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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MESA VERDE AS A NATIONAL PARK

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PREFACE

Mesa Verde has a unique distinction in that it is the only man-made National Park in the United States. It consists of hundreds of cliff dwellings -- homes of the Pueblo Indians from around 1100 to 1300 A.D. These dwellings, rediscovered in the latter part of the nineteenth century, faced extinction because of relic-hunters. Virginia McClurg undertook the task of preserving these ruins. A twenty-four year struggle ensued during which time she and the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association worked continuously for federal protection of this prehistoric site. Today, the ancient home of the Pueblo Indians is viewed annually by thousands of tourists because a small group of Colorado women worked vigorously to establish Mesa Verde National Park. This is their story.

This thesis is based primarily on materials from three sources: the Museum at Mesa Verde National Park, Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook in the Pioneer Historical Museum in Colorado Springs, and the Historical Society in Denver.

Acknowledgement of assistance in completing the work must go to Dr. Russell Buhite for his guidance, Mrs. Jean Pinckley for her help in the selection of the topic, Miss Laura Franklin for her patience, and my sister and parents for their encouragement and help.

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CHAPTER I

THE CLIFF DWELLINGS INHABITED

Two lonely cowboys rode across the snow covered ground on their ranch in southwestern Colorado. Continuing their way in and out of the canyons, they arrived on a high bluff and stopped for a rest. Snow clung to the green pines which dotted the canyon walls. Weary from the long journey, the riders gazed out over the string of seemingly never-ending mesas. Lowering his vision, one of the cowboys suddenly gasped with amazement as he beheld a mammoth city partially hidden in the opposite canyon wall. He excitedly directed the other's view to this discovery. The two men sat silently, astounded at the site they beheld. Before them lay an ancient, deserted city built in a cave in the canyon wall; a city probably large enough to house several hundred people. This was the area of cliff dwellings and the two men had often seen many smaller dwellings, but nothing so majestic as the palace which now confronted them. Although the buildings were partially in ruins, the men could almost picture the deserted city swarming with crowds of Indians who must have lived there hundred of years before.[1]

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[1]See picture on p. 71 Appendix I.

On that bleak day in December, 1888, Richard Wetherill and Charles Mason beheld a site which no man had seen for nearly six hundred years. Before them lay the largest cliff dwelling ever constructed by Indians in North America - a dwelling which they appropriately named Cliff Palace. As they sat gazing at it, questions began forming about the mystery which enveloped this long hidden town. Why was it built? Who were the Indians who lived there? When was it inhabited? Why was it abandoned? How long had it been deserted? To answer these questions is to present the story of the ancient Pueblo Indians who inhabited Cliff Palace and the other cliff dwellings which are now preserved in Mesa Verde National Park.

Mesa Verde or Green Tableland (so called because of the green color it takes on from cedar and pinon trees) is distinct from other national parks in that it is the only one set aside to preserve the works of man rather than nature. The mesa itself is fifteen miles long and eight miles wide.[2] The park is located in southwestern Colorado close to the Four Corners area. Mesa Verde rises fifteen hundred feet above the surrounding Montezuma Valley, slanting downward toward the south.[3] The Mancos River formed the numerous canyons which cut the mesa.[4] The

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[2]General Information Regarding Mesa Verde National Park, Season of 1918 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), pp. 6-7. Herein cited as Season of 1918.

[3]See picture on p. 71 Appendix I.

[4]Joyce Herold, Prehistoric Settlement and Physical Environment in the Mesa Verde Area, University of Utah Anthropological Papers, 53 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, November, 1961), p. 7.

principal canyons which house the cliff dwellings are Rock, Long, Wickiup, Navajo, Spruce, Soda, and Moccasin.[5] Flat-topped mesas, sheer-walled canyons, and narrow river valleys characterize this country.[6] The fertile mesa tops attracted agricultural Indians. Abundant game added to the desirability of the area.[7]

The 51,017 acres of federal land which constitute the park contain twenty large canyons and many smaller ones. There is no way to estimate the actual number of ruins. Richard Wetherill calculated that there were over five hundred (which is a very conservative guess.) There are probably hundreds of ruins which have not yet been discovered.[8] The cliff dwellers built their homes in caves in the side of canyon walls. Alternate soft and hard layers of sandstone and shale composed these walls. Erosion undermined the soft layers, leaving huge rocks without foundations. As the rocks fell away, natural caves were formed.[9]

Until 1929 archaeologists could only guess at the approximate years in which these cliff dwellings had been built and inhabited. With the development of dendrochronology, or tree ring dating, this

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[5]Rules and Regulations, Mesa Verde National Park (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), p. 11. See chart on p. 82.

[6]See picture on p. 80, Appendix I.

[7]Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr., "Report on Archaeological Reconnaissance in Southwestern Colorado in the Summer of 1923," The Colorado Magazine, II (April, 1925), pp. 5-7.

[8]Mesa Verde National Park (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950), pp. 3, 10.

[9]Jesse Walter Fewkes, Antiquities of the Mesa Verde National Park, Cliff Palace (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), p. 20. Herein cited as Antiquities.

this problem has been solved. Thus, by using old beams from the cliff houses, it is possible to determine that the first dwelling in the Mesa Verde area was constructed in 1066, and the last was erected in 1274.[10]

The ancestors of the cliff dwellers entered the Mesa Verde area around the turn of the Christian era. Because of their skill in making baskets, they were known as the Basket Makers. The Basket Maker Period lasted from 1-450 A.D. These Indians were farmers who cultivated corn and squash. The mesa tops made excellent fields for farming, and caves provided the necessary shelter. No evidence has been found of buildings except for storage pits in the floor of the caves. Pottery was unknown at this time and baskets served all purposes. As the bow and arrow had not been developed, the major weapon present was the atlatl which was a throwing stick to launch darts. Dogs represented the only domesticated animals these peoples possessed.[11]

The Modified Basket Maker Period from 450-750 A.D. saw the movement of the Indians to the mesa tops, construction of new types of homes, and the development of several new features which proved assets to their daily living. The new type of dwellings, called pithouses, were semi-subterranean homes constructed of adobe. Entrance was through a smoke hole in the top and a ladder which descended to the inside. The pithouses were concentrated in small villages near the fields. Pottery appeared during this period and took the place of much of the basketry. The

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[10] Percy Fritz, Colorado: The Centennial State (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1941), pp. 19-20.

[11] "The Basket Makers - 1 to 450 A.D.," Diorama Series, II (Mesa Verde National Park: Mesa Verde National Park Museum.).

diet was supplemented by the addition of beans. Development of the bow and arrow proved an asset to hunting. Turkeys were first domesticated during this era.[12]

Pueblo Indians received their name from the Spanish word for village. During the Developmental Pueblo Period from 750-1100 A.D. the Indians began to join their houses together in pueblos. Rectangular houses made of adobe were joined together in a long, curving row. In front of this row were one or two underground rooms. Similar to the former pithouses only now entirely underground, these kivas were used by the men as ceremonial rooms, workrooms, and clubrooms. Later in the period, stone masonry appeared and took the place of the adobe.[13]

The Pueblos experimented widely during this Developmental Period, and their civilization progressed rapidly. Between 1100 and 1300 A.D. the Pueblo civilization reached its peak. This era of the cliff dwellings was truly the Great Pueblo Period.

Why did a people who were apparently happy and prospering decide to move down to the cold, damp caves? Why would hundreds of people want to crowd together in unsanitary conditions and live in apartments half way up a canyon wall? Apparently, there was some threat to their mesa top existence.

Evidence seems to point to the appearance in the area of nomadic, hostile Indians. Between 1050 and 1200 A.D. kivas were brought inside

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[12] "The Modified Basket Maker Period - 450 to 750 A.D.," Diorama Series, III (Mesa Verde National Park: Mesa Verde National Park Museum).

[13] "The Developmental Pueblo Period - 750 to 1100 A.D.," Diorama Series, IV (Mesa Verde National Park: Mesa Verde National Park Museum).

the villages on the mesa tops and were surrounded by houses. Tall, round towers began to appear which probably served as lookout stations and were often connected with the kivas. All the house walls were doubled. Villages grew larger as much of the good farmland was abandoned and people concentrated around springs. Even these changes failed to provide adequate defense, so the tribesmen established homes in the caves.[14]

The cliff dwellings served as excellent fortresses. Toe and handholds, ropes, and ladders represented the sole means by which the Indians could enter and leave the dwellings. It would be impossible for an enemy successfully to launch an attack while climbing up toe and handholds with an entire city bombarding him from above.

Cliff Palace represents the typical architecture of the cliff dwellings. The cave which houses Cliff Palace (in a branch of Cliff Canyon) measures three hundred and twenty-five feet across and one hundred feet at the point of greatest depth.[15] It contains more than two hundred rooms and twenty-three kivas. The cave, located several hundred feet up from the floor of the canyon, is arranged in a crescent shape with the kivas in front of the other rooms. Between three hundred and fifty and four hundred people once occupied this dwelling.[16]

Perhaps the most interesting features of Cliff Palace are its twenty-three kivas. Each kiva continued as the underground ceremonial

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[14] Mesa Verde National Park (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 8.

[15] Don Watson, Cliff Dwellings of the Mesa Verde, A Story In Pictures (Mesa Verde National Park: Mesa Verde Museum Association), p. 46. Herein cited as A Story in Pictures.

[16] Season of 1918, pp. 23-25. See pictures on pp. 80-81, Appendix I.

room, workroom, and clubroom for the men. Entrance to the kiva was through a smoke hole in the center of the roof. Descending through the smoke assured purification. The kiva was circular with a fire pit in the center of the floor. Fresh air entered through a ventilator shaft and was prevented from blowing the fire by a deflector stone. A low shelf, used as storage space, ran all around the interior. Six pilasters on this shelf supported a roof made of log and adobe. The surface of this roof was used as a large open court. The kiva also had a "sipapu" which was a small hole next to the firepit. This represented the symbolic entrance to Mother Earth.[17]

While the men owned the kivas, the secular rooms belonged to the oldest woman of the clan. Masonry of the secular rooms was often inferior to that of the kivas.[18] The rooms were small, usually being just large enough for an adult to stretch out and sleep. Since all activities were carried on outdoors, these rooms were used solely for sleeping. Fires were rarely built in the rooms because men kept warm in the kivas and women huddled around fires on the open plazas. Because doors were located on the second story or higher, it was necessary to use ladders to enter the rooms. These doors averaged some twenty-five inches in height by sixteen inches in width. Many of the doors were T shaped, enabling an individual to put his hands on the ledge and swing his feet through. Small holes along each wall served as a lookout, provided ventilation and light. Inside the buildings, pegs in the wall or handholds were the methods of getting from one floor to another.[19]

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[17]Watson, A Story in Pictures, p. 22.

[18]Fewkes, Antiquities, p. 34.

[19]Watson, A Story in Pictures, pp. 16-20.

The best way to portray the mores of the Pueblos is to follow the life cycle and see what an Indian could expect to encounter. Immediately after birth, a Pueblo baby was bathed, then rubbed with juniper ashes to protect him from witches. Both mother and baby remained indoors for twenty days following birth. At sunrise on the twentieth day, the baby's head was washed. Then the grandmother on the father's side took him to the top of a cliff, held a prayer ceremony, and dedicated the child to the Sun Father. He then received a name.[20]

Childhood was a carefree time. The first six or seven years held no responsibilities. Until the child could play by himself, he rode around on his mother's back in a cradle-board. Children were controlled by threats of witches rather than by punishment. At about seven, a girl began to follow her mother and imitate all she did. This constituted her entire education until she was married. At the same time, a boy followed and imitated his father, and thus learned farming and all the important crafts. He received his religious training from his "ceremonial father" or uncle, who communicated all the legends and beliefs of the tribe to his nephew. Between twelve and fourteen, the boy was initiated into his "ceremonial father's" secret society and learned all the secrets of that organization.[21]

Pueblos were a matrilineal and matrilocal people. Descent was traced through the female line, and when a man married, he went to live with his wife and her family. The most distinctive feature of Pueblo

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[20]There is a story or rumor connected with birth which relates the father's responsibility of running to his kiva at the time of the birth and removing the cork in the sipapu so the baby's spirit may enter this world. If the father left the cork out a little too long, the result was twins, and he would be chided by his neighbors and called "butterfingers."

[21]Don Watson, Indians of the Mesa Verde (Mesa Verde National Park: Mesa Verde Museum Association, 1955), pp. 82-85.

society was the clan which was exogamous.[22]

At the age of seventeen or eighteen a Pueblo boy was ready for marriage, while a girl usually married at fifteen. Families arranged marriages and seldom did the young couple have any choice. However, romantic inclinations did not escape them altogether. If a boy saw a certain girl whom he liked, he might suggest a marriage to his family. The council of elders then decided if the arrangement would be beneficial. Upon approval, a group of representatives approached the girl's father, lauding the boy's good qualities and promising presents. If the girl's family decided in favor of the arrangement, the next morning the girl had to go to the boy's home and grind corn for four days in front of his mother. If the girl demonstrated that she would be industrious and make a good wife, she returned home and with the help of her relatives began building a home for her future husband.

The house was built either beside or on top of her mother's house. A girl directed her clan relatives whose job it was to join in and build this new home for her. Men gathered rocks from the canyon and chipped them until they were the right size. Women did the actual work of building. Prayer sticks were placed in the corners of the walls as offerings to the gods.

While the girl was busily engaged in constructing her new home, the prospective husband spent his time making gifts for his future in-laws. A common gift was a cotton blanket which the boy wove after making a trip to the southwest to obtain cotton from other Pueblo Indians. Usually, several weeks or months passed before these preparations could be

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[22]EXOGAMOUS: no one could marry within a clan because all members were considered to be closely related.

completed. Upon completion of the house, the boy moved in with the girl and the couple was considered married. There was no formal wedding ceremony.[23]

The couple soon settled down to the necessary tasks of supporting themselves. A man's major job was to do the planting each spring. Fields, owned in common by the entire village, were allotted to each clan which in turn divided them among its individual families. A family could keep this piece of land and pass it on from one generation to the next if they continued to farm it. Neglected land reverted to the clan.

Although all land belonged to the women, being passed through the female line, the men were the farmers. Ritual surrounded the planting ceremony. A farmer went to the center of his field and dug six holes (each a foot deep), four in the cardinal directions and two representing the upper and lower worlds. Kneeling in the center of these holes and facing east, he painted a cross on the ground, planted a prayer stick in the cross, and sprinkled cornmeal over it. He then took four grains of corn of each color - yellow, blue, red, white, speckled, and black - and planted one color in each hole. A digging stick with a stone blade was used for planting. Four rows were then planted, one extending east from the center, one west, one south, and one north. This completed the ritual for the first day. The planter then had to return home and not set foot on his field for the next four days. After this time period had elapsed, the planting could be finished.[24]

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[23] Watson, Indians of the Mesa Verde, pp. 57-64.

[24] Ibid., pp. 46, 66-73.

Corn, beans, and squash represented the staples which these Indians grew. To supplement the diet, Pueblos gathered wild fruits, nuts, and seeds. Gooseberries, chokecherries, and pinon nuts were favorite delicacies. Prickly pear cactus could also be eaten raw or roasted after its spines were removed.[25]

Several dams in the canyon below Cliff Palace stored water to last the people through the dry season until the summer rains came. These dams were twenty feet long and five or six feet high.[26] In 1962 archaeologists discovered an ancient water system used by these Indians. It consisted of a series of ditches to catch run-off rain water. A reservoir large enough to store two and a half million gallons of water assured the Indians of a constant water supply. A system of ditches was used to irrigate the fields on the mesa top.[27]

In the spring when men began the planting, women turned to replacing the pottery which had been broken over the winter months. Of particular necessity were large water jars capable of holding several gallons of water which could be stored the two months of each year when there was no rain. Clay for the pottery was obtained in a layer of shale at the foot of the canyon wall. The tempering material consisted of pieces of broken pottery. Two parts clay to one part temper were mixed with water until the material became workable. Coiling was the common technique of making pottery. After the pots had dried, they were covered with a white chalky substance, then polished with a smooth

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[25]Paul R. Franke, "The Mesa Verde," Nature Magazine, XIX (May, 1932), p. 290.

[26]Watson, Indians of the Mesa Verde, p. 73.

[27]Douglas Osborne, "Solving the Riddles of Wetherill Mesa," National Geographic, 125 (February, 1964), p. 194.

pebble. A brown liquid obtained from boiling the bee plant was used for paint. After firing, the brown designs turned black and the result was the typical black-on-white pottery of the Mesa Verde area. Wood and bark were piled on top of pots placed in a shallow pit for firing.[28] Rectangular geometric figures constituted the designs painted on pottery; the spiral, triangle, and cross being the most common symbols. No replicas of humans or other life forms (except for a few birds) were ever employed.[29]

Clothing consisted of little or nothing. Children ran naked while a woman's wardrobe consisted only of a small apron made of yucca fiber strings. Men wore loin-cloths. In wintertime, a blanket was often draped over the shoulders.[30] Upon leaving Cliff Palace, men and women donned sandals made of yucca leaves. These sandals generally consisted of a sole with thongs which passed between the toes and tied around the ankle. Sometimes, however, corn leaves covered the upper part of the foot for protection.[31]

Politically, a number of chieftains controlled the village, the Town Chief being the most important. Second in rank was the War Chief who guarded against enemies and witches. Next came the Sun Chief who kept the calendar and set the dates for ceremonies. Following, in charge of hunting parties, came the Hunt Chief. The Crier Chief had the job of distributing news throughout the town. In addition to these chiefs, the

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[28]Watson, Indians of the Mesa Verde, pp. 48-53.

[29]Fewkes, Antiquities, p. 71.

[30]Watson, Indians of the Mesa Verde, p. 77.

[31]Fewkes, Antiquities, p. 73.

village had a council made up of all the leaders of the secret societies (each kiva belonged to a secret society). The town chiefs and the council met together in a kiva when a problem arose which had to be settled. Everyone was given an opportunity to present evidence and voice his opinion. When all had made their feelings known, the Town Chief brought forth his decision which all abided by because of his reputation for being a wise and just man.[32]

Religion centered around the kivas. Each secret society had one or more medicine men or priests. Each society had a different function, for example to bring rain, control the sun, cure sickness, or control witches. The rituals and ceremonies connected with these various tasks were performed in the kivas. Quite often, however, there would be a public dance performed on the roof of the kiva. The majority of the ceremonies were held during fall and winter when the men were not working in the fields. Fertility rites appeared in the spring and ceremonies for rain in the summer. If the year had been an especially dry one, these rites became very important. Otherwise, they merely represented a token thanksgiving.

Sun Father and Earth Mother were the two most important powers to the Pueblos. Other lesser gods controlled such things as rain, fertility, and plant growth. This was not so much a worship of the forces of nature as a recognition of them. The myth of their origin helps explain their concept of life. Sun Father and Earth Mother united, and all creatures came into being in the world of darkness in a cave in the center of the earth. A short time later, these creatures climbed to the world of twilight where a slight ray of light was visible.

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[32]Watson, Indians of the Mesa Verde, p. 94.

After remaining there for an appropriate length of time, they continued their journey upward to the world of dawn, finally making their entrance into this world through the "sipapu." This was the same path that everyone followed when he made his way into this world. The spirit of the dead returned through the "sipapu" to live in the afterworld with Earth Mother.[33]

Witches were a common phenomenon to these peoples. All children were taught to fear them. The parents reprimanded them by saying, "If you don't behave, the witches will get you." The single intent of the witches was to harm and destroy. They caused all diseases, and as well as attacking an individual, they could work against an entire community, causing floods, epidemics, or droughts. They might appear in the form of a dog, coyote, or owl as well as a human. Medicine men had the ability to overcome these witches because they were endowed with the identical powers, but used them only for the benefit of the people. When a person became ill, a medicine man was immediately called. He could be cured only if the medicine man was successful in breaking the spell of the witch. Anyone might be a witch, even your next-door neighbor, so the Pueblos took great care not to offend anyone lest he be a witch and decide to take revenge.[34]

Even though marriages arranged by families usually provided couples that were compatible, divorce was rather common in Pueblo society. One reason for its frequency was the ease by which it could be accomplished. A woman, deciding to divorce her husband, simply waited until

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[33] Ibid., pp. 106-109.

[34] Ibid., p. 74.

he went off to the fields one day then picked up all his belongings and put them outside the door of her house. On top of this stack of clothes, she placed his sandals pointing in the direction of his mother's house. When the husband returned from his day of work and saw his belongings outside the home, he simply picked them up and returned to his mother. There was no need for him to argue with his wife because the question had been settled. A husband could also divorce his wife. He merely left home and never came back.

Upon death, chiefs and priests were buried in the ground or floors of rooms while poorer classes were often dumped in the refuse heaps in the back of the cave, or cremated. If buried, the dead were placed in a flexed position because of the belief that the body must be in the same position it was before birth in order to return to Mother Earth. A special room has been located in the back of Cliff Palace which was used for cremating the dead. This has been ascertained because of the phosphate ashes, remains of human bones, and objects which were normally placed in the graves of buried people.[35]

The Pueblos lived out their lives and knew a comfortable existence in a land which normally supplied them with sufficient food and game. They had created a new height in their civilization. This was truly a golden era. Why then, in the latter part of the thirteenth century did these Indians in the Mesa Verde region abandon the area which they had been occupying for centuries?

Numerous theories have been proposed as to why Mesa Verde was abandoned. The most widespread and generally accepted cause of the

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[35]Fewkes, Antiquities, pp. 39-40, 77-78.

migrations is the Great Drought which spread throughout the Southwest from the years 1276 to 1299 A.D. These years have been accurately established by the use of tree ring dating. As the Indians had been farming in the Mesa Verde region for a thousand years, they had faced dry years before the Great Drought and been prepared for them. A dry spell could be expected every few years, and preparations were made months in advance if signs indicated there would be a lack of rainfall that year. Water would be stored up for the summer months. Food was rationed, saving corn and beans and utilizing wild plants which women spent days in gathering. Thus, drought of up to several years had been survived by people in this region, so probably no one worried when the drought hit in 1276. The years previous to this had been good, so there was no cause for alarm. Only this drought was to continue year after year after year. A whole new generation grew up and still the drought continued. Every year for twenty-four years, the rainfall was below average. It was the worst drought which ever occurred in the Southwest. At first when the crops failed, the people gathered wild plants, but even these eventually dried out. They could not turn to hunting because the animals either died off or moved to a spot where water and food were more plentiful.

Three terrors confronted the people: lack of food, lack of water, and the wrath of the gods. Great fear was aroused that their gods had deserted them when all the ceremonies of the priests proved to be of no avail in bringing the desired food and water. Indians died daily from starvation or disease. As a last resort, they were forced to eat their seed corn, a drastic step because once the seed

corn was gone, they could never plant another crop.

After the food and water were gone, no alternative remained but to move away in search of better conditions. Thus, the great migration began which was to leave Cliff Palace and the entire Mesa Verde region deserted by the year 1300 A.D. The migration was not a mass movement, but took place gradually. In Cliff Palace probably one clan left at a time.[36]

Coupled with this idea is the theory of arroyo-cutting. Previous dry periods had discouraged vegetation. Therefore, when later flood waters came, the loosely held soil was gradually washed away, forming arroyos or steep channels. Perhaps the Pueblos had been experiencing a period of increasing dryness where much farmland was lost by this arroyo-cutting, and the Great Drought was merely a climax to this.[37]

Pressure by nomadic enemies has also been espoused as a contributing factor to the great migration. The nomads obtained their food supply by raiding Pueblo towns, consequently becoming parasites. They did not have to exist in great numbers because a few parasitic bands could cause disaster.[38]

Who were these nomadic enemies? Debate persists about who they were, and if they existed at all. Two schools of thought arise over the identity of the hostiles. One claims they were ancestors of the Utes and Paiutes, a desert-tradition group consisting of those Indians

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[36]Watson, Indians of the Mesa Verde, pp. 133-136.

[37]H. H. Wormington, Prehistoric Indians of the Southwest (Denver: Denver Museum of Natural History, 1961), pp. 79-82.

[38]Alfred Vincent Kidder, An Introduction to the Study of Southwestern Archaeology (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 336-341.

who had been living in the Southwest, but rejected agriculture and a settled way of life and reverted to nomadism.

Athapascans represent the other possible enemy group. Much debate has arisen over when the Athapascans arrived in the Southwest. Although many still insist that the Southern Athapascans did not arrive in the Southwest until shortly before the coming of the Spanish, glottochronology, the science of dating by use of linguistics, seems to have determined that Navajos and Apaches separated from the Northern Athapascans somewhere between 900 and 1300 A.D., so it is possible they were in the Southwest at the time of the migration.[39]

Another explanation of the migration is that the large apartments were death traps. The cliff dwellings were America's first slums. Extremely unsanitary conditions resulted from crowding together. Through excavation, archaeologists have found that all trash and garbage were disposed of right in the cave. This possibly would have been satisfactory if there had been no rain. The sun would quickly dry up germs, but rain helps germs to grow and multiply. People drank out of puddles formed near their homes. These tenements caused a great decline in the number of Pueblo Indians.[40] This theory may explain the abandonment of the cliff dwellings, but it alone does not explain the desertion of the entire area.

A final theory attributes the cause of migration to factionalism of internal disintegration among the Pueblos. These Indians were

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[39]Irving Rouse, "Introduction," An Introduction to the Study of Southwestern Archaeology by Alfred Vincent Kidder (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 43-47.

[40]Dr. Frank Thone, "America's First Slums," Science Newsletter, XXXI (January 23, 1937), pp. 58-59.

accustomed to living in small independent villages dominated by clans, all members of whom were blood relatives. During the Classic Period, these small towns united to form larger communities. Material culture was easily adjusted to community life; for example, specialization developed in pottery and basketry, and each helped the other with fields and defense. But social and religious organization remained unchanged. Each clan remained a distinct social unit as far as social and religious life were concerned; each retaining its own ceremonies. Consequently, each community really consisted of a group of separate towns which could form no strong central administration. Under these conditions, it is very likely that internal feuds and dissensions would result. The Pueblos were probably bothered by internal quarrels, and when a serious crisis appeared (in this case the Great Drought) each clan packed its belongings and moved away to found another small town which was more to its liking.[41]

Each of these theses appears logical. But evidence suggests error in single cause; abandonment of the pueblos undoubtedly occurred as a result of the combined strength of several interrelated elements.

In any event, by the year 1300 A.D. Cliff Palace and the other cliff dwellings stood barren. Their walls were to remain steadfast through the ensuing years; six centuries passed before another human observed the splendor of these ancient, deserted cities.

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[41]Paul S. Martin, George I. Quimby, and Donald Collier, Indians Before Columbus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), pp. 147-148.

CHAPTER II

DISCOVERY OF THE CLIFF DWELLINGS

From the time of Coronado's expedition in 1540, the Spanish claimed all of southwestern United States including the area of the deserted cliff dwellings. However, it was not until 1776 that the cliff houses were first mentioned by the Spanish. On August 11, 1776, Escalante, a Spanish priest endeavoring to find a short cut from New Mexico to the missions in California, camped near the northern edge of the mesa. He is credited with being the first white man to view any of the cliff dwellings. Although he recorded having seen a few small ruins, no evidence exists that any attempt was made to explore them.[1]

Father Escalante's discovery caused no great excitement among the Spanish, the ruins being of no value to the gold-hungry Spaniards. In fact, it was not until 1829 that the cliff dwellings were next mentioned. Antonio Armijo, on his expedition to establish the route of the Santa Fe Trail from Santa Fe, New Mexico to California, camped at Mancos Creek near the southeastern edge of the mesa. On November 19, 1829, he recorded sighting a few dwellings. Since the old Santa Fe Trail penetrated the Four Corners region, many traders passed through the Mesa Verde area in the ensuing years, but none mentioned sighting

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[1]Ansel F. Hall, "Mesa Verde and its Ruins," Mesa Verde (Mesa Verde National Park: Mesa Verde Company, 1951), n.p. Herein cited as Mesa Verde.

or exploring the cliff dwellings.[2]

This region left Spanish hands and became a United States possession with the close of the Mexican War in 1848. The signing of the Treaty of Guadaloupe-Hidalgo gave Americans claim to the entire Mesa Verde region. Americans wasted no time exploring and inhabiting southwestern Colorado. Gold and silver were discovered in the Ia Plata Mountains, and a rush of prospectors flooded into the area.[3]

Although many had viewed the cliff dwellings from the canyon floor, it remained for Professor John S. Newberry, geologist with the School of Mines of Columbia University, to record the ascension to the top of Mesa Verde in 1859. Professor Newberry noted that the name "Mesa Verde" was in common use for the plateau by this time. The early Spaniards had bestowed the name on this green tableland and subsequent explorers continued the tradition.[4]

A treaty signed with the Ute Indians in 1868 technically put the cliff dwellings "out of bounds" for the white man by ceding all Colorado west of the continental divide to the Utes as a huge reservation. Part of this land was relinquished by the Utes in the Ute Treaty signed at the Los Pinos Agency in 1873. According to the treaty, the Utes gave up all lands "lying north of a line 15 miles north of the south boundary of the state of Colorado."[5] This meant, in effect, that the northern part of the mesa no longer belonged to the Indians, but the

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Edmund B. Rogers, "Notes on the Establishment of Mesa Verde National Park," The Colorado Magazine, XXXIX (January, 1952), p. 10.

majority of the larger ruins still remained within the Ute reservation.[6] In subsequent years, the Ute claim to this land and these dwellings did not seem to bother white explorers who entered the region.

Prior to 1874 little was known by the general public about the cliff dwelling region. William H. Jackson, the first to discover, photograph, and report one of the larger dwellings, publicized the area. Jackson was a photographer hired by the government to work with the Hayden Survey Crew at the La Plata mines. Rumors of the ancient ruins of southwestern Colorado reached him. Determined to visit them, he hired a guide named John Moss and left for Mesa Verde.[7] The following is an account by Jackson of his travels:

> Our first discovery of a Cliff House that came up to our expectations was made late in the evening of the first day out. . . . We had finished our evening meal. . . and were standing around the sage brush fire. . . . Looking up at the walls of the canyon that towered above us some 800 to 1,000 feet we commenced bantering Steve, who was a big heavy fellow, about the possibility of having to help carry the boxes up to the top to photograph some ruins up there - with no thought that any were in sight. He asked Moss to point out the particular ruin we had in view; the Captain indicated the highest part of the wall at random. 'Yes,' said Steve, 'I can see it,' and sure enough, on closer observation, there was something that looked like a house sandwiched between the strata of the sandstones very near the top. . . . All hands started out at once to investigate. The first part of the ascent was easy enough, but the upper portion was a perpendicular wall of some 200 feet, and half way up, the cave-like shelf, on which was the little house . . . the 'Two Story House' of our first photograph.[8]

In the year following Jackson's discovery, another member of the Hayden Surveys, Dr. W. H. Holmes, again explored the area. This

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[8] William H. Jackson, "First Official Visit to the Cliff Dwellings," The Colorado Magazine, I, #4 (May, 1924), pp. 156-157.

expedition discovered and named a larger dwelling, Sixteen Window House, but still failed to see any of the major ruins.[9]

Virginia Donaghe McClurg (who was later responsible for the establishment of Mesa Verde as a National Park) first became acquainted with the Mesa Verde region in 1882 when she arrived in Durango as a correspondent for the New York Daily Graphic. Her assignment was the lost cities of the prehistoric Indians of the Southwest.[10] She was immediately greeted by a full scale uprising of 1,000 Utes. Several Indians, hunting off their reservation (with the Indian Agent's permission), were killed by reckless cowboys. In retaliation, the Indians killed a white settler, drove off his family, and burned his home; they then intensified their activity. When Virginia McClurg set out from Durango, settlers were rushing toward the city for protection from the antagonized Utes.[11]

The correspondent secured a seat on a freighter from Durango to Mancos, this being the only type of transportation available.[12] Forced to remain in Mancos for several days because of the Indian scare, she finally obtained an escort of soldiers to accompany her to the green tableland. Unfortunately, after exploring some of the smaller

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[9]"Mesa Verde to Celebrate 50th Anniversary, June 29," Rocky Mountain News (June 17, 1956), p. 10.

[10]Although news of the cliff dwellings was not widespread, it was publicized enough by Jackson to reach the ears of New York newspaper publishers.

[11]Mrs. Gilbert McClurg, The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association (pamphlet on file at Historical Society in Denver), n.d., p. 1.

[12]Arthur Chapman, "The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association and its Work in Mesa Verde," Denver Times (June 29, 1915), pp. 2-3.

cliff dwellings, the party decided to return to Mancos because of the pending Indian war.[13]

Eighteen eighty-five found Virginia McClurg back in the Mesa Verde region as a guest at a ranch run by one Ben Wetherill.[14] The Wetherills had settled in the Mancos Valley in 1881 and the five sons (Richard, John, Alfred, Clayton, and Wynn) had collected many relics from the smaller cliff dwellings. During 1885 Mrs. McClurg explored several small ruins with the Wetherills.[15]

The following year, Virginia McClurg led her own expedition to investigate the cliff dwellings. The party, consisting of a guide, photographer, several pack animals and saddle horses, camped three weeks in Cliff Canyon. During this time, Three Tiered House and Echo Cliff House were discovered, named, and explored. Perhaps the most significant discovery of this expedition was made by Mr. Cassuis Viets who came upon one of the major dwellings in the Mesa Verde, namely "Brownstone Front," a structure with smooth, rosy stucco covering its outer walls.[16]

Virginia McClurg related the difficulties of that first exploration of Brownstone Front.

> We climbed to it one damp and sultry day when the languor induced by insufficient food and bad water had diffused itself

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[13]"Mrs. Gilbert McClurg - Her Studies and Explorations in the Pre-Historic Southwest," Books, IV, #4 (April, 1894), pp. 55-56.

[14]The Wetherill family in subsequent years were to discover and explore the majority of cliff dwellings in the Mesa Verde area including Cliff Palace.

[15]Hall, Mesa Verde, n.p.

[16]McClurg, The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, p. 2. The name of Brownstone Front was later changed to Balcony House.

> among the little band. The first section of the ascent, as one might say, is covered with pinons, undergrowth and scattered rocks. Needles from the pines make the soil very slippery, and the slant is so great that two steps backward to one forward, is about the average rate of progression. Add to this, scrambling over rocks and fallen trees, detaining clutches of projecting boughs, prickly vines and thorny cactus, shortness of breath in the upper air, and the labor grows Herculean. As we go higher, vegetation decreases and ledges of rock await our approach; intermingled with wash of crumbled stone and pebbles, from which the feet must be laboriously extricated.[17]

Much of the credit for the discovery and exploration of the Mesa Verde cliff dwellings must be attributed to the Wetherills. As previously mentioned, the Wetherills owned a ranch (called the Alamo) in the Mancos Valley.[18] They became friends with the Utes, and so by 1885, with the Utes permission, they were grazing their cattle in the Mancos Canyon and its branches in the Mesa Verde region. The Wetherill boys often had a winter camp in Johnson Canyon, a short distance from the Mancos River. On these long, lonely days spent in winter camp, Al became interested in exploring the cliff dwellings up the canyon. Charles (a brother-in-law) grew equally fascinated as he heard the other Wetherills reminiscing about their findings, so during the winter of 1887-88 he spent several days in winter camp with Al. The two entered and explored some of the larger houses. The collection of relics was taken back to the ranch and sent to a Mrs. Chain in Denver.[19]

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[17] "Mrs. Gilbert McClurg - Her Studies and Explorations in the Pre-Historic Southwest," p. 57.

[18] Frances Gilmor, and Louisa Wade Wetherill, Traders to the Navajos (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 19.

[19] Charles Mason, "The Story of the Discovery and Early Exploration of the Cliff Houses at the Mesa Verde," Wetherill MSS (Given to the Colorado Historical Society on May 5, 1918 - on file in Curator's Office in Denver), n.p. Herein cited as Wetherill Papers.

According to a Ute Indian, Acowitz, a huge cave in the side of one of the canyon walls supposedly contained a "big house" of the ancient people.[20] The canyons were numerous, and the Wetherills had not yet encountered anything to fit the description given to them by Acowitz until December 18, 1888. Charles Mason and Richard Wetherill were riding along Chapin Mesa, between Cliff and Navajo Canyons when they sighted Cliff Palace, the largest of all the ruins. Charles Mason recalled in later years, "To me this is the grandest view of all among the ancient ruins of the Southwest."[21]

Although Charles and Richard are given credit for the discovery of Cliff Palace, Charles later said that Al had seen Cliff Palace about a year before, but had not attempted to climb up to it and explore it because he was on his way back to camp and only had a partial view of the dwelling. It remained for Richard and Charles to be the first to explore the massive dwelling.[22]

After recovering from the initial amazement of their discovery, Charles and Richard spent several hours exploring the huge, deserted city. Parts of human skeletons and stone axes with attached handles were found in Cliff Palace. Later the same day, the two cowboys discovered the best preserved of all the cliff dwellings and named this new find Spruce Tree House. Named for one of its structures, Square Tower House, a third large ruin, was discovered the following day.[23]

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[20]Hall, Mesa Verde, n.p.

[21]Mason, Wetherill Papers, n.p.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Later, the name was changed to Peabody House in honor of Mrs. Lucy Peabody who contributed so much toward the establishment of

While returning from their discovery of Cliff Palace, Charles and Richard encountered John Wetherill and three friends, Charles McLoyd, Howard Graham, and L. C. Patrick. When told of the discoveries, the four newcomers went back to Cliff Palace and spent several days collecting as many relics as they could easily transport. It came to their attention that the relics looked as though the cliff dwellers had left suddenly, leaving everything they owned where they had used it last. In the spring, they carted the collection over to Durango and exhibited it, arousing widespread interest in the artifacts.[24]

In the spring of 1889 Richard, Charles, Al, John, and Clayton Wetherill returned to Mesa Verde for the express purpose of making another collection for profit. During these excavations, they discovered the first mummy (a child only a few months old) ever found in the cliff dwellings, preserved simply from extremely dry conditions within the caves. This first large scale excavation was vividly recalled by Charles Mason. He related that the first dwelling they explored received the name Sandal House from the unusual number of sandals found within the cave. Sandal House consisted of only ten to twelve rooms, but its large rubbish heap enabled the men to send a pack horse loaded with sandals, pottery, and other implements back to the ranch after only a few days of excavating.

After Sandal House had been worked over, the group moved out of Mancos Canyon into Acowitz Canyon. Here, work began on a small structure called Fortified House. This house did not yield much until one day when John accidentally stumbled on a hidden room only five or

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Mesa Verde as a National Park. However, it is now once again known simply as Square Tower House.

[24]Mason, Wetherill Papers, n.p.

six feet square. Besides a dozen pieces of pottery, fine baskets, and a bow and arrows, John had discovered five skeletons. Rats had damaged most of the clothing covering the skeletons except for the bones of a large man who was still completely clothed in a suit of buckskin.

While exploring a cliff house in a fork of Johnson Canyon, the Wetherills discovered four more skeletons, those of a man, woman, child of around twelve, and a baby a few months old. The skull of the first three had been crushed in. A large stone ax was found on the floor, its blade fitting into the caved-in portion of the skulls. In the same dwelling, the men discovered their second mummy. This woman received the name "She" because the Wetherills had been reading Rider Haggard's story, She.[25]

The same expedition accounted for the discovery of Spring House, Long House, Mug House, High House, Kodak House, and Step House. Mug House received its name from the discovery of four or five mugs tied together with strings through their handles. According to Charles, they gave the appearance of having been left where last used; as if the occupants had been frightened away suddenly. From these and similar observations in Cliff Palace, Charles formed his theory of the abandonment of the cliff dwellings. It was his contention that the cliff dwellers were attacked by enemy tribes and all killed or adopted into the tribes of the conquerors. The final battle probably occurred at Cliff Palace. He supported this theory by pointing to the fact that the beams had been removed from the walls in Cliff Palace and probably used as fuel during a seige. Also, many pieces of pottery and other

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[25] Ibid.

valuables were found covered with clay. If the cliff dwellings had been abandoned, these valuables would have been taken with the migrating Indians. So Charles Mason believed that the Pueblos met tragedy at the hands of their enemies.[26]

Fortunately, the Wetherills kept thorough records of their excavations which proved to be invaluable to later trained archaeologists. The Wetherills, however, were not interested merely in the monetary value attached to these artifacts, but also in the ancient peoples who must have inhabited the mysterious cliff houses. By piecing together fragments of information obtained from the artifacts, they were able to gain a fairly accurate picture of the life of the Pueblos. Charles Mason reported:

> In making these explorations, we were among the first to learn much of the cliff dwellers' modes of life. They were agriculturists and raised crops of corn, beans and squashes, and kept tame turkeys. Almost every house had its turkey pen, in which the birds were probably fastened at night. They also used the seed of lamb's quarter and other wild plants for food, as the Navajos do today. Their clothing seems to have been limited to the feather blanket and sandal. They were, no doubt, successful hunters, as most of their implements were made of deer bones. Beads and many of their awls were made of turkey bones.[27]

Meanwhile, attempts were being made to preserve the cliff dwellings and their artifacts. Mesa Verde has a unique history in that it is the only National Park created solely through the efforts of a small, private group. Virginia Donaghe McClurg was the driving force behind this private group. From the summer of 1882 when she first entered

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[26] Ibid.

[27] "Discoverers of Mesa Verde Now Visiting Here," Denver Times (April 18, 1918), n.p.

the Mesa Verde region, Mrs. McClurg strove to preserve these ancient cities by calling the attention of the American public to this unique heritage. Mesa Verde was established as a National Park only after twenty-four years of laborious work by Mrs. McClurg and her colleagues.

Virginia McClurg's short expedition in 1882 had been sufficient to arouse her interest in the ancient, deserted cliff dwellings and their preservation. The Denver Times has said of her:

> From that date to this, Mrs. McClurg's interest in Mesa Verde has never flogged, and that Colorado is today in proud possession of this National Park is due in largest measure to her patient, continuous and self-denying work, covering a quarter of a century.[28]

Through her literary ability, Mrs. McClurg was able to bring the Mesa Verde area to the attention of the American public. She describes very graphically what life must have been like for the Indians who once inhabited the dwellings:

> Looking up and down on this morning of centuries ago, you see cultivated fields, green and gold in the sunshine. . . . Men are at work here scratching the earth with sharp sticks, cutting out weeds with stone knives. Where the ditches are lacking, they water the crop from large pottery jars. Others have gathered great heaps of the Spanish bayonet, or yucca, and with flat, flail-like implements, are beating it. . . . From a quarry near by you hear the cling-clang of the workmen's tools on blocks of sandstone. . . . Up in the cliffs is a large, unfinished structure, and you see an unending procession of builders passing up one ladder which leads to it, and down by another; each one bearing his quarried stone, and depositing it in place. Multitudes supply the place of machinery, as they did in old Egypt.
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> It seems a scene of peace and industry - but look again! Far down the valley is a superb stone pueblo. There is no sign of life about it. Its walls are blackened; the desert dust chokes it; grasses nestle in the crannies where saplings have already begun to grow. Long ago, because of disease, or

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[28]McClurg, The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, p. 2.

> foes too strong to be resisted, it was deserted. . . . Then you see that far down the valley are strong watchtowers, even triple-walled, crowning every eminence. They bristle also from the mesa's crest, and they are manned by watchmen and soldiers armed with heavy clubs and flint knives.[29]

Virginia McClurg was not the only individual interested in preserving the heritage of our southwest. As early as 1882 a memorial was introduced in Congress by Senator George Hoar of Massachusetts. This memorial, sponsored by the New England Historic Genealogical Society, appealed for preservation of:

> At least some of these extinct cities or pueblos, carefully selected with the land reservations attached [because] they furnish invaluable data for ethnological studies now engaging the attention of our most learned scientific, antiquarian and historical students.[30]

As the larger dwellings in the Mesa Verde region still remained undiscovered, this memorial was a general appeal for the preservation of any Pueblo cities in the Southwest. Congressmen, however, indicated no interest in the cliff dwellings and the subject was dropped. Subsequent pleas in Congress were to achieve nothing for years to come.[31]

Partly because of the publicity Mrs. McClurg had given Mesa Verde, others in Colorado began to take an interest in preserving the cliff dwellings. By studying the artifacts left in the dwellings, she was able to determine accurately the kind of life led by the Pueblos who once inhabited the region.

Artifacts have value, however, and if left unprotected, will

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[29]"A Picture of the Past," Books, IV, #7 (Midsummer Number, 1894), p. 107.

[30]Rogers, "Notes on the Establishment of Mesa Verde National Park," p. 11.

[31]Ibid.

be snatched away by money seekers who are not concerned with the historical value of the pieces. In 1886 the Denver Tribune made a plea to preserve the ancient cliff dwellings in the canyon of the Rio Mancos. It asked Congress to set aside this canyon as a public park to save the dwellings from destruction. It also requested Congress to appropriate money to preserve the ruins and build roads to make the park accessible to tourists. Arguing further, the paper stated that in the East great care was taken to preserve old relics which actually were not very old, but in Colorado where they had something which is part of America's heritage and could genuinely be considered ancient, no steps were taken to preserve it. The Tribune concluded:

> But 'what hands have built hands can destroy,' and these ruins, which have endured through many ages, are now in danger of destruction. Unless something is done to protect them, the vandals of modern civilization will destroy them. It is for this reason that Congress should provide for their preservation, or else turn them over to the State in order that it may preserve them.[32]

The need to preserve the Mesa Verde ruins became more evident with the Wetherill discoveries. At first, the Wetherills undertook excavations purely out of curiosity. Finding, however, that these valuable relics could be sold to museums, they began digging for profit. But they always went about their excavations scientifically, keeping records of all their findings.

Unfortunately, others also rushed in to unearth these relics upon finding they were valuable. These treasure-hunters kept no records and as a result, many of the valuable artifacts of the Cliff Dwellers have been lost. The Wetherills' discoveries opened a period of "pot

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[32] "The Mancos Ruins," Denver Tribune (November 12, 1886), p. 12.

hunting" where many of the ruins were destroyed.[33] The pot hunters were interested in one thing - money. To obtain a piece of pottery, they thought nothing of knocking down a wall. Such actions gave impetus to the movement to place the ruins under the jurisdiction of the state or federal government.

In total the Wetherills made three large collections from the Mesa Verde area; in 1885, in 1888-89, and in 1890-91. The material obtained from these three collections was sold in 1892 to C. D. Hazzard and Jay Smith who exhibited the artifacts at the World's Columbian Exhibition at Chicago in 1893.[34] Thus, the Wetherills must be credited not only with discovering most of the Pueblo ruins, but also for bringing them to the attention of the American public. The exhibit at the Fair indicated the necessity of preserving this heritage. Along with the other artifacts, one complete roof from Square Tower House was placed on exhibition.[35] Following their tour of the World's Fair, the relics were donated to the University of Pennsylvania.[36]

Due to the publicity of the Wetherill discoveries, other studies of the area were soon conducted. Dr. F. H. Chapin published the results of his study in 1890. The following year W. R. Birdsall published information obtained in a second study.[37] The first scientific

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[33]Hall, Mesa Verde, n.p.

[34]Letter from Miss Orian L. Lewis, Deputy Curator of State Museums in Colorado to Mr. Floyd W. Sharrock, Department of Anthropology, University of Utah, November 26, 1962 (now on file in Curator's Office of State Historical Society in Denver).

[35]Hall, Mesa Verde, n.p.

[36]Letter from Lewis to Sharrock.

[37]Rogers, "Notes on the Establishment of Mesa Verde National Park," p. 11.

excavation of the Mesa Verde area was undertaken by Baron Gustaf Nordenskiold of Finland in 1891. With the assistance of the Wetherills, Nordenskiold excavated twenty-two of the larger ruins. Within a four month period, Nordenskiold collected over six hundred relics which he shipped back to Finland and which even today remain in the museum in Helsinki. In 1893 the Baron published a book about the Mesa Verde area and his recent excavations in the vicinity, thus focusing more attention on the cliff dwellings.[38] Nordenskiold unintentionally assisted the growing movement pressing for preservation of the cliff houses because with the publication of his book, many Americans were astounded to learn that their valuable relics had been placed on exhibition in far away Helsinki. This added to the growing demand for legislation to preserve and protect the cliff dwellings and their artifacts.[39]

The major cliff dwellings in the Mesa Verde had been discovered and publicized. A unique portion of the American heritage had been unearthed. Priceless relics were there for the taking. Something had to be done to protect and preserve the ancient cities in the caves.

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[38]Hall, Mesa Verde, n.p.

[39]Gustaf Nordenskiold, The Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde, Southwestern Colorado; Their Pottery and Implements (Stockholm: P. A. Nordstedt and Soner, 1893), pp. 10-11.

CHAPTER III

EARLY YEARS OF THE COLORADO CLIFF DWELLINGS ASSOCIATION

Virginia McClurg recognized apathy as the greatest danger to the ancient cliff dwellings. Consequently, she launched an extensive speaking and lecture campaign to awaken the American public to the necessity of preserving these ruins. In the New York Tribune she wrote:

> The actual condition of things is appalling, as civilization creeps nearer this territory of ancient interest. The gallant swain takes his best girl on a picnic to the ruins and prods out a pottery bowl or stone axe which are possibly broken in transit or forgotten, or taken home to the parlor shelf. The cowboys select fine, large jars of prehistoric make, and setting them in a row beguile their Sunday leisure by peppering them with shot in lieu of the tin cans which serve as targets on ranches nearer town sites. The relic hunter digs up curios which he does not catalogue and which he separates from their environment without record, making them thus valueless to science, and barters them for groceries at the nearest center store, or sells them piecemeal to the infrequent tourist. The honest farmer carts away the walls from a pre-historic pueblo to line his irrigation ditch. Worst of all is the fiendish treasure hunter. He it is who fondly imagines that a treasure of gold and silver is hidden under Aztec ruins. The fact that the use of metals was absolutely unknown to the neolithic aborigines of our southwest until the Spaniards came, deters him not.[1]

Because of Mrs. McClurg's writings, interest in the Southwestern ruins was kept alive in Congress. In the 50th Congress (1887-89) a bill was introduced but defeated which would have made a public reservation

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[1]Mrs. Gilbert McClurg, The Mesa Verde Cliff Dwellings and the Women's Park (pamphlet on file at the Historical Society in Denver), n.d. n.p. Herein cited as Women's Park.

out of the lands in New Mexico, which now comprise Bandlier National Monument. Section 3 of this bill applied indirectly to the Mesa Verde area:

> The Director of Geological Survey is hereby authorized to make a report to Congress specifying such other archaeological remains existing upon the public domain as should be preserved in the interest of science, together with a description of such tracts as it may be necessary to reserve in order to insure the protection of said archaeological remains from injury and spoilation.[2]

From 1893 until 1906, Mrs. McClurg engaged in one long political campaign to wake the American public and the members of Congress to the necessity of preserving the cliff dwellings. Throwing her hat in the political arena in 1893, she campaigned actively by presenting a series of lectures on the ruins. The first speech, presented at the Anthropological Building at the Columbian Exposition, was shortly followed by a second one delivered to the International Folk Lore Congress in Chicago.[3]

The first organized movement to preserve the ruins began in 1894 when Mrs. McClurg gave a series of lectures concerning the ancient cliff dwellers for the Ladies' Aid Society in St. John's Cathedral in Denver. A season ticket, costing one dollar, entitled the holder to hear four lectures on the subject of "The Pre-Historic Southwest."[4]

In one of these lectures entitled "Personal Reminiscenses," she painted a vivid picture of the Mancos Valley as she entered it on the freight wagon.

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[2]Rogers, "Notes on the Establishment of Mesa Verde National Park," pp. 11-12. HR 11037.

[3]McClurg, The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, p. 2.

[4]Taken from a ticket to lectures given by Mrs. McClurg in 1894 in St. John's Cathedral in Denver. (On file in the Pioneer Historical Museum in Colorado Springs in Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook.)

> After the toilsome ascent of La Plata divide and of the natural boundary which the Mancos people call the 'Big Hill,' Mancos Valley lies below in the sunset, as peacefully as if it were cradled in the bosom of long-matured civilization, instead of a frontier outpost, contiguous to the haunts of the Utes. Rio Mancos meanders through the Valley, embossed with turfy knolls and low meadows from whose clumps of foliage ascends the tinkle of cow-bells. The far boundary of the valley is Mesa Verde. Where Mesa Verde seems to break off abruptly and descend to the plains, the opening discloses Ute Mountain. . .crowned by a gigantic blunt cone, from which to right and left, the mountain runs out in a horizontal ridge. . . . Behind it, the clear west was of encrimsoned orange, ineffably transparent and luminous, and focused in its radiant depths trembled the glory of the evening star.[5]

Such descriptions attracted the interest of many to the Mesa Verde region. At the close of the lectures, Mrs. Frederic J. Bancroft started a petition for the preservation of the pre-historic ruins. After all present had signed the petition, it was presented to the Governor for his signature, and then signed by the President of Chicago University. Senator Edward O. Wolcott of Colorado agreed to present the petition to Congress, but unfortunately, it accomplished nothing because of the apathy of most Congressmen.[6] However, the petition represented the first organized step to preserve the ruins. A long, bitter political campaign had been initiated.

Mrs. McClurg was becoming known not only for her dramatic efforts to save the cliff dwellings, but also as one of the outstanding women poets in our country. Her poems, published in Century, Cosmopolitan, Harper's Magazine, and Review of Reviews, received such high praise

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[5]"Mrs. Gilbert McClurg - Her Studies and Explorations in the Pre-Historic Southwest," pp. 54-55.

[6]McClurg, Woman's Park, n.p.

that she soon became Colorado's poet laureate.[7] One critic said of her in the Great Divide, "She is a poet whose verse has touched a higher point of inspiration than has been reached by any other Western writer we know of." Later, in reviewing her Seven Sonnets of Sculpture, this same critic said:

> Taking Matthew Arnold's own severe definition of poetry as a test, her sonnets are truly poetry. Of our women poets, the only works which invite comparison are those of Edith Thomas and Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson, and it is doubtful if even they have done anything better.[8]

Mrs. McClurg's ability as a poet later helped in securing Theodore Roosevelt's sympathy to the movement to preserve the cliff dwellings. She sent him an ancient cliff dwelling bowl, one of her sonnets, and a water color sketch of Cliff Palace. The sonnet told of the ancient cliff dwellers.

> Long ere the Genoese traversed the sea,
> On arid plateaux dwelt a peaceful race
> Whose castled cliffs rose from the canon's base,
> To unscaled heights of sunrise mystery.
> They toiled in fields with patient industry;
> They plied the loom; shaped well the potter's vase,
> And Pueblo virgins on the clay would trace
> The symbols of the dual deity,
> Before Columbia's blazon was unfurled,
> Above the land, to glow in ambient air,
> The hands were dust that wrought the stars and bars.
> O, dual fate of this sad-glorious world,
> Ever the earth its weight of stripes must bear,
> But when we look to heaven, we see the stars![9]

Mr. Roosevelt's reply was:

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[7] "Virginia C. McClurg," (Taken from Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook on file in the Pioneer Historical Museum in Colorado Springs. This is a newspaper clipping, but no name of newspaper given.)

[8] "Mrs. Gilbert McClurg - Her Studies and Explorations in the Pre-Historic Southwest," p. 54.

[9] "Annual Meeting of Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association," Colorado Telegraph (August 18, 1901), p. 16.

> El Paso Club, Aug, 10, 1901.
> Dear Mrs. McClurg: No gift would have appealed to me more than the cliff dwellers' bowl, and I liked the poem, for it said about what I had often felt about this strange, simple, dead semi-civilization. Oh! how the romance and golden mystery of the west that has gone, of the west that has vanished with vanished sunsets, must strike chords in the hearts of all who have, themselves, the lift-upward within them.[10]

Although Virginia McClurg by her poetry and lectures aroused considerable interest in the Mesa Verde area, the movement to preserve the ruins did not gain much momentum until 1897. In October of that year Mrs. McClurg spoke before the State Federation of Women's Clubs in Pueblo. When the address concluded, Mrs. Thomas Addison rose and made a motion to appoint a committee for "the preservation and restoration of the cliff and pueblo ruins of Colorado." Her resolution met warm response, and soon Mrs. McClurg was appointed chairman of this newly organized committee - a step toward fulfillment of her goal.[11]

Once formed, the committee ran into two obstacles: first, the exact extent of the land could not be determined because of inaccurate surveys; secondly, the land containing the majority of the cliff dwellings belonged to the Weeminuche Utes under the leadership of Chief Ignacio.

The first project of the committee was to hire engineers to make a survey and produce an accurate map of the area.[12] Once this was

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[10] Ibid.

[11] McClurg, Women's Park, n.p. The other nineteen members of this original committee included: Mrs. Jesse Gale of Greeley; Mrs. J. D. Whitmore, Mrs. George Summer, Mrs. W. C. Peabody, Mrs. John McNeil, Mrs. Henry Van Kleeck, Miss Minnie Reynolds of Denver; Mrs. William F. Slocum, Mrs. C. A. Eldredge, Mrs. H. C. Lowe of Colorado Springs; Mrs. Mahlon Thatcher, Mrs. Thomas Addison Lewis, Mrs. John J. Burns of Pueblo; Mrs. Edward G. Stoeber, Mrs. B. Austin Taft of Silverton; Mrs. Gordon Kimball of Ouray; Mrs. J. Kellogg Scovill, Mrs. Boyle of Durango; and Mrs. C. B. Rich of Grand Junction.

[12] Ibid.

completed, the committee turned its attention to building a wagon road from Mancos to Cliff Canyon. (They believed this road would permit easy access to the ruins and thus attract more tourists.) Once a way had been provided to get to the ruins, the next step was to obtain water for those who made the trip. This was accomplished by dynamiting shale away from the water hole in Spruce Tree House.[13]

The second problem was tackled after the club women overcame a sense of guilt about removing the Indians from their land. This problem they solved by rationalizing that the preservation of the cliff dwellings overshadowed the basic rights of the Indians. The land was of no value to the whites. Except for the ruins, the land was almost worthless -- no good to miners or farmers. The few springs available served only as a source of drinking water -- not enough to irrigate the arid land. Consequently, the women, all pangs of conscience removed, set out to have the ruins placed in the hands of the federated club women of Colorado.[14]

Mrs. McClurg continually kept the club women informed of the progress of her committee. In a report to the Greeley Federation Meeting in 1898 she related that much public interest was being aroused in their project. She explained that an article she had written on the history of the cliff dwellings and their present state of preservation had been published in the June Biennial issue of the Boston Club Woman. The same article had been reprinted in the New York Times, so many were now aware of the cliff dwellings.

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[13]Virginia McClurg, "The Making of Mesa Verde into a National Park," The Colorado Magazine, VII, #6 (November, 1930), p. 217.

[14]McClurg, Woman's Park, n.p.

Her recommendations to the federation included keeping the subject of the cliff dwellings constantly before the public - to keep up a growing interest in the area. She also suggested that the area of the cliff dwellings be placed under the custodianship of the federated women of Colorado - to preserve the dwellings temporarily while Congress was going through the long, slow process of establishing the area as a national reservation.

The federation found that Virginia McClurg had already conducted a personal interview with Senator Edward Wolcott of Colorado. His help was considered valuable because of his previous experience as Secretary of the Interior. He was reportedly sympathetic to their plan, but wanted to wait and make the area into a national reservation, rather than place it immediately under the custodianship of the women.

Mrs. McClurg concluded her report to the Greeley Federation by saying:

> The Cliff palace is the prey of the spoiler; soon it will be too late to guard these monuments, the wonder and envy of the student of the past; to us is awarded the proud privilege of preserving them; let us not be unheeding of the plaint of the ancient people who say to us in the day of their decadence:
>
> We know how great from the sunrise land,
> You come with every boon,
> We know that ours is the waning
> And yours is the waxing moon.
> The fires grow cold and the dances fail,
> And the songs in their echoes die,
> And What have we left but the graves beneath
> And above the waiting sky?
> Our fathers sought these frowning cliffs,
> To rid them of their foes,
> And thrice and more on the mesa floor
> Our terraced towns uprose.
> Our deep canals are furrows faint
> On the wide and desert plain,
> Of the grandeur of our temple walls
> But mounds of earth remain.

And over our altars and our graves
Your towns rise proud and high,
And the world we knew and the life we lived
Will pass as the shadows fly.
Alas for us, who once were lords
Of stream and peak and plain,
By ages done, by star and sun
We will not brook disdain -
For we are the ancient people,
Born of the wind and the rain.[15]

In another address before the State Federation, this time in Denver, Mrs. McClurg explained to the women why the situation was becoming desperate. The government was going to build reservoirs in the Mesa Verde area. The workmen would be like all the others who confiscated the ancient relics. Something had to be done immediately to preserve the ruins. The question remained - How could they get control of the land in the Mesa Verde region which still belonged to the Weeminuche Utes?[16]

Mrs. McClurg explained that she had been appointed Special Indian Commissioner to secure a lease of the Mesa Verde land from the Ute Indians.[17] The Indians would be allowed to retain their grazing rights to the land; the committee would simply control and preserve the ruins.

Virginia McClurg had to overcome several difficulties before obtaining the lease. Upon arriving at Navajo Springs where the negotiations were to take place, she discovered that Chief Ignacio, chief of the Weeminuches with whom she was to settle the lease, was

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[15]"Plea for Cliff Dwellings," The Denver Republican (October 13, 1898), n.p.

[16]"Colorado Club Women May Get Cliff Dwellings," The Rocky Mountain News, XL, #302 (October 29, 1899), p. 11.

[17]McClurg, The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, p. 4.

away on a hunting trip. Fortunately, Acowitz, successor to Ignacio, happened in at the Wetherill ranch where she was staying, and agreed to search for the old chief and bring him back for the negotiations.

Upon the arrival of the chief, Mrs. McClurg found that a few preliminaries were necessary before the old chief would converse. As she tells it she

> Offered Ignacio two mustard plasters, sharp and to the point, then his pallor was so apparent under the bronze that I followed them with a glass of cherry bounce, which I indicated to him was of my own make. . . . Under the revivifying influences of cherry bounce the treaty proceeded. When the subject of cliff dwellings was broached, Ignacio said: 'Yes, I savez. You want to make a show of cliff houses as they made a show of me in Denver last year, at the festival of Mountain and Plain.'
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Then Ignacio said: 'Squaw, I am an old man and many have lied to me. Do you speak the truth - do the club women of Colorado also be like the men?'[18]

After once more reassuring the old chief of the honesty and integrity of her mission, Mrs. McClurg succeeded in signing a thirty year lease with Ignacio whereby the Indians would receive three hundred dollars per year if they gave up control of the cliff dwellings.[19]

Virginia McClurg felt a sense of victory in obtaining this lease from the Indians. Her mood changed, however, because the lease was not ratified by the United States government until 1901.

The situation was becoming critical. Time was passing and not much progress had been made in preserving the ruins. In 1899 Virginia McClurg decided to appeal directly to the President of the United States.

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[18] McClurg, Women's Park, n.p.

[19] "Colorado Club Women May Get Cliff Dwellings," p. 11.

At first she did this through a letter to his wife. She informed Mrs. McKinley:

> We have heard that you are interested in the movements of the club women of America. In our efforts to preserve the cliff & pueblo ruins of Colorado, our committee represents not only the 5,000 federated club-women of Colorado, but the 250,000 club-women, who have endorsed our undertaking.
>
> We are striving to obtain the custodianship of these ruins. . . . We hope to make the ruins accessible by ladders, to make roads through the wilderness, to plant it - with the trees and plants indigenous to the region - in short, to make it the most interesting park in the United States. Then all can explore our wonderland, but none can destroy or take away.[20]

This letter was coupled with a plea to Mrs. McKinley to bring the matter to the attention of her husband. Unfortunately, the assistant secretary to the President answered the letter and suggested that Mrs. McClurg communicate with the Secretary of the Interior over the matter and not bother the President or his wife.[21]

After corresponding with Senator Wolcott and discovering that an act of the President was necessary before the Mesa Verde lands could be placed under the control of the club women, Virginia McClurg decided to appeal directly to President McKinley. In a letter to the President on February 17, 1899 she said:

> Senator Wolcott writes me that you must declare the land vacant, before it can pass under the Colorado Club-Women's control. We hope that you will look favorably upon our request; for it is a noble work & not the least illustrious upon the roll of presidents will be the name of him who is the first to protect the oldest aboriginal monuments of the United States.[22]

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[20] Letter from Virginia McClurg to Mrs. William McKinley, n.d. (Taken from Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook on file in the Pioneer Historical Museum in Colorado Springs.)

[21] Ibid.

[22] Letter from Virginia McClurg to President William McKinley, February 17, 1899. (Taken from Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook on file in the Pioneer Historical Museum in Colorado Springs.)

Unfortunately, the President was not interested enough at the time to take action in Mrs. McClurg's behalf. Undaunted, Virginia McClurg turned to Indian Agent Louis Knackstedt for his help in putting through the proposed lease. In a letter of December 11, 1899 he informed her that he was sympathetic to her idea of trying to preserve the cliff dwellings and would certainly recommend a thirty year lease of the Indian land if it did not interfere with the grazing rights of the Indians in the Mesa Verde region.[23]

Meanwhile, the women were working through both the House and the Senate to achieve their goal. John Shafroth in the House became devoted to their cause. On February 6, 1900 he introduced a bill which stated:

> Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That any person who shall destroy, injure, or carry away, without authority from the Secretary of the Interior, any aboriginal antiquity or prehistoric ruin on the public lands of the United States shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction be fined a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars, or imprisonment for a period not exceeding ninety days, or both.[24]

Although this bill would not have accomplished the purpose of the women - preservation of the ruins as a National Park - it would have been a beginning. However, Congress still was not sufficiently interested in the project. The bill was referred to the Committee on Public Lands and shelved in this committee.

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[23]Letter from U. S. Indian Agent Louis A. Knackstedt of the Southern Ute Agency at Ignacio, Colorado to Mrs. Gilbert McClurg, December 11, 1899. (Taken from Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook on file in the Pioneer Historical Museum in Colorado Springs.)

[24]HR 8195, 56th Congress, 1st Session, April 5, 1900. (This is a copy of HR 8195 found in Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook in the Pioneer Historical Museum.)

Not daunted by this failure, Representative Shafroth introduced another bill on April 5, 1900. The contents of this bill were similar to the previous one dealing with fines and imprisonment, but this bill attempted to go a little further. It stated:

> Be it enacted. . .That the Secretary of the Interior may, from time to time, set apart and reserve from sale, entry, and settlement any public lands upon which are monuments, cliff dwellings, cemeteries, graves, mounds, forts, or any other work of prehistoric, primitive, or aboriginal man, to the extent of not exceeding three hundred and twenty acres of land for each reservation. That if any such objects shall be situate on any unsurveyed lands of the United States, the Secretary of the Interior shall cause the same to be surveyed.[25]

Unfortunately, this bill met the same fate as the former bill. In the Senate, Senator Henry Teller backed Mrs. McClurg and her work. However, he informed her that it would be impossible for him to make any progress with this issue in the Senate without a map of the area. In a letter written on March 11, 1900 Mrs. McClurg informed the Senator she only recently received an appropriation from the Federation of Women's Clubs that would pay for the cost of an accurate map. She promised to undertake the project with all haste, so that he might be able to start things moving in the Senate.[26]

At the turn of the century another step was taken toward preserving the cliff dwellings of the Mesa Verde region. The committee for the preservation of the ruins became incorporated as a non-profit corporation on May 19, 1900. The name of this new organization was to

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[25]HR 10451, 56th Congress, 1st Session, April 5, 1900. (This is a copy of HR 10451 found in Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook in the Pioneer Historical Museum.)

[26]Letter from Mrs. Gilbert McClurg to Senator Teller, March 11, 1900. (Taken from Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook on file in the Pioneer Historical Museum.)

be the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association.[27] Later, chapters were also introduced in New York and California.[28] As Regent General of the new Association, Mrs. McClurg was to direct most of her efforts through this body in the ensuing years. The management was made up of a board of twenty-one directors called vice-regents.[29] The purpose of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association was stated in Article II of its constitution:

> The object of this Association shall be the restoration and preservation of the Cliff and Pueblo ruins in the State of Colorado; the dissemination of knowledge concerning these prehistoric people; the collection of relics; and the acquiring of such property as is necessary to attain such objects.[30]

An initiation fee of two dollars was a prerequisite to membership - thereafter the membership being retained by annual dues of one dollar. For one hundred dollars anyone could obtain a life membership. "This life membership may be hereditary in the female line, either lineal or collateral."[31] The swastika was adopted as the emblem of the Association. Mrs. McClurg found this (the bird swastika of the cliff dwellers) on an ancient cliff-dwelling bowl. On the central sun of this swastika were inscribed the words "Dux Femina Facti" which means

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[27]Rogers, "Notes on the Establishment of Mesa Verde National Park," p. 14.

[28]McClurg, "The Making of Mesa Verde into a National Park," p. 217.

[29]McClurg, The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, p. 4.

[30]"Article II - Object of the Cliff-Dwellings Association." (A quote on file in the Museum at Mesa Verde National Park.)

[31]Report of the Committee for the Restoration and Preservation of the Cliff and Pueblo Ruins of Colorado, submitted by Lucy E. Peabody on September 27, 1900. (Taken from Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook on file in the Pioneer Historical Museum.)

"the women led the way."[32]

In the year 1900 Virginia McClurg found herself carrying her campaign to other parts of the world. She received high honors at the Paris Exposition of 1900 as the United States delegate to the International Congress of Ethnologists. She was able to bring the subject of the cliff dwellings to the attention of scientists from all over Europe with her speeches on the pre-historic ruins of Southwestern Colorado. Her talks, presented at the College de France and the Museum del 'Histoire Naturalle, were illustrated with lantern projections.[33] Her lectures were very well received, and the seat of honor at a grand banquet given by the Congress was bestowed upon her. The Duke de Loubat also gave an elaborate dinner in her honor.[34] After being presented at the Elysee Palace, she received the Order of Officier del 'Instruction Publique - or the Gold Palm - a very high honor in France.[35]

Unfortunately, Virginia McClurg's ideas were not as well received in her own country as they were abroad. A couple years before, Mrs. McClurg had secured the consent of the Weeminuche Utes to lease the land with the cliff dwellings. However, no legal lease was formulated until July 9, 1900. At that time a formal lease was entered into by the Utes occupying the Southern Ute Indian Reservation and Indian Agent Joseph O. Smith. The council proceedings for leasing the Ute lands went as follows:

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[32]McClurg, The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, p. 4.

[33]Ibid.

[34]"Virginia D. McClurg," n.p.

[35]McClurg, The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, p. 4.

> We, the undersigned Wiminuchi Ute Indians. . .who have been duly empowered. . .to transact all business of the tribe relating to leasing the unalloted or tribal lands. . .do hereby authorize and empower Joseph O. Smith United States Indian Agent for the Southern Ute Agency. . .to lease the tribal lands of our said reservation for the purpose of preserving the prehistoric ruins, for a period not exceeding ten years at the rate of three hundred dollars per annum.[36]

Joseph O. Smith made the following report concerning the lease to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He stated:

> I further certify on honor that said Ignacio, A-Ka-Witz & Ma-ri-a-no can not personally and with benefit to themselves occupy or improve the ruins described. . .for the reason that the same is neither agriculture or grazing lands. . .and I find that the same will be of no material advantage to the parties of the first part.[37]

By terms of this agreement, the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association could occupy all the Mesa Verde lands, and thus preserve the ruins. They agreed to pay the Utes three hundred dollars a year for this lease, to be paid in twenty-five dollar monthly installments. The agreement was sent to the Secretary of the Interior for his approval, and after corrections were made it was accepted by the Secretary in 1901.[38]

At a report to the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, Virginia McClurg related the difficulties of getting the Indians to sign this lease. She took the lease to Mancos and then on to Navajo Springs in hope of finding the Weeminuche Utes. Upon her arrival, she found that the Indians were off on one of their hunting trips, so her

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[36]Council Proceedings for Leasing Ute Land. (Copy of Council Proceedings taken from files at Museum at Mesa Verde National Park.)

[37]From the Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs - Letters Received, 17627/1901. (Taken from files at Museum at Mesa Verde National Park.)

[38]Rogers, "Notes on the Establishment of Mesa Verde National Park," p. 15.

long journey had been in vain. The lease was finally signed at the Quarto-Centennial Jubilee in Colorado Springs when all the necessary chiefs were present.[39]

It had been a long, hard struggle, but by the end of 1901 Virginia McClurg and the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association had succeeded in negotiating a lease with the Utes which would allow the Association control over the ancient ruins. Another four years of struggle lay ahead, however, before their final goal was to be realized.

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[39]Regent's Report at Annual Meeting of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association in Pueblo, submitted by Mrs. Gilbert McClurg in 1903. (Taken from Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook on file in the Pioneer Historical Museum.)

CHAPTER IV

SLOW PROGRESS - 1901-1905

"It is the goal of the women's ambition (said Virginia McClurg) to make Mesa Verde park accessible to all, a place of rest, interest, pleasure and pride to the state of Colorado."[1] Now that the lease with the Ute Indians had been settled, the women of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association could turn their efforts toward furthering this goal. In 1901, the advances included opening a wagon road along the Mancos River, improving the horseback trail to the top of Mesa Verde, and constructing a place for tourists to stay. Their aim was to make the Mesa Verde area self-supporting, not a profit-making organization.[2]

The year 1901 saw the introduction into Congress of the first bill to make the Mesa Verde area into a National Park. The bill, entitled "Creating the Colorado Cliff Dwellings National Park," was presented to the 56th Congress by Congressman Shafroth on February 22, 1901. Receiving the treatment of previous bills dealing with the Mesa Verde area, HR 14262 never reached the floor of the House for debate. It was killed in the Public Lands Committee.[3]

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[1]McClurg, Women's Park, n.p.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Rogers, "Notes on the Establishment of Mesa Verde National Park," p. 16.

In the annual meeting of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association in August of 1901, the historian, Mrs. Thomas A. Lewis of Pueblo, submitted a report on the progress of the Association during the previous year. She told of the treaty which had been secured from the Weeminuche Utes giving the Association control over the Mesa Verde cliff dwellings and their valuable relics. Mrs. Lewis stated that the above mentioned contract, which had the official sanction of Congress, was to remain in effect for a period of ten years, during which time steps would be taken to place the ruins under permanent protection. Virginia McClurg received entire credit for the progress. The Association owed her a deep vote of thanks for her untiring efforts.[4]

Upon accepting the gratitude of the organization, Mrs. McClurg, as regent, stated that the aim was still "to improve and beautify Mesa Verde Park which we hold under lease from the Weeminuche Ute Indians, and to stop, sharply and forever, the depredations of relic-hunters and curiosity seekers."[5]

She continued to explain a new project which the Association would soon undertake. The American Association for the Advancement of Science would soon meet in Denver. These men would be the ones who would most appreciate the ancient cliff dwellings, so arrangements were being made to take these scientists, ethnologists, and archaeologists to Mesa Verde. The Denver and Rio Grande, and the Rio Grande Southern Railroads had agreed to co-operate with the project by giving the

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[4]"Annual Meeting of Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association," Colorado Telegraph (August 18, 1901), p. 16. (Taken from Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook.)

[5]Ibid.

Association and the scientists special low rates so all could visit the cliff dwellings in early September.[6]

The excursion, once arranged, lasted from September fourth through seventh, 1901. It began at Durango. Equipped with four wagons plus a mess outfit, the group proceeded westward past Mancos and by nightfall had reached the end of the wagon road up Mancos Canyon. Entertainment at the campfire that evening consisted of a meeting of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association where each member was required to make a short speech.

The remainder of the trip down the canyons was made on horseback to the point where it was necessary to leave the horses and scramble up the side of the canyon walls. This was quite an undertaking for the women and older members of the group, and a solemn vow was taken by all members never to reveal the names of those who were too exhausted to finish the ascent.

The expedition served its purpose and drew the attention and interest of the scientists of the country toward the Pueblo ruins. Among the scientists making the trip was Dr. J. Walter Fewkes of the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Fewkes was so impressed by the cliff dwellings that several years later, he was to return to explore and make scientific reports of the ruins.[7]

In December of 1901 further governmental action was taken toward preserving the ruins. Two Joint Senate Memorials drafted by the Colorado

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[6] Ibid.

[7] "Denver Women as Cliff Dwellers," The Denver Republican (September 10, 1901), n.p. (Taken from files at museum at Mesa Verde National Park.)

Legislature were sent to Congress. The first, drafted on the ninth of December, urged enactment of legislation to preserve the ruins in the Mesa Verde area and some type of legislation to punish depredators. The second, following one day later, urged the withdrawal from public sale of lands containing the aboriginal artifacts.[8]

Representative Shafroth responded to these Memorials by introducing a second bill calling for the creation of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings National Park. This bill (HR 6270) was introduced into the 57th session of the House on December 13, 1901, and like its predecessors, found its way to the Committee on Public Lands and there met its death.[9]

Nineteen hundred and two witnessed two more failures for national park bills in Congress. HR 7461 and HR 6270 were introduced by Representatives Bell and Shafroth, but met the same fate as earlier bills.[10]

The second year of the twentieth century proved to be insignificant as far as advances toward the goal of a National Park were concerned. The main activity of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association for that year was a rummage sale held June 26 and 27 at 114 South Union Avenue in Pueblo. The purpose of this rummage sale was to raise money to finish the road from Mancos up to the cliff dwellings, and to build a rest house at the ruins. The women made a plea to the people of Colorado to donate freely:

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[8]Edmund B. Rogers, History of Legislation Relating to the National Park System Through the 82nd Congress, I (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1958), p. 2.

[9]U. S., Congressional Record, 57th Cong., 1st Sess., 1902, XXXV, Part 1, p. 291.

[10]Rogers, "Notes on the Establishment of Mesa Verde National Park," p. 16.

> Thousands of dollars have been spent in Egypt and other parts of the world for explorations, and the preservation of ancient ruins, and we of Colorado should see that the wonderful ruins here in our own state should be preserved. The way to do it is to help the band of women who are working to preserve the Cliff Dwellings, by responding promptly and liberally to the call which they are making for the rummage sale they will hold next Thursday and Friday.[11]

Congress made one important step forward in 1903. On March 3, 1903 Congress passed an act giving the Indian Office the right to negotiate for lands known as Mesa Verde. In a letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to Joseph O. Smith, Esquire, United States Indian Agent for the Southern Ute Indian Reservation at Ignacio, Colorado, Smith was instructed to carry out the negotiations with the Weeminuche Ute Indians. His instructions indicated the necessity of calling a general council of the tribe for purposes of negotiation. The first function of the council was to see if the Indians would be willing permanently to relinquish the Mesa Verde region. If they agreed to this primary consideration, Smith was to obtain a cession of the land and come to an agreement on satisfactory terms for the cession. Payments for the ceded area could be made in one lump sum, or spread out over two or three installments, or other terms which would prove satisfactory to both the Indians and the United States Government. Caution was taken to lay emphasis on the fact that the agreement would not become effective until ratified by Congress. Upon completion, the agreement should be put in writing and signed by a majority of the adult male Indians living on the reservation and signed by the Agent.[12] (Such a course was

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[11]"For the Preservation of Colorado Cliff Dwellings," Pueblo Chieftain, n.d., n.p. (Article concerning rummage sale June 26 and 27, 1902. Taken from Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook.)

[12]Letter from Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior to Joseph O. Smith, Esquire, U. S. Indian Agent for the Southern Ute Agency at Ignacio, Colorado, March 14, 1903.

followed and negotiations were completed, but Congress refused to act until 1906.)

Representative John Shafroth introduced another unsuccessful bill on December 10, 1903 for the purpose of creating Colorado Cliff Dwellings National Park. This bill, HR 6784, like its predecessors made its way into the Committee on Public Lands and there met defeat.[13] Like former bills, HR 6784 provided for the Mesa Verde area to be set aside as a public park, with a lengthy description of the proposed boundaries included. Section two of the bill stated that the National Park would be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior. He would be responsible for establishing rules and regulations governing the Park so as to preserve the ruins and their artifacts. Section three granted the Secretary of the Interior sole permission to determine what persons or institutions would have the right to conduct excavations within the said Park. Licenses would be given only to reputable institutions whose object was to enhance the knowledge about the cliff dwellers and their homes.[14]

In her annual Regent's Report to the Cliff Dwellings Association, Virginia McClurg regretted that little action had been accomplished toward their goal in the year 1903. The greatest strides she said were made in arousing public sentiment for preservation of the cliff dwellings. As an illustration of the success of their organization, she quoted a Washington editor:

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[13] U. S., Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1904, XXXVIII, Part 1, p. 104.

[14] Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, HR 6784, 58th Cong., 2nd, Sess. (Taken from the files of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association at the Historical Society in Denver.)

> Wherever the Cliff Dwellings are known [the editor told her], the name of the Colorado Cliff Dwelling Association is at once thought of in connection with them; not only to the people, but to the government, your Association has taught the value of these ruins.[15]

Each year saw more interest projected in Congress about the cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde. Senator Teller finally introduced a bill in 1904 which passed the Senate for the first time. This bill was constructed by an eminent archaeologist by the name of Reverend Henry Mason Baum. The bill, designed to preserve the ruins as a National Park, was presented to educational institutions, museums, and archaeological and historical societies and received their approval and endorsement.

Senator Teller raised certain objections when asked to present this bill in the Senate, and agreed to present it only with his own amendments. The amendments placed the care of the ruins in the hands of the Secretary of the Interior who would only allow properly qualified persons to excavate. Such persons had to be doing their research for a museum or university. Any state museum could obtain permission to excavate from the Governor of the State if the relics were to be placed in a museum in the state. Foreign societies could also obtain excavation privileges with the qualification that artifacts were to be placed in their national museums. Also added was a clause which provided a five hundred dollar fine or one year imprisonment for anyone caught excavating without a license, or destroying, defacing, or mutilating the ruins.

With the amendments the bill was introduced into the Senate and,

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[15]Regent's Report at Annual Meeting of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association in Pueblo, submitted by Mrs. Gilbert McClurg in 1903. (Taken from Mrs. McClurg's Scrapbook.)

surprisingly, passed. In the House, however, it met defeat because of the objections of the officials at the Smithsonian Institution. They were in the process of presenting a separate bill which would give them sole right to excavate the ruins. Support for the National Park was thus split between the two groups, so both bills were defeated.[16]

The backers of the National Park project in the House were also encountering more success than ever before. Representative Hogg introduced a bill on December 8, 1904 for the purpose of creating Colorado Cliff Dwellings National Park.[17] As usual, the bill passed on to the Committee on Public Lands for debate. This time the results proved different. The bill was approved by the committee with only a few additional amendments.

On January 19, 1905 the chairman of the Committee on Public Lands reported the bill (with the amendments) back to the House.[18] Accompanying the bill was a statement submitted by the chairman (House Report 3703). In this report the committee said that it recommended passage of said bill with the following amendments. First, and most significant, was the recommendation to change the name of the bill to "Creating the Mesa Verde National Park" rather than Colorado Cliff Dwellings National Park. The other three amendments involved only minor changes in the wording. It was the committee's opinion that the

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[16]"Preserving Colorado's Magnificant Relics," Denver Post (June 12, 1904), n.p. (Taken from T. F. Dawson Scrapbooks, Vol. XXXVII, p. 189, at the Historical Society in Denver.)

[17]U. S., Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 3rd Sess., 1905, XXXIX, Part 1, p. 92. HR 15986.

[18]U. S., Congressional Record, 58th Cong., 3rd Sess., 1905, XXXIX, Part 2, p. 1110.

remarkable Pueblo ruins should be protected and preserved for all to see. Therefore, they urged the creation of a National Park.[19]

The report continued to provide a physical description of the Mesa Verde region, Spruce Tree House, Cliff Palace, and Balcony House, along with the proposed boundary description for the National Park. In summation, the report said that the Mesa Verde region was of no use to the Utes because they would not go near the cliff dwellings, believing them to be inhabited by the spirits of the dead. Whites had little use for the region as it was extremely arid and not suited for farming. Furthermore, the ruins should be preserved because:

> They are not only of local but of national interest, and many tourists who now never heard of the Mesa Verde ruins would visit them if the area was under Government control. Also it would bring more money into such towns as Durango and Mancos.[20]

Even with the support of the Committee on Public Lands and the help of the report, the proposed bill failed to pass the House of Representatives. However, more Congressmen were becoming convinced that a National Park was needed to preserve an important part of America's heritage.

Even though 1905 was an equally unproductive year for legislation, the women of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association continued their struggle to secure permanent protection for the ruins. They had succeeded in raising support for their project from the majority of the inhabitants of their own state. For example, at its biennial meeting in January of 1905, the Colorado Historical Society drafted a memorial

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[19]U. S., House Reports, 58th Cong., 3rd Sess., 1904-05, II, Report #3703, p. 1.

[20]Ibid., p. 5.

to Congress urging the adoption of a bill to set aside those areas of Colorado rich in cliff dwellings as a National Park to be preserved for all to see.[21]

The Rocky Mountain News, the same year, reported that the women had made slow progress on their project, but were now meeting with significant success. A bill to preserve the ruins had popular approval in the state, had finally passed the hurdle of the Public Lands Committee, and had even overcome the opposition of the Secretary of the Interior.[22] With these obstacles behind them, it seemed only a matter of time before their bill would become a reality.

The long, hard labors of a group of women, and especially the efforts of one woman - Virginia McClurg, were about to bear fruit. Each year had seen further advances. As 1906 opened, they stood on the threshold of victory.

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[21]"Ask Congress to Preserve the Ruins" (January 18, 1905), n.p. (Taken from the Curator's Files at the Historical Society in Denver. No name of the newspaper is given.)

[22]"Colorado Cliff Dwellings National Park Provided for by Congressman Hogg's Bill, Which had been Favorably Reported," Rocky Mountain News (January 22, 1905), n.p. (Taken from the Curator's Files at the Historical Society in Denver.)

CHAPTER V

A BITTER CONFLICT

The year 1906 witnessed victory for the National Park Bill. On January 15, 1906, Senator Thomas Patterson introduced a bill in the Senate to create Mesa Verde National Park.[1] The Senate Bill was reported back from the Public Lands Committee on April 9, 1906.[2] Senator Patterson, chairman of the committee, informed the Senate that his committee recommended the passage of this bill as did the Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner of the General Land Office. With his report, he submitted several letters which verified the necessity of passing this bill. In one of these letters the Governor of Colorado issued his plea to the Public Lands Committee:

> The people of Colorado, and I believe of the entire West, would be glad to see this bill favorably reported upon by your committee, as we are quite anxious that this historical place be properly protected.[3]

Regulations adopted by the Nebraska Academy of Sciences at their fifteenth Annual Meeting at Lincoln, Nebraska demonstrated that other states besides Colorado were anxious to see the cliff dwellings preserved. The delegates at that conference "endorsed" and "urged"

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[1]U. S., Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., 1906, XL, Part 2, p. 1067. (S 3245).

[2]U. S., Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., 1906, XL, Part 5, pp. 4936-4937.

[3]U. S., Senate Reports, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., 1905-1906, I, Report #1428, pp. 1-2.

the passage of this bill because the ruins had already suffered irreparable damage, and this neglect should not be continued.[4]

The Senate also received copies of resolutions adopted by the Colorado Equal Suffrage Association, the Colorado State Horticultural Society, and the State Forestry Association, endorsing the National Park Bill. These resolutions all reflected the idea that danger to the ruins was imminent and, therefore, passage of a bill to protect the cliff dwellings was a necessity.[5]

The bill in the Senate passed and was sent on to the House for its approval. Meanwhile, Representative Hershel Hogg had introduced a similar bill into the House on December 11, 1905.[6] In June, the Public Lands Committee reported HR 5998 back to the House of Representatives.[7] The committee chairman submitted a report recommending the passage of the bill because he considered the area concerned of no value for mining or agricultural purposes.

In support of his committee's recommendation, the chairman included letters from several scientific associations specifying the need to preserve the ruins. The members of the Davenport Academy of Sciences meeting in Davenport, Iowa on January 29, 1906 passed a resolution urging the creation of Mesa Verde National Park. Another resolution, sent from the Pueblo Business Men's Association on February 1, 1906 to

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[4] Ibid., p. 2.

[5] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[6] U. S., Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., 1906, XL, Part 1, p. 309. (HR 5998).

[7] U. S., Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., 1906, XL, Part 9, p. 8610.

the Speaker of the House, J. G. Cannon, urged the passage of the National Park Bill because of the damage already suffered by the cliff dwellings due to neglect and willful destruction.[8]

A further resolution adopted by the Iowa Anthropological Association on February 24, 1906 in Iowa City read:

> Resolved, That the Iowa Anthropological Association views with greatest interest this movement and anxiously adds its voice to the request from other sources that immediate legal measures be instituted to save from vandalism, greed, and unnecessary natural decay the numerous stone, brick, adobe, and other works found in the Colorado and other regions.[9]

The report concluded with the names of thirty-six professors or other prominent citizens around the United States who had communicated with - or appeared before - the committee in behalf of the proposed bill.[10]

It was now suddenly discovered that none of the major cliff dwellings were located within the boundaries of the proposed Park. The women of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association undertook a project to secure the passage of an amendment to the National Park Bill. The amendment would provide that all ruins situated within five miles of the proposed Park boundary would also be included within the Park, thus placing 274 more acres within its jurisdiction. Termed the Brooks-Leupp Amendment, it was named for two friends of the Association - Indian Commissioner Francis J. Leupp and Franklin E. Brooks, Congo

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[8] U. S., House Reports, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., 1905-1906, III, Report #4944, pp. 1-2.

[9] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[10] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

Congressman-at-Large from Colorado.[11] The amended bill creating Mesa Verde National Park passed the House on June 20, 1906.[12]

On June 23, the bill passed the Senate (S3245 being recalled from the House as it was no longer necessary).[13] Two days later the bill was signed by the Vice-President and the Speaker of the House.[14] On June 29, 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the bill into law.[15]

It had taken twenty-four years, but finally the cliff dwellings of the Mesa Verde received permanent protection. The long battle had been won even though it no longer had the support of its perpetrator, Virginia McClurg. While discussion had continued in Congress over these two bills, Virginia McClurg suddenly altered the goal of her twenty-four year struggle to have the Mesa Verde area permanently preserved as a National Park. She now decided the area of the ancient cliff dwellers should become a state park placed under the jurisdiction of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association - action which would, in effect, place the cliff dwellings under her control. This change in objectives caused a split within the Association, resulting in a long, bitter conflict

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[11]McClurg, The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, p. 3. (Six more years passed before a final treaty was negotiated with the Utes to establish the present boundaries of Mesa Verde National Park. This treaty was not ratified in Congress until 1913. Taken from Rogers, "Notes on the Establishment of Mesa Verde National Park," p. 16.)

[12]U. S., Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., 1906, XL, Part 9, p. 8818.

[13]Ibid., p. 9010.

[14]U. S., Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., 1906, XL, Part 10, pp. 9245, 9195.

[15]Ibid., pp. 9311, 9807.

between Mrs. McClurg's supporters and those of Lucy Peabody who still desired the National Park.

Due to the split in the Association, occurring in February of 1906, Mrs. Lucy Peabody assumed the position of leadership in the efforts to establish a National Park. In the same month she reported to her colleagues that great progress had been made as long as the organization had worked in unison. Congress was on the verge of passing the long desired bill to place the ruins under federal protection when Mrs. McClurg persuaded the Association to reject the bill and work in favor of one which would place the ruins under her control. Mrs. Peabody announced her intention to resign from her offices in the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, take the members who would stand by her, and continue the original struggle to preserve the cliff dwellings in a National Park.[16]

Lucy Peabody, following her break with the Regent, was able to exert considerably more influence than Mrs. McClurg because of her recent connections in Washington D.C. She had previously served as a secretarial assistant in the Bureau of American Ethnology at Washington and here acquired her first interest in preserving the Mesa Verde area. After moving to Colorado, she continued her fight to preserve the ruins under federal jurisdiction.[17] Mrs. Peabody's faction claimed final

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[16]"Colorado May Get National Park Rivaling Yellowstone," Denver Post (February 25, 1906), n.p. (Taken from files at museum at Mesa Verde National Park.)

[17]Notes on the conference of May 7, 1946 with Dr. Edgar L. Hewett on the Lucy E. Peabody-Virginia McClurg fight on establishing Mesa Verde National Park. (Taken from the Park Archaeologist's Office, file box of Mesa Verde History, at Mesa Verde National Park.) Herein cited as Hewett on Feud.

victory over Mrs. McClurg's interest group principally because the former was able to work closely with Congressmen to secure the desired legislation.[18]

Lucy Peabody has often been dubbed "The Mother of Mesa Verde National Park" for her faithfulness to the project to its completion. For her untiring efforts, Mrs. Peabody later received the first public vote of thanks ever passed by the American Anthropological Association:

> Be it Resolved, That the American Anthropological association recognizes in the securing of this national measure for the preservation of the great monuments of ancient culture in southern Colorado an exceptionally noteworthy service to science, and in testimony of its appreciation of such service, hereby extends to Mrs. Lucy E. Peabody a vote of thanks.[19]

In all fairness to Virginia McClurg, it must be said that she renounced the National Park Bill not alone because she wished to maintain personal control over the region, but because of her realization that none of the major cliff dwellings would be encompassed by the proposed bill. She indicated that she had supported previous bills to make the Mesa Verde region a National Park, but withdrew her support from the Hogg Bill because Congressman Hogg was not familiar with the Mesa Verde area and the boundary lines of his proposed bill included no major ruins.[20]

She had one additional objection to the National Park. The

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[18]Comments for the Regional Director, Region Three, by Archeologist Nusbaum, July 26, 1946, Museum at Mesa Verde. Herein cited as Nusbaum on Feud.

[19]"Knowledge of the Ages is Buried in Mesa Verde," Daily News (August 11, 1907), n.p., Museum at Mesa Verde.

[20]Chapman, "The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association and its Work in Mesa Verde," p. 2.

Secretary of the Interior would control the Park, giving him the authority to let any organizations excavate. Thus, relics would be scattered throughout the states and foreign countries instead of remaining in Colorado where they belonged.[21]

The feud between Virginia McClurg and Lucy Peabody did not come to an end with the passage of the Mesa Verde National Park Bill. The two women disagreed over who was to be the first superintendent of the Park. Mrs. McClurg wanted the position to be given to her husband, Gilbert McClurg.[22] Lucy Peabody favored the appointment of Major Hans M. Randolph of the National Guard in Denver. With Mrs. Peabody's backing, Randolph was selected.[23]

Angry because the cliff dwellings were now under federal control and her choice of a superintendent had been overlooked, Virginia McClurg decided to build her own cliff dwellings near Manitou Springs, Colorado. At least there would be no question of her control over these dwellings if she was personally responsible for building them. She hired a Mr. Ashenhurst, a self-styled professor, to complete the project for her. To make the dwellings comparable to those at Mesa Verde, Mr. Ashenhurst duplicated portions of Spruce Tree House, Cliff Palace, Balcony House, and Square Tower House. After several years, the fact that these cliff houses were mere reproductions was not advertized, and the public was led to believe that pre-historic Indians constructed these dwellings.

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[21]Virginia McClurg, "Resents Slurs on Hard Work," Rocky Mountain News (no exact date - sometime in February, 1906), n.p., Museum at Mesa Verde.

[22]Hewett on Feud.

[23]Nusbaum on Feud.

at Manitou Springs.[24]

The construction of the imitation cliff dwellings created a further schism within the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association. Forty members resigned because of the Regent's action.[25] Virginia McClurg's unfaltering battle to preserve the cliff dwellings ended in a struggle for revenge because her ideas had not been accepted. Even though the Association was to function until her death, it had been deeply hurt by the bitter feud between her and Lucy Peabody.

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[24]Letter from Chief Park Archaeologist, Mrs. Jean M. Pinkley to Rocky Mountain AAA in Denver, September 30, 1964, Museum at Mesa Verde.

[25]Alvin J. Steinel, "Oppose the Moving of Ruins; Protest to the Governor," Rocky Mountain News (October 27, 1906), p. 1, Museum at Mesa Verde.

CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE

The trip to the top of Mesa Verde to view the cliff dwellings can now be made rapidly by car over a twenty mile paved road from the entrance to the Park. Good highways provide easy access from the two neighboring towns of Cortez and Mancos.

Those first visitors to Mesa Verde National Park in 1906 found the journey much more difficult.

> Visitors to Mesa Verde National Park, June 29, 1906, were a hardy lot. Leaving at daybreak from the towns of Mancos or Cortez, Colorado, they bounced in buckboards and wagons over 15 miles of rough and dusty roads to the foot of the mesa. At that point they left their vehicles and took to horseback and the ascent of the mesa's north escarpment, via tortuous switchback trails, was begun. Reaching the mesa top, they then proceeded for hours down the ridge of Chapin Mesa, through sagebrush glades and pinon and juniper forests to the head of Spruce Tree Canyon. There, just at sunset, they were rewarded with their first view of a cliff dwelling, Spruce Tree House. Unsaddling, they led their horses down into the canyon to the spring, the only source of water for men and beasts. Returning to the mesa top, they set up camp in the growing dusk and cooked their evening meal over the open fires.[1]

The year 1906 saw only twenty-seven such hardy souls visit the ruins at Mesa Verde.[2] Today, thousands annually view the spectacular dwellings preserved through the efforts of the National Park Service.

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[1]Information for the Press - For Immediate Release, from O. W. Carlson, Superintendent of Mesa Verde National Park, June 24, 1958. Taken from the files at the museum at Mesa Verde National Park.)

[2]Ibid.

At the time these first tourists visited Mesa Verde, the ruins were not safe. In their searching, the pot hunters had not only taken many of the valuable relics, but had undermined many of the walls. Dr. J. Walter Fewkes of the Smithsonian Institution, whose interest had been aroused in the cliff dwellings when he and other scientists viewed them in 1901 as guests of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, returned to the ruins in the summer of 1908 to direct repair work. No attempt was made to restore the dwellings to their original condition, simply to repair them. The first summer Dr. Fewkes and his crew worked at repairing Spruce Tree House. Cliff Palace was repaired the following summer. Altogether, work under the direction of Dr. Fewkes included the repairing of Sun Temple in 1915, Farview Ruin and the Mummy Lake Group in 1916, Square Tower Ruin in 1919, Fire Temple in 1920, and Pipe Shrine in 1922.[3] Even today the ruins are constantly repaired to keep them safe for the many tourists. Navajo Indians are usually employed for this task.

The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association remained active for many years after its initial goal of permanent preservation of the ruins had been accomplished. One of its subsequent projects was raising funds for the renovation of Balcony House in 1910-1911. This project was conducted under the supervision of Professor Edgar L. Hewett, Director of the School of American Archaeology.[4]

The Association produced a pageant entitled "The Marriage of the Dawn and the Moon" in Spruce Tree House on September 4, 1917.

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[3]Hall, Mesa Verde, n.p.

[4]Ibid.

Virginia McClurg, having reconciled with the Association, wrote, costumed, and directed the entire production consisting of twenty-four actors, singers, and dancers.[5] In connection with the pageant, the Association prepared a huge barbecue where it served foods similar to those consumed by the ancient cliff dwellers; such items as baked ears of maize, squash, beans, roast beef and mutton.[6]

In sponsoring the pageant the Association was playing a familiar role for the story of the establishment of Mesa Verde National Park has been the story of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association. This association of women produced the first accurate map of the Mesa Verde area and helped to build the first wagon road through the canyon. In 1901 it arranged to bring anthropologists to visit Mesa Verde. It developed Hammond Spring at Spruce Tree House and was responsible for securing a lease from the Weeminuche Utes for the Mesa Verde region. But its most significant contribution was the distribution of pictures, books, Indian music, relic displays, and over one thousand lectures to stimulate interest in preserving the cliff dwellings.

In addition to its contributions, the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association had a direct influence on the acts of Congress which sanctioned the Indian lease, established a commission to deal with the Utes to cede Mesa Verde, and appropriated one thousand dollars to survey Mesa Verde. Similarly, the Association exerted pressure which ultimately resulted in the passage of the Hogg Bill and its amendment

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[5]McClurg, The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, p. 4.

[6]Mae Lacy Baggs, Colorado the Queen Jewel of the Rockies (Boston: The Page Company, 1918), pp. 306-307.

establishing Mesa Verde as a National Park.[7]

Part of America's heritage has been preserved. Mesa Verde stands today as a monument to the efforts of a group of Colorado women; a reminder of the prehistoric life in Colorado of which the state of Colorado can be proud.

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[7]McClurg, The Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, pp. 3-4.

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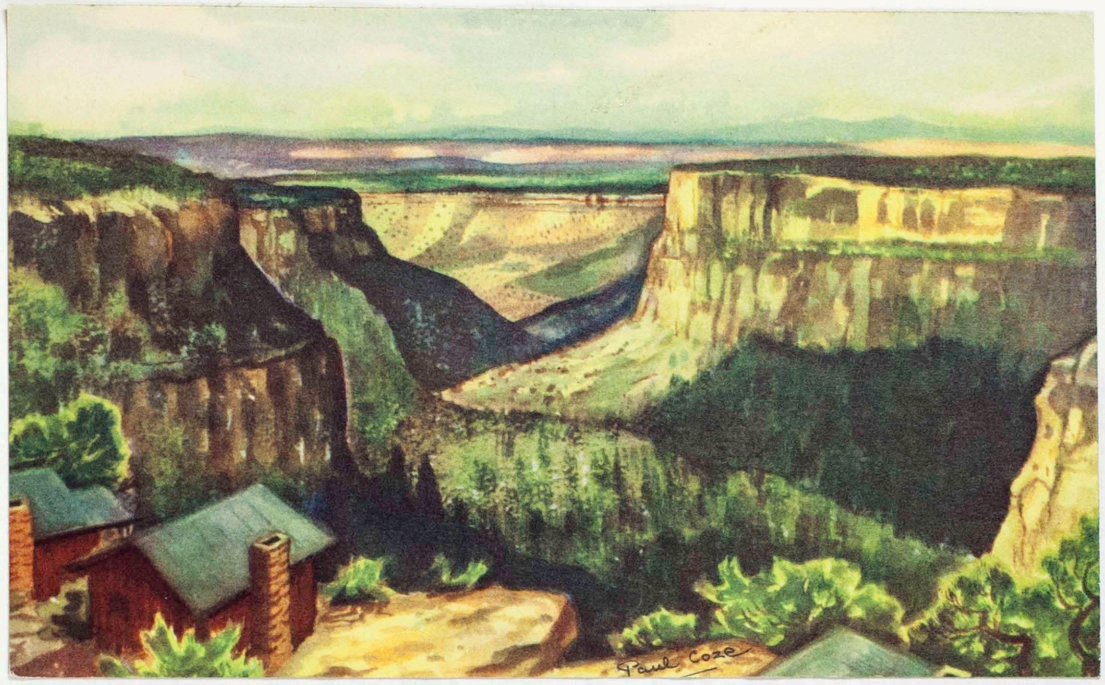
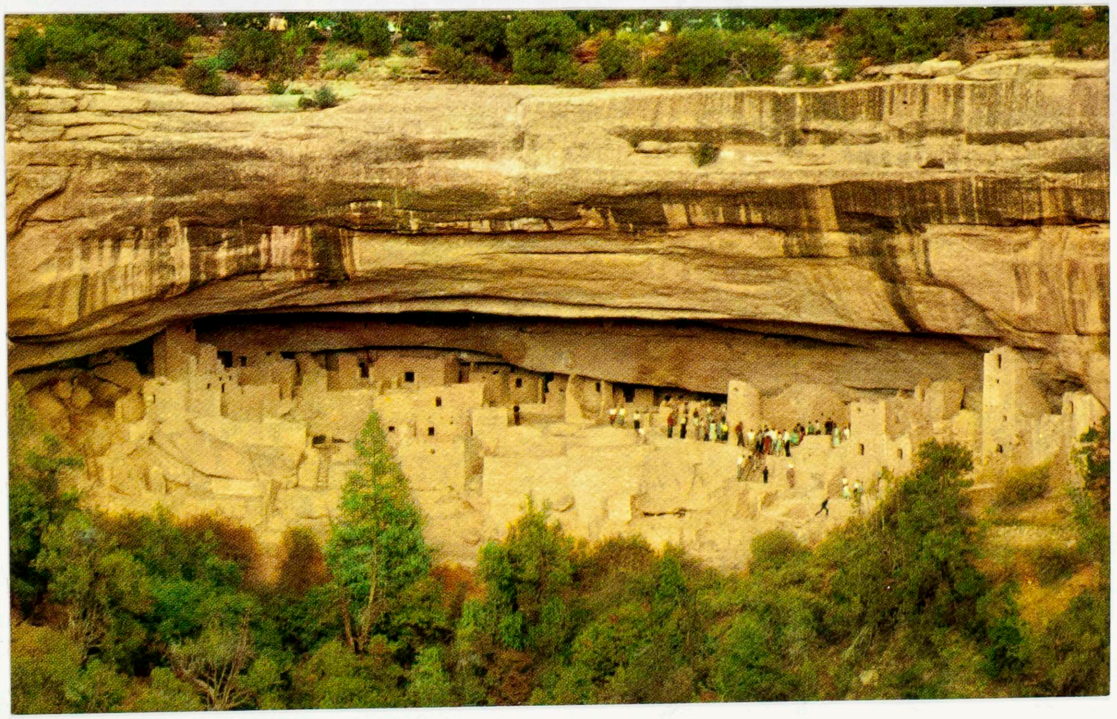
APPENDIX I

COWBOYS DISCOVERING CLIFF PALACE

MESA VERDE FROM PARK ENTRANCE



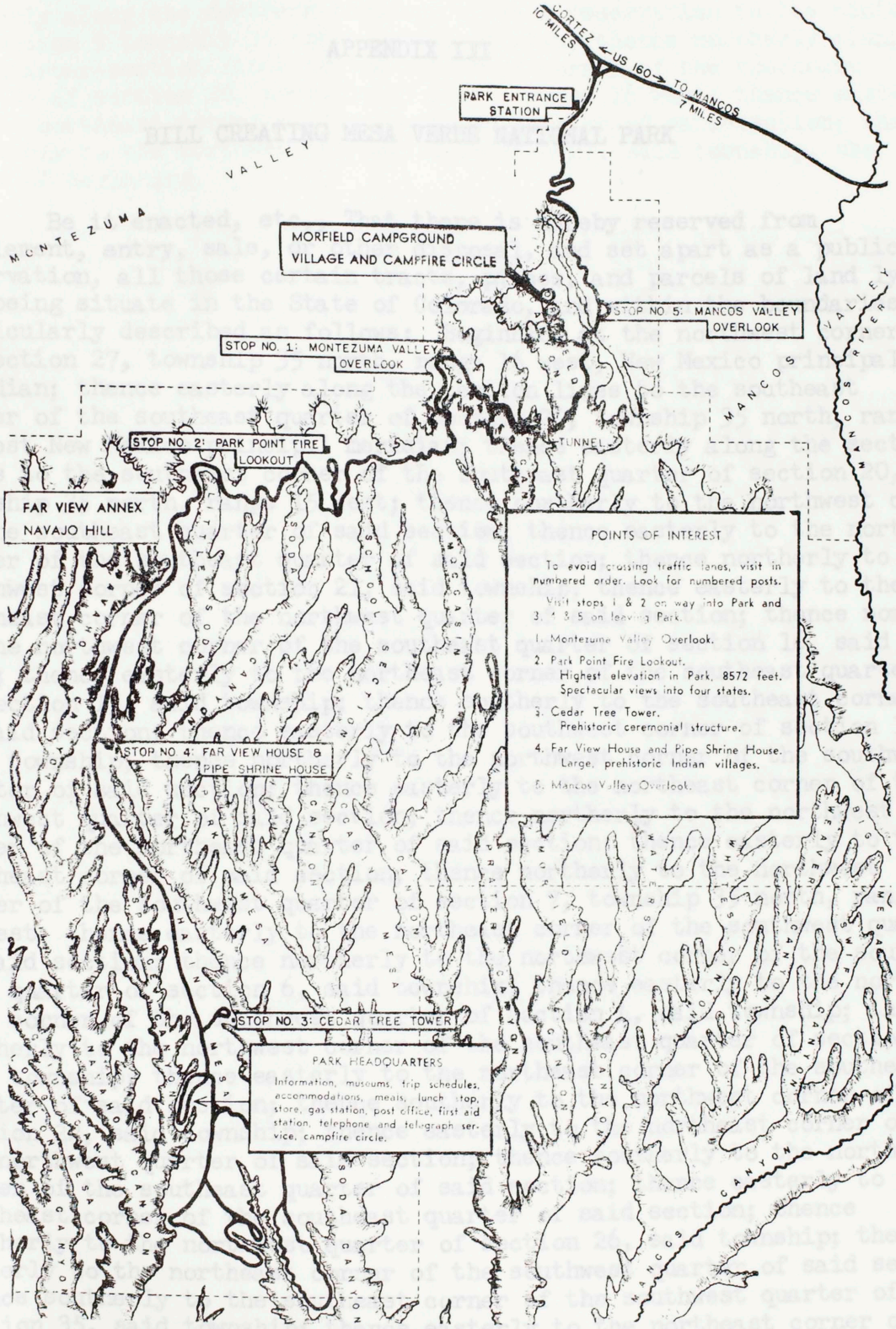
MESA AND CANYONS OF MESA VERDE



CLIFF PALACE

SOUTH SECTION OF CLIFF PALACE

APPENDIX II



CANYONS OF THE MESA VERDE

APPENDIX III

BILL CREATING MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

Be it enacted, etc., That there is hereby reserved from settlement, entry, sale, or other disposal, and set apart as a public reservation, all those certain tracts, pieces, and parcels of land lying and being situate in the State of Colorado, and within the boundaries particularly described as follows: Beginning at the northwest corner of section 27, township 35 north, range 16 west, New Mexico principal meridian; thence easterly along the section lines to the southeast corner of the southeast quarter of section 20, township 35 north, range 16 west New Mexico principal meridian; thence easterly along the section lines to the southeast corner of the southeast quarter of section 20, township 35 north, range 15 west; thence northerly to the northwest corner of the southeast quarter of said section; thence easterly to the northeast corner of the southeast quarter of said section; thence northerly to the northwest corner of section 21, said township; thence easterly to the northeast corner of the northwest quarter of said section; thence northerly to the northwest corner of the southeast quarter of section 16, said township; thence easterly to the northeast corner of the southeast quarter of section 15, said township; thence southerly to the southeast corner of said section; thence easterly to the southwest corner of section 13, said township; thence northerly to the northwest corner of the southwest quarter of said section; thence easterly to the northeast corner of the southwest quarter of said section; thence northerly to the northwest corner of the northeast quarter of said section; thence easterly to the northeast corner of said section; thence northerly to the northwest corner of the southwest quarter of section 7, township 35 north, range 14 west; thence easterly to the northeast corner of the southwest quarter of said section; thence northerly to the northwest corner of the southeast quarter of section 6, said township; thence easterly to the northeast corner of the southwest quarter of section 4, said township; thence southerly to the northwest corner of the southeast quarter of section 9, said township; thence easterly to the northeast corner of the southeast quarter of said section; thence southerly to the northwest corner of section 22, said township; thence easterly to the northeast corner of the northwest quarter of said section; thence southerly to the northwest corner of the southeast quarter of said section; thence easterly to the northeast corner of the southeast quarter of said section; thence southerly to the northwest quarter of section 26, said township; thence easterly to the northeast corner of the southwest quarter of said section; thence southerly to the southeast corner of the southwest quarter of section 35, said township; thence easterly to the northeast corner of section 2, township 35 north, range 14 west; thence southerly along the section line between sections 1 and 2 and between sections 11 and

12 to the northern boundary of the southern Ute Indian Reservation; thence westerly along the northern boundary of said reservation to the center of section 9 township 34 north, range 16 west; thence northerly along the quarter-section lines to the northwest corner of the southeast quarter of section 28, township 35 north, range 16 west; thence easterly to the northeast corner of the southeast quarter of said section; thence northerly to the northwest corner of section 27, said township, the place of beginning.

Sec. 2. That said public park shall be known as the Mesa Verde National Park, and shall be under the exclusive control of the Secretary of the Interior, whose duty it shall be to prescribe such rules and regulations and establish such service as he may deem necessary for the care and management of the same. Such regulations shall provide specifically for the preservation from injury or spoilation of the ruins and other works and relics of prehistoric or primitive man within said park: Provided. That all prehistoric ruins that are situated within 5 miles of the boundaries of said park, as herein described, on Indian lands and not on lands alienated by patent from the ownership of the United States, are hereby placed under the custodianship of the Secretary of the Interior, and shall be administered by the same service that is established for the custodianship of the park.

Sec. 3. That the Secretary of the Interior be, and he is hereby, authorized to permit examinations, excavations, and other gathering of objects of interest within said park by any person or persons whom he may deem properly qualified to conduct such examinations, excavations, or gatherings, subject to such rules and regulations as he may prescribe: Provided always, That the examinations, excavations, and gatherings are undertaken only for the benefit of some reputable museum, university, college, or other recognized scientific or educational institution, with a view to increasing the knowledge of such objects and aiding the general advancement of archaeological science.

Sec. 4. That any person or persons who may otherwise in any manner willfully remove, disturb, destroy, or molest any of the ruins, mounds, buildings, graves, relics, or other property from said park shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction before any court having jurisdiction of such offenses shall be fined not more than $1,000 or imprisoned not more than twelve months, or such person or persons may be fined and imprisoned, at the discretion of the judge, and shall be required to restore the property disturbed, if possible.[1]

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[1]U. S., Congressional Record, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., 1906, XL, Part 9, p. 8818.