

## ADMINISTRATION

Hovenweep National Monument, established on May 2, 1923, and containing 505 acres, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The superintendent of Mesa Verde National Park, whose address is Mesa Verde National Park, CO 81330, is in charge of the monument.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior, has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

U.S. DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



# HOVENWEEP

The desolate country north of the San Juan River contains mesas and small canyons where prehistoric Pueblo Indians once lived. Within the monument are six impressive groups of these ruins: the Square Tower and Cajon Groups in Utah, and the Holly, Hackberry Canyon, Cutthroat Castle, and Goodman Point Groups in Colorado. These ruins are noted for their square, oval, circular, and D-shaped towers.

The Cajon Group consists of two large pueblos, but unfortunately they show not only the destructiveness of time but also the ravages of relic hunters. Most of the vandalism occurred before the monument was established. The Holly, Hackberry Canyon, and Cutthroat Castle Groups contain towers and large pueblos. Goodman Point includes a large unexcavated pueblo and several smaller sites. These detached sections are isolated and difficult to reach, and none compares with the Square Tower Group in extent or degree of preservation.

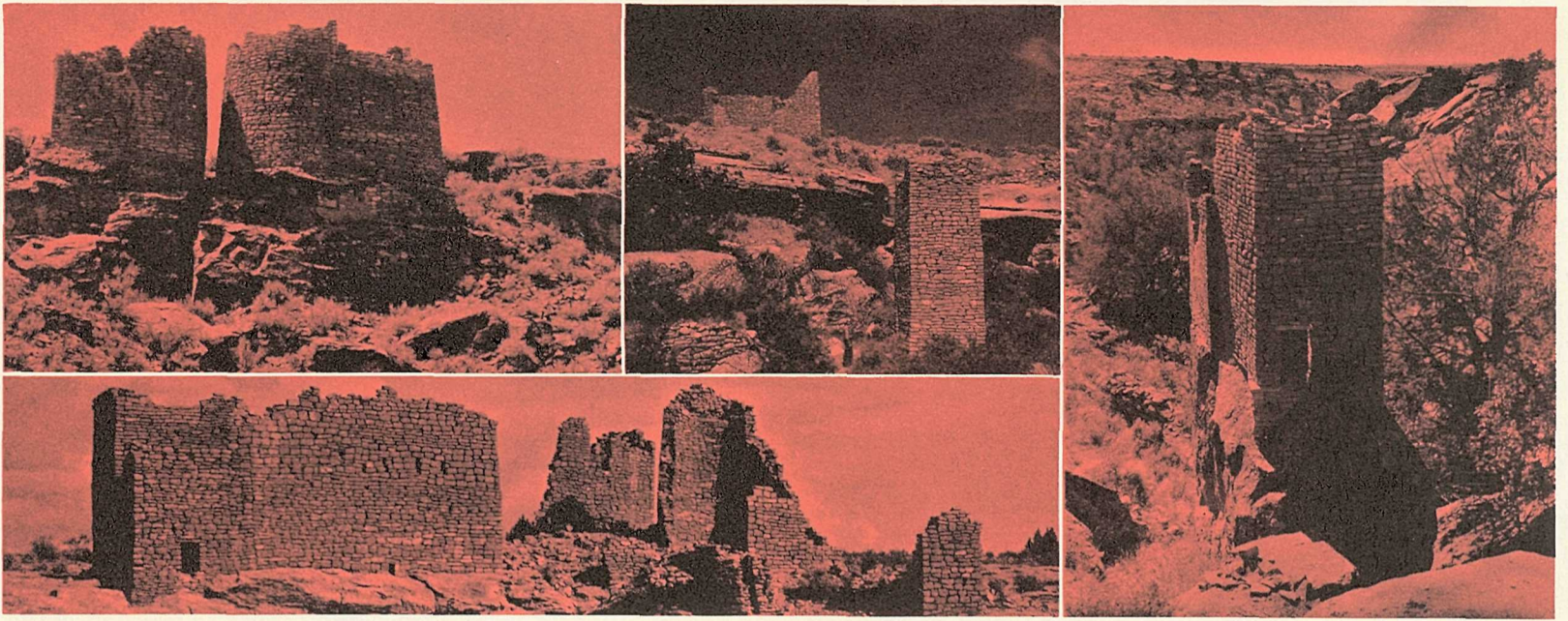
First to report on ruins in the area was W. D. Huntington, leader of a Mormon expedition to present southeast Utah in 1854.

Hovenweep is a Ute Indian word meaning "deserted valley." The name was first applied to this region by the famous "Pioneer Photographer" William H. Jackson, who visited the ruins in 1874.

Dr. J. W. Fewkes, of the Smithsonian Institution, made an extensive archeological survey of the ruins in 1917-18 and recommended that they be protected as a national monument.







## THE HOVENWEEP PEOPLE

The inhabitants of Hovenweep were part of the large group of prehistoric Pueblo Indians who occupied the Four Corners region of Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico from about A.D. 400 until almost 1300. Their culture was similar to that of the people who lived in what is now Mesa Verde National Park, Colo. Their descendants are the present-day Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Arizona.

When the Pueblo people in the San Juan region first began to farm is not known. They took shelter in shallow caves, but before long they built pithouses in the valleys and on mesa-tops. Later they constructed surface rooms in contiguous rows. In the 900's, they adopted stone masonry. From the late 1000's to the present, Pueblo Indians have built multistoried dwellings.

Like their descendants, the prehistoric Pueblos raised corn, beans, and squash in small fields. They also used many wild plant foods, hunted and trapped animals, including birds, and domesticated the turkey. These people were expert artists and craftsmen who produced a variety of tools, utensils, ceremonial objects, jewelry, and articles of dress. Their social and religious organization was apparently well developed.

For centuries the Pueblos lived in peace and security in small, scattered villages. But by the early 1100's, they had left many of their small villages in favor of larger, compact pueblos. By 1200, they had moved from the open valleys and mesa tops to the heads of the Hovenweep canyons, which contain permanent springs. They constructed their pueblos and towers here in order to protect their precious sources of water.

The long draws draining into the canyons offered an advantage in that they could be terraced to hold back the soil and provide sheet-water irrigation for crops. The canyon heads, at somewhat higher elevations, also afforded the Pueblos unobstructed views of the countryside.

In 1276, a 24-year drought started in the San Juan area. The people, now concentrated in restricted places, were unable to cope with such

prolonged hardship. Failing crops and diminishing water supplies forced them to abandon their homes before 1300. They drifted south to the Rio Grande and Little Colorado drainages and never returned.

## THE RUINS TODAY

The presence, today, of tumbled piles of masonry, the remains of many-roomed pueblos, small cliff dwellings, and towers, and the quantities of refuse scattered over the canyon slopes leave little doubt that a sizeable population—as much as the springs and limited farmland could support—once lived in this now desolate country.

Pueblo and tower walls are constructed of excellent coursed-stone masonry. Most of the mortar has long since disappeared, though some walls stand more than 20 feet high. Loopholes at strategic points in these walls command the approaches to buildings, trails, and springs.

## ABOUT YOUR VISIT

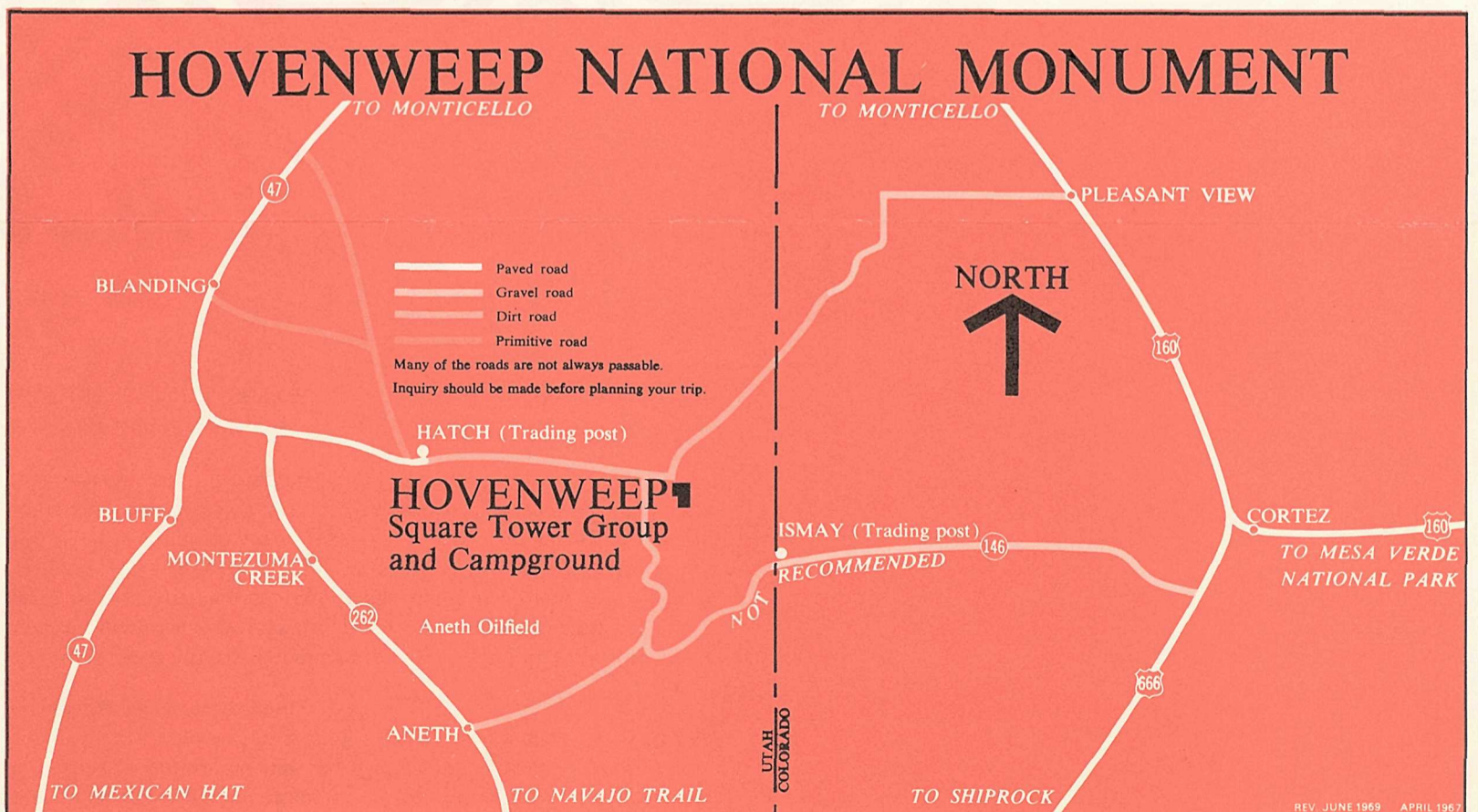
Hovenweep is isolated. There are no paved roads in the vicinity. Approach roads are fair if it is not storming or has not been storming recently. There are no accommodations, stores, or service stations in or near the monument, and no wood is available for building campfires in the campground.

The best approach to Hovenweep is from Pleasant View, Colo., 18 miles north of Cortez on U.S. 160. Turn west in Pleasant View at the Hovenweep directional sign and follow the graded road 27.2 miles to Square Tower Group, Utah. There are three other routes, which are *not recommended*: Colo. 146, which leaves U.S. 66 three miles south of Cortez and approaches Hovenweep via McElmo Canyon, is rough and longer. A dirt road approaches Hovenweep from Aneth, Utah. A paved and graded road leads to Hovenweep, via Hatch, from the west, leaving Utah 47 midway between Blanding and Bluff, but it is generally impassable (except 4-wheel-drive vehicles) during and following storms.

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