

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARKS AND MONUMENTS OF CENTRAL ARIZONA



Tonto National Monument – Upper Cliff Dwelling
NPS PHOTO

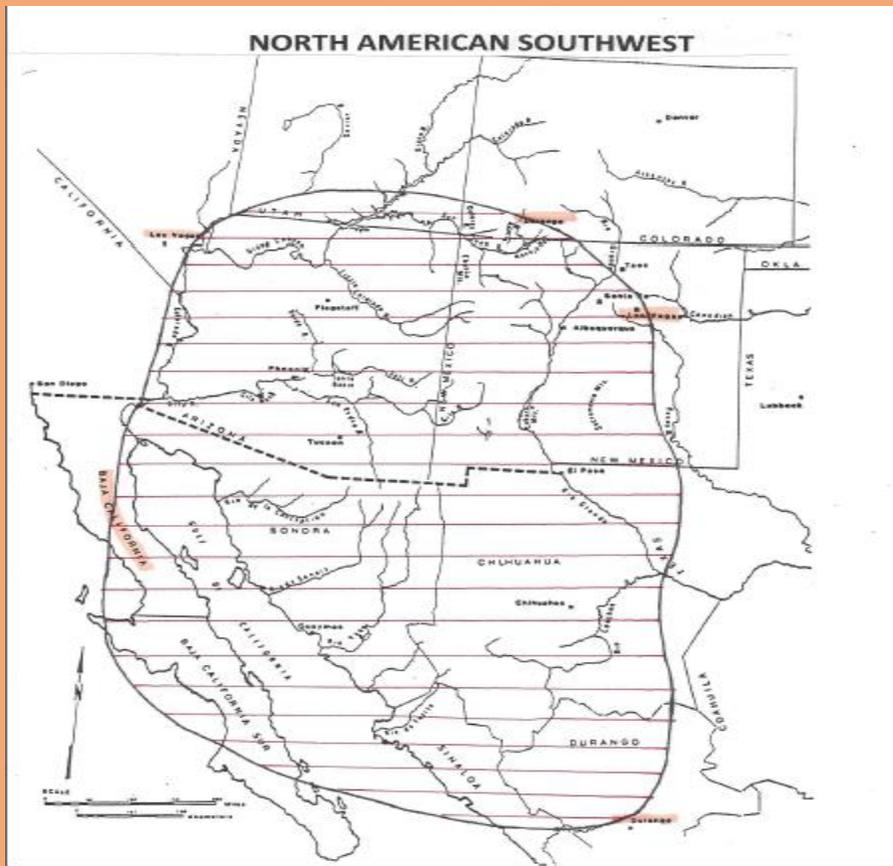
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this website is to provide some information about the prehistory of the Southwest with a focus on two of this regions prehistoric cultures: the Hohokam and Salado and their historic homelands. Native Americans have occupied what is now Arizona for thousands of years. There is no other place in the United States that contains such monumental remnants of prehistoric cultures as the Southwest desert of North America. The largest Native American reservation (majority of the Navajo Nation) and the second largest, the Tohono O'odham Nation, are located in Arizona.

The purpose of these pages are also to give visitors to the Apache Junction, Arizona area a glimpse of the well-preserved ancient dwellings and history of the indigenous people whose civilizations occupied this region. These people flourished here in the Southwest Sonoran Desert centuries ago, prior to the first Spanish explorers arriving here in Arizona around the mid-late 15th century. Expecting to find great riches, the Spaniards encountered communities of Native Americans. The Southwest is described as extending from Durango, Mexico, to Durango, Colorado, and from Las Vegas, New Mexico, to Las Vegas, Nevada. (Cordell 1984:2)



Rock art in Canyon de Chelly, Arizona



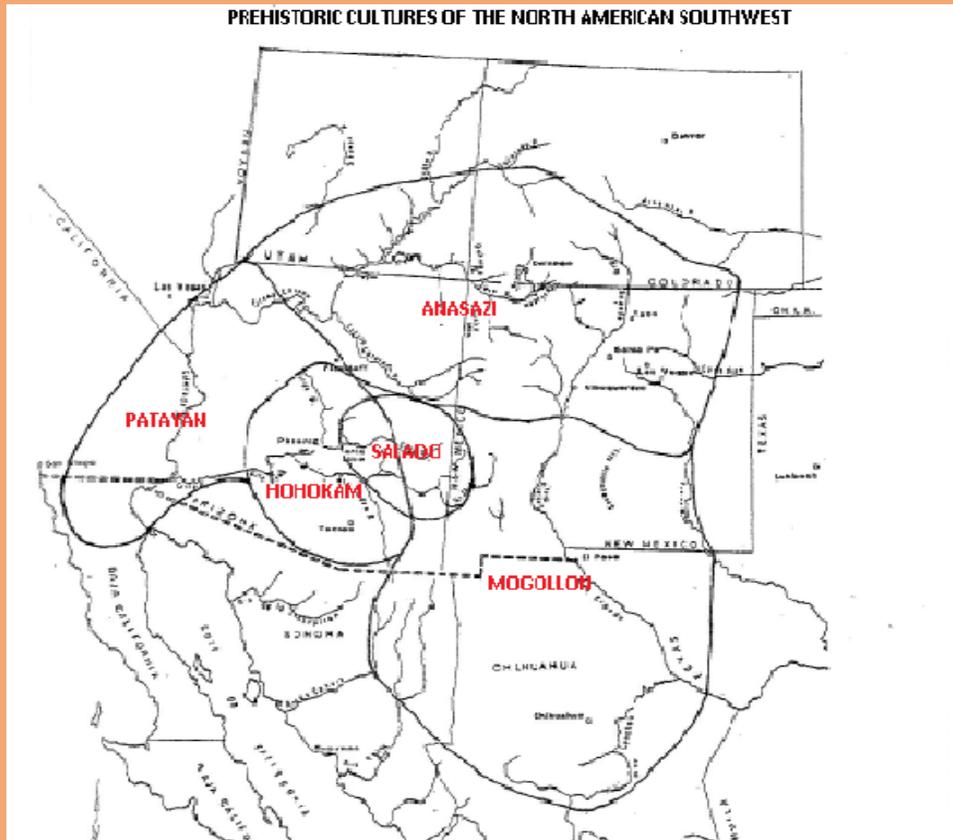
Southwest Cultures' Geographical Area
Illustration by John McDonald

Archaeologists believe some of the first early inhabitants arrived here in the Southwest some 11,000 to 15,000 years ago (Paleo-Indian Tradition). Archaeological evidence of the earliest Paleo-Indians in the American Southwest comes from two mammoth kill sites in Southern Arizona. The Lehner Mammoth-Kill Site dates to around 9000 years BCE and the Naco Mammoth-Kill Site dates to about 10,000 years BCE.

It's believed that these Paleolithic people transitioned from a hunting/gathering lifestyle to one involving agriculture and permanent, if not only seasonally, occupied settlements. Archaeologists refer to this period in time as the Southwestern Archaic tradition. In the Southwest the archaic period is generally dated from 8000 B.C. and ending around A.D 150. Archaeologists and historians believe that these desert archaic people eventually evolved into the four major prehistoric cultures in the American Southwest and Northern Mexico. These major cultures are known as the "Ancestral Pueblo (formerly called Anasazi)" Hohokam, Mogollon and Patayan, sometimes referred to as "Oasisamerica." Archaeologists use these terms to denote these ancient cultures' tradition of the North American Southwest.

Today, the descendants of the "Anasazi" prefer the term "Ancestral Pueblo."

These ancient Native American cultures occupied the present-day Four Corners area of the United States, comprising Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado.



Prehistoric Cultures' Traditional Homelands
Illustration by John McDonald

This site is also an attempt to give an insight on these early inhabitants, who relied heavily on their relationship with “Mother Earth,” the sky, the sun and the natural elements to provide food, clothing and shelter. Everything in their daily existence depended upon them.

These pages are also an attempt to explain how these prehistoric peoples survived and adapted to this harsh desert environment and of their ingenuity in utilizing desert materials to create wood and stone tools. From animal bone, they made tools, whistles and flutes. From fibers of the agave and other wild desert plants, they wove mats, sandals and rope. From cotton grown in their fields, they wove blankets and clothing. To build structures they would find a deposit of caliche hardpan to use as a foundation and flooring. They erected their roof and wall supports from timber such as fir, pine and juniper from the nearby mountains then plastered the walls of brush and grass with adobe (mud and clay). Potters formed ropes of local clays to coil them into plain, incised or beautifully decorative painted pottery. These artisans would fashion human-animal shaped figurines and obtain paints from crushing local minerals such as Hematite. Using igneous rocks such as chert, obsidian and jasper they manufactured projectile points, knives, and choppers. Food processing tools (mano and metates) were made from basalt and granite. Shells imported through trade from Gulf of California and Pacific coast were made into fine jewelry and ornaments.

If you are a curious individual who is planning a trip or just someone who is fascinated by historic sites and ancient cultures, there is no better place to start exploring than the historic locations listed below. Visits to these archaeological sites, national parks and monuments promises visitors of all ages an interesting, informative and unforgettable experience.

While visiting these parks visitors will discover museums and visitors centers located within the parks themselves. These on-site museums are dedicated to preserving the cultural remains (artifacts) that were found during excavations of these sites. These artifacts provide valuable information about the prehistoric people who once inhabited them. Some of the museums attractions include not only displayed artifacts, but exhibitions and videos.

Information contained here on these archaeological parks and sites give only a brief introduction about the Native American Cultures who flourished here in the prehistoric Southwest over a millennium ago. For more information about the prehistoric dwellings and the peoples who inhabited them, you may wish to contact the official web page of that site. Driving directions, hours of operation, phone numbers, addresses, tours, activities, facilities and web page links are posted for the parks listed here. Most of the parks listed here have seasonal hours of operation; be sure to check with the parks site or call before planning your trip.

HOHOKAM AND SALADO CULTURES

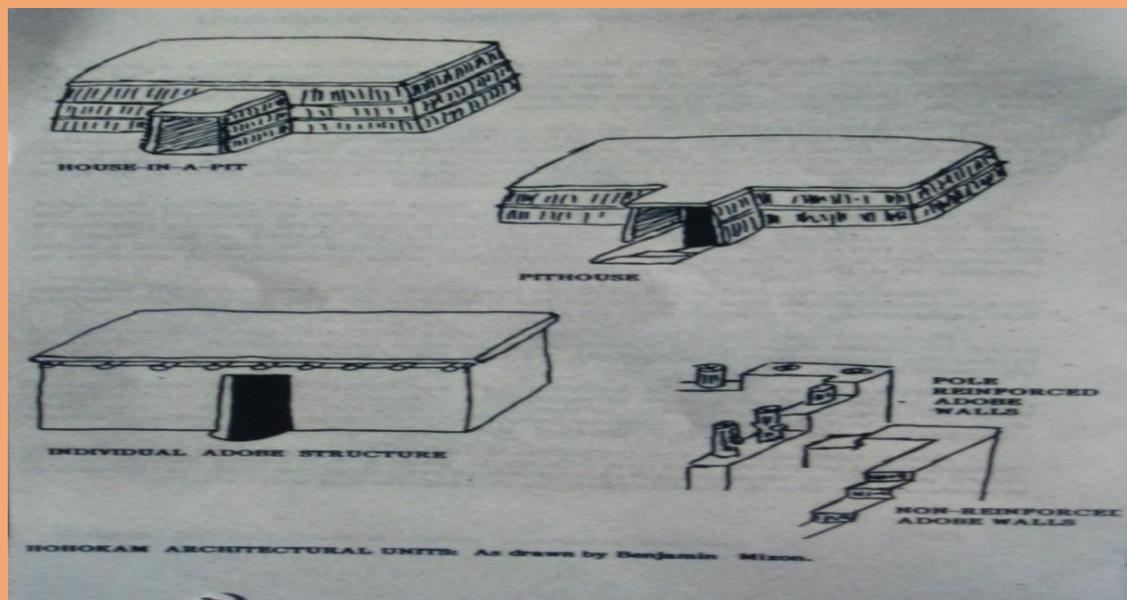
HOHOKAM - (A.D. 1–1450) Hohokam was a term coined by archaeologist Harold S. Gladwin to describe a culture differentiated from others in the region thanks to excavations in the 1930s. They are one of the four major prehistoric archaeological cultures, (Oasisamerica) of the present day four corners areas of the North American Southwest. Archaeologists believe the Hohokam people migrated out of Mexico around CE 200 and occupied the middle Gila and lower Salt River drainage areas, now referred to as the main Hohokam core of the Phoenix and Gila Basins. Early archaeological researchers believe that this culture was made of local decedents of ancient hunter/gathers (Late Archaic Period) who responded to Mesoamerican influences and possibly emerged as the Hohokam. If the Hohokam were not immigrants, then perhaps the Mesoamericans influenced the Hohokam through trade and exchange. The Hohokam traded goods widely across the American Southwest and Mesoamerica with other prehistoric cultures. During this period in time, there were several trade routes from Mesoamerica into southern Arizona.

The Hohokam people occupied a geologically and ecologically diverse region of the North American Southwest. Their region extended from the basin and range, lower desert area of northern Sonora, through southern Arizona, northward to the Mogollon Rim into the southwestern corner of the Colorado Plateau. The main Hohokam core of settlements was located along the Gila and Salt Rivers. The prehistoric Hohokam people constructed one of the largest and most sophisticated irrigation systems in the North American Southwest, which created a productive agricultural society that lasted for centuries using pre-industrial technology.

In 1992 the Hohokam canal system was recognized as a National Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

For continued success and management of their canal system, the Hohokam culture appeared to have some sort of leadership, or hierarchy structured within their society. Some sort of elite leadership was needed to govern over any conflicts that may have arisen from villages and farmers over water issues and keep social harmony among the people. It is also perceived that Hohokam religion played a prominent role in their society as well.

The prehistoric Hohokam are known for their use of adobe and caliche to construct homes and public architecture such as platform mounds and ball courts. The primary dwelling of the Hohokam culture was a semi-subterranean structure called a “pithouse.” These dwellings would stay cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Besides providing shelter from environment, these structures may also have been used to store food. The larger structures may have been used not as residences, but as gathering places for telling stories, dancing, singing and cultural celebrations.



Pit house illustration
Drawn by Benjamin Mixon

They were skilled artisans who carved marine shell jewelry stone palettes, and stone beads and pendants. They also made a distinctive red-on-buff pottery and other ornate objects. For reasons that remain unclear, the Hohokam culture collapsed during the 14th century, when people abandoned their large villages and canals.

The Classic Period of Hohokam culture is notable for the peaceful intrusion of the Salado culture that came from the upper reaches of the Salt River in the Tonto Basin. The Salado people lived in Hohokam territory for several decades, then withdrew and disappeared.

SALADO - (A.D. 1250 – 1450) “Salado” was the name chosen by archaeologist Harold S. Gladwin for discoveries made along the Rio Salado, or Salt River that flowed through the valley of their homeland. The Salado people are believed to be a mixture of cultures brought together by environmental factors which forced people to change territory and adapt to new

environments. Gladwin felt that the origins of the Salado came from the Little Colorado River region of Northeastern Arizona, bringing Mogollon architecture and pottery traits with them, which they modified as they moved farther south. There has been much debate among archaeologists over whether the Salado was a distinct culture or a mixture of cultures, including elements of Hohokam, Mogollon and Ancestral Pueblo, or a subgroup of a single cultural tradition (*Cordell 1997., P 414*). The Salado civilization was centralized by three prehistoric culture of the Southwest during this time period: Ancestral Puebloans to the North, Mogollon to the East and the South and the Hohokam to the West and Southwest.

The Salado peoples who migrated into the Tonto Basin area established settlements and constructed platform mounds at regular intervals along the Tonto Creek and Salt River. The Salado lived comfortably in the Tonto Basin valley along the Salt River for several centuries, irrigating about 2000 acres of crop fields and supplementing their diet by hunting and gathering native wildlife and plants. Something “changed” and for unknown reasons the Salado people went to great lengths to move their settlements away from their only water source and crop fields. Archaeologists are not sure what forced the Salado to move - perhaps it was for protection from the environment, population growth, or possibly defensive position. Even though there is no archaeological evidence that warfare existed among these cliff-dwellers, they moved to higher ground in the natural caves located in the nearby Superstition Mountains and built their pueblos.

There is archaeological evidence that the Tonto Basin/Roosevelt Lake and Globe, Arizona region was occupied long before the Salado people appeared in the region. By about A.D. 500 to A.D. 700, small groups of Hohokam colonists apparently moved into Tonto Basin from the lower Gila and Salt River Valleys and established settlements along the Salt River and at the Besh-Ba-Gowah and Gila pueblo sites in Globe, Arizona. At the same time that the Salt River area was being settled by Hohokam, other people were settling in the upper Tonto Basin along Tonto Creek. These would appear to be Mogollon settlements. By about 950 to 1150 A.D. the Hohokam apparently pulled back into the Phoenix Basin. No one replaced them for some time until what has been called the Salado culture.

Archaeologists believe that the main reason for the Hohokam migration from the Phoenix Basin area into the Tonto Basin was for the express purpose of growing cotton. Cotton is strong, durable, and lightweight. It was relatively easy to grow, harvest and process. Cotton had many uses, and held an important role in religious ceremonies, which still is seen today in modern Pueblo groups where cotton is used in all articles of dress associated with ritual ceremonies.

These prehistoric cultures that occupied this region of the Southwestern United States left us with no written record of themselves. Instead they left behind remains of their existence here with numerous archaeological sites, cliff-dwellings, platform mounds and artifacts to unravel their culture’s mysteries. Located in the Phoenix, Tonto and Gila Basins and Globe, Arizona are some of these prehistoric cultures best preserved archaeological sites and dwellings of the North American Southwest.

These historical archaeological sites are: Tonto National Monument, Besh-Ba-Gowah Archaeological Park, Casa Grande Ruins National Monument, Hieroglyphic Canyon, Pueblo Grande Museum Archaeological Park and Mesa Grande Cultural Park.

A few short hours driving distance north of Phoenix, Arizona are some monumental Ancestral Pueblo cliff-dwellings to visit as well: Navajo National Monument, Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Bandelier National Monument, Montezuma Castle National Monument and Montezuma's Well. If you are interested in ancient cultures, these sites promise visitors of all ages an unforgettable experience and are worth a day's road trip to visit.

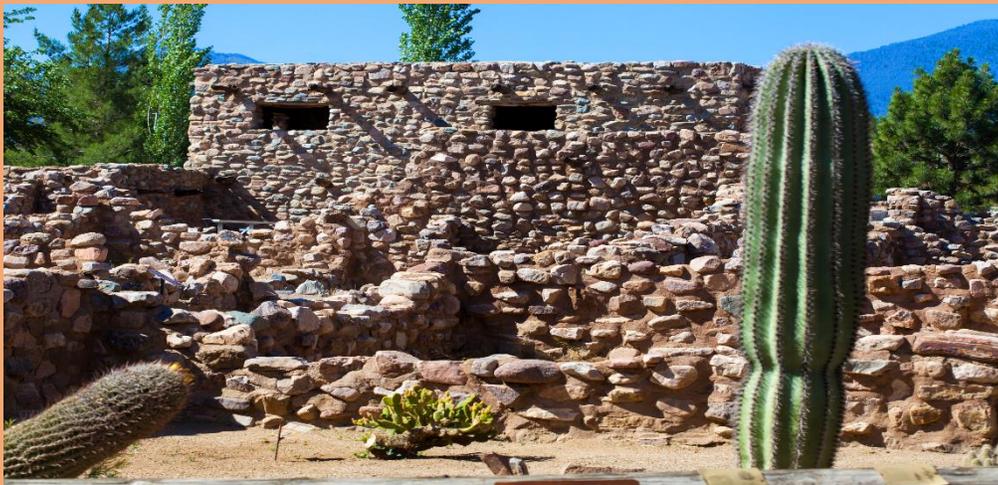
ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARKS AND MONUMENTS OF CENTRAL ARIZONA

BESH-BA-GOWAH ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK {Salado/Hohokam}

<http://www.globeaz.gov/visitors/besh-ba-gowah>

Located in Globe, Arizona is an 800 year old Salado culture pueblo. The Salado culture inhabited the Tonto Basin, Globe, Miami, Superior and San Carlos areas from A.D.1150 to 1450. Who were the prehistoric Salado people? Many archaeologist have pondered and even argued whether the Salado people were a mixture of cultures; Hohokam and Mogollon, Mogollon and Anasazi or Anasazi and Hohokam (*Middaugh 1998*) or just a subset of a single cultural tradition (*Cordell 1997:414*).

The name "Besh-Ba-Gowah" comes from the Western Apache phrase meaning "place of metal" or "place of hard rock," originally employed by the Apache Indians to refer to Globe, Arizona, which was a major copper mining town. Local miners took this Apache name of Globe and gave it to the ruin.



Besh-Ba-Gowah Pueblo – Globe, Arizona
Photograph courtesy of Rick Hossman

The pueblo was built in stories. Many of the ground floor rooms were used for storage as upper stories were for living areas. Several of these rooms have been almost completely restored and contain the types of tools and pottery which were excavated from the site.

The previous temporal phase of the site is identified with the regional Hohokam culture who settled here around A.D.550 and abandoned it around A.D. 1100.This was evident by the Hohokam pit house found under Besh-Ba-Gowah dating to A.D. 550.

At approximately A.D. 1225, the Salado Indians began construction of the pueblo that still stands today. Shortly after A.D. 1400, the pueblo was abandoned and the Salado people are believed to have migrated to different areas of the Southwest. It is believed that this is linked to climatic changes that caused a shortage of water which may have resulted in an increase of warfare among Pueblos (Gila Pueblo) The area apparently remained uninhabited for centuries until the Apache people made it their homeland sometime after A.D. 1600.

The Besh-Ba-Gowah Museum: The museum displays a variety of the artifacts that were excavated from the site. The museum houses one of the largest single collection of Salado pottery as well as tools, clothing and other artifacts. A seasonal ethno-botanical garden on the grounds illustrates how native plants were used by the Salado in their daily life.

Driving Directions: From Apache Junction take U.S. Highway 60 east through Superior into Miami then Globe by following the signs to the Broad Street exit. Make a right turn to 150 Jess Hayes Road. Besh-Ba-Gowah is on the right on Jess Hayes Rd. The park's physical address is 1324 S. Jesse Hayes Road, Globe, Arizona 85501.

Operating Hours: The park and museum are open 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. (Summer hours closed Monday and Tuesdays.) Special programs are offered periodically on excavation and history of the site. For more information, call the Greater Globe-Miami Chamber of Commerce, 1-800-804-5623, or contact the museum at 928-425-0320. A picnic area and parking is within 100 feet of the pueblo entrance, and the site is almost entirely wheelchair accessible.

TONTO NATIONAL MONUMENT {Salado} Tonto National Monument (National Park Service)

Tucked away in some natural caves on a hillside overlooking Roosevelt Lake, located within the Tonto National Forest on the Eastern end of the Superstition Mountain Wilderness area, you will encounter two of the best preserved Salado cliff-dwellings of the upland Sonoran Desert.

Inhabiting the Tonto Basin for a relatively short period between A.D. 1250 and around A.D. 1450 were the Salado. The Tonto Basin and Globe, Miami, Superior, and San Carlos areas are traditionally considered the Salado heartland. The Salado Indians occupied these areas for two centuries, and made their living from what nature provided in their mountainous terrain. Many of the wild plants were sources of food, medicine and raw material for these prehistoric civilizations. Besides some of the wild plants and cactus, food subsistence consisted of turtles, fish, deer, corn, beans and different types of squashes.

During their occupation of the Tonto Basin they developed specialized crafts and became master potters, designing a unique style of ceramics that associate these wares with the Salado culture. Archaeologists refer to these styles as Roosevelt Red Ware, also known as Salado Red Ware and Salado Polychrome. Salado Polychrome appeared to be one of the most widely traded of all

ceramics of the prehistoric Southwest and one that was duplicated as well. Based mainly on their design, Salado Polychrome was divided into three styles: Pinto, Gila and Tonto. This style of pottery consisted mainly of squat jars, bowls, and ollas and were done in red, white and black paint. Pictured is a good example of “Tonto Polychrome,” typical of the Salado culture.



Tonto Polychrome
NPS Photo

Archaeological study continues to reveal aspects of this culture. Even so, we have only a vague notion of who the Salado were. Like most of the prehistoric cultures that were here in the Southwest, the Salado people left no written record of their existence - no chronology of events that shaped their society. The most vivid signs of life are in their pottery, remnants of fabric, abandoned ruins, stone and bone tools - all reminders that humans once led rich and productive lives here in the Tonto Basin (Roosevelt).

Tonto National Monument is unique due to the fact that it offers visitors a chance to visit two cliff dwellings, both constructed by the prehistoric Salado people around A.D 1300. The “Lower Cliff Dwelling” consists of 16 ground floor rooms, three of which had a second story. Next to this was the 12-room annex. The lower dwelling is reached by a paved, half mile, self-guided trail starting from the visitor’s center. Located above the first (lower) dwelling, in a natural cave on a nearby ridge, is a second (upper) similar dwelling. The “Upper Cliff Dwelling” is much larger and had 32 ground floor rooms, eight of these with a second story. The upper dwelling is reached by a different trail, and visitors must be accompanied by a ranger. The upper dwelling is only accessible through scheduled tours. Reservations are required, and tours run 2-3 days a week from November through the end of April. The average tour length is 3-3 1/2 hours. For additional information call (928) 467-2241.

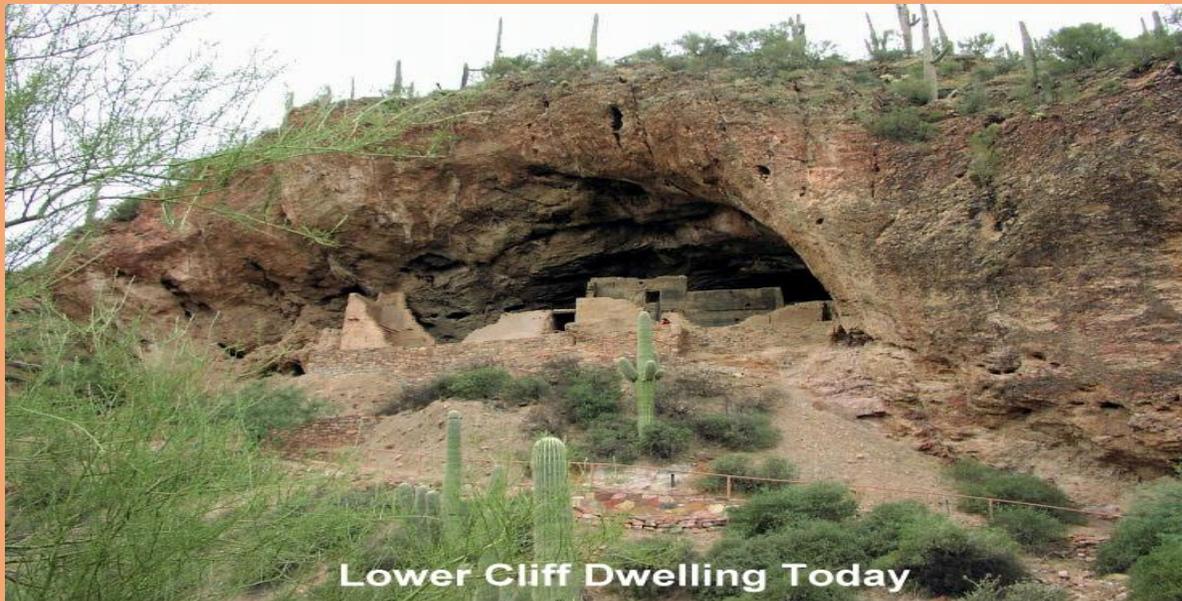


Photo courtesy of NPS

Salado – Where Did They Go? Like the Hohokam, the Salado people were also impacted by climate changes and resources that were becoming scarcer. All of the Southwest cultural groups experienced population drops and migrations into other regions. Some archaeologists and historians speculate that the Salado, like the Hohokam people, migrated to the Casas Grandes in Mexico, while others suggest they traveled northward and became integrated into the remnants of other pueblo peoples. The Hopi, O’odham, and other modern-day Native American Tribes claim the Salado as their ancestors.

Sometime between A.D. 1400 and A.D. 1450, the Salado culture abandoned their cliff dwellings. The dwellings at Tonto National Monument represent the end of the Salado presence in the Tonto Basin.

This culture’s origins are as mysterious as their disappearance.

Driving Directions: Tonto National Monument is about 78 miles (about a 2 hour drive) northeast of Apache Junction, AZ and 4 miles west of Roosevelt Dam. Possible routes: Ariz. 188 west from Globe; Ariz.; 188 south from Ariz. 87 (Beeline Highway); or State Hwy. 88 (Apache Trail) beginning at Apache Junction. The northeastern 22-mile section of Hwy. 88 is unpaved and mountainous, but maintained and has several scenic overlooks along the way. This route will take you by three of the reservoirs on the Salt River chain - Canyon, Apache and Roosevelt Lake. This route is not recommended if people are coming for one of the park’s tours. Tonto National Monument’s physical address is 26260 N. AZ Hwy 188 #2 Roosevelt, Arizona 85545.

Operating Hours: The park is open daily except December 25, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Begin your tour at the visitor center, located one mile off Ariz. 188. Inside are exhibits on the culture and crafts of the Salado people, and an audiovisual program introducing the park. The visitor center is accessible to persons in wheelchairs. Ask at the visitor center about the guided tours to the Upper Ruin. For more information on the ruins contact the visitor center at (928) 467-2241.

Facilities: A picnic area is located half a mile from the visitor center. It has restrooms, water and is handicapped accessible. No camping is permitted in the park. Camp sites are plentiful at Roosevelt Lake.

CASA GRANDE RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT {Hohokam}
Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (U.S. National Park Service)

GREAT HOUSE

Located a short driving distance South of Apache Junction, Arizona, rising above the desert floor in Coolidge, Arizona, sits a famous national landmark. Under a sheltered roof in Casa Grande Ruins National Monument stands the “Great House.” This historical place was the very first archaeological site in the United States to be protected as a cultural preserve in 1892 – then, twenty-six years later in 1918, became a National Monument.

Although this 1932 shelter roof that shadows the Great House has no unique engineering or architectural feature because it was constructed using common steel frame techniques of the day, it has historical importance. Even though it was not the first roof to cover the Great House, this roof represents early National Park Service preservation efforts.

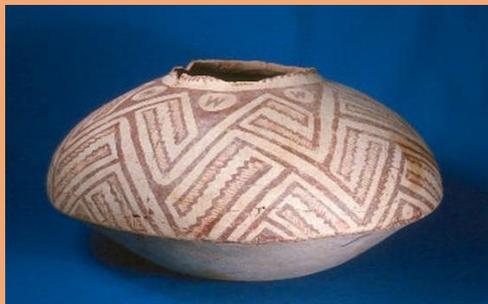
Casa Grande Ruins National Monument preserves a large portion of a Hohokam village. Some of the Park’s archaeological features include the enigmatic Great House (Casa Grande in Spanish) building as well as the remains of other buildings and a prehistoric “ball court.” Named by early Spanish explorers, the large caliche earthen structure rises four stories high and is 60 feet long. It has walls three feet thick and is surrounded by a compound wall. The ceilings and floors consisted of wooden beams from juniper, pine and fir, which had to be brought down from mountains located as much as fifty miles away. This dwelling is the last remaining example of the largest structures built by the Hohokam Culture. Completed prior to A.D. 1350, the Great House dates from the Classic Period of the Hohokam Chronologies A.D. 1150 to 1450 and was in use for approximately 100 years.



Great House
Photo by John McDonald

Who built the ruins? We refer to the people who built the Casa Grande as the ancient Sonoran Desert people, or “Hohokam.” The Hopi, Zuni and other modern-day Native American tribes claim the Hohokam as their ancestors. This was a name given by archaeologists to the prehistoric culture living along the Salt, Gila, Verde and Santa Cruz Rivers in the Sonoran desert of Arizona. Archaeologists use these terms to denote these ancient cultures tradition of the North American Southwest.

The Hohokam Culture is best known for its engineered canal systems and agricultural practices. Ancestral people designed and built an extensive irrigation system, digging gravity fed canals by hand along the Gila and Salt Rivers. More than 300 miles of canals have been discovered carrying water from river to fields as far as 20 miles away. Additional distinctive characteristics of the Hohokam Culture include finely made ceramics, stone and shell jewelry, architecture including community compounds and public buildings, earthen platform mounds and ball courts. The Hohokam Culture is well known for its pottery throughout the Southwest, in particular a style called “red-on-buff” because of its distinctive coloring.



Sacaton Red-On-Buff
Photograph courtesy of Pueblo Grande Museum

Who were these desert farmers? Their origins probably lay within the archaic hunter-gathers who lived in Arizona for several thousand years. These nomadic peoples began to live more

sedentary lives, and by as early as 2100 B.C.E. were growing corn in Southern Arizona. Archaeologists believe that these early desert archaic people evolved into the Hohokam. Eventually canals would be developed. The earliest known Hohokam canals date to 1500 B.C.E. By 300 C.E. a distinct Hohokam culture was in place along the Gila and Salt Rivers and their tributaries. The core of the Hohokam Culture is found along the Salt River, Gila River, and Santa Cruz River Valleys. The crops grown by the ancient Sonoran Desert people eventually included not only corn but several varieties of beans and squash, as well as cotton and tobacco. In addition to crops, the ancestral people continued to harvest many native plants and hunt animals of the desert. These included cactus fruits, pads and buds, agave hearts, mesquite beans, and the medicinal creosote bush. They hunted small game such as rabbits, birds and reptiles. The nearby mountains held big game such as deer and desert bighorn sheep.



The ancestral Sonoran Desert people traded material goods and ideas with other peoples. They imported turquoise, pottery, pinyon nuts, obsidian (volcanic glass) and even sea shells from the Gulf of California and the Pacific Coast. From Mexico came copper bells, iron pyrite mirrors, and parrots. And what did these desert dwellers have to offer in exchange? Their farms produced surplus crops for export, including cotton. They also traded their finely crafted shell jewelry and pottery. Casa Grande Ruins was an important site along the trade networks of the southwest. One major route, reconstructed by archaeologists, went from northern Mexico into the Tucson area, and from there into the Gila River Valley.



Pieces of bone, shell rings, necklace, and bracelets
Photograph by John McDonald

The first recorded history of Casa Grande came when Padre Eusebio Francisco Kino first visited the prehistoric dwelling in 1694. His first journal entries started the first written accounts and description of the structure and village compound. He was followed in later years by historian

Adolph Bandolier in 1883-84 and anthropologist Frank H. Cushing in 1887-88, who continued documentation about the ruins. The primary function of the dwelling remains unknown.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: The Park is in Coolidge, Arizona, about an hour Southeast of Phoenix. From I-10 take Coolidge exits and follow the signs to the park's entrance off Ariz. Rte. 87/287. From Apache Junction take U.S. 60/89 to Florence Junction, then Ariz. Rte 287 to the Coolidge turn off for Ariz. Rte 87, then follow signs to the ruins. (About a 45 min drive from Apache Junction.) For more information, call the Visitors Center at (520) 723-3172. The Park's physical address is 1100 Ruins Drive, Coolidge, AZ 85128.

HOURS OF OPERATION: The Park is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, closed Thanksgiving and December 25. Inside the visitor's center are exhibits of artifacts representative of the Hohokam Culture, such as their very distinctive red-on-buff pottery, etched shell jewelry, and trade items.

ACTIVITIES: Outside, wheelchair accessible trails lead through the ruins of what was once a large compound in prehistoric times. Check with park staff about guided tours in the late fall and winter. Signs are posted so that you may tour the park on your own. Additional areas are visible from the overlook platform in the picnic area. There is a park entrance fee, and national America the Beautiful passes are both sold and honored for entry.

FACILITIES: There are restrooms, drinking fountains, and picnic tables, a small museum, bookstore, and a 22 minute award winning film available at the park.

HIEROGLYPHIC CANYON



Hieroglyphic Canyon Trailhead

Located a short driving distance east of Apache Junction, Arizona is a valley of prehistoric "rock art" first named Apache Springs, then Hieroglyphic Springs and now Hieroglyphic Canyon. The USGS topographic map shows the canyon as having both names Hieroglyphic Canyon and Hieroglyphic Springs. The canyon is located within the Superstition Mountain Wilderness of the Tonto National Forest and east of Gold Canyon, Arizona.

As they enter into the canyon, hikers will see a variety of recognizable images, symbols, and

other geometric designs that only have meaning to the person who etched those centuries ago. You can pick out images of desert big horned sheep, lizards, deer, hunting scenes, fertility miracles and some which are believed to be religious rituals and ceremonial activities. These ancient etchings are believed to have been made by the Hohokam culture sometime between A.D. 900 to A.D. 1100. Some of the rock art here may date back to the late Archaic Period. The term Archaic Period was given by archaeologists to the hunter-gathers who followed the Ice Age Paleoindians in North America. The Archaic period in Arizona dates from about 8,000 BC to as late as A.D. 400 to A.D. 150, depending on the region.



Petroglyph Panel
Photograph by Chris Juck

Hohokam seasonal and village settlements have been found in the nearby Gold Canyon and Apache Junction area. Based on test excavations, the temporal era of these sites were late Pioneer Period to Sedentary and some Classic Period, A.D. 300 to A.D. 1150. (*Greenwald 1987*) It is possible that these sites are associated either seasonally or ceremonially. The Gold Canyon site may have been affiliated with Hieroglyphic Canyon due to the fact that isolated petroglyphs have been found on nearby hilltops in Gold Canyon.

As you follow the trail through the lower desert scrub environment towards the valley of petroglyphs, be sure to look closely for other prehistoric features. Located among the rock outcropping you will observe bedrock mortar holes and grinding slicks that were essential for food processing. Prehistoric people once sat at these milling stations to process wild edible plants, cactus, medicine and pigments. These ancient mortar holes and grinding slabs were generally utilized to grind raw plant material into small pieces or flour for cooking. Some grinding slicks may have been used to sharpen and manufacture tools and weapons. It's possible that some of the ancient mortar and grinding slicks here were used by hunter/gathers from the Archaic Period.

The early hunter-gathers of the Southwest would carry with them cores or chunks of raw materials such as chert, dacite and other materials until a tool or weapon was needed. Then all they would have to do was flake and chip the edges or surfaces to make a desired tool or weapon, such as knives, scrappers and projectile points.

Bedrock mortars are shallow to deep basins in bedrock formed by the continuous grinding, crushing and pounding of various weed and grass seeds, grains, and nuts with a handheld stone (mono) or wooden tool (pestle).

Grinding slicks are flat or concave surfaces where a variety of raw foods are pulverized with a hand stone tool into flour and meal used in gruels and breads. Hand stones were selected mostly of igneous or metamorphic rock that was used to grind other rock material, such as basalt and granite or quartzite.



Bedrock Mortar Holes

During the Archaic period, small bands of 10-50 members would travel throughout the countryside to seasonally harvest these wild plants and cacti. They would gather yucca seeds, palo verde, mesquite pod, prickly pear, saguaro buds and jojoba beans.

Mesquite pods have a natural sweet taste when ground, which is great for baking. One of the Hohokam's main foods was Cholla cactus (buds) and agave hearts. They would dig up the base of the agave plant (century plant) and slow roast the heart in an earthen oven, or horno, and eat the sweet tasting heart.

Not only did early prehistoric people gather the native plants and cacti for subsistence, but they also hunted animals (fauna) and reptiles that were indigenous to the region. Mountain sheep, deer, lizards and snakes are depicted in the rock art of the canyon. There may be some sort of hunting magic associated with the animal images pecked into these canyon walls.



Petroglyphs – Hieroglyphic Canyon

Even though the site is called Hieroglyphic Canyon, these images pecked into the walls of the Canyon are what archaeologists refer to as petroglyphs which were created by pecking, chipping, scraping or grinding the surface of the rock to remove the outer “patina,” also called desert or rock varnish due to exposure of the arid environment, to create a symbol, design or motif. They are by far the most common form of “rock art.” Designs that are painted are called “pictographs,” although none of these types of rock art are present in Hieroglyphic Canyon.



Photograph courtesy of Chris Juck

What do these glyphs mean? Native American symbols can be thousands of years old and are not easily interrupted. Rock drawings, or inscriptions, have been left on caves, canyon walls, and rock outcrops as early as the Upper Paleolithic era (late Stone Age) in the Old World, dating 45,000 to 10,000 years ago. The earliest known North American petroglyphs were found at Pyramid Lake, Nevada, and date back some 10,000 to 15,000 years ago. Interruptions have included shamanic (ceremonial), astronomical, maps to hunting grounds, water source or mere doodling. The late LaVan Martineau, a non-Indian adopted by the Paiute, spent much of his time trying to decipher these glyphs. His conclusion was that this “rock art” was a form of writing that was based on symbols. Native Americans had different languages so in order to understand one another these pictorial symbols were used as a sign language. (*Martineau 1973*).

Ethnologists believe that in pre-Columbian times, at least two thousand distinct Native American languages existed in the western Hemisphere, accounting for about one-third of the languages of the world.

There are many theories to the meanings of these symbols pecked onto rock outcrops and canyon walls of the Southwest. No one knows for certain if this was art or writing or both. One image or symbol may have five different interpretations to five different people. We may never find out their real meanings, but we will keep trying. Petroglyphs must have had a very deep cultural and religious significance to the prehistoric inhabitants that created them that continues to resonate with modern Indian communities of today.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: From Apache Junction, Arizona take U.S. Highway 60 east to King's Ranch Road, about 5 miles. Turn left on King's Ranch Road, 2.8 miles to Baseline Road, turn right and follow Baseline .3 miles to Mohican, turn left for .3 miles to Valley View, turn left and follow Valley View (turns into Whitetail Road) to Cloud View Avenue, turn right and then continue .5 miles to Lost Gold Mine Trail Parking Lot. There will be signs to follow along this route as well. Wear sturdy hiking shoes or boots and comfortable clothing; a walking stick is advisable. Dress for the time of seasons. In summertime, especially, make sure you have at least two quarts of water, sunscreen, and a hat, and plan your trip early before the sun gets too high in the sky.

These petroglyphs and other archaeological sites are a fragile, non-renewal resource and should be respected not only for us, but future generations as well. Destruction to these sites are permanent and irreversible. Please take a minute to familiarize yourself with the Archaeological Site Etiquette Guide. This can be found by visiting the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) website.

Have an enjoyable visit and remember: If you pack it in, pack it out!

MESA GRANDE CULTURAL PARK {Hohokam}



Aerial view of Mesa Grande from the northwest
Photo courtesy of AZMNH

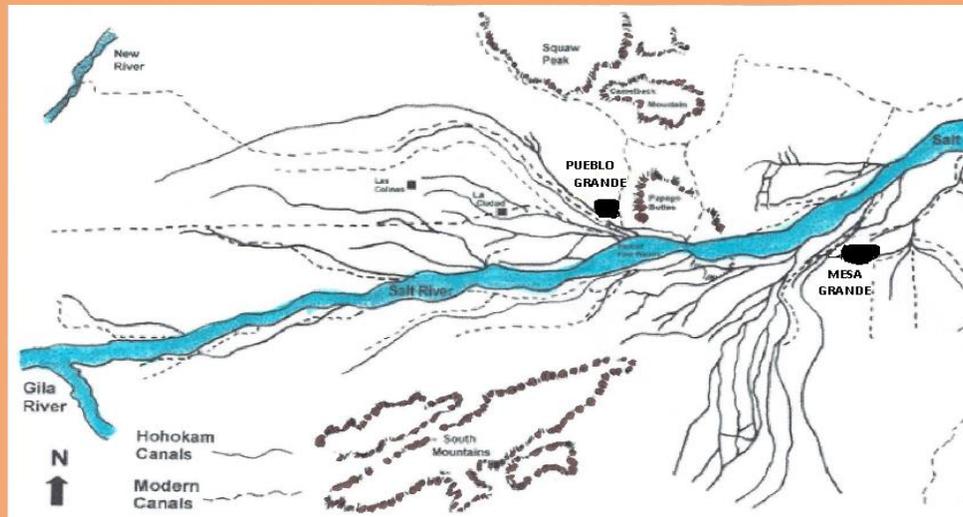
Rising above the desert landscape in Mesa, Arizona you will find one of the city's historical landmarks: Mesa Grande Temple Mound. This earthen platform mound is one of the two largest remaining platform mounds in the North American Southwest. With a height of around 27 feet and walls made of caliche, the mound is longer and wider than a football field. The platform mound is enclosed by a compound adobe wall with a large plaza located in front of the mound.

The village surrounding the mound once covered over one-half a square mile. Mesa Grande controlled over 27,000 acres of Hohokam farm land, which now lies under the city streets and housing developments of Mesa, Arizona. The prehistoric Hohokam culture, ancestors to the modern day AKimel O'Odham (Pima), constructed the great mound sometime around A.D. 1100 and it was occupied up to around A.D. 1450.

Located west of Mesa Grande in Phoenix is the Pueblo Grande Platform Mound, also constructed sometime around A.D 1100. (See Pueblo Grande Museum Archaeological Park.) Pueblo Grande was also occupied by the prehistoric Hohokam Culture between A.D. 450 and A.D. 1450. Pueblo Grande had already established the first large main irrigation canals that diverted water from the Salt River onto thousands of acres of farmland on the north side of the Salt River. Pueblo Grande population grew and flourished for centuries as a result of their agriculture success.

Both of the "Grandes" are centrally located in what archaeologists refer to as the Hohokam Core or Phoenix Basin. They were strategically situated at the headgates of two extensive irrigation systems. Archaeologists and researchers believe that these two settlements played essential roles in the organization, construction, and operation of irrigation systems and the distribution of canal

water from the Salt River to farm lands and villages. With Pueblo Grande on the North side of the Salt River and Mesa Grande on the South, they were able to supply water to some 110,000 acres of Hohokam farm land and service an estimated population of between 50,000 to 80,000 Hohokam people.



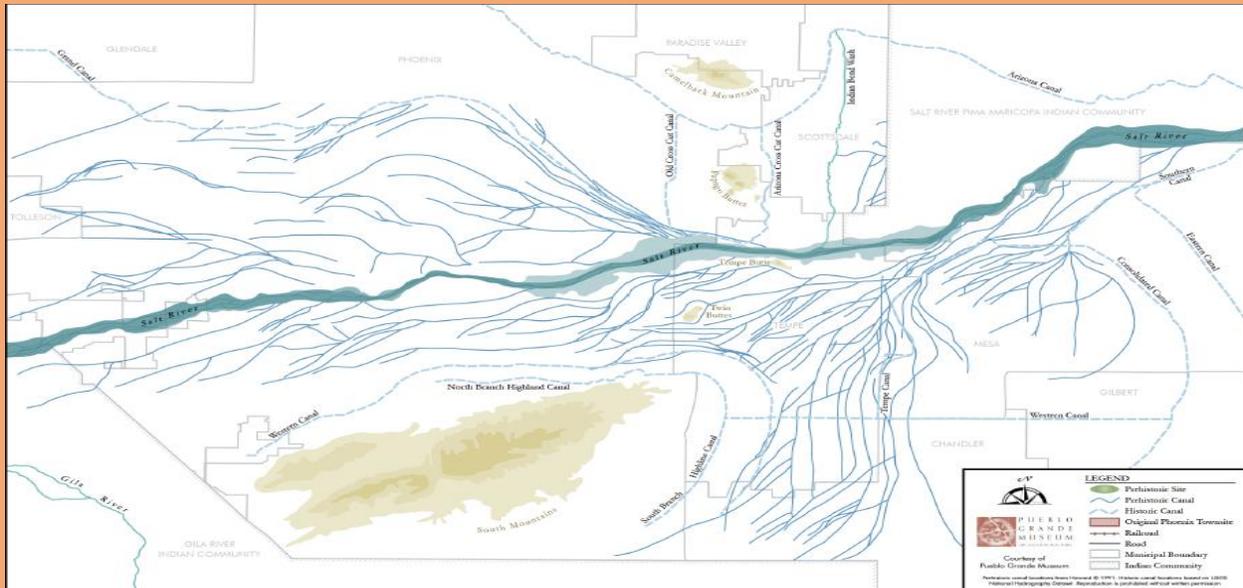
Hohokam canal map of the Salt River - Pueblo Grande and Mesa Grande situated on the north and south sides of the Salt River (Phoenix Basin)

Image courtesy of Ripleys.com/images

These early desert-farmers grew the “three sisters:” corn (maize), tepary beans, and different varieties of squash, as well as cotton, tobacco, agave, amaranth and barley. Their agricultural success was due to the variety of farming techniques used other than irrigation, such as planting in the alluvial fans and outwash slopes (Ak-Chin farming) far from any wells or river sources. These innovations in farming allowed their population to grow and flourish for centuries here in the Sonoran Desert.

PREHISTORIC CANAL SYSTEMS-HOHOKAM

The Hohokam were renowned for their ability to develop and maintain a highly sophisticated irrigation systems for more than a thousand years. Constructing the vast network of canals must have taken a substantial amount of physical labor. One might imagine the manpower required to accomplish this task, which took years to complete in some cases. Dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke would have been factors to contend with, especially during the hot summer months here in the valley where daytime temperatures can reach well over 100 degrees. Archaeological research indicates that at least one canal extended nearly 20 miles, and that there were about 16 separate canals systems, each with its own headgate area. Approximately 1,000 miles of canals have been mapped in the Salt River Valley alone; these represent thousands of years of construction and use.



COURTESY PUEBLO GRANDE MUSEUM. PREHISTORIC CANAL LOCATIONS FROM HOWARD @ 1991, HISTORIC CANAL LOCATIONS BASED ON USGS NATIONAL HYDROGRAPHY DATASET. REPRODUCTION IS PROHIBITED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION.

These gravity-fed canals were dug by hand using wedge-shaped stones as hoes and wooden digging sticks to loosen the hard desert soils. The soil could then be put into baskets and emptied along ditches to form the canal banks. These canals were dug to an average depth of around twelve to fifteen feet wide. It has been estimated that approximately 400,000 to 800,000 cubic meters of soil was excavated to construct some of the main canals that took years in the making. These carefully engineered canals diverted water from the Salt/Gila Rivers and were designed to follow the contours of the desert terrain, dips and slopes to achieve a gradual downhill drop of 1 to 2 feet per mile. The Salt River is the largest tributary of the Gila River and was the major source of water in the valley during prehistoric times.

Mesa Grande Reopening

Wednesday, October 15, 2014

Closes on Sunday, May 3, 2015

1000 North Date Street (Corner of Date and 10th Street), Mesa, Arizona 85201

Hours of Operation

Wednesday – Friday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Saturday – Sunday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Closed Monday & Tuesday

Admission

Adults: \$5.00

Children (3-12): \$ 2.00

Group Admissions (10+ People)

Interpretive Trail: \$4.00

Archaeology Trail: \$5.00
Interactive Experience: \$6.00

Field Trips

Mesa Grande Only: \$6.00
Mesa Grande and Arizona Museum of Natural History: \$9.00

Group rates and tours available October 1-14 and May 3-31. Must be pre-paid and pre-booked online, or call (480) 644-3553.

For More Information, Contact: Mesa Grande Visitor's Center at (480) 644-3075, the Arizona Museum of Natural History at (480) 644-2230, or click [Mesa Grande](#).

PUEBLO GRANDE MUSEUM & ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK {Hohokam} Parks and Recreation Pueblo Grande Museum & Archaeological Park



Mound photo. Museum guest tour of platform.
Photo courtesy of Pueblo Grande Museum, City of Phoenix

Spanish for “Large Town,” Pueblo Grande is a large prehistoric village site with one of only two remaining largely intact platform mounds that are open to the public. During prehistoric times, there were more than 20 such mounds situated along a network of prehistoric irrigation canals in the Salt River Valley. The Pueblo Grande village is believed to have once encompassed an area close to a square mile. The village was occupied for about a thousand years (A.D. 450 to A.D. 1450) and supported a population of between 750 and 1000. Pueblo Grande contained at least two ball courts and a “Big House” similar to that at Casa Grande National Monument in Coolidge, Arizona. Unfortunately, Pueblo Grande’s “Big House” was destroyed during the early development of Phoenix. In addition to these monumental structures, Pueblo Grande also contained hundreds of pit houses, several trash mounds (middens), adobe compounds, and numerous “hornos” (earthen ovens) and extramural pits.

Pueblo Grande was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1964 and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as Pueblo Grande Ruin and Hohokam-Pima Irrigation site in 1966.

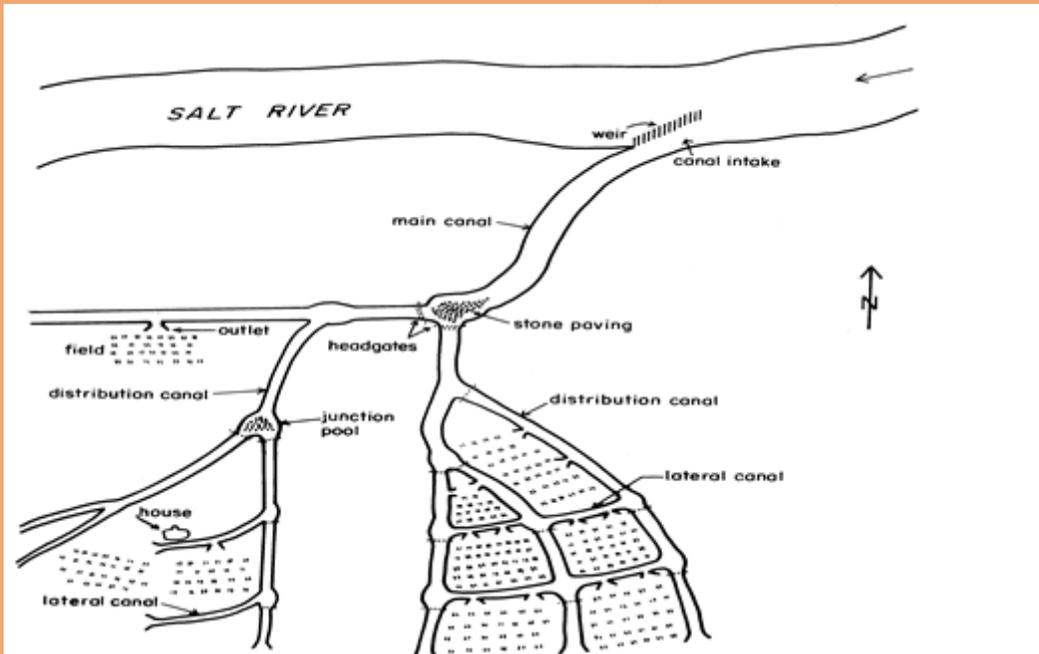


Half-excavated horno (earthen oven) from La Ciudad De Los Hornos
Photograph by John McDonald

HOHOKAM CANAL SYSTEM 2 / RECENT RESEARCH REVEALS NEW INFORMATION

Recent archaeological investigations revealed new and exciting information about Hohokam irrigation technology in the vicinity of Pueblo Grande. Under contract to the City of Phoenix, Desert Archaeology, Inc. conducted data recovery just west of Pueblo Grande and south of the Grand Canal. This area is in the path of several of the main trunk canals of Canal System 2, the largest prehistoric irrigation network on the north side of the Salt River.

Located northwest of the Park of Four Waters, which is the headwaters of several main trunk canals at Pueblo Grande, discovery of numerous prehistoric canals, including main, distribution, and lateral canals was not a surprise. Unexpected was the discovery of recognizable prehistoric irrigated field systems—the first exposure of such systems in the Salt River Valley – and a water control structure that regulated water flow from one canal to another. Also found were several canal-side water catchment features, pit houses, field houses, and a surface adobe structure. One of the pit houses contained burnt corn - evidence that crops were being processed here.



Hohokam Canal System Components
 After Masse in *Hohokam & Chaco*
Courtesy of Pueblo Grande Museum, City of Phoenix

Each prehistoric field system identified had a distribution canal and a series of lateral canals. Seven fields were distinguished in the patterned distribution of lateral ditches. Other fragmentary ditches indicate additional fields were present, but not well-preserved. The upper limits of preserved prehistoric field surfaces were within centimeters of the zone of modern disturbance; in most places, modern land leveling had removed the actual field surface. Similarities in stratigraphic layers in the laterals that fed the fields imply the fields and irrigation features were built and used at the same time, between A.D. 1000 and A.D. 1150. Pollen evidence indicates that many crops were grown, including corn, cotton, squash, cholla buds, and possibly prickly pear.



Agricultural fields and lateral canal
Photograph courtesy Pueblo Grande Museum, City of Phoenix

While large main canals were anticipated in these areas, the complexity of distribution canals was unforeseen. Two large distribution canals that ran toward the southwest indicate that main trunk canals were supplying water to areas in that direction, as well as to known villages to the northwest. Archaeological excavation at the junction of a main and distribution canal revealed a well-preserved adobe and cobble water-control structure in the form of a low wall or weir that reinforced the junction and controlled the elevation at which water could enter the distribution canal from the main. This feature is presently unique among Hohokam irrigation structures, indicating even greater engineering sophistication among the Hohokam than was previously known.



Trench excavated through water-control structure to reveals its construction
Photograph by Connie Darby, courtesy City of Phoenix

The large “North Canal,” originally investigated by Richard Woodbury in the Park of the Four Waters, was trenched revealing a deep, broad channel (7+ meters wide, 3 meters deep) containing relatively uniform, fine sandy sediments. These sediments represent a single, massive flood event that ended the use of the canal. A luminescence dating sample collected from the base of these flood sediments suggests that at least one of the floods speculated to have ended prehistoric irrigation in the Salt River Valley occurred sometime between A.D. 1221 and A.D. 1341. However, it seems unlikely that the devastating flood occurred within the first hundred years of this interval, given the large populations living along and utilizing the northern reaches of Canal System 2 during this time. New, currently unpublished evidence confirms that the flood occurred sometime after A.D. 1300.



Photograph by Connie Darby, courtesy City of Phoenix

Although standard 5-ft-deep trenches were initially excavated during the projects, numerous deeper benched trenches were needed to expose the larger canals to their full extent. Here, Dr. Kathy Henderson points toward the upper edge of the North Canal. The light-colored fill of this canal is primarily a massive deposit of fine sand from a single flood event that ended its use.

Other discoveries include a reservoir designed to capture and hold water from a canal and an enigmatic canal-side basin that may have been a walk-in for access to the canal or a pond created for other purposes.

A report on one of these excavation projects will soon be available at Pueblo Grande Museum. Data analyses for the other project are still underway, and results will add new important information to the archaeological record.

Location: Pueblo Grande Museum and Archaeological Park is located in Phoenix, Arizona at 4619 E. Washington Street. Located near Sky Harbor International Airport, the Park is easily accessible from the Phoenix Sky Train and Light Rail.

Hours of Operation: Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Sunday, 1 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. Children (under 6) free, and 17 and under free on Sundays. *The Pueblo Grande Museum is closed on Sundays and Mondays, May through September.*

Tours: The ADA- accessible archaeological trail and museum are set up to be self-guided for visitors, with an introduction video, map guide, and interpretive signage. Guided tours for schools and groups of 10 or more are available with two weeks' advanced booking during the months of October through April.

Workshops: Throughout the year, Pueblo Grande Museum has programming for adults, children, and families which include archaeology classes for kids, arts and crafts workshops, hikes, and lectures. The Museum also holds annual events such as the Indian Market, children's summer programs, a Native Art & Rug Auction, Ancient Technology Day and more to please all ages and interests!

For more information about booking a tour, planning a visit, seasonal hours of operation, visit pueblogrande.com, or call the Pueblo Grande Museum at 602-495-0901.

Abandonment and Migration Theories

These civilizations flourished here in the Sonoran Desert for centuries; then, for reasons unknown, populations declined and settlements were abandoned sometime between the 14th and 15th centuries. It is believed that this phenomenon did not happen all at once, but rather over several generations. Archaeologists, historians and scholars have proposed various hypotheses and explanations for the major abandonment of the Southwest during this time, suggesting that it was not due to one single catastrophic event, but a combination of social and environmental stress factors such as severe drought followed by repeated flood events, population pressure combined with fewer available resources, and a breakdown in trade relationships.

In her book, *Archaeology of the Southwest*, Linda Cordell points out that these people felt themselves “pushed” by a combination of social and environmental changes and “pulled” for more stable weather patterns, fertile farm lands, safer communities and spiritual fulfillment.

It has been estimated that the population of the desert southwest around the 14th century numbered somewhere between 40,000 to 80,000. By the time the first Spanish explorers reached Arizona in mid-late 15th century, the population had declined to an estimated 5,000.

Modern-day Native American tribes that claim the Hohokam people as their ancestors still speak of ancient abandonments and migrations in their oral histories. Thus, years of additional research will be necessary to discover new evidence as to the mysterious phenomenon of these people’s origins and collapse of their civilizations. We may never find out the answers to some of the centuries-old questions: “Where did they go?” and “Where are they today?”

Start Exploring Archaeology Today

ARIZONA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

If you would like to learn more about the prehistory of the Southwest and the Native American cultures who lived in the North American Southwest over a millennium ago, if you are just a curious individual, or someone considering a vocational level, consider becoming a member of the Arizona Archaeological Society. As a member, you will have the opportunity to participate in field schools, workshops and other activities where you will develop your archaeological skills through a certification program. There are about 23 different courses available such as excavation, laboratory, and survey techniques.

As a member, you will receive the monthly newsletter called the *Petroglyph*. This is an informative paper of what’s going on within the Arizona Archaeology Society and includes

reports from the various chapters located throughout Arizona. Each year that you are a member, you will receive the annual publication of the *Arizona Archaeologist*. This book is written by professional archaeologists on archaeological investigations throughout the Southwestern United States and Northwestern Mexico. You will also have “Members Only” online access to download some of the past publications of the *Archaeologist*.

The San Tan Chapter of the A.A.S invites you to visit their website at: [Arizona Archaeological Society - San Tan \(Queen Creek\)](#) to learn more about becoming a member today.

SEE ALSO: The Southwest Archaeology Team (SWAT) [Southwest Archaeology Team, Inc.](#)

“2014”

SOURCES

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL CULTURES AND CULTURAL AFFILIATION: HOPI AND ZUNI PERSPECTIVES IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST. Kurt E. Dongoske, Michael Yeatts, Roger Anyon, and T.J. Ferguson

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Casa Grande Ruins National Monument-(U.S National Parks Service)
Diane Garcia-Park Ranger

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Arizona Museum of Natural History

Dr. Jerry B. Howard- Curator of Anthropology

Verde Valley Archaeology Center/PaleoWest Archaeology

Dr. Todd W. Bostwick

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