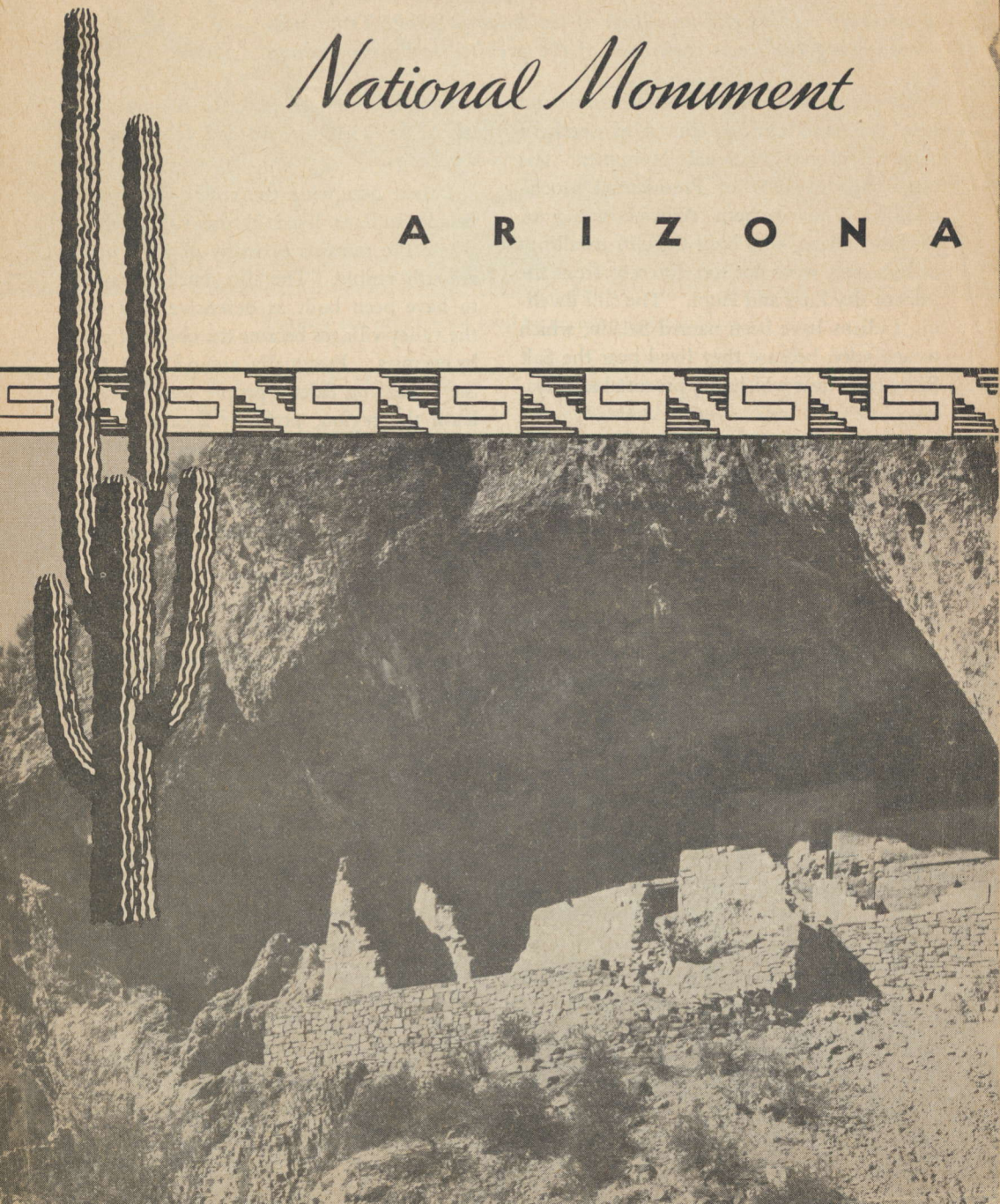


TONTO

National Monument

A R I Z O N A



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NATIONAL MONUMENT



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

To protect some of the most accessible and best preserved cliff dwellings of southern Arizona, Tonto National Monument was established in 1907 by Presidential proclamation. 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. The cliff-dwelling Indians have been named Salado, which means salty, because they lived near the Salt River from near which they 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 con-

struction 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, where the remains of many of their houses are still 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 known who these enemies were, but possibly they were the ancestors of the Yavapai Indians who now live north and west of the Tonto Basin.

View 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 farmlands 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 up the trail to the cliff house. 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. Rabbits and other small animals, as well as birds, were also 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 dyed threads of blue, brown, black, red, and yellow were used to create complex designs. A considerable amount of good quality cloth of plain weave was made for everyday use. A specimen of this is the one used as a wrapping on the child burial found in 1950, which is now on display in the museum.

Sandals and mats were woven of yucca fibers; the yucca leaf was also shredded and spun into strong cordage. Beargrass 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, several hundred miles to the southwest, indicating the

distance over 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, usually blooms in May or early in June.

The mesquite, paloverde, graythorn, cat-claw or acacia, and jojoba predominate to make the brushy desert chaparral cover.

Many of the plants are labeled for identification. You may obtain further information on plant life and archeology from the monument staff.

Photography

The cliff dwelling faces nearly east and is 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.

The Monument

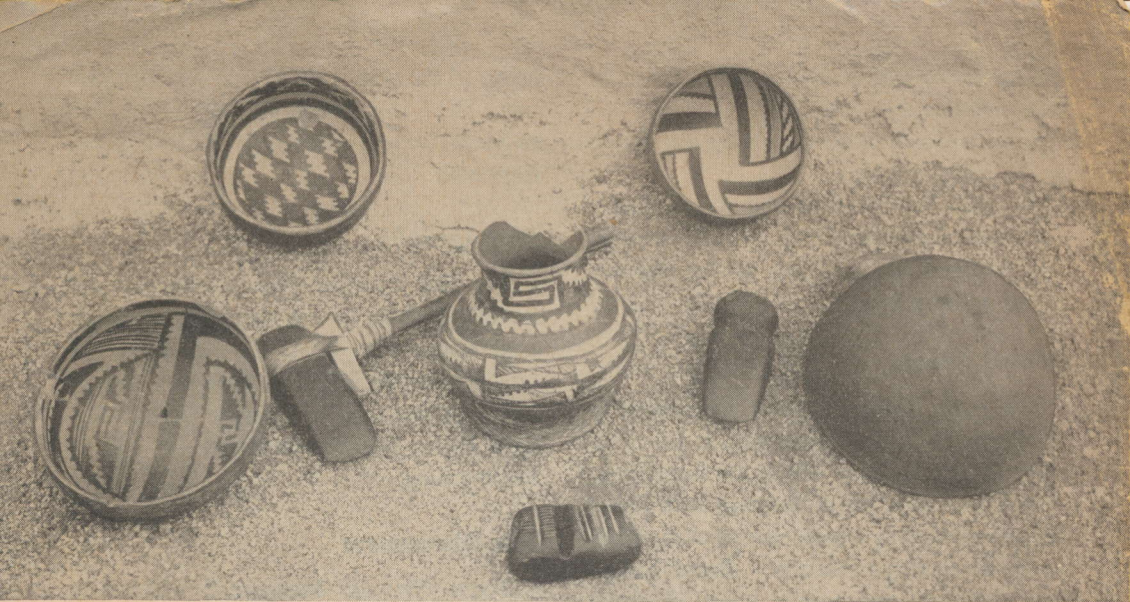
Tonto National Monument, which now contains 1,120 acres, was transferred to the National Park Service in 1933 from the Agriculture Department.

How To Reach the Monument

If driving from Phoenix, take U. S. 89 to Mesa, then U. S. 60-70 to Apache Junction, where you turn left on State Route 88 to

Visitors in Tonto cliff dwelling





Utensils and implements used by prehistoric inhabitants

Roosevelt. Tonto National Monument is 5 miles from Roosevelt.

From Globe, take State Route 88 to monument, which is 30 miles away.

Visitor Use Fee

A fee of 25 cents is charged for each adult entering the monument. Children under 12 years of age, or groups of school children 18 years of age or under, are admitted free when accompanied by adults assuming responsibility for their safety and orderly conduct.

Season and Facilities

The monument is open all year, with the most comfortable weather between late October and the first of June.

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 community of Roosevelt is 3½ miles from the monument.

There is a self-guiding trail to and through the Tonto ruin from the parking area.

Administration

Tonto National Monument is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Roosevelt, Ariz., is in immediate charge.

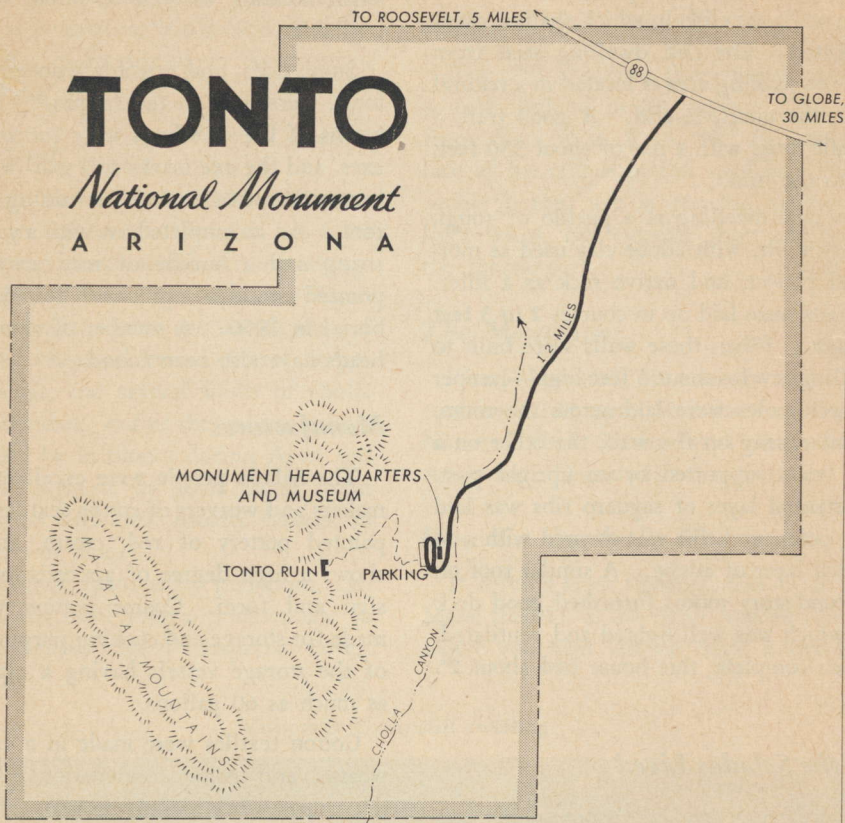
Related Areas

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.

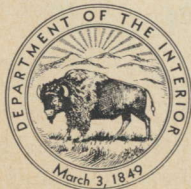
The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

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ARIZONA



FEB 1955 NM-TON-7002



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

DOUGLAS McKAY, Secretary

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, CONRAD L. WIRTH, Director

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-52125-5

Revised 1955