

Vacation Guide

New Mexico's History and Natural Beauty Beckon

High, dry, sunny New Mexico is one of the best vacation areas in the United States. Among its attractions are historic old towns, towering mountains, vast underground caverns and a desert of pure white sand.

New Mexico was Indian territory until the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores searching for the legendary Seven Cities of Gold. The legend may have arisen when early Spanish explorers saw adobe villages in the distance. Adobe is clay, with straw as a binder, and the late afternoon sun shining on adobe walls sometimes makes them glint like gold.

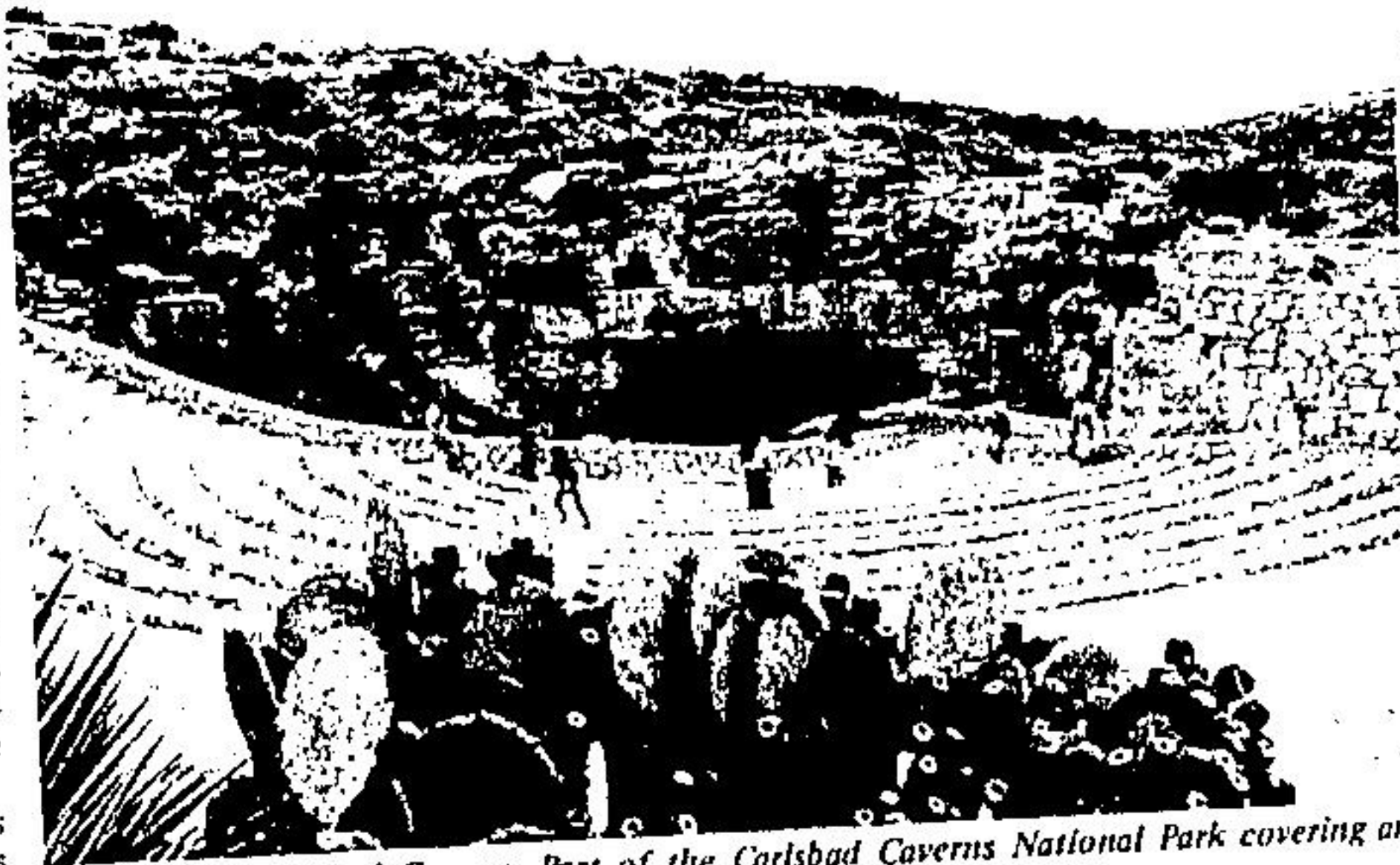
New Mexico's history is divided into four distinct eras - Indian, Spanish, Mexican and American. Santa Fe, the state capital of New Mexico, has many reminders of New Mexico's earliest Spanish period, including the palace built there in 1610 by Don Pedro de Peralta, third governor of the Spanish province. The palace, which resembles a fortress, now houses a museum that tells the story of New Mexico's sometimes turbulent past.

Taos is an old town that has become a year-round artists' colony. It has about 80 art galleries catering to all tastes.

The adobe villages in which many of the Indians live are called pueblos and the Taos pueblo is one of the most notable. Its interconnected buildings, including some several stories high, have been inhabited continuously for more than eight centuries and still provide a home for about 1,400 Indians.

Albuquerque, which is New Mexico's largest city, has become a major metropolitan area but the central Spanish-American Old Town has been preserved much as it was centuries ago. It is a gas-lighted enclave of buildings, most of which have been converted to gift shops, antique stores, art galleries and restaurants.

All New Mexico is high country and one of the best scenic views can be obtained from an aerial tramway that takes 60 passengers aboard



Entrance to Carlsbad Caverns. Part of the Carlsbad Caverns National Park covering an area of 46,753 acres.

a bright red coach on a 10-minute ride to the top of Sandia Peak, at an altitude of 10,378 feet, overlooking Albuquerque.

The longest traverse extends for more than one and a half miles and passengers get a view like that from a

helicopter as the coach soars across deep canyons and rocky crags.

The view from the summit is especially dramatic at dusk when the lights of Albuquerque are switched on, twinkling like diamonds

on velvet. White Sands National Monument is a desert of gypsum, a fine white sand, that has dunes up to 40 feet high. At the Visitor Center, exhibits explain how the gypsum was formed. A road leads through part of the

desert where many Arabian Nights movies have been filmed.

Carlsbad Caverns, best-known of all New Mexico's attractions, have been explored to a depth of more than 1,000 feet and are claimed to be the world's largest.

Tourists visit the caverns mainly to see the beautiful stalactites and stalagmites but another attraction is the sight of thousands of bats emerging from the cavern entrance at dusk to go searching for insects in the surrounding hills.

Roswell is a small town that has long been famous for its fine climate. In the 1930s, that was what at-

tracted Robert Goddard, a scientist who was one of the first to experiment with liquid fuel rockets of the kind that were ultimately to take men to the moon.

After interplanetary rockets had been perfected, the value of Robert Goddard's early work was recognized. A small museum now includes one of his workshops, completely reconstructed, and several of the rockets he built, along with many photographs showing the results he achieved.

Outside the museum is a gantry of the kind he built while conducting his experiments, with one of his rockets in place as if about to be launched.

Bermuda poinsettias welcome Christmas

Spend a Christmas in Bermuda and one of the great things you'll discover is cassava pie. When you do, it will be a lasting memory.

Cassava pie is Bermuda's traditional yuletide dish, as important to Bermudians as turkey is to Americans. Best described as a sweet rich cake filled with either chicken or pork or both, cassava pie has a distinctive and delectable nutty taste. Locals eat it hot or cold, for breakfast or supper, and always with a smile.

The origins of Bermuda cassava pie go back more than 365 years to the Christmases that were celebrated right after the island was settled. Then, the starchy root of the cassava tree was abundant on the island, whereas today very little cassava is raised here anymore. In fact, Bermuda each year imports more than 25 tons of cassava, primarily from the West Indies. Generally, it is brought in as unprocessed roots, then

peeled, grated and packaged for sale. Ironically, the root in its natural state is highly poisonous, containing hydro-

cyanic acid. By soaking the roots in water, the poison is diluted and extracted.

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