

Bureau of Land Management
Canyons of the Ancients National Monument
Lowry Pueblo National Historic Landmark

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Information and exhibits on Lowry Pueblo, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (CANM), the Trail of the Ancients Scenic and Historic Byway, and Ancestral Puebloan life on the Great Sage Plain can be found at the Bureau of Land Management, Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum. A one-mile (2 km) interpretive trail leads from the Center up to Escalante Pueblo and a hilltop panoramic view. The trail and picnic tables are all wheelchair accessible. If traveling from Lowry, the Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center & Museum is seven miles east of the Highway 491 turnoff on Highway 184 and three miles west of Dolores.

For more information about the CANM, Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum go to <https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/colorado/canyons-of-the-ancients>



Funding provided by the National Scenic Byways Program, Colorado State Historical Fund, and the Bureau of Land Management.

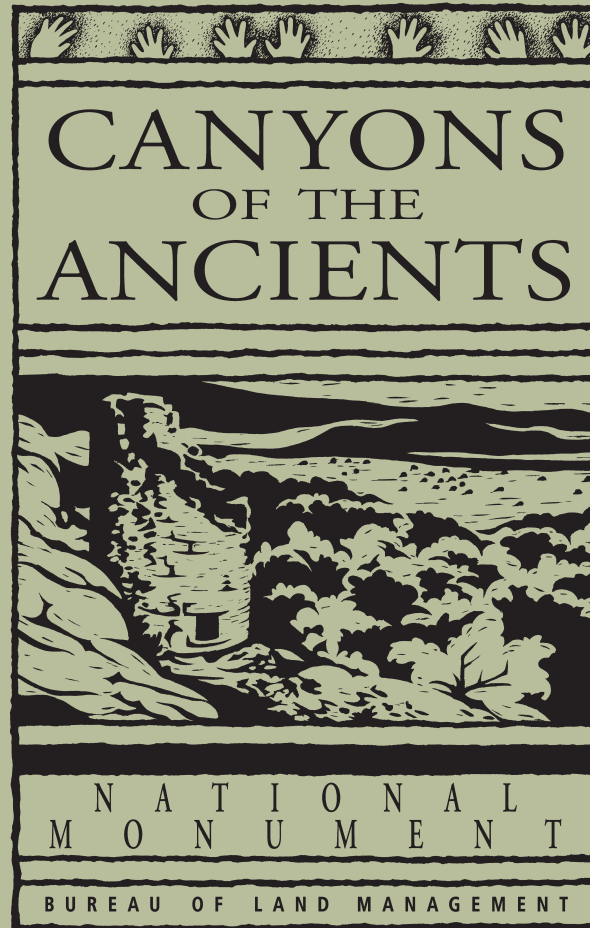
BLM/CO/GI-21/006



NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS

Lowry Pueblo

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument



WELCOME TO LOWRY PUEBLO

Lowry Pueblo is a 1,000-year-old Ancestral Puebloan village that was named after George Lowry, an early 20th century homesteader. Lowry Pueblo is part of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, is on the Trail of the Ancients Scenic and Historic Byway, and is protected and maintained by the Bureau of Land Management.



The Ancestral Pueblo people constructed Lowry Pueblo around AD 1060 and inhabited it for about 165 years. Lowry began as a small village with a few rooms and a kiva. Several more rooms, the Great Kiva, and Kiva B (the painted kiva) were added between AD 1085 and 1170. By the time the last families left Lowry and migrated to the south and east, the pueblo had grown to 40 rooms, eight kivas, and a Great Kiva.

Lowry Pueblo was excavated in the 1930s by Dr. Paul S. Martin of the Chicago Field Museum of Natural History. In 1965 the BLM and the University of Colorado stabilized the masonry walls, and Lowry Pueblo was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark in 1967. Although the masonry has been repaired several times to preserve the structure and to make it safe for visitors, Lowry looks much as it did when it was originally excavated.



Early movies document the first excavations.

THE GREAT SAGE PLAIN

You are standing in the middle of the Great Sage Plain - more than 1,500 square miles of high, dry, rolling plateau, deeply scored by canyons. The wind-deposited soil supports sagebrush and piñon/juniper forest. This landscape contains the highest recorded density of prehistoric and historic sites in North America. On the southern horizon is Ute Mountain, sacred to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and the mesas of Mesa Verde National Park. The Abajo and La Sal mountains rise to the northwest in Utah. To the east you can see Lone Cone and the San Juan Mountains.

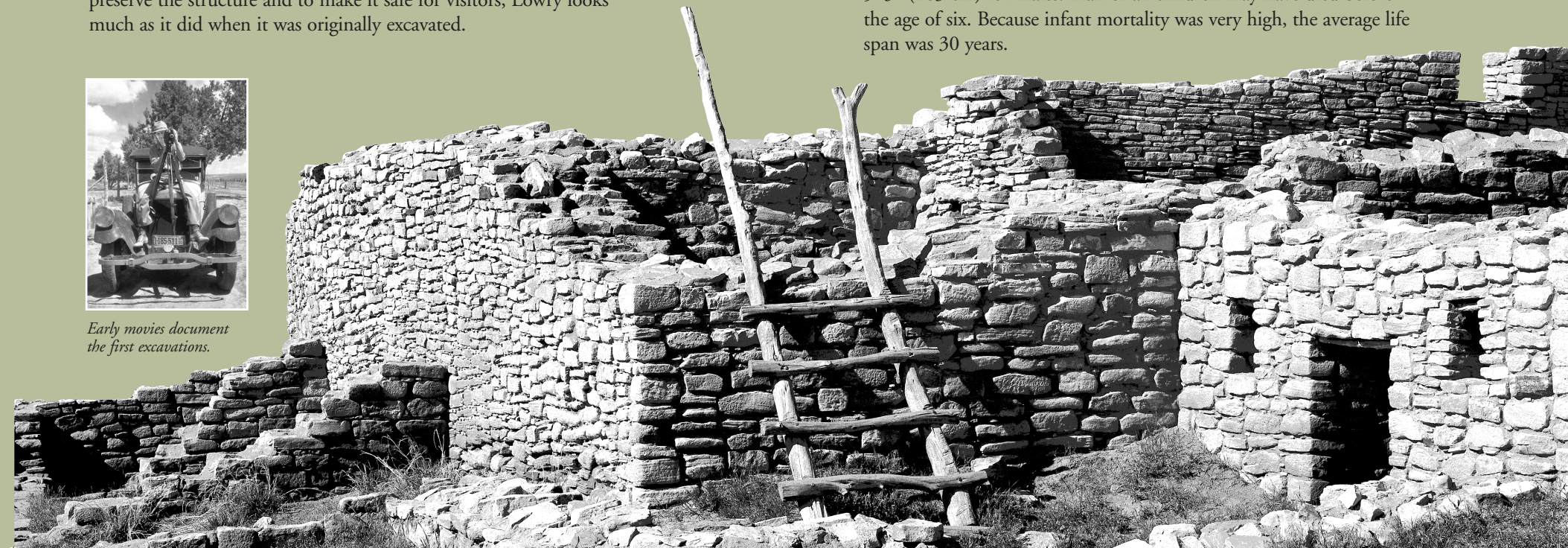


"All of life was based on corn in the Pueblos, as it is today."
Tito Naranjo,
Santa Clara Pueblo

THE ANCESTRAL PUEBLOANS

The Ancestral Puebloans built Lowry on top of the houses of an earlier community as they struggled to survive in this arid landscape. They farmed corn, beans, and squash; supplemented their diet with small game; and made tools from stones and animal bones. The average height of an

adult Ancestral Puebloan was about 5' 1" (156 cm) for females and 5' 3" (163 cm) for males. Half of all children may have died before the age of six. Because infant mortality was very high, the average life span was 30 years.



LIFE IN THE PUEBLO

About 40 people may have lived at Lowry Pueblo. Their living space was designed to accommodate social and family connections, political and ritual ties, and the needs of daily life. Grinding corn, nuts, and seeds sometimes took place indoors, but there is little evidence of cooking in the pueblo's rooms. Most cooking hearths were outside. Water likely came from natural pools in the canyon bottom. Storytelling in the kivas was probably a popular wintertime activity.



"Indian people always shared—not only spiritual values, but everyday values of bringing up children and sharing food for survival."

Esther Martinez
San Juan Pueblo

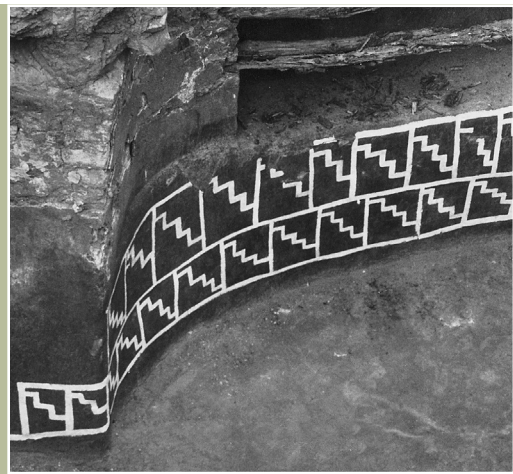
The pueblo stood two or three stories high, with rooftop entrances reached by ladders. Lowry's small rooms suggest that most activity took place on top of the roofs and along the east side of the building, where most of the artifacts were discovered. The Ancestral Puebloans used small T-shaped doorways to protect their living areas from the weather. Smaller doorways made it easier to block the wind and insulate against heat and cold. The long, uninterrupted back wall of the pueblo denied ground-level access to anyone approaching from the west.

Tree-ring dates, masonry styles, and the relationships of walls indicate that Lowry Pueblo underwent six periods of construction within about 25 years. During each expansion and remodeling period, construction techniques changed, perhaps due to regional trends or because of the abilities and preferences of individual builders. Some of Lowry's masonry reflects a style seen at Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. This style features layers of narrow slabs, small chinking stones, and the banding of darker and lighter sandstone. Lowry may have been an early Chacoan colony or trading center, or may simply have been built to resemble the Chacoan style. Later additions to the pueblo were of a local, block masonry style.



"Pueblo people were industrious and the very high value on hard work is evident from Sand Canyon to Lowry."

Tito Naranjo
Santa Clara Pueblo



"The step shape was an abstract symbol of cloud formations."

Tito Naranjo
Santa Clara Pueblo

The modern roof preserves its plaster remnants, original wood, mortar, and masonry. Today's doorway was not how the Ancestral Puebloans entered the kiva. They entered through an opening in the ceiling (near where the center skylight is now located) and climbed down a ladder. When first excavated, this kiva had a beautiful painted mural on its walls. Unfortunately, efforts to preserve the mural in place failed. A section of this mural was removed to ensure its preservation. It is on display at the Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum along with a life-sized photo mural from 1934 showing the painting when it was first excavated.

"The spirit being of the people and the spirit being of the village is still here."

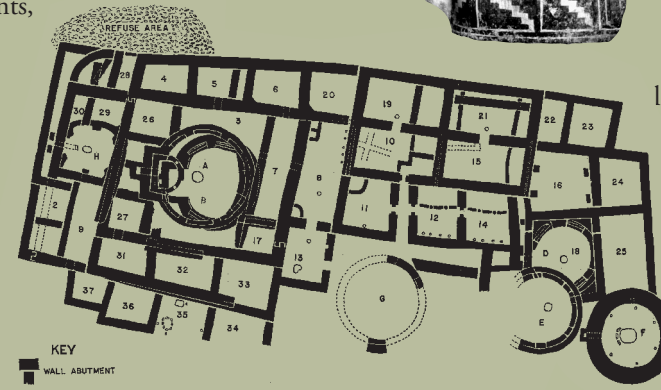
Tito Naranjo
Santa Clara Pueblo



KIVA B (THE PAINTED KIVA)

Members of extended families or clans probably used small kivas like this one for family gatherings, storytelling, and religious activities.

The modern roof preserves its plaster remnants, original wood,



KEY

- WALL ABUTMENT
- POST HOLE
- SEALED DOORWAY
- BOND OF OLD AND NEW WALLS
- WALL PLATE



25 FEET



the wood beams in the roof tell us that the last construction was between AD 1160 and 1170.



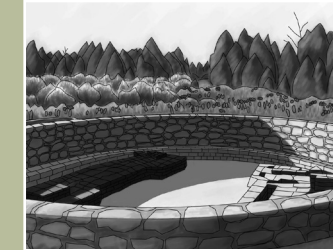
THE GREAT KIVA

The Lowry Great Kiva, 47 feet in diameter, is one of the largest kivas found in this area. This kiva was probably a central gathering place for Ancestral Puebloans from several hundred square miles.

People came from other communities on the Great Sage Plain to trade, exchange information, and to conduct religious ceremonies.

Construction of the Great Kiva started around AD 1086, during the first phase of construction at Lowry Pueblo. It was most likely used throughout the life of the community. The subterranean structure was probably accessed by a ladder through a central opening in the roof or down a series of steps through the rooms on the north. The roof was supported by four large ax-hewn beams resting on masonry platforms within the structure.

Tree-ring dates from



"Once a sacred place has been established, it always remains sacred."

Tito Naranjo, Santa Clara Pueblo

PLEASE RESPECT ANCESTRAL PUEBLOAN HOMES... LEAVE NO TRACE

The remnants of Ancestral Puebloan homes are scattered across the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. This National Monument was established on June 9, 2000 to preserve thousands of archaeological and historical sites. The Monument's legacy provides a link to the past. To preserve this legacy for future generations, please...

KEEP YOUR FEET OFF THE FURNITURE

Archaeological sites are very old and fragile. Walk carefully and avoid stepping on walls and trash middens.

DON'T TOUCH THE PAINTINGS

Oils from skin damage pictographs (rock paintings) and petroglyphs (rock carvings). Never deface artwork in archaeological sites.

DON'T EAT IN THE LIVING ROOM

Avoid picnicking in archaeological sites. Crumbs attract rodents who may tunnel and nest in the site. Make sure that you pick up and carry out all of your trash.

DON'T TAKE THE KNICKKNACKS

Leave artifacts right where you find them for others to enjoy. Out of context, artifacts mean little to the archaeologist. It is illegal to remove them.

NO SLUMBER PARTIES

Avoid camping in the ruins. It's easy to destroy walls and artifacts in the dark. Smoke from campfires stains walls and cliffs, and charcoal leaves a mess. Never use wood from archaeological sites in campfires.

TELL THE OWNER IF YOU SEE SOMETHING WRONG

Please report any vandalism or damage to historic or archaeological sites to the Tres Rios Field Office and Canyons of the Ancients Law Enforcement Tip Line: 833-660-5771 (toll free), TRFOtpline@blm.gov or call Cortez Dispatch for non-emergencies at 970-565-8441.

Lowry photography by Robert Jensen, additional photography provided by Bureau of Land Management, computer illustrations by Theresa Biezrau, monument logo by Mary Beath, and brochure design by Graphic Interpretations

Scale model of Lowry built by Paul Martin.

"You always visit a place like this with respect. Always."

Esther Martinez
San Juan Pueblo