

MAY 20 - "TAKE IT EASY", WINSLOW, AZ

Saturday morning and it's time to hit the road.

After a stop at Starbucks to check email, we're heading south to Camp Verde then north a short distance to view Montezuma Castle National Monument. The southern Sinagua farmers built this 5-story, 20-room dwelling sometime between 1100 and 1300. It occupies a cliff recess 100' above the valley. Early American settlers marveled at the structure. They assumed that it was Aztec in origin, hence the name Montezuma Castle.



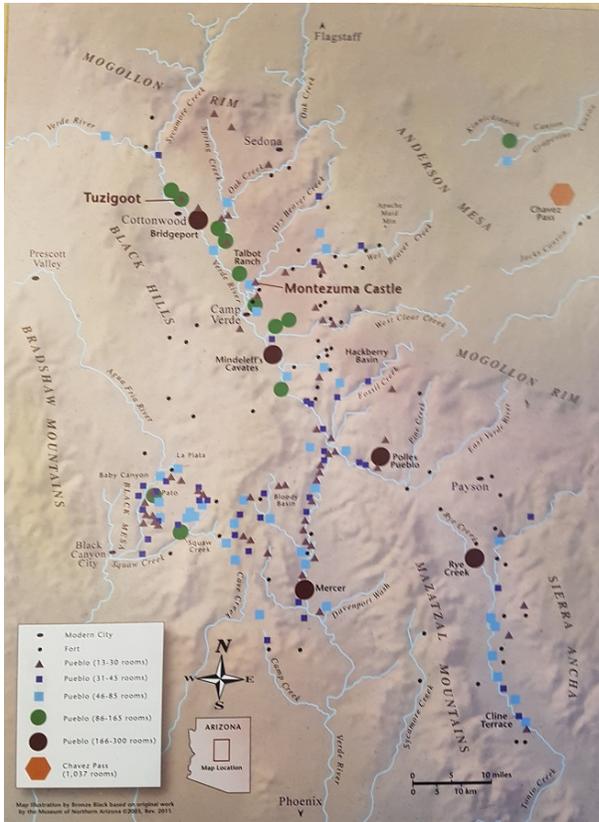
On the Move

Around 1400, after centuries of settlement here, families began leaving their Verde Valley homes.

The archeological record suggests that from 1350 to 1400, people began to leave the valley and join larger pueblos to the north and east. They did not disappear, but may have left for a variety of reasons. What was it like to leave behind homes their families had occupied for generations?

What caused them to depart this well-watered, bountiful valley? Disease, conflict, depleted soils, and changing, unpredictable weather patterns are all possibilities. Also, trade networks that had been in place for many centuries appear to stop around this time, cutting off important social, cultural, and economic contacts. Perhaps there was

the prospect of a better life in another place. Hopi say their ancestors purposefully settled and left villages like Montezuma Castle for a reason, one that involves fulfillment of a spiritual covenant.

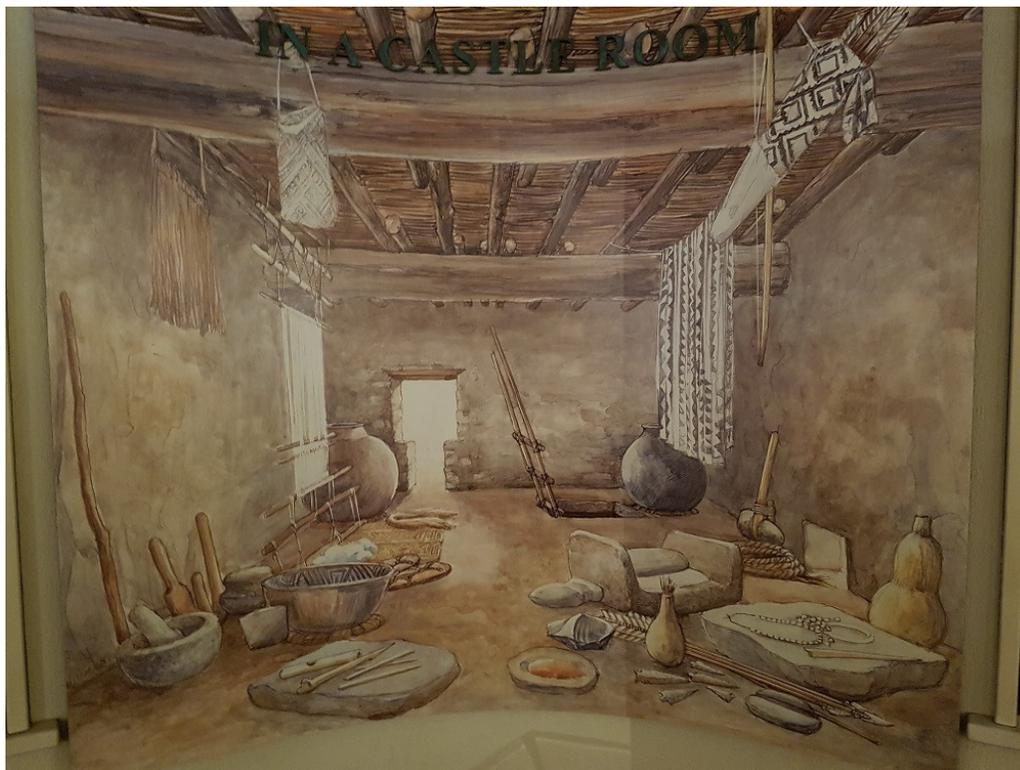


Surrounded by Neighbors

Though Montezuma Castle may seem remote, by 1300 it was part of a complex network of at least 40 Verde Valley villages. Between 6,000 and 8,000 people may have lived in the valley and its surrounding uplands.

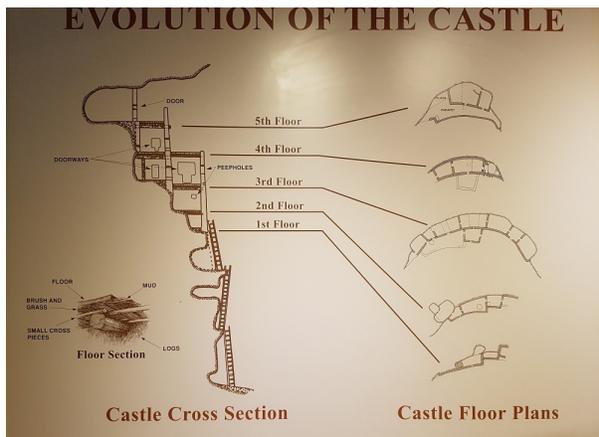
Many Hopi people say Montezuma Castle and the numerous other villages in the valley were built and occupied by clans migrating in waves from the south. The villages here were springboards to settlements further north, and ultimately to villages on the Hopi Mesas. In their view, the Verde Valley was simply a temporary stop in a larger journey, and not the final destination for these people.

Here's an artistic depiction of one of the rooms.

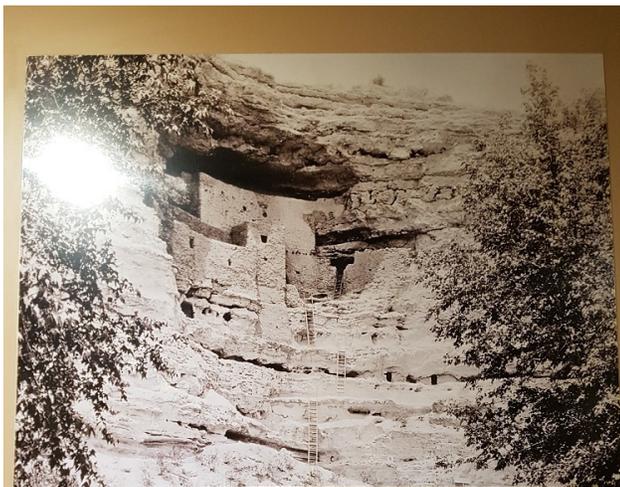


THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

The Sinagua farmers did not disappear. Their descendants still remain among the Hopi, Zuni, and other Puebloan groups. The Yavapai also share a connection with the Castle's inhabitants. O'odham peoples of southern Arizona tell us their ancestors traded with the Verde Valley people. Modern cultural connections to Montezuma Castle are rich and complex.



Here's an graphic illustration of the castle. Can you picture yourself climbing up those ladders? How about climbing down?!



It was hard to imagine that this structure has been here for so many centuries. Impressive!

Montezuma Castle, the most visible building complex of the Sinagua in this area, was constructed in phases. The people added to it gradually – perhaps from the 1130s to the early 1400s. At its greatest development the structure included portals and "viewing slots." Some passageways in the walls and ceilings were opened or closed indicating that home improvements may have been done during the overall building process.

Back on the road, we headed south back towards Camp Verde. There, we turned east on Hwy 260 for a while, then north on Hwy 87 towards Winslow, AZ. From Camp Verde (3,160') we climbed. We stopped for a break at Blue Ridge - the library building had some picnic tables outside - perfect!

We continued our climb through West and East Sunset Mesas to over 6,000'. You can see the mesas in the distance.



Then we dropped down to 4,850' and Winslow, AZ.



I knew there was a reason I wanted to drive to Winslow (other than the fact the only other way to get here is on Interstate highways). Do you remember the song "Take It Easy" by The Eagles? Be sure to click the link to hear this famous song.

Yup, after a visit to the tourist centre, we headed to "the corner."



We then drove along Route 66 to the east side of Winslow to view two pieces of the wreckage of the WTC from the 9-11 terrorist attacks. Very moving to see, and touch, these pieces and the actual flag which flew outside of the Pentagon on that fateful day!



REMEMBRANCE GARDEN

THESE TWO STEEL BEAMS FROM THE WORLD TRADE CENTER
ENTRUSTED TO THE CITIZENS OF WINSLOW
BY THE CITY OF NEW YORK,
ALONG WITH THIS FLAG THAT WAS FLOWN AT THE PENTAGON;
STAND AS THE CENTERPIECE OF OUR REMEMBRANCE GARDEN.
THE WORDS "UNITED WE STAND" REMIND THE WORLD
THAT WE WILL NOT FEAR TERRORISM.
WE HEREBY DEDICATE THIS GARDEN TO NORTHERN ARIZONA'S
PROMISE THAT
"WE WILL NEVER FORGET"



Okay, time to head towards the Meteor Crater, about 20 miles west. We've booked into the RV park there for a couple of nights. So tomorrow we'll drive 6 miles to view the crater. Looking forward to that!

More later.