

ADMINISTRATION

Tuzigoot National Monument is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is P.O. Box 68, Clarkdale, AZ 86324 is in immediate charge of the monument.

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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TUZIGOOT

Tuzigoot is a remnant of a prehistoric town built by Indians who farmed Arizona's colorful Verde Valley between A.D. 1125 and 1400. It covered the summit and higher terraces of a long limestone ridge that rises 120 feet above the Verde Valley. In places, the pueblo was 2 stories high, and its 77 ground-floor rooms, covering an area about 500 by 100 feet, averaged 12 by 18 feet. The inhabitants entered the pueblo by means of ladders to the roofs, thence by hatchways into the rooms. An open plaza separated an outlying unit from the main body of the pueblo.

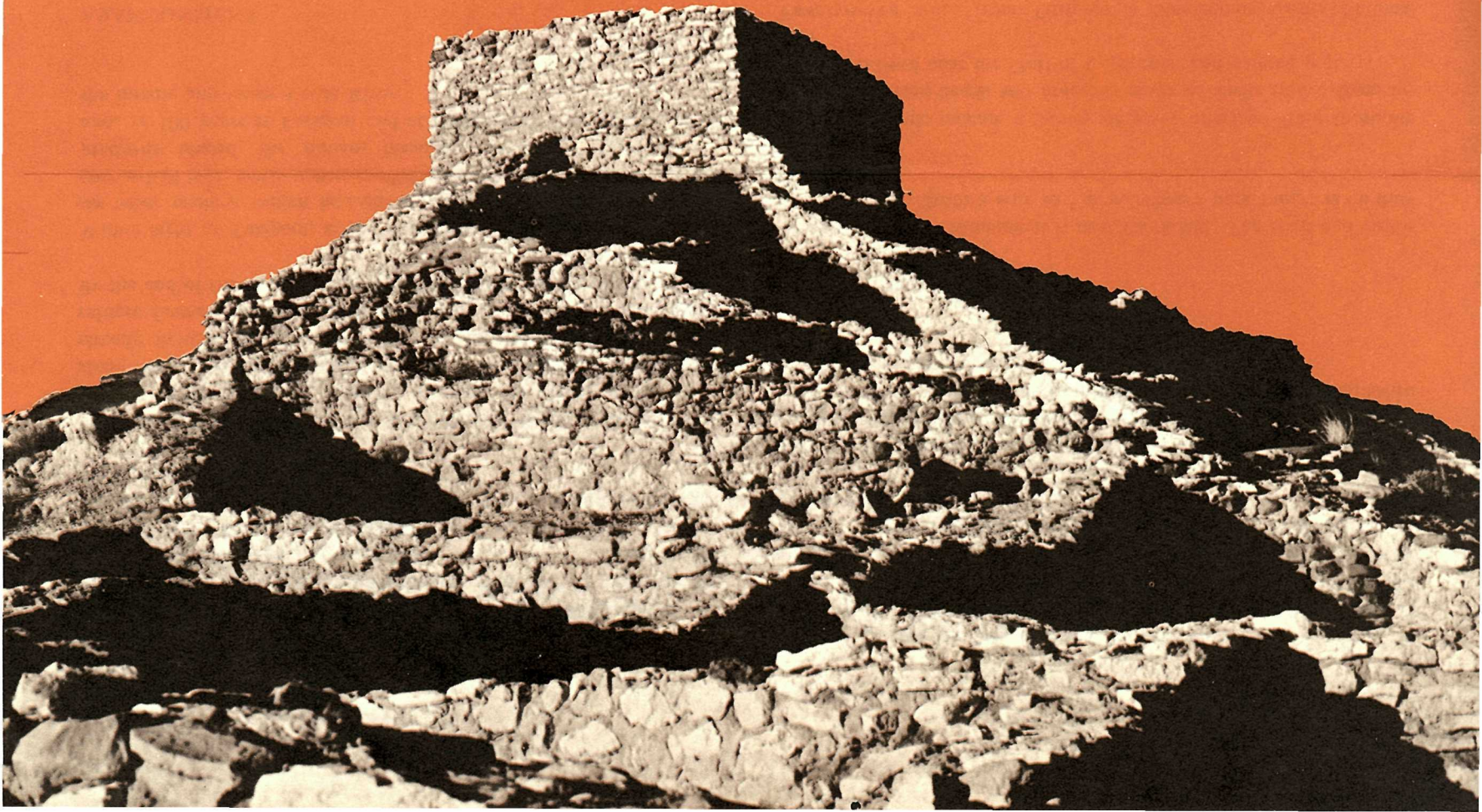
THE PEOPLE

The story of Tuzigoot, as pieced together by archeologists, began 1,000 years ago. Early in the 10th century, Indians of the Verde Valley were living peacefully in pole-and-brush huts in the midst of their cornfields.

In nearby patches and between hillocks of corn, they raised beans, pumpkins, and cotton. They were related to the prehistoric farmers who lived on river terraces near present-day Phoenix.

About 1125, northern Indians (now called Sinagua) joined the residents. They built masonry houses on mesa tops and in caves and erected the first small cluster of rooms on the hill at Tuzigoot. For almost 100 years, this small pueblo of 15 or 20 rooms sheltered about 50 people.

Modern excavations indicate that these later people, in contrast with the early inhabitants who cremated their dead, buried their dead unburned. The adults were buried in the great refuse piles on the hillsides below the dwellings; infants, beneath the room floors and in the walls, perhaps in the belief that their souls would be born again in the next children, as Hopi Indians of 50 years ago believed.



THE GREAT DROUGHT

During the 13th century, the Southwest experienced a disaster which has never since been equaled. Between 1215 and 1299, rainfall was below normal, causing extended droughts. The last 23 years of this period were especially dry, and crops lay stunted and dying in the parched soil. Those people living in and near the four adjoining corners of present-day Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado felt the drought the most.

Since drought conditions in the Verde Valley made dryfarming impossible in the flats away from the streams, the people concentrated along the permanent spring-fed streams where irrigation ditches were already in use. Tuzigoot doubled and redoubled its population as refugee farmers moved in from the nearby valley flats in the 1200's. By the end of the drought, there were 92 rooms on the hilltop.

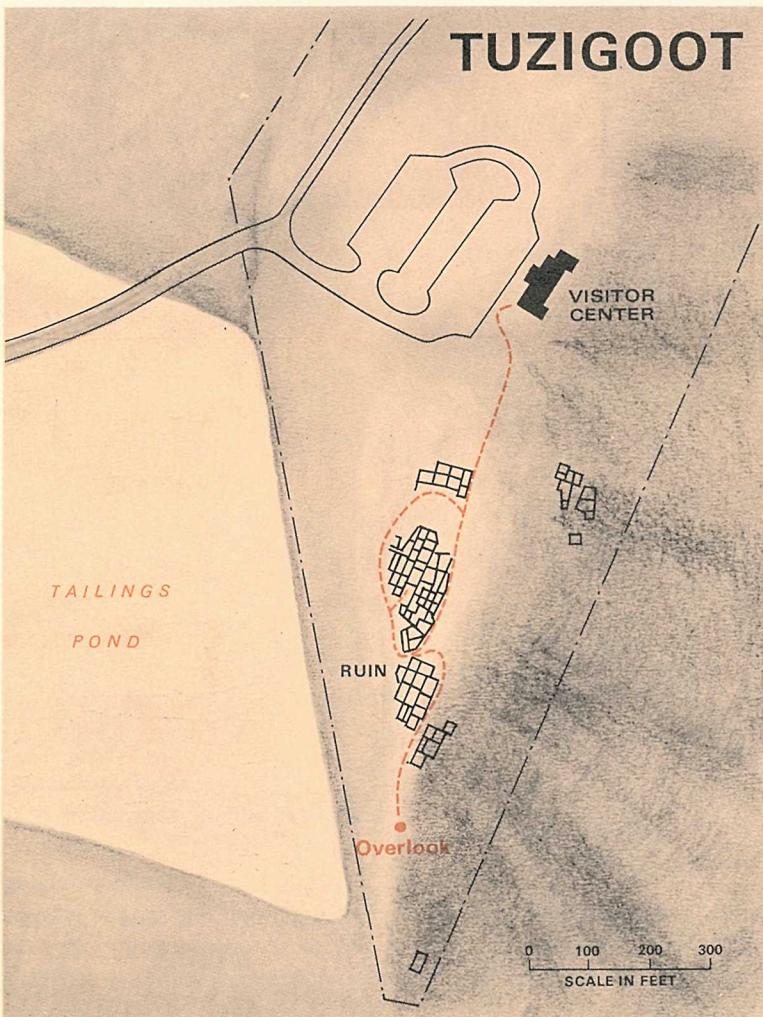
Within sight of Tuzigoot, at the beginning of the 14th century, were six other pueblos, which had either undergone a similar increase in size or had been newly constructed during this period. As the drought gradually abated, the Indians became content and remained for another 100 years at Tuzigoot and at many other large pueblos along the middle and lower Verde River.

ABANDONMENT

No one knows why Tuzigoot and the other valley towns were abandoned in the 1400's. Epidemics might have depleted the population, but tangible evidence is lacking. Another theory is that by 1300 too many people had moved off the desert flats and concentrated along the streams. Thus, population pressure on the small amounts of arable land could have caused an imbalance, which, in turn, could have led to strife and a gradual exodus from the valley. Survivors were probably absorbed into other pueblos outside the valley.

The modern Hopi and Zuni hold traditions that some of their clans came from the Verde Valley and other parts of central Arizona.

Whatever the cause and exact time of abandonment, when Spanish soldiers, commanded by Antonio Espejo, entered the Verde Valley in 1583, they found the pueblos in ruins and Yavapai Indians living in thatch-roofed huts.



REDISCOVERY

Tuzigoot pueblo lay forgotten and undisturbed for four centuries, its lower rooms obscured under fallen material from the upper floors and roofs. In 1933 and 1934, the University of Arizona excavated the entire site. Federal relief funds and the cooperation of the Phelps Dodge Corporation, which owned the land, helped to make this project possible.

Through the interest of local citizens, the entire hill of Tuzigoot, with museum and complete collection, was donated to the Federal Government. On July 25, 1939, Tuzigoot National Monument was established by Presidential proclamation.

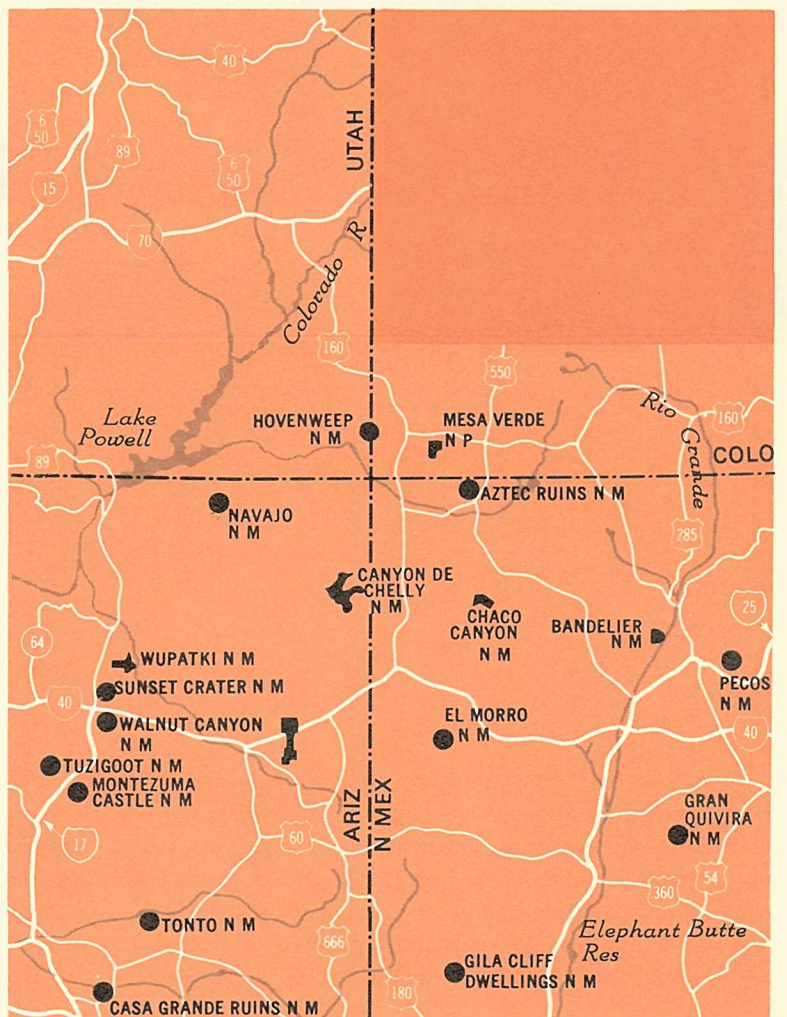
ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Tuzigoot National Monument is near Clarkdale. The ruins and visitor center are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., when a park ranger is on duty to assist you.

Museum exhibits include a variety of grave offerings—rare turquoise mosaics, delicate beads and bracelets made of shells traded from Indians who lived near the Gulf of California, and painted pottery.

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

If you plan to continue north on U.S. 89A to Flagstaff, you can easily reach other National Monuments: Walnut Canyon, a natural area of great beauty featuring cliff dwellings on rock ledges of canyon walls; Wupatki, a series of remarkable pueblo dwellings; and Sunset Crater, site of the last active volcano in the Southwest, which erupted cinders over many early pithouse dwellings about A.D. 1065.



ARCHEOLOGICAL AREAS