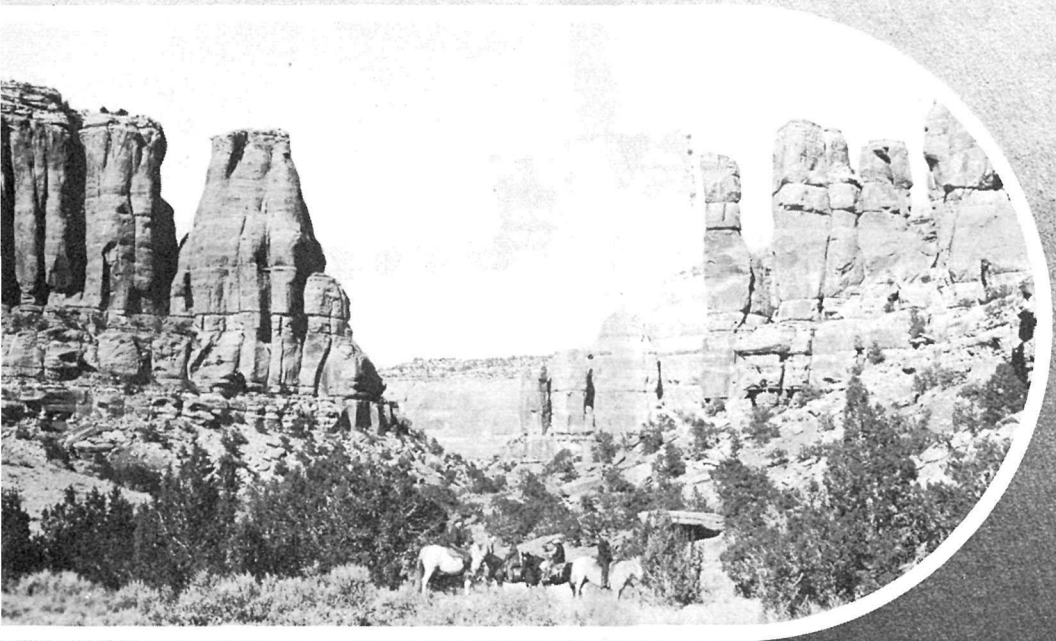


# Colorado



National Monument

C O L O R A D O

# Colorado

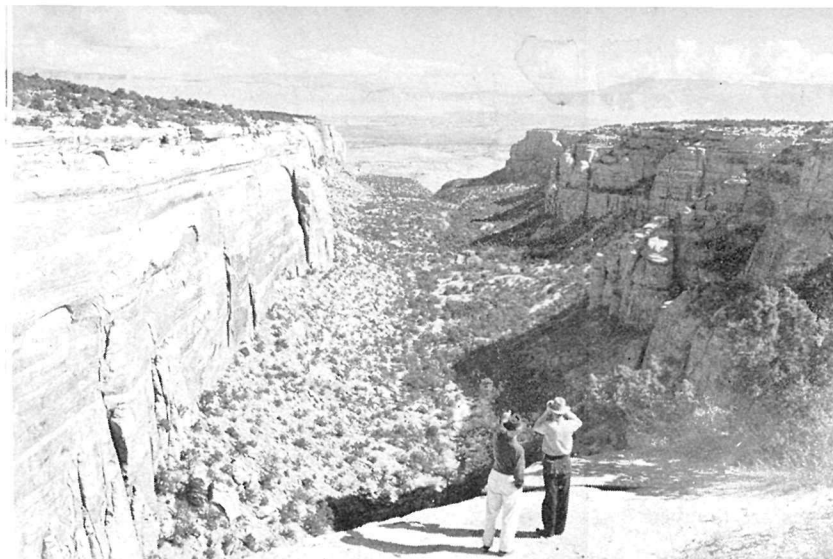
## NATIONAL MONUMENT



*Colorful and spectacular erosional forms consisting of massive ramparts, sheer-walled canyons, and delicately sculptured spires and columns containing interesting and significant records of the earth's history in this locality.*



*"The Monuments" of Monument Canyon as seen from the campground*



*View down Red Canyon toward city of Grand Junction*



*These weird rock formations in Monument Canyon are called the "coke ovens"*

COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT comprises an area of fantastically eroded and vividly colored highlands. Its sheer-walled canyons, towering monoliths and stratified ramparts, and fluted columns combine to present a spectacle of imposing grandeur. Red is the predominant color, making the name "Colorado"—the Spanish term meaning "red"—especially appropriate.

### NATURAL FEATURES

The monument is a portion of the vast upland area flanking the Colorado River on either side of Grand Valley. The deep red sandstone has been carved by action of wind and water through eons. Colossal natural amphitheaters, dwarfing man and his works, have been formed. In the process, giant monoliths have been hewn out of the sandstone. Most prominent among these sandstone shafts is Independence Rock, 500 feet in height. In the great red walls and canyon amphitheaters petrified wood, fragments of dinosaur bones, and limited evidence of early habitation by Indians have been found.

Weird formations come into view at every

turn of the road. Devil's Kitchen, Coke Ovens, Monolith Parade, and Window Rock are but a few of the intriguing features visible from the transmonument scenic drive which skirts the cliffs of Red, Ute, and Monument Canyons. To the northward, Book Cliffs form the skyline and mark the opposite side of Grand Valley. Grand Mesa, one of the most famous of flat-topped mountains, looms to the eastward. Grand Valley, nearer at hand, to the northeast, unfolds with its symmetrical pattern of farms and orchards.

### GEOLOGY

Colorado National Monument contains interesting geologic exhibits produced in the red sandstone formations. Nature's processes, which have produced these exhibits, include the original deposition of the sediments comprising the formations themselves; faulting and displacement of large blocks of the earth's crust; and the ever-present action of wind, water, and temperature changes, collectively called "weathering" by geologists.

Three geological exhibits, or records of earth history, in the monument are worthy of special mention. They are the great hiatus, or gap, in the geologic record; the fracture, or fault, which formed the northeast escarpment of the monument overlooking Grand Valley; and the unusual assemblage of dinosaur bones found on the valley floor between the monument and the Colorado River.

*The Great Hiatus.*—Near the base of the high escarpment, which flanks the valley of the Colorado River, granite of black color contrasts vividly with the brick-red of the shales and sandstones in the overlying formations. The contact between these two very different rocks is irregular. The underlying granite is classed with those rocks which are the oldest in this part of the Rocky Mountains. It was formed from molten rock at a time so remote that only the most primitive forms of life existed. The overlying red shales and sandstones (Triassic and Jurassic systems of the Age of Reptiles) were laid down in shallow seas, and on deltas and beaches. Several hundred millions of years

later life had developed to such a stage that the huge lizards, called dinosaurs, came into being. The record of what took place between these two ancient eras is missing in rock formations of the monument. The passage of this 500 million years or so is represented only by a thin line marking the zone of contact between the crest of massive black granite and the overlying layers of red shale and sandstone.

*The Fault Escarpment.*—In most of the monument the bone-bearing rocks occur high up in the cliffs, but on the northeast side they are found in the valley floor. This difference of

elevation is the result of a break in the earth's crust, called a "fault." The rocks of the Colorado River Valley have subsided several hundred feet with relation to those in the escarpment. The fault is about 10 miles long. At its ends the displacement becomes less and less until finally the fault merges into folds, indicating that the pressure on the rocks was less intense in these areas than in the area in the vicinity of the monument.

*Dinosaurs.*—The existence of dinosaurs or "terrible lizards" in this area is indicated by their fossil remains in the sandstone of the

Morrison formation (Upper Jurassic system). Five different species have been found in rocks adjoining the monument. They are the *brontosaurus*, the "thunder lizard," so called because of the supposed trembling of the earth from the weight of its tread; the *brachiosaurus*, a giraffe-like wader adapted to take refuge in deeper waters; the *allosaurus*, a meat-eating reptile with short forelegs and long hind legs; the *stegosaurus*, called the armored dinosaur, a small-headed beast with huge flaring plates to protect its back; and the *diplodocus*, the largest land-living animal known.

*Looking across the Grand Valley*



*Dramatic lighting enhances spectacular scenery*



## WILDLIFE, TREES, AND FLOWERS

The monument is a wildlife sanctuary where hunting is prohibited. Deer, foxes, coyotes, and porcupines are plentiful, as well as many species of birds. Elk are occasionally seen. In the mid-1920's, a few bison were transplanted to the monument. The herd, now maintained at 20 head, the maximum for which there is forage, may be seen from the monument highway grazing on the canyon floors or along the base of the great valley escarpment.

The forest cover is chiefly juniper and piñon pine, interspersed with several species of brush and shrubs such as sagebrush, serviceberry, and mountain-mahogany. A wide variety of wild-flowers may be seen during the early summer.

## ACCESSIBILITY

The eastern entrance to the monument is 4 miles from Grand Junction and the northern entrance 3½ miles from the town of Fruita. U. S. Highways 6, 24, and 50 converge at Grand Junction, and 6 and 50 pass through Fruita, making the monument easily accessible. An excellent highway traverses the monument, following the canyon rims for most of its 22 miles. Along the route are parking overlooks where you may enjoy the spectacular beauty. The two entrances permit those en route east or west to go through the monument, or to take a circle trip through the monument via Grand Junction or Fruita. The monument highway is open to travel all year.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Campgrounds and picnic areas, equipped with tables, benches, fireplaces, water, firewood, and sanitary facilities, are provided at monument headquarters. Camping supplies and equipment are not obtainable in the monument. Hotel and tourist camp accommodations are available in nearby towns.

## VISITOR USE FEES

The following fees are collected for each automobile, motorcycle, and house trailer entering the monument: 50 cents for 15 days; \$1 for calendar year. During its valid period, the cost of the 15-day permit may be applied toward a similar annual permit. All fees are deposited as revenue in the U. S. Treasury and offset, in part, appropriations made for operating the monument.

## ADMINISTRATION

Colorado National Monument, containing over 18,000 acres of Federal land, was established by Presidential proclamation in 1911. It is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 157, Fruita, Colo., is in immediate charge.

The following synopsis of National Park Service regulations, made for the protection of the natural features of the monument as well as for your comfort and convenience, is presented for your guidance:

The monument is a sanctuary for wildlife; hunting and the use of firearms are not permitted.

Flowers, shrubs, and trees should not be disturbed or wild animals or birds harmed or frightened. Initials must not be carved on signs, or structures and natural features marred or defaced.

Be careful with fire. Be sure cigarettes and matches are out before discarding them. Build campfires only at designated places in the campground. Use sparingly only the wood prepared and stacked there for this purpose. Extinguish campfires completely before leaving them.

Please help keep the monument premises clean. Deposit all refuse in receptacles provided for that purpose.

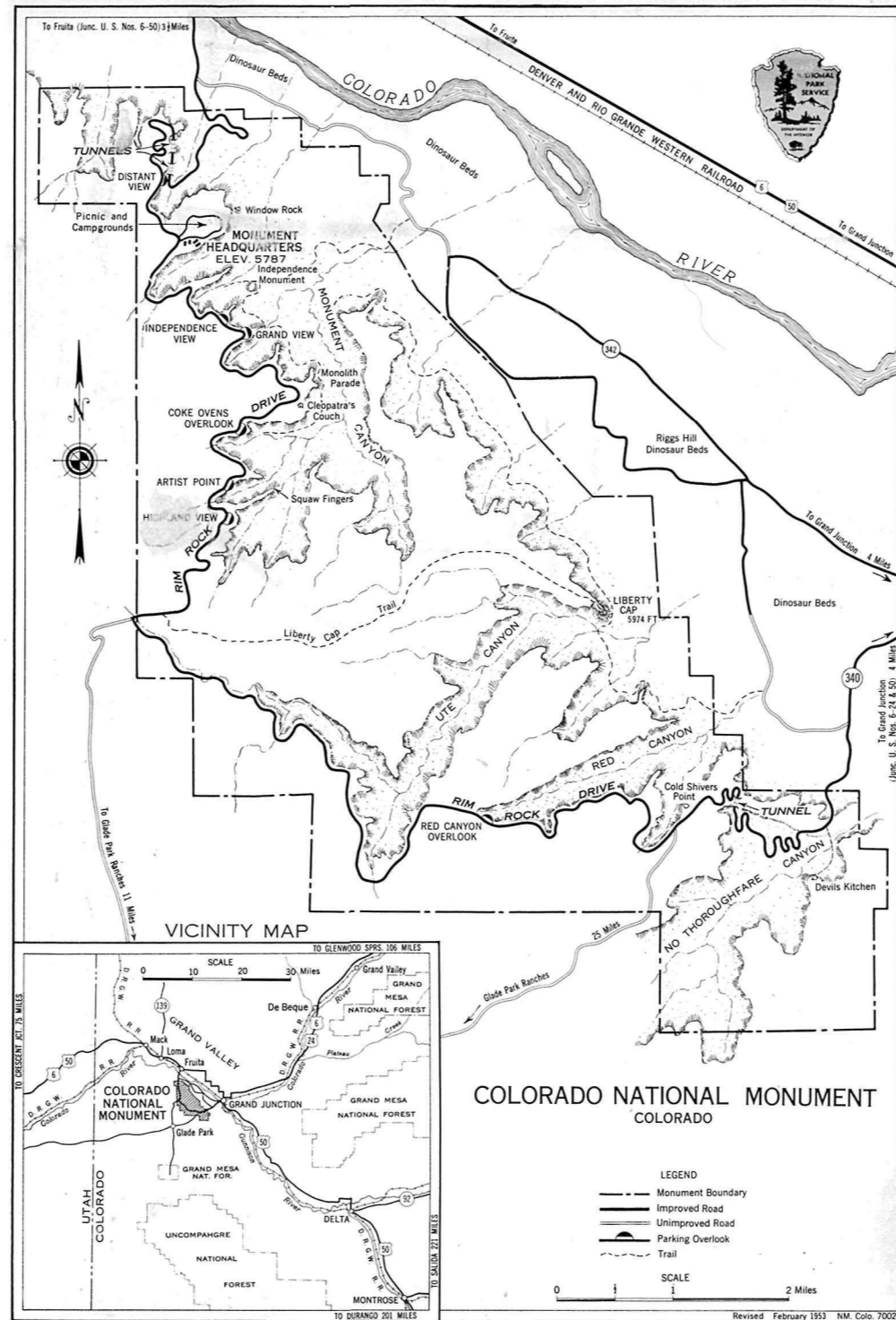
Rocks or other objects must not be thrown or rolled into the canyon. This practice is destructive to the monument's natural beauty and is dangerous to persons who may be in the canyon below.

Hiking or climbing alone is dangerous. You should check with the superintendent or a ranger as to destination and trail conditions.

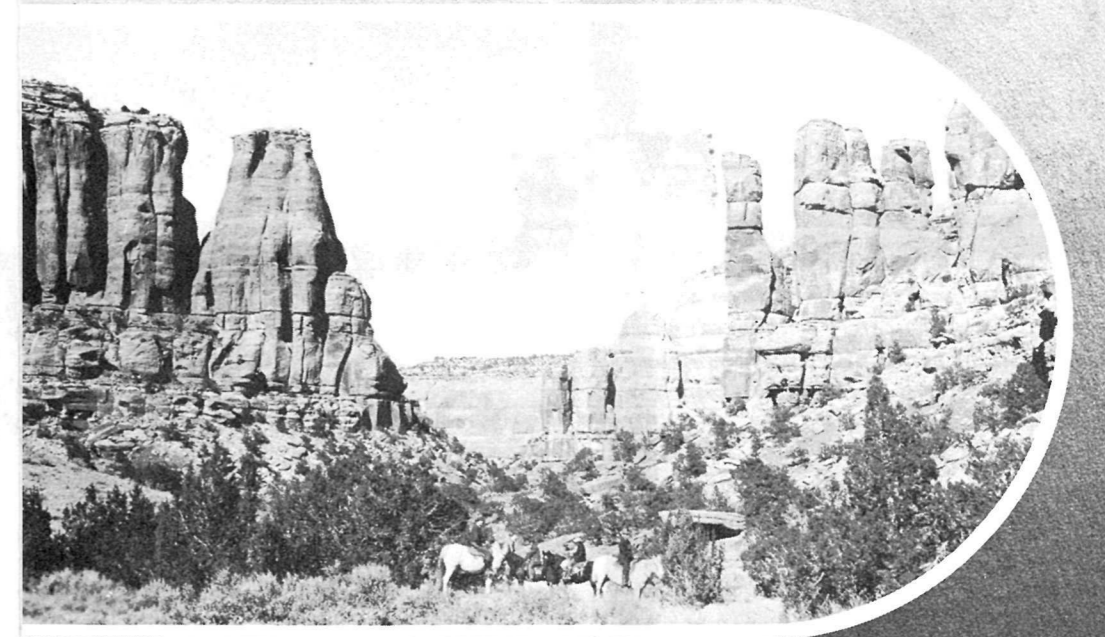
Dogs and cats must be kept on leash or otherwise under physical restrictive control.

The speed limit is 25 miles an hour and speed must be reduced on sharp and blind curves. Avoid accidents by driving carefully.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.



# Colorado



## National Monument

C O L O R A D O