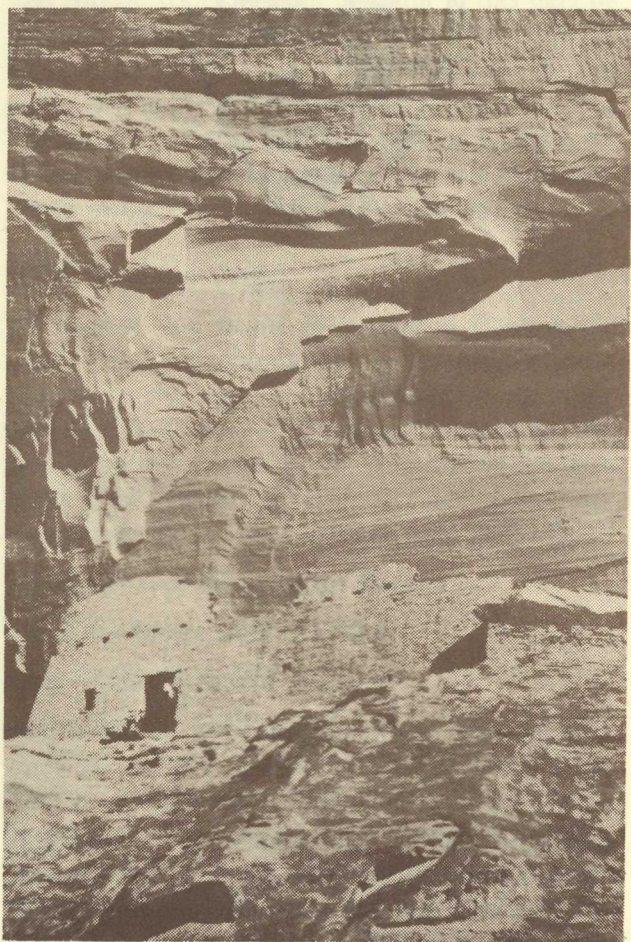


Motoring Guide
to the
NORTH RIM
of
CANYON DE CHELLY





The United States Department of the Interior and the National Park Service welcome you to Canyon de Chelly National Monument. We hope you enjoy your visit.

This guide will help you to recognize and understand some of the features of the area. The staff of Canyon de Chelly National Monument are here to help you. We invite your questions and comments.

Please remember, you will be traveling adjacent to deep, canyons having vertical walls. Use extreme caution when approaching the canyon rims. Control children and pets. A fall may be fatal.

The National Monument has been established to protect the historic and prehistoric remains within the park. It is illegal to destroy or collect any artifacts. We ask your help in preserving the beauty and history of this area for future generations.

The Navajo tribe owns all the land in this part of Arizona including that within the boundaries of Canyon de Chelly National Monument. We are guests of the Navajo people and we must respect their property rights and their right to privacy. As in any other community, one does not enter any house without an invitation from the owner.

MILE 0-Visitor Center

We suggest you begin your tour of Canyon de Chelly National Monument by spending a few minutes in the visitor center exhibit room. Here you will find museum displays concerning the human occupation of the canyons during the past 2,000 years. From the visitor center follow the directional signs to the NORTH RIM DRIVE.

MILE 5.4-Turn off to Ledge Ruin

MILE 6.2-Ledge Ruin Overlook

Ledge Ruin Viewpoint

Archeological investigations have revealed evidence of human occupation within Canyon de Chelly over the past 2,000 years. Ledge Ruin, located about 100 feet (30m) above the canyon floor in the alcove directly in front of you, was occupied about 700 years ago by people called Anasazi. Ceramic remains suggest the site was

occupied from about AD 1050 to 1275. No archeological excavations have been conducted at the site; however, mapping of the surface features recorded evidence of 29 storage and habitation rooms including 2 kivas and a 2 story unit. Rubble and trash provide evidence of possibly 20 more rooms.

The Anasazi were the earliest known inhabitants of the canyon and lived in many areas across the southwest from approximately AD 200 to 1300. Although Anasazi is a Navajo word usually translated as "The Ancient Ones," archeological and historical evidence indicates that the Navajos are not the direct descendants of the prehistoric Anasazi and did not build or occupy the cliff dwellings and pueblos.

The story of the Anasazi lifeway within the canyons and how their culture changed through time is "written" in the remains of broken pottery, ancient tools and weapons, burials and habitation structures. Archeologists give the early period (about AD 200 to 700) the name Basketmaker because of the excellent baskets, cordage and woven items characteristic of this culture.

During this period the Anasazi settled down from a nomadic hunting and gathering lifeway to become semi-sedentary farmers whose fields were scattered along the canyon floors. Initially they had no permanent homes but probably lived in brush and pole structures near their fields in the summer growing season and moved to high dry caves during the cold winter months.

As a sedentary lifestyle became more predominant, a more partially subterranean dwelling called a pit house was constructed, usually close to the canyon floor. Beans, corn and squash became the basic dietary staples and remains at Antelope house indicate cactus pads were commonly eaten. Domesticated turkey provided an additional food source as well as feathers for clothing and perhaps ceremonial activities.

The second major period in Anasazi history is called the Pueblo period (AD 700-1300) and is characterized architecturally by a transition from villages of flat-roofed post and adobe structures to multi-storied pueblos and cliff dwellings located in crevices in the canyon walls. Whether the higher site locations were preferred because they conserved farming space, provided safety from seasonal flash floods and shelter from inclement weather or whether the growing pueblo population sought protection from attacks by their neighbors is not known. Underground ceremonial structures or kivas were developed during this period, probably based on the earlier pit house plan.

Dekaa Kiva Viewpoint

Located in an alcove high above the canyon floor is a single masonry structure known as a kiva. By comparison with the present day Pueblo Indian usage of kivas, archeologists believe these prehistoric structures were also ceremonial chambers. Remnants of ties for supporting weaving looms still exist in the floors of some kivas and indicate that the chambers were also a center for weaving, which was a masculine occupation.

It appears today as if the kiva is an isolated and almost inaccessible structure unrelated to other pueblo sites in Canyon del Muerto. However, a close look at the next alcove west along the canyon wall reveals other remnants of masonry structures. A toe and hand hold trail connects the two alcoves. More recently constructed walls inside the kiva indicate it may have been used as a Navajo storage site hundreds of years after its original Pueblo architects had left the canyons.

MILE 8.2-Turn off to Antelope House

MILE 10.2-Antelope House Overlook

Antelope House Ruin Viewpoint

This site is named after the finely executed paintings of antelope on the canyon wall to the left of the

ruin. Local Navajos attribute the craftsmanship to Dibe Yazhi (Little Sheep), a highly respected Navajo artist who lived here in the 1830s. The prehistoric Anasazi occupants of Antelope House contributed the hand outlines and the figures in white paint.

A late Basketmaker period pit house was found by archeologists under the surface masonry structure of Antelope house and is securely dated to AD 693. The site was occupied fairly continuously after that time. This pueblo consists of two major room blocks connected by a circular central plaza. Relatively late in the history of the site's occupation, structures were built in the plaza creating a third room block.

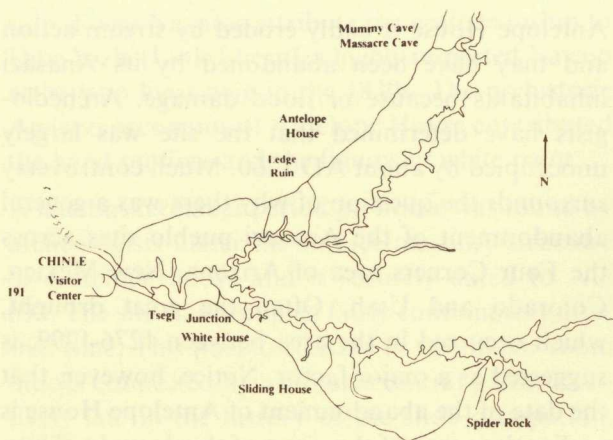


In viewing the ruin from the overlook vantage point, you can see various circular and rectangular structures. The circular pits are kivas, while the rectangular rooms are either storage structures or living quarters. Including Basketmaker period architecture not readily visible, the site contains 91 rooms and a 4-story structure built during the final stages of the site's occupation.

Antelope House is badly eroded by stream action and may have been abandoned by its Anasazi inhabitants because of flood damage. Archeologists have determined that the site was largely unoccupied by about AD 1260. Much controversy surrounds the question of why there was a general abandonment of the Anasazi pueblo sites across the Four Corners area of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah. Often the great drought, which occurred in the area between 1276-1299, is suggested as a major factor. Notice, however, that the date of the abandonment of Antelope House is earlier than that of the onset of the drought. Thus, other factors, such as excessive rains and violent flooding may have been important in causing the abandonment of the site. Presently, archeologists suggest that the Anasazi population moved to areas west and southeast of the canyon where they joined with other groups and have become known as the Hopi and Zuni Indians. After AD 1300, there appears to have been occasional movement back into the canyon, possibly by the Hopi people, for the purpose of growing crops or to escape turmoil in their home area.

Depending upon the season of your visit to Canyon de Chelly National Monument, you may be somewhat surprised to learn that water runs into the canyons and sometimes creates flooding problems. The winter storms bring snow to the Chuska Mountains east of here, and spring run-off from this range provides the source for the stream that runs throughout the canyons. Depending upon the severity and length of the winter precipitation, the stream may no longer run in early or mid-summer except in upper portions of Canyon del Muerto and Canyon de Chelly.

The fields planted by the Navajos near Antelope House and across the wash are reminiscent of prehistoric agricultural activities. Most Navajo homes, or hogans, are set away from the good agricultural land. Beans, corn and squash remain



the major crops, with alfalfa an important recent addition for some families. The Spaniards introduced melons and also peach trees to the Indians in the 17th century, and some Navajos today maintain small orchards next to their fields.

Winter is often severe in the canyon and, thus, during this season the Navajos live on the rims where pinyon and juniper are available for firewood. Spring brings movement back into the canyon. Some Navajos live there all summer, while many work their land in the evenings and on weekends. The growing season extends from May to September. However a very wet winter may create so much water in the canyons that the Navajos cannot reach their fields until June. The stream has not been the only source of water for prehistoric or historic agriculture, for the water table in many places at the canyon floor is only about one or two feet deep.

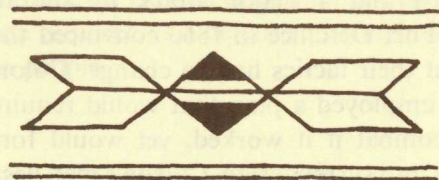
Tomb of the Weaver

The Tomb of the Weaver was found in an alcove about 50 feet (15m) above the canyon floor across the wash from Antelope House. This burial was discovered by archeologists in the 1920s and con-

tained the very well-preserved body of an old man wrapped in a blanket composed mainly of the feathers of golden eagles. The labor involved in capturing the birds to provide the down and in constructing more than 1000 feet (300m) of cord from which the blanket was made indicates the individual must have enjoyed great respect and prestige in his community. Other objects placed in the crypt included an extremely thick bow which required great strength to use, a single reed arrow, and containers filled with cornmeal, shelled and husked corn, pinyon nuts, beans and salt.

The careful construction of the crypt kept dust and sand from entering in. In fact, a white cotton blanket found under the feather cloth appeared so new that it seemed to have just been woven. The entire burial was covered by thick skeins of cotton yarn which measured more than two miles (3.2 kilometers) long and upon these lay a spindle whorl. It is believed that the individual himself was a weaver who hung his loom and practiced his craft in one of the nearby villages.

Late in the Basketmaker period at Canyon de Chelly, domesticated cotton was introduced into the Anasazi area. Evidence for the use of cotton textiles as clothing does not appear until the early Pueblo period. Although it may have been traded from the south, the actual source of this species of cotton which was successfully adapted to high altitudes and arid conditions is unknown. It is no longer grown in the canyons.



Navajo Fortress Viewpoint

Navajo Fortress, the isolated high redstone butte located across the canyon, was once an important Navajo refuge from raiders: Spanish, American and perhaps other Indian groups.

Archeologists believe that the Navajo initially moved into the American Southwest sometime between AD 1300 and 1500, after moving south from the Canadian region. At this time they were following a nomadic hunting and gathering lifeway. Contact with the Pueblo Indian groups along the Rio Grande and with the Spaniards in the 16th and 17th centuries resulted in agriculture, weaving and sheep herding being introduced into the Navajo culture. The earliest identifiable Navajo remains within the canyons date from the end of the 18th century; however, Spanish documents suggest that the Navajo were in the area before that time.

As pastoralism became increasingly important within their economy, the Navajos undertook livestock raids on the growing number of Spanish and later Anglo-American settlements encroaching upon their lands. The canyons appeared to be a Navajo stronghold to various military expeditions attempting to break the back of the Navajo resistance and raiding. The Spaniards were never very successful and after the United States acquired the Southwest from Mexico in 1846, the responsibility for making the west safe for Anglo settlement fell to American military forces.

Various expeditions entered the canyons in the mid-1800s but usually saw few Indians or met little resistance, though planted fields and grazing sheep gave evidence of Indian occupation. Navajo raiding continued and a major attack by the Indians against Fort Defiance in 1860 convinced the military that their tactics had to change. Colonel Kit Carson employed a plan that would require little actual combat if it worked, yet would force the Navajos into surrendering. Carson's men destroyed

corn fields and hogans in late summer and initiated sporadic small offensives during the fall of 1863. In the winter of 1864, he struck directly at Canyon de Chelly, and a sizable portion of the Navajo population, lacking sufficient supplies and without adequate shelter surrendered. Those who did so were moved to Fort Sumner, New Mexico some 400 miles (640 kilometers) away. The psychological impact of the move called the Long Walk, was profound and endures in the memory of many Navajo people today. Although the land at Fort Sumner was unsuitable for agriculture, the government attempted to make the canyon people and some 8,000 other pastoral Navajos brought together there into agriculturalists. Disease, drought, and severe storms made living conditions impossible, and finally, in 1868 the Navajos were released and allowed to return to their homelands within a new reservation which included Canyon de Chelly.

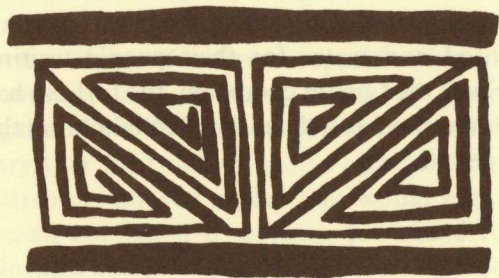
Navajo Fortress was used as a refuge throughout the period of Spanish and American military actions against the Canyon people. On the east side, not visible from the overlook, is a trail leading to the top of the fortress from the canyon floor. At a number of places, log poles which still stand were used to connect the lower levels with otherwise inaccessible sections directly above. As the Navajos climbed, the poles were pulled up behind them. Also located at strategic spots are small rock walls behind which retreating Navajos hid while hurling rocks on intruders attempting to follow. Similar structures are found on the top of the fortress. Under the shelter of night, Navajos would sometimes sneak down and escape from the area or gather food and water for their people waiting above. Since the Carson campaign, the fortress has not been required as a defensive stronghold by the Navajo people.

MILE 17.5-Turn off to Mummy Cave

MILE 19.1-Mummy Cave Overlook

One of the largest and most beautiful ruins within Canyon del Muerto is Mummy Cave. Archeologists uncovered evidence of continuous habitation at this site from the time of the earliest known occupation of the canyon to the latest dates of permanent residence by Anasazi people (approximately AD 300 to 1300). This dwelling is built in two adjacent caves several hundred feet above the streambed. The largest portion of the settlement is built in the eastern alcove and includes 50 rooms and 3 kivas. The western cave contains about 20 rooms and is now accessible only by a ledge from the cave on the east. Traces of an eroded hand and toe hold trail suggest that the occupants of Mummy Cave used a more direct route to their homes, straight up from the top of the talus slope. In some instances, as houses on the lower levels became buried under trash, others were built on top of them and the locations were reoccupied.

The seven rooms built on the central ledge, including a 3 story tower, were constructed after the alcove structures and are identified as being of Mesa Verde type masonry. Tree ring dating techniques indicate that the tower unit was built about AD 1284.



Archeologists believe that the architects were a people who had recently left the Mesa Verde area in southwestern Colorado, perhaps after being pushed out of their homeland by drought and other conditions of stress.

Whether the tower structure was used primarily as a defensive outpost or had special ceremonial significance for the inhabitants is not known. Throughout this ruin much of the original plaster used on the inner and outer walls still remains. Its varied colors and the painted designs within one of the large kivas suggests the inhabitants of the cliff dwelling were concerned with more than just the durability of their home. Mummy Cave received its name when an archeological expedition into the canyon in the late 1880s found two mummies in cists eroding out of the talus slope below the site. The leader of the expedition, Colonel Stevenson, is reported to have given Canyon del Muerto or "Canyon of the Dead" its name following his work at Mummy Cave.

MILE 21-Massacre Cave Overlook

Massacre Cave Viewpoint

The first documented Spanish contact with Canyon de Chelly Navajos occurred in the military expedition report of 1805. A bloody battle is believed to have taken place at the rock strewn ledge located to your left under a canyon rim overhang. In the winter of 1805, Antonio de Narbona led an expedition into the Canyon de Chelly hoping to finally put an end to Navajo raiding and warring against Spanish settlements expanding into Navajo country. There are many different accounts of the actual events that occurred at Massacre Cave.

Narbona reported his forces killed as many as 115 Navajos taking refuge in the canyon and that 33 were taken captive. One account tells that at the time most of the able-bodied men were away hunting in the Lukachukai Mountains visible to

the east of the overlook point. The women, children and old people, seeing a raiding party composed of Spaniards, Zuni, and Opata Indians fled to hide in Massacre Cave. This cave is located high up the nearly 1000 foot (300m) canyon wall, but because of the angle of the rim, it is inaccessible from above. The fallen rocks along this long, narrow ledge provided shelter for the Navajo refugees. To reach it from below requires a scramble up the steep talus slope and then climbing an almost perpendicular section of bare rock with only hand and toe holds as support.

The Navajos' presence in the cave may have been known by Narbona from information given by a young Navajo warrior turned traitor to his people because elders of the tribe had denied him the right to marry a particular girl as his second wife. Another account claims that a detachment of sharpshooters from Narbona's party found their way onto the rim above the cave but had not located the position of the well-sheltered Navajos. Then, an old woman, unaware of the troops' presence on the rim above, gave away the Navajo's location when she began yelling taunts at Spanish forces in the Canyon.

In any event, marks left where rifle shot ricocheted off the cliff walls in back of Massacre Cave indicate that sniper fire from the rim occurred and may have been the decisive factor in the Spanish massacre of the Navajos huddled below. The battle of Massacre Cave is one of the few reported large scale hand-to-hand confrontations between Spanish troops and the Navajos of Canyon de Chelly.

Yucca Cave Viewpoint

Yucca Cave was occupied in early pueblo and possibly late Basketmaker periods. The large cluster of structures on your right includes four definite rooms, one kiva and two other possible rooms or storage cists. The single smaller structure tucked in a sandstone pocket to your left is a food storage

cist. Although not visible from this overlook a hand and toe hold trail connects the two alcoves. How would you like to have been the person with the task of crawling out to get corn or dried squash kept in that storage cist?

Imagine for a minute living at this site and having small children just learning to walk. How would you have given them more than one chance to learn not to go too far past the edge of their homes.

Massacre Cave is the last stop on the North Rim Drive.

We hope you are enjoying your visit to Canyon de Chelly National Monument and that you will have time to see other National Park Service areas in the Southwest.



FOR A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE VISIT

The following suggestions should help make your visit to Canyon de Chelly National Monument an enjoyable one.

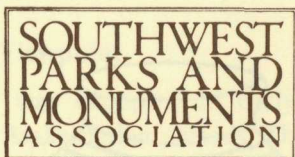
-When leaving your vehicle unattended, **LOCK IT**. The safest place for your valuables is in the trunk. Purses, cameras, binoculars, wallets, etc. should be carried with you, **NOT** left in the vehicle.

-The Navajo reservation has an open range policy. This means livestock are not fenced in and therefore frequently are on the roads. Obey the speed limit and be alert.

-The rim drive overlooks provide excellent views. They also present a potential for falling over the edge. Please remain behind the retaining walls and keep children and pets away from the edge.

-Should you experience or observe an accident, theft, or suspicious activity, please contact a ranger as soon as possible.

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