

upatki

National Monument

A R I Z O N A



Wupatki NATIONAL MONUMENT

An unusual stone pueblo built by Indian farmers of the 12th century

The red sandstone prehistoric pueblos of Wupatki, gleaming against a background of black basaltic cliffs and facing a view of the Painted Desert of the Little Colorado River, were built by groups of farming Indians, ancestors of the picturesque Hopis. More than 800 home sites have been discovered in the monument, varying from the pits of ancient earth lodges to house structures three stories high. Studies of ancient wooden beams in the ruins have dated the major occupation as occurring during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

These abundant prehistoric ruins constitute the tangible and colorful remains of an eleventh-century Indian "land rush" that resulted from the earlier eruption of Sunset Crater, a nearby volcano.

Coming from several directions and bringing different customs and habits, the various tribes met and mixed, though remaining in large part distinct groups, forming a local cultural pattern differentiated from its contemporaries in other sections of the prehistoric American Southwest.

The many ruins in Wupatki National Monument are in an unusual state of preservation. The most accessible are the Citadel and Wupatki, located 5 and 14 miles, respectively, from U. S. Highway 89.

The Eruption and the Land Rush

Prior to the eruption of Sunset Crater, the vast area from the San Francisco

Peaks to the Little Colorado River was sparsely inhabited due to scarcity of rainfall for raising crops. A few families were scattered along the base of the peaks where abundant snow and frequent summer rains made farming possible.

Between 1046 and 1071 A. D., or almost 1,000 years ago, there were rumblings in the valley at the foot of the peaks. Earth lodges abandoned by the frightened Indians decayed into ruins. Then came the eruption of what is now Sunset Crater. Huge clouds of volcanic cinder or ash buried remains of the homes and spread a black mantle over more than 800 square miles of territory between the mountains and the river.

While this was probably regarded as a great catastrophe at the time, some of the Indians soon discovered it was possible to raise corn where plants previously had shriveled and died from lack of water. The fine layer of cinder over the soil formed a mulch which absorbed moisture from the scanty rain and snow. Gradually news of this new farming land filtered out over the Southwest. The land rush was on.

The People

Here truly was a "melting pot." Indian families came from the north, south, east, and west. In the cinder-covered area is the only place where we find the Pueblo

dry farmer from eastern and northern Arizona mingling with the Hohokam irrigation farmer from the south; where there are strong influences from the Mogollon groups to the south and east along with those from a more backward and, as yet, little-known people from the west.

Each tribe came with their precious corn seed and digging sticks to cultivate the cinder soils. They met and mingled. In the earlier village ruins it is possible to distinguish these various people by characteristic styles of their utensils, tools, and weapons, but as time went on these differences became less and less apparent.

The Villages

Villages were developed throughout the cinder-covered area. One of the most important and longest inhabited of these was a ruin which is now called Wupatki—a Hopi Indian word for “Tall House.” Here was a spring, one of the few in this arid region.

Wupatki is one of the most spectacular pueblos in northern Arizona. Its sandstone walls rise from a sandstone spur at the base of a black lava mesa that overlooks the Painted Desert. From an in-

significant pueblo of a few rooms, Wupatki grew until it became the largest in the region. During the 1100's it contained more than 100 rooms, was in places at least three stories high, and had an estimated population of from 150 to 200 persons. To one side of the ruin, protected from the prevailing winds, was an open-air amphitheater which apparently was used for public ceremonies. In the valley below is a “ball court,” the only stone-masonry one that has been discovered in the Southwest. Little is known of the game itself, but it was very popular in southern Arizona and was brought up by migrants from that region. Wupatki was partially excavated and a few of the rooms restored by the Museum of Northern Arizona in cooperation with the National Park Service in 1933-34.

Around the Citadel was another concentration of prehistoric Indians. Within a square mile there are more than 100 sites, varying in size from earth lodges to the larger pueblos. The Citadel itself, as yet unexcavated, is a fortified apartment house. Probably it was once two stories high and contained nearly 50 rooms. Its impregnable position on top of a small

lava-capped mesa, overlooking a wide expanse of country, suggests that it served as a retreat during times of stress. Numerous loop-holes through the thick walls strengthen this impression. On the terraced slopes of the mesa are circles of boulders, the remains of more temporary homes. It is possible that the Citadel was built to guard a water supply that existed in the nearby limestone sinkhole.

Just below the Citadel is the small pueblo now called Nalakihu, a Hopi word for “House Standing Alone.” It, like Wupatki, was excavated and partially restored in 1934.

Other outstanding ruins in the monument are Wukoki ruin, another fortified apartment house; and Crack-in-the-Rock ruin near the Little Colorado River. To reach these more inaccessible ruins, it is necessary to make arrangements with the custodian in Wupatki ruin.

Abandonment

All of the ruins were abandoned in the 1200's. This is accounted for, partly at least, by several factors—high winds sweeping the moisture-conserving cinder fields, climatic changes, and disease among

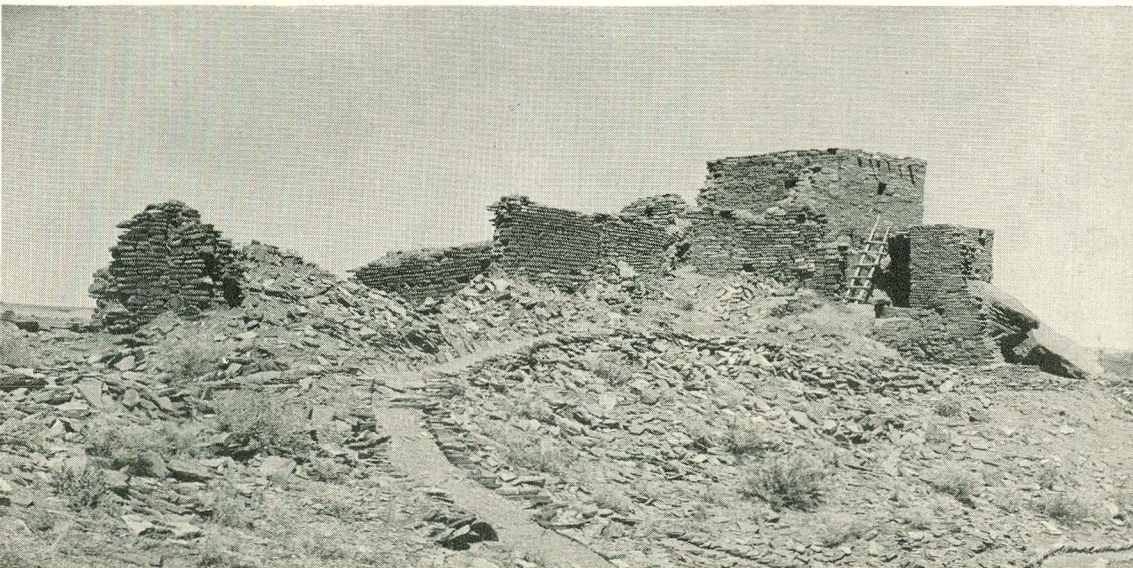
the Indians. It brought to a close one of the unique chapters of Southwestern archeology. Probably among the present day Hopis the descendants of these people are to be found.

Drought and disease, possibly also attacks of nomad enemies, caused the abandonment by the Pueblos of most of northern Arizona during the thirteenth century. This region, the Tsegi region (Navajo National Monument and vicinity), and the region of Canyon de Chelly National Monument were deserted. The survivors from all these areas must have congregated at the Hopi mesas, where the springs never fail. Later, in the fourteenth century, the great pueblos of Chaves Pass and Homolovi (near Winslow, Ariz.) and of the Verde Valley (notably Tuzigoot and Montezuma Castle National Monuments) were abandoned, their people going northeast to swell the Hopi nation. When the Spaniards arrived in 1540 there were no pueblo villages occupied in Arizona save those of the Hopi, in Tusayan.

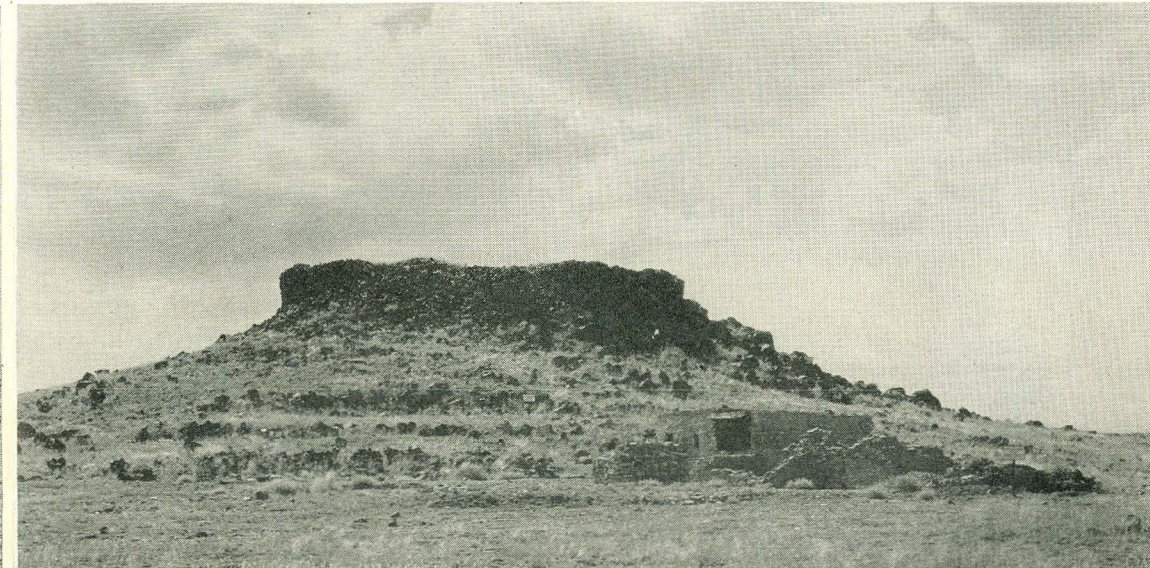
Tree-Ring Dates

The time of occupation of each ruin in this region is fairly well known, through

The Wupatki ruin



The Citadel



the tree-ring method of dating prehistoric sites. The date of eruption of Sunset Crater is approximately known, from the dating by the tree-ring method of houses built before and after the cinder fall.

Nearby Points of Interest

By visiting Sunset Crater, Wupatki, and Walnut Canyon National Monuments, and also the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff, Ariz., visitors can obtain first-hand knowledge of one of the most interesting localities in the United States. The story of each area is linked with the others. The Museum of Northern Arizona has been instrumental in searching out the scientific facts concerning the manifestations of nature and man in the region and displays interesting exhibits which help to explain them. The exhibits to be installed by the National Park Service at Walnut Canyon and Wupatki will be specifically explanatory of the monuments; the Museum of Northern Arizona presents a picture of the entire region.

How to Get to Wupatki

Wupatki National Monument is easily approached from U. S. Highway 89 at a point 22 miles north of its junction with U. S. Highway 66, 6 miles east of Flagstaff, and 23 miles south of its junction with State Highway 64 close to Cameron. Roads within the monument are not improved. There is also another entrance road from Sunset Crater National Monument. However, it is one-way, runs through deep cinder, and is not advisable for drivers unaccustomed to this type of

road. It is generally impassable in winter.

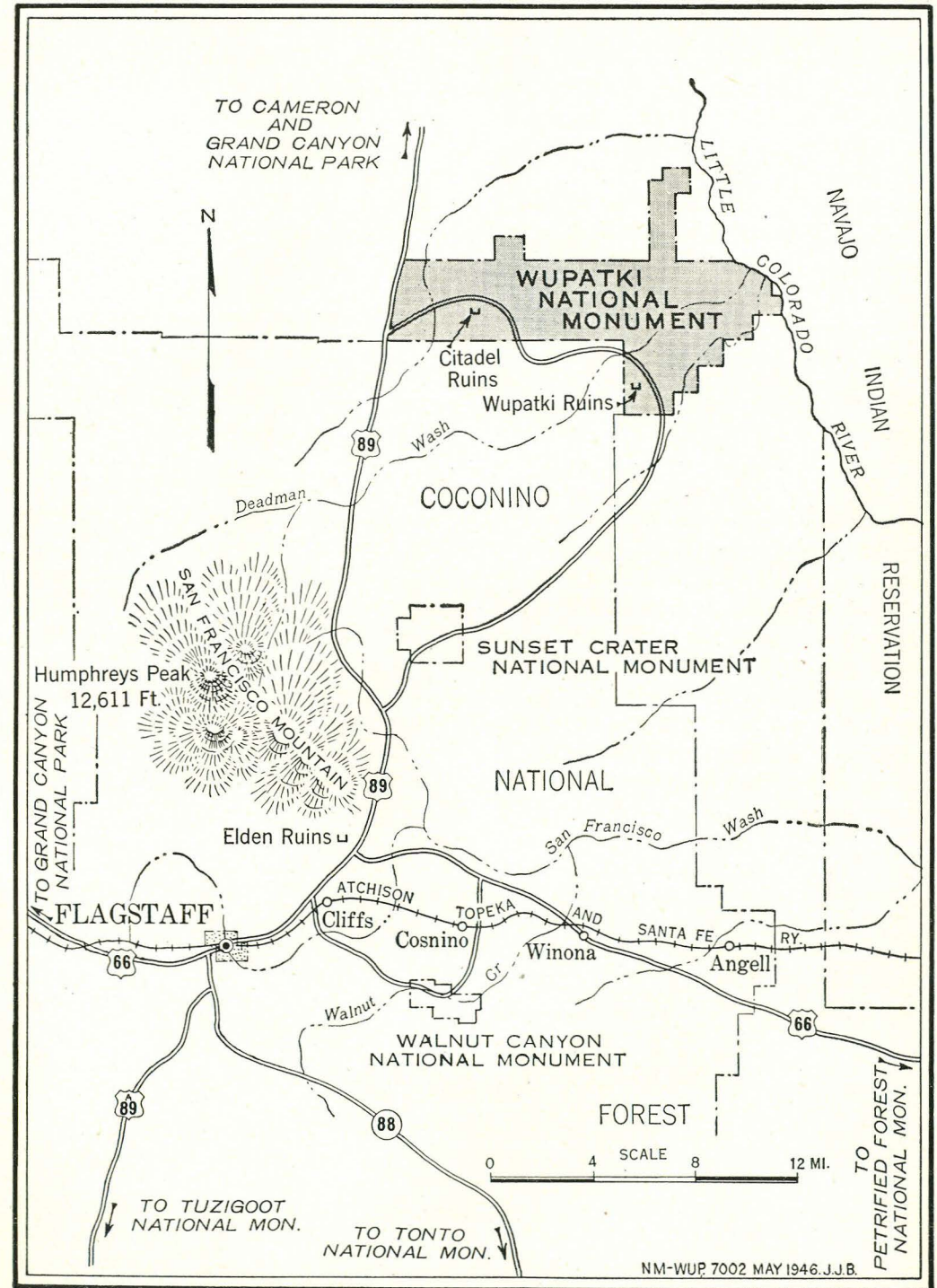
Administration

Wupatki National Monument was established in 1924 by Presidential proclamation and contains 34,693 acres of Federally owned land. It is a part of the National Park System, owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior. In these areas the scenery and the objects of historic, prehistoric, and scientific interest are carefully preserved and displayed for public enjoyment.

Free guide service is available at Wupatki Ruin from 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. No accommodations for visitors are provided at the monument, but such facilities may be obtained at either Flagstaff or Cameron, each approximately 40 miles away. Lunches may be purchased at a few points along Highway 89.

Please help us take care of the monument by observing the rules which have been devised for its preservation and protection. Do not collect souvenirs. Leave all natural phenomena and archeological remains unharmed for others to enjoy. To preserve the ruins and for your own safety do not walk on prehistoric walls. Stay on established trails. Keep on the main traveled roads and drive carefully. Remember all National Park areas are wildlife sanctuaries. So do not hunt. Keep dogs on leash.

For information, write the Custodian, Wupatki National Monument, Flagstaff, Ariz.



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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