

# Bandelier

NATIONAL  
MONUMENT

New Mexico



# Bandelier

## NATIONAL MONUMENT

*Beautiful canyon country containing many cliff and open pueblo ruins of late prehistoric period*

The disastrous drought years of the late 13th century broke up many ancient Pueblo Indian centers in the Southwest and forced the harried and worn survivors to move to locations where the water supply was more constant. A favorable area was the upper Rio Grande Valley in present-day New Mexico. One of the later flowerings of Pueblo culture occurred here, and the numerous ruins of Bandelier National Monument are characteristic of this phase of Pueblo development.

Several groups settled on the canyon-slashed slopes of the Pajarito Plateau, in a spectacular setting characterized by tan cliffs, forested mesas, and deep gorges. The story of these people—their adaptation to their environment and their relationships with other groups—is gradually being brought to light through continuing research by archeologists, adding a significant chapter to Southwestern prehistory.

The Pajarito Plateau is of interest geologically as well as archeologically. It is constituted largely of tuff (consolidated volcanic ash) and basaltic lava ejected thousands of years ago from the great volcanic crater—one of the largest in the world—whose rim today forms the Jemez Mountains. Through this massive plateau, running water has cut many steep-walled canyons down to the Rio Grande.

Bandelier National Monument, a wilderness area crossed only by trails, covers more than 48 square miles. It was named in honor of Adolph F. A. Bandelier, the distinguished Swiss-American scholar, who carried on an extensive survey of prehistoric ruins in the region and studied the Pueblo Indians around Santa Fe between 1880 and 1886. Part of his time was spent in Frijoles Canyon, and the plot of his ethnohistorical novel, *The Delight Makers*, is laid in the canyon as he pictured it in prehistoric times.



*Tyuonyi Ruin from northwest.*

### *The Ruins*

The most accessible features of Bandelier National Monument are the ruins in Frijoles Canyon. The ancients chose well the location of their dwellings. The deep gorge, cut by a stream rising high in the mountains, is still a veritable oasis in the dry country of New Mexico. Translated, the name of this stream, "Rito de los Frijoles," means simply Bean Creek.

Cliff ruins, or talus villages, extend along the base of the northern wall of the canyon for approximately 2 miles. These houses of masonry were irregularly terraced, from 1 to 3 stories in height, and had many cave rooms gouged out of the solid cliff. The cliff of compressed volcanic ash, or tuff, was worked with tools of harder stone.

Tree-ring chronology and correlations of pottery types indicate that most of Bandelier's ruins belong to the late pre-Spanish period, although a few small ruins date back to the 12th century. The large pueblos of Tyuonyi and Tsankawi evidently were occupied until about A.D. 1550, although their decline had probably set in before Coronado visited the region in 1540. No specific mention of Pajarito villages is made in the chronicles of Coronado's expedition.

The Frijoles inhabitants, as other ancient pueblo dwellers, were farmers. They grew corn, beans, and squash. They used cotton cloth, which has been found in the caves, and this suggests that they had the loom. Since the growing season on the plateau is short, however, they might have had to obtain the cotton by trade. They made pottery with decorations in glaze.

Exact cause of abandonment of the dwellings is unknown. For centuries the Indian farmers lived in the Pajarito can-

yons, built villages, honeycombed the cliffs with artificial caves, and tilled the soil of valley and mesa top. With the passing years, drought, soil-eroding flash floods, soil depletion, raiding Indians, famine, or disease—singly or in combination—forced the canyon dwellers again to seek new homes. Undoubtedly, some of the descendants of the Indians of the Pajarito Plateau still live in modern pueblos along the Rio Grande.

### *About Your Visit*

Bandelier National Monument, 46 miles west of Santa Fe, N. Mex., is reached from Santa Fe north on U.S. 285 to Pojoaque, then west on State Route 4. Approach may also be made through the beautiful Jemez country from Albuquerque. Inquiry should be made during bad weather before attempting the latter trip.

The monument is open all year. From May into September, temperatures range from the low 50's at night to the high 80's in the daytime. The relative humidity is generally low. Thunderstorms are frequent in July and August, but are usually of short duration.

Frijoles Canyon Lodge (mail address: Santa Fe, N. Mex.), where meals, overnight accommodations, gasoline, and campers' supplies can be obtained, is open only during the summer travel season.

The National Park Service maintains a campground on the mesa above Frijoles Canyon near the entrance station. Each campsite is provided with a tent space, table, and fireplace. There are modern toilets, water taps, and trailer sites. A picnic area is located in Frijoles Canyon near the visitor center.

### *Back-Country Use*

Ninety percent of Bandelier National Monument is, and will remain, a wilderness. This rugged land is an impressive scenic experience to venturers. The back country is accessible by approximately 30 miles of maintained trail. Some of the features to be enjoyed are the gorges of Alamo Canyon, the Stone Lions, Painted Cave, the pueblo ruins of San Miguel and Yapashi, and White Rock Canyon of the Rio Grande. All persons desiring to follow the trails should register with a park ranger before leaving the headquarters area.

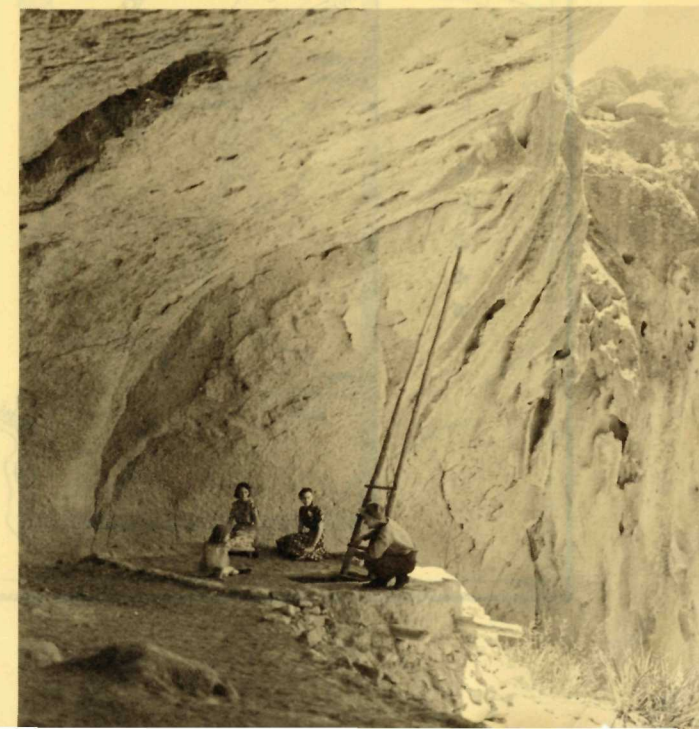
### *Interpretive Program*

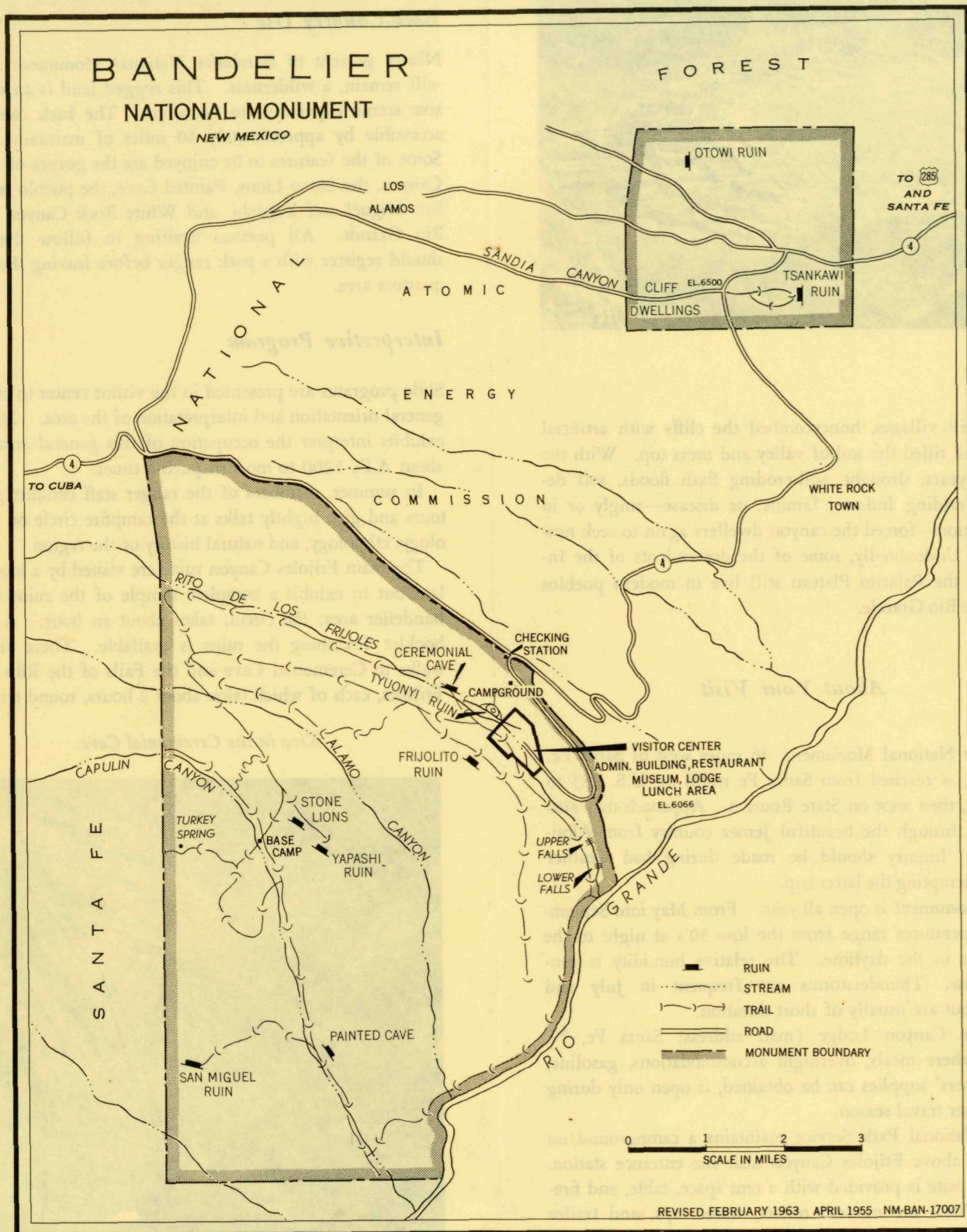
Slide programs are presented in the visitor center to provide general orientation and interpretation of the area. Museum exhibits interpret the occupation of this general area from about A.D. 1200 to modern pueblo times.

In summer, members of the ranger staff conduct guided tours and give nightly talks at the campfire circle on archeology, ethnology, and natural history of the region.

The main Frijoles Canyon ruins are visited by a loop trail laid out to exhibit a complete sample of the ruins of the Bandelier area; the circuit takes about an hour. A guide booklet describing the ruins is available. There are also walks to Ceremonial Cave and the Falls of the Rito de las Frijoles, each of which takes about 2 hours, round trip.

*Kiva in the Ceremonial Cave.*





*A reminder:* All objects in the monument—Indian artifacts, flowers, trees, animals, and rocks—must be left in place and undisturbed so that others, too, may enjoy them. This protection is a matter of law; it is also a matter of good citizenship and consideration for others.

#### Visitor-Use Fees

A vehicle permit fee is collected for each automobile, motorcycle, and housetrailer entering the monument. All fees are deposited as revenue in the U.S. Treasury and offset, in part, appropriations made for operating the monument.

#### Administration

Bandelier National Monument, established on February 11, 1916, 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 Santa Fe, N. Mex., is in immediate charge of the monument.

#### 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 for the future, 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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New Mexico

COVER: Long House and cliff of tuff.