians." The party did not actually visit Aztec, but knew of the ruins from hearsay. Spanish traders and explorers are thought to have preceded them in the region as far as the Gunnison, but this is the first known reference to the ruins.

In 1859, Capt. J. N. Macomb of the topographical engineers, United States Army, conducted an exploration northwest from Santa Fe across southwestern Colorado, into Utah to near the junction of the Colorado and Green Rivers, returning to Santa Fe by way of the San Juan, Canyon Largo, and Jemez. Prof. J. S. Newberry, the geologist of the expedition, noted in his journal ruins observed along the way, and on the outward journey made a 40-mile side-trip down the Animas to visit the ruins of which he had heard "large pueblos, handsomely built of stone, and in a pretty good state of preservation." From the fragments of painted pottery and

the style of architecture, Dr. Newberry concluded that "the people who built and occupied these structures belong to the common aboriginal race of this region, now generally known as the Pueblo Indians."

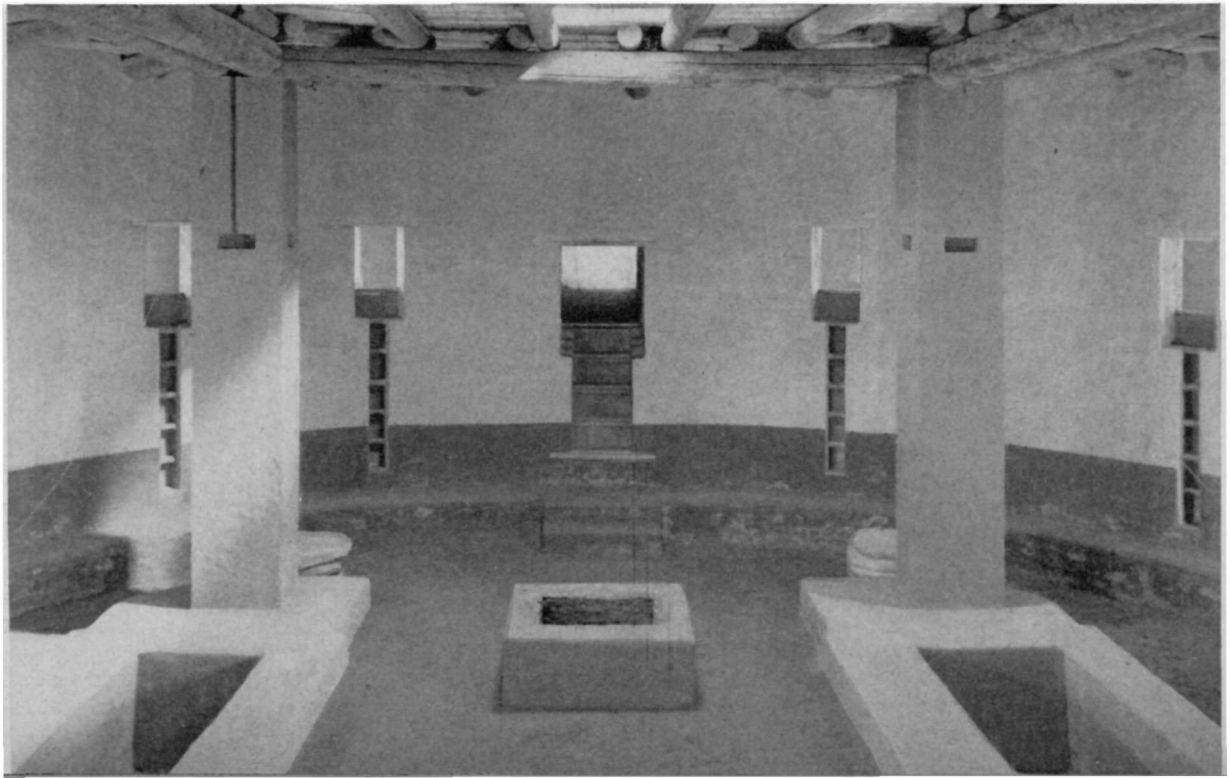
The misnomer "Aztec" was probably applied to the ruins sometime after the first settlers moved into the lower Animas Valley about 1876. Early travelers generally, like Dr. Newberry, realized that the Southwestern ruins represent not a vanished race but Pueblo Indians. The wife of Gen. Lew Wallace, a territorial governor of New Mexico, writing in the 1870's, added that from the sameness of the remains she was sure that nothing of interest or importance would be found in them to reward patient student or dreamer.

In 1878, the great ethnologist Lewis H. Morgan visited the site and published the first ground plan and detailed description of it a few years later. No further scientific study of Aztec was made until 1915, when Mr. Morris planned the excavations which began in 1916.

## *The Monument*

AZTEC RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT was established by Presidential proclamation on January 24, 1923, comprising a tract of 4½ acres on which the main ruin was situated, donated to the United States by the American Museum of Natural History through the generosity of one of its trustees, Mr. Archer M. Huntington. The area was enlarged to 17 acres by Presidential proclamation of July 2,

*An interior view of the reconstructed kiva at Aztec Ruins.*



1928, the same institution having donated the tract of 12½ acres containing additional ruins. Another addition, on December 19, 1930, brought the total area to 25.88 acres.

### *How To Reach The Monument*

AZTEC RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT is just across the Animas River from the little town of Aztec, N. Mex., and only three-quarters of a mile off U. S. Highway 550. A surfaced side-road runs north to the monument from the west end of the highway bridge across the river.

Aztec is easily reached by automobile, as it is situated on the paved U. S. Highway 550. Aztec is 35 miles south from Durango, Colo., and U. S. 160; 43 miles east from Shiprock, N. Mex., and U. S. 666. It is 137 miles from Gallup, N. Mex., to Aztec by way of Shiprock.

Another, unpaved, road reaches Aztec from the south, State Highway 55 from Cuba, N. Mex. (State Road 44 from Bernalillo, N. Mex., to Cuba is paved.) It is 185 miles from Albuquerque to Aztec by way of Bernalillo and State Roads 44 and 55.

Albuquerque and Gallup are both on the trans-continental highway U. S. 66 and on the main line of the Santa Fe Railway. A narrow-gauge branch line of the D. & R. G. W. Railroad from Durango, Colo., to Farmington, N. Mex., passes through Aztec.

*The administration and museum building.*



### *Facilities For Visitors*

NO LODGING ACCOMMODATIONS are provided at the monument because of its proximity to towns. A trading post across the road from the monument entrance handles refreshments and curios. Lodgings and meals can be had in the neighboring town of Aztec, and good accommodations are available at Farmington, N. Mex., 14 miles west, and at Durango, Colo., 35 miles north.

The National Park Service museum, in the administration building at the parking area, displays objects found in the ruin, as well as general interpretive exhibits.

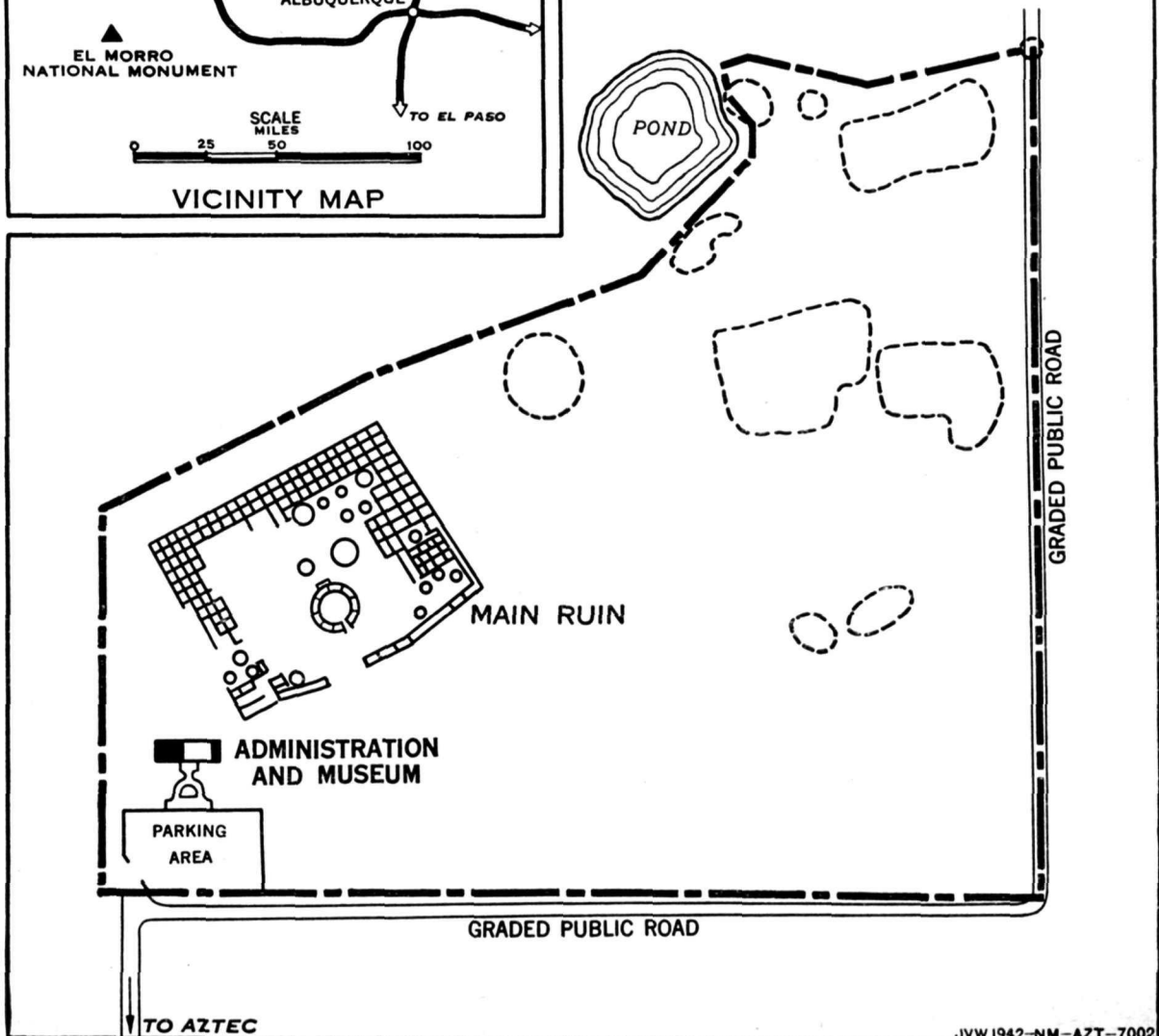
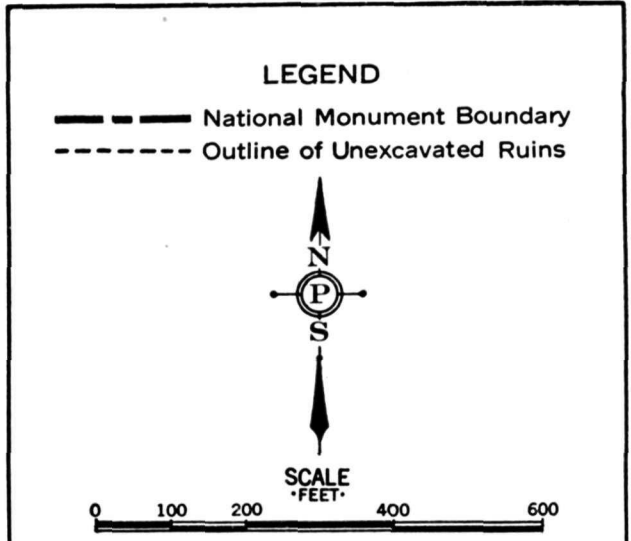
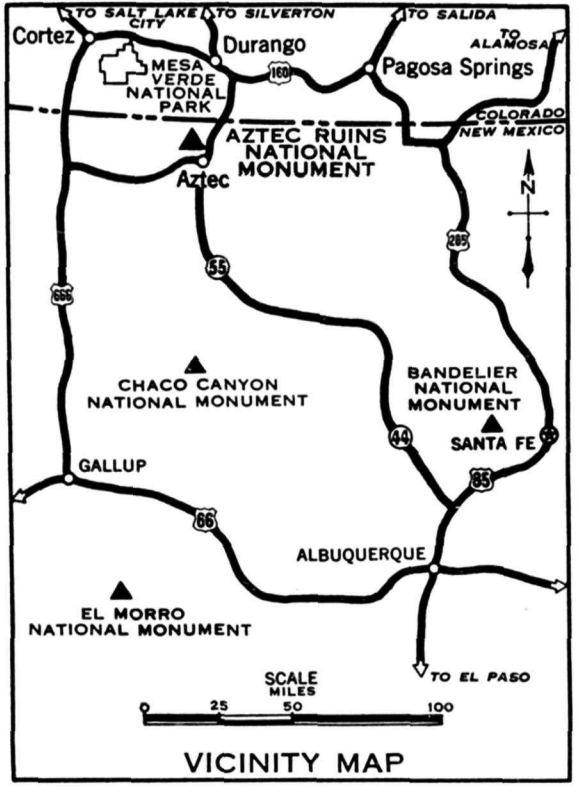
### *Administration*

AZTEC RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT has been administered since its establishment by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. There is a fee of 25 cents for admission to the area. Children 16 years of age, or under, or groups of school children 18 years of age, or under, when accompanied by adults, are admitted free.

There is a permanent staff of two men, a custodian and a ranger. Temporary rangers are added during the summer travel season.

Inquiries and other communications may be addressed either to the Custodian, Aztec Ruins National Monument, Aztec, N. Mex., or to the Superintendent, Southwestern National Monuments, Coolidge, Ariz.

# AZTEC RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT



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