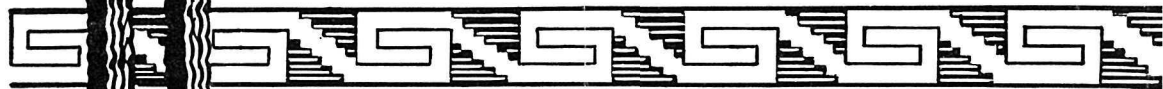
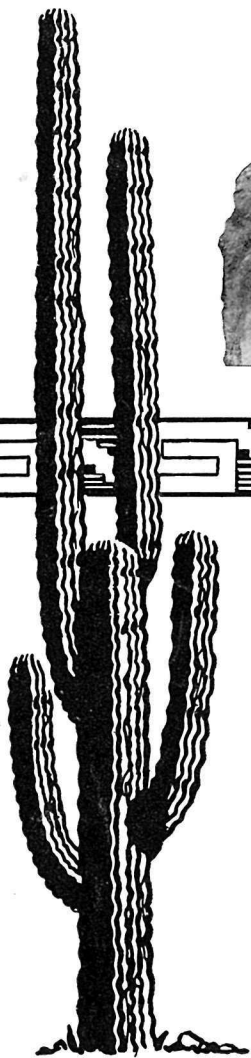


Tonto Cliff Dwelling



TONTO

National Monument

A R I Z O N A

TONTO NATIONAL MONUMENT

Fourteenth-century cliff dwellings of the Arizona Salado tribe, who were among the finest craftsmen of the prehistoric Pueblo Indians.



Tonto National Monument is set aside to protect some of the most accessible and best-preserved cliff dwellings of southern Arizona. The southern Arizona group of Pueblo Indians, who built the cliff dwellings in this area, were not too different from the present-day Zuni and Hopi. They have been named the "Salado Branch" by archeologists, the term "Salado," meaning salty, having been derived from the Salt River, near which the Indians procured salt crystals.

The cliff dwellings were occupied during the 1300's, a period determined by comparison of pottery and other remains with material from other sites accurately dated by annual growth rings in timbers

used in construction of the buildings. A single date of A. D. 1346 is recorded from the cliff dwellings.

Before occupying the cliff dwellings, the Salado Indians lived in the valley proper, the remains of many of their houses still being visible. The cliff dwellings appear to have been built as defensive sites when the valley villages became the object of attack by enemies. Eventually, around A. D. 1400, the remaining Salado people were forced to leave the region, probably because of continued harassment by their enemies. It is not definitely known who these enemies were, but possibly they were Yavapai Indians who lived north and west of the Tonto cliff dwellings.

Looking out from cliff dwelling across Roosevelt Lake to the Sierra Ancha



The Cliff Dwellings

On both sides of the Roosevelt Lake basin are many long canyons leading up into the mountains. Near the tops of some of the canyon walls are cliffs in which shallow caves are located. The cliff dwelling seen from the Tonto parking area is located in a natural cave in the quartzite cliff. A good trail, a half-mile long, with a rise of about 330 feet, leads to the ruin.

This cliff dwelling is a pueblo of rough masonry walls, with adobe clay used as mortar and plaster, and native rock as a filler. The walls were laid up in courses 2 to 3 feet in height. When these walls were built to the ceiling level—about 6 feet high—juniper or pinyon poles were laid across the room, one end resting on the wall, the other on a center beam supported by an upright post. A substantial layer of saguaro ribs was laid on the poles, and this was covered with a 3- or 4-inch layer of adobe. A similar roof on the second-story rooms furnished good deck space which was well-lighted and ventilated.

When complete, this house had about 25 rooms.

How the Salados Lived

The nearest dependable water supply was probably a seep or spring up the main canyon over a half-mile from the dwelling. The farm lands in the Salt River flood plain were from 2 to 4 miles distant and at about a thousand feet lower elevation. Water, firewood, harvested crops, and wild game secured by hunting, all had to be carried to the cliff house by the Salado. Crops of maize, beans, squash, and cotton were raised by irrigation. Until the valley was flooded by construction of Roosevelt Dam, the old irrigation canals built and used by occupants of the Tonto cliff dwellings and other nearby prehistoric villages could still be traced.

In addition to the cultivated foods, the Indians gathered mesquite beans, cactus fruits, and many wild nuts and berries. Undoubtedly they hunted wild game for a meat supply as deer bones have been found in the cliff dwellings; and rabbits and other small animals, as well as birds, were available.

Stone hoes, and possibly wooden digging tools, were used in the farming. The roof beams of the dwellings were cut with stone axes, and the axe marks still may be seen on beams in place in one remaining original roof. An incomplete bow with a yucca fiber string and a bundle of reed arrows with pointed wooden tips were found with a burial in 1950. A number of stone arrowheads have also been found.

Manufactures

The Salado people were excellent pottery makers and weavers of cotton textiles. Their painted pottery of red, cream, and black shows a high degree of appreciation of design and form. Coarse pottery was also made for storage and cooking purposes, some of the storage vessels having a capacity of as much as 60 gallons.

Cotton textiles were made in a variety of weaves and color combinations. Embroidery, open work, diamond twills, and gauze weaves were among the types made, and blue-, brown-, black-, red-, and yellow-dyed threads were used to create complex designs. A considerable amount of cloth of plain weave, of very good quality, was made for everyday use. A good specimen of this was used as a wrapping on the child burial found in 1950, on display in the museum.

Sandals and mats were woven of yucca fibers; the yucca leaf was also shredded and spun into strong cordage. Bear grass was used for mats.

Ornaments were made of turquoise and of several varieties of shells. Some of the shells are from the Gulf of California, sev-

eral hundred miles to the southwest, indicating the distance to which objects were carried by trade even at that time.

Two mesquite wood clubs were also found in the cliff dwellings.

A small but excellent and representative collection of prehistoric Salado tools, utensils, and weapons is on display in the museum at the parking area.

Desert Plants

Although Tonto National Monument is primarily an archeological area, it has a variety of desert plants which are interesting. The Upper and Lower Sonoran life zones are represented by several species of cacti and by the desert chaparral cover. Barrel, hedgehog, fishhook, and several kinds of cholla cacti are abundant, and of the various species some should be in bloom during April and May. The saguaro or giant cactus, most spectacular in this area, should bloom early in June.

The mesquite, paloverde, crucifixion thorn, graythorn, catclaw or acacia, and jojoba predominate to make the brushy

desert chaparral cover. Many of the plants are labeled for identification by the visitor, and further information on plant life and archeology may be obtained from the interpretive staff of the monument.

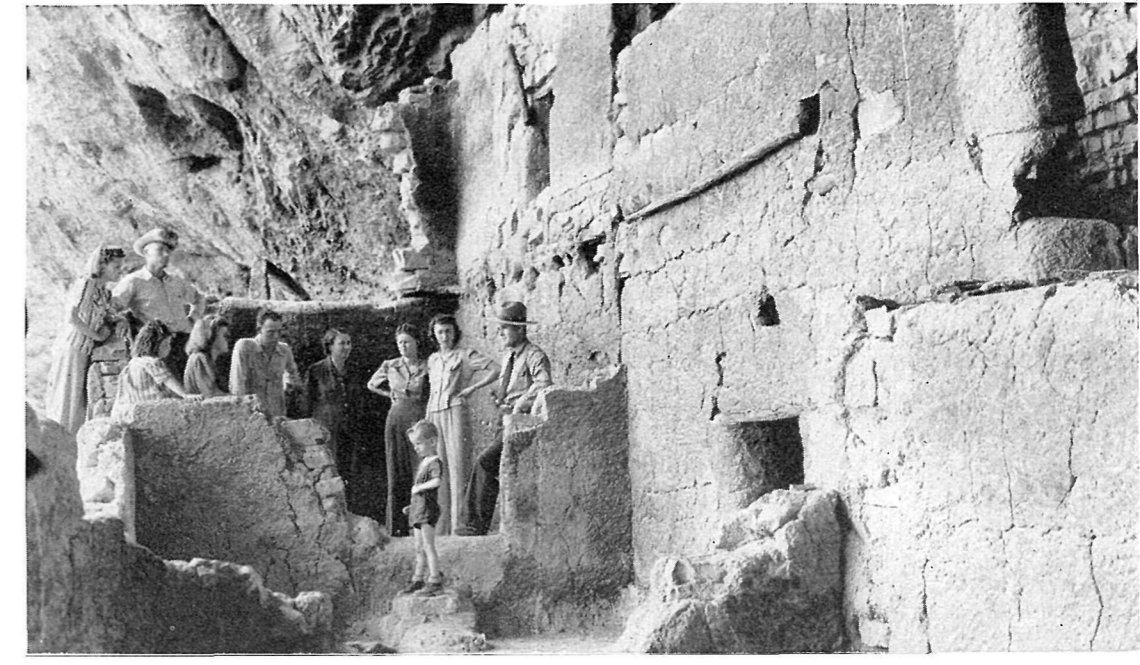
Photography

The cliff dwellings face nearly east and are fully lighted in the morning, especially from about 8 to 10 a. m. By noon, the face of the cliff is in full shadow. Photography in the cave is possible during daylight hours, but exterior shots are best in the morning.

How to Reach the Monument

Visitors from Phoenix, Mesa, and other points in southern and western Arizona should turn off United States Highway 60-70 at Apache Junction, 24 miles east of Mesa, Ariz. The approach road from Apache Junction is the Apache Trail (State Highway No. 88), a good gravel road through the rugged Superstition Mountains to Roosevelt Dam and on past

A party of visitors in Tonto cliff dwelling





Utensils and implements used by prehistoric inhabitants

Tonto National Monument to Globe and Miami, Ariz.

Visitors en route to Phoenix through Globe and Miami may turn off on the Apache Trail between those towns. Tonto is about 1 hour from Globe, and 4 hours from Phoenix.

Season and Facilities

Tonto National Monument is open the year around, with the most comfortable weather for visiting occurring between late October and the last of June.

Interpretive service and guided trips are provided daily.

Good water and a small picnic area are available in the monument, but there are no facilities for camping, and no concessions or accommodations. The small community of Roosevelt is 3½ miles from the monument.

Administration

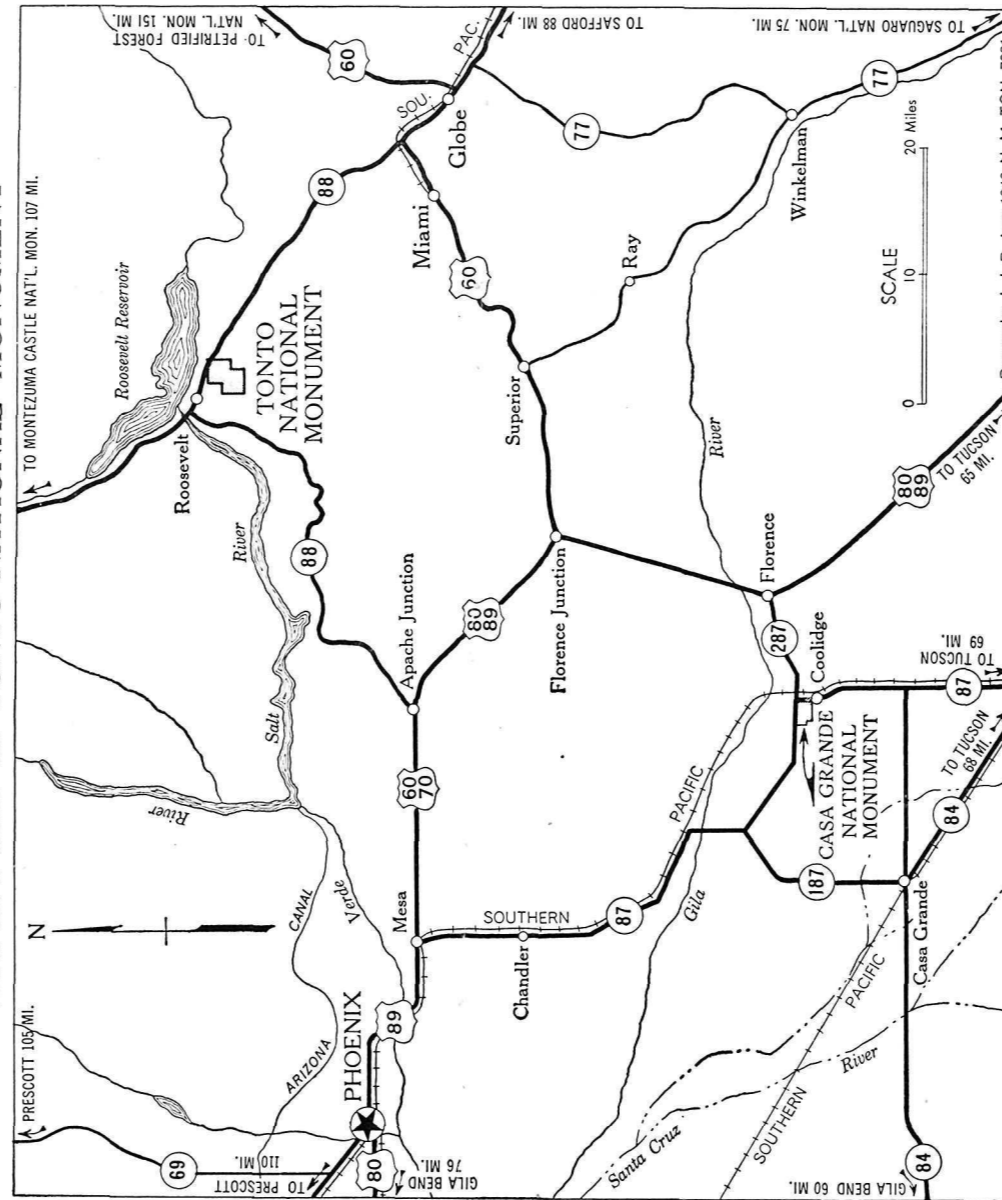
Tonto National Monument was established by proclamation, in 1907, by President Theodore Roosevelt. It consists of 1,120 acres, and is one of the units of the National Park System administered by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior.

All communications should be addressed to the Superintendent, Tonto National Monument, Roosevelt, Ariz.

Related Areas

Other cliff dwellings may be seen at Mesa Verde National Park, Colo.; Bandelier and Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monuments, N. Mex.; and Canyon de Chelly, Montezuma Castle, Navajo, and Walnut Canyon National Monuments, Ariz.

VICINITY MAP OF TONTO NATIONAL MONUMENT



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OSCAR L. CHAPMAN, Secretary
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, NEWTON B. DRURY, Director

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