



**M**esa **V**erde  
NATIONAL PARK  
Colorado

# Mesa Verde National Park

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, J. A. Krug, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, *Newton B. Drury, Director*

This national park was created by act of Congress in 1906 primarily to conserve and protect the thousands of prehistoric ruins on the mesa tops and in the caves of its many deep canyons. It is one of the areas of the National Park System established for the benefit and enjoyment of the people and administered by the National Park Service in such manner as to protect the superlative scenic, historic, prehistoric, and scientific resources they contain.

## PRESERVATION OF THE RUINS

Preservation of the ruins, abandoned for many centuries and now weakened by the natural forces, requires that they be given maximum protection. Built by a vanished people, they can never be replaced. Visitors are asked to cooperate with the National Park Service to the end that these remarkable structures may be preserved, unimpaired, for the enjoyment of future generations.

In order to prevent damage to the ruins, one rigid rule is strictly enforced: VISITORS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER CLIFF DWELLINGS UNLESS THEY ARE ACCOMPANIED BY A MEMBER OF THE UNIFORMED FORCE. Roads and ruins are patrolled and severe penalties may be imposed on those disregarding this regulation. This rule does not apply to the ruins on the mesa top, and visitors who have registered at the entrance checking station or at the museum may visit these at any time during daylight hours.


## WHAT TO DO AND SEE IN MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

To promote understanding of the ways of life of Mesa Verde's prehistoric inhabitants, a program of interpretive services is provided for visitors during the summer season. For fullest enjoyment and understanding of the park, its notable ruins and prehistoric inhabitants, visitors are urged to take full advantage of the museums, guided tours, evening campfire talks, and trailside exhibits.

*Archeological Museum.*—This museum graphically illustrates and explains, by means of dioramas and comprehensive exhibits, the physical characteristics, customs, and arts and crafts of the prehistoric Indians of the Mesa Verde, from earliest inhabitation (200–300 A. D.) to abandonment of the Mesa Verde at the time of the Great Drought (1276–99 A. D). It provides the most important single aid to an understanding of the human prehistory of the Mesa Verde. It is advisable to visit the archeological museum both before and after inspecting the ruins.

*Natural History Museum.*—Exhibits of the flora, fauna, and geology of the park are here presented. From chairs on the porch of the museum one may restfully enjoy the best cross-canyon view of Spruce Tree House ruin. Public rest rooms are in the basement of this building.

*Guided Trips.*—Daily during the summer season, auto caravan trips are conducted to some of the finest and most notable ruins. Trips are taken partly in visitors' own cars and partly on foot. The morning trips include early pit houses, a number of



unexcavated ruins, Square Tower House, Sun Temple, and striking canyon-rim views of Cliff Palace and other cliff dwellings in Fewkes and Cliff Canyons. On the afternoon trips, visitors see Cliff Palace, the largest known cliff dwelling, and visit Balcony House, one of the most interesting. Trips require from 1½ to 3 hours. **DON'T TRY TO DO TOO MUCH.** Considerable arduous climbing is necessary to reach the cliff dwellings and persons unaccustomed to vigorous exercise should not attempt all the "climbs" in one day.

**Cliff Palace.**—This is the largest and most notable of all the cliff dwellings. Since its discovery, more than 300,000 people have gone through it, and, although every effort has been made to protect it, much damage has been done. In order to preserve it for all time, this ruin is now closed to visitors. People may still climb down to it, however, and view it from the trail that runs across the cave just outside the walls. From this trail spectacular views are obtained of the towering structure—views that former visitors, using the upper trail, were denied. Unusual new photographic possibilities are now open to visitors because of view points that are now accessible.

**Spruce Tree House.**—This well-preserved cliff dwelling is located across-canyon from the museum and may be visited at any time when there is a ranger on duty in the ruin. Visitors should inquire at the museum as to visiting hours.

**Far View Group.**—This group of mesa-top pueblos is located near the entrance road 4 miles north of park headquarters. Far View House and Pipe Shrine House have been excavated, and around them are a dozen unexcavated ruins, now only

mounds of rock and earth densely overgrown with sagebrush.

**Ruins Roads.**—These roads, comprising two loops of 7 miles each skirting the rims of Navajo, Fewkes, Cliff, and Soda Canyons, are open from 8 a. m. to 6 p. m. to registered visitors who have received instructions at the museum. Spectacular views of many of the major cliff dwellings as well as several dozen small ones may be had from the "View" points. Interpretive exhibits are located at each of these points. Sun Temple and two Modified Basket Maker pit houses are on the Sun Temple-Square Tower House loop.

**Park Point.**—Midway between the park entrance and park headquarters, a half-mile spur road and a short foot trail lead to Park Point (8,575 feet)—highest point in the park. This point commands a spectacular view over 14,000 square miles of the Four Corners country. The fire-guard on duty will point out scenic features and demonstrate methods used in detecting and locating forest fires when his fire duties permit.

**Trails for Hikers.**—Opportunity to visit many unusual points and outlying ruins is offered to those interested in hiking. Information and necessary permits may be obtained at the museum.

**Camping and Picnicking.**—Free camping and picnic grounds, including comfort stations, fireplaces, tables and benches, and wood and water, are located in the headquarters area (see map). **CAMPING AND PICNICKING RESTRICTED SOLELY TO THIS AREA,** which is open from about May 15 to November 1.

**Spruce Tree Lodge.**—In headquarters area: Cabins, meals, soda fountain and lunch

counter, curios, campers' supplies, including gasoline and oil.

In addition to Mesa Verde National Park, the National Park System also includes the following archeological national monuments located in the South-

west: Aztec Ruins, Chaco Canyon, Bandelier, and Gila Cliff Dwellings, in New Mexico; Canyon de Chelly, Casa Grande, Montezuma Castle, Navajo, Tonto, Tuzigoot, Walnut Canyon, and Wupatki, in Arizona; Yucca House, in Colorado; and Hovenweep, in Utah and Colorado.

From Park  
Headquarters  
(Elev.  
6,965 feet)  
READ UP

### MILEAGE TO POINTS OF INTEREST BETWEEN PARK ENTRANCE AND PARK HEADQUARTERS

From Park  
Entrance  
(Elev.  
6,955 feet)  
READ DOWN

19.7	Park Entrance, on U. S. 160, midway between the towns of Mancos and Cortez, Montezuma County, Colo.	0.0
15.8	Ascending east escarpment of the Mesa Verde, via Point Lookout grade, named for the bold promontory which dominates the Mesa Verde. Mancos Valley nestles at foot of La Plata Mountains to east. Northerly therefrom are higher peaks of San Juan Mountains, Dolores Peaks, and Lone Cone—all in Colorado.	3.9
13.3 to 14.8	Knife Edge road traverses north escarpment of the Mesa Verde more than 1,500 feet above floor of Montezuma Valley. Sleeping Ute Mountain directly west, in Colorado; northward thereof, in Utah, Abajo (or Blue), and La Sal Mountains. East is the west face of Point Lookout, in Mesa Verde, elevation 8,400 feet.	4.9 to 6.4
9.7	Park Point spur road, elevation 8,380 feet. Sloping southward from this point is the principal expanse of the canyon-gashed Mesa Verde tableland. To the west, Sleeping Ute Mountain. Next, south and west, Carrizo Mountains of Arizona; eastward and southward thereof, Lukachukai and Chuska Mountains of New Mexico and Arizona forming a backdrop for Ship Rock, 1,860 foot landmark on the Navajo Reservation, which appears from a distance as a fully-rigged sailing vessel against a mountainous shore line. Best unobstructed views in all directions may be had from crest of Park Point, elevation 8,575 feet, to which spur road leads.	10.0
5.7	Summit of Chapin Mesa, elevation 8,380 feet, the tongue-like mesa within Mesa Verde National Park on which notable ruins are principally concentrated.	14.0
4.1	Road junction for Far View group of ruins. (See text.)	15.6
0.8	Spur road, 0.4 mile, to Cedar Tree Tower, unique combination of tower and kiva connected by underground tunnel passageway.	18.9
0.0	Park Headquarters: Museums, Spruce Tree House ruin, and administrative office.	19.7

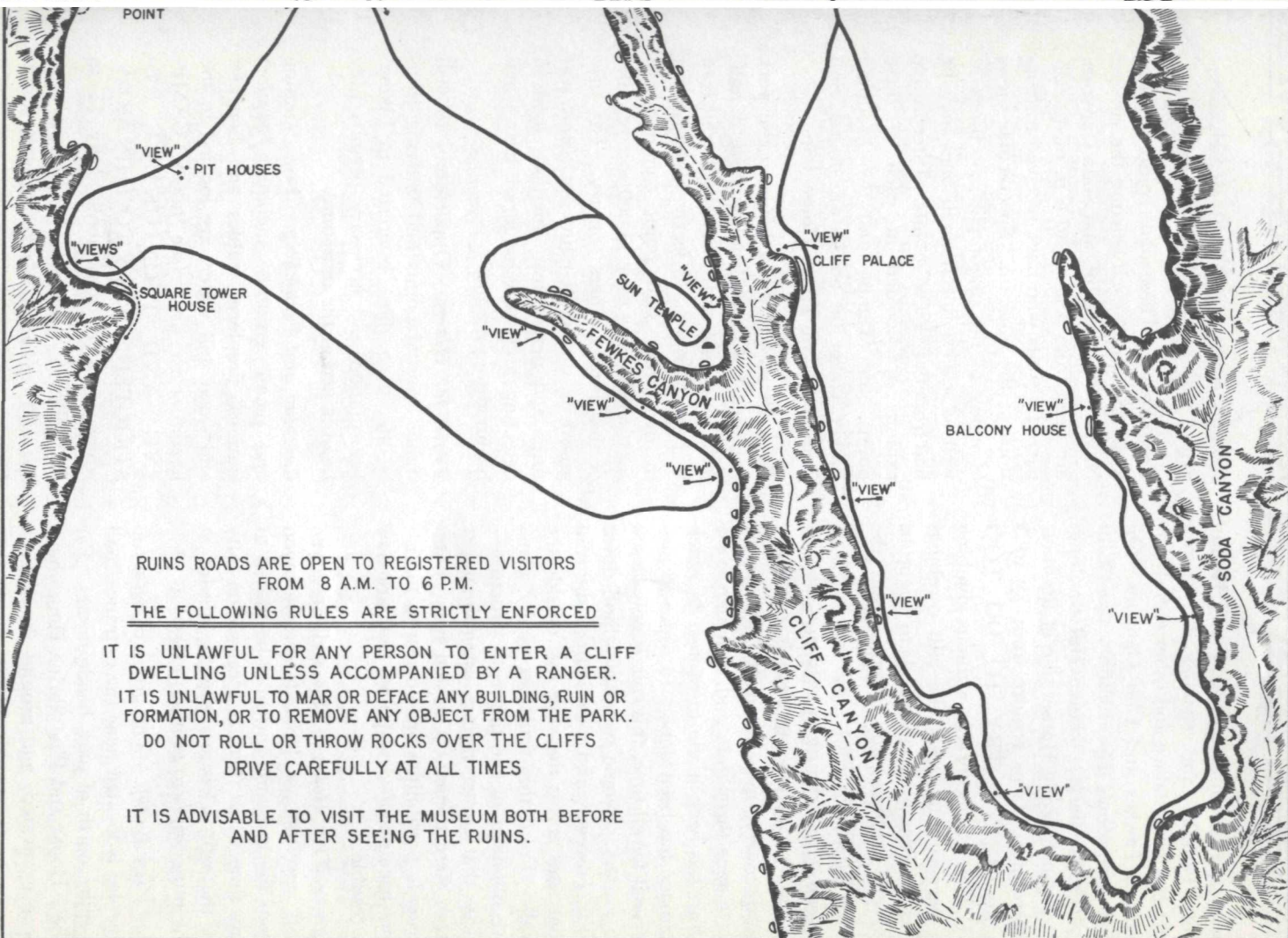
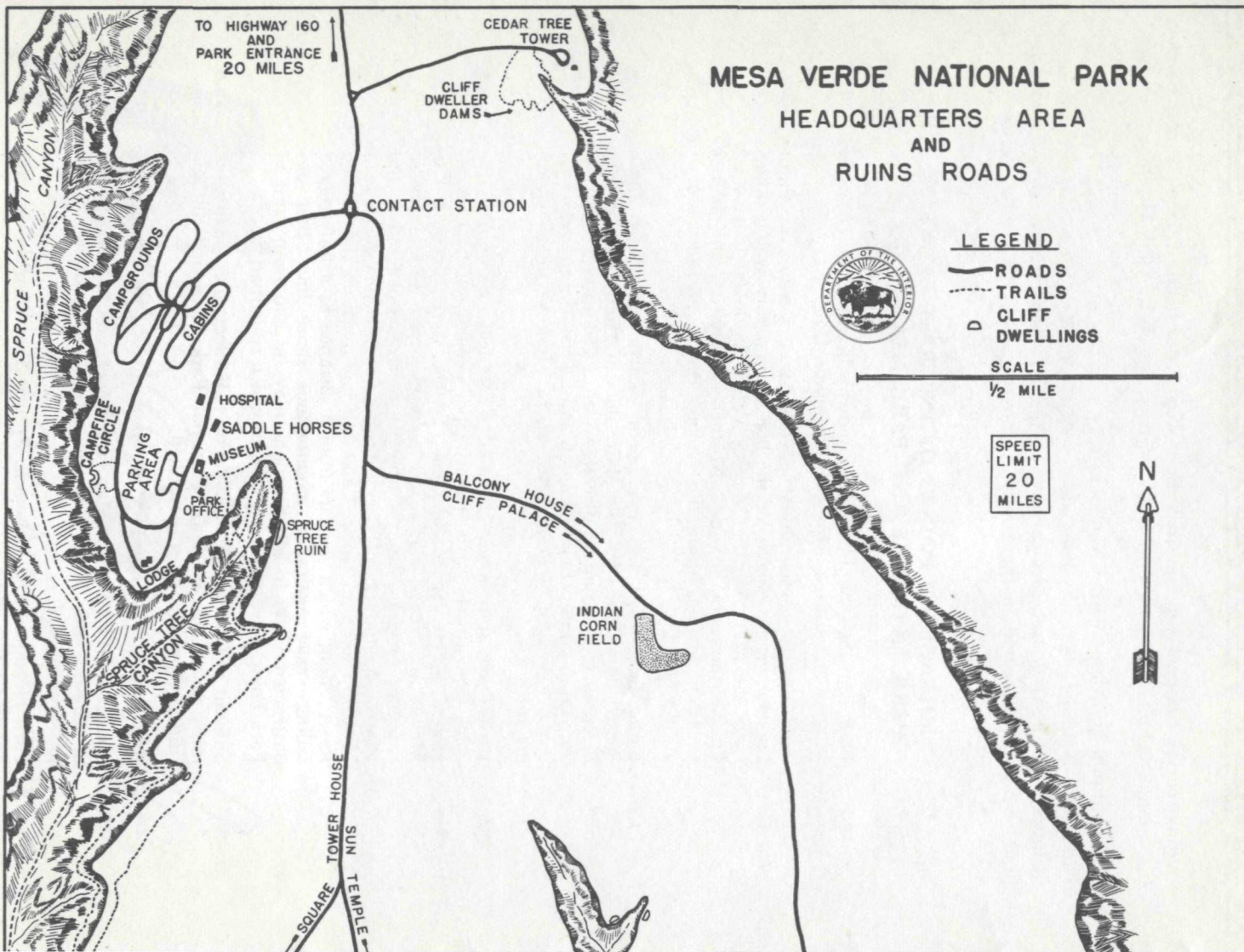
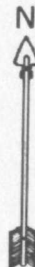
# MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK HEADQUARTERS AREA AND RUINS ROADS



- LEGEND**
- ROADS
  - - - TRAILS
  - CLIFF DWELLINGS

SCALE  
1/2 MILE

SPEED  
LIMIT  
20  
MILES



RUINS ROADS ARE OPEN TO REGISTERED VISITORS  
FROM 8 A.M. TO 6 P.M.  
THE FOLLOWING RULES ARE STRICTLY ENFORCED

IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR ANY PERSON TO ENTER A CLIFF DWELLING UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A RANGER.  
IT IS UNLAWFUL TO MAR OR DEFACE ANY BUILDING, RUIN OR FORMATION, OR TO REMOVE ANY OBJECT FROM THE PARK.  
DO NOT ROLL OR THROW ROCKS OVER THE CLIFFS  
DRIVE CAREFULLY AT ALL TIMES

IT IS ADVISABLE TO VISIT THE MUSEUM BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER SEEING THE RUINS.