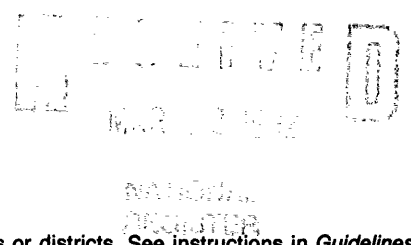


66000252

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Yucca House, Aztec Springs Ruin  
other names/site number 5MT5006

2. Location

street & number Yucca House National Monument, Montezuma County, CO  not for publication  
city, town Cortez  vicinity  
state CO code \_\_\_\_\_ county Montezuma code 083 zip code 81321

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	_____ sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Silvan C. Beaman Signature of certifying official 2/24/92 Date  
Chief Historian State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Franklin S. ... Signature of commenting or other official January 17, 1992 Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register. N/A Janet E. Townsend June 23, 1993 (SLK)  
 See continuation sheet. 1966  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:) UNFORMATION  
Signature of the Keeper 4-16-92 Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling  
DOMESTIC/village site  
RELIGION/religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/park

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Masonry  
walls Masonry  
roof N/A  
other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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National Park Service**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET**Section number   7   Page   1  **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Yucca House National Monument is a prehistoric ruin and belongs to the Pueblo III [defined by Kidder (1927)] or Great Pueblo Period [defined by Roberts (1935)] (ca. A.D. 1075 to 1300) of the Mesa Verde Branch of the Anasazi Cultural Tradition. The ruins represent a prehistoric agricultural people with a Formative culture that occupied the area for more than 900 years. Yucca House is immediately west of Mesa Verde National Park, which contains nearly 4,000 documented ruins of villages, towns, isolated buildings, work areas, and soil conservation devices built by the Anasazi. The Anasazi Cultural Tradition encompassed much of the southwestern United States, including northern New Mexico and Arizona and large portions of Utah and southwestern Colorado. The Mesa Verde Branch is one of several distinctive regional variations of the Anasazi Tradition, and is identified by the basic characteristic of settled village farming; skilled craftsmanship in ceramics, weaving, and other arts; and social and religious structures.

During the Great Pueblo Period, the Mesa Verde Anasazi culture depicted at Yucca House reached its artistic and architectural climax. The classic Mesa Verde Black-on-white pottery style, distinctive from all other Anasazi Cultural Traditions, is a hallmark of the Great Pueblo Period. Bowls, ladles, pitchers, and mugs were common decorated forms. Corrugated pottery served for cooking and storage.

It is believed that some Mesa Verde sites of this time period in the Montezuma Valley exhibit evidence of contact and/or trade with the Chacoan area (Figure 1). There is evidence of intersite communication systems among the pueblos believed by some to have originated in the Chacoan area. Also, what may be intraregional roadway remnants, assumed to be for trade or travel, are exhibited at Lowry Ruin and other sites in the surrounding area. A single rectangular rubble mound within Upper House at Yucca House has long been proposed as Chacoan structure (Powers et al. 1983:174). However, aerial photographic imagery of the area has not been examined to determine if Chacoan prehistoric road-like features occur near the Yucca House complex.

The monument contains 9.6 acres of land deeded to the U.S. Government by Mr. Van Kleek on July 2, 1919. In 1990, Hallie Ismay signed a donation deed transferring an additional 24.27 acres to the National Park Foundation for ultimate addition to the national monument. The site was designated a national monument by President Woodrow Wilson (Presidential Proclamation No. 1549) December 19, 1919. It was Dr. Fewkes who suggested the name Yucca House for the ruins because they were located on the eastern flank of what is now called Sleeping Ute Mountain. The Ute Indians referred to the mountain by the name Yucca Mountain because of the abundance

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of yucca plants growing there. (In the earlier reports by Holmes and Jackson, this mountain is referred to as El Late Mountain.) The name Yucca House was adopted by the Department of the Interior as the official designation for the new monument. The monument today is surrounded by private land owned by Mrs. Hallie Ismay of Cortez, Colorado.

The ruin attracted the attention of the earliest explorers into southwestern Colorado because of its large size, obvious prehistoric significance and, also, because it had an active spring. Yucca House was originally known as the Aztec Spring Ruins. The earliest description of the site is by W.H. Jackson (Jackson 1876:377-378) who visited the area while working for the Hayden Survey of 1874. Jackson estimated that the ". . . town built around the spring is nearly a square mile in extent . . ." The occupied area surrounding the "town" center probably did cover the mile or possibly more around the site at that time, but today his estimate is too large for this complex.

In the following year the site was visited by W.H. Holmes who was also with the Hayden Survey. Holmes (1878:398-400) further described the site and included a sketch map in his report of the surveys of 1875 and 1876. Holmes observed that the ruins around Aztec Spring "form the most imposing pile of masonry yet found in Colorado . . . the pile is from 12 to 15 feet in height and its massiveness suggests an original height at least twice as great . . . the stone used is chiefly of the fossiliferous limestone that outcrops along the base of the Mesa Verde a mile or more away [east], and its transportation to this place has doubtless been a great work for a people so totally without facilities . . ." It is now known that the distinctive tabular limestone also outcrops from the Juana Lopez member of the nearby Mancos Shale just west of Yucca House.

In 1918, Dr. J.W. Fewkes (1918:111-113; 1919a:80-81; 1919b:23-28), then Chief of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, made a survey of the numerous archeological sites previously reported in southwestern Colorado and provided one of the earliest known photographs of the ruins then known as Aztec Spring. In his "Prehistoric Villages, Castles, and Towers of Southwestern Colorado," Fewkes (1919b:23-28) declared that he "saw no ruined prehistoric village in the Montezuma Valley that so stirred his enthusiasm to properly excavate and repair as Aztec Spring . . ." Fewkes, more impressed with Yucca House than any other site in Montezuma Valley, worked diligently with the site's owner Mr. Henry Van Kleeck of Denver, Colorado, to effect donation of the site to the United States Government.

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In October 1966, with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, the national monument was administratively listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Although it was the wishes of both Mr. Van Kleeck and Dr. Fewkes that a major excavation be undertaken in the ruins, it never came to pass. In the spring of 1964, however, Albert H. Schroeder, archeologist with the Southwest Regional Office, National Park Service, and James A. Lancaster, archeologist with Mesa Verde National Park, made a few tests in and around both mounds (Schroeder 1964; Pinkley 1964). The tests clearly substantiated the presence of room structures outside the major mounds and the presence of a great kiva in the Lower House plaza (Lancaster, personal communication 1985). In addition, tree-ring specimens were obtained that dated (ending ring dates) A.D. 1163, 1229, and 1263 (Robinson et al. 1947:38). These dates and the architectural style of the ruins firmly place Yucca House in the Great Pueblo period of the Anasazi Tradition.

**PRESENT MANAGEMENT**

There have been acts of vandalism in the past at Yucca House, and there remains the threat in the future. While vandalism has not been extensive, as with any unexcavated, unstabilized, and minimally protected archeological resource, there is always the potential danger of destruction, both intentional and unintentional. The construction of a boundary fence and posting of warning signs have been sufficient deterrent to any serious disturbance since the site became a national monument in 1919. Hallie Ismay, whose front yard adjoins Yucca House, informally watches over the monument. Continuation of her vigil cannot be assured indefinitely. The isolated location of Yucca House contributes to this threat as does the fact that no permanent park personnel are stationed at the monument, although personnel from Mesa Verde National Park occasionally visit the monument.

**GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

The San Juan Basin (ca 40,000 km<sup>2</sup>) topographically is ". . . bounded on the north by the San Juan and Laplata Mountains, Mesa Verde, and Sleeping Ute Mountain. On the west, Carrizo Mountain, the Chuska Mountains, and the Defiance Plateau rim the basin, while to the south less severe limits are formed by the Zuni Mountains. On the east the Nacimiento Mountains and the Jemez Caldera are the major features, lying just east of the Hogback Monocline, which structurally forms the east basin

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edge . . ." (Powers et al. 1983:1) The San Juan River embraces the Chaco Basin within its south-central expanse.

Yucca House is in Montezuma County, Colorado, in the northernmost portion of the San Juan Basin drained by the San Juan River. It is situated on the lower, eastern slopes of Sleeping Ute Mountain approximately 10 miles south of Cortez, Colorado, and 2 miles west of U.S. Highway 666. The site is near the crest of a low ridge crossing Montezuma Valley that separates the McElmo drainage to the north and the Mancos drainage to the south.

**ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION**

In the Montezuma Valley, Romberg, Cragola, and Mikim loam occur on canyon sideslopes, hillsides, and benches at elevations of 5,400 to 7,400 feet. At the monument the elevation is between 5,775.7 and 5,920 feet (1,805 m). The annual precipitation is 11 to 15 inches. The average annual air temperature is 47 to 52 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 100 to 135 days (Ramsey et al. 1990). The Yucca House site vicinity included suitable soil types, frost-free days, and temperatures amenable to today's agricultural pursuits in the Montezuma Valley. It is assumed that these same conditions prevail for dry land farming during the Formative Anasazi occupation. Evidence of corn has been found archeologically in this area, and the size of the ruins at Yucca House presume a stable food resource for the inhabitants.

Aztec Spring is a reliable water source. It is unknown whether this spring was active during the Great Pueblo Period, however, early reports contain information that the spring was a source of water in 1876.

The dominant vegetation on the site rubble area is sagebrush, rabbitbrush, yucca, and grasses. Mule deer, cottontail rabbits, and mourning doves are frequently observed at this site.

**RESOURCE DESCRIPTION**

There are two major sagebrush-covered archeological structures (rubble mounds) and several smaller mounds and plazas within the monument boundaries [refer to enclosed aerial photo copy (Figure 3) and sketch by Holmes (Figure 2)]. The larger of the two major mounds, generally referred to as the "Upper House," measures approximately 80 by 100 feet with a height of 15 to 20 feet. The mound appears to be rectangular

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with rooms on all four sides and three depressions in its center, which may contain two or three kivas. Immediately to the south of this house mound in an open swale or depression is the spring. To the south of this swale or depression, but at a slightly higher elevation, there is evidence of a depression that is thought to be the remains of a great kiva.

The second major rubble mound is located approximately 600 feet to the east of Upper House and at a slightly lower elevation. It is generally referred to as Lower House and sometimes as the East Ruin. This rectangular structure, a second sagebrush covered mound, measures approximately 180 by 200 feet. The mound is highest along its north side and is believed to be a row of rooms (or houses) 50 or more feet in length and 8 to 10 feet in height. This mound is approximately 20 feet in width. The remaining portion of this ruin is what appears to be a rock-walled plaza area to the south of the room block. In the center of the plaza is a depression approximately 50 feet in diameter believed to be the remains of a great kiva or, possibly, a dance platform.

There are several possible house mounds to the immediate west of Upper House and extensive scattering of cultural debris, including building stone, to the east and south. This debris is believed to be the remains of smaller houses and use areas. Without extensive testing or excavation this cannot be substantiated (Schroeder 1964; Pinkley 1964; and James A. Lancaster, personal communication 1985). The circular area evident to the west of the park boundary is a modern stock tank.

Because the site has been kept in reserve for scientific research and the ruins have not been excavated and mapped to scale, it is impossible to give a detailed description of the individual structures. For this reason, the ground plan completed by W.H. Holmes in 1875 is the most detailed description available for Yucca House at this time (Figure 2). (This figure is a highly simplified and very speculative ground plan.) The mounds of building rubble, up to 20 feet in height, are covered with sagebrush and rabbitbrush that obscure specific structures or features. The amount of mounded building debris suggests that the room structures were at least three stories at Upper House and two stories at Lower House. However, Powers (et al. 1983:174) states that within Upper House there were two stories encompassing an estimation of approximately 40 rooms. Two kivas are present in the center of the house, and a smaller third kiva may be indicated by a depression in the southwest corner of the room block. Holmes' ground plan shows a definition of room block walls and kivas. The monument was mapped by aerial photography in 1984. The aerial photo, Figure 3 in pocket, defines two rubble mounds with no room blocks evident. Figure 3 also shows the contours of the rubble mounds and the present and proposed boundaries of the national monument.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHEOLOGY/PREHISTORIC  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

A.D. 1163 to 1263  
Great Pueblo Period  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

Mesa Verde Branch, Anasazi  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.



**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property 15.71

UTM References

A              
Zone Easting Northing

B              
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jack R Rudy/Adrienne B. Anderson/Betty J. LeFree  
organization National Park Service date 1990  
street & number 12795 West Alameda Parkway telephone (303) 969-2875  
city or town Denver state Colorado zip code 80225

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Yucca House dates from the Anasazi Great Pueblo Period with tree-ring dates of A.D. 1163 through 1263 and represents the culmination of the long sequence of Formative Period cultural development of southwestern Colorado. This sequence begins with the Basketmaker II period (A.D. 200-450) localized around Durango, Colorado (Morris and Burgh 1954). It continues through the Basketmaker III period (A.D. 450-700) as found, again, in the Durango area, on Mesa Verde (to the immediate east of Yucca House), and in the Yellow Jacket and Ackmen areas north of Yucca House (Martin 1939; Wheat 1955). The next period, Pueblo I (A.D. 700-900), is also known from the same areas, from the McPhee Reservoir area to the north of this site, and from the McElmo Creek drainage just west of Yucca House. Pueblo II (A.D. 900-1100) is known and understood from excavations on the Mesa Verde and the Ackmen-Lowry area to the north and west of Yucca House (Martin 1936; 1939). The majority of the large urban center sites of the Great Pueblo Period, or Pueblo III, (A.D. 1075-1300) have not been archeologically investigated in the Montezuma Valley. Some ruins, such as Dominguez, Escalante (Reed et al. 1979), and Lowry ruins (Breternitz and White 1976) have been partially excavated. The enclosed map shows the locations of other known Pueblo III ruins in the Montezuma Valley in relation to Yucca House (Figure 4).

The management of Yucca House since its establishment as a national monument to the present holds it in reserve, protecting it from unnecessary and unwarranted excavation and exploitation. The ruins have not been excavated by archeologists or extensively destroyed by vandals or pot hunters. The scientific and interpretive value of Yucca House has increased over the years as the surrounding areas have been developed. Many of the larger ruins have disappeared through urban and farmland development or been damaged by vandals. These factors all augment the uniqueness of Yucca House and increase the site's potential to provide scientific information at some time in the future. When ultimately excavated and interpreted to the public, Yucca House will provide unparalleled information to supplement our understanding of the interactions between the Chaco and Mesa Verde Branches of the prehistoric Anasazi in the south and north of the San Juan Basin. The focal point of the Mesa Verde Anasazi was not the nearby Mesa Verde itself where the spectacular, although anomalous cliff dwellings occur, but the poorly studied and little understood Montezuma Valley that served as the Anasazi bread basket. The major aspect of importance of Yucca House is its potential for future scientific research when archeological methods and scientific advancements will allow answers to many questions associated with Mesa Verde Anasazi and Montezuma Valley that are not present today.

Research problems defined by the Southwest Colorado Prehistoric Context (Eddy et al. 1984:63) include: 1) population dynamics contributing to the growth, decline,

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and abandonment in the area of Anasazi communities; 2) differences that may exist in the distribution of water control systems and agricultural techniques; and 3) social and political integration, foreign relations, paleoenvironment information.

Powers (et al. 1983) states that the San Juan Basin environments indicate a great deal of variability both in annual precipitation and in the relative suitability of environments throughout the basin for agrarian populations. Based on his examination of ecological diversity within a 10 km radius of each Chacoan outlier, the most suitable locations appear to be the Chaco Basin peripheries and areas to the north in the Montezuma Valley.

Gleichmann and Gleichmann (nd) in the Draft Great Pueblo Period of the McElmo Drainage Unit, A.D. 1075-1300 defined seven property types in the context. One of which is a habitation site with public architecture that contains residential and/or ritual architecture. Public architecture is believed to be produced by suprahousehold labor organization and interpreted to function as community ritual-integrative structures that served as ceremonial or redistribution centers for a surrounding community. Yucca House is considered by Gleichmanns to be included in this property type.

Areas of significance for habitation sites with public architecture as defined by Gleichmann and Gleichmann (nd), include (1) architecture, (2) community planning and development, and (3) the study of prehistoric culture through excavation and analysis of physical remains. Properties of this type may be considered eligible for inclusion on the National Register under Criterion A, being associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, as they comprise some of the few remaining examples of what were the centers of Anasazi ceremonial and/or community activity between AD 1075 and 1300, the final period of prehistoric occupation of the four corners area. Chaco outliers may also be considered significant for their association with the Chaco Interaction Sphere during the period AD 1075 to 1150.

Habitation sites with public architecture are also eligible under Criterion C. The community planning represented in the layout of these sites and individual architectural elements, such as Great House, tri-walled structures, or great kivas, embody the distinctive characteristics of Great Pueblo Period architecture. The architectural remains are also representative of the highest level of architectural skill and artistry achieved in the prehistoric Southwest.

Yucca House is eligible for inclusion on the National Register under Criterion D. Research at habitation sites with public architecture is critical to understanding

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the nature of community integration during the Great Pueblo Period and to defining the social structure of prehistoric communities in the region.

Substantial population growth and over-exploitation of a limited resource base (particularly in Chaco Canyon) by population clusters in the semiarid, central portions of the Chaco Basin, may have provided the impetus for the emergence of formalized exchange. Documentation of several major road systems interlinking outliers with the Chaco Canyon communities indicates that the area integrated by the system was large and diverse. It is apparent that the known roads transect a variety of environments, ultimately leading from Chaco Canyon to ecologically diverse areas on the periphery of the Chaco Basin. This divergent pattern of road systems appears quite efficient since it selects for maximum resource diversity and is not dependent on a single source area or resource system (Powers et al. 1983).

The existence of prehistoric roadways interconnecting outliers and Chaco Canyon sites and the occurrence at Yucca House of a great kiva form strong, primary evidence for site interaction on a regional scale (Powers et al. 1983). Although no prehistoric roads or road-like features have been documented in the Yucca House complex, it is possible that another important aspect of Yucca House's social and political integration within the larger context of the Montezuma Valley may be evidenced in these exchange roadways linking the settlements of the Montezuma Valley. Because of its strategic geographic location on the southeast end of the Montezuma Valley, it is assumed that the Yucca House site played an important role along the route that extended north from the large centers in Chaco Canyon and Aztec Ruin in New Mexico to the farmlands in the north. Other possible Chacoan Outliers such as Lowry, Escalante, Ida Jean, and Wallace, where there is evidence of Chacoan architecture, were possible linkages along this route (Powers et al. 1983). While modern farming has destroyed the bulk of any roadway network, segments of roadways are evident at Lowry Ruin to the west and north, and around the Goodman Point area to the west, and may be demonstrable at Yucca House. Such documentation of trade and/or contact would provide knowledge of social and political organization within the larger context of the Montezuma Valley. Because of its location in the valley between Ute Mountain and Mesa Verde, Yucca House may exhibit the potential to provide important information regarding intersite roadways among contemporaneous villages and possible intrasite trade routes and influences relating to the Chaco Branch of the Anasazi Tradition.

Because the Montezuma Valley is within an area where agriculture can be successfully practiced, information contained in Yucca House may have the potential to add to the knowledge of water control and agricultural systems reflecting social integration. Did the farmers at Yucca House develop a dependable water supply

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through spring enhancement and control soil erosion by the use of farming terraces as they did at the contemporary Lowry Ruin to the north and west of Yucca House and other Pueblo III sites in the Montezuma Valley?

In summary, the location suggests that Yucca House appears likely to have been a major trade center during the Pueblo III, Great Pueblo Period. Situated in a semidesert area and enclosing a permanent spring, its location must have been a focus for travelers in this dry region. Yucca House may be on a major artery of travel between the large cultural centers to the south and the farmlands of the Mesa Verde area and Montezuma Valley. Yucca House is one of the few remaining major prehistoric valley communities that is still relatively intact. If excavated properly (under optimum conditions of archeological research), it offers great potential for yielding information on numerous problems surrounding the natural and cultural history of the Mesa Verde Anasazi, on inter- and intra-site trade and cultural relationships, and sociopolitical organization in the northern southwest during the 12th and 13th centuries.

The significance of Yucca House is threefold:

1. It has the potential to contribute important knowledge about the prehistoric Pueblo peoples who occupied the northern portion of the American Southwest. This massive site is associated with the height of Anasazi cultural evolution, which reflects the broad pattern of Formative period development across the nation. This development, based on agriculture and the associated lifeway, resulted in the highest level of aboriginal sociocultural organization achieved north of Mexico before the arrival of Europeans. Information contained in this reserved, pristine resource may contribute to the scientific knowledge of many of the research issues of the area and within the larger framework of the region. Its pristine nature and reserve status make its research potential extremely important; it is nationally significant under Criterion D of the National Register Criteria-of-Significance.

2. Distinctive architecture. There are few great kivas that have actually been documented, only the great kivas at Lowry Ruin and Aztec National Monument have been excavated and stabilized. The great kiva at Lowry Ruin, north and west of Yucca House, was the first such structure to be excavated in Colorado. The largest depression in Upper House probably is the remains of a great kiva. The large Lower House depression is variously thought to be a dance floor plaza or great kiva. The spectacular, unique, and extensive multistoried nature of these ruins, which attracted early attention to their preservation, is considered by some southwestern archeologists, on an architectural basis, to be among the so

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called Chacoan Outlier ruins. It is nationally significant under Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places Criteria-of-Significance because it embodies distinctive architecture characteristics and methods of construction of the Great Pueblo Period.

3. Chaco outliers comprise some of the few remaining examples of what were the centers of Anasazi ceremonial and/or community activity and for their association with the Chaco Interaction Sphere during the period A.D. 1075-1300. It is nationally significant under Criterion A of the National Register Criteria-of-Significance for being associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

In 1919, the site's significance was formally recognized by Presidential Proclamation No. 1549 (December 19, 1919), which set it aside as a National Monument. The proclamation states in part:

Whereas there is in Montezuma County, Colorado, on the eastern slope of the Sleeping Ute Mountain an imposing pile of masonry of great archeological value, relic of the prehistoric inhabitants of this part of the country; and

Whereas the ground . . . has been donated to the United States . . . with a view to the preservation of said ruins, and such preservation is deemed to be in the public interest . . . there is hereby reserved and set apart as a national monument . . . .

In October 1966, the site was administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

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UTM REFERENCES: Starting at southwest corner of the nominated property and proceeding clockwise:

<u>Point</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
A	12	705200	4124780
B	12	705400	4124780
C	12	705420	4124920
D	12	705440	4124920
E	12	705420	4125020
F	12	705334	4125059
G.	12	705165	4125055

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:** The National Register property, portions of which are outside the present Yucca House National Monument, is within the NE1/4 Sec. 35, T. 35N., R. 17 W., New Mexico Principal Meridian, Montezuma County, Colorado and encompasses 15.71 acres.

The National Register property is in the following USGS Topographic Maps as given below:

Mud Creek Quadrangle, 7.5 minute series, Colorado  
SE1/4NE1/4NE1/4 Sec. 35, T. 35 N., R. 17 W.  
SW1/4NW1/4NE1/4 Sec. 35, T. 35 N., R. 17 W.

Towaoc Quadrangle, 7.5 minute series, Colorado  
NE1/4SW1/4NE1/4 Sec. 35, T. 35 N., R. 17 W.  
NW1/4SE1/4NE1/4 Sec. 35, T. 35 N., R. 17 W.  
(All New Mexico Principal Meridian)

The National Register property is shown on the above two USGS quadrangle maps. Specific information on how to get to the monument is available in the Chief Park Ranger's Office, Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:** The boundary for this National Register property is based on the outside extent of all materials and features associated with Yucca House ruins that are visible on the surface. Subsurface testing was not employed.

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**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

All photographs were taken at Yucca House National Monument by Jack R. Rudy in July of 1986. (Figure 5 shows the direction of the photographs.)

1. View to the south from outside and below the rubble mound of Upper House.
2. View to the southeast from outside and below the rubble mound of Upper House. Note the building rubble in the lower right half of the photograph.
3. View to the east of the north wall of the Lower House room block.
4. View northeast of the house mound rubble of Lower House.
5. Looking south to the house mound (north mound of rubble) of Lower House.
6. View to the south from outside and below the rubble mound of Upper House.
7. Looking southwest to the house mound (north mound of rubble of Lower House).
8. Looking east down on the house mound and plaza area of Lower House from atop the mound of the Upper House.
9. View to the southeast of the northern mound portion of Upper House.
10. View to the southeast of the northern mound portion of Upper House, showing the Montezuma Valley and the west escarpment of Mesa Verde.
11. View south of the rubble mound of Upper House. Escarpment of Mesa Verde in the background.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 66000252      Date Listed: 1966;4-16-92

Property Name	County	State
<u>Yucca House National Monument</u>	Montezuma	CO

Multiple Name

-----  
 This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Janet E. Severson  
Signature of the Keeper

~~4-16-92~~ 6-23-93  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

The nomination is amended as follows: "Architecture" and "Social History" are added to the Areas of Significance.

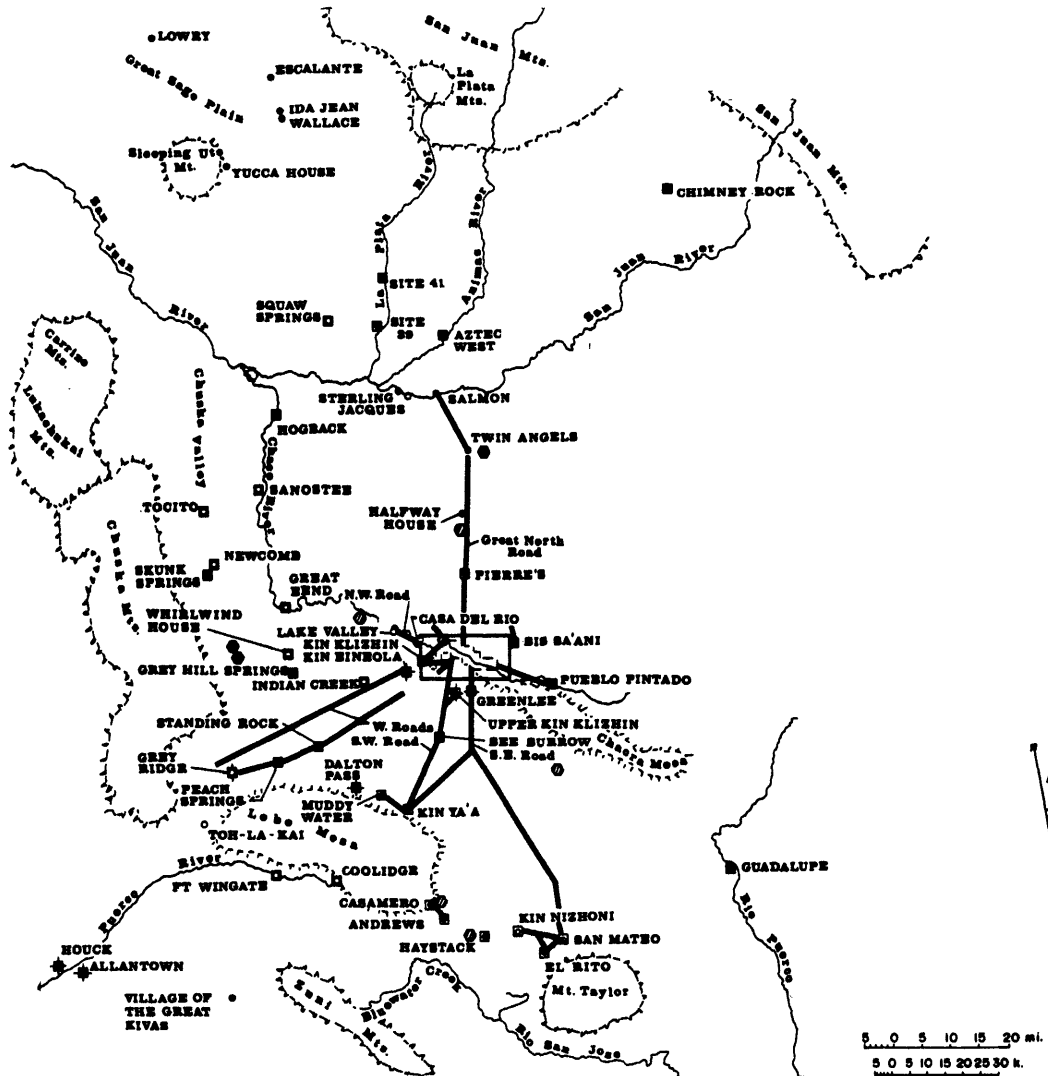
Mr. Edwin Bearss was consulted regarding all the issues associated with this nominations.

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DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

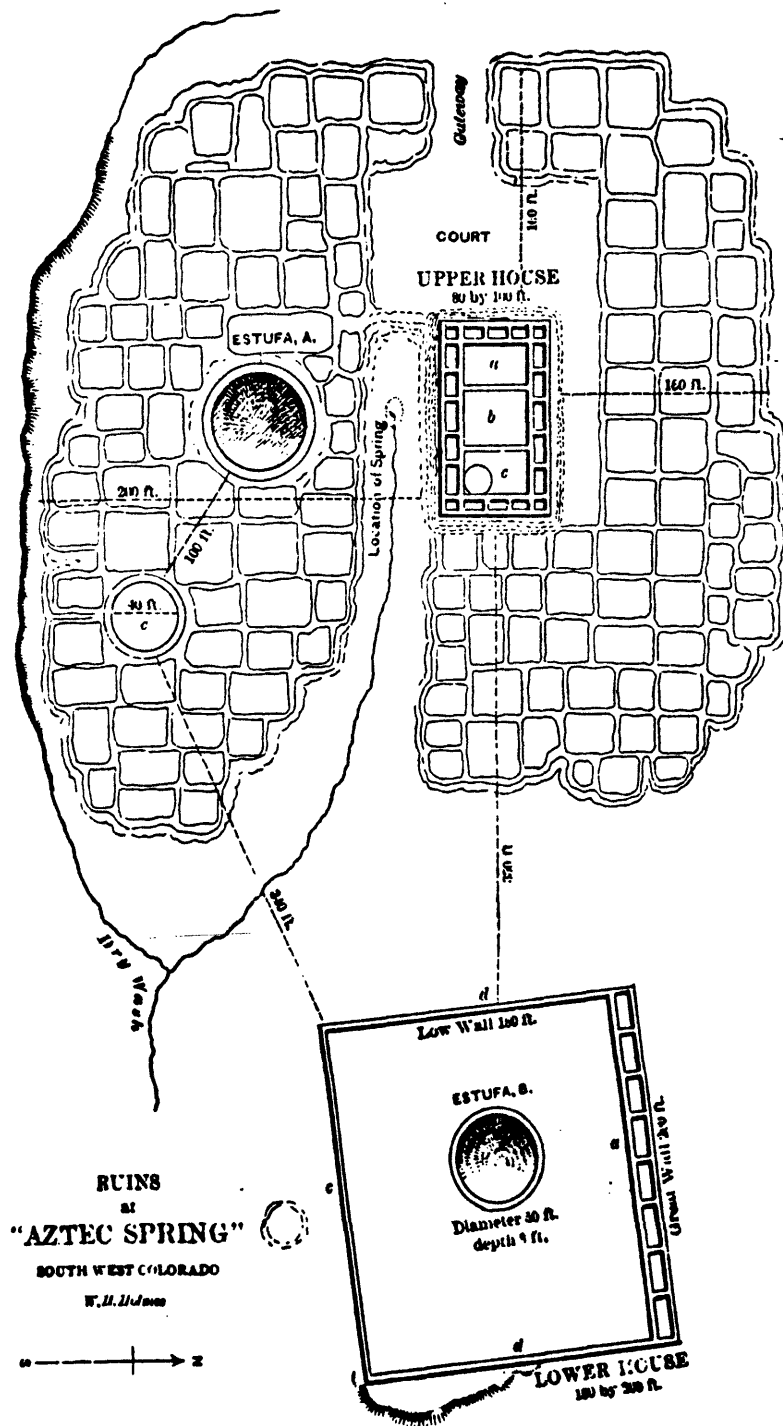
# FIGURE 1

San Juan Basin Identifying Chacoan System with the Outliers, including Yucca House (top left)



- OUTLYING CHACOAN STRUCTURE OR MAJOR CHACO CANYON STRUCTURE (TREATED IN THIS STUDY)
  - OUTLYING CHACOAN STRUCTURE (NOT TREATED IN THIS STUDY)
  - OUTLYING CHACOAN STRUCTURE AND ASSOCIATED COMMUNITY (INNER CIRCLE OR DOT KEYS TREATMENT OR NON-TREATMENT)
  - ⊙ OUTLYING CHACOAN STRUCTURE AND PROBABLE ASSOCIATED COMMUNITY (INNER CIRCLE OR DOT KEYS TREATMENT OR NON-TREATMENT)
  - ▨ OTHER RECONNAISSANCE AREA
  - SCHEMATIC INTERPRETATION OF PROBABLE PREHISTORIC ROAD. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD AND THE SOUTHWEST ROAD, ROAD IDENTIFICATIONS ARE TENTATIVE. SUBJECT TO FUTURE CONFIRMATION THROUGH GROUND SURVEY.
- INTENSIVE SURVEY AREAS INCLUDE THE BIS SA'ANI, PEACH SPRINGS, AND PIERRE'S COMMUNITIES. RECONNAISSANCE AREAS INCLUDE THE TWIN ANGELS, HALFWAY HOUSE, HOGBACK, GREAT BEND, GREY HILL SPRINGS, STANDING ROCK, DALTON PASS, MUDDY WATER, AND CASANERO OUTLYING STRUCTURES OR COMMUNITIES.

**FIGURE 2**



**RUINS**  
at  
**"AZTEC SPRING"**  
SOUTH WEST COLORADO  
W.H. Holmes

Ground plan of Yucca House ruins known as "Aztec Spring" ruin as sketched by W.H. Holmes in 1875 (Holmes, 1878). The term "estufa" was then applied to what today is known as a kiva (an underground ceremonial room). Building rubble and other cultural debris surrounding the Upper House are still present today but the clear delineation of rooms is not. There is reason to believe, from surface survey and other archeological evidence, that the remains of additional houses, whether contemporary with the Upper House or even possible earlier, are still present.

**FIGURE 4**

**PUEBLO III SITES in Montezuma Valley**

