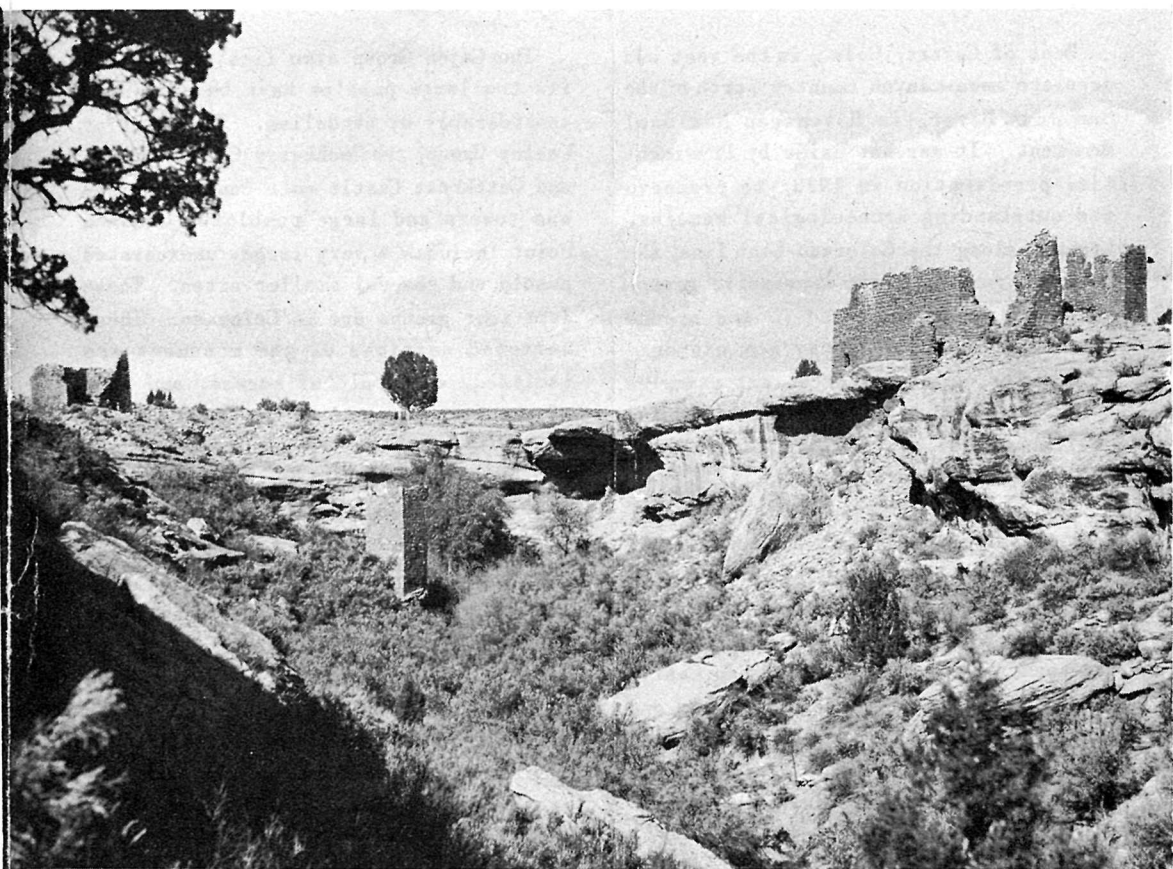


# HOVENWEEP NATIONAL MONUMENT



UTAH      COLORADO

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Remarkably preserved prehistoric Pueblo ruins clustered at the heads of rocky canyons in the famed "Four Corners" region of the Southwest.

West of Cortez, Colo., in the vast and desolate mesa-canyon country north of the San Juan River, is Hovenweep National Monument. It was set aside by Presidential proclamation in 1923, to preserve its outstanding archeological remains. Located along the Colorado-Utah line, the monument comprises six impressive groups of pueblo ruins situated in and around the heads of small, rocky box canyons. These ruins, which are excellent examples of defensive architecture, are noted for their numerous square, oval, circular, and D-shaped towers.

The most extensive, spectacular, and best preserved group is the Square Tower Canyon cluster in Utah. This group, containing 19 different buildings, was named for a magnificent Square Tower in the head of the canyon. Hovenweep Castle is the largest pueblo in the cluster and has walls that measure 60 feet long and still stand 20 feet high. Twin Towers, Stronghold House, and Hovenweep House are other imposing structures seen here.

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.

## THE HOVENWEEP PEOPLE

The prehistoric inhabitants of Hovenweep were Pueblo Indians. They were part of a large farming group which occupied the Four Corners, or San Juan, region of Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico from before A. D. 400 until almost A. D. 1300. The culture of the Hovenweep people was identical with that of the Mesa Verde people who lived in what is now Mesa Verde National Park, Colo. The descendants of these ancient people are the present-day Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Arizona.

When the Pueblo Indians arrived in the San Juan region they were just beginning to farm and settle down. At first they took shelter in shallow caves but before long they learned to build houses and soon spread out over the wide valleys and broad mesa tops. Their first homes, crude pithouses, were later replaced by surface rooms built in contiguous rows. In the 900's, stone masonry became popular, and from that time to the present, these people have been constructing multistoried, terraced pueblos.

Like their descendants, these ancient Pueblo Indians were farmers who raised corn, beans, squash, and cotton in small fields. Many wild plant foods also were utilized, animals and birds were hunted or trapped, and the turkey was domesticated. These people were expert artists and craftsmen who produced a wide variety of tools, utensils, ceremonial objects, jewelry, and articles of dress. Their social and religious organization apparently was well-developed and complex.

For centuries, the Pueblos lived in peace and security and their small villages were scattered over wide areas.



*The Square Tower, in the Square Tower Group, Utah*

In the early 1100's, nomadic groups apparently began drifting into the region in increasing numbers for the farmers deserted many small villages in favor of larger, compact pueblos. By A. D. 1200 the Pueblo people tended to withdraw completely from the open valleys and mesa tops to more defensible sites located near permanent springs. The fortified pueblos and towers of Hovenweep and cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde were constructed at this time.

The Pueblo Indians chose the heads of Hovenweep canyons as village sites for a specific reason: Springs in the heads of these canyons furnish the only permanent water for the area. By A. D. 1200, when the pueblos and towers were built here, it was imperative that the people

protect their water supply if they were to withstand prolonged enemy pressure.

There were other advantages to these locations. Several canyon heads are somewhat higher in elevation and afford long, unobstructed views of the countryside. The long draws (wide, shallow gullies) draining to the canyons could be terraced for farming. Such terraces held back the soil, provided sheet-water irrigation in case of rain and could be watched from the village rooftops.

In A. D. 1276, a 24-year drought started in the San Juan area. Harassed by enemy pressure, the people were now concentrated in restricted areas and were unable to cope with such a prolonged drought. Failing crops and diminishing water supplies forced them to abandon the Four Corners area before A. D. 1300. They drifted south to the Rio Grande and Little Colorado drainages and never returned.

Pueblo and tower walls are constructed of excellent, coursed stone masonry and though most mortar has long since disappeared, some walls still stand over

20 feet in height. Loopholes at strategic points in these walls command the approaches to buildings, to trails, and especially, to all approaches to the springs. Tumbled piles of masonry on the talus slopes below the canyon rims; multistoried, many roomed pueblos along the rims; small cliff dwellings tucked beneath the overhanging ledges; towers built on hugh boulders in the canyon bottoms and on narrow ledges or on the exposed rimrock; the presence of vast quantities of refuse scattered over the canyon slopes attest to the presence of a once sizeable population. There can be little doubt that as many people as the springs and limited farmland could support once lived in this now desolate country.

## ABOUT YOUR VISIT

If you are seeking the unusual and are able to leave your modern self behind and visualize the past, then Hovenweep offers you a unique experience. Do not expect to visit this monument without

*The Twin Towers, in the Square Tower Group, Utah*







Hovenweep Castle, in the Square Tower Group, Utah

some difficulty, however, for Hovenweep is isolated. There are no paved roads, no accommodations, stores, service stations, or wood; and there is NO WATER that today can be used by man. But there are fair approach roads, provided it is not storming, and a park ranger is on duty.

The best approach to Hovenweep is from Pleasant View, Colo., 18 miles north of Cortez on U. S. 160. Turn west at the sign and follow the graded road 27.2 miles to Square Tower Group, Utah. State Route 146, leaving U. S. 666 three miles south of Cortez, and approaching Hovenweep via McElmo Canyon, is not recommended if it is or has been storming. A primitive road approaching Hovenweep from the west, which leaves Utah State Route 47 midway between Blanding and Bluff, Utah,

is impassable in times of storm and often requires use of four-wheel drive equipment.

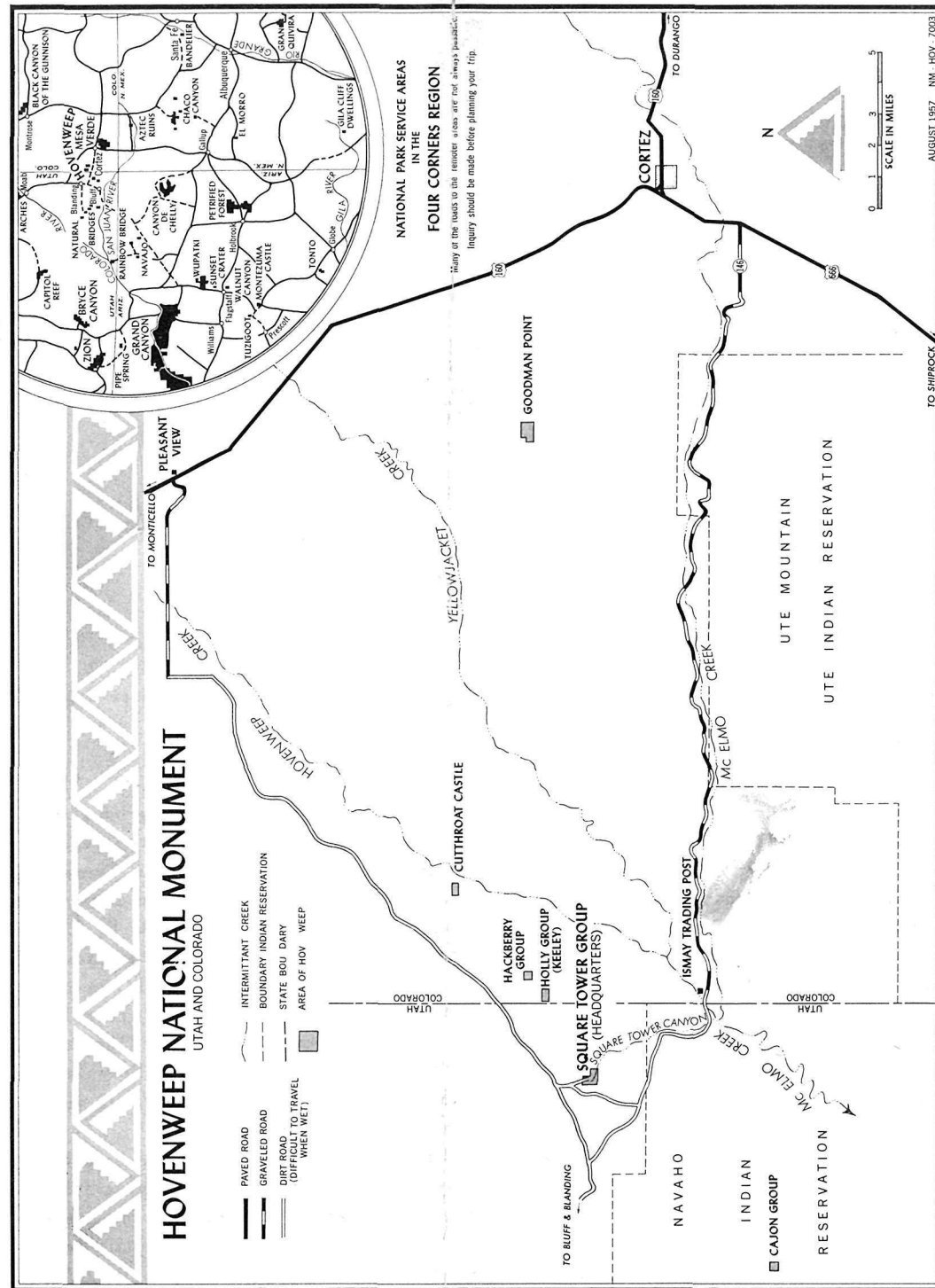
Picnic grounds are located at monument headquarters at the Square Tower Group. No supplies of any kind are available. Be sure to carry your own WATER AND WOOD.

#### ADMINISTRATION

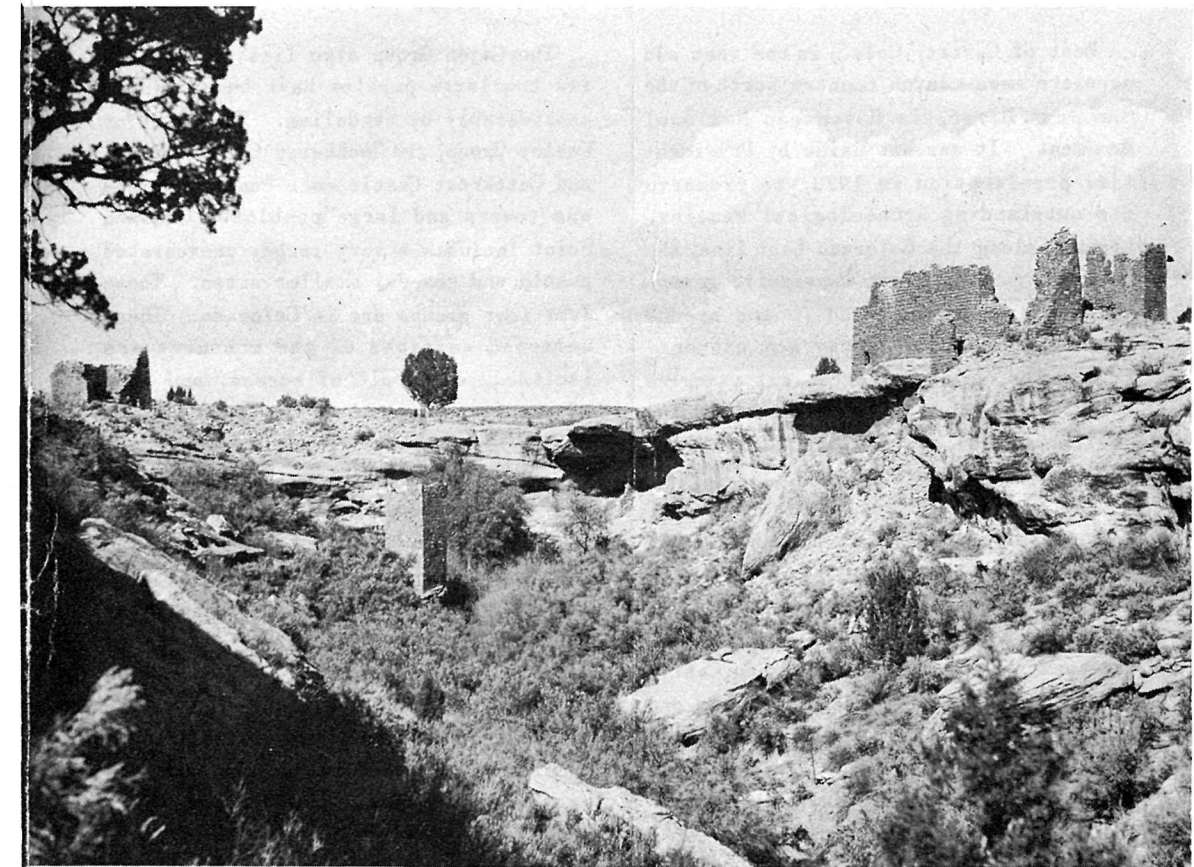
Hovenweep National Monument, covering more than 500 acres, is administered by the National Park Service of the U. S. Department of the Interior. The area is under the direct supervision of the Superintendent, Mesa Verde National Park, Colo. A park ranger maintains headquarters at the Square Tower Group, Utah. Address all inquiries to Superintendent, Mesa Verde National Park, Colo.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Fred A. Seaton, Secretary  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, Conrad L. Wirth, Director



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UTAH COLORADO