

The Llano Quemado Site 17 Lab

Our Llano Quemado dig had no more than shut down in the fall of 1989 when Jim Judge, the Director of the Field School at Ft. Burgwin, offered the Society lab space to begin cleaning, sorting, and cataloging the artifacts collected from Site TAS 17. Annette Grubiss asked Thurston Toeppen and Alex Fletcher to supervise the lab work, but it became evident that only one person was needed--Toeppen wound up with the job of overseeing, recording, acquiring supplies, and keeping things running smoothly as the members washed and brushed, labeled, recorded lithics and reassembled hundreds of sherds, not to mention charcoal, burned jacal, manos and metates, animal bones, and cooking stones.

Initially we worked at Fort Burgwin with Jim Judge nearby as an adviser. Up to about ten people worked there on Saturdays. Because Judge, our benefactor, was preparing to leave Ft. Burgwin, TAS member Bill Stevens was able to negotiate with the U.S. Forest Service for a room in the basement of their building on Civic Plaza Drive in Taos where our findings are still stored. Bags and boxes of artifacts were moved. The work continued to challenge the members who volunteered each Wednesday to bring order out of chaos involving thousands of fragments.

The usual lab procedure was to (1) take artifact bags in order by Field Number (FN), wash or otherwise clean them as required, then replace them in the bag with the FN slips; (2) classify and describe them on a 5x8 SMU card and assign a TAS89 serial number, make out a 3x5 SMU card corresponding to the large card to replace the FN slips (which were then crossed off); (3) arrange sherds for comparison and assemble them when possible; label large, assembled and special-interest artifacts with a serial number; (4) summarize above information on 5 1/2 x 8 cards made up for the purpose.

A year went by before a modern disaster struck: the basement room flooded. The artifacts survived in good shape, but large amounts of data recorded in ink were destroyed. We changed to pencil. Another year passed. At that point Thurston Toeppen developed a more concise method for organizing the artifacts

with the data. Since we did not have the facilities or skills to analyze soil samples, lithics, bone, wood, charcoal, etc., none of this work was done, but the samples and artifacts are housed in the basement room.

In the end, it had taken us as long to catalog the artifacts as it had to make the dig, three years plus. All that now remains is to complete the writing of the report and Site 17 will be history.

The Story of an Excavation -- The Llano Quemado Site

A Video

In 1991, during the third and last summer season of excavation at the Llano Quemado Site, Curtis Anderson made a VHS video of the excavation and of the members of Taos Archaeological Society who worked on the dig. In addition to showing various features of the excavation site and the work being done, the video pays tribute to the professional archaeologists who were on hand to give their expert advice on procedure: Paul Williams, Bob Kriebel, Bob Lawrence, Patty Crown, and the late Herb Dick. Marjorie Schweitzer prepared the log of the video. Grassroots Video, Taos, produced the video labels and copies of the video in 1993.

TAS AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO

Involvement with the State Society

The involvement of Taos Archaeology Society (TAS) with the Archaeological Society of New Mexico (ASNM) has been extensive. Several TAS members attended the ASNM Field School when it was held at the Vidal Site near Gallup, NM. As a result some members enrolled in and worked toward completion of the ASNM Certification Program. Further, it provided requisite skills and training for TAS members to conduct their own excavation of the Pueblo site in Llano Quemado on the southern edge of Taos.

Over the years, several TAS members were nominated and/or elected to the ASNM Board of Trustees, including Annette Grubiss, Paul Williams, and Greg Sagemiller. Each trustee also became active

in committee and work for ASNM. Paul Williams served on the Certification Council. Greg Sagemiller was elected Vice-President of ASNM and subsequently served two terms as President, and as chair of the Scholarship Fund Committee.

The Taos Archaeological Society participated in the ASNM Rock Art Recording Field School. In the summer of 1993-1994, TAS members enrolled in the ASNM Rock Art Recording Field School at the Lyden Site near Velarde, NM.

TAS has made donations to the ASNM Scholarship Fund, recognizing the value in the ASNM's commitment to aiding students who may be future leaders in the pursuit of Southwestern archaeology.

TAS is proud of its strong relationship with ASNM: hosting the annual meeting as a very young Society and again 7 years later; attending annual meetings in various parts of the state; participating as members of the Board of Trustees; and the many friendships that we have made over the years with members of ASNM and other affiliated societies.

Sponsoring the Annual Meetings

The May 1989 Annual Meeting

On May 5-7, 1989, a young TAS hosted the Annual Spring Meeting of the Archaeological Society of New Mexico.

The meeting was considered an unqualified success thanks to the committee chaired by Christine Ponko and the many volunteers from our society.

A reception and art show "American Hieroglyphics" at Stewart's Fine Arts was held the first evening of the conference. Saturday's program included nine presentations of papers and a mini-symposium. That evening's banquet was climaxed by the Bandelier Lecture, "The Looters and the Looted," presented by Fort Burgwin's Dr. Jim Judge. Four field trips on Sunday to rock art Sites, Valle Vidal, Picuris and Taos Pueblos and the Kit Carson Museums concluded the conference activities.

TAS also benefited financially from the conference. Proceeds (shared with the state society) almost doubled our bank balance.

The May 1996 Annual Meeting

Taos Archaeological Society hosted its second annual meeting of the Archaeological Society of New Mexico in May 1996.

The meeting was held at the Quality Inn in Taos and was well attended by members from around the state. The Bandelier Lecture, "Archaeological Research in the Northern Rio Grande: What We Are Doing and What We Haven't Done," was given by Dr. Patricia Crown. Members of TAS were especially pleased to welcome Patty Crown back to Taos. They were well acquainted with Patty when she and Jim Judge were the Directors of the Pot Creek summer excavation and lecture series presented by SMU at nearby Fort Burgwin. Patty also was a valued consultant on the Llano Quemado Site excavated by TAS.

Several papers presented at the 1996 annual meeting focused on northern New Mexico archaeology, including a reevaluation of the Valdez settlement pattern, farming patterns in the Valdez and Pot Creek phases, alternative explanations for ceramic traits in assemblages from the Tewa Basin and Taos Valley, health and diet in Taos Valley based on faunal and human remains, the Lyden Petroglyph site, and defining the Anasazi Frontier in the Taos Valley. Other papers focused on the research in Pot Creek Pueblo and the difficulties of stabilizing the Pot Creek site on a limited budget.

In addition to these and other excellent papers, the conference attendees were invited to participate in a trip to the Lyden Rock Art site, a trip to Pot Creek, a visit to several archaeological sites in Taos, and self-guided tours at Taos Pueblo and Kit Carson Historic Museums.

Tucker Heitman served as General Chair of arrangements. She was ably helped by the hard work and enthusiastic response of TAS members: Jean Muste, Chris Di Lisio, Virginia Mallory, Greg Sagemiller, Judith Duncan, John Muste, Peggy Toeppen, Dorothy Zopf, Marjorie Schweitzer, Shirley Shepherd, Alex Fletcher, Melinda Gomez, Rebecca Sagemiller, Bill Hemp, and Alex Fletcher.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES OF TAS

Rock Art Recording

Many of the members of the Taos Society were interested in the rock art of the area from the very beginning. Spurred by the excitement of discovering and recording the Big Arsenic Springs Petroglyph site, the group set out to record as much rock art as possible in the Taos area. Paul Williams of the BLM supervised the project. Through contact with Curtis Schaafsma at the Laboratory of Anthropology, the group was given information about a number of sites in the Taos area that Curtis and Polly Schaafsma had researched as preparation for Polly's *Rock Art in New Mexico* publication in the early 1970s. TAS revisited and recorded these sites in the Hondo Valley, in the Rio Grande Gorge, and along the Rio Pueblo.

During 1988 the TAS rock art recording crew photographed, sketched, and documented 16 rock art sites, including the Big Bear, Kissing Fish, Vista Verde, Golondrina Mesa, Hupobi, and Manby Hot Springs sites. All archaeological materials and features that were found associated with the rock art sites were also recorded. TAS members logged many hours in the office putting together the site forms for this project. Based on analysis of artifacts, rock art styles, and patination these sites dated to the Archaic, Anasazi, and Historic Periods.

In 1989 TAS members volunteered to help the BLM record rock art within the Santa Fe River Canyon near La Cienega. The Archaeological Society of New Mexico's Rock Art Field School had recorded the rock art at La Cienega Mesa under Jim Bain's supervision in 1974, but very little was known about other rock art in the Santa Fe River Canyon. The Taos group located and recorded five major unknown petroglyph sites. This information was a driving force in the BLM decision to designate the La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern, which will help protect the rich cultural, and natural resources of the Santa Fe River Canyon.

The TAS has continued to record the petroglyphs of the area through the years. In fact, as of 1998 the group has recorded 37 petroglyph sites in the Taos area. This work has created a very good database,

and has built on the work that Polly Schaafsma did in the early 1970's. TAS members who took part in the petroglyph project include: Susan Hill, Daniel Burleson, Christine Ponko, John Schweitzer, Howard and Caroline Stofel, Jean Muste, Natalie Friedman, Temple Shalt, Annette Grubiss, Jim Parsons, Bill Stevens, Pat Moore, Alex Fletcher, Tucker Heitman, Mary Burns, Eliot and Barbara DuBois, Char Graebner, George and Dorothy Zopf, Joss Coggeshall, Bill Lechtenberg, Willi Wood, Chris Di Lisio, Greg and Rebecca Sagemiller, Lay Powell, Nan Lipsett, Shirley Shepherd, and Thurston and Peggy Toeppen.

Passages to the Past

In the spring of 1993 The Taos Archaeological Society undertook the task of bringing local archaeology to the attention of the citizens of Taos through a weeklong exhibit entitled Passages to the Past. The three-part show consisted of photographs of New Mexico rock art, art works inspired by local rock art, and a hands-on display of the Society's Llano Quemado excavation, an interactive computer display on prehistoric pueblos, aspen art, oral history, and more. This event was part of NM Heritage Preservation Week and overlapped the first week of the Taos Spring Arts Festival.

The display of excavation artifacts included interpretive questions about the probable use of each artifact as well as baskets of sherds and lithics, which could be handled by the visitors. A BLM video on archaeology etiquette featuring the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles was a big hit with all ages, especially the elementary school classes who came.

It was our goal to help educate our children, the community as a whole, and visitors to Taos about our heritage and the importance of protecting our archaeological resources. The TAS with the help of the Town of Taos, BLM, and the Forest Service sponsored this event. It was well received by Taos County and the surrounding communities. Over a thousand school children spent several hours at the exhibit.

Taos Public Library Archaeological Books Project

TAS conceived and funded (in major part) arrangements with the (then Harwood) Taos Public Library to catalog, mark, and shelf books and bound articles on archaeology. These are contained in a special section of the Library's Southwest Collection and are available for circulation. Bill Stevens, long-time member of TAS, was the impetus behind this project.

The collection consists of over 60 publications treating the topics: Broad Synthesis of Southwest Archaeology, Historical Accounts and Biographies, Taos Region, Anasazi Culture, Rock Art, Archaeological Methods and Techniques, and Other Sites, Regional and Southwest. Publications are marked with blue tape beneath the catalog number to indicate the Southwest Collection, and with a green dot to indicate archaeological content. A separate collection of publications on more technical topics and regional sites such as the Chama Valley, Gallina Culture, and Chaco Canyon is to be housed in the TAS Room in the basement of the newly acquired Taos Town building on Civic Plaza Drive. Most of the publications and papers donated by the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service are filed there, including field notes and reports by Herbert Dick, Florence Ellis, and Helen Blumenschein.

Field Trips

Weekend or weeklong campout excursions to archaeological sites and facilities have been a hallmark of the TAS since its inception in 1987. These have included field sessions with members working under professional archaeologists employed by the federal or state agency having stewardship for the site; field trips conducted as a part of the annual Pecos Conferences; ASNM State Meetings; Historic Preservation Week; and combined work/visitation excursions arranged by agency hosts in recognition of the value of earlier volunteer support projects.

The typical format for trips has been transportation in agency vans and private vehicles, tent camping, and group meals, the latter sometimes of memorable high class (especially the chile rellenos dinners and the huevos rancheros breakfasts prepared by Peggy Stevens). Equipment for the group sessions



San Juan Float Trip



Trip to Ute Mountain Tribal Park
 (l to r back row) Dorothy Zopf, Virginia Mallory, George Zopf,
 Bill Stevens, Peggy Stevens, Bill Lechtenberg, Alex Fletcher, Paul Williams
 (front row) John Schweitzer, Marjorie Schweitzer, Chris Di Lisio

has been provided by members who do river running as a family sport -- especially Bill and Peggy Stevens who provided rafting gear and expertise--and the itinerary has even included member-guided float trips of the San Juan River and the Rio Chama. Trips are well attended, especially the ones planned as the TAS's major annual event, with 20 to 30 members and guests being the norm. The camaraderie that evolved has been a sustaining ingredient in the success of the TAS and continues to aid in attracting new members.

The Tsiping pueblo ruin near Abiqui, NM, has been the favored site, with work sessions and visits in 1991, 1992, and 1996 (2 sessions) and members often return on their own to this very special place. A partial list of visited sites includes: Punche Lake Teepee Ring Village (Tres Piedras, NM), San Juan River, La Cienega petroglyph and pueblo ruins, Mesa Golondrina Benches/Gallina Culture, Hupobi and Posi Pueblos (Ojo Caliente), Jemez Mountain Pueblo Ruins, Navajo Pueblitos, Rio Chama, Chimney Rock (CO), Lowry Pueblo/"Puzzle House"/Hovenweep (CO), Grand Gulch and Cedar Mesa, UT, Ute Mountain Tribal Park, Casas Grandes, Mexico; and Galisteo Basin Pueblos. Paul Williams, Archaeologist for BLM/Taos Resource Area has been the principal host; however, all of the federal and state agencies have been most generous in providing superb hosts over the years.

One of the highlights of TAS's field trips is the camaraderie felt by everyone in setting up camp, sharing meals, especially the excellent cooking of Peggy Stevens, and singing around the campfire. Joan Phillips and John Schweitzer accompanied songs on the guitar. George Zopf played bass with the Bluff bluegrass band at Sand Island.

The San Juan Float Trip⁴

In the immortal words of George Zopf, "I only needed diarrhea to make this the perfect night." But that was Saturday. We need to go back a bit.

Friday morning dawned clear and cool, a real stroke of luck because it made us grab down jackets or other warm clothing on the way out the door. The previous afternoon the men had loaded the river gear: 4 rubber rafts, oars, paddles, 28 life jackets, etc., into a panel truck. Now, Friday morning, it only remained

to maneuver in the huge coolers of food containing 11 meals for 24 people, our personal gear plus folding chairs, into every nook and cranny of the 5 vehicles that were caravanning to Sand Point, the campground outside of Bluff, Utah, where we would camp for the night before putting into the San Juan River in the morning.

Friday proved to be a memorable night, and not just because of sand fleas. Friends of Paul's (Williams) from his student days at Northern Arizona University shared the first of Peggy Steven's fabulous meals with us. (Grizzled rangers were seen to have tears in their eyes when the Taos Archaeological Society departed any campground after sharing our food with them.) In return the Bluff gang entertained us with an evening of Bluegrass music the likes of which few have ever heard, especially not with George (Zopf) on the bass fiddle.

On Saturday morning our weather luck was still holding, not to mention general enthusiasm and bonhomie. Eske and friend, each in a kayak, darted between the big rafts like water bugs. There were herons and sandpipers. It was glorious. By noon the breeze had picked up a bit, but with our pita halves filled with every imaginable deli item and standing on a narrow bit of shore hidden in the cliffs of the river, we hardly noticed. Back in the rafts we were suddenly pulling every available bit of waterproof gear up to our chins. There were waves on that river. What should have been a speeding-with-the-current adventure was fast becoming a standoff between current flowing west and wind blowing east.

Still in hope of making at least four miles that first day to what was described as a possible campsite--remember those cliffs--paddles were distributed and we went to work. Aided by heavy clouds, the sky was fast darkening before any plausible camping ground appeared. Turning the rafts into shallow water, Paul and Sandy Courter sprung to reconnoiter while the rest of us gradually straightened up. But no, not enough space. Back to the paddles and very soon an obviously better spot appeared. Until the rafts were unloaded they couldn't be beached. We were splashing and hauling when Mary Courter's voice rang out, "I'm not moving." Mary had no change of clothing; Sandy had forgotten her bag. She was not about to step on anything less than dry land.

Fortunately Peggy Stevens was able to engineer a hot spaghetti supper with all the extras before the rain settled in for the night. Wet, cold, and a bit of a slant the wrong way to the floor of our tent made it a memorable night. The next day was a lot of hard paddling interspersed with views of magnificent, giant petroglyphs. The best sight, however, was the rock that gives the town of Mexican Hat its name. And there, waiting on the shore was Greg Sagemiller, not just grinning, but dry and warm and ready to take over the retrieval of the rafts while we bedraggled creatures staggered up the hill into town, our float on the San Juan complete. (*See Appendix B for lists of Overnight and One-Day Field Trips.*)

Volunteer Field Work

The Wilderness Study Institute of Durango, Colorado, offered TAS members the opportunity to participate in mapping and surface collecting on selected segments of the Hupobi and Posi Pueblo ruins near Ojo Caliente. More than twenty TAS members (about ten each day) spent a day or more at the site, earning the gratitude and praise of the project directors for the professionalism and dedication. Several members camped at the site for various lengths of time. TAS members worked with the Wilderness Institute in the summers of 1990 and 1991.

In the summer of 1990 near Arroyo Seco, two teams of TAS volunteers mapped surface features, collected lithic, charcoal, and ceramic surface materials and excavated a cross section of the foundation and wall of the ruins of a watchtower (torreon) that local folklore said dated back to the original Spanish settlers. The work was done under the direction of local archaeologist, Jeff Boyer, whose services had been obtained by an acequia association seeking to establish a priority date for settlement and use of nearby streams to irrigate fields. Boyer's published analysis has promise of setting a date of about 1745--significantly pushing back the 1815 claim of litigants in a water rights adjudication suit.

For six days in June, 1991, TAS members worked with the Santa Fe National Forest district in surveying the benches between the top of Mesa Golondrina and the canyons of the Rio Chama and Rio Gallina under the direction of Dave Legarre, archaeologist for the Coyote District of the Santa Fe National

Forest. This survey was near the Castles of the Chama, a large Gallina structure dating to the 12th and 13th centuries, AD.

In September and October 1991, TAS members worked on the Tsiping site field sessions that were collaboration among TAS, the BLM Resource Area (Paul Williams), the Wilderness Studies Institute (Steve Glass and Janet Baker Glass), and the Santa Fe National Forest (Dave Legarre). Most volunteers stayed for a full week.

The Tsiping site may represent the remnants of a post-Mesa Verde Anasazi architectural tradition. A large formerly multi-storied pueblo may have had 1200 rooms and is located high on a mesa overlooking the Abiquiu Reservoir and Ghost Ranch in the drainage area of the Chama. Archaeologists believe that due to its easily defended location and unusual masonry construction (coursed shaped tuff blocks), Tsiping may represent the remnants of a post-Mesa Verde Anasazi architectural tradition. Interesting features include what are believed to be stone-lined garden plots, agricultural fields, a "world shrine," petroglyphs, and several kivas carved into the tuff bedrock, including one great kiva. Tsiping has been ravaged by vandals and casual collectors, but has never been systematically studied and plotted. Mornings were spent in the field doing surface surveying and afternoons doing lab work.

On October 17, 1992, the Forest Service dedicated the Pot Creek Cultural site located on State Route 518 near Ft. Burgwin. TAS members had helped with the restoration of the pueblo and the kiva. TAS member Chris Ponko supervised the mudding. Annette Grubiss was in charge of the volunteer mudders.

Awards

Three prestigious awards in 1990 recognized contributions by TAS and its members.

At a ceremony at the Santa Fe Opera complex in May, the Take Pride in America--New Mexico campaign honored TAS with the first-place award for constituent organizations. The Lieutenant Governor, Jack Stahl, presented the award.

TAS was honored specifically for its work with the Bureau of Land Management. Activities singled out for special notice included the recording of rock art, inventorying of archaeological sites, and helping to stimulate community awareness of Northern New Mexico's rich archaeological resources.

TAS President Bill Stevens and several members of the organization were on hand for the ceremony.

In the summer of 1990 TAS was honored with the national "Take Pride in America" award, presented by First Lady Barbara Bush. Special mention was made in the award citation of the thousands of hours of volunteer service contributed by TAS members and of the efforts made by TAS to heighten community awareness of the archaeological heritage of Northern New Mexico.

Late in the summer of 1990, TAS Vice President George Zopf and a contingent of members accepted the "Volunteers for Public Lands" award, presented on behalf of the Bureau of Land Management by BLM national director Cy Jamison. The ceremony was held at the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic Rivers site north of Questa.

The Strength of TAS

In large part, the continuing vitality of the TAS has rested with an active cadre of some two-to-three dozen members. Over the years, the names have changed as interests and emphases have changed, but an essentially constant balance of enthusiastic long-time seniors and new comers has provided a remarkable continuing presence as a community endeavor.