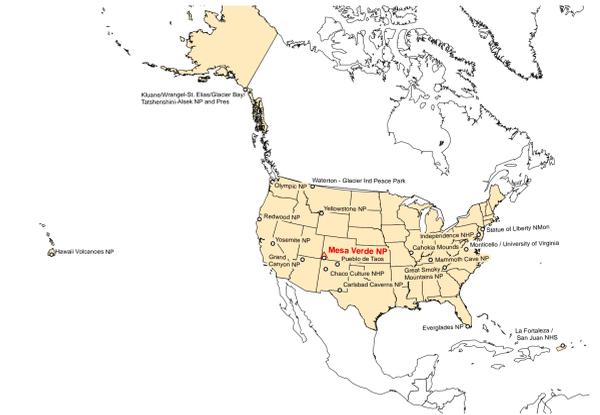


UTM Coordinates of Mesa Verde National Park WHS
 A 729880 E. 4135510 N.
 B 736950 E. 4122800 N.
 C 726880 E. 4115090 N.
 D 717250 E. 4114850 N.
 E 716850 E. 4128860 N.
 F 728380 E. 4136730 N.
 Source scale: 1:24000
 Projected UTM Zone 12, 1927 North American Datum



Balcony House, Chapin Mesa ca. A.D. 1250. Photograph ca. 1955. (National Park Service Historic Photograph Collection)

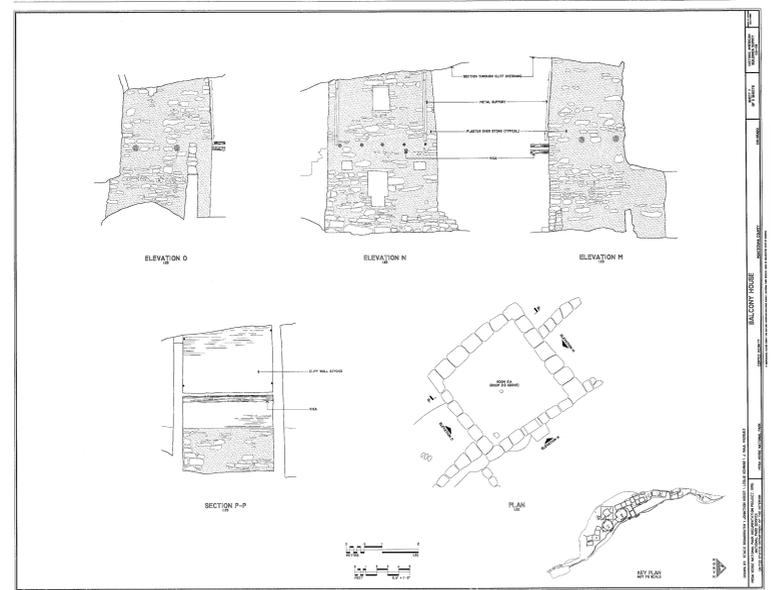
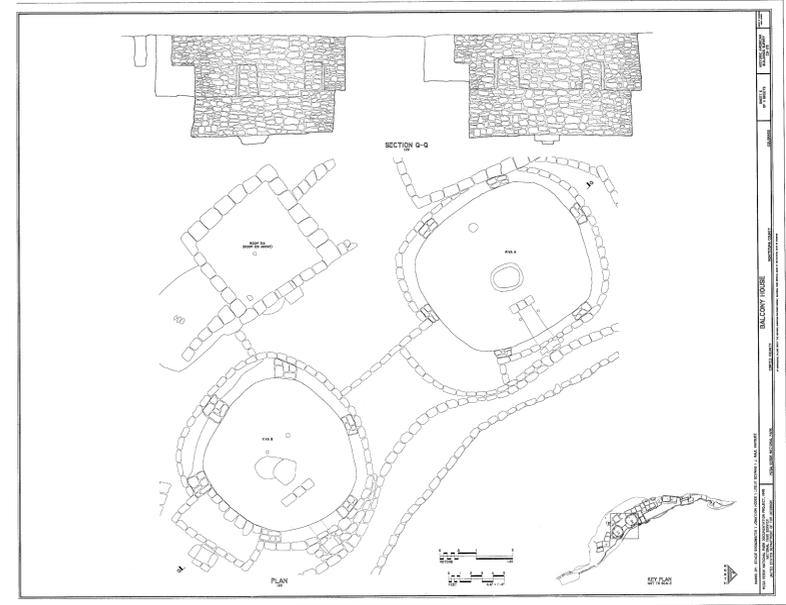


Mesa Verde National Park: Longitude 108°27' W / Latitude 37°15' N

First attracted to Mesa Verde over 1,300 years ago, man found the land much as it is today. He settled in the canyons and on the mesas, and existed there successfully as a sedentary farmer until near the end of the 13th century. These settlers were American Indians, who archeologists termed Anasazi, and are known ancestors of the present-day Pueblos. Their cultural remains are widespread throughout the canyon and plateau country of the American Southwest, but nowhere are they better preserved and represented by a long sequence of sites than they are at Mesa Verde. These archeological resources document Anasazi activities and accomplishments for more than six centuries, revealing man's relationships with nature and with each other. Archeologists have analyzed and interpreted many of the items excavated at Mesa Verde for both the scientist and the layman to study.

Mesa Verde prehistory spans the total human experience, from his early ways of subsistence, through his social organization, his economic and governmental patterns, to his religious beliefs and activities. It is possible to reconstruct this prehistory because of the number, variety, and degree of preservation activities at Mesa Verde. Architectural remains reflect the range of Anasazi construction techniques and settlement patterns. Structures range from small complexes of semi-subterranean pit houses to large, multistoried stone structures of many rooms and ceremonial chambers built within great shallow caves of the cliff dwellings. Besides vegetal materials recovered from the ruins, artifacts provide information about the former occupants. For example, we now know how they earned their livelihood, what their available resources were and how they were processed, what their craftsmanship and artistic accomplishments were, and how concerned they were and how they reacted to the world around them. Fragments of animal bones and seeds and plant particles tell of their dietary habits. Human skeletons and associated items tell of their physical attributes and diseases as well as of certain of their religious customs.

Mesa Verde National Park, thus, provides a unique association of sites, materials, and data from which archeologists have reconstructed a large segment of Anasazi prehistory. Their findings have been reported in scientific journals and in popular publications. Most of the major Mesa Verde ruins are open to the public, and the museum and park staff provide visitors with details of the Anasazi story. Mesa Verde is the only place in the United States where such an extensive, well-preserved and interpreted example of prehistoric Anasazi culture is readily available to all people.



Mesa Verde also affords protection for many unstudied Anasazi sites within its boundaries. These resources will provide future archeologists, who will undoubtedly have advanced methods and theories, a chance to reexamine and refine current explanations and to make available to the public additional interpretive sites as needed. The importance of maintaining such a reserve of cultural resources cannot be overstated, particularly when surrounding sites are rapidly disappearing because of reclamation projects and programs to produce energy from oil, gas, coal, and uranium—all of which abound in lands once occupied by the Anasazi. Mesa Verde is an essential key to understanding the past Anasazi culture, as well as the Pueblo Indian culture that has survived into the present. It also has universal significance in that its remains disclose the interactions between man and his environment. Knowledge of such interaction is crucial to anthropologists in their quest to understand human nature. Because the Anasazi are known ancestors of the modern Pueblos, who still reside in about thirty villages in New Mexico and Arizona, archeologists and ethnologists have joined forces in their use of ethnographic analogies to interpret archeological evidence and to use that evidence to give a time frame to the studies of the Pueblo Indian culture.



Mesa Verde NP World Heritage Area