



Thomas Fulton Dawson

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## A Tribute to Thomas F. Dawson

BY E. M. AMMONS

When President Harding was making his memorable tour westward across the continent, he was the guest of the people of Denver for more than twenty-four hours. This city was favored with the longest visit on the part of the Chief Executive of all places on the route between Washington and Tacoma, and the occasion was one of much more than ordinary interest.

Arriving in the city at about ten o'clock Sunday morning, June 24, 1923, the various members of the presidential party were entertained according to previous arrangements. Since in such a company the personnel must consist largely of newspaper men, plans had been carefully made by the Denver Press Club to take the members of this group through the Mountain Parks. There they took lunch and visited places of interest. On the return trip one of the automobiles plunged over a fifty-foot embankment with the result that three of the party were killed.

One of those three was Thomas F. Dawson of Denver, a veteran newspaper man and local manager of the press representatives and Historian and Curator of History of the State Historical and Natural History Society of Colorado. After the accident, when aid reached Mr. Dawson, he said, "Look out for the others, boys. I'm all right." It was not realized until after he had reached the hospital that his injuries were fatal. In a few hours the lamp of life had flickered out, and it was recognized by his rescuers that his exclamation when he was picked up was simply an expression of his life-long unselfish regard for the welfare of others.

Thomas Fulton Dawson was born on a farm near Munsfordville, Kentucky, June 23rd, 1853. His father dying in his early childhood, he was raised by his uncle. As he grew towards manhood he removed to Louisville, Kentucky, and commenced his journalistic career on the Louisville Ledger. His success there brought the attention of Denver men to the value of his work,



and he was called to Denver in the summer of 1876 by the old Denver Tribune, which was then owned by Herman Beckurts and edited by O. H. Rothaker, son-in-law of the Public Printer, S. P. Rounds, one of the most brilliant editorial writers in the West. At that time the paper was located at Sixteenth and Market Streets.

Mr. Dawson was married to Miss Ella Dickinson in Louisville, Kentucky, on March 13, 1878, and at once took up his residence in Denver, making this city his home except during the time that his duties called him to Washington. He had no children, but raised for relatives more than his share. One of them, a nephew and namesake, Mr. Thomas F. Dawson, is Assistant Clerk of the United States Supreme Court. Mrs. Dawson survives her husband. Mr. Dawson was always a favorite with children and he was familiarly called by many who knew him best, "Uncle Tom."

Mr. Dawson was associated in the management of the Denver Tribune with Eugene Field, associate editor, and Fred J. V. Skiff, city editor. He occupied the position of state and telegraph editor. It was during this service that Eugene Field made his reputation as a child's poet and paragrapher.

Mr. Skiff has managed three of our National Expositions in a most successful and brilliant manner. Mr. Rothaker died at an early age and was not therefore permitted to fulfill the promise which his brilliancy indicated.

In the early eighties Mr. Dawson associated himself with Mr. Frank S. Woodbury of the Denver Times, and Captain R. G. Dill of the Leadville Herald Democrat, and purchased the Denver Times from its founder and proprietor, General R. W. Woodbury. In the conduct of this paper, Mr. Dawson was editor, Captain Dill was city editor, and Mr. Woodbury was manager.

I had been employed by the paper on part time during the last years of my school days and on full time since the early part of '81 as circulation manager. With Mr. Dawson's advent into the management of the paper I became a reporter and afterwards city editor, telegraph editor, and state editor. In these positions I was thrown in constant contact with Mr. Dawson and had an opportunity to observe the value of his work.

It will be remembered by all old-timers that Senator Teller, who had been elected one of the first senators of this state, was called to the Cabinet by President Arthur and that, at the close of his most successful term as a Cabinet officer, he wished to retire from public service and resume the practice of the law. The campaign for the election of his successor was perhaps the most exciting in the history of the state. Neither Senator Hill nor

his competitors could control the legislative caucus, and Senator Teller was induced to give up his business plans and return to the Senate.

Soon after this re-election Mr. Dawson's peculiar abilities for the position were recognized by Senator Teller, and he was appointed as the Senator's secretary in Washington, a position which he held until the Senator's final retirement in 1910. Soon after Mr. Dawson's employment at Washington, his ability as a newspaper writer was called to the attention of the Associated Press and he soon became one of the leading writers for that organization. For almost the entire time that he was secretary for Senator Teller, he did the general work of the United States Senate for the Associated Press, besides many special duties, among which were the Maine inquiry and the Schley investigation.

At the beginning of the national campaign in 1896 he was assigned the duties of looking after the resolutions committees of the several national conventions, of which there were four that year. In this work he was so successful that he was employed in every national campaign as long as he lived and had already been engaged for the next set of conventions in 1924.

He was also assigned to duty in connection with some of the most noted tours in presidential campaigns, among them the most energetic and brilliant tour of William Jennings Bryan in 1896.

His work as a general writer on current events in and about the United States Senate was so thorough and fair that it always commanded the respect of all members of the Senate regardless of their party affiliations. A good illustration of this fact occurred during the visit of President Harding to Denver. Mr. Dawson had been away from Washington three years; but President Harding recalled his services so favorably that he took occasion to mention Mr. Dawson's work in the most complimentary manner.

During Mr. Dawson's connection with the Senate in his newspaper capacity, he proved invaluable to the people of Colorado in land and other public matters. There are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of men in the state today who owe the success of their land claims or kindred matters to his untiring efforts in their behalf. His almost unbounded success in these matters was due to his known reliability in his representations to the departments. It may also be stated that during this period he did a lot of general writing and newspaper correspondence of a valuable sort.



One of Mr. Dawson's most creditable pieces of work was not so well known in his home city. During President Wilson's term he was for several years executive clerk of the United States Senate. This is a position in which the greatest trustworthiness is required. Treaty making, presidential appointments and other confidential matters are considered. Mr. Dawson, because of his long acquaintance with U. S. Senators, was not only peculiarly fitted for this place, but that confidence which the Senators reposed in him was essential for the success of the work. Mr. Dawson not only executed this difficult position to the satisfaction of all Senators, but while in office he unearthed records and data which had long been unused, and made them available to the Senators and executive officers. This caused him a great deal of work, but it brought to him the commendation of all concerned.

When he first came to Denver, Colorado was in the throes of admission into the Union. Public activities were turbulent, and the state had its greatest population of noteworthy characters. Mr. Dawson was by nature a historian. With his very first introduction to the state, he began his collections of clippings and historical data. This course he pursued diligently to the end and in many respects he had the best collection of the kind in the state.

In addition to this general collection of historical data, he was the author of many special works, not all of which bore his name. Upon his arrival in Colorado he became acquainted with David Cook, President of the Rocky Mountain Detective Association, and wrote most of the story in "Hands Up", which was an account of Mr. Cook's many stirring experiences during the turbulent days of territorial organization. Mr. Dawson also wrote the thrilling story of the Ute War, one of the few remaining copies of which sold for two hundred and seventy dollars at a recent auction sale in New York. His most ambitious work, however, was the "Life and Character of Edmond Oliver Wolcott", written at the request of the Senator's family. He devoted a large amount of time to this work, which comprises two large volumes and furnishes more valuable data than any other historical effort within the history of our state.

His recently published shorter sketch of Senator Henry M. Teller was of unusual value, and the greatest regret of his many friends is that he was not permitted to live long enough to write a biography of Senator Teller, the foremost citizen of this state for a period of fifty years.

Mr. Dawson's public service was so interwoven with that of others that it is difficult to separate it. In at least two instances,

however, his efficient work can be mentioned entirely separate from those with whom he was connected.

A few years ago a Colorado society was organized in the city of Washington, and long prior to his returning to Colorado, Mr. Dawson was President of this Society. His services were splendid in keeping Colorado people better acquainted and more able to secure accomplishments for their state. After returning to Denver he was chosen President of the Sons of Colorado and gave a most brilliant administration of that office. During all the time he was employed by Senator Teller he enjoyed that gentleman's unbounded confidence to such a degree that he was authorized to sign letters for his chief.

The work begun by Mr. Dawson in the collection of historical data was continued until his death. During his latter years, and especially after he was connected with the State Historical and Natural History Society of Colorado, he worked this mass of material into a set of scrap-books, seventy in number, which were donated to the Society. These books furnish a great deal of valuable material for Colorado's historical records. He not only furnished many interesting stories, but much information of very great value. In addition to this set he donated to the library of the Society nearly four hundred and fifty volumes of books relating to the history of the West.

In the summer of 1885 Mr. Dawson and the writer went into the cattle business under the firm name of Dawson and Ammons. We started out with a modest outfit of eighty acres of land and twenty-five head of cattle. The business grew until we had many thousands of acres of land and for many years would average from a thousand to fifteen hundred head of cattle.

Mr. Dawson's most notable achievement in this connection was the support given his junior partner and associates in inaugurating and building up the National Western Stock Show at Denver with its consequent great influence in the growth of the live stock industry in the West.

Many years ago we acquired a "cow" camp that had been established by former State Senator W. W. Webster on the South Platte River at the mouth of Goose or Lost Park Creek. We did the riding for cattle in the neighborhood from this point. Mr. Dawson was in the habit of spending many of his vacations in connection with the riding operations on the range. One day while the rest of the party were engaged in branding calves, Mr. Dawson, as was his wont, went on a tour of inspection. Returning in the evening he announced that he had discovered a reservoir site. At this point just below the mouth of Goose Creek, the river ran through a narrow gorge of solid granite, and Mr. Dawson



declared it the best reservoir site he had ever seen. Some time later I met Mr. Charles Allen, the engineer of the Denver Union Water Company, a gentleman whom I had known since I was a boy. He told me of some reservoir sites that the Water Company had examined; among these were the site at the blind canon on Goose Creek, the one on Tarryall, the one at Antero, and some others. I asked him if he had looked over the one at the mouth of Goose Creek. He said, "No, I never heard of it." I told him some of the advantages of this site, and he said he would look it over. Soon afterwards he, with Mr. Joe Osner and some officials of the Denver Union Water Company, came to my house on South Platte River, ten or twelve miles below the site of the reservoir, and from there examined it. No filing had been made on this site and Mr. Allen took formal possession of it for the Denver Union Water Company. Since that time the dam for Lake Cheeseman has been built on this site, forming the finest reservoir in all this part of the country.

Mr. Dawson was able, wise, efficient, industrious, and generous; he was a historian by nature and led a very busy life. Circumstances prevented his following his natural bent as a business, but he made it a fad. Throughout his active life-work at Washington he kept most intimate relations with historical matters relating to Colorado, and, as his contributions to the library indicate, his labors were of great value to his chosen state. In all his work he religiously adhered to historical accuracy. Being convinced that the honor of exploring the Colorado River was wrongly bestowed, he spent much time and care in looking up facts which gave that honor to James White. Because of his loyalty to the state and its history, he was induced to give up a most lucrative position at the National Capital for that of Historian and Curator of History of the State Historical and Natural History Society of Colorado at one-third of the salary in order to carry out his favorite plans for collecting historical data concerning Colorado. He was a perfect genius in his ability to get information. Affable in his general relations with men, he possessed the ability of easy approach to the highest official or a most humble citizen. Throughout his adult life he was an inspiration to his many friends and his noble character continues a beacon light to guide them over the rough places in the pathway of life.

### Resolutions Appertaining to the Death of Thomas F. Dawson

Adopted by the State Historical and Natural History Society,  
August 28, 1923

WHEREAS, This organization has met an irreparable loss in the tragic death of Thomas F. Dawson, its distinguished curator of history, and

WHEREAS, The honorable position held by him and his vital relationship to the Society and its individual members call for an expression of appreciation of his merits on the part of his co-workers; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That with intense sadness we recall the circumstances of his most lamentable death, coming as it did in the midst of labors of highest importance to the welfare and glory of his state, labors for which by nature and experience he was particularly well qualified and which could be performed so skillfully by no other individual, labors the accomplishment of which required unusual sacrifices, patience, and energy, but which were given willingly and abundantly for the benefit of his community and his race.

RESOLVED, That, while we recognize those endowments which contributed so much to his usefulness as companion and benefactor, we cherish, in memory, especially those personal qualities which so strongly endeared him to those with whom he came into daily contact—his gentle manners, broad sympathies, and various other lovable traits of character which gave to him a state full of friends, and an acquaintanceship reaching from ocean to ocean.

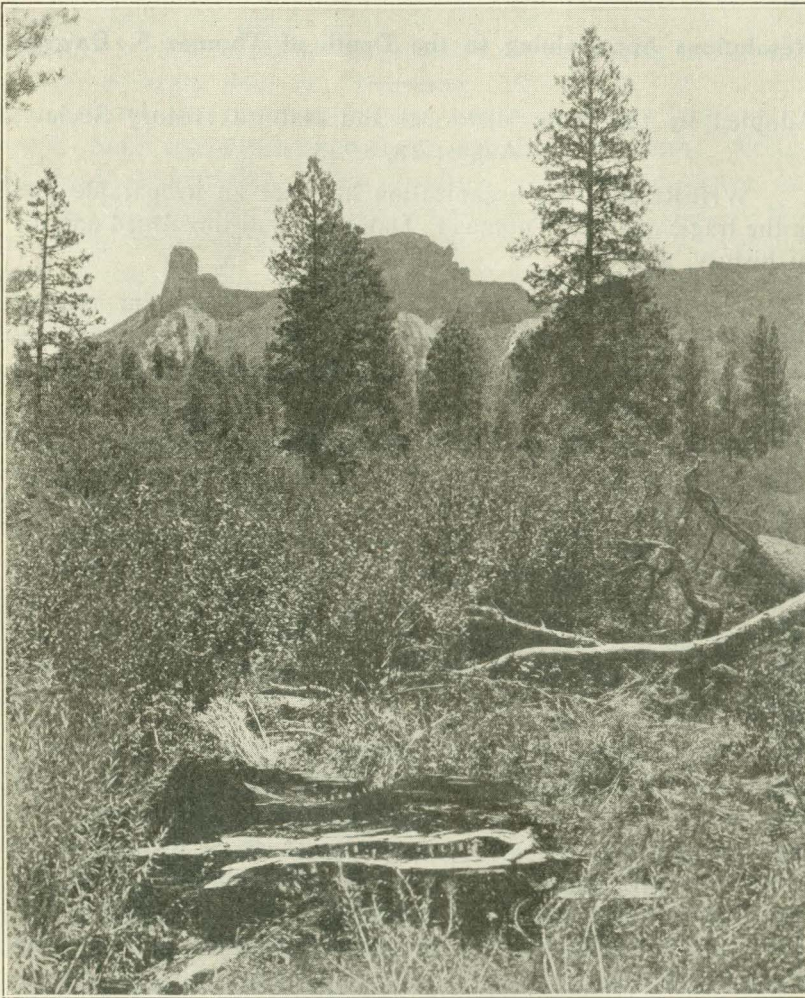


# Further Archaeological Research in the Northeastern San Juan Basin of Colorado, During the Summer of 1922\*

BY J. A. JEANCON AND FRANK H. H. ROBERTS

## The Pagosa-Piedra Region

BY J. A. JEANCON



Chimney Rock and Companion

The name Pagosa-Piedra Region has been tentatively given as a geological designation of the area in Archuleta county of southwestern Colorado containing prehistoric ruins, and is also used as the cultural name for the time being until a better one can be found to cover the field adequately.

The country is one of great beauty and variety, of mountains, plains and river valleys. The eastern part of the county is watered by the extreme northeastern source of one of the many branches of the San Juan river. The western portion carries the Piedra river. Both of these are real rivers and not simply mountain streams to which a fanciful name has been given. Scattered all through the county are numerous small streams fed by the snows of the mountains that rise all along the northern border.

Many of the mountain peaks are bare and above timber line. Below these bare spots are vast forests of quaking aspens blending into limitless stretches of pine, spruce and other conifers. On the lower reaches of the mountains are immense areas of scrub oak and sagebrush. The wild flowers, which in season are in great numbers, add a beauty to the country that is more than pleasing. In wet seasons all of the wild flowers are unusually large and highly colored. The mariposa lily, painters brush or Indian pink, and several varieties of daisies seem to be the predominating types.

About half (southern) of the county unrolls from the mountains into beautiful basins and valleys, with here and there large and small mesas and heavy growths of conifers (Plate 1). The country is excellent for raising corn, alfalfa, wheat, and other small grain. Many of the farms have been occupied by their present owners or their forefathers for many years and agriculture is not in an experimental state, but has proven to be very

\*Report of the Second Joint Archaeological Expedition of the State Historical and Natural History Society of Colorado and the University of Denver.

Frontispiece and Plates 1, 2, 3, 14, and 15 from photographs by George L. Beam, Denver, Colo. Courtesy of the D. & R. G. W. R. R.





Plate 1. Chimney Rock and Companion

successful. The mountains also afford vast and excellent ranges for the grazing of cattle and sheep.

On the mesa tops of the lower foothills are found juniper and other cedars, pinion, scrub oak and trees of comparatively recent years. On the mesa sides and in the vast parks are wonderful growths of yellow pine that often attain a great height and large girth at the butt (Plate 2).

Maps of the Colorado State Geological Survey of 1913 show that a very large part of the central areas of Archuleta County, running east and west about thirty miles and north and south from eight to ten miles in width, are of the Cretaceous period. In the northeastern corner and all along the eastern border the Devonian predominates, while there is a small outcropping of the Shoshonean in the southwestern corner. Most of the open country presents no deep erosive features after one leaves the mountains; in the latter, however, there has not only been extensive erosion of the mountain sides and tops, but huge deep canons show the activities of nature at work.

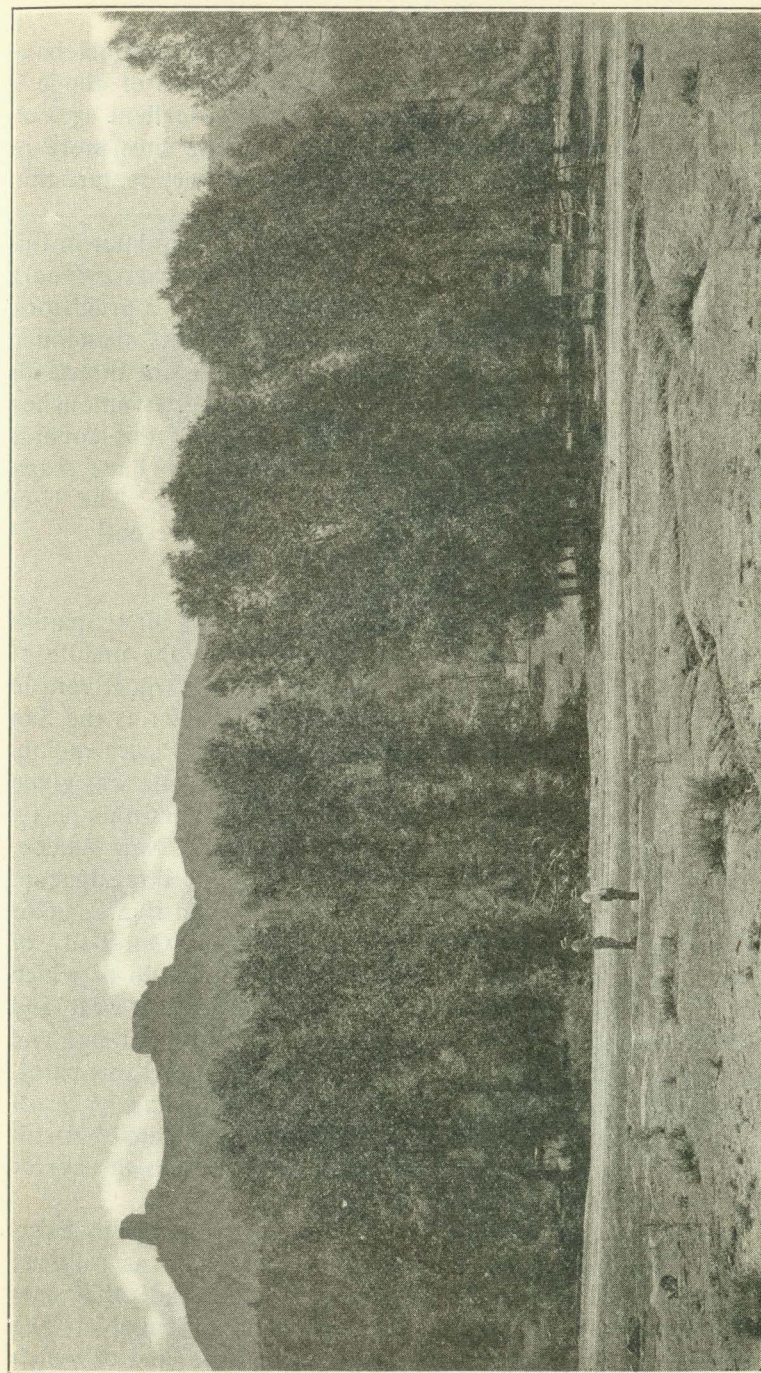


Plate 2. Chimney Rock from the North



### Prehistory

That the peoples who came into this country should have chosen the river valleys and the mesa tops as places of abode is not to be wondered at. The permanent water, excellent agricultural areas, abundant building material and house sites more or less difficult of access would include practically every feature that they could desire.

As the matter of house remains will be taken up later in this report it need only be mentioned here that in the Pagosa-Piedra region we have a marvelous opportunity for studying a prehistoric culture which is practically as the ancient inhabitants abandoned it, and which abounds in unusual features. There are thousands of house remains, burial mounds and other antiquities untouched and awaiting the research of the scientist. All of this country later became the hunting ground of the Utes, who have many stories of their contact with the prehistoric people. The Utes maintained their residence in the country until very recently.

### History

There are records extant that show that the first Spanish expeditions into Archuleta county occurred about the middle of the eighteenth century. The expedition of Juan Maria Rivera in the year 1761 explored most of what is now known as the San Juan basin of Colorado, which includes the Pagosa-Piedra region.

In 1776 Fray Francisco Sylvestre Valey Escalante was given authority to conduct an expedition into California, and this party, traveling in a northwesterly direction from Santa Fe, New Mexico, entered what is now Archuleta county at a point three leagues below the junction of the Navajo and the San Juan rivers. This place they named Nuestra Senora de las Nieves (Our Lady of the Snows) and it was the first named site in Colorado of which the exact date is known. From here they traveled west and slightly north and named many creeks, streams, mountains, and other places which still retain the names given them by this party. Amongst these we find the Piedra Parada (Standing or erect rock), now called the Chimney Rock by the Americans, but still retaining its Spanish name on the maps, and which is the center of the culture described in this paper.

In a report written in 1776 to Fray Augustin Morfi, Escalante mentions the ruined habitations of the region as follows: "The Tehuayo, according to the diary of Onate and other narratives, should be considered at most two hundred leagues to the northwest from Santa Fe; and it is nothing but the land of which the Tihuas, Tehuas and other Indians transmigrated to this kingdom, which is clearly shown by the ruins of the pueblos which

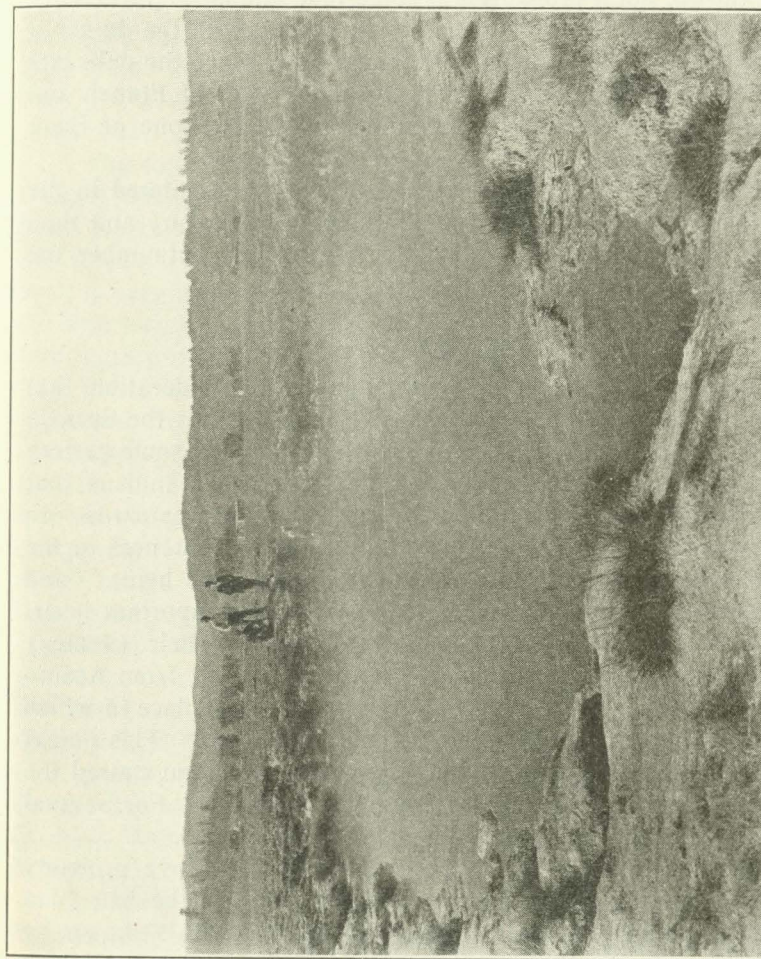


Plate 3. Hot Springs at Pagosa Springs



I have seen in it, whose form was the same as they afterwards gave to theirs in New Mexico; and the fragments of clay and pottery which I also saw in the country are much like that which the said Tehuas make today. To which is added the prevailing tradition with them, which proves the same."<sup>1</sup>

The exact date of the first settlement in Archuleta county is not known, but it probably was some time late in the eighteenth century or early in the nineteenth. In talking with the descendants of the early Spanish families they usually place the date late in the eighteenth century. There are many tales of French and Spanish treasure troves in the country but so far none of them have been found.

It is probable that the first American settlers entered in the latter part of the second half of the nineteenth century and then only in small numbers. Today the Spanish still outnumber the Americans to a large extent.

### The 1690 Period

Heretofore it has not been taken into consideration that during the period of the reconquest of New Mexico by the Spanish in 1690-95, it is more than probable that a part of southwestern Colorado may have been invaded by the refugee Indians that were driven out of their homes by the returning Spaniards. In the works of Mr. A. F. Bandelier we find many references to the period under discussion, one of which will be given here: "and on the 4th of June of that year (1696) the last important insurrection of the Pueblos broke out. \* \* \* Their (Jemez) first step was to secure assistance from the Navajos, from Acamo and from Zuni, \* \* \* a fierce conflict took place in which the Jemez and their allies were routed. \* \* \* This defeat broke up the confederacy of the Acamo and Zuni and caused the Jemez to flee to the Navajo country. \* \* \* For several years the Jemez remained among the Navajos."<sup>2</sup>

The Navajo country as referred to in the above probably extended up into the section around the elbow of the San Juan river at Juanita, Colorado. That this is probable is shown by the finding, during the past summer (1922) of some paintings that are without doubt of Navajo origin.

At a point twenty miles south of Pagosa Springs, on the San Juan river at the mouth of the Montezuma creek, are two pictured rocks, one of which is an exact reproduction of the principal figure used in the present day ceremonies of the Yabachi: a nine-

<sup>1</sup>Twitshell, R. E. Spanish Archives of New Mexico, Vol. 11, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup>Bandelier, A. F. Investigations among the Indians of the southwestern United States, etc. Final report. Part II, pages 215-216.

day ceremony of healing the sick and performed by the Navajo. It is located about one-eighth of a mile from the junction of the San Juan river and the Montezuma creek in the latter canon, and is on a large block of stone that has fallen off of the canon wall. On Plate 4-A is shown a photograph of the picture, which is scratched into the surface of the rock and afterwards colored. Most of the pigment is gone, but enough remains to show that originally the whole thing was painted. This is especially noticeable in the band holding the line of feathers running down the back. This was colored red, and in places the color still shows fairly well.

The total height of the figure is about forty inches and the body is four and one-fourth inches at the widest part. Above the head are two mountain sheep horns attached to the head dress and three eagle plumes erect. The long line of feathers down the back is very much like that shown on the figure of the Naskiddi, the hunchback god of the Navajo. The lines radiating from the face were probably intended to represent the sun rays.

The following quotation taken from Col. James Stevenson's report on the Navajo healing ceremony of the Hasjelti Dailjis is most appropriate at this place: "The Naskiddi are to the north and the south of the painting; they carry staffs of lightning ornamented with eagle plumes and sunbeams. Their bodies are nude except the loin skirt, their leggings and moccasins are the same as the others. The hunch on the back is a black cloud, and the three groups of white lines denote the corn and other seeds of vegetation. Five plumes are attached to the cloud backs (eagles live in the clouds). The black circle zigzagged with white around the head is a cloud basket filled with corn and seeds of grass. On either side of the head are five feathers of the red shafted flicker (*Colaptes cafer*); a fox skin is attached to the right side of the throat; the mountain sheep horns are tipped with the under tail feathers of the eagle, tied with cotton cord. The horns are filled with clouds."<sup>3</sup>

In the picture in the Montezuma Canon not all of the features described in the above quotation are seen, but enough is left to show what it was intended for. The extended hands of the figure probably grasped the staffs of lightning and many other features are to be recognized. Originally the figure was probably colored as is the one described in the Stevenson report. Colonel Stevenson calls attention to the fact that all of the round heads in the pictures are of the male and the octangular ones are of the female.

<sup>3</sup>Stevenson, James. Navajo ceremony of the Hasjelti Dailjis. Eighth Ann. B. A. E., page 262, Plate CXXI.



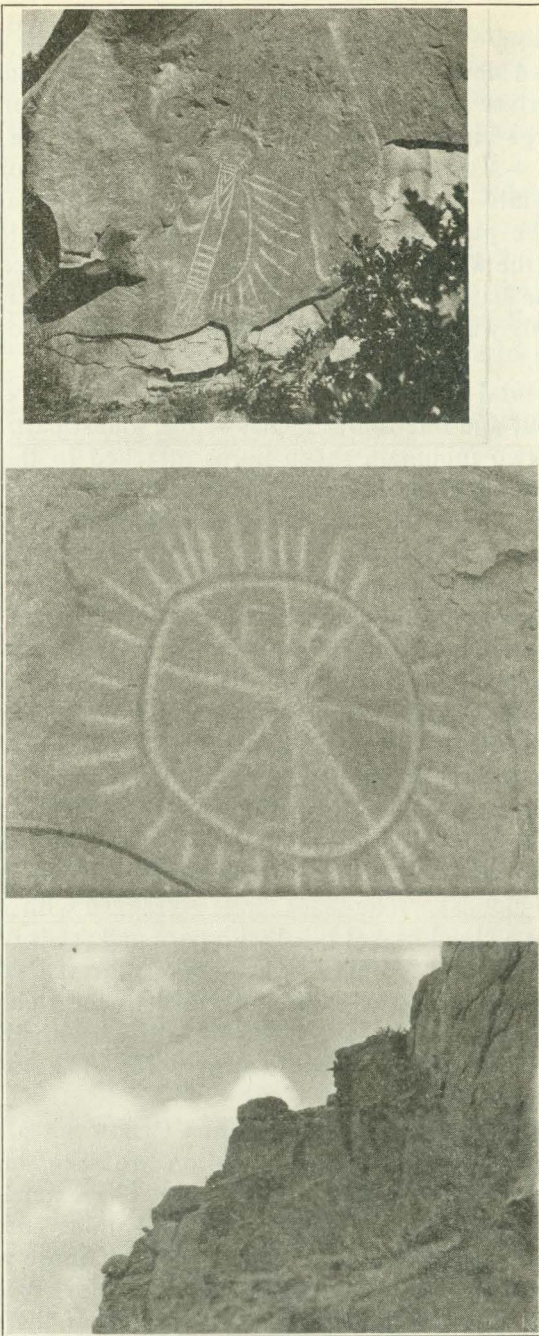


Plate 4.  
Naskiddi Figure  
Sun Dial  
Rock on Which the Sun Dial is Painted

A little to the right and above the male figure is a picture of the vulva of a woman and below at the right is another figure of undetermined character. As far as the writer knows, it is not usual for the pictures of the genitalia of either sex to accompany any of the figures of the healing ceremony, although it has been stated that a dance of a phallic character is sometimes performed in connection with the ceremony.

The other picture referred to is that of a sun dial (Plate 4. B.). This is on a large rock facing almost straight south (Plate 4. C.). The circle is twenty-eight inches in diameter inside and thirty inches outside. There are two circles inside of the rays: the interior one is white, the outside one red. The width of each is about an inch. The inner part of the dial was all painted red, traces of which are still to be seen in many places within the two circles. The rays, which number thirty-four, are white and are seven inches in length on an average. The exact function of this picture is not known. Unfortunately it is somewhat defaced by people marking their initials all over it. It is more than likely that it is a companion picture to the one described above and of Navajo origin. The distance between the two is less than an eighth of a mile. We had no time to go further up the canon to look for other pictographs.

Although no ruin sites or potsherds of the 1690 period were found in the neighborhood it is pretty safe to conclude that there are some, as the writer made a reconnaissance to the Colorado border just below here in 1920 through the northern part of New Mexico, which clearly indicates that the remains do not end there. Around Juanita, which is only a few miles from the junction of the San Juan river and the Montezuma creek, there are lots of indications of the period under consideration. Another thing in favor of this theory is the finding of beaten copper plate of very old Spanish manufacture and other articles on the Trujillo ranch, which is just across the river from the sun dial.

#### Prehistoric. Pagosa Junction Region.

The next location investigated was that of Pagosa Junction. Here we found extensive areas of pithouses. In fact there were so many sites that it was impossible for us to examine all of them. No great difference was found in the types of pottery picked up on the surface of the ground in all of the places visited around Pagosa Junction, and, until further investigation has been made, it will all be considered as belonging to the pithouse culture.

In view of the curious features encountered on the Piedra in the pithouses it is hardly safe to call all of the culture pre-Pueblo. This year has demonstrated that the difference between the pre-



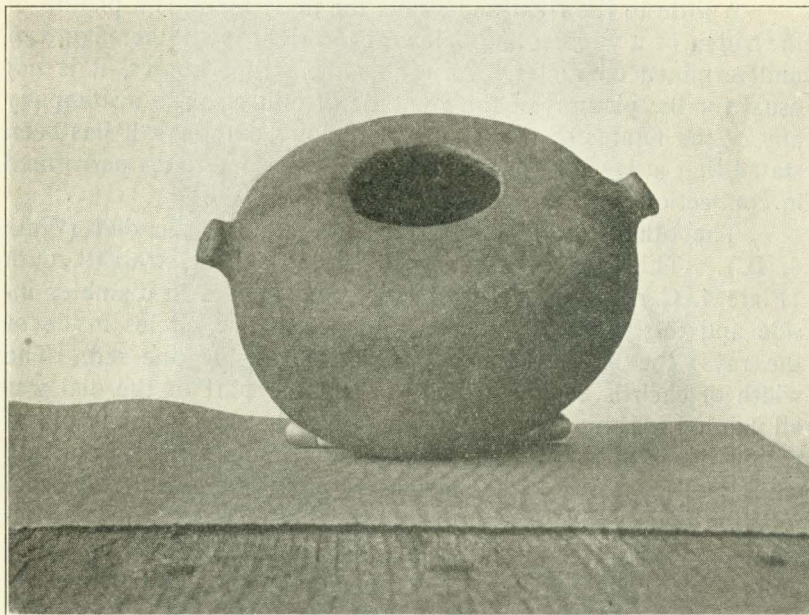


Plate 5. Early Decorated Ware, Owned by Mr. W. Zabriskie,  
Pagosa Junction, Colorado

Pueblo and the Pueblo cultures is not as clearly defined as was at first supposed, and therefore a site must be excavated and studied before the exact period to which it belongs can be determined. These remarks are brought about by the remarkable condition that was found to exist on a hill one-eighth of a mile north of the Junction. Here there were great areas covering several acres of pithouses. Whether they were joined together or not we were unable to tell from surface indications, as these were not definite enough. The pottery on the surface was all very crude black on white ware, no coiled ware, and only a few sherds of the punched out ware. From these indications it would seem safe to assume that parts of the ruins were pre-Pueblo pithouses and that part of them were of later dates, but, as was said before, it would not be safe to make a positive statement until excavations had been made, as these areas can be determined only by intensive study.

At a point about a mile north of the junction there is another large group, again with badly defined walls, but with large coiled ware and crude black on white wares on the surface. Here again we were not able to assign a period to the ruins.

On a high point two miles to the northwest of the junction is a group of ruins that are almost obliterated. The site is more than a thousand feet above the river and it seems strange that

the prehistoric people would have built so far from water. There was quite a large amount of good black on white sherds scattered over a large area. The ruin site itself is small and probably did not consist of many rooms to judge from the present surface indications.

Across the river from the railroad station is a large mesa somewhat less than a mile in length, and running roughly east and west. Mr. Zabriskie, a merchant conducting a store at the Junction, told the writer that there are many ruins on top of the mesa and he had in his possession a small pot of early black on white ware which he said came from the ruins there (Plate 5 and Fig. 1). This jar is typical of the third and fourth periods of the Piedra pithouses. It is five inches in diameter, and three and one-fourth inches in height. The opening in the top is one and six-eighths inches in diameter. The black pigment used to make the design is not very good and corresponds to that found on all of the ware of this period.

We were told of other ruins in the neighborhood but had not the time to visit them.

#### Pine River District

A brief visit was made to some of the ruins in the eastern part of La Plata county. As all of the eastern part of this county

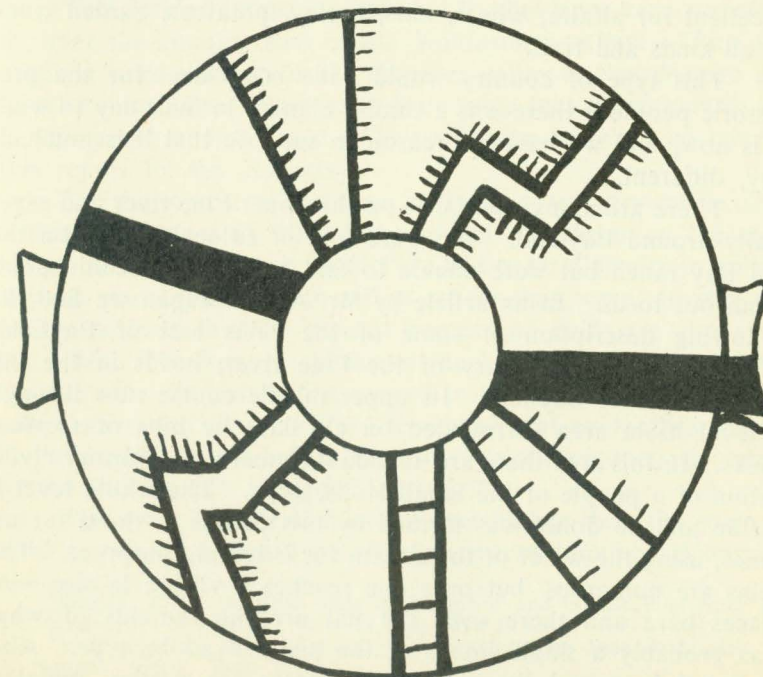


Figure 1



is watered by the Pine river it will be called, for convenience sake, the Pine River District or Region.

The Pine river rises in the San Juan mountains and flows almost straight south to the San Juan river, which it joins at the Colorado-New Mexico line. The stream is fairly good sized and flows rapidly, carrying at most times a good volume of water. The valley through which it flows is about one-half of a mile in width, varying somewhat at different places, but in the main about that width. Sometimes there are two benches on the sides of the valley proper and at times only one. Above these benches east and west the country extends as table lands in long rolling reaches. On the lower bench and in the river valley proper there are great areas covered with cobble stones of all sizes. According to the Geological survey of 1913 the north half of the country through which the river flows is of the Shoshone period and the south half is of the Eocene.

All of the country excepting where there are boulder fields is covered with sage brush, pinon, and cedar growth. In many places the pinon and cedar growth is so thick that it has killed out the sage. The growth is very similar to that found all over the southwestern part of Colorado. Occasionally one sees great outcroppings of the native sandrock which resemble monuments. Most of the country has now been broken up into farms and is excellent for alfalfa, wheat, oats, barley, potatoes, garden truck of all kinds and fruit.

This type of country would have been ideal for the prehistoric people if there was a similar climate in their day to what it is now, and we have no reason to suppose that it is much, if any, different.

There are many ruins sites on the upper Pine river and especially around Bayfield. We were told of extensive sites on the old Bay ranch but were unable to find anyone who could point them out to us. In an article by Mr. A. E. Reagan we find the following description of some of the ruins east of Bayfield: "Butte Creek, a tributary of the Pine river, heads in the hill country east of Bayfield. Its upper middle course runs through a level basin area surrounded on all sides by hills of residual rocks. In this area there are abundant remains of a former civilization of a people of the Small House type. The whole level is fertile and no doubt was farmed by this people in those far off times, using the water of the stream for irrigating purposes. The ruins are numerous, but only one reaches a village in size. At places here and there over the flat are the remains of what was probably a single house of the puddled adobe type. Also scattered here and there over the mesas are pestles, metates,

manos, Indian axes, mallets, etc. Large circular depressions, often with raised borders, also occur here and there. Furthermore, instead of being perched on the edge of the mesa as in the case of the other villages described, the main village is placed on a hill and, in addition, is composed of rock instead of all adobe mortar as all the others are.

"It is likely that the single lodges were summer lodges used very much like the outlying lodges of the Jemez in tending and watching their crops in summer. The circular depressions, forty to one hundred feet in diameter, seem too numerous and too flat to have been used as kivas unless this flat was a ceremonial assembling place for all of the inhabitants of the upper San Juan region in that distant time. The village, though large, never had people enough to necessitate that many kivas. It would seem that they were reservoirs and were used to store water in flood time for use in the drier part of the year. This theory is strengthened by the fact that they are in the fields and not near the main village. The village is quite large and the debris today is a massive pile. The two plazas and several kiva depressions can be discerned. Fragmentary pottery, grinding slabs, and other artifacts are scattered about the place. Everything indicates that a numerous population, probably over seven hundred souls, once inhabited this site."<sup>4</sup>

The circular depressions alluded to above are very numerous all over the country east of the Montezuma valley. They also occur in large numbers in the Mimbres valley in New Mexico and in other localities. They have been gone into more extensively in the report of last year.<sup>5</sup> They will also be taken up later in this report by Mr. Roberts.

The ruins west of the town of Ignacio are very much obliterated on account of the settling of the Americans on the mesa top on which they occur; in fact we had great difficulty in getting anyone who lived there to tell us where they were, as only one person realized that the present homes and fields are above the ruin sites. Mr. Reagan speaks of the Utes having occupied the ground when they were first moved to the Ignacio agency by the government and says: "The Ute rubbish was evidently a veneer to the ancient debris before the same was heterogeneously mixed by the white man's tilling of the soil."<sup>6</sup>

The mesa is several hundred feet higher than the town of Ignacio and is the usual type of sage-covered country. Along the

<sup>4</sup>Reagan, A. E. Ancient ruins in the lower and middle Pine river valley, Colorado. *El Palacio*. Dec. 31, 19, page 171.

<sup>5</sup>Archaeological Research in the Northeastern San Juan Basin, etc. J. A. Jeancon, 1921. Page 7.

<sup>6</sup>Reagan. *Op. cit.*



eastern edge was the site selected by the prehistoric people for their villages. There can be no confusion in the differentiation between the Ute remains and the prehistoric. The Pueblo pottery and house remains are distinct and different from those of the Utes.

Through the kindness of Mr. Turner of Ignacio we were able to locate a part of the ruins on the west side of the town. Starting at a point three hundred feet south of the junction of the road which leads to Mr. Turner's home and the main road we found a number of indications of ruins. The largest and best defined one is a mound running roughly east and west about one hundred feet in length and running north and south about fifty feet in width. It is only about one and one-half feet in height and shows no surface indications of walls. There are many cobblestones scattered all over it and the walls—the lower parts at least—were probably built of these. Fifty feet southwest of this mound are two large piles of stone suggesting detached rooms. The whole group suggests similar ones to be found along the San Juan river after leaving Shiprock, New Mexico, and running over to the Four Corners.

There are many small mounds scattered all over an area comprising about ten acres, but none of them are definite enough to establish them as house remains. In their present condition it is impossible, without excavation, to say whether the stones were taken from the adjoining tilled fields and piled up to get them out of the way or whether they are really small house remains. On the larger mound spoken of above there are many fragments of baked adobe roof material, but on the others these indications are missing.

Only eight fragments of pottery were obtained on the Turner mound and these are all of the hard grey ware such as was found on the Piedra in the later pithouses. They are without slip or decoration.

Here and there, on the north side of the junction of the road, for a distance of over half a mile, are mounds which can be definitely established as house remains. One man told us that these extended along the eastern brow of the mesa for several miles, but we were unable to locate more of them. As was said by Mr. Reagan, the sites have been occupied by the Utes first, and afterwards by the Americans, and, where the mesa top has been plowed up, all traces of the house remains are gone.

We also tried to find the ruins on the mesa east of the Indian school but were unable to do so. There did not seem to be anyone in the neighborhood who could direct us to them and so I am forced to resort again to Mr. Reagan's article.

### **Ruins on the Mesa Across the River From the Indian School**

"The ruins here lie in a north and south direction just back of the west front of the mesa of the Southern Ute Agency and school. There are three major ruins and some scant remains of what appear to be detached houses. The villages seem to have been placed on the edge of the mesa, which is slightly ridged here, so as to be close to the fertile lands of the river valley adjacent and also to be able to overlook both the valley and the mesa eastward from them as a matter of protection from enemies. From the evidence the ridge was inhabited throughout probably hundreds of years and it is now hundreds of years since the early inhabitants left their homes to the wearing away of the elements. Today not one foot of wall appears to be in place, only tumbled heaps remain and from appearances much of these have been leached out and carried to the valleys by the dashing rains, melting snows, and whirling winds of the coming and going years. Around the ruins, especially No. 1, there are numerous fragments of pottery and pieces of chipped flint scattered here and there, and in case of the village site cited they blanket the hillside and extend quite a distance towards the valley from it. Arrow heads, stone axes and grinding slabs are also present in considerable numbers. Sage brush, cedar and pinon overtop these ruins now.

"Number 1 is the ruin of a very old village, as has been suggested. It was also occupied for a long period of time, as is attested by the great quantity of broken pottery scattered one hundred feet or more on each side of it and extending from it down the hill slope to the westward. The village is in horseshoe shape with an original width within the houses of probably fifty feet. Its plaza opens to the south. Within are two circular depressions which were probably kivas (estufas). The village debris is now three feet deep. The place seems to have been sacked and destroyed by an enemy, as the roof mortar was burned into brick.

"Number 2 is the ruin of what appears to have been a circular village from which no openings can now be discerned. It also evidently had a high wall, as is now attested by the bulky mass of debris. A large, deep circular depression occupies the center and was probably a kiva. From the more scanty pottery remains it was evidently not occupied as long as Number 1. It was also likely a much later village, as its mound seems to be better preserved; it appears not to have suffered so much from the ravages of time.

"Number 3 is a ruin some two hundred yards south of Number 2. It is built in horseshoe shape facing the east. Its



width space between the house walls appears to have been more than twenty feet—it is now low and hardly traceable. There is much pottery scattered about the place. From appearances it is as old a village as Number 1 or older. It has suffered from the ravages of time till it is almost obliterated.”<sup>7</sup>

### La Boca Ruin

This ruin is located on the line between Colorado and New Mexico about ten miles below Ignacio and is of especial interest, both from its location as well as from the numerous and different types of sherds that cover the site. The whole surface of the ruin is covered with sherds that indicate at least two periods if not more.

The ruin is located on a bluff about two hundred feet above the Pine river and is open on all sides. As a defensive site it is badly chosen, as it is easy to get at from every side excepting the river. It is more than likely that when the village was occupied it was much further back from the river than it now is, as the bank has been undermined and has caved to the edge of the ruin. The indications are that there was formerly from seventy-five to one hundred feet distance between the village and the river. The unprotected position of the site makes it rather remarkable as it is so unusual.

The whole site covers between four and five acres of ground and it is impossible, without excavation, to say whether this is a solid mass of rooms or whether the houses are detached. From surface indications the walls appear to have been mostly of adobe. This again would be very unusual for this part of the country. Adobe walls in southwestern Colorado are rare and although Mr. Reagan in his paper on the ruins of the upper Pine river says some of the ruins were built of adobe they are nevertheless rare in that section of the country.

A Mexican family had taken up a part of the site at La Boca as a homestead and while plowing in the field on the side towards the ruin found several pieces of pottery, which are described in the portion of this report devoted to pottery of the region. These are very crude and of the early types of pithouse wares. The Mexican woman told the writer that no walls were encountered and so it is possible that they plowed through a part of a burial mound.

While the ruin mound is only a few feet high at the highest point it is more than probable that the accumulation over the building is of much greater depth than can be seen on the surface. The outer walls are all washed away and the house debris covers the side of the hill on which the ruin is located.

<sup>7</sup>Reagan. Op. cit.

The pottery is most curious in that sherds of several periods were found in the same places on the mound. One of the most interesting points is that there seems to have been a great deal of red ware as the red sherds are very abundant. A large number of sherds have basket impressions on the bottom. These do not appear to have had any decoration and are of a coarse heavy grey ware. The black on white is not unusual in any way. One sherd is considerable of a puzzle and, while it is only a small piece (one inch by one inch and three-fourths), there is enough to show that it is very different from any of the other sherds picked up on this site. It is a part of a round, pot-bellied jar, thin, and of excellent paste, with a decoration done in a terracotta colored paint. The slip underneath is of an orange yellow and resembles some of the ware found at Sikyatki, at the foot of the Walpi mesa in Arizona. The writer soaked this piece in water for several days and then washed it with soap and water and afterwards with acid, thinking that perhaps the coloration might be stain from the soil, but there was no difference and, upon drying it, it retained the same color as at first. There is almost no red stain in the soil on the top of the mesa where it was found. There are several sherds that have been through a very hot fire and have a decided red color that always comes from overfiring, but the sherd mentioned above is not of this color.

Many other ruins were reported to us in the neighboring country but as our time was limited we could not visit them. There are many interesting questions that arise when one considers the field as visited this last summer. It is rather startling to find, within the distance of a comparatively few miles, the sudden transition from such simple structures as the pithouses to the great ruins of Bloomfield and Aztec. The question naturally arises as to whether the people of southwestern Colorado followed the San Juan river down to where it joins the Animas, and if so how did it happen that they went so rapidly from the pithouse to the large pueblo. Mr. Earl Morris, in a conversation with the writer, stated that there are some very primitive dwellings in the neighborhood of Aztec, and Mr. Neil M. Judd, who has worked for the last two summers in Chaco Canon, found traces of simple dwellings that would fit into the pithouse group. A comparison of the masonry of the Piedra with that of the Chaco and Aztec reveals a great similarity. This is also shown in the pottery. There are so many design elements in all three regions that are almost alike that it is amazing, to say the least, and may give us some light upon the migrations of the two later regions.

Another phase of the question is shown in the fact that, from the research made so far on the Mesa Verde and surrounding



country, there appear to be comparatively few of the very early house remains in that section of the country. Did some of the Piedra people move straight west and settle in the Montezuma valley and the Mesa Verde? It is too early to even attempt a surmise, as we know practically nothing of the ruins and other remains that lie between the regions under consideration. As has been said earlier in this paper, there does not appear to be much doubt that some of the people from the eastern part of the Pagosa-Piedra culture found their way southeast and into the Rio Grande country.

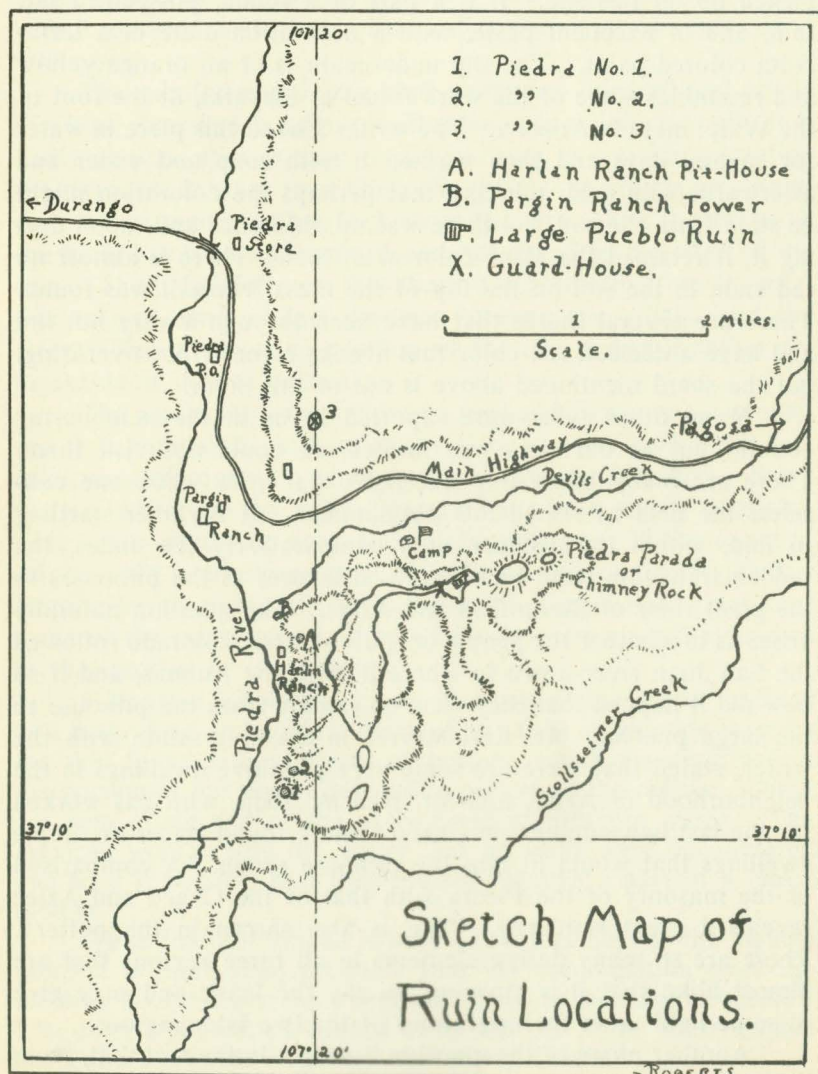


Figure 2



## Excavation Work in the Pagosa-Piedra Field During the Season of 1922

BY FRANK H. H. ROBERTS

The actual work of excavation during the summer of 1922 was devoted to four sites. Three of these may be included in the group called pithouses and the fourth was the large pueblo located on the top of the Chimney Rock or Piedra Parada mesa where considerable work was done during the season of 1921. Three representative groups of mounds were chosen on the first bench above the level and to the east of the Piedra river. These have been numbered Piedra No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3, respectively, beginning at the point farthest down the river and working upstream until the Upper Pargin ranch is reached, where the No. 3 group is situated. (Sketch Map, Figure 2.) It was thought that considerable additional information could be obtained by working at places separated by some distance, not only from each other but also from the Harlan Ranch pithouse and the Lower Pargin Ranch tower, which were excavated during the 1921 season, hence the choice of the sites discussed and described in this report. Some mention was made of the Upper Pargin group of pithouses in the report for the 1921 season, but as practically no work was done at that place it was impossible to give more than a general description of the appearance of the various groups of mounds and a short account of the excavation of one of the houses.

In taking up the work of the 1922 season the various sites excavated will be discussed in the probable chronological order of their antiquity as indicated by their position in the chronological table of house building development in this region as suggested by Mr. Jeancon in the report of the 1921 season.<sup>8</sup>

### Upper Pargin Ranch Pithouses

On the first bench above the river to the east of the Pagosa-Durango Highway, a short distance north of the schoolhouse, which is located several hundred feet from the point where the road turns north toward the Piedra postoffice, are many groups of mounds covering the disintegrated remains of the earliest types of pithouses to be found in this region. (Sketch Map, Figure 2, No. 3). These mounds are located on land belonging to Mr. D. L. Pargin and it was through the kindness of the owner that permission was secured by the expedition to work at this site. The

<sup>8</sup>Archaeological Research in the Northeastern San Juan Basin During the Summer of 1921, Denver 1922, pages 5 and 6.



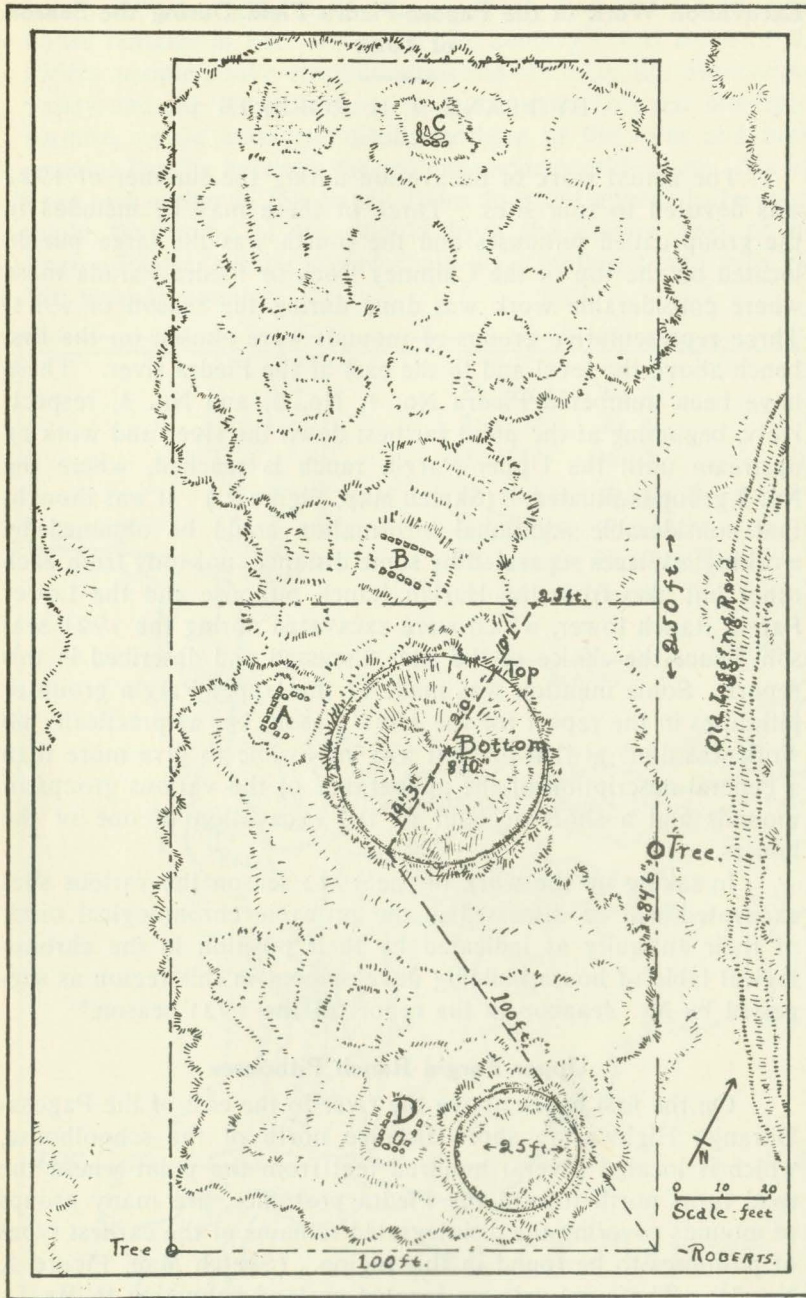


Figure 3

row of mounds extends for a distance of about 250 feet along the top of the ridge and their nature can readily be determined by the fact that they are covered with sage brush and pieces of burned roofing material, together with many scattered sherds. Excavations were made in several of these mounds but it was practically impossible to determine the size, shape, or quality of the houses originally located there because of the extent to which they had been subjected to weathering influences. In two instances two opposite side walls of rectangular rooms were uncovered but the remaining portions, which could not be located on account of the structures having reached such an advanced stage of decay, prevented the drawing of final conclusions.

One of the mounds opened in this group proved rich in artifacts but furnished practically no answer to the question regarding the type of house. (Figure 3; Figure 4.) From the

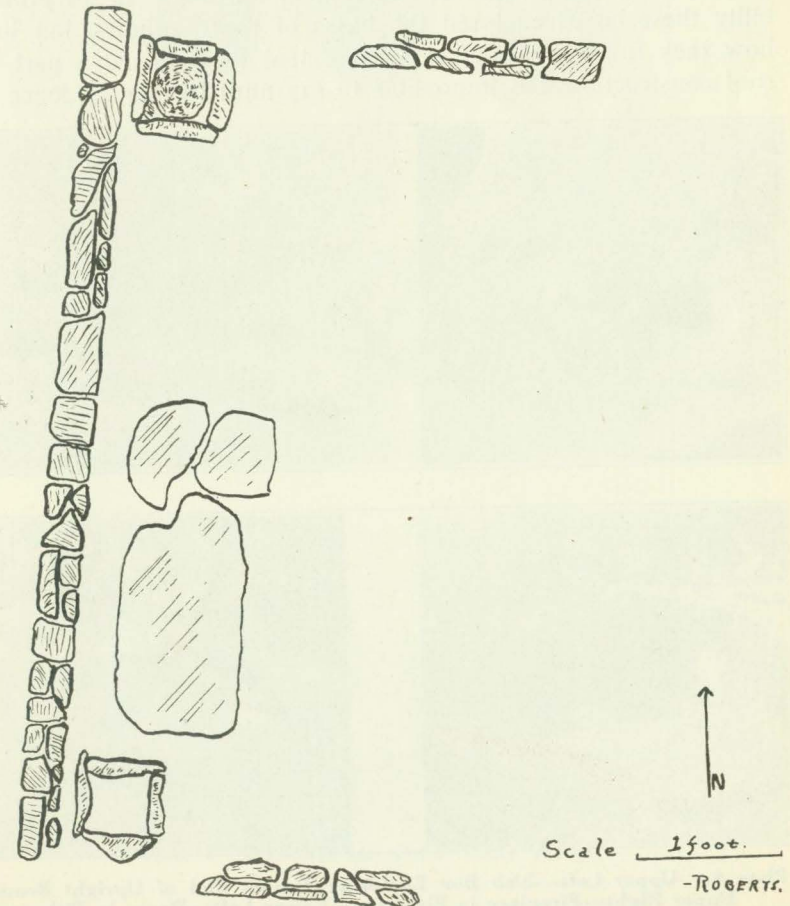


Figure 4



lumps of burned adobe bearing imprints of beams, poles and bark, and from the cobbles in the debris one would feel safe in asserting that the building had probably been of the second stage in the house chronology. One interesting feature at this point was the fact that near the ends of the wall running in a roughly north and south direction were two small slab boxes within which were found the charred ends of beams which had evidently been placed in an upright position. One of the boxes or perhaps pillar supports, if they may be so designated, measured 6 inches by 6½ inches by 7 inches in height. (Plate 6, No. 1.) The burned end of the pole which it contained was a fraction over 5 inches in diameter. The similar box at the other end of the wall (5 feet in length, although the wall probably extended farther,) was of the same type and size though not so well preserved. It was impossible to secure the measurement of the pole diameter as there was simply a mass of charcoal in the box. In all probability these boxes enclosed the bases of roof supports, but just how they functioned and to what extent they played a part in roof construction it is impossible to say until further evidence is

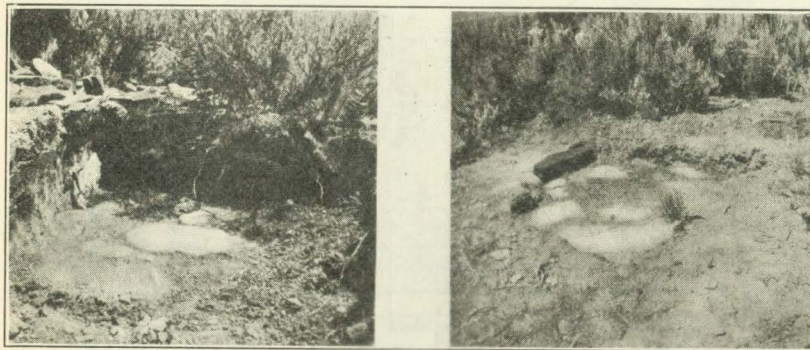
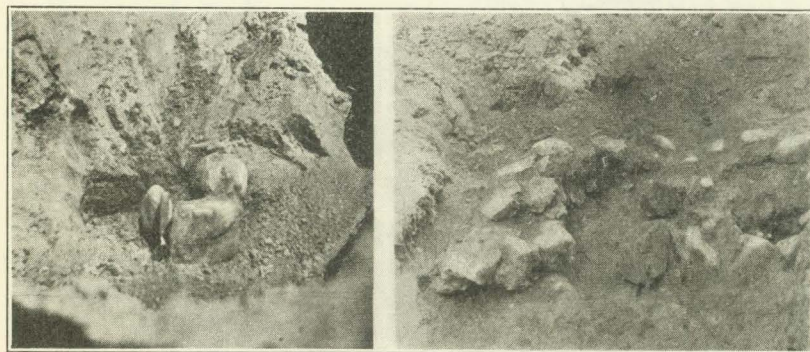


Plate 6. Upper Left—Slab Box Enclosing Tunnel End of Upright Beam. Upper Right—Fireplace in Pithouse. Lower Left—Room in Pithouse, Showing Paving. Lower Right—Small Enclosure With Paved Flooring.

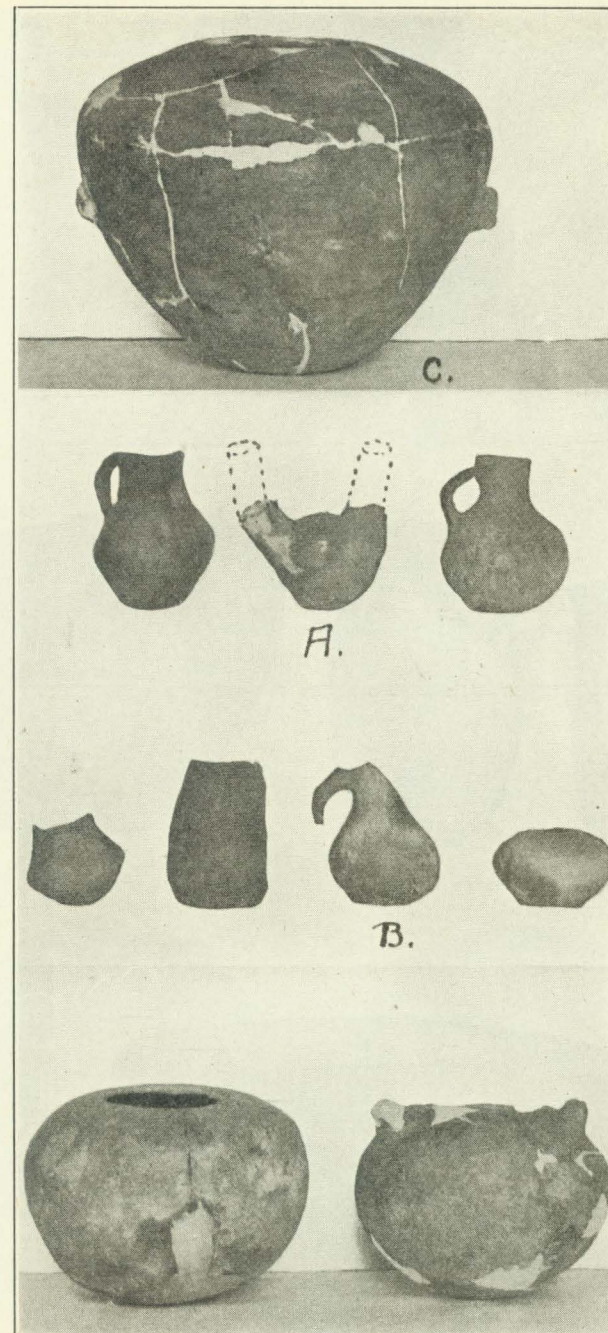


Plate 7. Pithouse and Other Early Wares



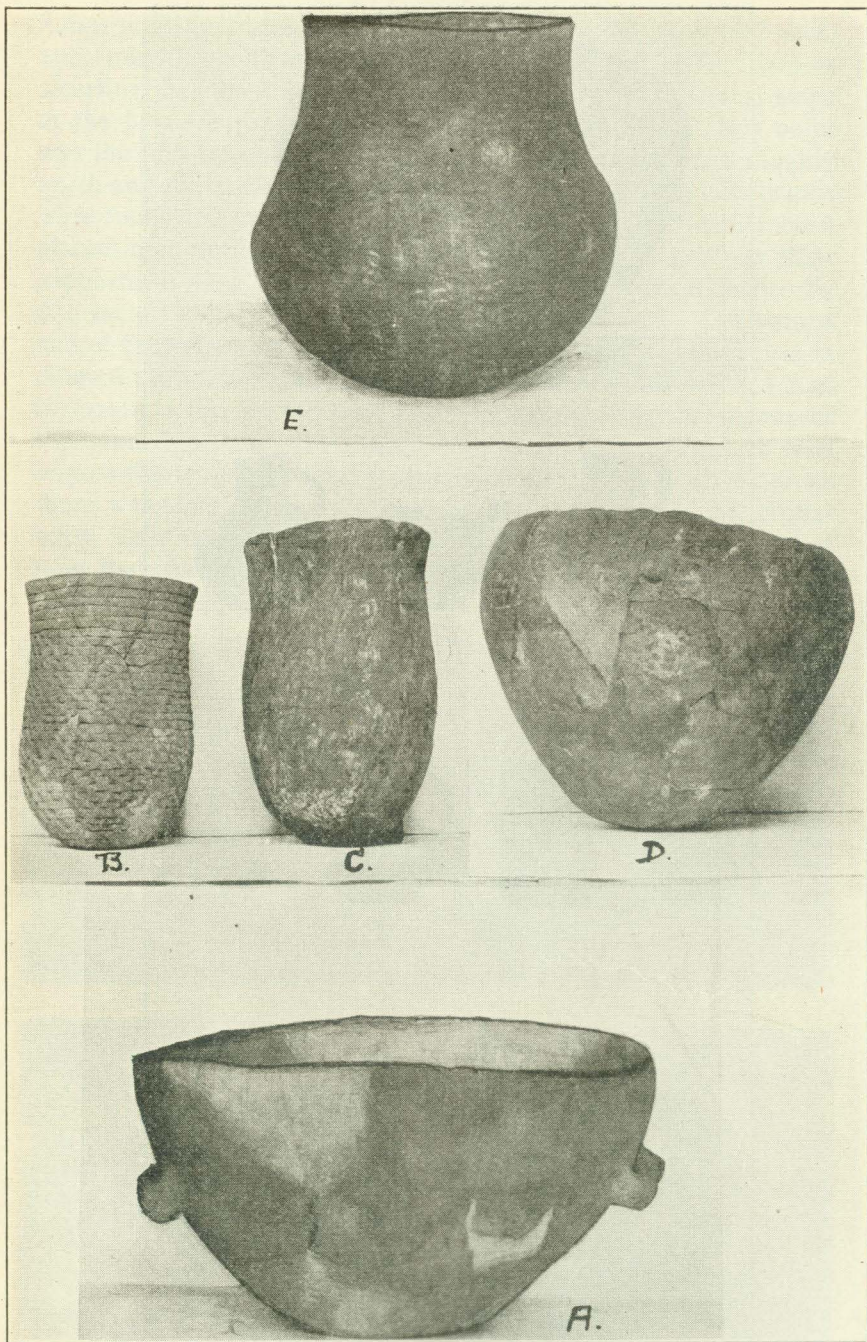


Plate 8. Undecorated Ware

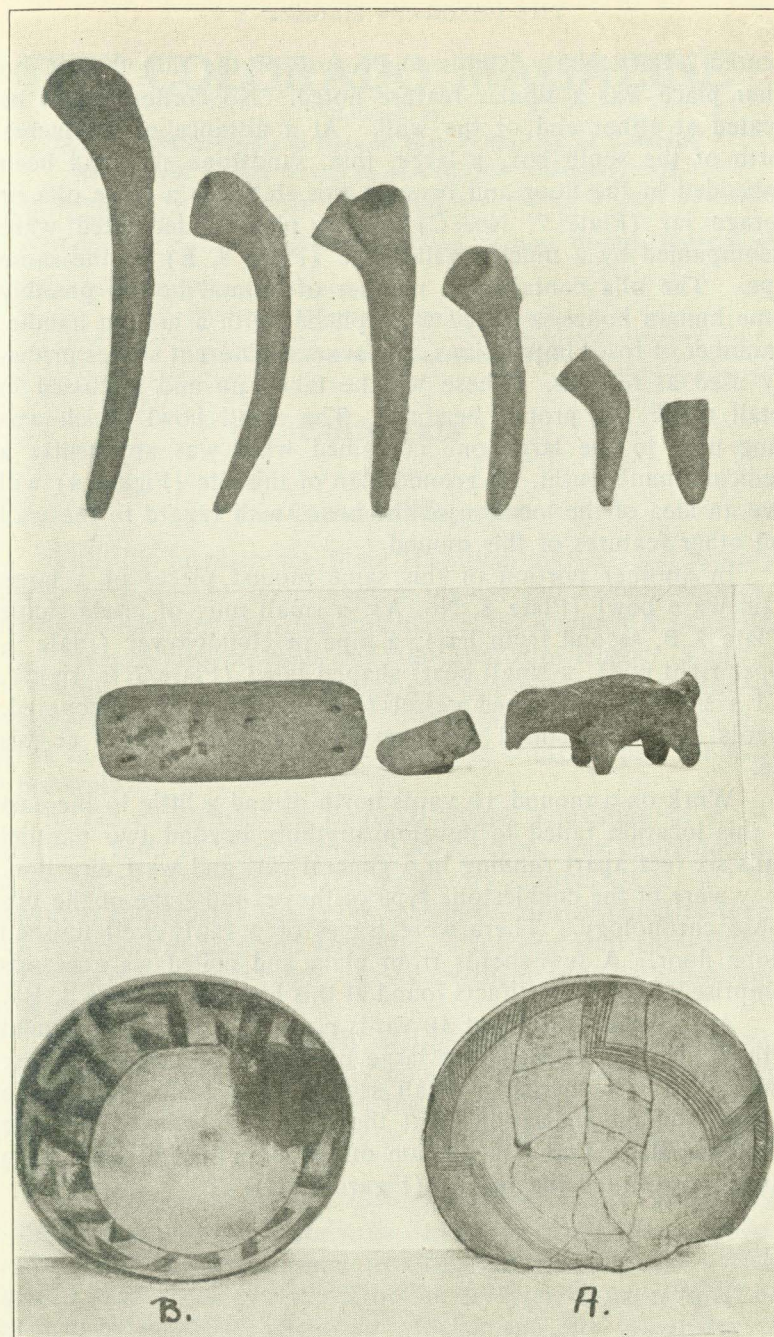


Plate 9. Pipes, Fetishes, and Black on White Bowls



secured. Particularly is this so because of the fact that in no other place was a similar feature noted. No corners could be located at either end of the wall. At a distance of 18 inches north of the south box, a large, thin, sandstone slab had been embedded in the floor and beneath this slab was a large olla or storage jar (Plate 7, No. C) of the plain undecorated ware accompanied by a much smaller one (Plate 8, E) of the same type. The olla contained a number of animal bones, possibly some human bones, a coiled ware pitcher with a broken handle, a number of fossil impressions, and several different stones probably used as fetishes. These will be taken up and discussed in detail under the proper heading. The small bowl which was lying next to the large one contained what was apparently a medicine man's outfit. A ground plan of this site (Figure 4) will give an idea of the location of the boxes with regard to the wall and other features of this mound.

In another portion of this same mound pieces of a large plain ware bowl (Plate 8, No. A), a small mug of crude shape (Plate 7 B, second from left), a pipe or cloudblower (Plate 9, upper right end), a small heart shaped bowl (Plate 7 B, right), and a small gourd-shaped vessel (Plate 7 B), were uncovered. Sherds of several coiled ware vessels were also secured at this site.

Work on a mound 10 yards north of and a little to the east of this location failed to develop anything beyond two parallel walls six feet apart running in a general east and west direction. They were of the cobblestone type of the second stage of the pit-house chronology. There were traces of a fairly well finished adobe floor. A few sherds from plain and coiled ware vessels comprised all of the artifacts found at this location (Figure 3, B).

At a distance of about 30 yards north of this second mound a third one was opened, but large quantities of burned roofing material, a few sherds, a small section of a wall, including a corner, and the indications that the floor had been paved with sandstone slabs, that is a portion of the floor had at least been paved, constituted the results (Figure 3, C).

(Continued in the next number.)

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### Editorial

#### The Colorado Magazine

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