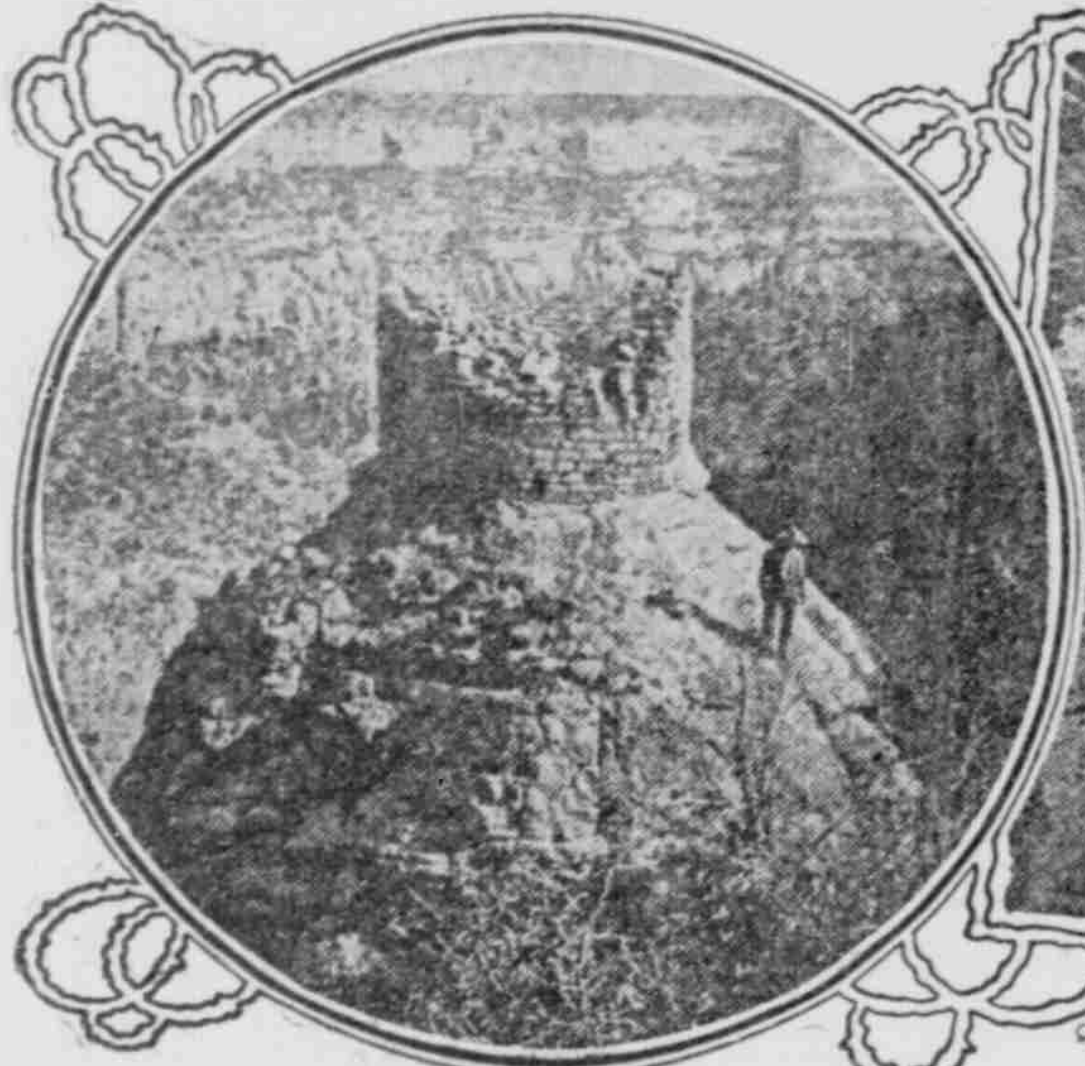


Where First Americans Dwelt



A Watch Tower

Uncle Sam Undertakes the Task of Patching Up and Preserving From Further Decay the Wonderful Rock Shelf Castles of the Prehistoric Folk of the Cliffs.

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Put a fence around a prehistoric wonderland, and patch up the ruins of a bygone civilization within it so that they may not suffer further dilapidation, is a task which the Government has newly undertaken in southwest Colorado, where once upon a time, amid weirdly picturesque surroundings, flourished the Cliff-Dwellers.

The fence is nothing more than a line which Congress has drawn about an area of sixty-five square miles, embracing a plateau through which, from northeast to southwest, the Mancos River has cut a slice 2,000 feet deep. Into this canyon from both sides run lateral gorges of equal depth, breaking up the mesa into a labyrinth of narrow cliff-walled passages. It is in high and almost inaccessible recesses in the faces of these cliffs that are found the ruins of prehistoric villages.

Located in a wild and gloomy gorge is the so-called Cliff Palace, which, occupying a shelf beneath overhanging rock 1,000 feet above the canyon's bottom, bears the aspect of an enchanted castle. Extending along the cliff nearly 425 feet, and in parts six and seven stories high, with majestic towers round and square, it is to the eye far more impressive than any of the ruined castles of the Rhine.

A Fortress On A Rock Shelf

It never was a palace, and, though

it might be called a castle, it would more properly be described as a fortified town, which in its day may have sheltered 1,500 inhabitants. A huge structure of dressed stones laid in mortar, it is, like the Capitol at Washington, a patchwork of architecture, expanded to its present size by many additions. Its towers are loopholed, evidently for defense, and its residential portions are mainly devoted to suites of rooms which presumably were assigned to families.

In front was a stone-paved plaza for dancing, and an important feature was a wall of solid masonry built flush with the edge of the precipice and extending from one end of the great rock-shelter to the other, so that the sheer face of the cliff was continued upward 9 or 10 feet above the floor of the cave. In the wall there was only one small entrance, which could be blocked at a moment's notice.

It was a fortress, well-nigh impregnable. Access by climbing to the shelf of rock on which it stood was practically impossible to an enemy; and even were a foothold on the shelf gained, the structure itself was so planned as to be admirably defensible. All doors were at a considerable height above the ground level, entrance through them being obtained by ladders readily withdrawn, while bal-

cones along the upper stories offered means of communication from room to room.

The descent into the gulf below was by steps cut in the vertical canyon wall. The space covered by the building is 425 feet long, with a depth of 80 feet, and at the front they are 80 feet high. There were 124 rooms on the ground floor. At the back of the cave are extensive open spaces in which turkeys were probably kept, many signs indicating that those birds were domesticated by the Cliff-Dwellers.

Sky Parloirs And Underground Rooms

The roofs were platforms on which the occupants spent much of their time, the women performing their household duties, doing their cooking and making pottery. Some of the rooms were used for grinding corn,

for baking bread and for storage. Large stores of food and water were at all times kept on hand, to provide against possible siege.

Most remarkable were the underground chambers, or "kivas," twenty-three in number, which were used for purposes of religious ceremonial. The meaning of these is well understood because subterranean rooms just like them are in use today by the Pueblo Indians, who are indubitable descendants of the ancient Cliff-Dwellers.

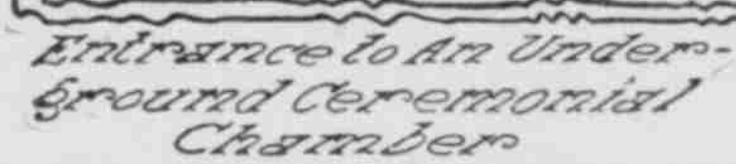
A kiva is always circular in form, the only entrance to it being from above, through a scuttle and by a ladder. An opening in the middle of the floor is supposed to lead to the under world, the world of ghosts. During ceremonials the voices of the ghosts are heard—this being an artifice of priestcraft; for the "mystery men" have secretly installed a speaking tube



Remains of an Ancient Cliff Dweller



Spruce Tree House



Entrance to an Underground Ceremonial Chamber



An Ancient Table

that enters the chamber from without, thus producing the illusion.

The Cliff Palace was not discovered until 1888, its situation being remote, and the entrances to its canyon blocked by falls of rock since the time when it was occupied. Another prehistoric hamlet, not very far distant, almost equally remarkable and known as Spruce Tree House, is perched on a similar lofty rock-shelf, and is provided against unexpected attack by a number of dark passages which lead through and behind the houses in every direction. These appear to be secret escapes, such as are found in ancient European castles.

Skilled At Raising Garden Truck

The Cliff-Dwellers were agricultural people, growing beans, melons, pumpkins, squashes and particularly corn, which was their main subsistence. They understood and extensively practiced irrigation, in some instances building large reservoirs for the storage of water. It would appear that they also raised cotton, for numerous fragments of cotton cloth are found in their ruined habitations. At all times

while tilling their fields they must have been obliged to keep apprehensive watch for their savage enemies, prepared at a moment's notice to seek refuge in their rock-shelf fortresses.

They were of the Stone Age, knowing not the use of any metal, as proved by the implements and weapons found buried beneath the dust of ages in their ancient abodes. The dust is impalpably fine and poisonous, so that explorers while working in the ruins have been obliged to tie damp sponges over their mouths and nostrils. The air of that region is so dry that dead bodies undergo a natural mummification, and in this condition many have been found, remarkably preserved.

A method commonly adopted by these prehistoric people in disposing of their dead was to wrap the body in a robe of turkey feathers woven upon a foundation of yucca-fiber cloth, to further enshroud it in a cover of matting made of reeds, and finally to seal it up in the wall of one of the family living rooms.

She House—another group of buildings occupying a cliff-recess 200 feet long and 150 feet high—got its name from the mummy of a young woman found, with a child beside her, sealed up in a wall. It was a ghastly thing, the body doubled up, and with tongue protruding from the mouth, as if death came to her in utmost agony. Yet in her lifetime she may have been a joyous and beautiful creature; her hands and feet were noticeably small, and her fine hair soft and brown.

Lofty Stone Watch-Towers

Of utmost interest are the ruined towers which occupy many isolated heights in that picturesque region. They are built very substantially of dressed stone, some of them round and others square, and the presumption is that they were posts of outlook to detect the approach of enemies, the view obtained from them covering a great extent of country.

Some of them, however, may have been designed for the capture of eagles. The modern Moki and Zuni have towers for this purpose on lofty rock-pinnacles, a live turkey being fastened on top for bait, with a man hidden beneath who extends his hand through a hole in the roof when an eagle alights, grabbing the bird by the leg. Those Indians keep eagles in cages, and pluck them at intervals for feathers used in religious ceremonials.

Nobody knows how long ago the dwellings of the precipices were abandoned, or why their inhabitants deserted them. Unquestionably they were vacated before Columbus landed on the shores of America, and it may have been 1,000 years or more earlier. One theory is that a change of climate, with diminished water supply, may have forced those prehistoric people to move out.

Quite thickly scattered over the top of the plateau are huge mounds which evidently represent the remains of buildings and groups of buildings, some of which must have been of great extent. A few of them have recently been explored by digging, and have revealed most interesting architectural remains. Presumably they represent a period later than that of the cliff dwellings; but, being unprotected by roofs of rock, they have undergone rapid disintegration.

A Prehistoric Plathouse

One of these buildings, of huge size and impressive architecture stood on the edge of a cliff 1,500 feet high which is, so to speak, the west front of the great plateau here described. It was a prehistoric apartment house, containing several hundred rooms, and from its windows the occupants could look out upon a marvelous expanse of scenery covering parts of four States. For right there is the only place in all this country where four States come together at one point.

The repair work undertaken on the cliff dwellings makes no attempt at reconstruction. It aims merely to preserve from further decay, by reinforcement with concrete and other protective measures, these most valuable relics of American antiquity.

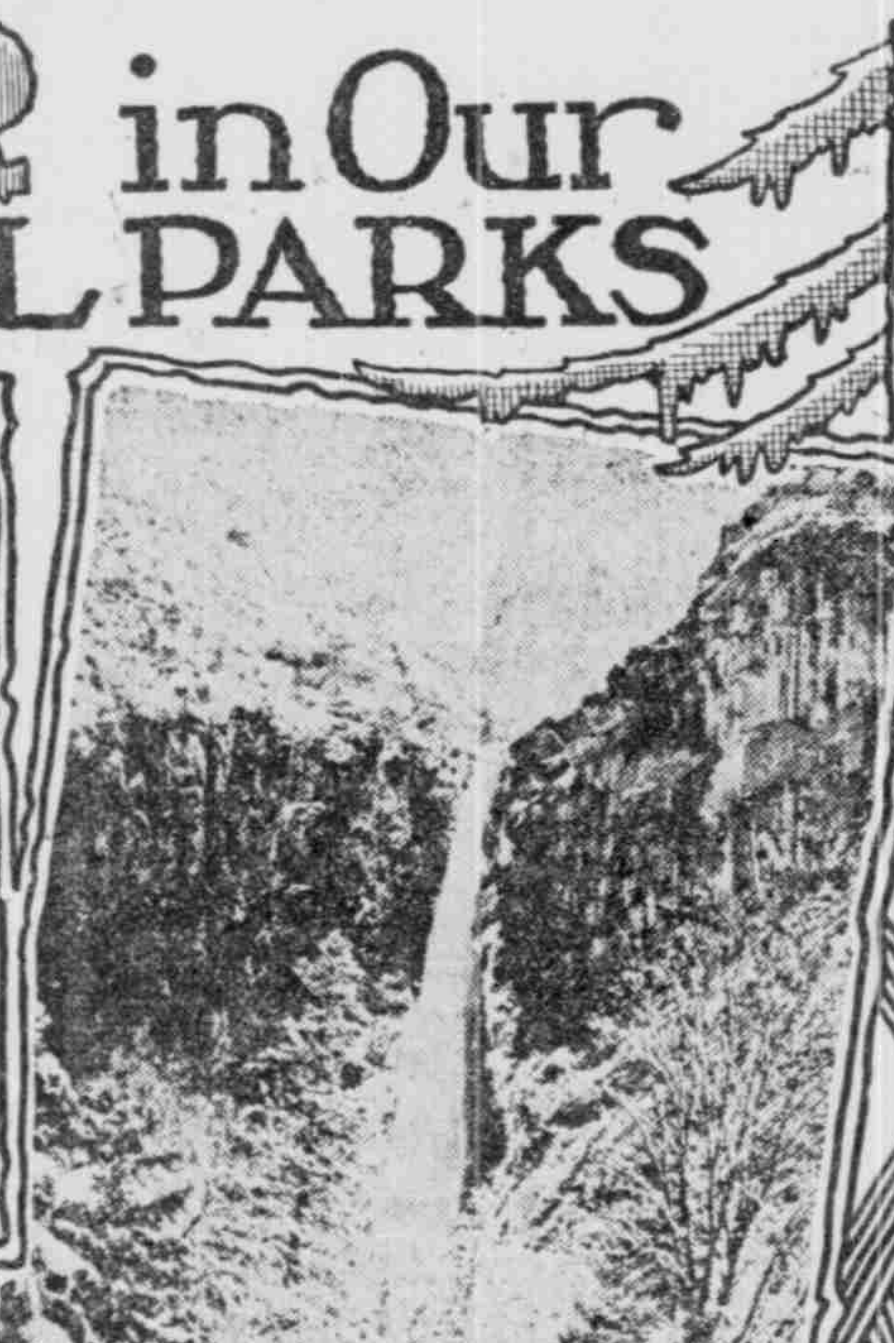
WINTER in Our NATIONAL PARKS



Dines on the Shores of Crater Lake - Crater Lake National Park



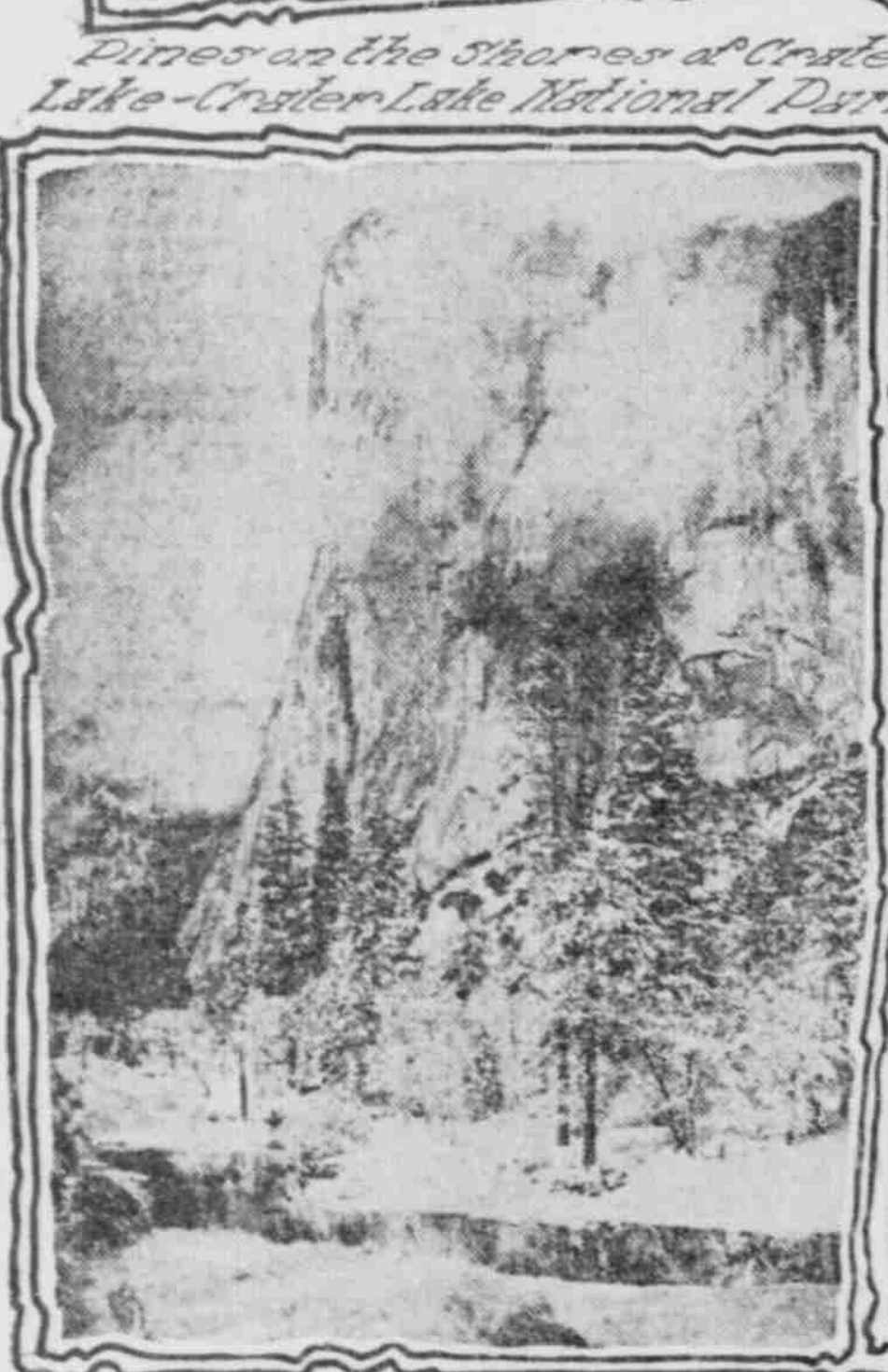
The Grand Canyon



Bridal Veil Falls Yosemite National Park



At the Foot of Mt. Ranier - Mt. Ranier National Park



El Capitan in Winter Yosemite National Park



Along the Lake - Crater Lake National Park



A Scene in Glacier National Park



Snow Shoeing in Rocky Mountain National Park