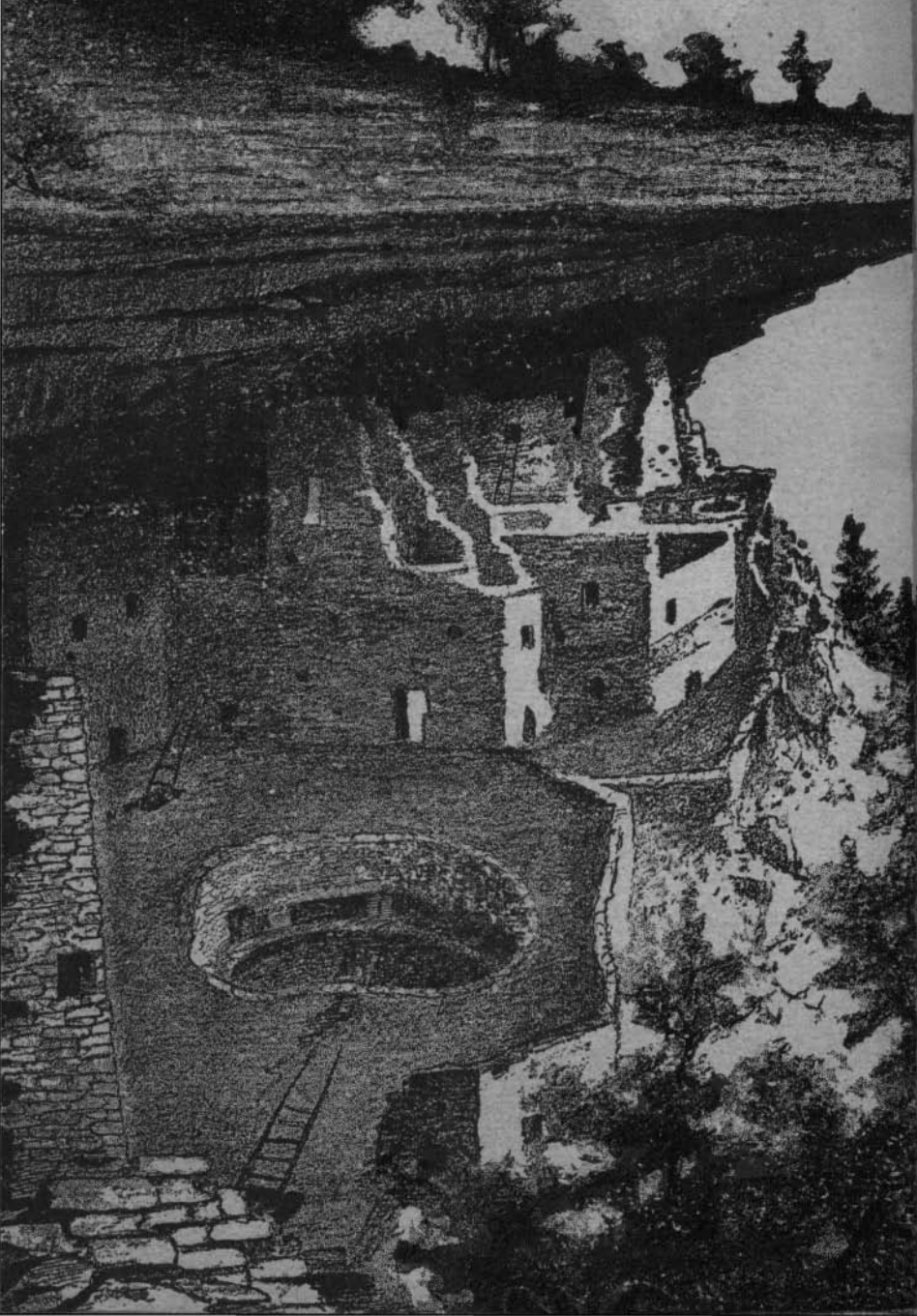


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Ancient Ruins of the Southwest



Ancient Ruins of the Southwest

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CLIFF PALACE -- Mesa Verde National Park



THE CLIFFS OF PUYE

Northern New Mexico

Ancient Ruins of the Southwest



THE remains of ancient populations spread over the Southwest have been a subject of great interest to travelers and settlers for generations past. They have attracted the attention of students and literary men and much has been written, scientific and speculative, concerning these ancient peoples.

Within recent years close investigation has shed new light upon these ancient places. The states and their citizens have commenced the protection of ancient ruins, the Government of the United States has interested itself and its scholars, so that now the truth about the ancient inhabitants of the Southwest is gradually becoming known. It has not in the least detracted from the interest in them to discover the truth—to remove the veil of mystery that has hung over them and make known the actual facts. On the contrary, they have grown in interest to thinking people as their true character has become known.

Most conspicuous of the ancient cities of the Southwest are those of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona. It is not an exaggeration to speak of these large ancient communities as "cities", for there must have been in them elements of collective order, of well-controlled community life, of common interest and common welfare characteristic of present-day communities which we designate as towns, and in some cases the

aggregation of population was sufficient to warrant the name of "city".

Pajarito Plateau in New Mexico

The great elevation of yellowish-gray volcanic tufa northwest of Santa Fe, known as Pajarito Plateau, overspread an area of perhaps five hundred square miles



THE CLIFF DWELLINGS OF PUYE

Northern New Mexico

on the west side of the Rio Grande at the base of the Jemez Mountains. It is a formation of vast age, and water and wind erosion have sculptured the soft rock masses into bold, fantastic remnants which, standing out above the general level, appear as geological islands. On the tops of these and also in the vertical faces of the southern exposed cliffs and upon the sloping talus reaching therefrom to the valleys below, we find the remains of almost countless groups of the old community houses. Those on the mesa tops were typically arranged in

quadrangles of four terraced houses, surrounding a squarish court, which could be entered only by a single narrow passageway. These quadrangular structures consisted of many rooms arranged in series, side by side, and also in terraces to the height of several stories. The great community house at Puye must have been four stories high and contained from ten to twelve hun-



COMMUNITY HOUSE AT PUYE--Recently excavated

Northern New Mexico

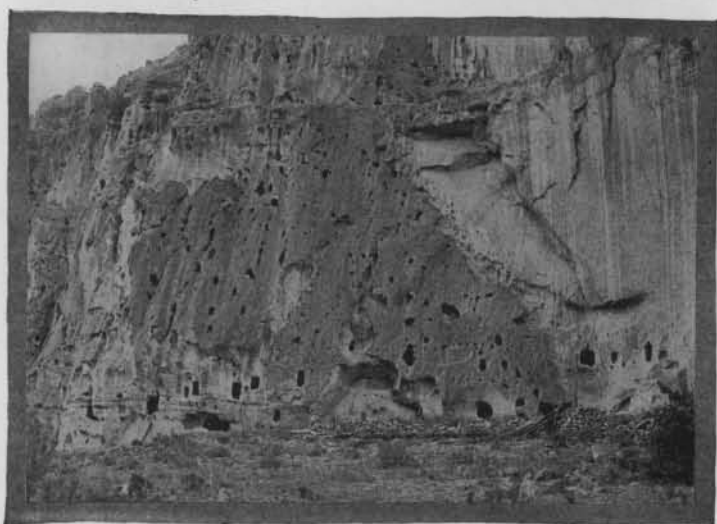
dred rooms, while against the cliff below were built extensive villages that housed hundreds of people. The entire plateau from the Chama River south for forty miles, is covered with similar remains. The cliff houses alone, or rather the cliffs containing them, if placed in a single line, would extend for over one hundred miles.

The culmination of all the ancient cliff cities of this region is to be seen in the Rito de los Frijoles. Here we find a condition very different from that above



EXCAVATED VILLAGE at the bottom of the Canon - Rito de los Frijoles

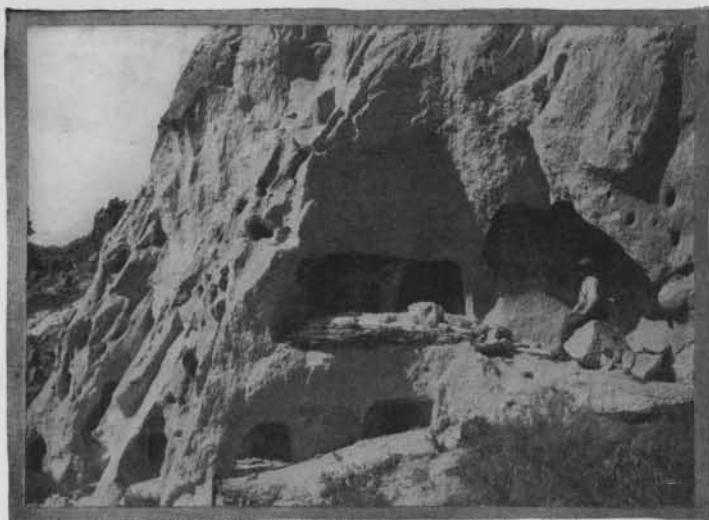
Northern New Mexico



CLIFF DWELLINGS in the Canon of the Rito de los Frijoles

Northern New Mexico

described, for, instead of being built as a citadel on an eminence, we find here the ruins in a cañon, five hundred feet deep, secluded from the outer world, as difficult of access as are the high mesa fortresses. Scattered along this narrow gorge are fifteen villages within a space of a mile and a quarter. The cañon was entered only by two or three trails. It is inaccessible from the Rio Grande because of two waterfalls which completely



A GROUP OF CLIFF DWELLINGS--Canon of the Rito de los Frijoles

Northern New Mexico

intercept the narrow passage. This ancient community bore the name of Tyuonyi. The principal focus of its population was the great community house, roughly circular, built on the northern brink of the streamlet. This was a terraced house, three stories high, and may have contained eight or nine hundred rooms. Its inner court was entered by a single narrow passage. Three other community houses much smaller are found in the bottom of the cañon, and on the talus against the northern cliff are the remains of eleven villages. Exca-

eight

ventions have been commenced in this old settlement, and already it has contributed much to the record of man's early life in the Southwest.

Another group of ancient towns, less picturesque in situation but of equal interest, is that of the Chaco Cañon in northwestern New Mexico. These great houses, standing in the open, some five stories high,



TENT ROCKS OF OTOWI

Northern New Mexico

were built of sandstone blocks, in some cases arranged in courses of varying thickness so as to produce decorative effects. They had no natural security of situation on high mesas or in deep cañons, but stood in the open valley and on the sandy plain, entirely unprotected save by their own massive walls. Best known of all in this group is Pueblo Bonito, a huge structure five stories high, semi-circular in form, its walls still standing to a height of over forty feet. Not far away are the ruins

of Chetro Kettle, Hungo Pavié, Wijiji and Peñasco Blanco. This famous group of ruins stands in the midst of a desolate plain, the Navajo Desert, now almost devoid of water and incapable of supporting any population except of wandering Navajo.

The Ruins near Aztec

Within a few minutes' walk of the town of Aztec, New Mexico, in the Animas Valley, is one of the



▲ COMMUNITY HOUSE

Aztec, New Mexico

greatest of the ancient pueblo ruins of the Southwest. It is of the same class as those of the Chaco Cañon and must have been built by a closely related people. The number of stories that it originally contained cannot now be determined and the original number of rooms is also indefinite, but it is plain that there were several hundred of them. Some of these rooms are still completely preserved, and floors, walls, ceilings and fireplaces may be seen in exactly the condition in which left by the ancient inhabitants. The timbers used in the construction of the ceilings are in many cases in a perfect state of preservation.



BALCONY HOUSE -- Mesa Verde National Park

Southwestern Colorado



LOOKING ACROSS CLIFF CANON from Balcony House -- Mesa Verde National Park

Southwestern Colorado

Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado

More spectacular in interest than any other place of its kind is the Mesa Verde National Park, near Mancos, in southwestern Colorado. Here is a geological condition not unlike that above described, excepting



Map Showing the Canons and Location of Principal Ruins in the Mesa Verde National Park -- Southwestern Colorado

that the great rock blanket is of sandstone instead of tufa. Like the Pajarito, it is rent into fragments by ages of torrential erosion, but, unlike that region, great natural caverns have here been formed in the rock walls, which afforded exceptional security for communities of people not inclined to, nor fitted for, the stress of warfare with predatory neighbors. In these caverns, reached by trails of extreme difficulty, we find the ruins of the most remarkable cliff dwellings in the world. It



SPRUCE TREE HOUSE before removal of debris -- Mesa Verde National Park

Southwestern Colorado

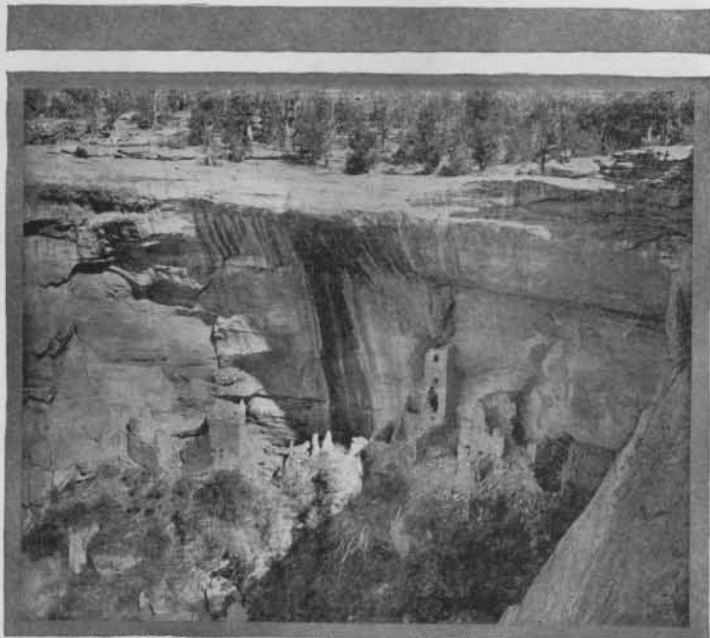


SPRUCE TREE HOUSE after removal of debris -- Mesa Verde National Park

Southwestern Colorado

is not to be wondered at that these ruined towns, in such unusual situations, with their towers, round and square, their subterranean sanctuaries, should have become the theme of countless stories and theories, romantic and absurd.

It must be admitted that a more weird sight is hardly to be seen in traveling over the known world.



PEABODY HOUSE, a recent discovery -- Mesa Verde National Park

Southwestern Colorado

They are not so great in extent as the community houses of the Pajarito, but they are in a much better state of preservation. In architectural design and skill of construction they surpass anything else of their kind that has been discovered. Greatest of all is the famous Cliff Palace. Nearly equal in interest are Balcony House, Spruce Tree House, Peabody House, Long House and many others, each of which affords new phases of in-

fourteen

terest in construction and situation. Many houses of lesser size are situated so as to be practically inaccessible at the present time.

Going west some forty or fifty miles from the Mesa Verde, we come to another district of cliff houses in the McElmo Cañon and its tributaries. The people who built these structures were doubtless closely related to those of the Mesa Verde, but their methods of de-



LONG HOUSE -- Mesa Verde National Park

Southwestern Colorado

fense differed conspicuously. Instead of placing their buildings in caverns under overhanging ledges, they built them on the edge of the rim-rock at the heads of small cañons and guarded them from below by means of watch towers, round or square, placed upon huge boulders at the cañon junctions. The Cannonball, Holly, Ruin, Hovenweep and Yellow Jacket cañons are tributaries of the McElmo, which contained countless cliff houses of this type.

Ruins in Southern Utah

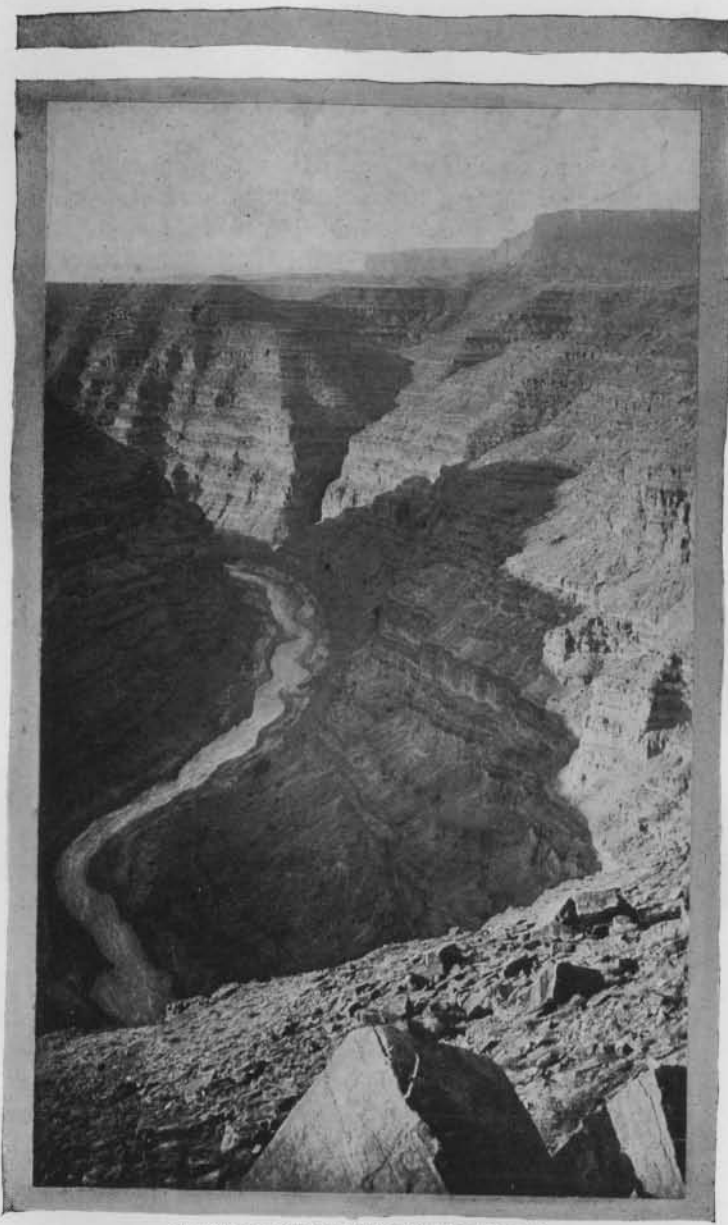
Southern Utah is also a rich field for the archæologist. Here, too, in addition to the human interest centering about the ancient cliff towns, we encounter the most unusual and fantastic scenery of the Southwest. The country of the Natural Bridges, lying sixty-five miles northwest of the town of Bluff, is in scenic and



EXCAVATION WORK ON COMMUNITY HOUSE

Southeastern Utah

archæological interest unsurpassed. These great natural arches are without parallel in the world. The gorges about them are full of natural caves, in which are found the cliff houses of the ancient inhabitants. Grand Gulch, the westernmost northern tributary of the San Juan, is another gorge of surpassing interest. It is, in places, one thousand feet deep, and for sixty miles its walls are dotted with cliff villages.



GRAND GULCH OF THE SAN JUAN RIVER

Southern Utah



“Who Were These Ancient People?”

To give even a brief description of all the centers of ancient population in the Southwest would require a volume. The purpose of this brief story is merely to point out in a general way the character and distribution of the remains of these ancient civilizations. The questions asked by everyone are: “Who were these ancient people?” “When did they live here?” and “What was the cause of their disappearance?”

Scientists no longer speak of vanished races in America. The fundamental unity of the race that inhabited this continent at the time of its discovery by the European may be accepted. In the Southwest, as on the Mexican plateaus and in Central America, certain tribes of Indians developed peculiar lines of culture to a level that may be considered “civilization”. By what names they may have been known to themselves and to other tribes we may never know. For the present we speak of them simply as the “Ancient Pueblos” and “Cliff Dwellers”, as we designate the ancient tribes of the Mississippi Valley as the “Mound Builders”. But it must not be understood that we assume any different race of people from the American Indian.

The time element in the history of these ancient groups is obscure. We know that the cliff cities were in ruins at the time of the coming of the Spaniards. Any statement of the date of their abandonment must be largely conjectural. If we were to venture such a conjecture, it would be to suggest from eight to ten centuries ago as the most recent date of occupation in the localities above described.



THE "EDWIN" NATURAL BRIDGE -- Height, 104 ft.; Span, 194 ft.

The disappearance of these people from the region in which they flourished for centuries is an interesting problem and one that is far from solution. To say that the present Pueblo Indians are exactly the same people is to assume what the ascertained facts will not bear out. There are wide differences between the symbols used by the ancients and by the present Pueblos for the decoration of their pottery. The anatomical remains of the Cliff Dwellers show decided non-conformity to the anatomical characters of the Pueblos of the present day. For example, the Pueblos of the Rio Grande Valley at

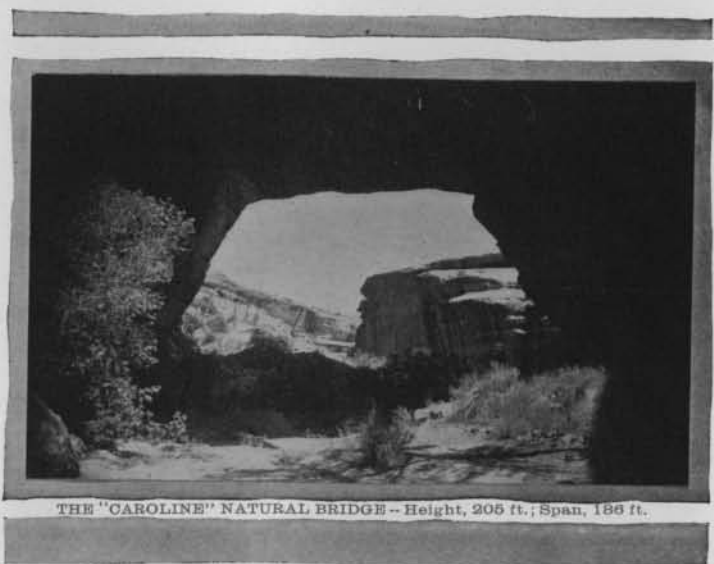


CLIFF DWELLING in the Country of the Natural Bridges

Southern Utah

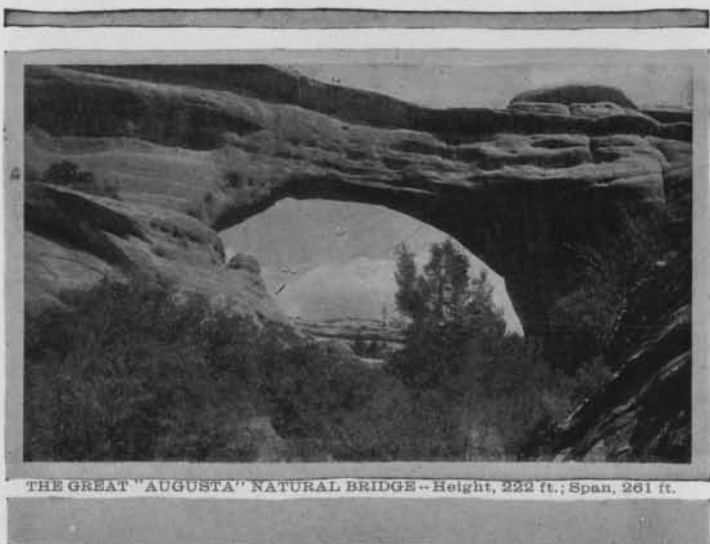
present are brachycephalic or broad-headed, while the ancient people of the adjacent Pajarito Plateau were a dolicocephalic or narrow-headed people. Moreover, the traditions of the Pueblos when thoroughly sifted, do not indicate that they were descended, except in part, from the people of the cliffs.

There can be no doubt, from the great extent of the ancient ruins of the Southwest, that a large population existed in that region centuries ago in places where,



THE "CAROLINE" NATURAL BRIDGE -- Height, 205 ft.; Span, 186 ft.

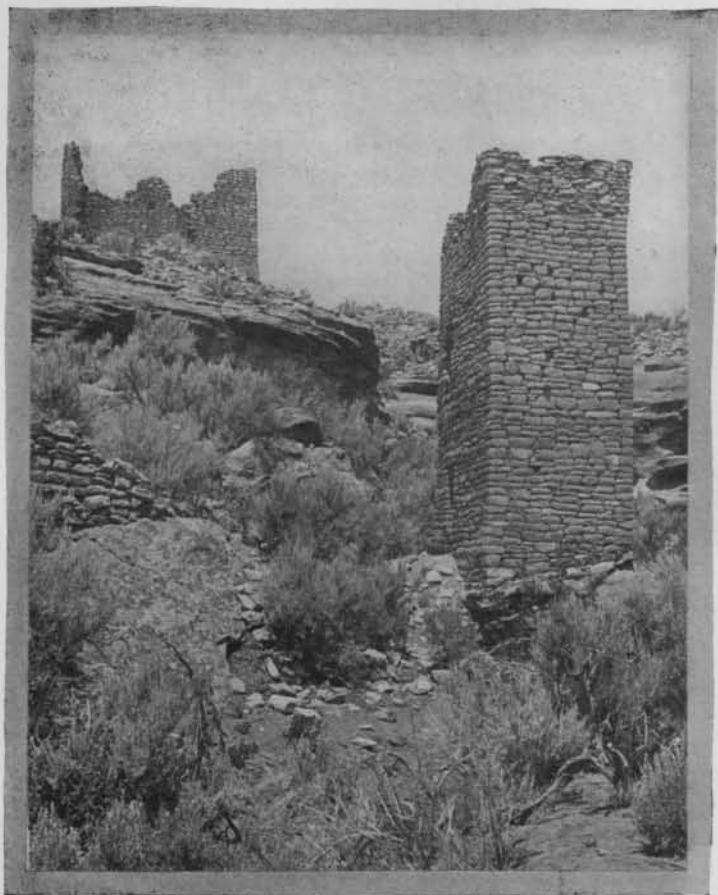
Southern Utah



THE GREAT "AUGUSTA" NATURAL BRIDGE -- Height, 222 ft.; Span, 261 ft.

Southern Utah

at the present time, people could not find subsistence in any considerable numbers, as, for example, in Chaco Cañon. Here we find irrigating ditches of considerable extent in the midst of a sandy plain now devoid of water except for the brief, dashing rains of the late summer season. The population indicated by the ruins



SQUARE TOWER

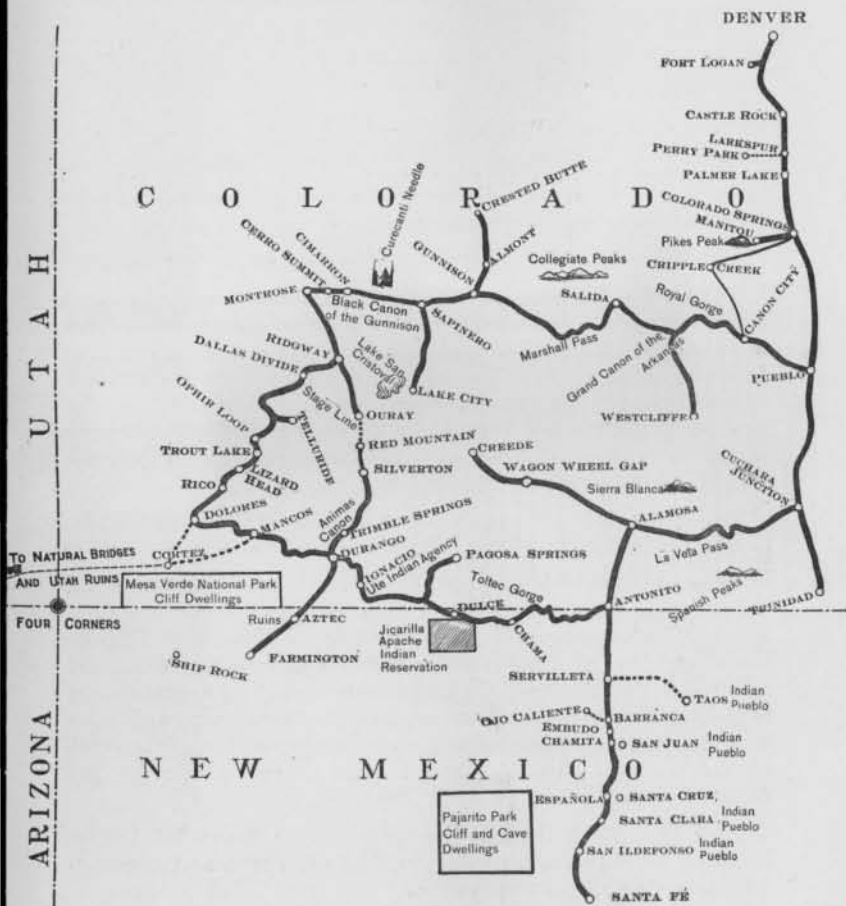
of that region could not subsist under present conditions. In a greater or less degree these conditions prevailed all over the Southwest, and the geological evidence is conclusive that there has been a slow, progressive drying up of this region, which has made population in such large communities practically impossible. The indications are that the abandonment of these villages went on slowly for many years. There is nothing to indicate any sudden general exodus. It would seem likely that a gradual re-distribution of the population took place, bands emigrating to the East, South or West, as their towns became untenable from lack of water. We know of detachments having settled at Hopi in Arizona, and in the Rio Grande Valley in New Mexico, but how far still larger bands may have wandered from the old cliff homes is unknown.

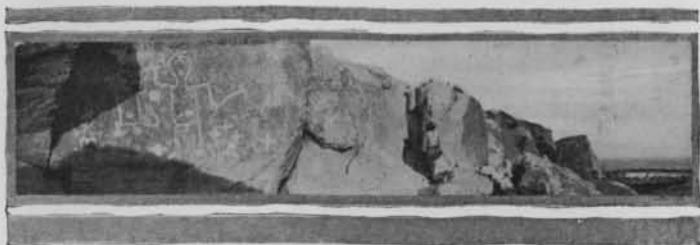


A WATCH TOWER -- Mesa Verde National Park

MAP OF
The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad
"Around the Circle Tour"

Showing Location of the Principal Cliff and Cave Ruins of the Southwest
and the Nearest Railroad Points from which they can be reached





PICTOGRAPHS -- Ruins of Tsankawi

Northern New Mexico

How to Reach the Ancient Ruins of the Southwest

The ruins of the Southwest herein described by Dr. Hewett are all located on the line of the Denver & Rio Grande System, or can be easily reached from stations on its line.

The Puyé ruins are twelve miles from Española, New Mexico.

The ruins of Pajarito, Otowi, Tsankawi, Navawi and Rito de los Frijoles are reached from Santa Fé, New Mexico, and are from twenty to thirty miles distant. They can also be reached from Buckman or Española, from seven to fifteen miles distant, but it is more satisfactory to make arrangements for transportation, etc., at Santa Fé. At this place arrangements are being made to convey travelers to the ruins by automobile at an expense of \$15.00 for one person, or \$12.50 each for two or more for a trip of three days.

The Aztec ruins are less than two miles from the Denver & Rio Grande station at Aztec, New Mexico, and can be seen from the train.

The ruins in the Mesa Verde National Park are reached from Mancos, Colorado, which is the headquarters of the Superintendent of the Park. The Cliff Palace, Spruce Tree House, Balcony House and Peabody House are about twenty-five miles from the station—fifteen miles by good wagon road and ten miles by horseback trail. Arrangements can be made at Mancos for the round trip, which can be comfortably made in three days at an expense of \$15.00 for one person, or \$12.50 each for two or more. These charges include conveyances, meals and sleeping accommodations.

The Holly, Yellow Jacket, Hovenweep and Cannon Ball Cañons are from 45 to 65 miles from Dolores, Colorado, where arrangements can be made for special conveyances.

The Natural Bridges of Utah are about 150 miles from Dolores, Colorado. There is a regular stage line from Dolores to Bluff, Utah, where arrangements can be made for guides and conveyances to the bridges, 65 miles from the latter point.

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