

= Four Corners Monument =

The Four Corners Monument marks the quadripoint in the Southwestern United States where the states of Arizona , Colorado , New Mexico , and Utah meet . It is the only point in the United States shared by four states , leading to this area 's being called the Four Corners region . The monument also marks the boundary between two semi @-@ autonomous Native American governments , the Navajo Nation , which maintains the monument as a tourist attraction , and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Reservation .

The origins of the state boundaries marked by the monument occurred just prior to , and during , the American Civil War , when the United States Congress acted to form governments in the area to combat the spread of slavery to the region . When the early territories were formed , their boundaries were designated along meridian and parallel lines . Beginning in the 1860s , these lines were surveyed and marked . These early surveys included some errors , but even so , the markers placed became the legal boundaries , superseding the written descriptions of geographical meridians and parallels . This includes the Four Corners Monument , which has been legally established as the corner of the four states .

= = Monument = =

The monument where " visitors can simultaneously straddle the territory of four states " is maintained as a tourist attraction by the Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department . Unlike many other attractions based on what are primarily political boundaries , such as the Berlin Wall , Four Corners Monument is an example of a political boundary that is a tourist destination in its own right . The monument consists of a granite disk embedded with a smaller bronze disk around the point , surrounded by smaller , appropriately located state seals and flags representing both the states and tribal nations of the area . Circling the point , starting from north , the disk reads with two words in each state " Here meet in freedom under God four states " . Around the monument , local Navajo and Ute artisans sell souvenirs and food . An admission fee is required to view and photograph the monument . The monument is a popular tourist attraction despite its remote and isolated location . As early as 1908 , people traveled long distances to take pictures of family and friends at the monument in Twister @-@ like poses , sitting on the disk , in a circle of friends or family around the disk , or for couples to kiss directly over the disk .

= = Location = =

The monument is located on the Colorado Plateau west of U.S. Highway 160 , approximately 40 miles (64 km) southwest of Cortez , Colorado . The monument is centered at 36 ° 59 ' 56 " N 109 ° 02 ' 42 " W . In addition to the four states , two semi @-@ autonomous American Indian tribal governments have boundaries at the monument , the Navajo Nation and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Reservation , with the Ute Mountain tribal boundaries coinciding with Colorado 's boundaries at the monument .

= = Climate = =

The nearby community of Teec Nos Pos receives 8 @. @ 46 inches of rain and 2 inches of snow annually .

= = History = =

The area now called Four Corners was initially American Indian land and beginning in the 16th century it was claimed by Spain as part of New Spain . Following Mexico 's independence from Spain , the area was governed by Mexico until being ceded to the United States by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 following the United States ' victory in the Mexican ? American War .

The first boundary which would become part of the monument was set as part of the Compromise of 1850 , which created the New Mexico Territory and Utah Territory . The border between the two territories was congressionally defined as the 37th parallel north by the 31st United States Congress . In 1861 , the 36th United States Congress transferred land previously allocated to the Utah Territory , to the newly created Colorado Territory . The Colorado Territory 's southern border would remain as the 37th parallel north , but a new border ? between the Colorado and Utah Territories ? was declared to be the 32nd meridian west from Washington . This line was derived from the reference used at the time , the Washington meridian .

In 1860 , just prior to the outbreak of the American Civil War , a group of people in the southern portion of New Mexico Territory passed a resolution condemning the United States for creating such a vast territory with only a single , small government in place at Santa Fe . They claimed by doing so the U.S. had ignored the needs of the southern portion , left them without a functional system of law and order , and allowed the situation to deteriorate into a state of chaos and near anarchy . The group declared secession from the United States and announced their intent to join the Confederate States of America under the name of the Arizona Territory . The U.S. Congress responded in 1863 by creating another Arizona Territory with different , but partially overlapping boundaries . The Confederate boundaries split New Mexico along an east ? west line , the 34th parallel north , allowing for a single state connection from Texas to the Colorado River . This would give the Confederacy access to California and the Pacific coast . The Union definition split New Mexico along a north ? south line , the 32nd meridian west from Washington , which simply extended the boundary between Colorado and Utah southward . The Union plan eventually became reality , and this created the quadripoint at the modern Four Corners . After the split , New Mexico resembled its modern form , with only slight differences .

= = = Surveying the boundaries = = =

After the Civil War , efforts began to survey and mark the actual borders . In 1868 , the General Land Office (GLO) had Ehud N. Darling survey and set markers along the border between the Colorado and New Mexico Territories (the 37th parallel north) ; this border has become known as the " Darling Line " . In 1875 , another GLO surveyor , Chandler Robbins , surveyed and marked the border between the Arizona and New Mexico Territories (the 32nd meridian west of Washington) . Robbins began near the Mexico ? United States border , and worked his way north marking the border every so often . Near the 37th parallel north he intersected the Darling Line , and here he erected a sandstone shaft . This sandstone shaft marked today 's location of the Four Corners Monument .

In 1878 , Rollin J. Reeves surveyed and marked the border between the newly created State of Colorado and the Utah Territory . Reeves located the sandstone shaft marker placed by Robbins at today 's Four Corners Monument . He then began to survey and mark the border between Colorado and Utah from this point northward . In 1901 , Howard B. Carpenter surveyed and marked the border between Arizona and Utah , completing the survey of borders making up the Four Corners Monument .

The results of these surveys and the markers placed were later accepted as the legal boundaries between the various states .

= = = The marker 's transformation into a monument = = =

By 1899 , the sandstone shaft marker placed by Chandler Robbins in 1875 had been disturbed and broken , so it was replaced with a new stone by two U.S. Surveyors , Hubert D. Page and James M. Lentz . In 1912 , a simple cement pad was poured around the marker . The first modern Navajo government convened in 1923 in an effort to organize and regulate an increasing amount of oil exploration activities on Navajo lands , and they would play a big role in the monument 's further development . In 1931 , Everett H. Kimmell , another U.S. Surveyor , found this newer stone had broken too and he replaced it with a brass disc marker set in cement . In 1962 , the Bureau of Land

Management and the Bureau of Indian Affairs poured an elevated cement pad around the 1931 brass marker ; this pad included the state border lines and names in tile . The monument was completely rebuilt in 1992 , and the 1931 brass marker was replaced with a disc shaped aluminum @-@ bronze plate set in granite . The monument was again rebuilt in 2010 , although the disc shaped plate from 1992 remained in place .

= = = Misplacement controversy = = =

Since the early 20th century , controversies have arisen regarding the accuracy of the monument 's placement . After the initial surveys , it was found that the borders did not always exactly follow the lines of meridian and parallel as had been intended . This is due to the primitive surveying technology available at the time . This discrepancy left the four states asking if the correct borders were the exact lines of meridian and parallel (and if new , more accurate , surveys needed to be done) , or if the markers placed during the initial surveys were now the actual border . This issue was resolved when New Mexico sued Colorado in 1919 , and in 1925 the Supreme Court ruled that the markers placed during the initial surveys were the actual borders , even if the markers were off in some locations (this includes the Four Corners Monument) . Today 's legal description of these border lines are based on the original markers , and not the written description of the borders created when the territories were formed . Because of this , the borders between these states are not perfectly straight and often zigzag . One example is the border between Colorado and Utah , where in one area the border jogs west about 1 @.@ 5 miles (2 @.@ 4 km) from where it was intended to be placed . Because this error occurred in the original survey ? which superseded the written description (being simply the 32nd meridian west of Washington) , the border set out by the markers remains the border between the two states . (38 ° 16 ? 34 ? N 109 ° 03 ? 38 ? W)

In 2009 this issue was again brought to the forefront due to American media reports that the monument was placed 2 @.@ 5 miles (4 @.@ 0 km) west of its intended location . These reports were quickly corrected after it was discovered that sources had forgotten that when the initial surveys were conducted that the Washington meridian was used . This meridian has an offset from the modern reference , the Prime Meridian , which has been used in the United States since 1912 . This offset is often missed by those not familiar with the history of American surveying .

Even after the mistakes in the reports were discovered , a spokesperson for the U.S. National Geodetic Survey admitted the monument is placed 1 @,@ 807 feet (551 m) east of where modern surveyors would mark the point . However , he defended the accuracy of the original survey , stating surveyors " nailed it " considering the primitive tools of the day . Pointing out the achievement given the conditions , he further stated , " Their ability to replicate that exact point ? what they did was phenomenal , what they did was spot on . " He concluded by stating that any claims of errors in the location of the monument are irrelevant . Once a survey commissioned to establish a boundary has been accepted by the involved parties , the survey markers are legally binding , regardless of any error that is later discovered . Similar statements were issued by the Navajo Nation , defending their work in maintaining and promoting the monument . In addition , general U.S. land principles , law , and the Supreme Court have established that the location of the monument is the legal corner of the four states .

= = = Similar places = = =

Canadian four corners
No Man 's Heath
Tres Fronteras
Triple Frontier
Treriksroset
Vaalserberg