



TUZIGOOT

National Monument

ARIZONA

TUZIGOOT *National Monument*



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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Remnants of a prehistoric fortified town of Indians who farmed Arizona's colorful Verde Valley for two centuries before A. D. 1300

TUZIGOOT NATIONAL MONUMENT consists of the excavated ruins of a prehistoric pueblo which flourished between A. D. 1100 and 1400 and a museum which houses the entire collection recovered from the site during the excavations of 1933-34.

Tuzigoot, an extensive ruin on a hill across the Verde River from Clarkdale, Ariz., is an outstanding example of the large late-prehistoric pueblos of the Verde Valley. It is strategically located on the end of a long limestone ridge rising 120 feet above the river.

A fairly typical hilltop pueblo of 110 clustered rooms covering the summit of the ridge and terraced part way down the slopes, two-storied in part, Tuzigoot is about 500 feet long overall and 100 feet across at its greatest width. An open patio, or plaza, separates an outlying unit from the main body of the pueblo, an unbroken mass of rooms 325 feet long. Many rooms are quite large; the average is about 12 by 18 feet.

There are only a few doors, the rooms having been entered through small openings in the roofs, as was often customary in late-prehistoric pueblos.

Top part of pueblo before excavation.



Verde Valley Prehistory

The Early People.—The story of Tuzigoot, as pieced together by students of American antiquity, opens 1,000 years ago. Early in the 10th century, Indians of the Verde Valley were living peacefully in the midst of their corn-fields. In nearby patches and between the hillocks of corn they raised beans, pumpkins, and cotton. These pioneer farming Indians occupied shallow pit dwellings—simple wattle-work huts with dirt floors. They were a northern offshoot of the Hohokam culture of the Gila Basin, with similar customs and similar manner of living.

Around 1100, new peoples were coming into the Verde Valley from the north. The newcomers were accustomed to building compact masonry houses on mesa tops and in caves. These were Pueblo Indians, who soon erected the first small cluster of rooms on the hill at Tuzigoot. For almost two centuries this small pueblo of 15 or 20

rooms continued to shelter perhaps half a hundred natives.

The archeological story indicates that the adult Indians were buried in the great refuse piles on the hillsides below the dwellings, and the babies were laid beneath the room floors in typical Pueblo manner, 170 of the latter having been found.

The Great Drought.—In the late 13th century came a disaster in the Southwest which has never since been equalled. For an incredible 23 years, 1276 to 1299, the rains failed, crops lay stunted and dying in the parched soil, and whole villages faced starvation. This drought in the Southwest seemed to have had its effect mainly on the people living on the west side of the Continental Divide from the Four Corners area south.

Such conditions in the Verde Valley would no longer permit dry farming to be practiced in the flats away from the streams. As a result, the people concen-

Top part of pueblo after excavation and partial rebuilding.



trated along the permanent, spring-fed streams where irrigation ditches were already in use. During these trying 23 years the pueblo of Tuzigoot doubled and redoubled its population as a result of the dry farmers moving in from the outlying areas to practice irrigation farming along the streams. By the drought's end, there were 110 rooms on the hilltop.

Within sight of Tuzigoot, at the beginning of the 14th century, were more than twoscore other pueblos (a few of which are visible from Tuzigoot today) that either underwent a similar increase in size or were constructed at this time. As the drought abated, the newcomers were content and remained for another 100 years at Tuzigoot and at many other large pueblos along the streams of the middle Verde Valley.

Abandonment.—Archeologists cannot be certain of the reason for the abandonment of Tuzigoot or any of the other pueblos in the valley. It is pos-

sible that enemy invasions succeeded in storming the hill village or that pestilence may have brought famine or sickness to the Verde Valley. For these, we have no tangible evidence. Around A. D. 1300, however, when so many people moved off the flats of the desert and concentrated along the streams, the small amounts of arable land available for so many people probably caused an imbalance which led to strife between neighboring villages, resulting in a gradual exodus from the valley.

To what regions they moved, we are not sure, but they may have wandered northward to the great Hopi villages beyond the Painted Desert and perhaps some went eastward to the Zuni area.

Rediscovery

For five centuries the Tuzigoot pueblo, its rooms obscured under fallen material from the ruined upper floors and roofs, lay forgotten and undisturbed. In 1933 and 1934, complete excavation of the site was carried out

A well-preserved burial.



with Federal relief funds and with the cooperation of the Phelps Dodge Corporation.

Through the interest of public-spirited local citizens, the entire hill of Tuzigoot, with museum and complete collection, was donated to the Federal Government, and on July 25, 1939, Tuzigoot National Monument, a tract of 42.67 acres, was established by Presidential proclamation.

Related Points of Interest

Of the thousands of open pueblo sites in the Southwest, the National Park System includes, besides Tuzigoot, outstanding examples in Casa Grande and Wupatki National Monuments, in Arizona; Aztec Ruins, Bandelier, and Chaco Canyon National Monuments, in New Mexico; and Mesa Verde National Park, in Colorado.

Montezuma Castle National Monument, one of the best-preserved cliff dwellings in the United States, is 27 miles from Tuzigoot and can be reached by a good road branching from U. S. 89A. The Castle, which was actually a community dwelling, offers many interesting comparisons with Tuzigoot, since it was inhabited at the same time and by people of the same general culture.

For the visitor to Tuzigoot National Monument who plans to continue north on U. S. 89A to Flagstaff, Ariz., numer-

ous related features of interest lie ahead. En route is famous Oak Creek Canyon, with its vividly colored rock formations, and many more attractions can be reached easily from Flagstaff. They include Walnut Canyon National Monument, a natural area of great beauty featuring 5 miles of cliff dwellings clinging to rock ledges; Wupatki National Monument, a series of remarkable pueblo dwellings; and Sunset Crater National Monument, the last active volcano in the Southwest, which erupted cinders over many early pit house dwellings about A. D. 1066.

Administration and Facilities

Tuzigoot National Monument is administered by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 36, Clarkdale, Ariz., is in immediate charge of the monument.

The ruin and museum are open between 8 a. m. and 5 p. m., during which time a ranger is on duty to assist visitors and provide additional needed information. The museum exhibits include rare turquoise mosaics, delicate sea shells traded from the California coast and made into beads and bracelets, and painted pottery which accompanied the dead as offerings.

There are no visitor accommodations in the monument, as it is not far from several small towns in which meals and lodging can be obtained.

The National Park System, of which Tuzigoot National Monument is a unit, is dedicated to the conservation of America's scenic, scientific, and historic heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.

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