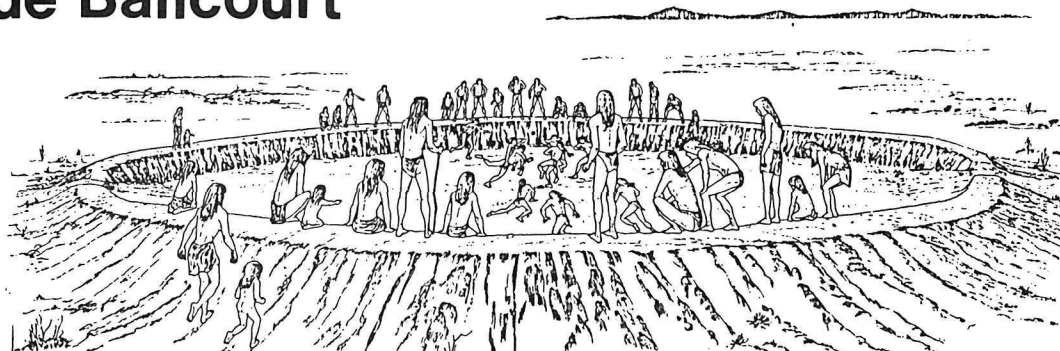


Casa Grande Ruins

National Monument
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The Casa Grande Ballcourt



BALLCOURT

This oval mound is an unexcavated prehistoric ballcourt. In it, the Hohokam people probably played a version of a game documented among the ancient Indians of Mexico and Central America.

The rules of the Hohokam game are unknown, but two teams probably moved a rubber ball back and forth across the playing area. The ballcourt may also have been used for dances or other special group activities.

CONSTRUCTION

Earth was piled up to form the banks of the court. The inside surfaces were plastered with caliche, a cement-like soil, to form a hard, smooth surface. At the ends of the court,

paths about two feet wide led from the embankments into the playing area. A green stone was found embedded in the center of the floor and may have been a playing marker.

THE VILLAGE

You are standing in the middle of what was once a very large community, covering at least 300 acres. The ballcourt is about midway between the two largest compounds in the Monument. To your left, southwest, is Compound A and the Casa Grande. To your right

you can see Compound B, which holds two platform mounds. Several smaller compounds are in the vicinity, but cannot be seen from here. The level area behind you, now the picnic area, may have been a plaza or community gathering place in Hohokam times.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Casa Grande ballcourt is one of over 200 known in Arizona. Ballcourts were "public works". Like the Casa Grande and the platform mounds, the construction of the ballcourt was a group project requiring community labor and organization. This court was probably used

during the 1100s and 1200s and was one of the last ballcourts used in the Hohokam area. Most ballcourts had fallen into disuse by the time the Casa Grande and nearby Compounds were built in the 1300s. The surrounding community was abandoned by the early 1400s.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
SEE:

Hohokam Ballcourts and
Their Interpretation
by David R. Wilcox and
Charles Sternberg, 1983,

Arizona State Museum
Archaeological Series
#160.