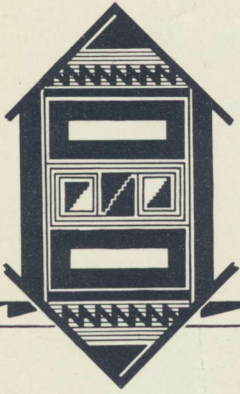


NAVAJO

NATIONAL MONUMENT • ARIZONA



NAVAJO

NATIONAL MONUMENT

United States Department of the Interior, Oscar L. Chapman, *Secretary*
National Park Service, Arthur E. Demaray, *Director*



Perched high in their matchless settings, the three great cliff dwellings of Navajo National Monument are the most striking remains of ancient occupancy of the canyon country of northeastern Arizona.

FROM ABOUT A. D. 300 until about A. D. 1300 there lived in the San Juan River drainage near the "Four Corners" of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona, Indians we now call the Anasazi (a Navajo word which means "The Ancient Ones"). Before A. D. 300 the Anasazi probably existed as small bands who wandered over the colorful plateau country hunting and trapping and gathering nuts and seeds; it is possible that they also did a little haphazard farming.

About A. D. 300 farming became more important in their economy. With a better and more dependable food supply population increased, people began to be more sedentary, crafts improved, and more permanent homes were built. By A. D. 1100 large villages of several hundred people each had been developed, as well as many smaller communities.

As time passed, three cultural centers—really prehistoric tribes—had differentiated from each other: the Chaco Canyon group, in northwestern New Mexico; the Mesa Verde, in southwestern Colorado; and the Kayenta, in northeastern Arizona.

The three cliff dwellings of Navajo National Monument represent this third group. In these villages the culture of the Kayenta

Anasazi reached its peak and then deteriorated swiftly. A combination of circumstances, chief of which probably were soil erosion caused by poor agricultural practices and disease brought about by lack of sanitation, resulted in a rapid loss of population. The remaining Anasazi abandoned the Kayenta region shortly after A. D. 1300.

Betatakin, meaning "Hillside House," is the most accessible ruin in the monument. It is a well-preserved "apartment house," 700 years old. As determined by the tree-ring dating method, this ruin was occupied between the years A. D. 1242 and approximately A. D. 1300.

Betatakin once had almost 150 rooms, of which more than 50 were residential, 6 ceremonial (kivas), 13 open courts or patios, about 30 storage, and 2 grinding rooms. The last-mentioned are among the many rooms which are still well-preserved.

Betatakin is built on the sloping floor of a great cave, carved by stream meander and wind erosion in the side of a soft, red, sandstone cliff which forms the sheer and vertical 500-foot north wall of a picturesque and beautiful canyon. The cave roof projects far out over the village. Sand storms had piled



A portion of Betatakin Ruin

among the central rooms an accumulation in which oaks 4 inches in diameter and varied shrubbery had taken root.

In the canyon fronting Betatakin are tall, slender quaking aspen; boxelder, Douglas-fir, and pinyon deck the talus slopes; and juniper and pinyon cap the bordering cliffs.

Betatakin was discovered in 1909 by Byron Cummings and the late John Wetherill, and was excavated and stabilized in 1917 by Neil M. Judd, of the Smithsonian Institution.

The pottery found in Betatakin and the other Segi cliff ruins is of exceptional quality, artistically painted, and includes both black-on-white ware and varieties of polychrome or "orangeware."

KEET SEEL

Keet Seel is the largest cliff ruin in Arizona and one of the last to be abandoned in the Segi Canyon region. It may be reached by horse or on foot from Betatakin by an 11-mile trail, which is primitive and crosses the canyon stream many times, making the trip on foot a difficult one.

Horses may be obtained from the nearby Navajos through the superintendent of the monument. One full day is required for the round trip.

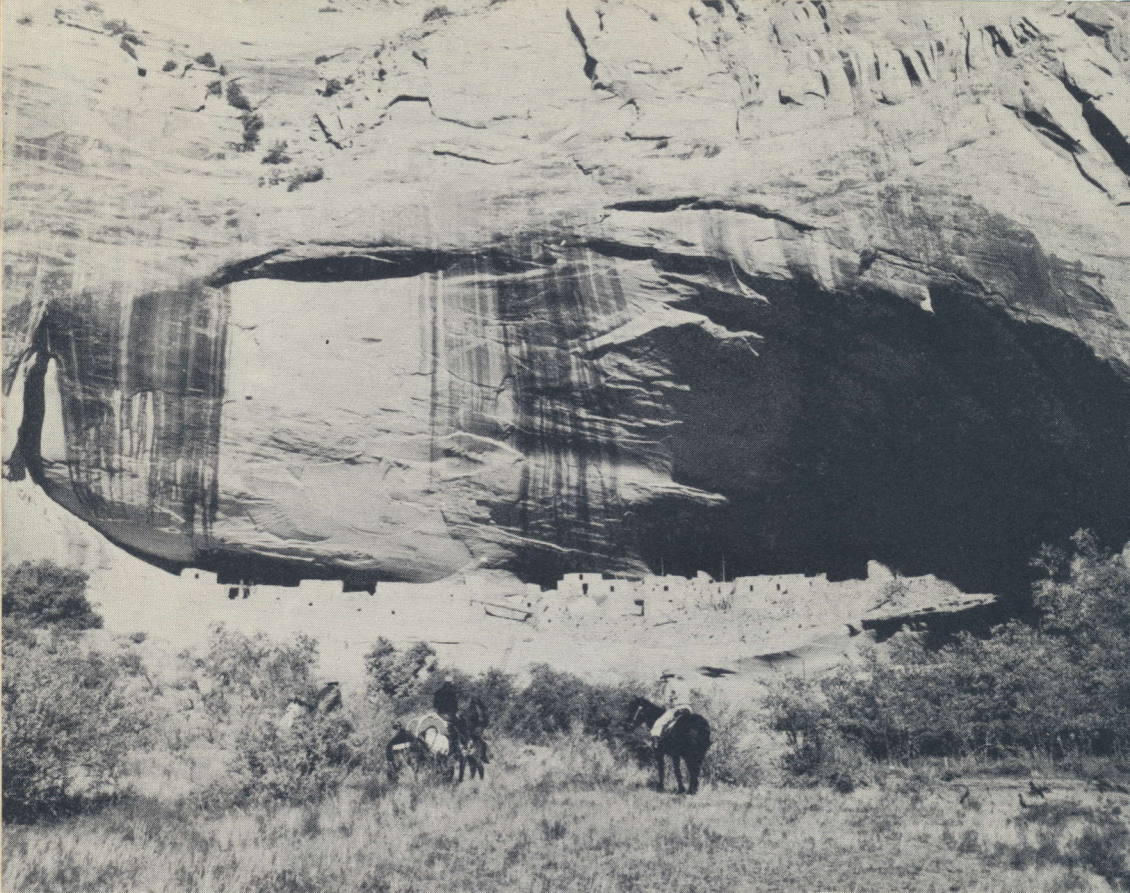
Keet Seel was discovered in 1893 by Richard Wetherill. It was partially excavated and stabilized in 1934, and today still gives the impression that it might have been abandoned only a few years ago. Actually, almost 700 years have passed since the Anasazi last lived in this cliff city.

INSCRIPTION HOUSE

Inscription House lies almost 20 miles in an air line west of Betatakin, the headquarters area. This fine ruin, the smallest of the three (with approximately 75 rooms), was so named because of an inscription found scratched into the plastered wall of one of the rooms. Weather-beaten, little remains of the original inscription. It is generally believed to be of Spanish origin and to date from the 1660's, but the exact wording has been variously reported. John Wetherill, from his second trip to Inscription House in 1909, remembered the inscription thus:

CHOS
1661 A d n

with more letters which were illegible.



Keet Seel Ruin

THE MONUMENT

Navajo National Monument was established by Presidential proclamation on March 20, 1909, and contains 360 acres of federally owned land. It is completely surrounded by the Navajo Indian Reservation and lies on the edge of a "roadless area" nearly 100 miles from paved highways.

RELATED AREAS

Other cliff dwellings in the National Park System include those in Canyon de Chelly, Walnut Canyon, Montezuma Castle, and Tonto National Monuments in Arizona; Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado; and Bandelier and Gila Cliff Dwellings National

Monuments in New Mexico.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

Only designated campgrounds and picnic benches are available in the monument, but trading posts and guest ranches in Kayenta, Tonalea, Goulding, Tuba City, Shonto, and Rainbow Lodge offer modern accommodations.

Because of the need of protecting the ruins, and the difficult unmarked trails by which they are reached, no one is allowed to enter any ruin unless accompanied by a guide.

Betatakin may be viewed from the binocular station on Betatakin Point at any time, with or without a guide.



Inscription House Ruin

Trips to Betatakin should start at 9 a. m. or 1 p. m.; and to Keet Seel at 8 a. m.

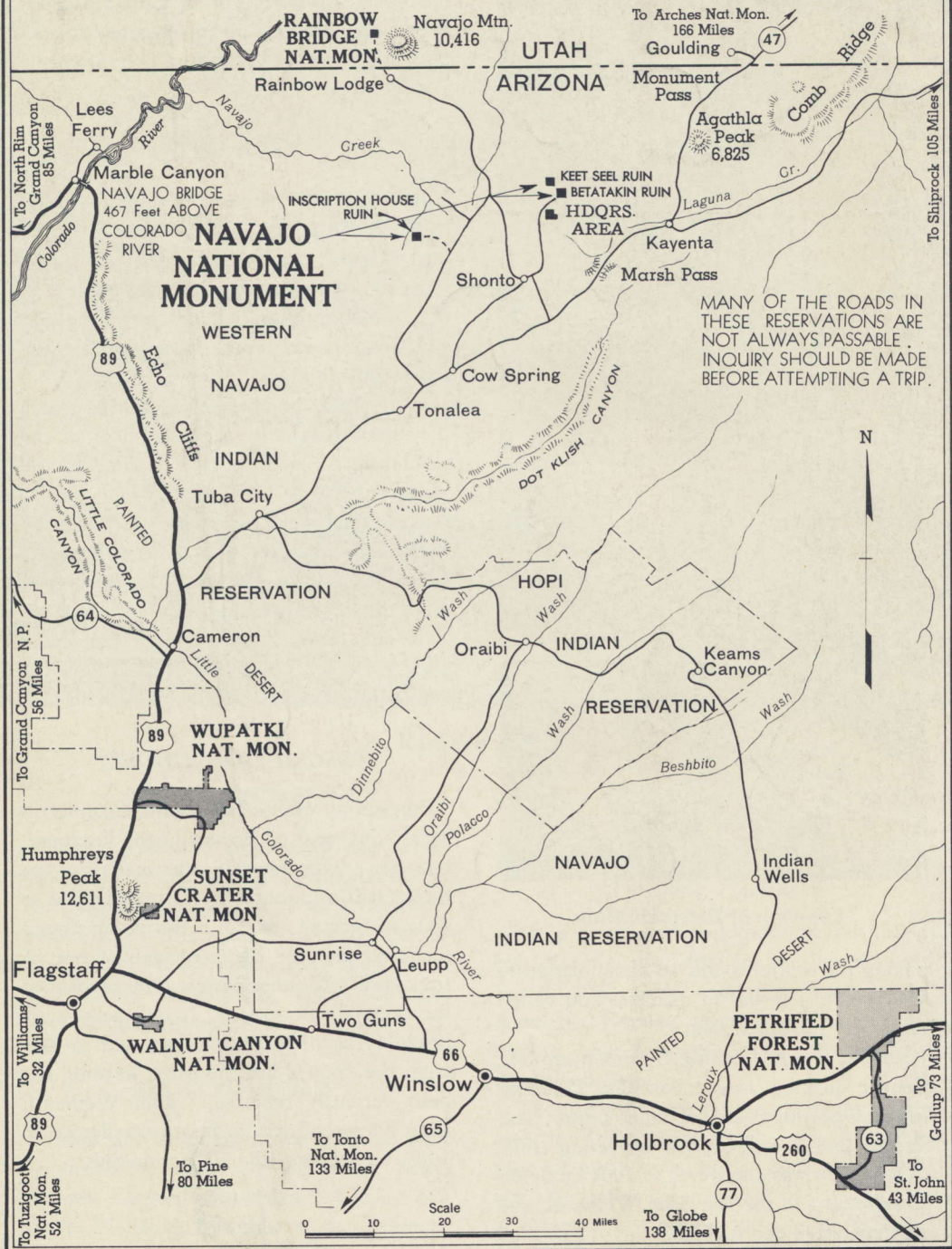
ADMINISTRATION

Navajo National Monument is a part of the National Park System administered by the National Park Service, United States Depart-

ment of the Interior. The Superintendent, Navajo National Monument, is in immediate charge and inquiries regarding the monument should be addressed to him at Tonalea, Ariz.

Monument headquarters are located near Betatakin, and visitors to outlying areas may obtain information and guidance by calling there first.

NAVAJO NATIONAL MONUMENT AND VICINITY



MANY OF THE ROADS IN THESE RESERVATIONS ARE NOT ALWAYS PASSABLE. INQUIRY SHOULD BE MADE BEFORE ATTEMPTING A TRIP.

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