



TUZIGOOT

National Monument

ARIZONA

Tuzigoot National Monument



United States Department of the Interior
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Tuzigoot National Monument consists of the excavated ruins of a prehistoric pueblo which flourished between 1000 and 1400 A. D., 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 a naturally defensible 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 over-all 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 18 by 12 feet.

There are hardly any doors, the rooms having been entered through small openings in the roofs, as was usual in prehistoric pueblos.

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 tenth century Indians

of the Verde Valley were living peacefully in the midst of their cornfields. In nearby patches and between the hillsides of corn they raised beans, pumpkins, and cotton. These pioneer farming Indians occupied pit dwellings, simple wattle-work huts erected over shallowly excavated dirt floors. They were a northern offshoot of the "Hohokam" culture of the Gila Basin, with similar customs and similar red-on-buff pottery.

Around the year 1000, 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 Great Drouth: In the late thirteenth century came a disaster in the

northern Southwest, the country north of the Little Colorado and Flagstaff, which has never since been equaled. 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. Presently, from the great pueblo villages of what is now northeastern Arizona, a steady stream of fugitive humanity came in search of lands which might have escaped the drouth, where water still filled the streams and where rain spirits sent showers over growing crops. Word soon spread of a great valley to the south that was still green and through which a crooked river flowed. The luckiest of the refugees finally reached the Verde Valley.

During these terrible 23 years the pueblo of Tuzigoot doubled and redoubled its population until, by the drouth's end, there were 110 rooms on the hilltop.

Within sight of Tuzigoot, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, were more than twoscore other new pueblos, many of which are visible from Tuzigoot today. As the drouth abated, the newcomers were content to remain in their valley homes.

Abandonment: For almost 100 years the pueblo of Tuzigoot flourished; then came disaster which this time could not be averted. Actually, archeologists cannot be certain of the reason for the pueblo's abandonment. It is possible that enemy invasions succeeded in storming the hill village. Indeed, some of the rooms had been burned, although signs of carnage are not present. Another explanation seems very probable. As in the case of pueblos still occupied in the days of the white man, crowded quarters, lack of adequate sanitation, and contamination of water supplies may well have brought sickness to the Verde Valley people.

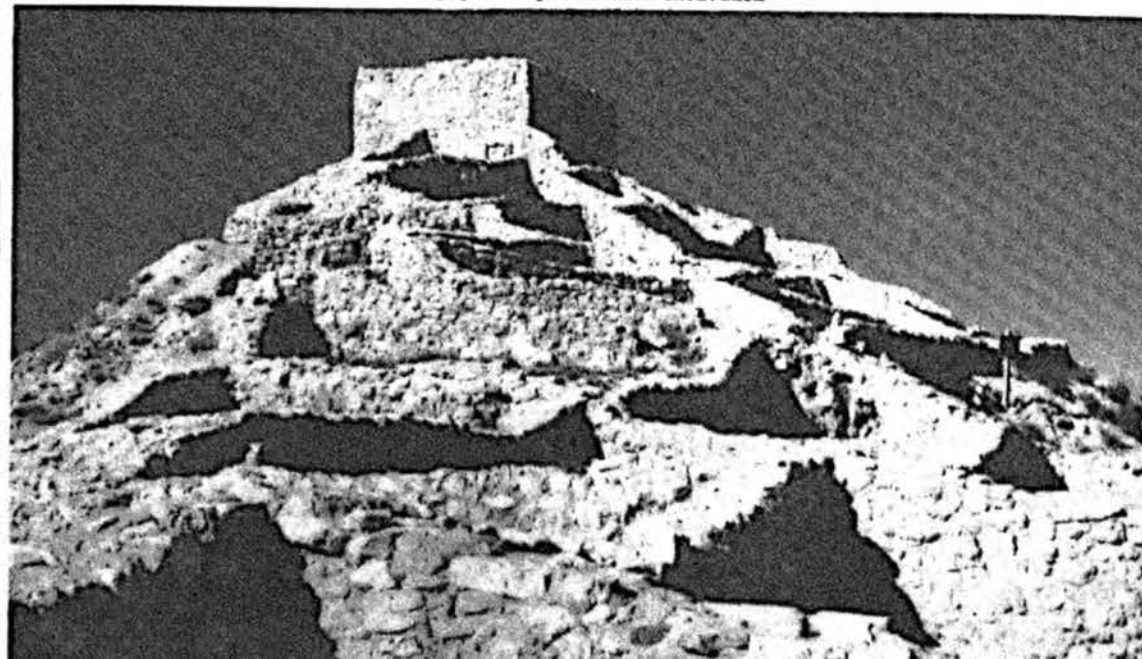
The archeological story indicates that year after year more villagers were buried in the great refuse piles on the hillsides below the dwellings, and even more Indian babies were laid beneath the room floors in typical Pueblo manner. At Tuzigoot, 170 infant burials have been excavated from beneath the pueblo house floors. The final abandonment by the much reduced population might have been due to attacks by hostile nomads. By this time there probably were Apaches in central Arizona, though some students believe they spread west from the plains of eastern New Mexico only in historic times. Aside from this, the ancestors of the modern Yavapai were probably in the region and may have attacked the Pueblos.

Finally, near the end of the fourteenth century, the Indians gradually left their fertile valley, and probably wandered northward again, to the great Hopi villages beyond the Painted Desert.

Top part of pueblo before excavation



Top part of pueblo after excavation



A well preserved burial



Rediscovery

For five centuries 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 with federal relief funds and with the cooperation of the Phelps Dodge Corporation. Trained archeologists were in charge of the work, clearing the ruins of debris, investigating the extensive refuse heap and burial ground on the east side of the hill, and making partial restoration of Unit IV. Two years later a modern museum was erected near the ancient pueblo to house the unusually complete collection recovered from the ruins.

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 42.61 acres, was created by Presidential proclamation.

Related Points of Interest

Many related features of interest lie ahead of the visitor who plans to continue north on U. S. Highway 79 to Flagstaff, Ariz. First and nearest is Montezuma Castle National Monument, one of the best preserved cliff dwellings in the United States. It is 27 miles from Tuzigoot and can be reached by a good road branching from U. S. Highway 79. 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.

Continuing through famous Oak Creek Canyon and its vividly colored

rock formations, many more attractions can be easily reached 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 885 A.D.

Traveling south, the visitor passes through Jerome, Ariz., one of America's unique towns, perched high on the mountainside, 2,000 feet above Clarkdale. From Jerome one may enjoy a 50-mile view to the San Francisco Peaks, and a panorama of Oak Creek Canyon. From the top of the pass, beyond Jerome, Mt. Mingus Recreation Area can be reached from a short branch road to the left, affording an even more spectacular series of lookout points, at an elevation of 7,400 feet.

Facilities and Administration

Tours of the ruins are conducted, and an archeologist is assigned to take visitors through the museum, one of the largest in the Southwestern National Monuments. 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 lodgings can be procured.

Inquiries should be addressed to the Custodian, Tuzigoot National Monument, Clarkdale, Ariz.

