

Canyon de Chelly

National Monument
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Our Vanishing Treasures



OUR ANTIQUITIES

The story of the first people of the Americas, their adaptations to their environments and their struggles for survival has spanned thousands of years. It has left us with a rich archaeological legacy which constitutes one of our nation's great treasures, and provides us with a vivid link with the past. The information gleaned from

archaeological sites is our primary source of knowledge about the rich and varied cultures that have sometimes disappeared entirely from our world. Today our lives are enriched when we visit the remains of the ancient dwellings and see first hand the tools, clothing and artistic expressions of the ancient ones.



THE CRISIS

But now we are faced with an escalating crisis that threatens to rob us and all future generations of our knowledge of the people of the past. Organized looters and vandals are destroying our ancient treasures at an alarming rate. Armed with guns, these thieves often employ bulldozers, back-

hoes, dynamite and helicopters denying each and every American our heritage and destroying forever our knowledge of the first Americans. Ancient burials are left torn apart and artifacts are sold for profit on a flourishing international blackmarket.

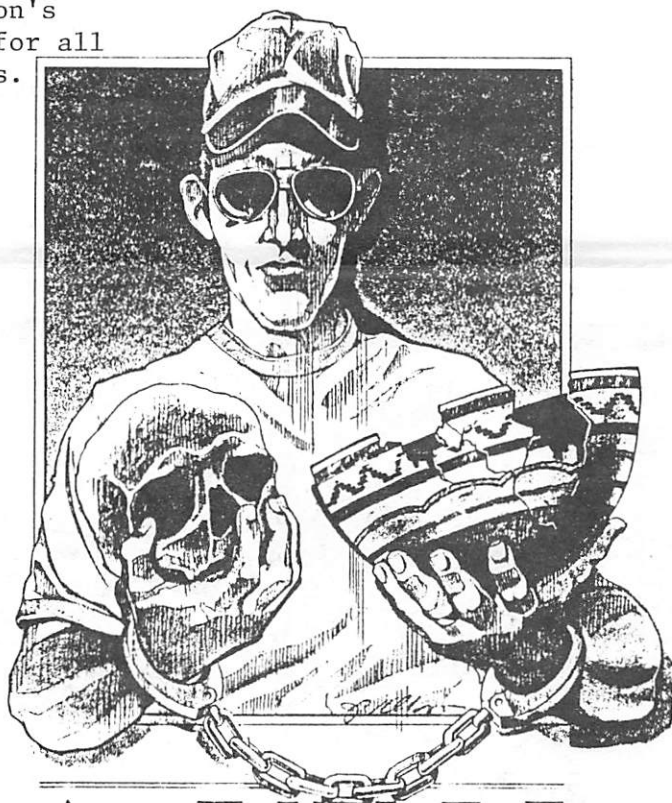
THE LAW

A federal law—"The Archaeological Resource Protection Act of 1979"—makes stealing and vandalizing antiquities from public lands a criminal offense with stiff penalties for violators, including; penalties of up to \$100,000 fine and/or 5 years imprisonment. It protects cultural

material at least 100 years old, ties civil and criminal penalties to values destroyed and provides payment of rewards for information leading to conviction.

PRESERVATION

If you have ever been fascinated by ancient cliff dwellings... If you have ever marveled at intricate designs on painted pottery... If you have seen images carved in cliff walls that have stood for a thousand years... If you have puzzled over why a culture thrived for a thousand years and then appears to have vanished forever... Then you must understand the importance of preserving our nation's cultural treasures for all people and all times.



A · T H I E F O F · T I M E

He's Stealing From You.

The remains of prehistoric and historic cultures belong to all of us. When artifacts are stolen and archaeological sites are destroyed,

we lose important clues about the past, forever. Strict laws protect artifacts and sites on State, Federal and Indian lands.

- BE A STEWARD OF THE PAST -

Report violations to your local law enforcement or land management agency.

YOUR HELP

You can help by expressing your concern for protecting our cultural heritage to your elected officials, by reporting any acts of theft and vandalism to your nearest law enforcement agency and by providing information as to time, place, vehicle license

numbers, descriptions etc. You can also help by leaving pot sherds and artifacts where you find them so that others will be able to enjoy them too. Someday, perhaps that pottery sherd will provide a missing clue to aid in our understanding of the ones who came before.