



New Mexico Archaeology

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO FOUNDATION

MAY 2016

THE NATURE OF ARCHAEOLOGY TODAY

In this issue of the Newsletter, I'm yielding the front page to Dr. Jeremy Sabloff. Jerry is retired from eminent positions in archaeology during his academic career and most recently has stepped down from the presidency of the Santa Fe Institute. He is a valued member of the Friends of Archaeology Board, and he provides a worldly perspective on what we do in archaeology, both within the Friends and OAS.

--Eric Blinman, OAS Director

"...it was not enough to know the what of a thing. What was only the outermost part. What truly mattered was the why..."

Margaret Frazer: A Play of Lords (New York: Berkeley, 2007)

The interested public that follows archaeology on television or on the pages of popular magazines (in print or online) is often surprised to hear archaeologists say that they do not study the past directly but rather that they study the archaeological record of today; that is, they focus on remains of the past that have survived to the present. In other words, what archaeologists actually do is study fragmentary materials that form today's incomplete record and then try to use these present-day materials to make inferences about peoples who made and used these materials in the past – be they decades, centuries, or millennia ago.

Moreover, the interested public also is often surprised to learn that the real excitement of discovery for most archaeologists is not only a rich tomb or a beautiful turquoise object but a new insight into how a past culture developed and why it succeeded or failed at different points in time. In this regard, some years ago the first sentence of a Scientific American Library book on the ancient Maya that I had written (*The New Archaeology and the Ancient Maya*) caused some consternation among friends at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the time that I became the Museum's Director. I had written: "I am not particularly interested in ancient objects." Is that the kind of attitude, I was asked, an archaeologist, let alone a museum director, should have? The answer would have been "no" if the primary goal of archaeology was to discover new sites and aesthetically pleasing objects. The answer I gave, on the other hand, was a firm "yes," since I strongly believed (and

still do!) that one of the principal missions of the museum was to put objects on display in ways that taught students and the public alike about the cultures, both past and present, which produced these materials. And, in some cases, indicate that even when a written historical record exists, that the archaeological record can enrich the historical understandings and fill in key gaps in the written record.

So, contrary to general public opinion, archaeology is not only about "what," "where," and "when," but it also is about "how" and "why" past cultures developed and changed through time. Why did ancient peoples give up their mobile life to become sedentary agriculturalists? How did the first states arise more than five thousand years ago and why did the inequality between elites and commoners arise? How were some complex societies (civilizations) able to sustain themselves over long periods of time, while others were relatively short-lived?

Answering these and many other "why" and "how" questions is a principal goal of archaeology. Given such a goal, and now fortified with a host of new techniques and methodologies that have considerably strengthened the kinds of data that archaeologists can collect and the kinds of answers that they can offer, recent archaeological research has become more and more relevant to local communities that are interested in clearer and richer understandings of their recent and distant pasts, and more broadly to cultural and ecological problems confronting the world today. For example, scholars are currently examining why and how cities have proved to be such successful adaptations that they have lasted for millennia and how can these successes be maintained as demographic and ecological pressures grow more and more severe?

If archaeologists are able to provide useful answers to questions such as this, perhaps archaeology will not only better illuminate the past but also might be able to shed some light on potential pathways that our future might take and help communities around the globe better position themselves in our rapidly changing world. ❖

Jerry Sabloff PhD is an External Professor and Past President of the Santa Fe Institute and Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor of Anthropology Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania

Volunteering

MAKING A RABBIT-FUR BLANKET

Lydia Cruzen, OAS volunteer



Have you ever received a present that turned out to be so much more than you expected? That's the way I feel about volunteering at the OAS. I went in for an interview and was put to work the same day helping Lynette Etsitty, a Navajo textile artist and OAS archaeologist, create a rabbit blanket.

The first, and most time consuming, task was cleaning yucca leaves that had been boiled for 2 days. The leaves are scraped and combed to remove the vegetal material from the very strong fibers. One solution Lynette discovered was that the soap made from the yucca root acted as a conditioner for the fibers, making them easier to comb, clean and work. Once the fibers had been cleaned and dried, Lynette hand-spun the yucca into cordage.

At this stage, the rabbit pelts were carefully cut into 1/3" wide/yard long strips – we could get about 20 feet of strips from one rabbit pelt. Lynette then soaked the rabbit strips and wound them around the cordage. Then the rabbit wrapped cordage was placed on a 30" x 40" loom and the entire blanket tied together with smaller diameter twine, again made from yucca. The entire project took about 300 labor hours, most of them Lynette's.

I had an incredible time working with Lynette as we shared rabbit fur sneezes and yucca/yucky jokes. I talked a lot about the process as well in my ceramics classes, eventually dragging in 4 other volunteers to help – Carmelita, Jocelyn, Tobie, and Betsy, thank you for the hours of yucca cleaning. Actually, the yucca cleaning is not all that tedious, once you get the skill down. Sharing the company and experience is the best part.

The blanket will be on display through July 2017 in a new exhibit, Weaving in New Mexico: The Ancestral Puebloan and Rio Grande Traditions, at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces. When the exhibit comes down, the blanket will be returned to play a role in the OAS education outreach program. ❖

LABELING THE PAST

Eric Blinman, Ph.D, Director of OAS

A front page story in the Santa Fe New Mexican the other day referred to the ancient peoples of the northern Southwest as "Ancestral Puebloans," eliciting a letter to the editor a few days later bemoaning the abandonment of "Anasazi" as the historic and popular referent to the same peoples. The underlying complaint was phrased in terms of political correctness vs clarity of communication with a public that has grown up with the term Anasazi.

Archaeologists, museum curators, and National Park Service interpreters have been involved in these discussions for the recent decades of my career. Several times a year the question is debated in the halls of OAS, and the issues are complicated.

A ceramic perspective is that the use of Ancestral Puebloan as replacement for just Anasazi is factually incomplete, since many of the archaeological cultures that are included under the label of Mogollon are indeed Ancestral Puebloan, yet we aren't abandoning the Mogollon label (a Spanish Colonial governor who has lent his name to a mountain range in the region).

A sociological perspective is that the terminological shift is the best but a poor compromise between sovereignty and bigotry. Deep seated cultural and historical animosity between Southwestern tribes has led to the perception of insult when archaeologists apply a Navajo word to the ancestors of Pueblo peoples. At the same time, the primacy of property rights (a Euroamerican legal concept) in the context of tribal sovereignty (a treaty right) has led to the Navajo Nation's insistence that their term for the ancient ones be used every time archaeologists refer to Puebloan archaeology on Navajo tribal lands. Add that to the familiarity of the American public with "Anasazi," and it is unlikely that Ancestral Puebloan will ever completely replace the "A-word" in technical and common use.

My perspective is a little different, in that our dilemma results from a failure of archaeologists to address our obligation to reconstruct the individual histories of Pueblo peoples. We use the term Pueblo as a gloss for a series of very different peoples who have survived Euroamerican colonialism. If "Pueblo" covers peoples who share farming (corn, beans, and squash), pottery, and sedentary communities with structures of stone, earth, and timbers, then we are talking about communities with histories that began well before AD 600. Historical linguists are comfortable characterizing the relationships between modern Pueblo languages as extending deep into the past, so deep that

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INTO THE DINETAH LABYRINTH: EXPLORING PUEBLO I AND NAVAJO ARCHAEOLOGY

FRIDAY, JUNE 3- SUNDAY, JUNE 5

Most archaeological enthusiasts venture north along US 550 on their way to explore the Ancestral Pueblo world, and most turn to the west, conscious only of the Great Houses of Chaco Canyon, Salmon Ruins, and Aztec Ruins. Few travelers turn to the east and take the less traveled path into the Dinetah, known best as the traditional homeland of the Navajo. The labyrinth of canyons, mesas, and dirt roads characterizing this region can be intimidating, and this sentiment may have extended deep into the past. In addition to the better known Navajo presence, the region was the home to a strong early Puebloan population, but the Chaco people did not seem to venture much east of the Great North Road. Why?

The Dinetah extends from Aztec in the north to Dulce in the south and is sandwiched roughly between US 64 on the east and US 550 on the west. The majority of the region is administered by the Bureau of Land Management, and the Dinetah may be the richest federal archaeological land holding in the United States. However, the archaeological sites are subtle, are not developed for the visiting public, and are effectively unknown to most of the world. Hiking not strenuous but some rock climbing involved. High clearance vehicles are recommended. We shall be carpooling to all sites.

Hiking will not be strenuous but high clearance vehicles are recommended. Carpooling is highly encouraged.

Trip Rating:

Moderate

Reservations: Sign up now.

Call 505-982-7799 ext. 5.

Trip Cost: \$255 FOA members/\$290 non-MNMF members. Two lunches provided. See nmarchaeology.org, for lodging information.

Check nmarchaeology.org and museumfoundation.org/friends-archaeology for updates. Spaces are limited.

PUEBLO I IN THE CHACO HEARTLAND

JUNE 25 (JUNE 26 OPTIONAL)

PUEBLO PINTADO

This will be a long, one-day Saturday field trip, June 25, touring Pueblo I-era sites in the San Juan Basin with Tom Windes, a retired archaeologist from the National Park Service. We will visit two clusters of sites near Pueblo Pintado and near Chaco Canyon. The sites represent the small settlements that are the 9th and early 10th century hamlets and villages that preceded the monumental construction of great houses in Chaco Canyon. These sites are roughly contemporaneous with some of the sites that will be visited on the Dinetah Labyrinth tour earlier in June, but there are significant differences in their appearance.

We have also reserved a group campground in Chaco for the night of June 25. Interested participants are welcome to stay overnight in the campground and join Eric Blinman for an informal tour of downtown Chaco on Sunday morning. Participants will need to bring their own food and camping gear (weather dependent, of course), but Eric will be able to provide some communal cooking equipment, and those who wish to can join in a communal dinner.

Trip rating:

Moderate

Hiking will not be strenuous but high clearance vehicles are recommended and carpooling is highly encouraged.

Trip cost for both days will be \$170/FOA members, \$190/non-members. Cost for first day only \$85/members, \$95/non-members. Spaces are limited.

Make reservations beginning May 31, 2016 at 7:00 am by calling (505) 982-7799, ext. 6. Please check back on nmarchaeology.org and the Museum of New Mexico Foundation's Friends of Archaeology website for updates.

NOTE: *Those signing up for either of the Dinetah Country field trips should try to attend Eric Blinman's Pueblo I Brown Bag talk at noon on Tuesday May 24, or at 7:00PM on Thursday evening May 26, at CNMA. See nmarchaeology.org for details.*

THE PUEBLO I AND NAVAJO ARCHAEOLOGY TOURS

Chuck Hannaford, OAS Project director and Education Outreach Coordinator

Eric Blinman, Sheri Spaar, Dean Wilson, and I recently ventured into the Dinetah Country on a scouting tour for the upcoming Pueblo I and Navajo archaeology excursion. I am always humbled and "never disappointed" with the tapestry of experience each new venture brings: clouds, colors, rugged cliffs and mesas, snow-covered distant peaks, the depths of archaeological time, myth, legend, and the many stories of human adaptation. The field is indeed the quintessence of the archaeological experience. It can be hard to put in a nutshell the heart of a tour. I realize that I first ventured into this big country as a BLM archaeologist almost 40 years ago. As an archaeologist, I am privileged to be able to spend time in New Mexico's many remote archaeological landscapes and to rub elbows with the many archaeologists who struggle to interpret the archaeological remains. The Dinetah region ranks at the top of my favorite areas with so many interesting questions and stories, and with so little visitation. What is the Chaco Great North Road? Why are there no Chaco Great Houses in the Dinetah? Who were the Pueblo I people who made and lived in the many Great Pit Structures throughout this region? Why is the Dinetah so archaeologically neglected compared to surrounding areas? Finally, who are those Athapaskans who transformed into the Navajo, the largest Native American tribe in the United States? If you have never experienced or contemplated the enigma of the Dinetah, we certainly invite you to consider signing up for this excursion. ❖

LIVING WITH ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE TEWA BASIN OR WHERE DID THE ANCIENT ONES LIVE BEFORE THE PAJARITO PLATEAU?

SATURDAY, JULY 9, 2016

For most of the public, and even for most archaeologists, the story of Northern Rio Grande archaeology begins with Bandelier National Monument and the Coalition period (AD 1175-1300). Well preserved sites on the Pajarito Plateau have attracted attention since the late 19th century due to their visibility, but the sites are almost exclusively post-AD 1175 in age. Earlier sites dating to the AD 900-1175 period are present in the valley bottoms of the Rio Grande and its tributaries, but these early sites are generally hidden and have only rarely been investigated. The valley bottoms were, and are, great places to farm and live, so these ancient sites are now covered by layers of occupation up to and including our modern communities.

This day trip will visit pre-Coalition period sites in the Santa Fe-Española corridor. The first site will be LA 835, a relatively famous site on Pueblo of Pojoaque land. The Pueblo has kindly granted permission for the visit, and the Governor may be joining us. This site has multiple roomblocks, was occupied multiple times, and a masonry "kiva" was excavated in the 1950s.

We will end the day at the Wickersham extended family property in the vicinity of La Puebla, New Mexico, north of Santa Fe. After purchasing the property in the mid-20th century, they discovered that many generations had lived there previously, including during the Late Developmental period. This will be a chance for tour participants to see why archaeologists know so little about this important period in the culture history of the Tewa Basin, and to hear anecdotes of the surprises in store for modern landowners who find themselves only the latest of more than 50 generations of valley citizens.

Trip leaders will be Stephen Post (Deputy Director Emeritus, OAS) and Steven Lakatos (Archaeologist, New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department).

LA BAJADA PUEBLO AND ENVIRONS

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 10, 2016

La Bajada Pueblo, a Rio Grande Classic period site, was occupied from the A.D. 1200's up to A.D. 1700 (dates obtained in 2008 by BIA archaeologist Peter McKenna). Both Cochiti and Santo Domingo Pueblos trace ancestry to this site, and access consultations with the Pueblo of Cochiti are underway. The only excavation of La Bajada Pueblo was in 1915, when Nels Nelson excavated about 10% of the site. Interestingly, this large (3-5 roomblock) and important site has rarely been toured by an archaeological group.

Our 5-7 hour tour, led by NFS archaeologist Mike Bremer, will visit the pueblo and proximate field and water diversion features. The tour will focus on two overlook sites on the mesa which have considerable rock art, a well preserved shrine, and some quite distinctive room features.

Trip Rating:

Moderate

Moderate hiking over uneven terrain with no trail- total distance for both sites approximately 3 miles.

Trip cost: FOA members/\$85, non-FOA members/\$95. This trip will have a limited number of participants.

Make reservations beginning at 7:00 am on Tuesday, June 7, 2016 by calling (505) 982-7799, ext. 7.

Please check back on nmarchaeology.org and the Museum of New Mexico Foundation's Friends of Archaeology website for itinerary updates.

Trip rating:

Easy

Trip cost will be \$85 for FOA members (\$95 for non-members). Spaces are limited.

Make reservations beginning August 9, 2016 at 7:00 am by calling (505) 982-7799, ext. 5. Please check back on www.nmarchaeology.org and the Museum of New Mexico Foundation's Friends of Archaeology website for updates.

THE CASAS GRANDES WORLD

THURSDAY-MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15-19, 2016

Come join us for a visit to the ancient town of Paquimé, heart of the Casas Grandes world. This unique center displays many elements associated with Mesoamerican societies to the south—ball courts, public platform mounds, effigy mounds, an advanced water delivery system, macaw breeding and a beautiful museum.

A visit to Mata Ortiz, the famous pottery-making village is also on the itinerary. Home of famed potter, Juan Quezada, the village has become a vibrant center of beautiful pottery production. Today's potters have taken design to a new level of sophistication, Based on ancient Casas Grandes designs.

Archaeologist Rafael Cruz, of Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, will join us for visits to other backcountry sites, ball courts, and rock art panels. A new road into the Sierra Madre Occidental will also allow us to travel to the famous La Cueva de la Olla. Formerly, a bone-jarring ride of three hours, the new road should make the trip much more enjoyable.

TRIP DETAILS:

A valid passport is required for this trip!

The trip will be self-motored and we will caravan from Santa Fe to Nuevo Casas Grandes; a trip of 8-10 hours depending upon time needed to cross the border into Mexico. That includes time for a lunch break We will stay at the Hotel Hacienda in Nuevo Casas Grandes, which has a restaurant and a pool.

Drivers will also need to purchase Mexican car insurance. Mexican law does not allow coverage with a U.S. insurance company. We will supply names of vendors who offer reasonable policies and prices We will be traveling backroads, so a high clearance vehicle is needed. Four-wheel drive is not necessary, just good clearance. We will compress ourselves into as few cars as possible for going into the backcountry.

Trip Rating:

Easy to Moderate

A visit to La Cueva de la Olla requires a brief ascent of perhaps 50 feet. It is not particularly difficult, but footing can be slippery. There is no trail. Persons with physical disabilities may not be able to make the ascent.

Price for the excursion will be \$300.00/FOA members, \$375.00/non-members. If you are interested in the trip, please sign up and we will contact you by email about hotel pricing and other details.

Please call the FOA Hotline starting 7:00am on Tuesday July 12 at 505-982-7799 x6. Group size is limited to 20 people.



Vessel by Jesus Martinez of Mata Ortiz

LABELING THE PAST

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at AD 600, Pueblo peoples spoke languages belonging to at least four and more likely at least six distinct language families.

Even if we confine ourselves to the geography of New Mexico tribes, archaeologists should be differentiating the deep culture history of proto-Zuni, proto-Keres, and proto-Tanoan communities. Add to this the histories of people who may not have survived into the twentieth century as distinct peoples, and we probably need to consider Mogollon-Mimbres, Piro-Tompiro, and Jornada Mogollon histories as well.

I tend to use Ancestral Puebloan in speaking and writing, but I still slip into Anasazi on occasion. However, in both cases I wince with the realization that neither characterization is accurate. My hope is that by the end of my career/life I will witness a shift to labels that honor the distinct histories of the diversity of our modern Native American communities. ❖

AGRICULTURAL FIELDS ABOVE ZIA PUEBLO

TO BE RESCHEDULED - POSTPONED TO FALL

The privilege of visiting sites on tribal lands carries with it a risk of last-minute changes. Our plans are always subject to disruption by the cultural and spiritual needs of the Pueblo, and a last minute conflict developed that required postponement of our planned visit. We are working with Ulysses Reid, of Zia Pueblo, to find a new date in the Fall.

Ulysses will lead a strenuous morning hike of Jemez River Valley agricultural field terraces (2-3 hours, round trip) near Zia Pueblo, followed by Feast-style lunch and an exhibition of arts and crafts at the Pueblo. The cost of the trip is \$85/FOA members, and \$95/ non-FOA members. Spaces are limited. Please check back on nmarchaeology.org and the Museum of New Mexico Foundation's Friends of Archaeology website for updates.

Office of Archaeological Studies

The Office of Archaeological Studies (OAS) was the first museum program of its kind in the United States. Its staff conducts international field and laboratory research, offers educational opportunities for school groups and civic organizations and works to preserve, protect and interpret New Mexico's prehistoric and historic sites.

If you would like to know more about OAS, please see our website:
www.nmarchaeology.org

Friends of Archaeology

The Friends of Archaeology is a support group of the Museum of New Mexico Foundation for the Museum of New Mexico, Office of Archaeological Studies.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Friends of Archaeology is to support the Office of Archaeological Studies in the achievement of its archaeological services mandate from the state of New Mexico by participation in and funding of research and education.

Friends of Archaeology Board

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BROWN BAG LUNCHES

TUESDAY MAY 24, 2016, NOON AND
THURSDAY MAY 26, 2016, 7 PM

Eric Blinman, OAS Director
Pueblo I Archaeology of the Four Corners region: Why should we care?

UPCOMING:

CHECK NMARCHAEOLOGY.ORG FOR DATES

Tim Maxwell, OAS Director Emeritus
Archaeology of the Casas Grandes region

Jayne Aubele, Educator, Museum of Natural
History and Science
Volcanic geology of the Caja del Rio

Eric Blinman, OAS Director
The past, present, and future of yucca fiber

CNMA CONFERENCE ROOM, 7 OLD COCHITI RD

First left off of Caja del Rio Rd --Take 599 to South Meadows Rd, continue through the traffic circle west along the Frontage Rd to Caja del Rio Rd.

Brown Bag Talks take place at the Center for New Mexico Archaeology at 12:00 noon (generally) on Tuesdays in the CNMA conference room. Seating is limited. Admission is free.

Check nmarchaeology.org both to confirm the schedule and to catch spur of the moment presentations. Bag lunch talks can be formal presentations or informal discussions, and are open without charge to the public. OAS staff commonly give presentations at meetings and to other archaeological groups in the Southwest, and we are encouraging our staff to practice or reprise their professional talks for our local audience. We also encourage visiting scholars to update us on their research.