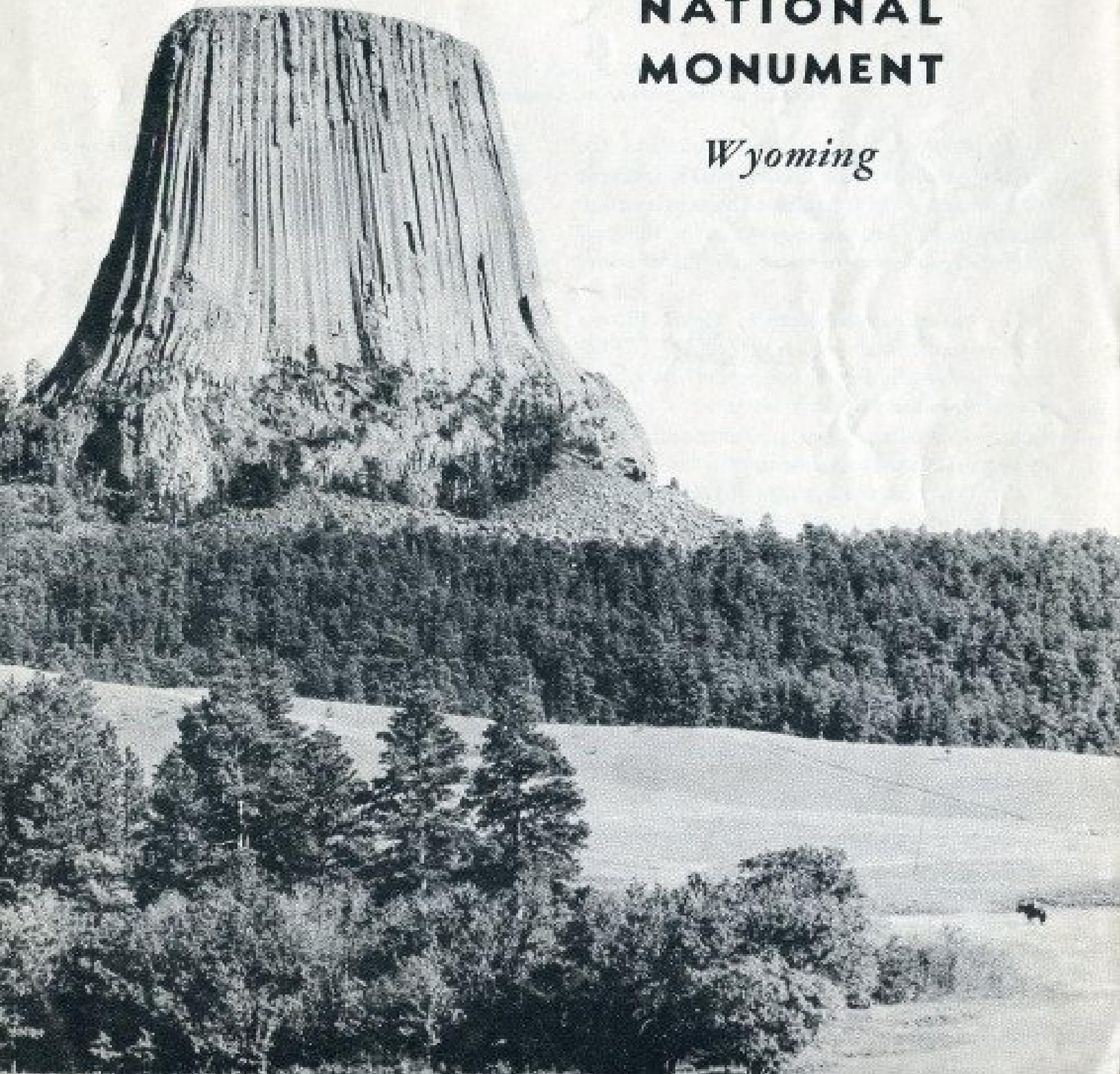


DEVILS TOWER

**NATIONAL
MONUMENT**

Wyoming



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Wyoming
(1949), by National Park Service

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DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT

Wyoming

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, J. A. Krug, *Secretary*
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, Newton B. Drury, *Director*

An 865-foot tower of rock, serving as evidence of volcanic activity that occurred many millions of years ago

Devils Tower National Monument has the distinction of being the first national monument to be created. It was established by proclamation of President Theodore Roosevelt in the year 1906 under authority of the so-called Antiquities Act.

The great natural feature, Devils Tower (known to the Sioux Indian as MATEO TEPEE, meaning Grizzly Bears' Lodge), is like a huge fluted monumental shaft set upon a mound, alongside the Belle Fourche River and amidst rolling grasslands and pine forests.

The Tower rises to a height of 1,280 feet from the river bed and some 865 feet from its apparent base on the hilltop. The diameter at its base is approximately 1,000 feet, and at the top averages 275 feet. The top surface embraces about an acre and a half, upon which mosses, ferns, grasses, shrubs, and sagebrush grow. Mice, pack rats, and chipmunks have been seen there, and the falcon and hawk make it their home. As viewed from various angles, the Tower has many shapes.

The fresh rock is of a dark grey color which, after weathering, bleaches to a light grey with tinges of buff. Lichens of various colors and shades grow on its face, reflecting tones of light, so that in color its appearance may change several times during the day, depending on

conditions of atmosphere and light. On occasion, a red sunset may give it a reddish glow, fading to dull purple.

A Geologic Mystery

As to the mode of origin of the Devils Tower geologists are by no means in agreement. That the rock of the Tower was at one time molten and was forced upward from deep within the earth is no question, and that it cooled beneath the surface is probable. But whether the great shaft as it now stands is in reality hardened lava in the neck of an old volcano the enclosing walls of which have been removed by erosion, or whether it is part of a great sheet or sill of molten rock which was injected between rock layers, cannot be positively stated.

On the basis of either explanation hundreds of feet of rock have obviously been removed by erosion from around the Tower and carried by rivers toward the sea.

The columns present an interesting problem. They appear to have been produced in the rapidly cooling volcanic rock by regularly arranged cracks which were due to contraction of the cooling mass. The fact that they are not well developed in the base of the Tower may be due to the slower cooling of the more deeply buried part. The flare of the columns is a subject too involved for this brief account.

As to the age of the Tower it is believed to have been formed early in the Age of Mammals, perhaps 50 million years ago, but to have been uncovered by erosion only in the last one or two million years.

Plant and Animal Life

About a half mile from the entrance to Devils Tower National Monument the visitor finds himself driving through a thriving prairie dog “town.” These animals were as typical of the original West as the buffalo. Their presence in towns covering several square miles was incompatible with agriculture, and the elimination of the species has progressed to the point where they are now rarely found. Since all forms of plant and animal life are protected within national monuments, this colony of prairie dogs gives one a glimpse of the Old West.

Mule deer may be seen occasionally, and also many small animals including cottontails and chipmunks.

A wide diversity of weather conditions, soil, and elevation, and the location of the monument between the mountains and plains, produce an interesting and extensive fauna and flora. These factors, together with interesting geological problems, afford the student of natural history a wealth of observation and information if he will but take the time to follow not only the trail which encircles the Devils Tower proper but the 4½ miles of nature trail as well.

Devils Tower and the Belle Fourche River

Distant view of Devils Tower

Fragments of fallen columns at base of Devils Tower

The Monument Museum

Many questions come to those who view Devils Tower, and an effort is made to answer them through exhibits in the museum at the parking

area. There, by use of pictures, diagrams, artifacts, and specimens, is presented an explanation of some of the features of the Tower, its geology, setting, history, and legend. These exhibits, of interest to the layman and student alike, are a logical prelude to a walk along the trails.

Location and Facilities

Located a little west of the center of Crook County, which lies in the northeast corner of Wyoming, the monument entrance is 7 miles northward from U. S. Highway 14, 29 miles northwest of Sundance, Wyo., and 33 miles northeast of Moorcroft, Wyo.

In the days gone by, because of its inspiring setting, the area close to the Tower was a favorite camping and picnicking site, first by the Indian and then by the pioneer who braved the rugged and traillike access to the very base of the great rock. Not the least inviting feature was the large spring of unusually pure and cold water located but a few feet from the base of the Tower, as if flowing from it.

In the development of the area, to afford easy access and more comfort for the hurried vacationist and thoroughgoing student as well, these salient primitive features are preserved by making the water available at nearly all principal points and by the development of the natural picnic and campground areas within the shadows of the Tower. Adjacent to the area, as well as within a few miles of it, are tourist cabins for those wishing overnight lodging, but who are not equipped to camp.

Administration

Devils Tower National Monument, containing 1,194 acres of federally owned land, is one of the areas of the National Park System owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service. In these areas the scenery and the objects of historic, prehistoric, and scientific interest are carefully preserved and displayed for public enjoyment.

Inquiries regarding the monument should be addressed to the Superintendent, Devils Tower National Monument, Devils Tower, Wyo.

**DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT
WYOMING**

High-resolution Version

DEVILS TOWER ELEV. 5117

Store

Devils Tower Post Office and Store

BELLE FOURCHE RIVER

ENTRANCE STATION

PRAIRIE DOG COLONY

LOOKOUT POINT

Fossil Hill

Museum and Office

Campgrounds

Picnic Grounds

REVISED APR. 1947 NM.-DT.-7001 J.J. Black, Mar. 1942.

LEGEND

— - — Monument Boundary

===== Main Roads

== == Secondary Road

- ~ ~ - Foot Trails

VICINITY MAP

DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT

LITTLE MISSOURI BUTTES

Belle Fourche River

Devils Tower

Alva

Hullett

U. S. Highway 85

Belle Fourche

Four Corners

Spearfish

TO NEWCASTLE

TO MEDORA, N. DAK.

U. S. Highway A 85

Deadwood

Lead

TO MT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL

U. S. Highway 14

Carlile

Moorcroft

Spearfish

Sturgis

Sundance

TO GILLETTE

TO RAPID CITY

U. S. Highway 212

Alzada

Belle Fourche

TO MILES CITY

U. S. Highway 16

Upton

LEGEND

==== Oiled Roads

—— Secondary Roads

Three miles of oil-surfaced road leads from the entrance on the east to the parking area, museum, Tower trail, and picnic areas and campgrounds.

A permit fee of 50 cents for each automobile, motorcycle, and house trailer is collected at the monument entrance. This permit remains good throughout the entire calendar year in which it is purchased.

All rock, plants, and animals on the monument are protected and must not be disturbed or harmed.

Help keep the grounds clean by using the fireplaces and refuse receptacles.

Camping, picnicking, and parking are limited to areas so designated.

Transcriber's Notes

- This eBook is based on a U.S. government publication which is public domain in the United States.
- Corrected a few palpable typos.
- Within the map, transcribed labels, and added italicized text where needed to define the context.
- In the text versions only, text in italics is delimited by underscores.

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