

SAN JUAN BASIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chapter of Colorado Archaeological Society



FIELD TRIP REPORT

Date: **June 18, 2018**

Destination: **FLC Field School**

Leaders: **Rusty Chamberlain**

Number of Participants: **7**

Seven SJBAS members met at Santa Rita Park to carpool to The Great Sage Plain to visit three Ancient Puebloan sites. Your intrepid expedition team members were trip leader Rusty Chamberlain, Susan and Don Hicks, Catherine and Ron Larkins, Don Spangler, and Jim Broke. The primary site we visited was the Bowthorpe property. The Fort Lewis College Field School has excavated several P2 units on the property over the last two years.

Bowthorpe Property

FLC Anthropology professor, Dr. Charles Riggs, let's call him Chuck, met us at the Field School campsite on the Bowthorpe property and led us over to the excavation sites. The site has four room blocks; three are on the Bowthorpe property and the fourth is just to the east of their fence. Chuck started us at room block #1 (RB#1) which was excavated by last year's class. He explained that these units are called Prudden Units, after pioneering archaeologist T. Mitchell Prudden. Such units consist of 6 to 10 rooms in 2 rows with a kiva to the south and a midden beyond that. They are common throughout the Colorado Plateau during the Pueblo II period.



From RB#1 we walked to RB#3 where the students have done most of the excavation. This unit has about 10 rooms, but it also has 3 kivas. All three were excavated. They may not have been occupied at the same time. The student excavations of the kivas show that they were mostly cleared out and then burned. They found burned roof timbers. In one of the kivas, they found broken vessels (including some large pieces) and corn kernels. Analysis of the corn kernels and the charred roof beams may show when each kiva was occupied.

Some of the rooms were also excavated. Interestingly, as the students dug down they found evidence of previous occupation. Around the area we saw several square piles of stones. Chuck explained that each pile comes for a single room. As the unit deteriorates, the walls fall into the room. By measuring the volume of the pile and the length of the room foundation, they can determine the height of the walls. During our visit, teams of students were mapping the contents and structure of each kiva and excavated room prior to back filling the excavation.



To finish our visit, we returned to the camp where two students were cleaning items collected during the previous four weeks. The bag of sherds, which student Micha was cleaning, came from the layer where the large pots were found; sherds were laid out on the screen, and we could almost put the pot together. We appreciated how generous Dr. Riggs, assistant Blyth Morrison, and the students were with their time and answering our many questions.

Sand Canyon Pueblo

After saying our goodbyes, we drove to the trailhead for Sand Canyon Pueblo where we enjoyed our lunch. We first explored the half of this Pueblo III village on the right of the drainage. This part

of the pueblo has two large structures, a double walled "D" shaped building and a great kiva. I must admit that I had to use my imagination and the map supplied on the information plaques. Then we checked out the other side of the village. Not as much to see here but we stopped at the last info plaque which indicated that Sand Canyon researchers believe there was a large plaza over a kiva with a tower on each side. Since we were not present for the excavation, we had to use our imaginations. In my imagination I see a white plastered Native American version of a Greek village climbing up the canyon wall. By the way, this site was first recorded in archaeological literature in 1903 by Mr. Prudden of Prudden Unit fame referenced above.

Goodman Point Pueblo

From here we backtracked to Goodman Point Pueblo. This site is now part of Hovenweep National Monument. Like Sand Canyon Pueblo, this village is built on two sides of a drainage with a spring some 30 meters inside the enclosing wall. The site is not documented with information plaques, but it is accessible, and Don Spangler found that the check-in station has literature about the site.

All in all, it was an enjoyable and educational trip. From the Goodman Point Pueblo which is on County Road P, it is a straight shot east to Highway 491 and home.

Participants: trip leader Rusty Chamberlain, Susan and Don Hicks, Catherine and Ron Larkins, Don Spangler, and Jim Broke

– by Rusty Chamberlain