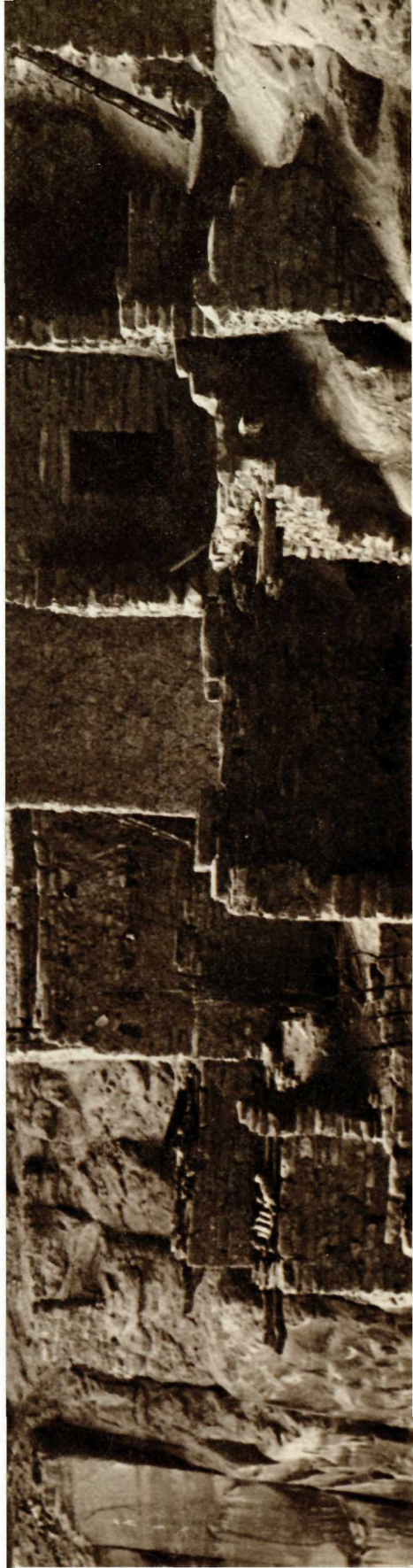


# NANAVAJO



**BETATAKIN** The name means "Ledge House" in Navajo. This is the most accessible ruin in the monument. Resting on the steeply sloping floor of a large natural alcove with a roof nearly 500 feet high, Betatakin was constructed and abandoned in two generations, between 1250 and 1300. The 135 rooms include living quarters, granaries, and one kiva or ceremonial chamber. It seems likely that additional kivas once existed here and have been destroyed by rockfall, since large pueblos such as this have usually been found to contain numerous ceremonial structures.

The towering red sandstone walls of Betatakin Canyon also shelter a pocket of quaking aspen, Douglas-fir, scrub oak, and boxelder. The trail to the ruin leads through this small grove in the canyon bottom—a shady haven in the midst of the stunted pinyons and junipers that surround the canyon.

The ruin was discovered in 1909 by Byron Cummings, a pioneer archeologist of the Southwest, and John Wetherill, a rancher and trader who, along with his older brother Richard, discovered many of the major Anasazi cliff dwellings in the San Juan region. Betatakin was stabilized in 1917 by Neil M. Judd, of the Smithsonian Institution.

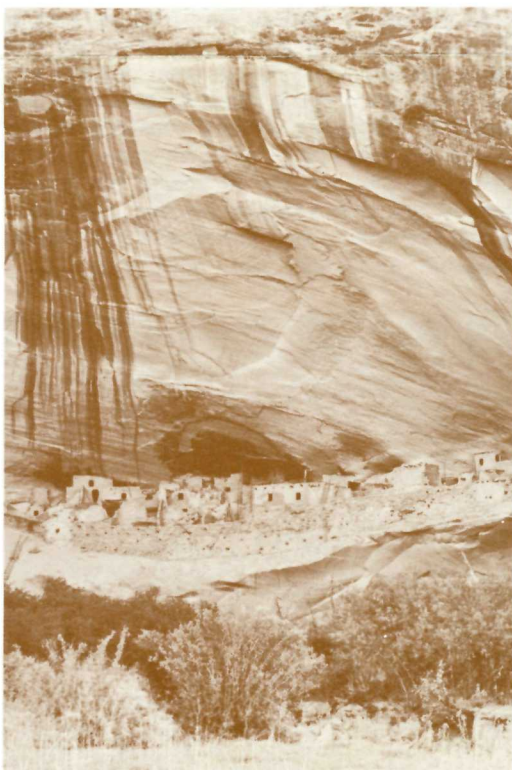
You may see Betatakin from the viewpoint at the end of Sandal Trail at any time, without a guide. The round trip walk from the visitor center takes about 1 hour. Binoculars will prove useful.

You may visit Betatakin only with a park ranger. Scheduled tours, limited to 20 persons each, are conducted in spring, summer, and fall, weather permitting. The round trip hike takes about 3 hours and involves strenuous climbing on the way back. Because the canyon is 700 feet deep—equal to a 70-story building—and the altitude is 7,200 feet, the hike can be tiring. If you have heart trouble, don't attempt it. Even if you are physically fit, move slowly, rest often.

**KEET SEEL** Richard Wetherill discovered this ruin in 1895. The largest cliff dwelling in Arizona, it has 160 rooms—living quarters, storage rooms, and five or six kivas.

Keet Seel, "Broken Pottery" in Navajo, gives the impression of having been abandoned for only a few years—not for seven centuries.

You may visit Keet Seel from April through September, weather permitting, but you must register at park headquarters 1 day in advance. Visitation is limited to 15 persons per day and 1,500 per year. The 8-mile primitive trail to the ruin crosses the canyon stream many times. You can go by foot or obtain horses from Navajo Indians through the superintendent. The hike is arduous, and a full day is needed for the round trip. Overnight trips are permitted only when a ranger is on duty during the summer.



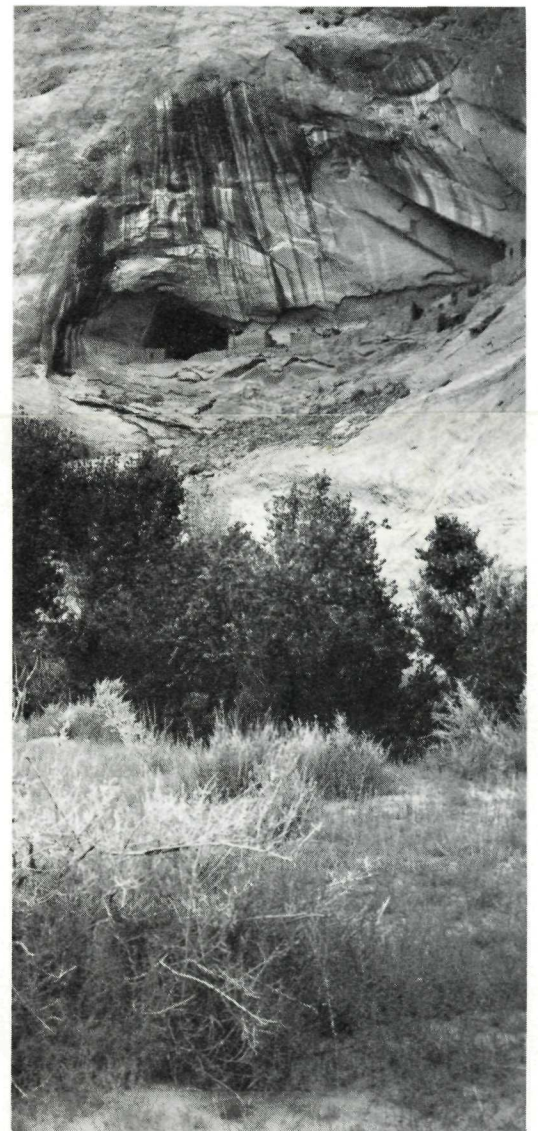
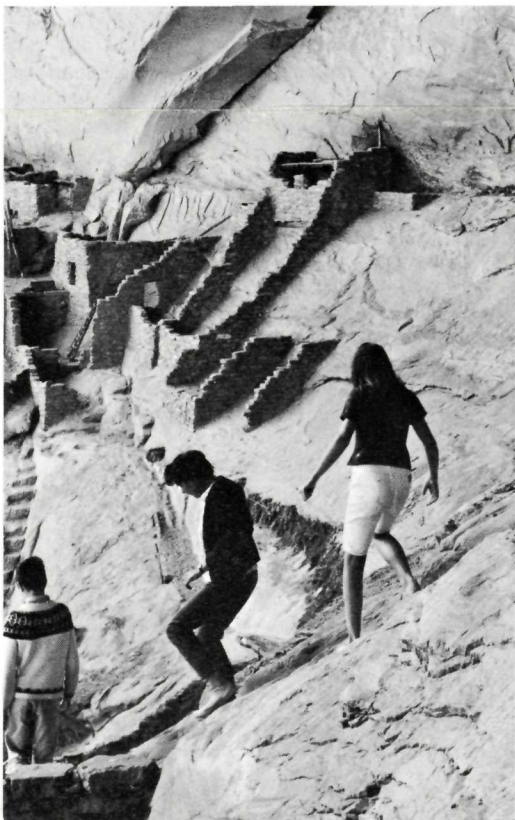
**INSCRIPTION HOUSE** This ruin is at the base of a high-arching sandstone cliff on the north side of an arm of Nitsin Canyon. It consists of about 74 living quarters and granaries and one kiva. A tree-ring date of 1274 indicates that Inscription House was built about the same time as Betatakin and Keet Seel.

The ruin is named for an inscription noted in 1909 by Byron Cummings and John Wetherill on the plastered wall of one of the rooms. Later, John Wetherill recalled that the still legible letters read—"C H O S 1661 A d n." The date is now believed to be 1861.

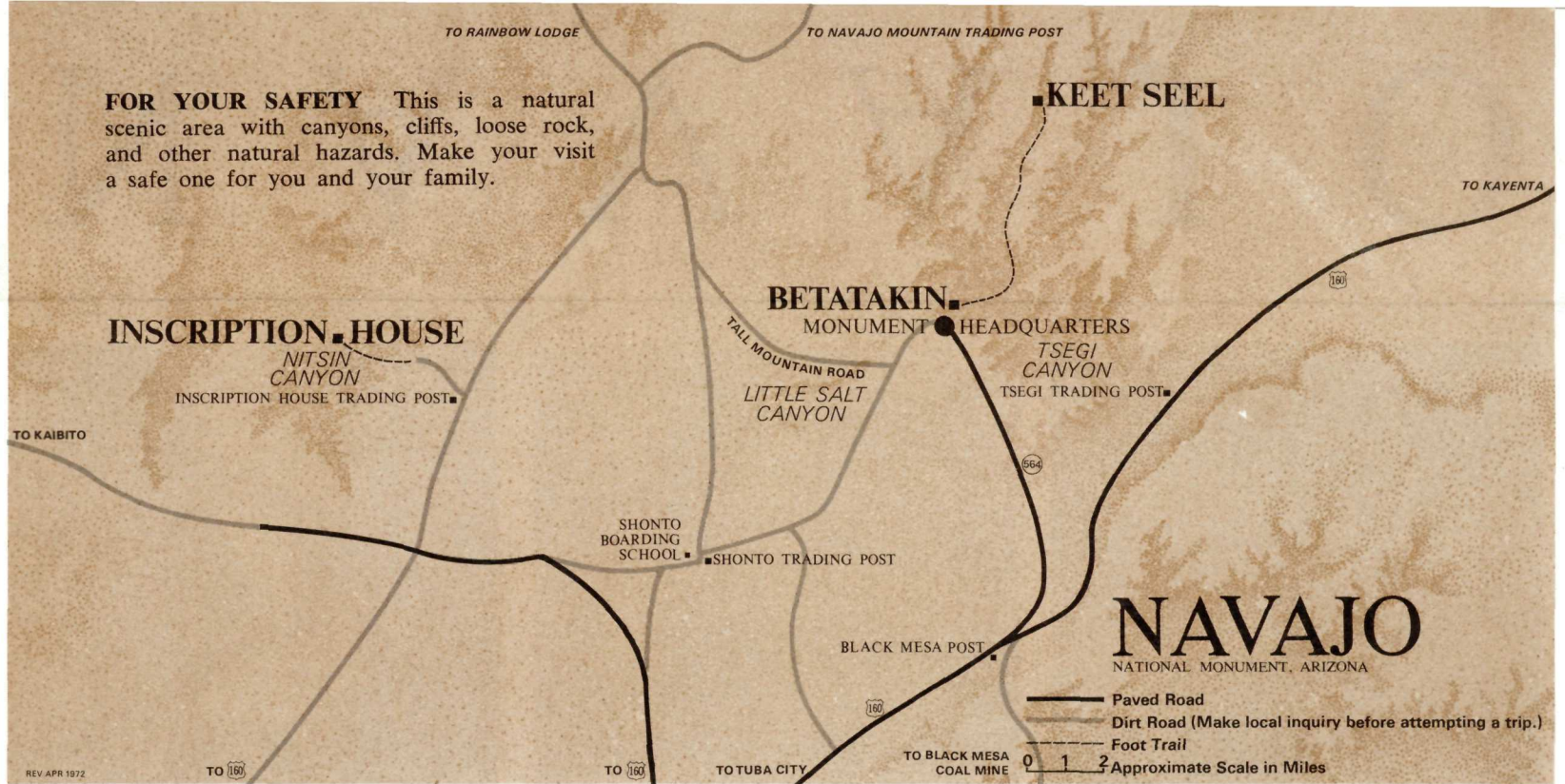
Inscription House is closed indefinitely because of urgent stabilization needs. It will be reopened when stabilization is completed.

**TREE-RING DATING** Each year, the trunks of trees add a ring of cells between the bark and the wood. In the semiarid Southwest, year-to-year fluctuations in moisture produce variations in ring widths. Matching similar ring patterns of different trees is called cross-dating. The date of a living tree is known by counting the rings toward the center and cross-dating the ring patterns of many living trees. The date of each annual ring is determined and a chronology is developed.

By matching the ring patterns of undated archeological timber and of living trees, cross-dating is achieved and each annual ring of the archeological specimen is assigned an absolute calendar date.



N A V A J O



**BETATAKIN, KEET SEEL, AND INSCRIPTION HOUSE—SPECTACULAR CLIFF DWELLINGS OF THE INDIAN FARMERS WHO LIVED IN THE CANYON COUNTRY OF NORTHEASTERN ARIZONA SEVEN CENTURIES AGO.**

For about 1,300 years the San Juan basin in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona was occupied by Indians called the Anasazi, after the Navajo word meaning "the ancient ones." The earlier groups roamed over this high plateau country, hunting, trapping, gathering nuts and seeds, and growing some corn and squash. Traces of these people are faint, but what remains foreshadows a rich cultural tradition.

By A.D. 400, agriculture had become an important part of the economy. With a better and more dependable source of food, the Anasazi population increased and permanent houses were built. Gradually, three distinct cultural centers emerged: Mesa Verde in southwestern Colorado, Chaco Canyon in northwestern New Mexico, and Kayenta in northeastern Arizona.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, the many hamlets in this vast region began to combine into a few relatively large villages. During this period, the household crafts reached a peak of artistic expression, especially in the realm of pottery. The three great cliff dwellings of Navajo National Monument mark the culmination of Anasazi culture in the Kayenta area.

By about 1300, the Anasazi of all three centers had abandoned their homes and fields, apparently because drought and soil erosion during the preceding decades had drastically reduced their harvests. The Mesa Verde and Chaco Canyon Anasazi seemingly migrated southeastward to more fertile lands along the Rio Grande, and the Kayenta Anasazi probably moved south to the Hopi mesas. The Hopi Indians, still carrying on their traditional ways and customs, give us a vivid picture of pueblo life as it was lived 700 years ago at Betatakin, Keet Seel, and Inscription House.

The Kayenta district is now inhabited by Navajos. These people have been here only about a hundred years and are not related to the prehistoric Anasazi.

**YOUR VISIT TO THE MONUMENT** You can reach monument headquarters by following U.S. 160 northeastward 50 miles from Tuba City or southwestward 22 miles from Kayenta. At this point, a 9-mile paved road runs from the highway to the monument.

There are picnic areas and a campground within the monument.

You are urged to spend some time in the visitor center at monument headquarters. The exhibits and the slide program describe the ways of the Anasazi and show examples of their arts and crafts. In summer, campfire programs are given on the archeology, history, and natural history of the monument.

A Navajo Tribal Guild concession in the visitor center sells objects made by the Indians.

**TO OUR VISITORS** Increasing use and subsequent wear of these cliff dwellings have forced the National Park Service to limit the number of people who may enter the ruins. The limits are set with the goal of the least damage consistent with public use. Only 15 people per day are allowed into Keet Seel; 20 per tour into Betatakin; and 10 per day into Inscription House when it is reopened after stabilization. All tours must be accompanied by a ranger.

Please keep pets on leash at all times; they are not allowed in buildings, on trails, or in the ruins.

**ADMINISTRATION** Navajo National Monument, established on March 20, 1909, and containing 600 acres, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Tonalea, AZ 86044, is in immediate charge. Phone (602) 672-2366.

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.

**National Park Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

☆ GPO 1973-515-974/106 REPRINT 1973

