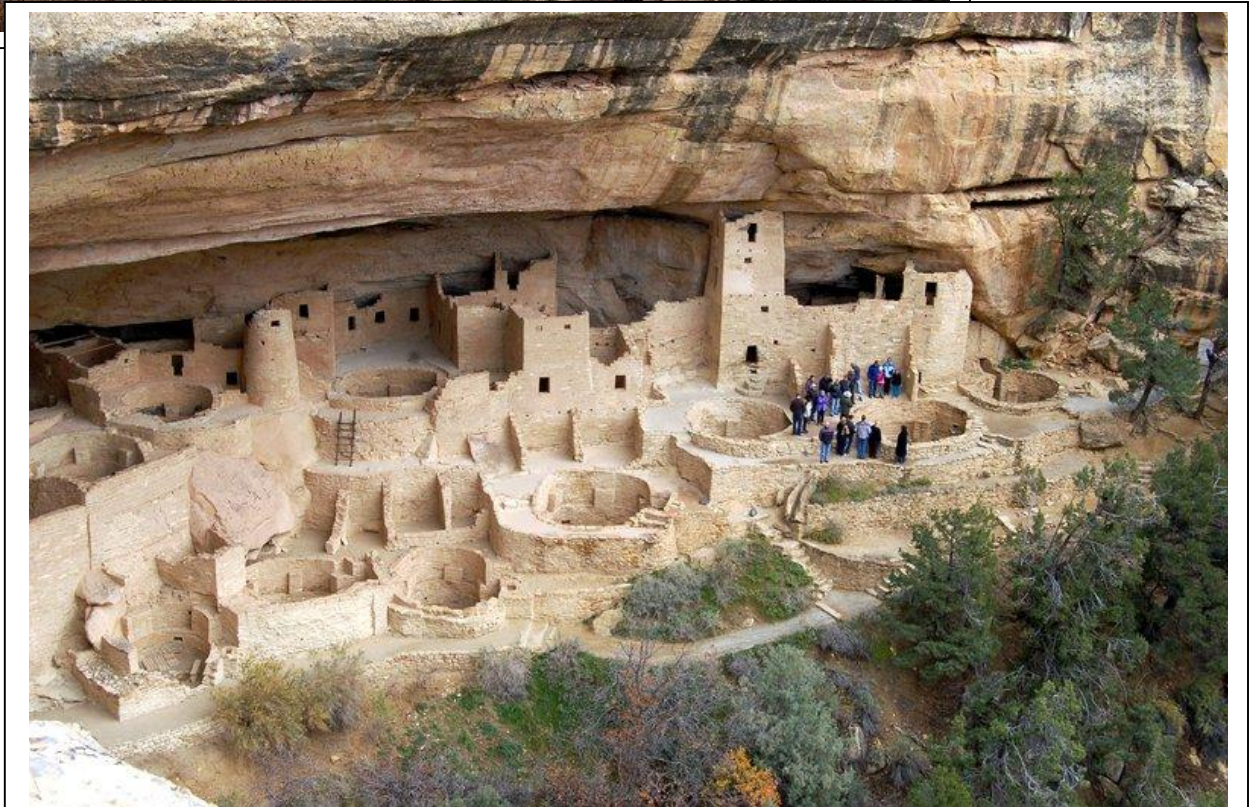
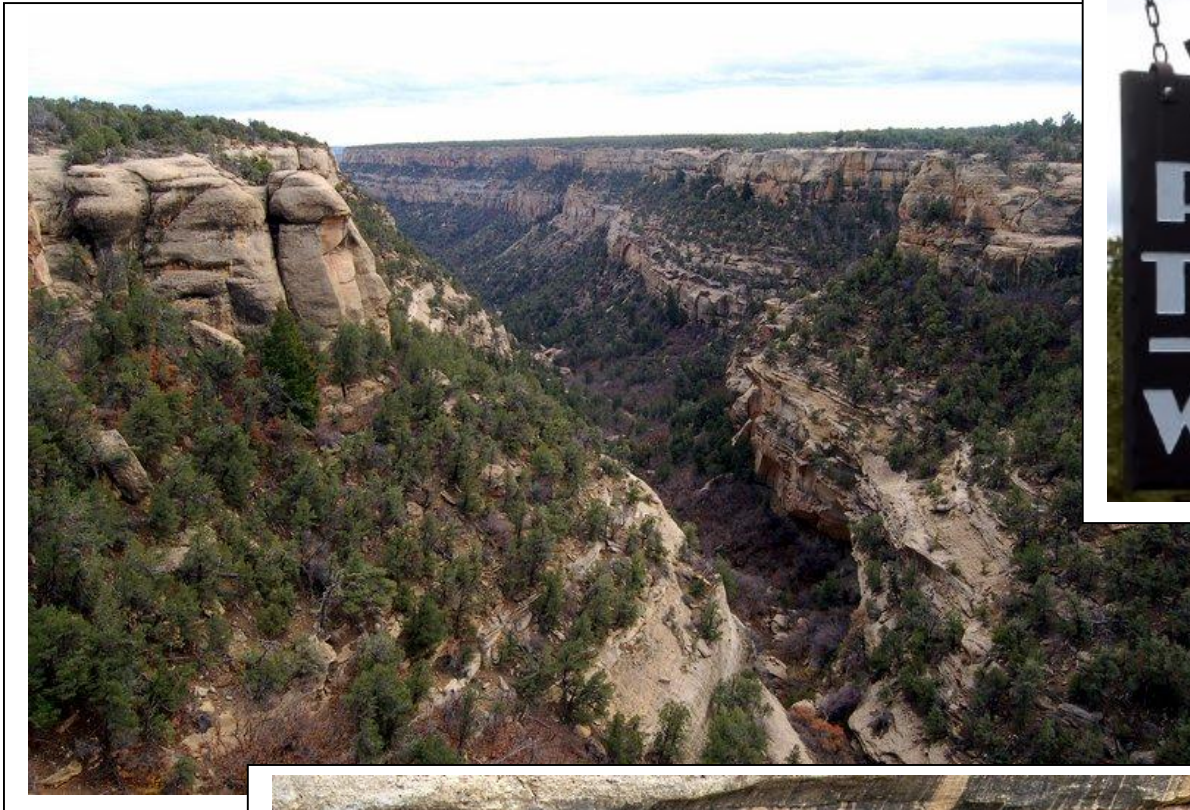
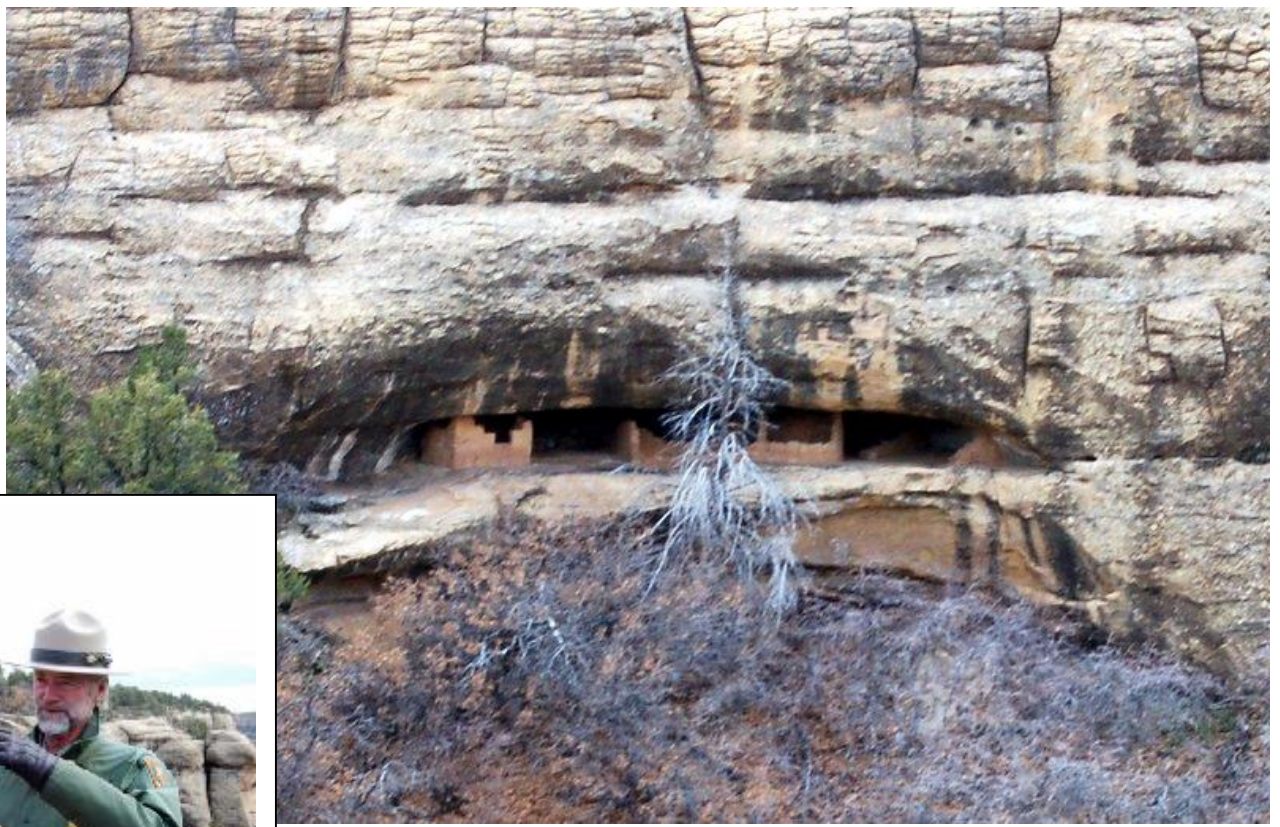
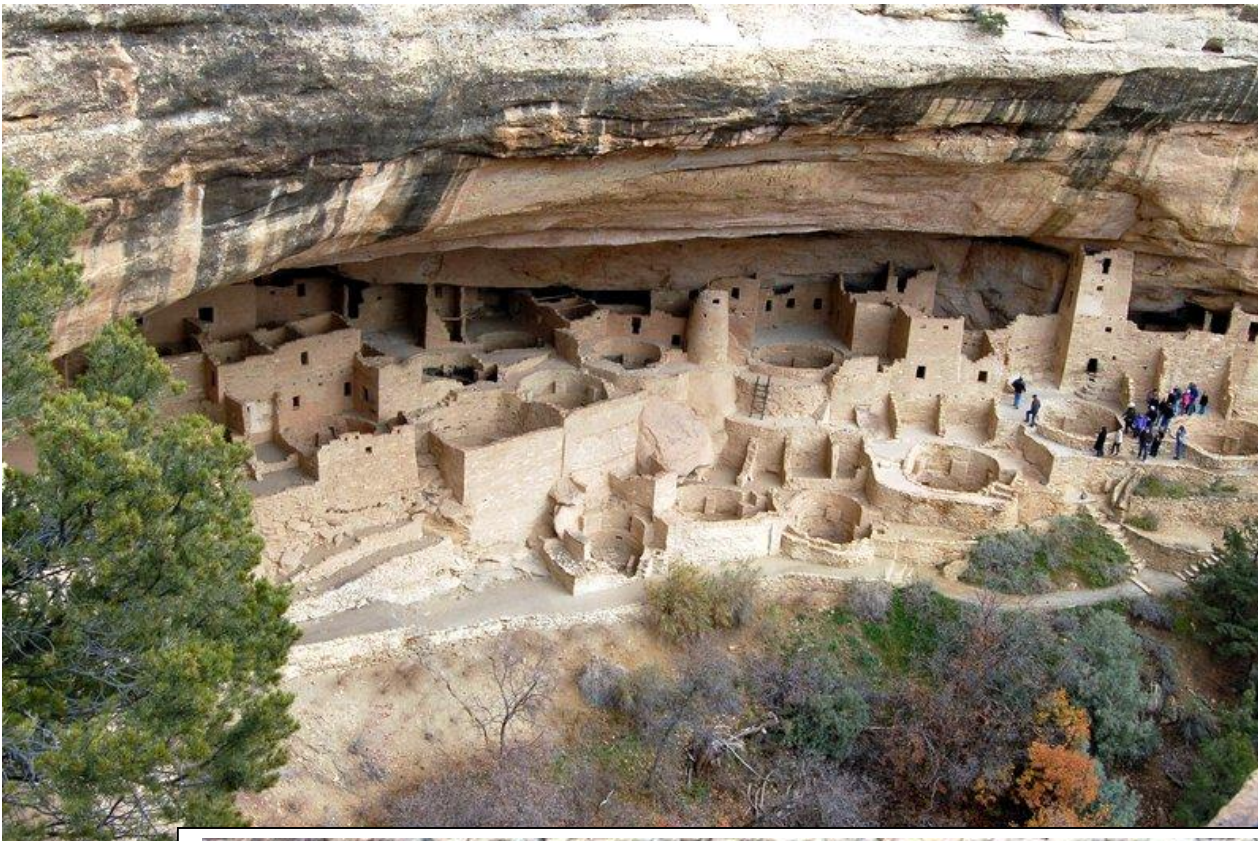


Western Road Trip Newsletter

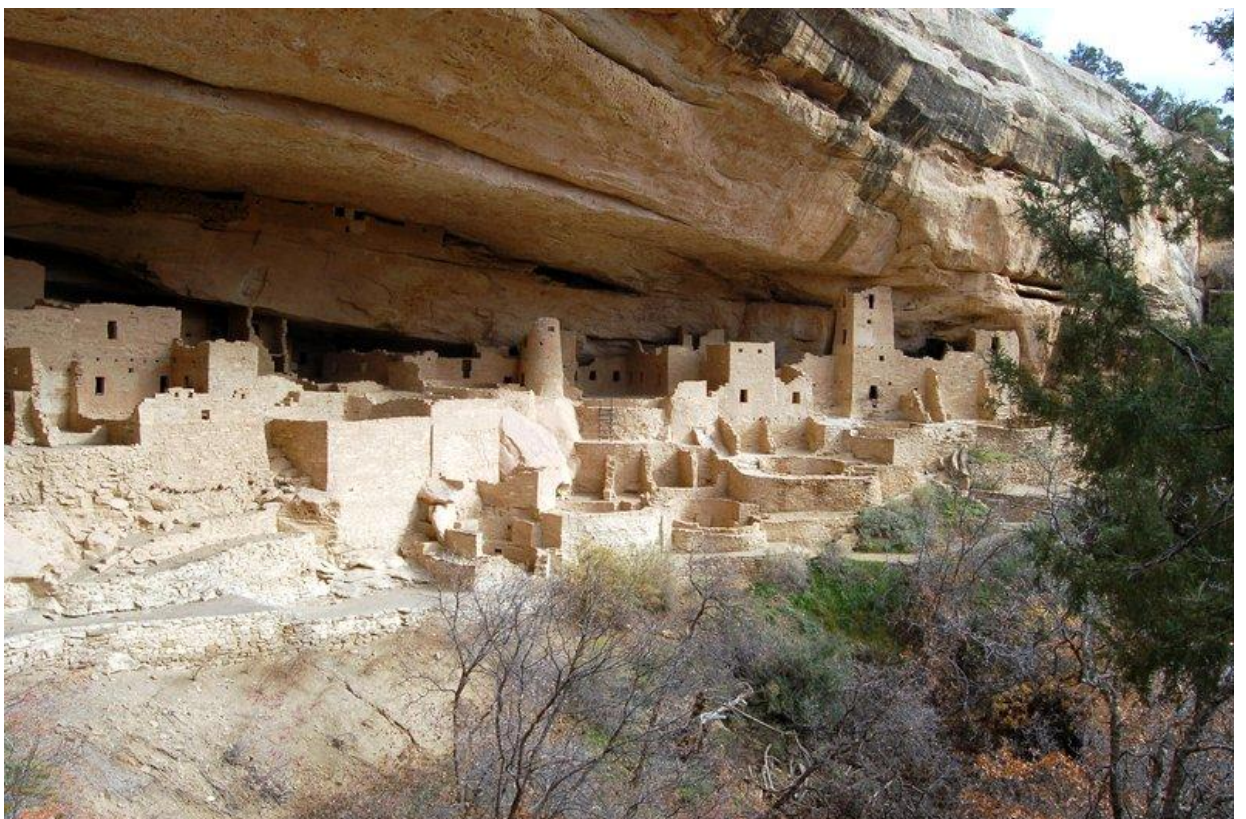
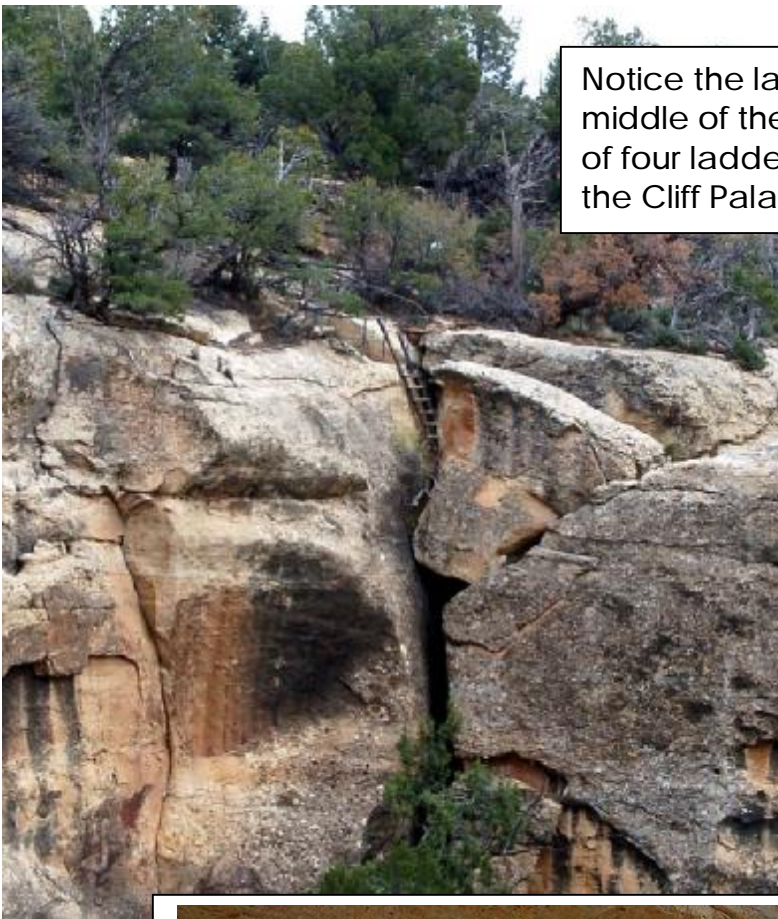
Episode III: The Cliff Palace Tour



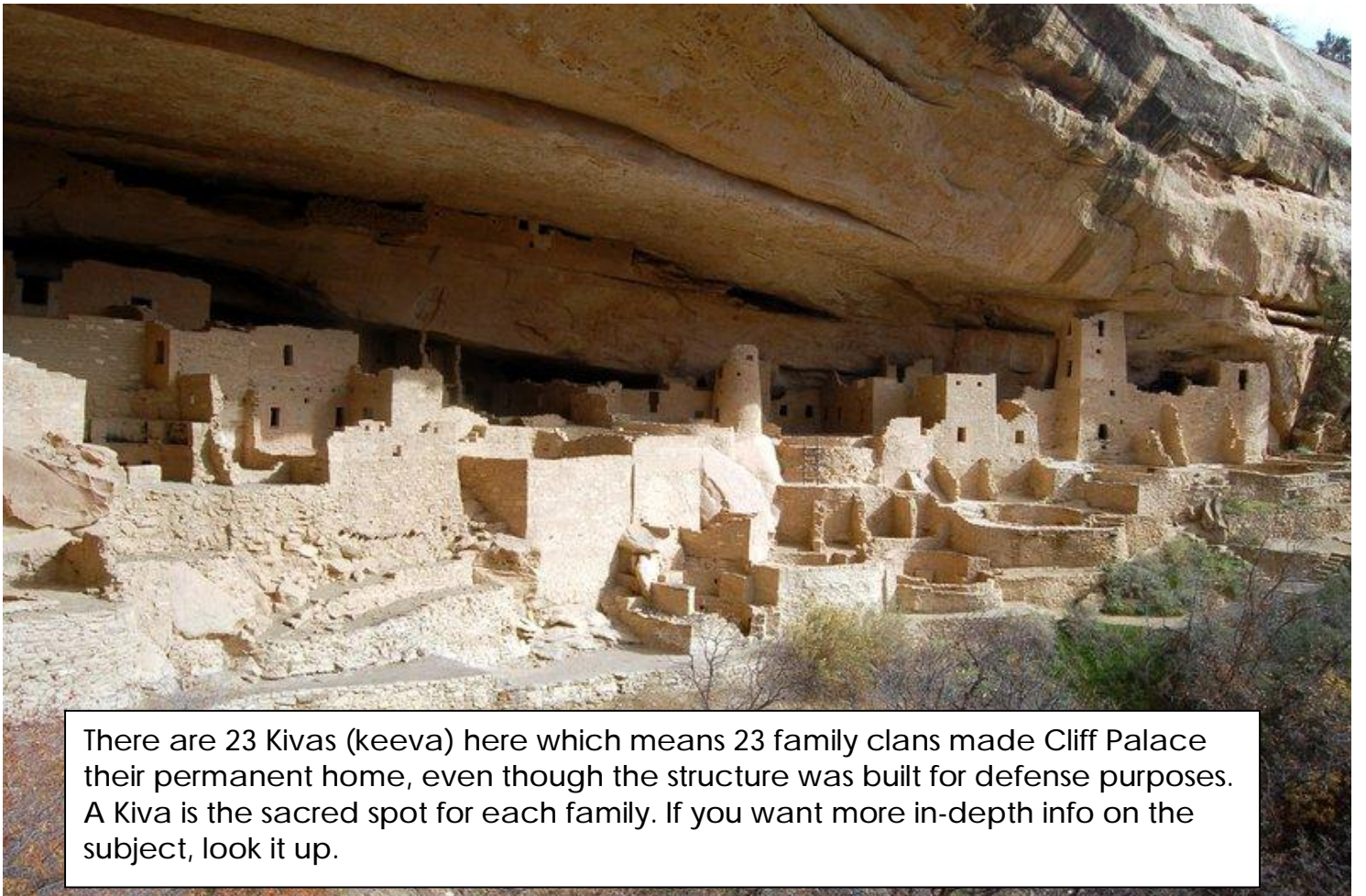


Ranger Tom Wolf, an ecology professor, retired 7 years ago to become a Mesa Verde Ranger. Here he is giving us a little history and other info on Cliff Palace.

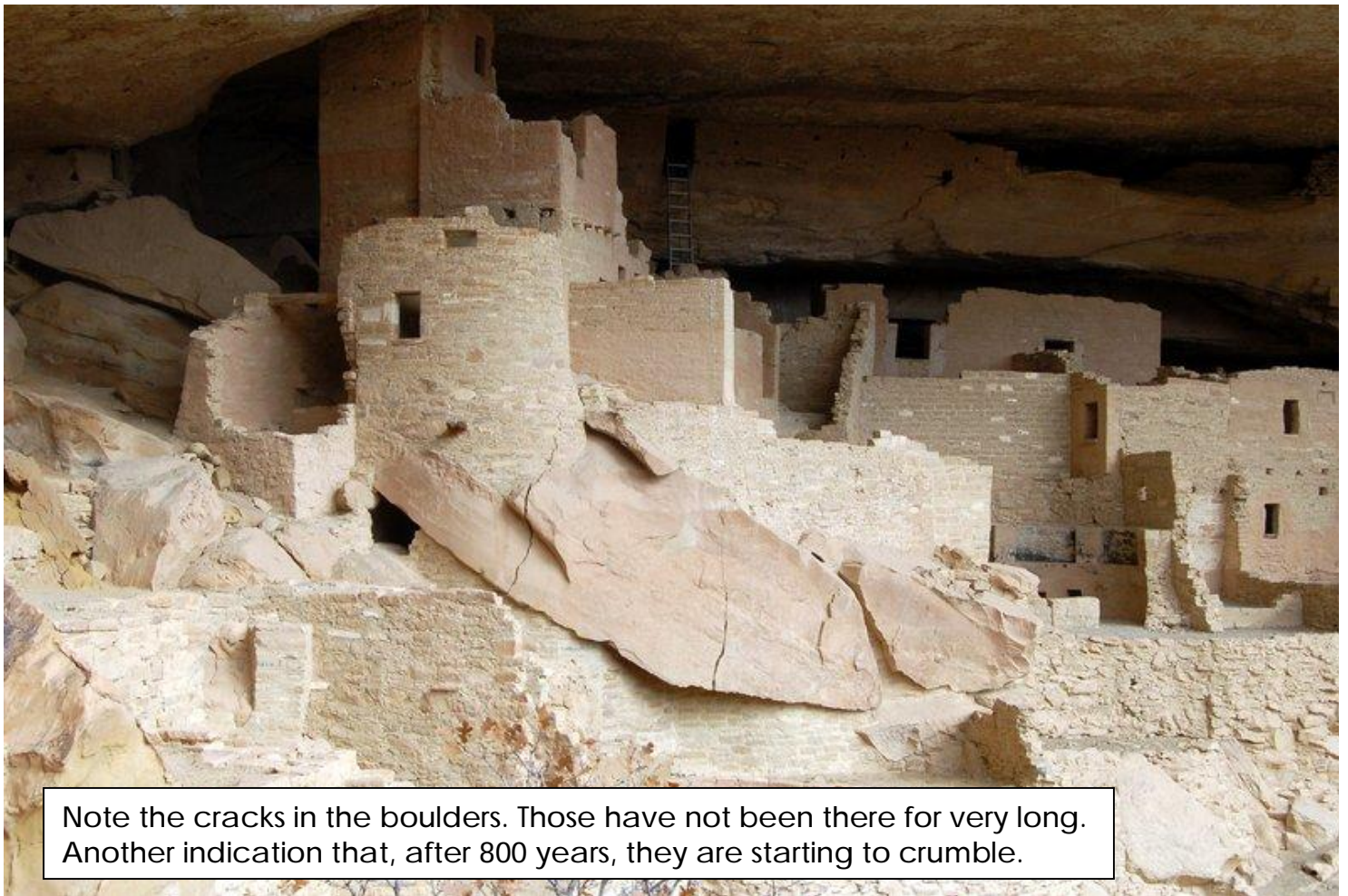
Notice the ladder right there in the middle of the photo? That is the last of four ladders we climb to exit from the Cliff Palace Tour



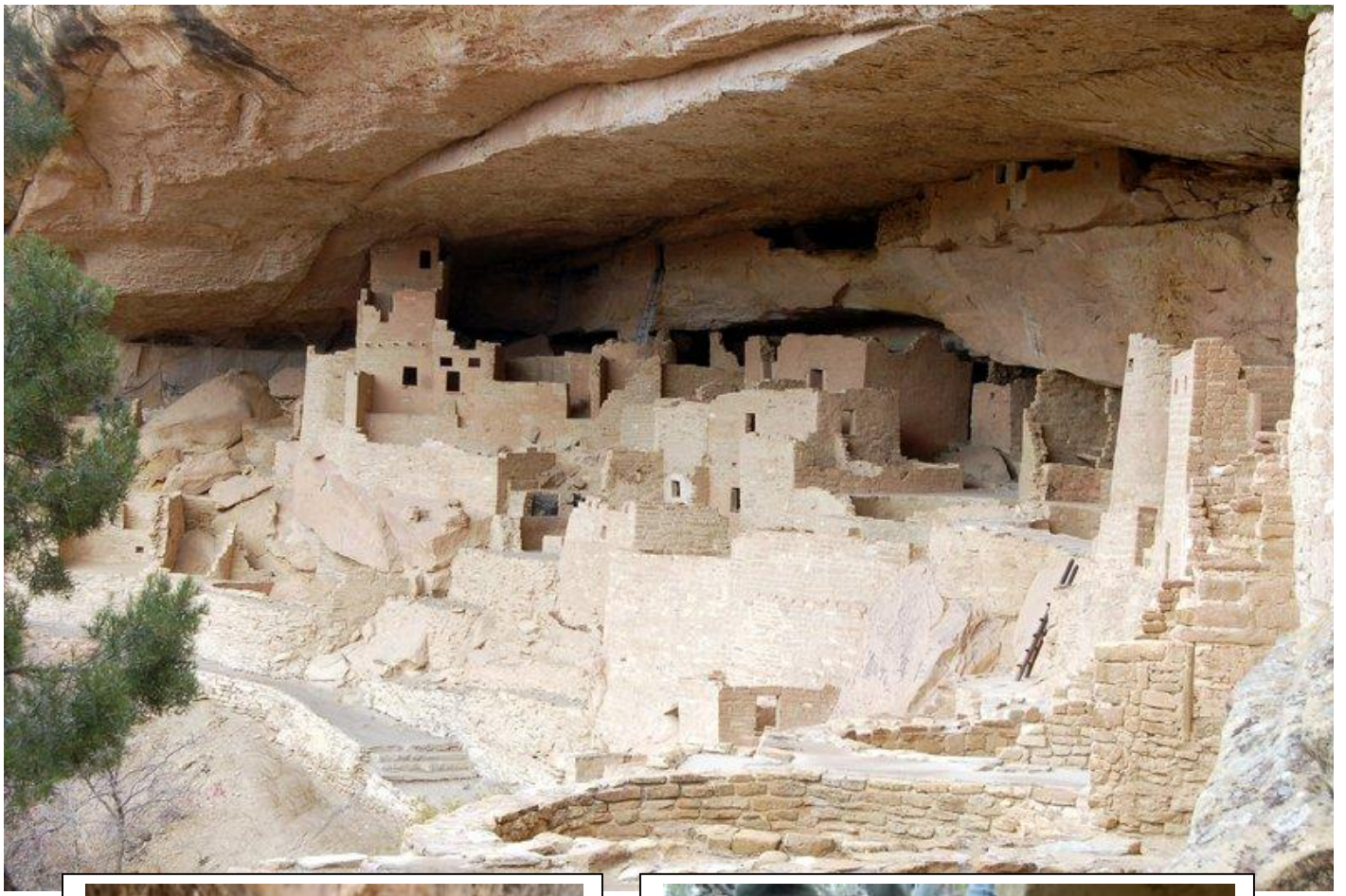
Everything from the round tower left was built first on bedrock. Everything to the right was built on sandstone. Because of several fires since the 90's, a good share of the trees on the mesa above were burned and no longer soak up the moisture from the soil. So the water percolates through the sandstone but stops at the shale (bedrock) below the buildings. So much water is now entering the right half of the buildings that they are starting to slide away from the wall. Major renovations are needed, or the entire structure will just slip away.



There are 23 Kivas (keevea) here which means 23 family clans made Cliff Palace their permanent home, even though the structure was built for defense purposes. A Kiva is the sacred spot for each family. If you want more in-depth info on the subject, look it up.



Note the cracks in the boulders. Those have not been there for very long. Another indication that, after 800 years, they are starting to crumble.

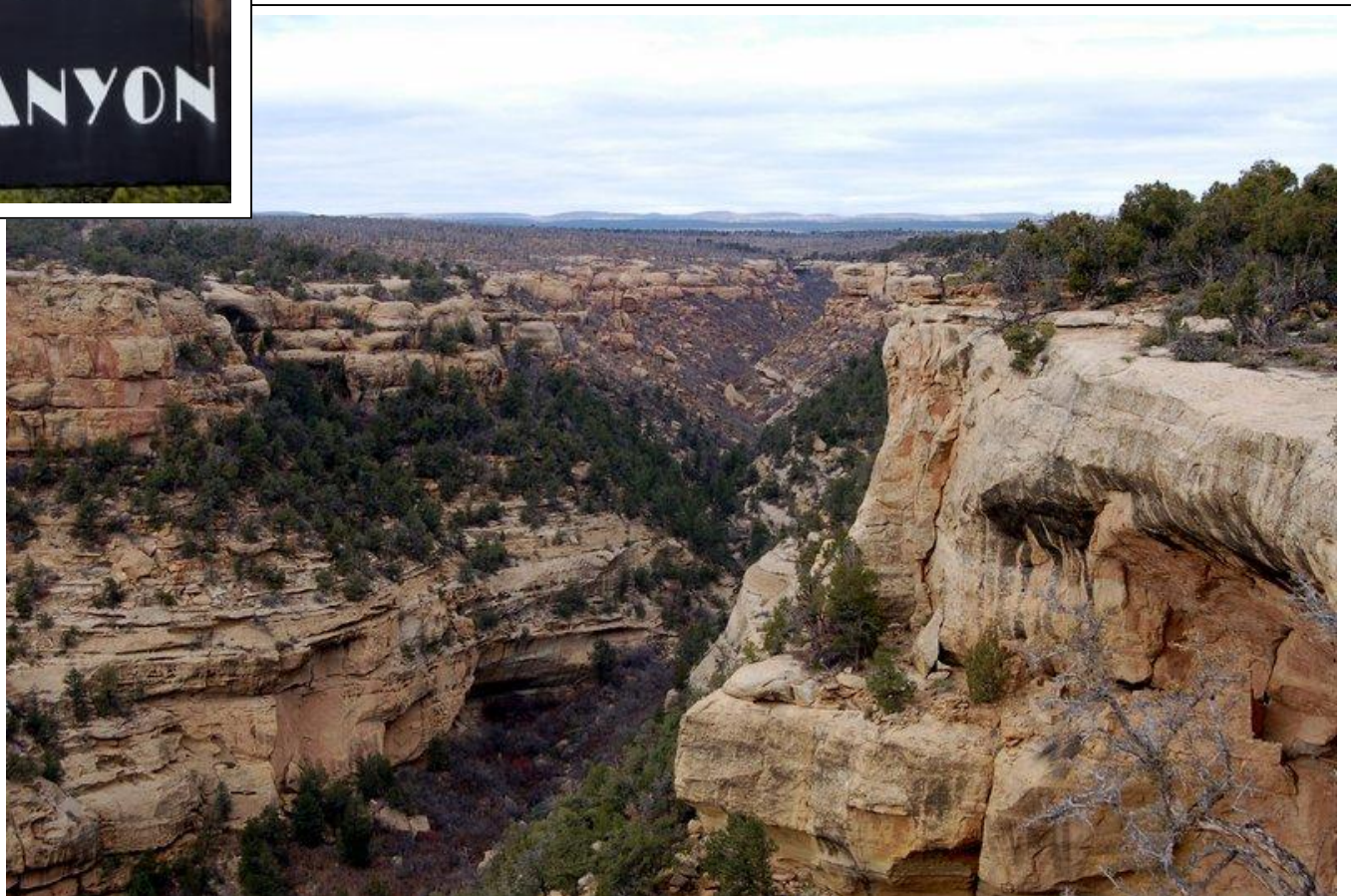


These are the final ladders to exit Cliff Palace. You will see the fella to the right again, in the next photo.



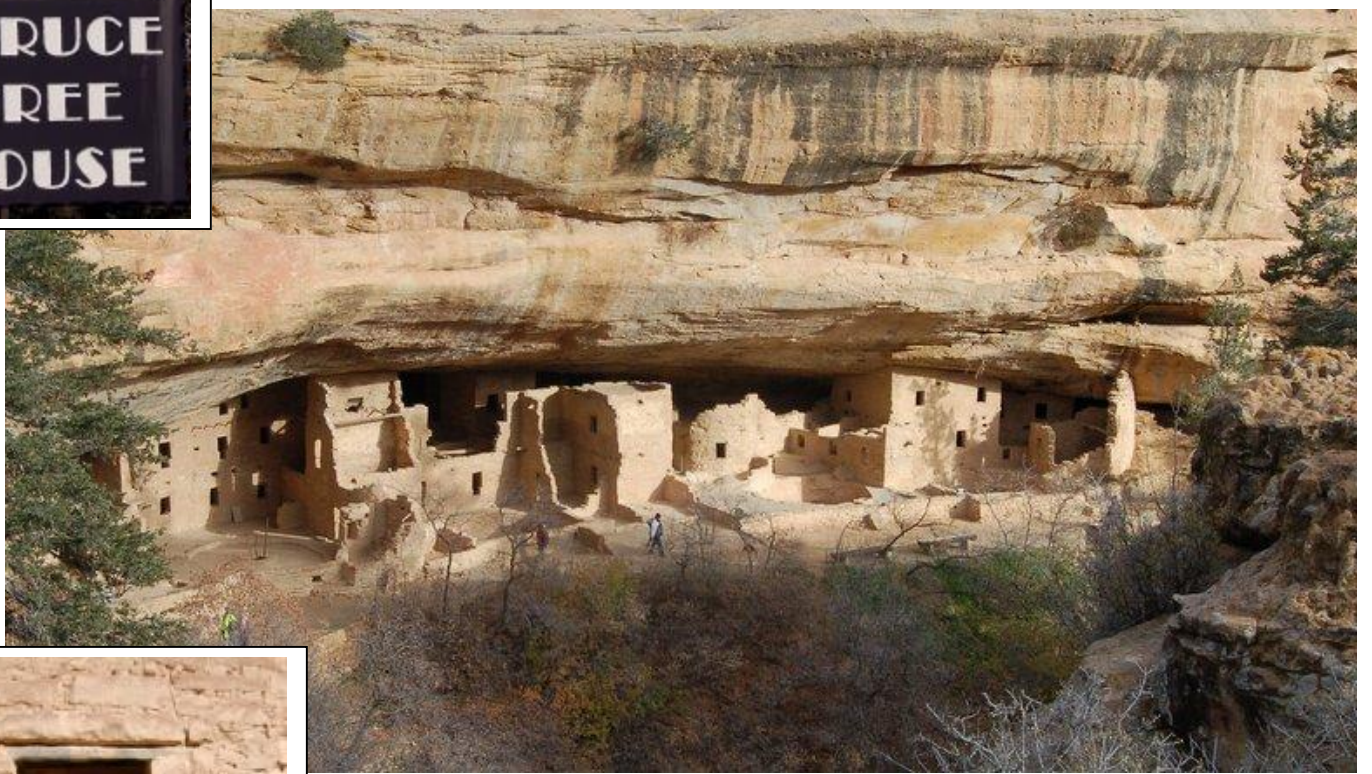
And you guys thought I was crazy to be out here with a camper.

His is not the only bike I saw today. He and I were the last two off the tour. He is from Raleigh, NC and his suit that he wears is heated. I had never heard of that before. His shoes, pants and jacket have tiny wires that heat up by use of the 12 volt battery.



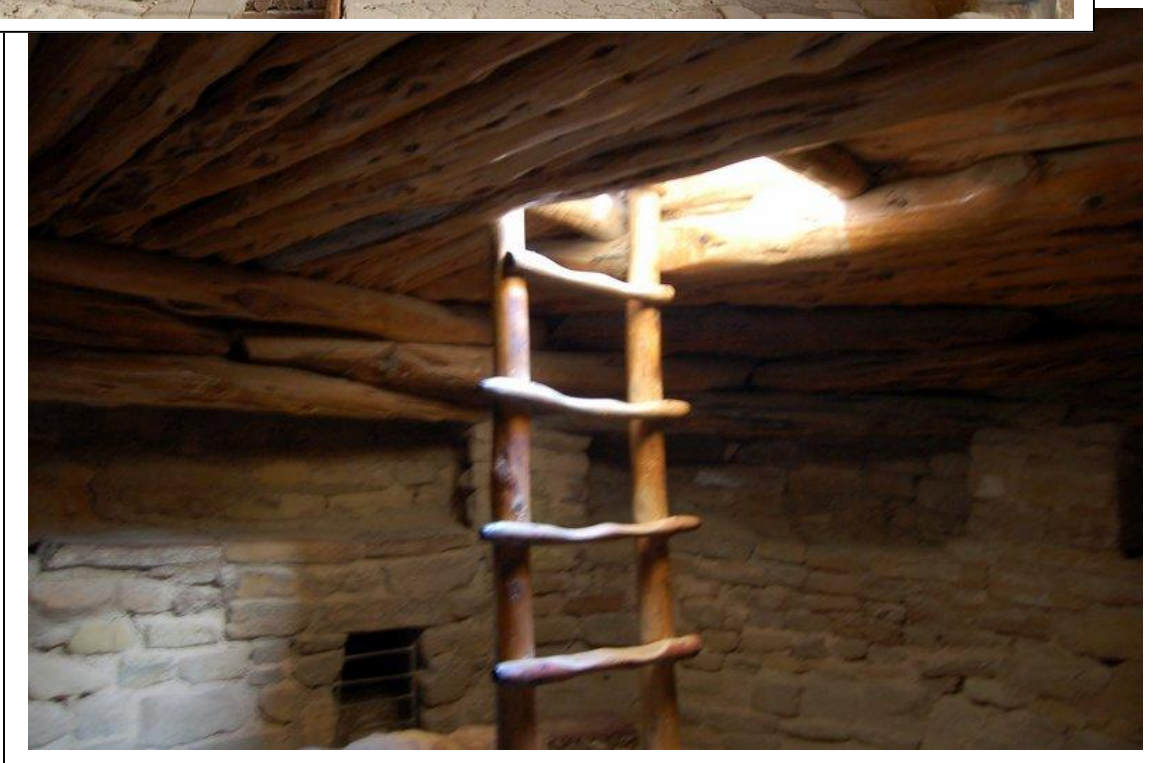
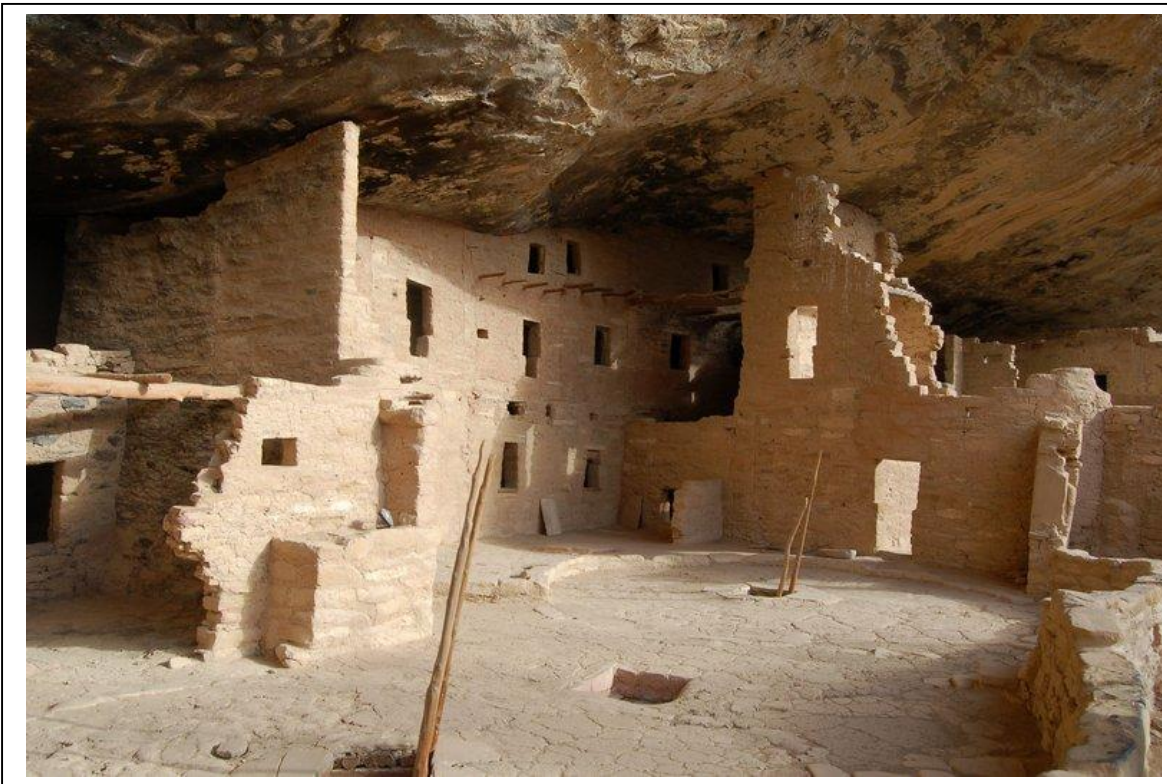


1) Notice how the trees are all burned down 2) the mountains were much more impressive when seen for real. The photo does not do them justice.

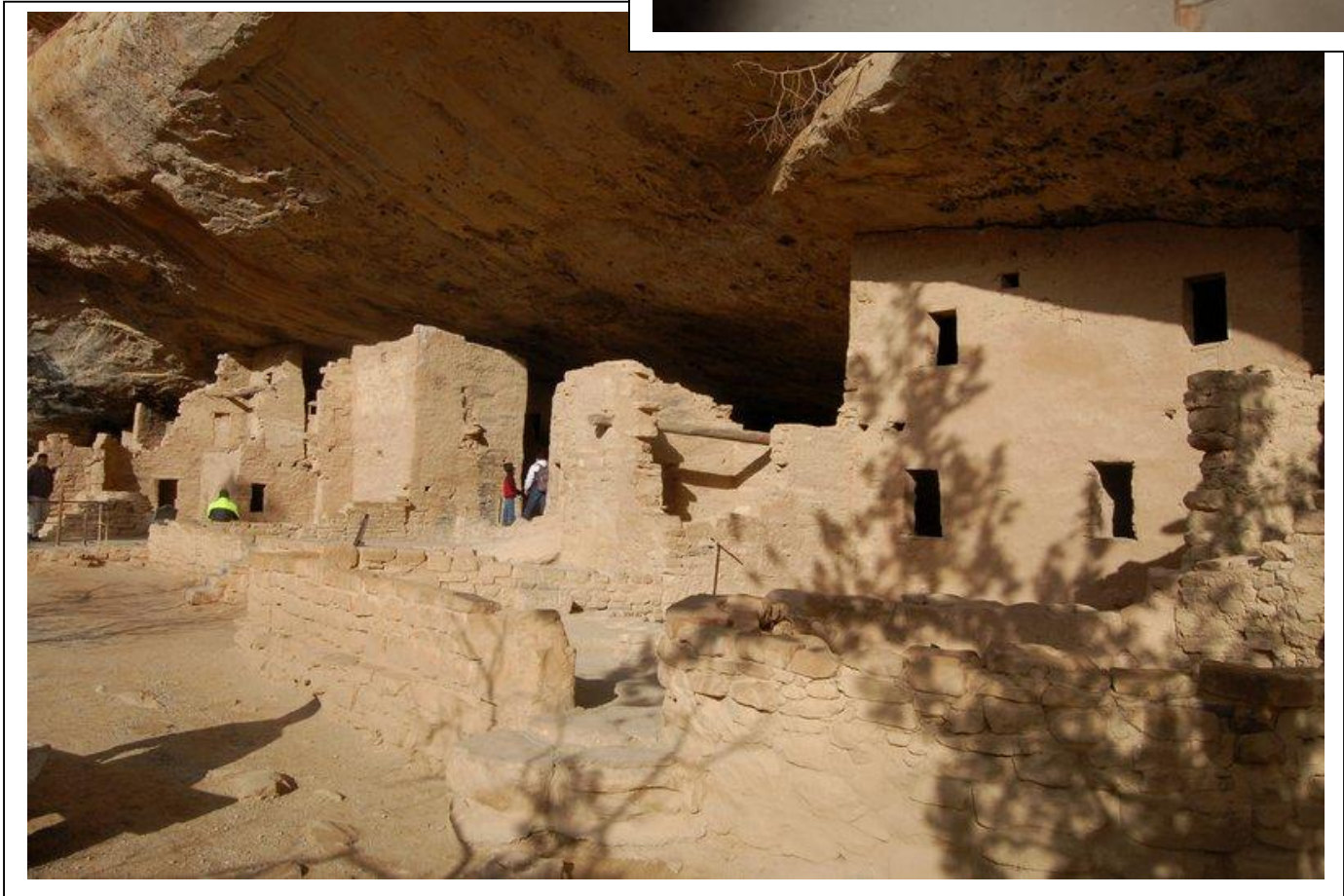


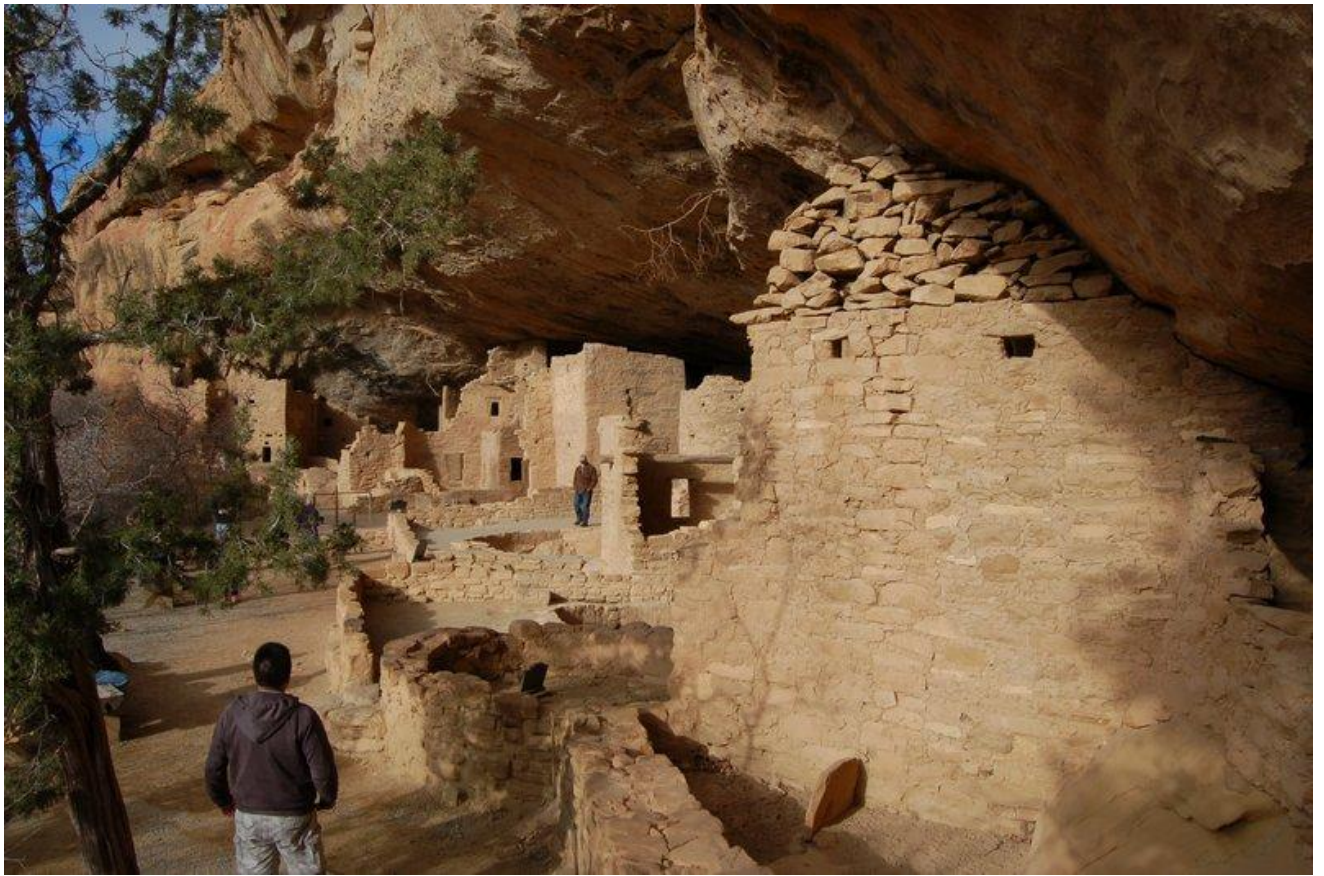
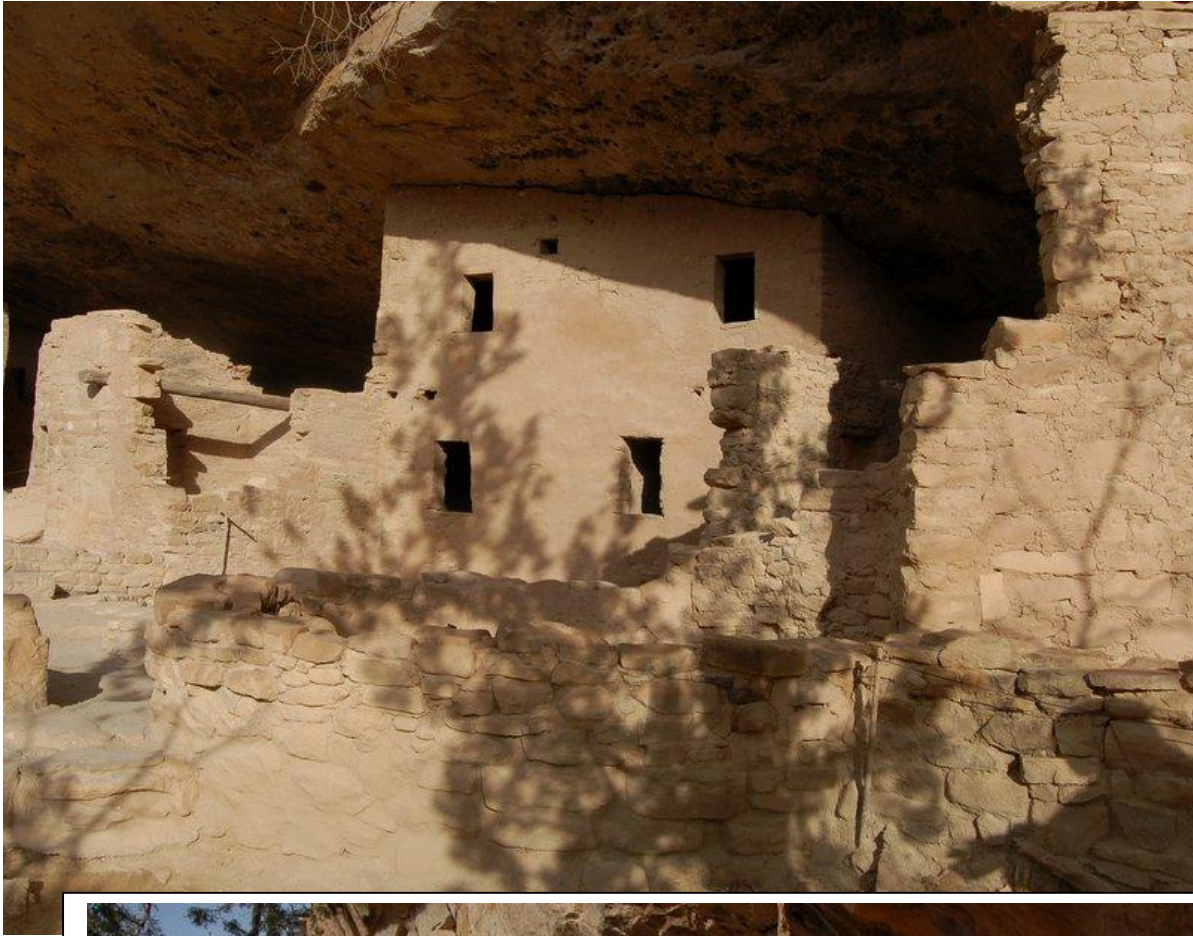
Spruce Tree House is the best preserved of all the cliff dwelling ruins in Mesa Verde. Notice in the photo below the tops of ladders. These are extending from Kivas that still have their roofs intact and are actually used by the Hopi Indians for ceremonies.

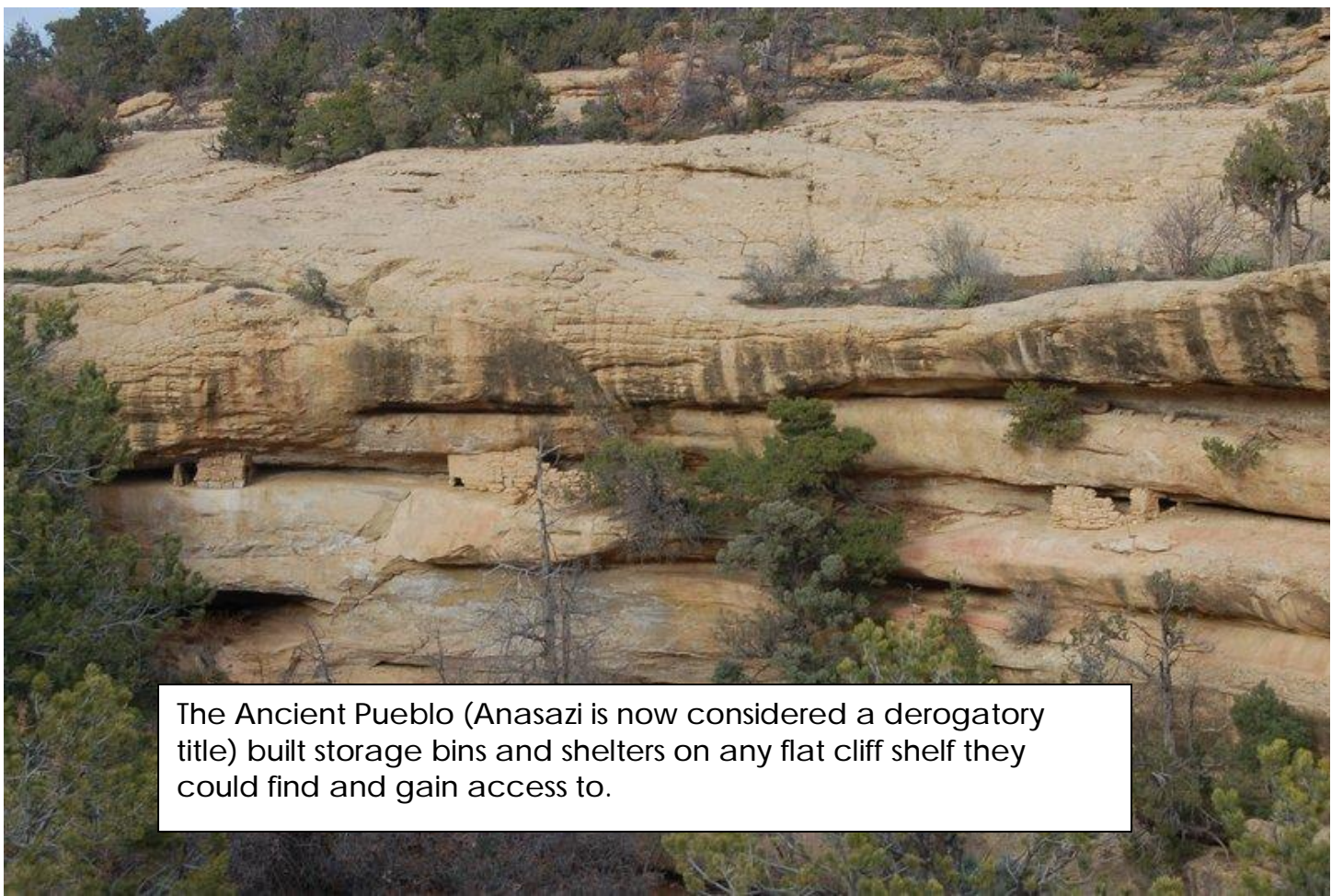
I had read that the keystone shaped doorways, like the one to the left, have not yet had the reason for their shape explained. Ranger Wolf said I was correct, but that similar architecture is seen in the Aztec and Inca cultures, and that the builders here did migrate from the south.



This is the only Kiva that white men are allowed access to, the reason being that it has been desanctified and is no longer used for Hopi ceremonies. It was warmer inside. Note the opening to the rear. This is actually the air inlet. The fire was built in the middle of the floor and the vent provided cold air into the Kiva and forced the smoke out the chimney hole in the roof, exactly where the ladder is. This is also the only entrance to the Kiva.







The Ancient Pueblo (Anasazi is now considered a derogatory title) built storage bins and shelters on any flat cliff shelf they could find and gain access to.

This is the end of episode III: The Cliff Palace Tour

Check your in box for the final episode IV: Far View Communities and Dinner