

Mesa Verde

NATIONAL PARK

Colorado



Mesa Verde

NATIONAL PARK

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The National Park System, of which this park 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 Mesa Verde (MAY-sah VER-day), Spanish — in this meaning — for “green tableland,” rises 1,500 to 2,000 feet above the surrounding valleys. For 1,300 years, agricultural Indians occupied the mesa and adjacent regions, and from the thousands of ruins found in the “Four Corners” area of Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico, archeologists have compiled a significant chapter in the history of ancient America. The visitor to Mesa Verde National Park who can momentarily live and think in the past should be able to enjoy a glimpse of life in prehistoric times.

PRESERVATION OF THE CLIFF DWELLINGS

Mesa Verde’s ancient and irreplaceable cliff dwellings, abandoned for centuries and dangerously weakened by time, must be afforded maximum protection if they are to be preserved. This regulation, therefore, is rigidly enforced:

Visitors may enter cliff dwellings only when accompanied by park rangers on guided trips, or during the hours a dwelling is scheduled as “open for visitation” with park rangers on duty.

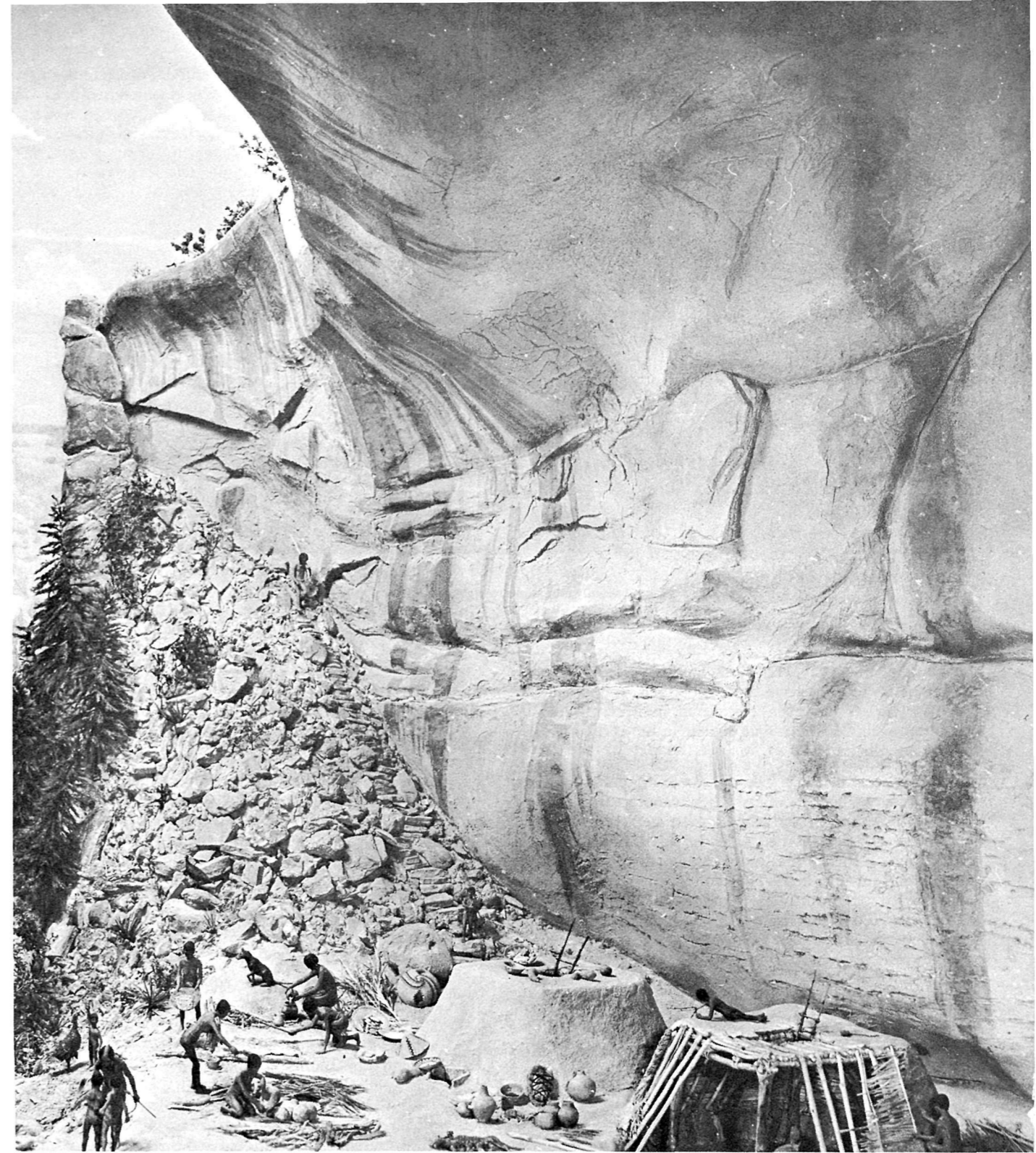
PREHISTORIC INHABITANTS OF THE MESA VERDE

The Mesa Verde was inhabited for hundreds of years by Pueblo Indians. These people, like their descendants living in Arizona and New Mexico today, were farmers. When they came into the area about A.D. 1, their culture was simple. They were intelligent and progressive, however, and by A.D. 1300 they had attained a high cultural level. Their occupation of the region is divided into four periods, each characterized by certain developments. In the following description, the dates are approximate.

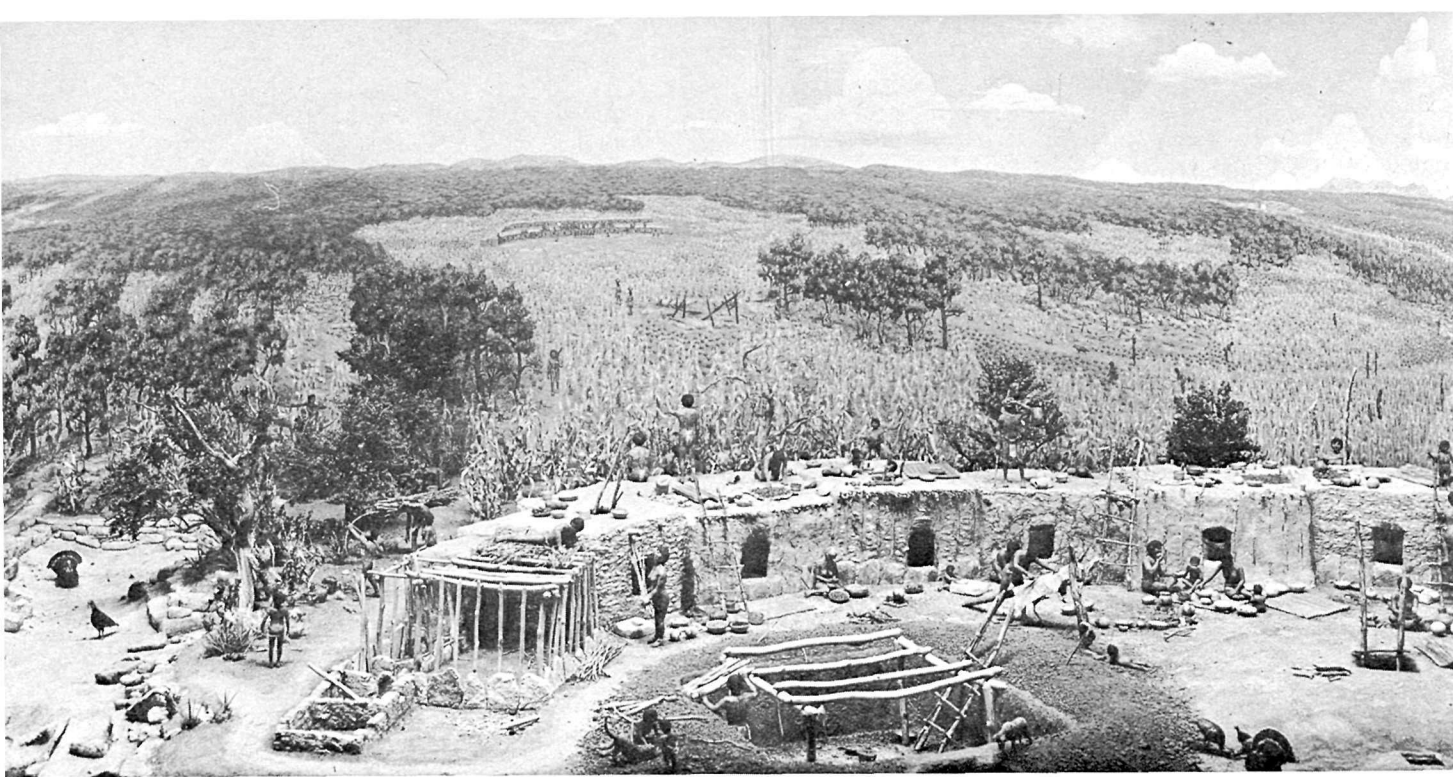
Basketmaker Period — A.D. 1 to 450

In 1892, Richard Wetherill, an early-day rancher and explorer, excavated some caves in southeastern Utah. Under rooms and trash left by Pueblo Indians in the A.D. 1200’s, he found burials and utensils of earlier inhabitants. These earlier people had no pottery but were expert weavers. Impressed by the profusion of baskets he found in their graves, Wetherill called them the “Basketmakers.” Years later it was realized that the Basketmakers were Pueblo Indians at an early stage in their cultural development, but the name, so descriptive of Pueblo culture between A.D. 1 and 450, has continued in use.

When the Basketmakers reached Mesa Verde they took shelter in shallow caves which characterize the area. Unfortunately, these caves were used hundreds of years later by their descendants, and little remains to indicate the early



Museum diorama showing pithouses of A.D. 600.



Museum diorama showing pueblo life of A.D. 850.

occupation. In areas near Mesa Verde, primitive Basketmaker house remains have been uncovered. As no evidence of these houses has been discovered in Mesa Verde, the people probably found ample shelter in the caves.

The Basketmakers wove excellent baskets, bags, sandals, and other articles. Since they did not make pottery, baskets and bags served as containers. They manufactured a variety of tools, implements, and jewelry of stone, bone, wood and shell. These people hunted with the atlatl (AT-lat-uhl), a dart-throwing stick. From hides of animals they made bags, robes, and fur blankets. They raised corn and squash in small fields on the mesa top and stored this produce and wild plant foods in roofed cists built in cave floors. The people often used these same cists as burial places for the dead.

The Basketmakers showed marked capacity for development and willingness to borrow ideas from people with whom they came in contact. There was steady cultural progress, and in the late A.D. 400's, significant changes began to take place.

Modified Basketmaker Period — A.D. 450 to 750

Sometime after A.D. 450, the Basketmakers started making pottery, borrowed the bow and arrow from some other group of people, and began building substantial

houses which were clustered in small villages, first in caves and later on the mesa tops. They began cultivating beans and domesticated the turkey. These changes in, and additions to, their culture are reflected in the name "Modified Basketmaker."

Weaving was still an important craft but pottery replaced baskets for many household purposes, such as cooking, storage, and water-carrying. The bow and arrow was a more efficient weapon than the atlatl; however, there is evidence that the people did more trapping and snaring of game than shooting. Beans, a high protein food, added much to the diet now that fire-proof vessels were available for cooking them. Turkeys, during this and the following period, seem to have been raised for their feathers, which replaced fur to a large extent in weaving blankets and robes.

The house structure developed during this period is called a pithouse. It was a semisubterranean room with low walls and a flat roof of posts, poles, sticks, bark, grass, and mud. The first pithouses were circular structures with a ventilator tunnel leading under the south wall. Entry was by means of a ladder through a smoke hole in the roof. Later the ventilator tunnel was replaced by an antechamber which may have had a doorway. Probably ladders were always used to gain access to the roof. Late in the period pithouses were dug deeper, and large ventilator tunnels with vertical shafts replaced the antechambers. These deep

pithouses were circular, D-shaped, or square with rounded corners. As pithouses provided ample protection, the people could live in the open near their fields. Hundreds of pithouse villages are found in the Four Corners region, indicating that the population increased in this period.

Arts and crafts continued to develop, tools were better made, and the presence of articles foreign to the Mesa Verde — such as shell, turquoise, obsidian, and salt — indicate that the people, like their ancestors, carried on trade with other tribes. By A.D. 750, the culture had undergone marked changes. Archeologists designate the following 350 years as another period.

Developmental Pueblo Period — A.D. 750 to 1100

In the latter part of the A.D. 700's, the people began to abandon pithouses as living quarters in favor of vertical-walled, flat-roofed houses built in contiguous rows. There was an increasing tendency to group these rows of rooms together in compact villages. To these the Spanish name "pueblo," meaning "village," has been given, and the people are referred to from this time on as the "Pueblos," the "village-dwellers." The name "Developmental Pueblo" is used for this period because this was when the groundwork was laid for the Great, or Classic, Pueblo Period that followed.

This was a period of experimentation and development, especially in architecture. Many types of walls were constructed early in the period, with posts, poles, stone, and adobe being used in varying combinations. By the middle of the period, coursed stone masonry evolved and was used for most construction from then on. At first the houses were joined together in curved rows, later in straight rows or E- or L-shaped structures. The open area in front of the houses formed a court where most daily activities took place. In these open courts the people continued to build pithouses, which they apparently used largely for ceremonial purposes. These pithouses, by now completely subterranean pitrooms, became more and more stylized and by A.D. 900 developed into kivas (KEY-vahs), unique ceremonial rooms which are still constructed and used by Pueblo Indians today. The word "kiva" is a Hopi Indian word for these rooms. Nearly every village had one or more kivas, pointing to the growth of a complex system of religious beliefs and practices.

In the A.D. 700's, a wooden cradle replaced the soft, padded cradle used by the Basketmakers. The old cradle allowed infants' heads to develop normally, but the new cradle flattened the backs of their skulls. This fad of head deformation continued for centuries.

Cotton was introduced, which led to the use of a true loom. Probably cotton was not grown on the Mesa Verde because the season is too short for the plants to mature. The fibers, possibly even cotton cloth, were acquired by trade.

Pottery improved throughout the period and distinctive types evolved. By A.D. 900, most vessels were made by coiling ropes of clay in the form desired, pinching each coil in turn to the one beneath it. If vessels were to be used for cooking or storage, the coils were not obliterated. This distinctive ware, known as "corrugated," was characteristic of this and the following period. All other vessels were smoothed and often decorated, usually with black designs on a white background.

Until almost A.D. 1100, this was a period of peace, expansion, and progress. Arts and crafts flourished, and a variety of tools and implements were manufactured. Innumerable farming villages dotted the region as the population continued to increase. Toward the end of the period, however, changes took place which seem to reflect growing unrest and need for security. These changes are seen in architectural modifications: double walls replaced single walls in house construction, tower structures appeared, ground-floor doorways were sealed, and occasionally rude walls were erected around the open-front courts to enclose the kivas. It is postulated that nomadic groups may have entered the Four Corners area in numbers, attracted by the fields, stored food supplies, and material possessions of the sedentary Pueblos. Perhaps the people were quarreling among themselves. Whatever the cause, the architectural trends that appeared at the end of this period became pronounced in the period that followed.

Great, or Classic, Pueblo Period — A.D. 1100 to 1300

This was the climax period of Pueblo culture in the Mesa Verde area, and arts, crafts, and architecture reached the peak of development. Material evidence, interpreted in the light of what is known of present-day Pueblo culture, points to the people having a rigid social structure. The growing importance of their religion is evidenced by the large number of kivas and the appearance of separate buildings designed solely for ceremonial use. On the basis of cultural developments and village locations, this period is divided into two phases.

The early phase (A.D. 1100 - 1200). In the early phase, the trends which started in the latter part of the Developmental Period resulted in a new village pattern. Compact pueblos replaced the sprawling open sites, and many earlier villages were abandoned. In these later villages, which were terraced structures from one to four stories high, there were



Spruce Tree House, best preserved large cliff dwelling.

no doorways into ground-floor rooms unless the rooms opened onto enclosed courts. Kivas, which formerly had been built in the open area in front of villages, were drawn back into the pueblo and surrounded by rooms, or were constructed in walled-in courts. The kivas frequently were connected by tunnels to tower structures, or to rooms in the pueblo. Nearly all house walls were double, the outer walls often being massive. Throughout the Mesa Verde region the people abandoned large acreage of what must have been good farmland to concentrate in areas near springs. Furthermore, through this and the following phase, there was a gradual decline in population as groups moved out of the area to settle farther south.

Better pottery was made and the decorations were more carefully applied. Fine craftsmanship was exercised in the manufacture of tools and implements. Articles made of turkey bone made their appearance, indicating that the people were using the bird for food. Excellent masonry of well-shaped stone blocks laid in a minimum of adobe mortar was used in construction.

The late phase (A.D. 1200 - 1300). This phase, marked by construction of the spectacularly located cliff dwellings, saw the culmination of Pueblo cultural development in Mesa Verde. Shortly after A.D. 1200, the people began to abandon their mesa and valley pueblos in favor of locations in caves or on cliff ledges, as in the Mesa Verde, or around exposed, rocky canyon heads, as in the Hovenweep area west of Mesa Verde.

Beautifully made and elaborately decorated pottery characterized this phase. Since so much material was

preserved in the caves, we know these people were adept at woodworking and were master weavers. They were artistic, decorating many items they used in everyday life. House walls were often plastered, and sometimes designs were applied in red, white, yellow, and black to add touches of color. The walls of some kivas were handsomely decorated. There were many articles for personal adornment.

The move to the cliffs is a puzzling one, and archeologists are far from finding the answer as to whom or what these people may have feared. It is difficult to picture enemy groups being able to penetrate far into the Mesa Verde, yet the evidence would seem to point to the Pueblos being afraid of some threat and taking measures to combat it. From fortified villages on the mesa top, they moved to shallow caves and cliff ledges. These were not desirable places to live. The aged, the crippled, and the very young could not negotiate the toehold trails over the cliffs. Mothers would have had to watch toddlers every minute. The caves were bitterly cold in winter. The mesa-top fields would have been more subject to raiding than ever before.

It is perhaps significant, in this land of little water, that the springs are located near the caves at the bases of the cliffs. Water was of paramount importance to these people. In the centuries they had farmed the mesa, they had cleared much of the land for garden plots and for timber for fuel and construction, thus increasing the rate of runoff and decreasing the output of the springs. The population was large and all available water was needed by the people themselves. If other groups were entering the area in numbers, they would constitute a threat to the water supply, a threat these people could ill afford.

Abandonment of the Mesa Verde — A.D. 1275 to 1300

The cliff dwellings, the highest architectural achievement of the Mesa Verde people, were not inhabited for long. Late in the A.D. 1200's, they were abandoned, the people leaving the area never to return. They drifted south to join other Pueblo people along the drainages of the Rio Grande and Little Colorado River of New Mexico and Arizona.

While the move to the caves is a puzzling one, the abandonment by A.D. 1300 of the widely populated Four Corners area, including the Mesa Verde, is even more difficult to comprehend. Probably many factors contributed to the move south. The population dwindled from A.D. 1100 on as groups drifted out, indicative of general unrest and dissatisfaction. As discussed above, there is the possibility of enemy pressure or intervillage quarreling to be considered. In this region, the success of dryland farming is largely dependent on winter precipitation. Perhaps this period was marked by light snowfalls, and the moisture

content of the soil was severely affected. The soil, farmed for centuries, might have lost its productivity. As the growing season is critically short, a minimal drop in temperature would have been disastrous if it continued for several years. Finally, the last 24 years of the 13th century were characterized by drought. This prolonged drought of A.D. 1276 - 99 was not particularly severe and was broken by years of normal precipitation. The people had survived worse droughts in the preceding centuries, so the 24-year drought certainly was not entirely responsible for the abandonment.

Why, then, did they leave? Modern research is contributing much to our understanding of these prehistoric times; it will contribute more. Science, however, can never give us the complete answer, because it cannot reconstruct for us the human emotions and reactions that were involved. It is doubtful that we ever really will know why these people, who had struggled so successfully for centuries against a not too favorable environment, gave up all they had achieved to move away from their ancient homeland and settle in a similar environment a short distance to the south.

THE RUINS

Visitors to the park will see ruins of many different types, ranging in style from simple pithouses of the A.D. 500's to cliff dwellings of the A.D. 1200's. While the cliff dwellings are the most spectacular villages because of their setting, the mesa-top ruins are more important, for they show the entire range of architectural development.

Mesa-Top Ruins

Ten surface sites on one loop of the ruins road may be visited in the sequence in which they were constructed. Starting with a Modified Basketmaker pithouse built in the late A.D. 500's, you go on to deeper pithouses of the late 600's and early 700's. These are followed by stops at developmental pueblos dating approximately A.D. 850, 900, 950, 1000, and 1075. Next comes Sun Point Pueblo, a structure of the early phase of the Classic Period. This village is interesting because its inhabitants deliberately tore down the roofs and walls and, taking this salvaged material with them, moved to a nearby canyon and built a cliff dwelling. The last stop is Sun Temple, a great ceremonial structure of the late phase of the Classic Period.

Cliff Dwellings

Many of these ruins of the late phase of the Classic Period are seen from canyon rims. They range in size from



Cliff Palace from canyon rim.

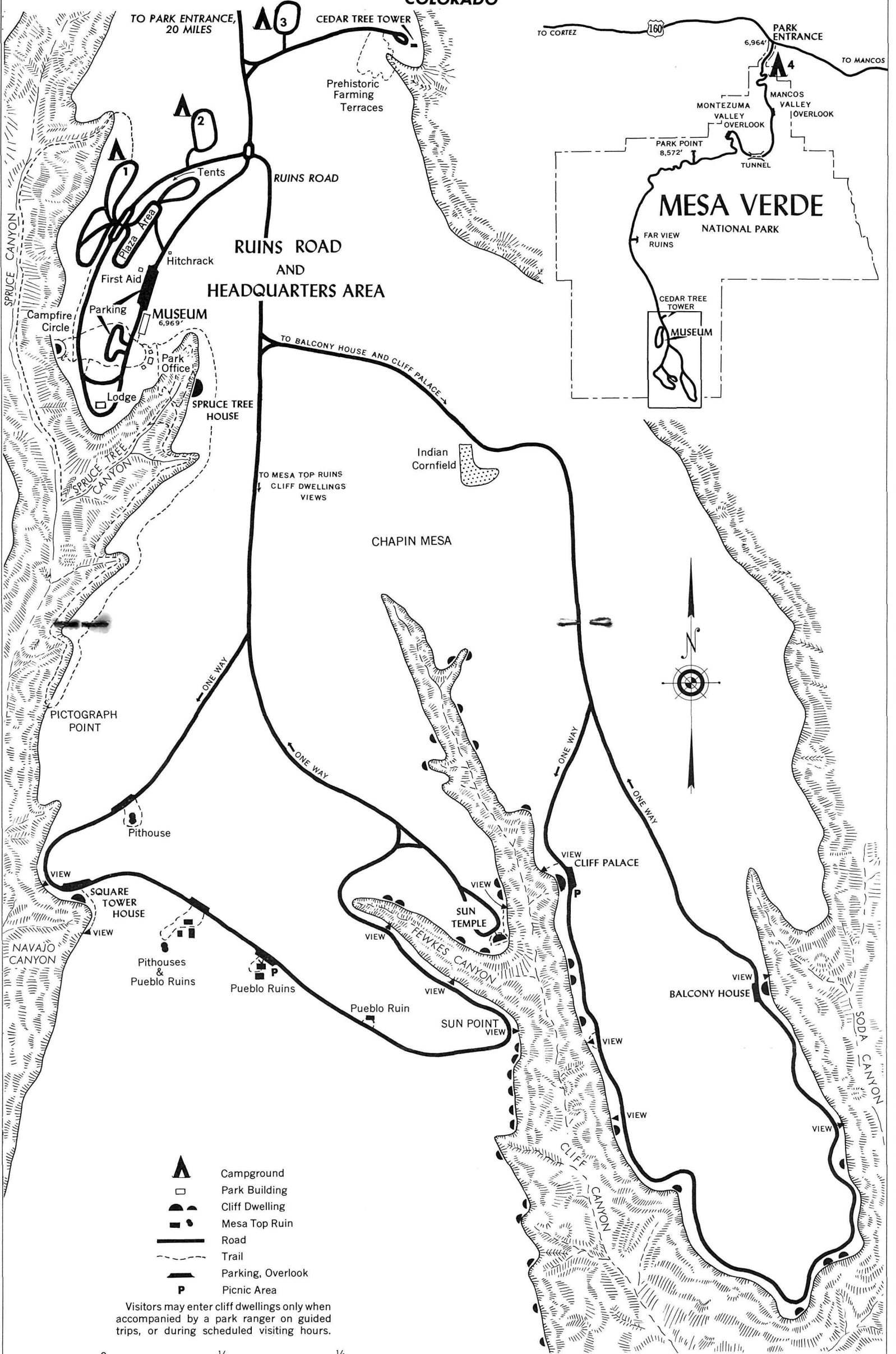
tiny storage rooms tucked away in almost inaccessible cliff niches to large villages containing scores of rooms. The largest and most famous of the cliff dwellings is Cliff Palace, the first major ruin discovered in the Mesa Verde. Spruce Tree House, in the canyon back of the museum, is the best preserved large cliff dwelling. Other famous cliff dwellings seen along the ruins road are Square Tower House, Sunset House, Mummy House, Oak Tree House, New Fire House, Fire Temple — an unusual ceremonial structure built in a cave — House of Many Windows, Hemenway House, and Balcony House.

HISTORIC EVENTS

Following abandonment of the Mesa Verde by the Pueblo Indians, there is no evidence that the area was occupied again by man until settlement of the surrounding valleys, in the 1870's, drove the Ute Indians to take refuge in the mesa's many canyons. Nomadic bands probably

MESA VERDE

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SCALE IN MILES

hunted in the area from time to time, but the silent, deserted villages decayed and fell to ruin. History did not bypass the Mesa Verde, however, and the following outline summarizes a few events which had bearing on its history.

Mid-1700's. Spanish traders penetrated southwestern Colorado. Possibly one of these men climbed the Mesa Verde and, looking down across its forested top, was inspired to call it the "green tableland."

1765. Don Juan Maria de Rivera led the first official Spanish expedition into the area and explored the mountains to the east and north of the Mesa Verde.

1776. The Spanish priests, Dominguez and Escalante, camped on the Mancos River at the foot of Mesa Verde August 10 and 11. The trail they followed past the Mesa Verde into the Utah Lakes area became famous as "The Old Spanish Trail."

1821. Mexico won independence from Spain and the Mesa Verde became Mexican territory.

1829. Antonio Armijo passed down the Mancos Canyon, which bisects the Mesa Verde, on the historic trek

Square Tower House.



by which he blazed an overland trail from Santa Fe, N. Mex., to the Pueblo of Los Angeles, on the California coast.

1848. The Mesa Verde region was acquired by the United States from Mexico by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

1859. Prof. J. S. Newberry, geologist with the Macomb Expedition, climbed the Mesa Verde and described the view from its north rim. His report is the first mention in print of the mesa.

1874. W. H. Jackson, famous "Pioneer Photographer," discovered, named, and photographed the first cliff dwelling, *Two Story Cliff House*, in the Mancos Canyon.

1888. Discovery of Cliff Palace, Spruce Tree House, and Square Tower House by Richard Wetherill and Charles Mason, ranchers of Mancos, Colo.

1891. Gustaf Nordenskiold, Swedish scientist, conducted first scientific excavations in the cliff dwellings.

1900. The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, an organization of women dedicated to securing National Park status for Mesa Verde, was incorporated and started working with scientists and Congressmen for a park bill.

1906. Mesa Verde National Park was established by act of Congress, June 29.

1908. The first park ranger-guided trips were conducted to the cliff dwellings. Dr. Jesse Walter Fewkes excavated Spruce Tree House.

1909. Dr. Fewkes excavated Cliff Palace.

1910. Dr. J. L. Nusbaum excavated Balcony House.

1913. The first entrance road was completed.

1915. The first campfire programs were conducted.

1917. The first museum was established.

1915 - 22. Dr. Fewkes excavated several cliff dwellings and mesa-top sites.

1924 to present. Archeological survey, excavation, and research conducted by the National Park Service, Gila Pueblo, the Universities of Arizona and Colorado, and the National Geographic Society.

1958. Archeological survey and excavation started by the Wetherill Mesa Archeological Project, a part of the MISSION 66 program for Mesa Verde National Park. This project will take 6 years to complete.

GEOLOGY

The park is important geologically as the type locality of the Mesaverde group, which consists, in descending order, of Cliff House sandstone, Menefee formation, and Point Lookout sandstone. This group, of Upper Cretaceous age, is underlain to a depth of 2,200 feet by the Mancos shale. Marine fossils characterize the Cliff House and Point

Lookout sandstones, and plant fossils abound in the Menefee formation, the great coal-bearing stratum of western Colorado.

Mesa Verde is an erosional remnant. The upheavals which accompanied the mountain-building to the north and east lifted, tilted, and cracked the great beds of sandstone and shale. Erosional forces have eaten away at the cracks throughout the millennia to form the maze of canyons and intertonguing mesas which is the Mesa Verde today.

Entering the park at an elevation of 6,964 feet, along a ridge separating the Mancos Valley to the east from the Montezuma Valley to the west, you see before you a steep, talus slope (the Mancos shale) topped by a bold promontory (the Point Lookout sandstone). As you drive west along the northern escarpment of the Mesa Verde, you will see that the road cuts through the Menefee formation, exposing shale and beds of coal. After topping the rim and heading south, you glimpse the dull golden cliffs of the mesa's many canyons, which drain southward into the Mancos River. These are exposures of Cliff House sandstone, in which are located the many shallow caves and ledges containing the cliff dwellings. The lower canyon walls are the Menefee formation. The mesa dips south and west at such a degree that the Point Lookout sandstone is not exposed in any of the canyons.

From Park Point on the north rim, the highest elevation in the Mesa Verde (8,572 feet), you get an excellent panorama of the celebrated Four Corners region of Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. This spectacular area is a striking illustration of the effects of erosion and mountain building on the land. Also from Park Point, or anywhere along the north rim, Mesa Verde's name, the "green tableland," takes on meaning as you look southward over the verdant expanse of forest and brush covering the mesa top.

Today, the Mesa Verde is like a great fortress, towering high above the surrounding valleys. Why, you may ask, did the Indians choose to live here? The answer is found in the geological phenomena of the mesa. When the ancient Basketmakers reached the Mesa Verde they were farmers. As such they needed three things: arable land, a permanent supply of water, and, since they had no houses, shelter from the elements. The mesa supplied all three.

Following the uplifting of the area, long before man appeared, a deep layer of windblown red soil from the south and west was deposited on the mesa top. This rich soil today supports a varied plantlife, and dryland farming is practicable. Under the soil lies the deep-bedded Cliff House sandstone, a porous formation which absorbs water from snow and rain and acts as a reservoir. The Cliff House sandstone lies on the Menefee, a formation characterized by lenses of dense, impervious shale. Water percolating down through the sandstone cannot penetrate the shale, hence it flows along the contact between the two to appear as seeps and springs at the heads of canyons and draws and

along cliff walls wherever the sandstone dips low. In these spots, the exposed, water-laden sandstone peels back to form shallow caves and overhangs. The Indians found shelter in these; the seeps and springs provided them with water; and the rich red soil produced excellent crops. But for the area's geologic history, the story of man in the Mesa Verde might be told in a few words.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The most interesting thing about Mesa Verde's plants and animals is their association with the prehistoric Indians. While the ancient people were farmers, they also hunted, snared, and trapped birds and mammals and collected roots, nuts, greens, herbs, seeds, and berries to vary their diet. They used timber, shrubs, bark, and grasses in construction and many woody plants in the manufacture of tools and implements. They used fiber-yielding plants, such as yucca, nettle, and flax, in weaving. Tied bundles of herbs found in the ruins indicate the use of other plants for medicinal and ceremonial purposes. Animals, while important as food, served the people in other ways. From hides and feathers, they made warm garments; sinew they used for sewing and binding; and they used bones extensively in the manufacture of a variety of tools, implements, and ornaments. They even utilized antlers, horns, hooves, claws, and talons.

Mesa Verde plants are typical of the Upper Sonoran and lower part of the Transition life zones of the semiarid, mesa-canyon lands of the Colorado Plateau. A pinyon-juniper forest covers much of the mesa top, giving way at higher elevations to dense stands of scrub oak, mountain-mahogany, fendlerbush, serviceberry, and other shrubs. Small groves of Douglas-fir and Rocky Mountain juniper characterize moist draws and canyon heads, and there are a few isolated stands of quaking aspen and ponderosa pine.

In the spring, flowering shrubs dominate the mesa, and a variety of wildflowers bloom from early spring to late autumn. Autumn coloring is at its best the last week in September.

Many plant remains from the ruins have been identified. Other plants which grow on the mesa are used today by Indians, and it is presumed the ancient people also utilized them. Yucca, juniper, pinyon, Douglas-fir, grasses, mustards, cactuses, sumac, gooseberries, and currants were valuable plants used by the prehistoric inhabitants.

Mammals. Over 50 species of mammals inhabit the Mesa Verde. Frequently seen along roadsides are Rocky Mountain mule deer, the most common large mammal in the park. Rocky Mountain bighorn, once native, have been reintroduced and are doing well. There are a few black bear, and infrequently a mountain lion is reported. Bobcats, coyotes, and gray foxes are common and chipmunks and

rock squirrels abound, as do many other small rodents. Cottontails are abundant.

The bones, hides, and antlers most commonly found in ruins are those of deer. Bones and hides of other animals which still inhabit the park have been identified. Rodents, the most common small mammals, were prize food items, and their pelts were carefully tanned and fashioned into a variety of bags and other leather goods.

Birds. Over 170 species of birds have been recorded. Resident birds, typical of the Southwest mesa-canyon country, include several species of hawks, owls, woodpeckers, jays, chickadees, and nuthatches. Also resident are golden eagles, grouse, turkeys (reintroduced), crows, ravens, and magpies. Other species are summer or winter residents, and there are many migrants.

The most numerous bird bones found in the ruins are those of the turkey, which was domesticated. Delicate snares found in the cliff ruins probably were used to trap small birds with brightly colored feathers; if so, these birds' fragile bones have not been preserved.

Reptiles. Lizards are the most common reptiles. The ancient people apparently admired the speed and grace of these little animals, for representations of lizards were frequently painted or molded on pottery or carved on building stones or cliffs.

There are not many species of snakes and only one poisonous reptile, the prairie rattlesnake. The snake most often seen is the common bull snake. Perhaps the prehistoric people regarded snakes in the same light as some Pueblo people do today — as messengers of the gods, ceremonial creatures which are not molested.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

For more detailed information on this area, you may purchase other publications at the park through the Mesa Verde Museum Association, a nonprofit organization. You may also order publications from the association, whose address is Box 38, Mesa Verde National Park, Colo. The association will send you a list of titles and prices.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The cliff dwellings are best photographed in the afternoon, for most of the caves face west-southwest. The finest pictures are taken from the canyon rims. Spruce Tree House, in the canyon back of the museum, and Square Tower House, Sunset House, Oak Tree House, New Fire House, Fire Temple, and Cliff Palace, on the ruins road, are excellent subjects. A telephoto lens is needed for other cliff dwellings seen on the drives.

Large mesa-top ruins, such as Sun Temple, Cedar Tree Tower, Far View House, and Pipe Shrine House, may be photographed any time during the day.

Excellent scenic views are obtained from the Mancos and Montezuma Valley Overlooks and Park Point, on the entrance road. Many fine canyon views are found along the ruins road.

There are few opportunities to photograph wildlife in Mesa Verde. Deer are usually seen early or late in the day when the light is poor. Spruce Canyon, paralleling Campground No. 1, is a good spot for birds and small mammals because there are waterholes in the canyon bottom. *You must secure a permit from the chief park ranger for use of the Spruce Canyon Trail.*

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

The park entrance is midway between Cortez and Mancos, Colo., on U.S. 160, which connects with a number of major highways that approach the park from all directions. You must drive 21 miles of mountainous road from the entrance to park headquarters, where museums, a lodge, and campgrounds are located.

Continental Trailways operates bus service to the park from Durango and Cortez, Colo. Frontier Airlines schedules daily flights to these cities. The nearest rail approaches to the park are at Grand Junction, Colo., and Gallup, N. Mex. Rent-a-car service is available at both Durango and Cortez.

PARK SEASONS

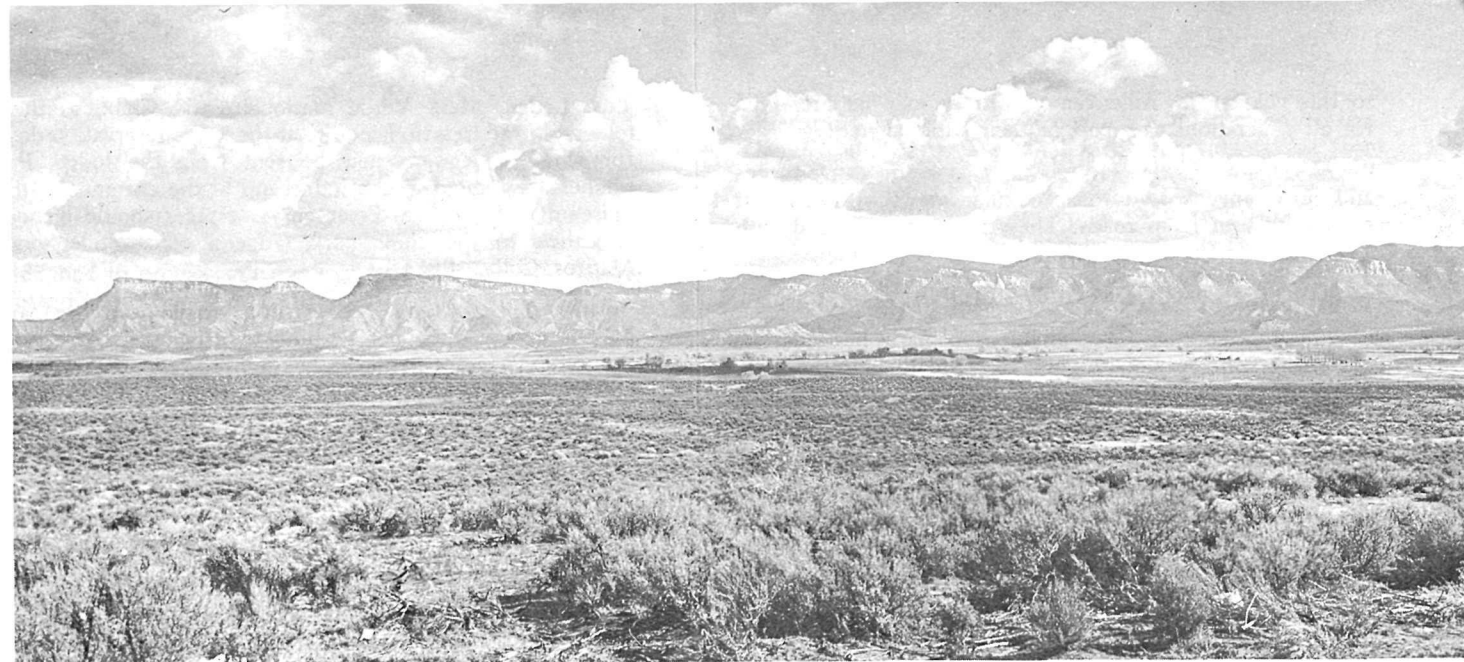
Summer. May 15 to October 15, when interpretive activities, accommodations, and other services are available.

Winter. October 15 to May 15. Lodging, meals, groceries, gas, and other supplies *are not available in the park.* The museum is open, and you may drive one loop of the ruins road, viewing cliff dwellings from canyon rims and visiting the mesa-top ruins.

WHAT TO DO IN THE PARK

In order to give you an understanding of the park and a glimpse into the lives of the prehistoric inhabitants, the National Park Service maintains museums, road and trail-side exhibits, self-guiding tours, and (during the summer) a schedule of park ranger-guided trips and campfire programs. *There are no charges for these services.*

Information and orientation. On arrival at park headquarters, you are urged to go first to the information desk



Mesa Verde from the Montezuma Valley.

in the museum. Attendants on duty here will assist you in planning your visit.

Museum. The park museum is the key to understanding the Mesa Verde and its prehistoric inhabitants. Exhibits and dioramas show the arts, crafts, and remains of the ancient Pueblo people, as well as the arts and crafts of Indians now living in the Four Corners region. The museum is open daily: 7:45 to 6 p.m. from June 16 through Labor Day; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. the rest of the year.

Ruins road drive. The two self-guiding loops of this road total 12 miles. Many cliff dwellings may be viewed from canyon rim vantage points. Ten excavated mesa-top ruins may be visited; these demonstrate the stages in the development of Pueblo architecture. Exhibits at the stops explain the points of interest and features seen. Open daily: 7 a.m. to sunset from May 15 to October 15; 8 a.m. to sunset the rest of the year.

Ranger-guided ruins trips. During the summer season, park ranger-interpreters conduct trips through some of the outstanding cliff dwellings. The schedule of trips is subject to change without notice, so be sure to check at the museum information desk for the daily schedule.

Campfire talks. Weather permitting, campfire programs are conducted each evening from early June to mid-September. The park rangers' talks deal with prehistoric and modern Indians of the Southwest, and the archeology, history, and natural history of the area. Times: 8 p.m. from early June to Labor Day; 7:30 p.m. from Labor Day to close.

Entrance road features. There are five numbered stops at points of interest along the entrance road. To avoid crossing traffic lanes, you are urged to visit Nos. 1 and 2 on your way into the park; Nos. 3, 4, and 5 on your way out.

No. 1. *Montezuma Valley Overlook.* Outstanding view of the valley and mountains to the north and west.

No. 2. *Park Point.* Halfway between the entrance and headquarters, Park Point affords superb views of the entire Four Corners area.

No. 3. *Cedar Tree Tower.* A ceremonial structure of the Classic Pueblo Period, located half a mile off the entrance road just above park headquarters.

No. 4. *Far View House and Pipe Shrine House.* Beside the road 4 miles above headquarters, these two large mesa-top pueblos date between A.D. 1000 and 1200.

No. 5. *Mancos Valley Overlook.* Located on the side of Point Lookout, the towering promontory you see on entering the park, this overlook affords a view of the valley and mountains to the east and north.

Hiking. A few short trails are available for hiking. *Written permits for the use of these must first be obtained at the chief park ranger's office in the park museum and must be returned to this office on completion of a hike.*

This ordinarily desirable activity is not compatible with much of the area. Mesa Verde National Park is a museum in itself and must be preserved as such. The fragile and totally irreplaceable ruins and the fragmentary story they now tell of ancient man must be given maximum protection

so this chapter in American prehistory may be preserved for all generations as a part of their national heritage.

Horseback riding. Horseback trips along canyon rims and into canyons lead to spectacular views of ruins that cannot be seen from roads. These trips are arranged with a concessioner.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Lodging. Spruce Tree Lodge (in park headquarters area) offers the only overnight accommodations in the park. Sleeping units range from tent and housekeeping to standard and de luxe cabins. Some cabins are located by the main lodge; others, in Plaza Area one-half mile north of the main lodge.

Season: May 15 to October 15. *Reservations:* From June 1 through Labor Day, it is well to make reservations in advance. Address: Reservation Manager, The Mesa Verde Co., Mesa Verde National Park, Colo.

Meals. During the lodge season, meals are served at appointed hours. Snackbar service is also available.

Camp, trailer, and picnic grounds. Free campgrounds are open during non-freezing weather, from approximately May 1 to November 1. Camping and trailer parking is permitted only in the designated campgrounds. Camping is limited to 14 days from June 1 through September 7; the limit may be extended at other times. Reservations are *not* made for campsites. Be sure to ask about available campsites at the entrance station before driving to headquarters.

Campgrounds are equipped with water, firewood, modern sanitary facilities, tables, and fireplaces. Trailer sites do not include tables, fireplaces, or utility hookups.

Campground No. 1. Park headquarters; mainly campsites.

Campground No. 2. Park headquarters; mainly trailer sites.

Campground No. 3. Entered from the Cedar Tree Tower road, 1 mile above headquarters. Mainly for organized groups.

Campground No. 4. Located 1 mile above park entrance; emergency campground *only* for use of latecomers.

Picnic sites. One on each loop of the ruins road; equipped with tables and benches; comfort stations are close by. *No fires* are permitted in the picnic grounds. Picnicking is permitted *only* at these sites or in the campgrounds.

SERVICES

Mail service. You may have your mail sent in care of General Delivery, Mesa Verde National Park, Colo., or, if you are a lodge guest, in care of Spruce Tree Lodge.

Telegraph and telephone. Visitors should use Spruce

Tree Lodge, Mesa Verde National Park, Colo., as their telegraphic address and inquire at the lodge reservation desk for wires. Telegrams may be sent from the lodge. Pay phones are located at the lodge and at the entrance to the museum parking area. Emergency messages should be sent or called to the chief park ranger's office (telephone: Mancos, Colo., 2861).

Bus transportation. For visitors arriving in the park by bus or for those not wishing to drive their own cars, Spruce Tree Lodge furnishes bus transportation to the ruins and a sunset trip to Park Point.

Medical service. A registered nurse is on duty at the First Aid Station by the museum parking area each day during the summer and from Monday through Friday the balance of the year. Hours: 8 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Religious services. Nondenominational services are conducted each Sunday morning and evening at the Campfire Circle, and Catholic Mass is said in the chief park ranger's office in the museum each Sunday morning throughout the summer.

Kiddie corral is operated by the Mesa Verde Co. Supervised play for children two to six years old. Open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the summer.

Service station is located beside the grocery store. Towing and major repair service may be arranged through Spruce Tree Lodge.

Groceries, campers' supplies, etc. From May 15 to October 15, the Mesa Verde Co. operates a small grocery store near the lodge. Ice may be obtained from a coin-operated machine beside the store. Soft-drink dispensers are located beside the store and in the campgrounds.

Laundry and dry cleaning. Limited laundry service may be obtained at the Mesa Verde Co. laundry in the Plaza Area. Commercial laundry and dry-cleaning services may be arranged at the grocery store. Hand-laundry tubs are located in the permanent comfort stations in Campground No. 1.

Showers. The Mesa Verde Co. maintains coin-operated showers in the permanent comfort stations in Campground No. 1. Inquire at Spruce Tree Lodge for more information on showers.

Newsstand. Newspapers, magazines, film, and other items may be procured at Spruce Tree Lodge.

Gift and curio shop. The Spruce Tree Lodge shop carries authentic Indian handicrafts, books, and souvenirs.

Horseback riding. The MV Pack and Saddle Co. operates from approximately Memorial Day to Labor Day. Rides of 1, 2, and 4 hours are available. All parties must be accompanied by a wrangler-guide. Reservations may be made in advance with the MV Pack and Saddle Co., Mesa Verde National Park, Colo.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

This is *your* park. It was set aside by Congress for you to enjoy. Congress has charged, however, that it shall be kept *unimpaired* for the use and enjoyment of *all future generations*. Please cooperate with the National Park Service in observing the rules and regulations which have been designed to protect and preserve all prehistoric and natural features and to provide for your safety and comfort.

Preservation of prehistoric features. Do not disturb, mar, or remove from place any antiquity. *Do not enter any cliff dwelling* except with a park ranger on a guided trip or when a ruin is open for visitation with a park ranger on duty. Severe penalties, including both fine and imprisonment, will be imposed for any violation of these regulations.

Preservation of natural features. Do not disturb, mar, or remove from place any rocks, fossils, minerals, or plants, and do not pick wildflowers or strip bark from juniper trees.

Protection of wildlife. The park is a sanctuary for all wildlife. Teasing, frightening, capturing, feeding, wounding, or killing any bird or other animal is prohibited.

Firearms. The use or display of firearms is prohibited, and possession of firearms must be declared on entering the park.

Fires are permitted *only* in fireplaces in designated campgrounds. Never leave a fire unattended. Be sure your fire is out before you leave camp; extinguish it with water. Report all brush, grass, or forest fires to the nearest park ranger, ranger station, or museum.

Firewood. Use only the firewood provided in the campgrounds. Do not use an ax or knife on any tree or shrub or strip the bark from any juniper tree.

Smoking. Do not throw cigarettes, cigars, pipe ashes, or matches from your car, and be sure these are *out* before discarding them anywhere in the park. In periods of extreme fire danger, smoking will be prohibited in moving vehicles and along park trails. You will be notified of this at the entrance.

Trash. Do not throw or dump trash anywhere except in trash receptacles that are provided throughout the park. Leave the park clean and beautiful.

Dogs, cats, and other pets are allowed in the park if they are leashed, caged, or otherwise physically restricted at *all* times. Pets are *not* allowed in public buildings or on any park trails.

Throwing or rolling of rocks or other objects over the cliffs is prohibited.

Hitchhiking is prohibited in all National Parks.

Camping and picnicking. These activities are permitted *only* in designated sites. Camping is limited to 14 days from

June 1 through September 7; the limit may be extended at other times. Campers may not leave their campsites unattended for more than 24 hours. Dumping refuse from trailers, except at designated receptacles in the campgrounds, is not allowed.

Ruins road. This road may be used *only* from 7 a.m. to sunset during the summer and from 8 a.m. to sunset the remainder of the year.

Hiking may be done by written permit only. Permits are issued at the chief park ranger's office. (See "What to Do in the Park.")

Accidents. All accidents must be reported to the nearest park ranger station as soon as possible after the occurrence.

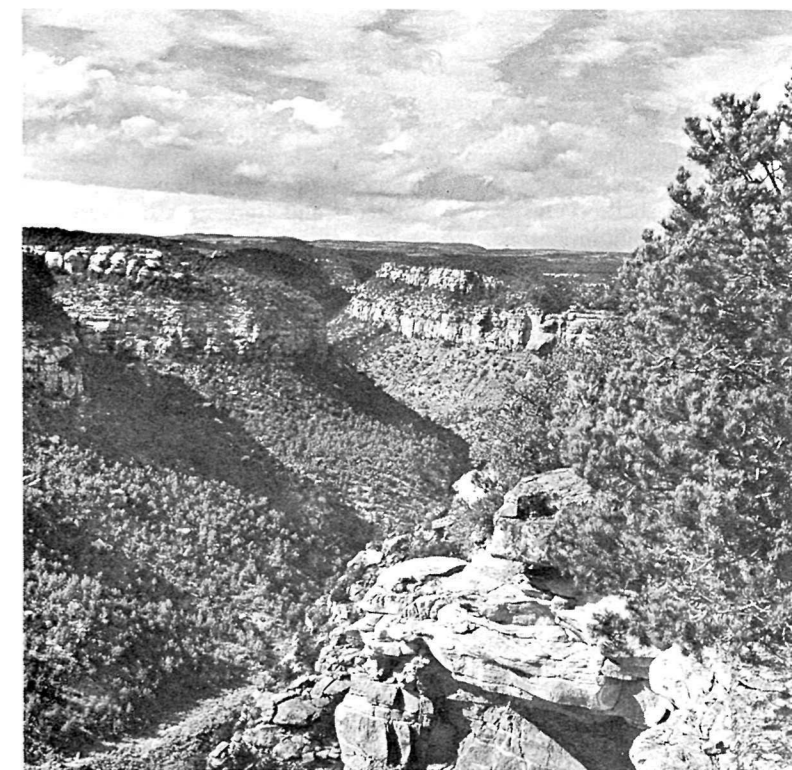
Operation of motor vehicles. No wheeled device shall be operated *outside constructed roadways or designated parking areas*. Motor vehicles shall be operated only with a park permit, which must be carried in the vehicle for which issued and must be exhibited on request to park rangers.

Park roads have numerous curves and grades, and courtesy and caution must be exercised to prevent accidents. Observe posted speed limits. Put your car in gear, or "park," and set the brake when you leave it.

THE FEDERAL ANTIQUITIES ACT

The Federal Antiquities Act of 1906 specifically prohibits the appropriation, injury, destruction, or removal from place of any object of antiquity, or the excavation,

A typical canyon view.





Balcony House, North Court.

injury, or destruction of any ruin on Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretaries of Interior, Agriculture, and War, except such scientific research or excavation as these Secretaries may authorize. The act provides penalties for any violations.

This act was designated to protect America's priceless heritage of an unrecorded past, and it behooves every citizen to assist in this protection by respecting the terms of the act and by reporting to proper authorities any violations they may observe. Every broken bit of pottery, bone, stone, and shell, every piece of charcoal and trace of ash, every stray building stone, etc., tells a story which, when correlated with other such stories, brings back a chapter from the vanished past. If such articles are disturbed or removed from place, the story is lost forever.

OTHER ARCHEOLOGICAL AREAS

In addition to Mesa Verde National Park, a number of National Monuments in the Four Corners region also preserve outstanding ruins that are evidence of the same prehistoric way of life. The National Monuments are Aztec Ruins and Chaco (Cha-ko) Canyon, in New Mexico; Canyon de Chelly (Shay) and Navajo, in Arizona; and Hovenweep, in Colorado and Utah.

ADMINISTRATION

Mesa Verde National Park was established in 1906 to preserve thousands of structures and other remains which prehistoric Pueblo Indians left on the mesa tops and in the caves of a score of rugged canyons of a great plateau in southwestern Colorado. The park contains 51,334 acres.

A superintendent, representing the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior, is the official in charge of the park. All comments and inquiries regarding the management and protection of the area should be addressed to him. His post office address is Mesa Verde National Park, Colo.

MISSION 66

MISSION 66 is a program designed to be completed by 1966, the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service, which will assure the maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources of the National Park System in such ways and by such means as will make them available for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Mesa Verde National Park and visitors to this area will benefit in many ways from MISSION 66. Under this program, many new ruins which are being excavated will provide additional knowledge of the prehistoric inhabitants of the area. This part of the program, known as the Wetherill Mesa Archeological Project, will be completed in a few years. Until that time, it is not possible to allow visitors access to the excavation area, which is located in a remote section of the park. MISSION 66 also will provide new campgrounds and overnight accommodations, improved roads and parking areas, and other related facilities.

VISITOR-USE FEES

Vehicle permit fees are collected at the entrance station. If you arrive when the entrance station is unattended, you must obtain a permit before leaving the park. Fees are not listed herein because they are subject to change; but the information may be obtained by writing to the superintendent.

Fee revenues are deposited in the U. S. Treasury; they offset, in part, the cost of operating and maintaining the National Parks.

Cover: Cliff Palace.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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NATIONAL PARK
Colorado**

