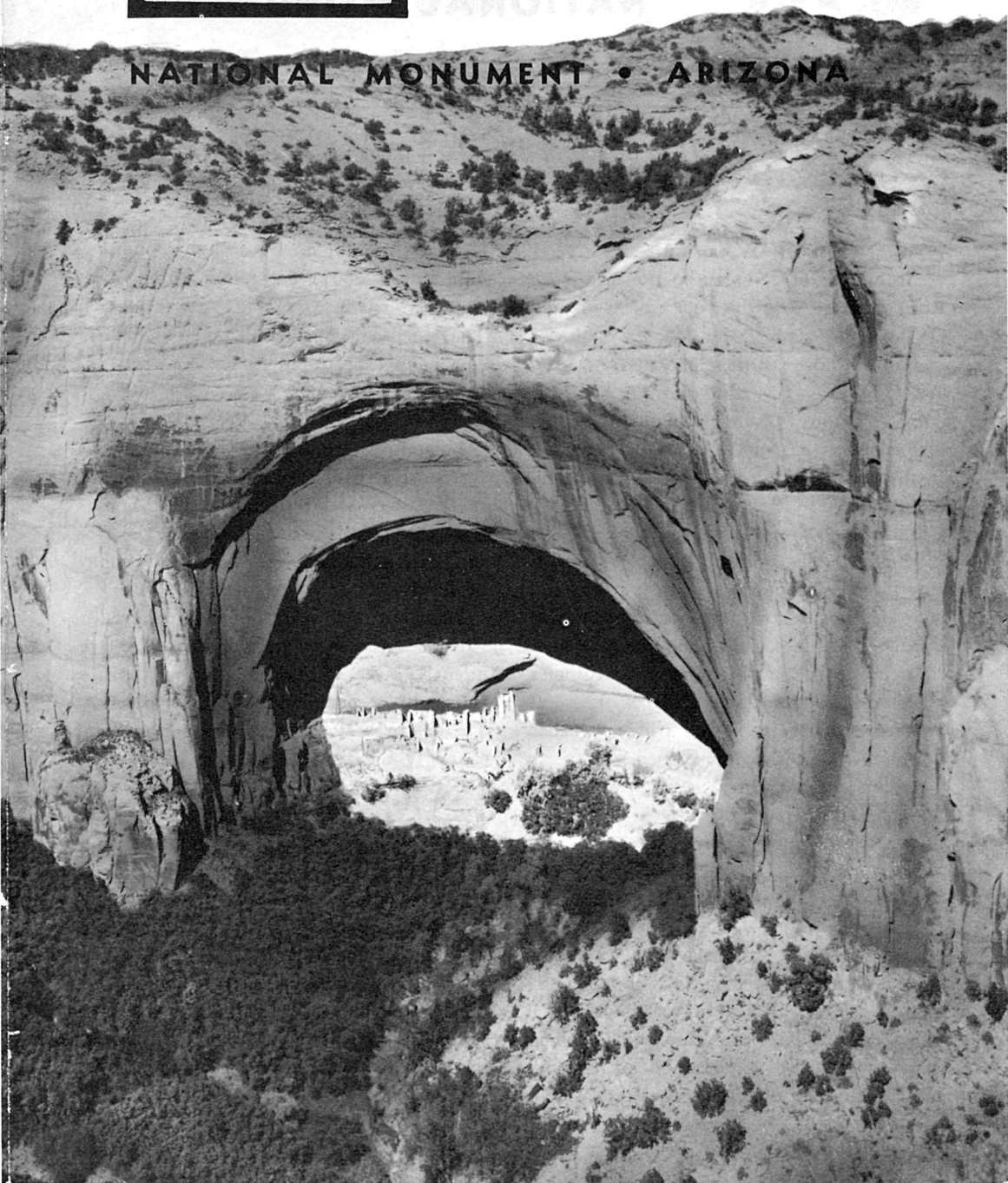
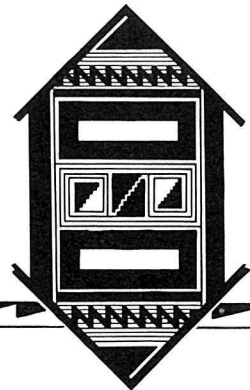


# NAVAJO

NATIONAL MONUMENT • ARIZONA





# NAVAJO

## NATIONAL MONUMENT

*Three great cliff dwellings, the most striking remains of ancient occupancy of the canyon country of northeastern Arizona.*

From about A. D. 300 until about 1300, prehistoric Indians lived in the San Juan River drainage near the Four Corners region of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona. We now call these Indians "Anasazi" after the Navajo name meaning "ancient ones." Before 300, the Anasazi probably roamed over the colorful plateau country in small bands, hunting and trapping and gathering nuts and seeds; it is possible that they also did some simple farming.

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

As time passed, three prehistoric cultural centers 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 (brought on by drought conditions during the 1200's) and poor farming practices, resulted in a rapid loss of population. The remaining Anasazi abandoned the Kayenta region shortly after 1300.

### BETATAKIN

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 1242 and approximately 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.

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



*Betatakin Ruin*

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

Pottery found in Betatakin and the other Segi cliff ruins is of exceptional quality, artistically painted; it includes both black-on-white ware and three-colored vessels.

### 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 on horseback from Betatakin by an 11-mile primitive trail which crosses the canyon stream many times. The trip can be made on foot, but it is a difficult one.

Horses can be obtained from nearby Navajo Indians through the monument superintendent. A 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 it 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. Weathering has effaced most 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:

C H O S

1661 A d n

with more letters which were illegible.

### ABOUT YOUR VISIT

The only facilities in the monument are designated campgrounds and picnic areas. However, there are trading posts and guest ranches in Kayenta, Goulding, Tuba City, and Shonto which offer accommodations. Because of the need to protect the ruins, and also because of the difficult unmarked

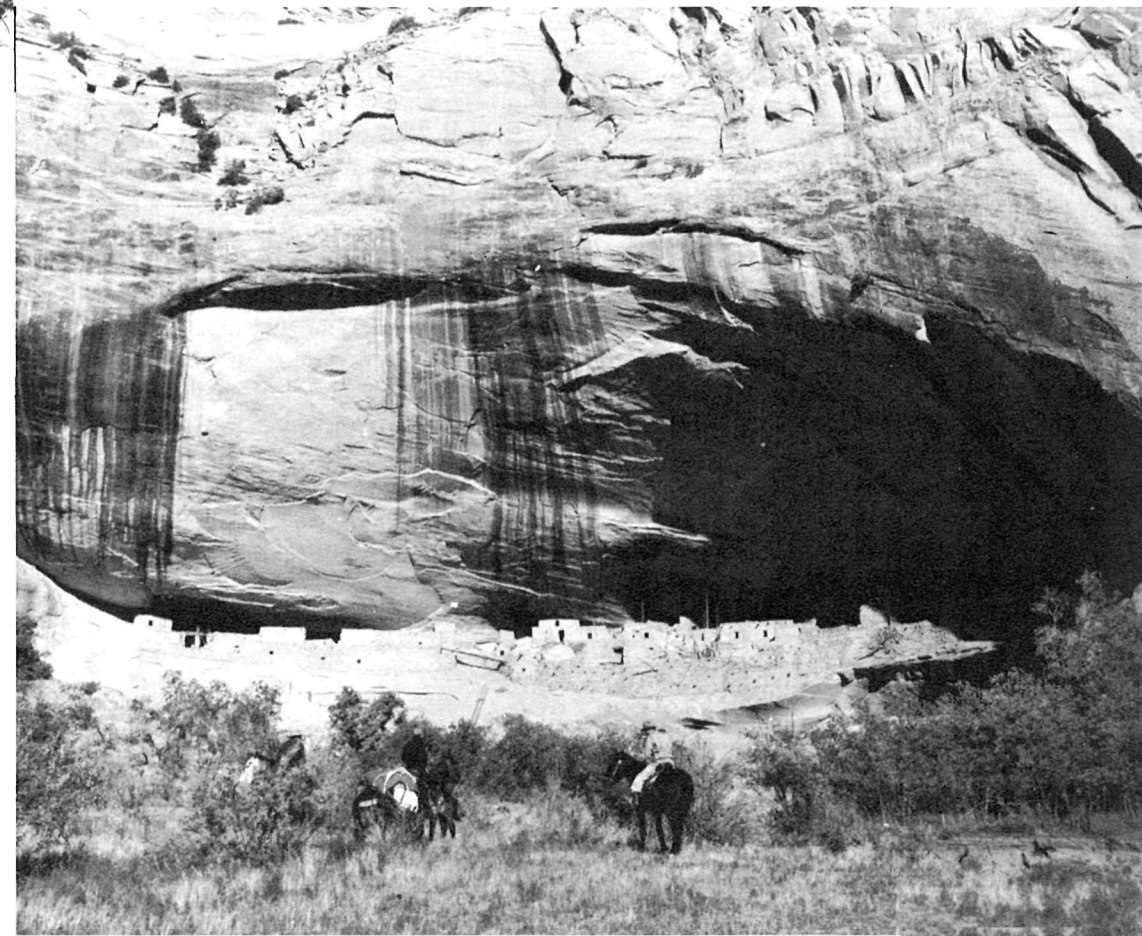
trails by which they are reached, you are not allowed to enter any of the monument ruins, with the exception of Inscription House, unless you are accompanied by a guide.

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

Trips to Betatakin usually start at 8:30 a.m. or 1:30 p.m., and to Keet Seel at 8 a.m. There are no guided trips to Inscription House.

Before attempting the long trips to Keet Seel and Inscription House, be sure to visit headquarters near Betatakin, where trail and hiking information is available.

*Keet Seel Ruin*





Inscription House Ruin

### ADMINISTRATION

Navajo National Monument, established on March 20, 1909, and containing 360 acres, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

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 inspiration of its people.

The development of this area is part of MISSION 66, a 10-year program to develop and staff the areas of the National Park System so that they can be used and enjoyed by both present and future generations.

A superintendent, whose address is Tona-lea, Ariz., is in immediate charge of the area.

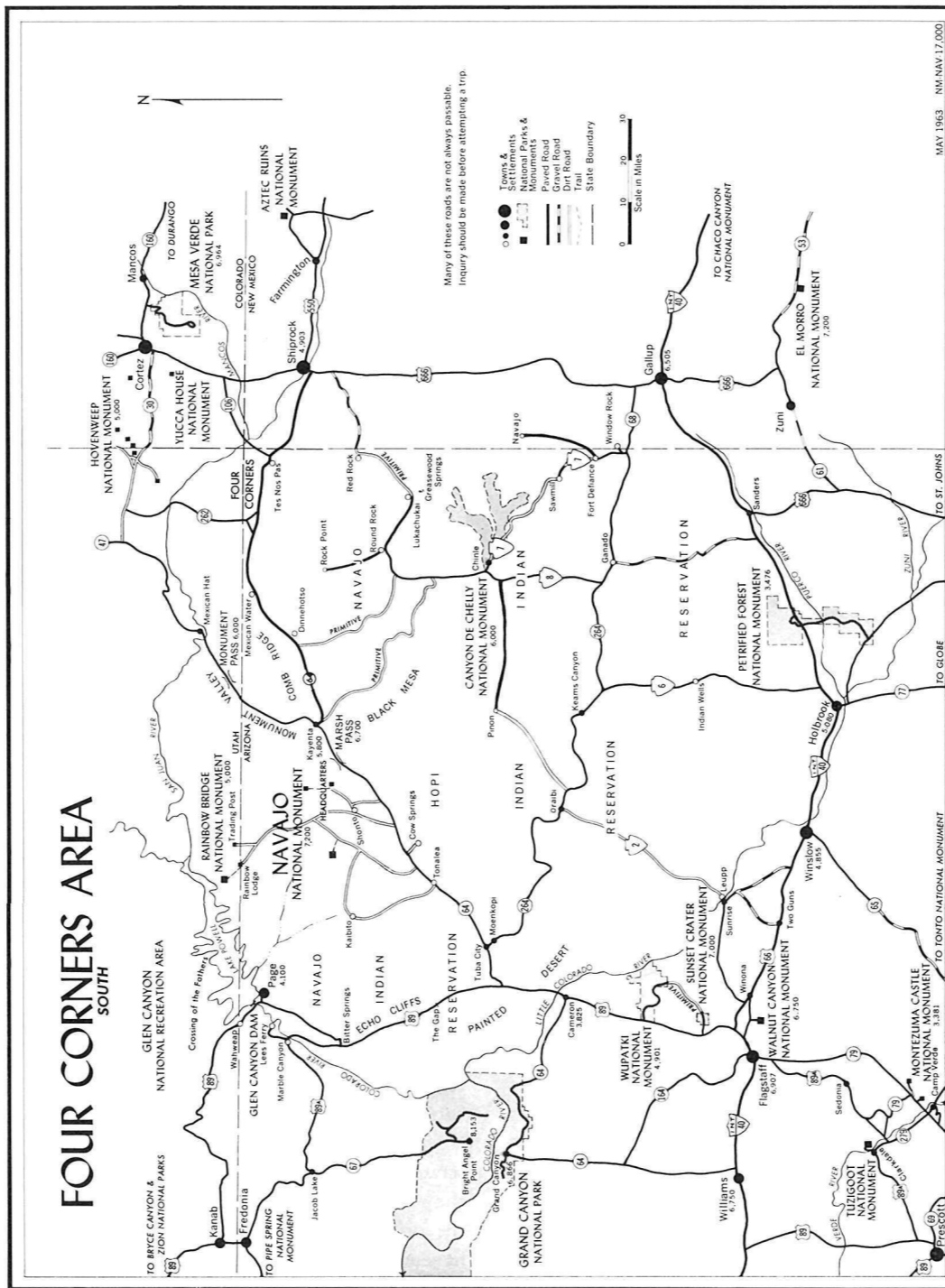
### AMERICA'S NATURAL RESOURCES

Created in 1849, the Department of the Interior—America's Department of Natural Resources—is concerned with the management, conservation and development of the Nation's water, wildlife, mineral, forest, and park and recreational resources. It also has major responsibilities for Indian and territorial affairs.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department works to assure that nonrenewable resources are developed and used wisely, that park and recreational resources are conserved, and that renewable resources make their full contribution to the progress, prosperity, and security of the United States—now and in the future.



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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