

Sandy Rise: A New View of Basketmaker II in the Western San Juan Basin

Jim A. Railey, SWCA Environmental Consultants

In the summer of 2006, SWCA carried out data recovery excavations at the Sandy Rise site (NM-H-51-55), along US 491 in the Navajo Nation (Railey 2007). The site was a Holocene sand dune, which rested primarily on weathered Cretaceous bedrock, with Holocene alluvium, associated with a nearby wash, underlying the northern edge of the dune. The dune contained three stratigraphically segregated archaeological components. On and near the surface were the remains of a small Pueblo II occupation, marked by a tiny (2.3 x 2.0-m) rectangular structure and two extramural pit features. The structure had a stone-masonry foundation and very few artifacts. Below that, at 80-100 cm below the dune surface, was a rich Basketmaker II component. Another half meter deeper, and sandwiched in the stratified alluvium below the northern edge of the dune, was an early Late Archaic component, consisting of a single pit feature (which yielded a two-sigma, calibrated radiocarbon date of 1720-1520 BC) and a nearby charcoal stain.

The Basketmaker II component at Sandy Rise was by far the richest, and yielded the most important discoveries at the site. The buried remains of this small settlement were discovered via backhoe trenching during the testing phase in 2004. During data recovery its spatial extent was delimited by further backhoe trenching, after which the Basketmaker II component was completely uncovered by machine scraping and investigated through hand excavations. Seven radiocarbon dates from the Basketmaker II component all fall within the interval 400-200 BC. A total of 49 numbered features were identified and excavated, and among these were seven pit houses (Figure 1). In terms of size, form, and architectural investment, the pit houses were somewhat intermediate between the small, shallow, dish-shaped forms so common in Archaic contexts in the Southwest, and the typically larger, deeper, and more substantial pit houses constructed during the Anasazi periods. The Sandy Rise pit houses ranged 1.9-4.9 m in diameter (mean 3.6 m), with observed depths ranging 10-62 cm (mean 39.6 cm). All but one of the pit houses exhibited a clear break between the walls and floor, and several of the structures contained large stone slabs deposited haphazardly in their fill. The five largest pit houses were located in the center of the small settlement, with the

two smallest structures situated along the northern and southern peripheries. Interior hearths were rather simple affairs, consisting of either charcoal stains on the house-floor surface, or shallow pits. None of the hearths were clay- or adobe-lined, nor was there any plastering on the pit-house floors and walls. The smallest pit house was unlike the rest, in that it was distinctly small and shallow, and was dish-shaped (that is, there was no clear break between the walls and floor), but it also contained the only recognizable post hole within any of the structures. The near total absence of post holes suggests the pit houses at Sandy Rise probably had cribbed-log superstructures, or perhaps conical or forked-stick constructions over the smaller ones.

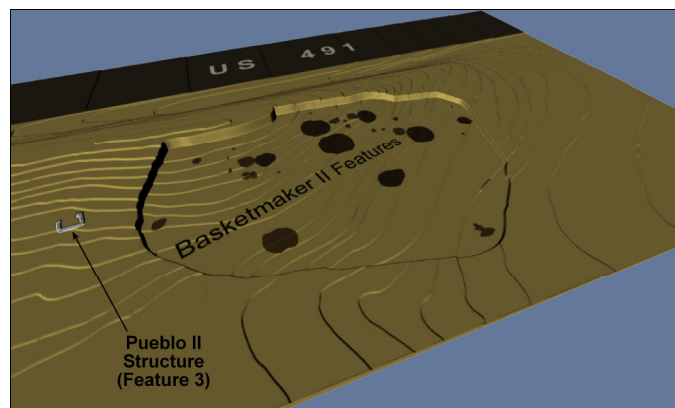


Figure 1. Cutaway view of the Sandy Rise site.

Abundant flaked-stone debris was recovered at Sandy Rise, over 90 percent of which was locally occurring petrified wood. Surprisingly rare in the assemblage was Narbona (Washington) Pass chert, a high-quality material whose source is less than 20 km west of the site. Completely absent was obsidian, which otherwise occurs commonly in pre-ceramic sites in the western San Juan Basin. Despite the abundance of flaked-stone debris, only 13 projectile points and fragments were recovered. Ground stone milling implements were rather common, consisting mostly of manos and mano fragments, along with several metates. Faunal remains were rare, but did include several tiny ring beads and pre-forms made from rabbit long bones.

Charred maize was present in four of eleven processed flotation samples from the Basketmaker II component. For the most part the maize remains were in poor shape, although one cob fragment was recovered by hand in the field, and appears to be from an 8-row variety. Squash was identified in a flotation sample from the testing

phase. Charred seeds (some from potential wild plant foods) and fuel wood (saltbush/greasewood and juniper, along with a smidgen of piñon) were also recovered from the flotation samples. Maize pollen was rare and no maize was identified in the phytolith samples. Taken together, the botanical assemblage indicates that the Basketmaker II folks at Sandy Rise were part-time farmers, and probably still relied on wild food resources for much of their diet.

Notably absent at Sandy Rise were any deep storage features. This was also the case at NM-H-26-56, another small Basketmaker II settlement located 64 km to the northeast on Gallegos Mesa (Volger et al. 1983). The lack of pit-storage facilities at these sites suggests that caching of maize and other storable foods may have occurred outside of residential settlements. Previous investigations in Tohatchi Flats (in the southwestern San Juan Basin) provide potential support for this scenario. At LA 6448, 53 storage pits and small number of other feature types (including 12 burials) were discovered, and maize was recovered from 32 of the features (Kearns and McVickar 1996). No structure remains were found, and the investigators suggested LA 6448 was a storage site rather than a habitation. Although the number of excavated sites is small, the evidence does suggest a possible pattern in which Basketmaker II residential and storage sites in the western San Juan Basin were spatially segregated on the landscape. Insofar as this is true, the pattern may be explained by the likelihood that Basketmaker II peoples in the region were still rather mobile, and the desire to conceal storage may have been especially important for seasonally mobile populations (see Blitz 1993; DeBoer 1988). The presence of burials at LA 6448 may also underscore both the strategic and symbolic importance of storage sites for Basketmaker II peoples in the region. Although evidence suggests Basketmaker II groups in the area were still seasonally mobile, the paucity of Narbona Pass chert and the absence of obsidian at Sandy Rise indicates that the extractive territories of at least some groups may not have been very extensive, and the flow of goods within exchange networks rather limited.

The Basketmaker II period was a time of dynamic changes reflecting the transition from “Archaic” hunter-gatherers to “Anasazi” farmers, and architectural evidence from Sandy Rise and NM-H-26-56 may be indicative of these changes. Radiocarbon dates indicate NM-H-26-56 was occupied several centuries later than Sandy Rise, and its pit houses were, on average, larger and deeper (Figure 2). Moreover, the inhabitants of NM-H-26-56 invested more in their structures, as indicated by multiple post holes and more interior features including small storage pits, a stone slab deflector in one

of the pit houses, and a clay-collared hearth in another. The architectural differences between these two sites may reflect the general evolution of pit houses over the course of the Basketmaker II period, leading to the more impressive developments in pit-house and kiva architecture during the subsequent Basketmaker III and Pueblo I periods – and beyond.

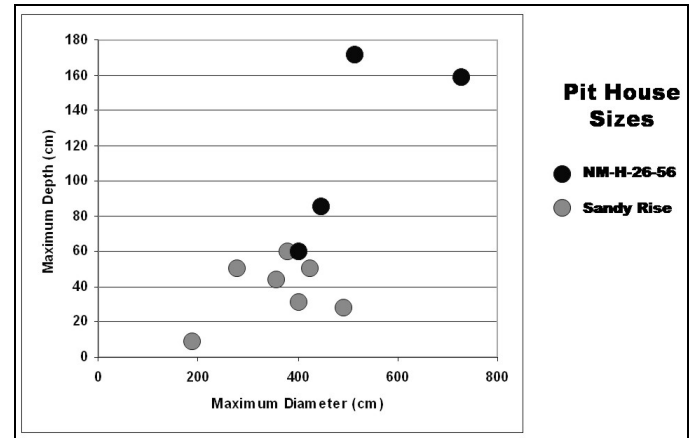


Figure 2. Scatterplot comparing pit houses at Sandy Rise and NM-H-26-56.

More information about the Sandy Rise site can be found in the final report, which is available for free at the New Mexico Department of Transportation’s (NMDOT) website:

<http://nmshtd.state.nm.us/upload/images/Programs-Environmental%20Deisgn/2007-1.pdf>.

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New Mexico Archeological Council Continuing Education Workshop Program: Historic Artifacts II: Euro-American, Hispanic, and Asian Ceramics, and Other Artifacts

*David T. Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., RPA,
NMAC Workshop Committee*

Professional and avocational archaeologists from across New Mexico came to the Maxwell Museum, University of New Mexico, on April 12 and 13, 2008, to participate in a continuing education workshop, *Historic Artifacts: Euro-American, Hispanic, and Asian Ceramics and Other Artifacts*. The workshop, sponsored by the New Mexico Archeological Council, the Bureau of Land Management, Maxwell Museum, and the Historic Preservation Division, focused on the importance of ceramic artifacts to the interpretation of archaeological sites from the Spanish 1600s to the Euro-American 1930s.

The workshop, partially funded by a continuing education grant from the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division and the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund, covered travel and associated costs to bring Dr. Teresita Majewski and James Ayres from Tucson to Albuquerque. Terry and Jim are nationally recognized historic archaeologists and both are past presidents of the Society for Historical Archeology. NMAC would also like to thank Dedie Snow and Matthew Barbour for donating their time to develop and present their sessions.

The goal of the workshop was to help improve the documentation of cultural resources, especially by archaeologists conducting studies performed in compliance with State, Federal and Tribal preservation laws. The workshop provided introductory information about historic ceramics and how to describe and date artifact assemblages commonly found on sites in New

Mexico. These sites include ranches, homesteads, mines, military sites, work camps, and town sites.

Dr. Teresita Majewski, Statistical Research, Tucson, began the workshop with a session that discussed the use of a technological approach to categorize stonewares, white-bodied earthenwares, Oriental and European porcelains, and European bone china. Using illustrations and examples, she showed the importance of understanding how ceramics are part of the national and international style trends (e.g. Art Deco, Craftsman) and how this may provide information on the economic and social status of a site's occupants.

Cordelia "Dedie" Snow, Archaeological Research Section, Historic Preservation Division, Santa Fe, and Matthew Barbour, Office of Archaeological Studies, Santa Fe, discussed the Majolica, Mexican Red Wares, and Mexican Lead Glaze ceramics found on sites in New Mexico. Artifacts from each of these ceramic groups can contribute to chronological, cultural, and economical interpretations to sites in the 17th and 18th centuries. Also important are the Oriental porcelain wares traded from China and Japan.

James Ayres, Independent Consultant, Tucson, concluded with workshop with a session discussing the "miscellaneous" artifacts often found on archaeological sites during surveys and recordation. These artifacts include buttons, marbles, and artifacts made of rubber, leather, and plastic. One of the more interesting trade wares found in New Mexico are sherds of Papago (Tohono O'odham) pottery, brownwares different from prehistoric brownwares. The Papago pottery appears to be associated with railroad sites, possible as trade items or brought by Papago railroad workers from southern Arizona. While not common, Chinese opium pipes and associated artifacts are also found in New Mexico. Jim's presentation concluded with a discussion of unusual Apache artifacts, including the modification of items for new purposes, killed artifacts, and battered cartridge cases.

The attendees of the 1.5-day (12 hr) workshop received a certificate recognizing their completion of the workshop. These 12 hours can be used to meet the State of New Mexico requirement for 24 hours of continuing education as related to state permit eligibility. The Bureau of Land Management also provided a certificate for hours that can be applied to general survey and site recordation knowledge.

The New Mexico Archeological Council would also like to recognize and thank David Simons and the State Office of the Bureau of Land Management for providing

the sets of handout reference materials. A special recognition to David Phillips, Maxwell Museum, for arranging the use of the Hibben Center as the workshop location and arranging the “eats and drinks” that keeps the workshop participants happy.

Book Review

Santa Fe: History of an Ancient City, Revised and Expanded Edition, edited by David Grant Noble Santa Fe: School of Advanced Research Press, 2008, ix+134 pp., illustrated, index, ISBN 978-1-934691-04-5, \$40.00 (cloth), \$20.00 (paper).

Reviewed by David Hill

To honor the 400th anniversary of Santa Fe the School of Advanced Research has reissued *Santa Fe: History of an Ancient City*. The volume is updated with three new chapters; one outlining recent archaeological research in the Santa Fe area by Stephen Post, a chapter on the history of water management in Santa Fe by Tara M. Plewe and a history of the Palace of the Governors by Francis Levine, who authored the archaeological section for the previous version of the volume. A revised Introductory chapter and an expanded History of Histories of Santa Fe along with many new illustrations round out the changes to the 1989 publication.

Chapter One presents Stephen Post’s overview of archaeological research in the Santa Fe area and is based on recent and mostly unpublished excavations that cover the Paleoindian, Archaic, Ancestral Pueblo Spanish Colonial and American Territorial Periods. Stephan manages to pack an amazing amount of information into thirteen pages presenting information on environmental and cultural change in the Santa Fe area in a style that is intelligible to archaeologists and the interested public alike. Like the rest of the volume, this chapter is very well illustrated with photographs and maps and illustrations that are relevant to the text. Until a substantive number of cultural resource reports are completed, this paper will serve as the “state of the art” summary for what we know about the prehistory and history of the Santa Fe area.

The Spanish Colonial historian Joseph P. Sanchez, presented two contributions to the 1989 volume, one on the Pedro de Peralta, the founder of La Villa Real de la Santa Fe de San Francisco and a second paper on the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. The first paper examines the conflict between the conflict between Pedro de Peralta and Friar Isidro Ordoñez. This paper is timely in that it addresses issues that are perhaps unpleasantly familiar

today; conflict between civil and religious components in society, political corruption, and “smear”.

The second paper by Professor Sanchez on the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 presents a concise chronicle of the events that lead up to the revolt through its aftermath. The chapter focuses on the individuals as much as on the events that surround one of the few successful indigenous revolts to take place in the Colonial New World.

The chapter on Diego de Vargas was written by John L. Kessell, one of the editors of the multi-volume *De Vargas papers* published the University of New Mexico Press. The de Vargas presented by Kessell as an individual who strove for social position in the Spanish Court, while serving as governor of Nuevo Mexico, a place he probably never really liked. De Vargas managed to place duty before personal feelings, a position that may have cost lives and at one point in his life his own freedom. The plot of the de Vargas story reads like a good historic novel and presents the man who put down the indigenous revolts of 1680 and 1696 as a truly complex human being.

Adrian H. Bustamante presents a chapter on the social organization of Santa Fe during the eighteenth century. Bustamante presents the complex social hierarchies of eighteenth century New Mexico based on race which was then reflected in social position, forms of employment and places of settlement. This is a particularly relevant chapter for archaeologists who are preparing research designs for data recovery programs from historic sites in New Mexico and elsewhere in the Greater Southwest. Given the recent interests of historic sites archaeology, this chapter is a good source of historic information and ideas for exploring issues of race and class using archaeological data.

The three chapters by Janet Lecompte and Joseph P. Sanchez, John P. Wilson and Marc Simmons cover the period of Mexican “rule” of New Mexico and the transition to a trade colony of the United States. Like the previous chapter, these to chapters also provide for a rich source of ideas to direct historical archaeological programs. The complex trade relationships first between Mexico and New Mexico and the subsequent shift in trade between the United States and New Mexico and later Chihuahua. Such shifts should be visible in the archaeological record.

A new chapter by Tara Plewa, a hydrologist, covers the history of water management in Santa Fe and presents the history of the now-endangered Santa Fe River. This chapter follows the history of the use of the Santa Fe River from its use by Ancestral Pueblo peoples, Spanish

settlers and into the world of the contemporary world of New Mexican water-politics and urbanization. The historic maps published in this paper of the growth of the acequia network are important for understanding how Santa Fe grew and developed. The historic photo of Archbishop Lamy's goldfish pond (now a parking lot) located adjacent to the Loretto Chapel shows that water in New Mexico can also serve to display social power as well as to irrigate crops.

Francis Levine's history of the Palace of the Governors combines documentary history with recent archaeological data and presents this location as a microcosm of New Mexican history. How what we now think of as the "Palace of the Governors" has changed considerably since the founding of Santa Fe.

Stanley M. Hordes brief chapter serves as an expanded bibliographical history of publications related to the history of Santa Fe. Not only historical volumes are presented but some of the most recent archaeological gray-literature regarding excavations in downtown Santa Fe are listed.

The volume ends with a list of suggested readings. Unfortunately, many of the volumes listed are out of print or are part of the archaeological gray-literature making them unavailable to the interested but casual reader.

Two audiences would appreciate this book. First of all archaeologists who work in northern New Mexico will find Stephen Post's archaeological overview invaluable for its presentation of recent research in Santa Fe. The historical portions of the volume will serve as sources for research questions when working with contemporary sites.

The other audience is made up of all of the people who come to New Mexico to experience an "authentic" history and culture of the west. This lushly illustrated volume would be the sort of thing that someone who comes to New Mexico could take home that presents a concise history of Santa Fe. Buy a copy for your friends and family who come to visit.

President's Message

Tim Maxwell, NMAC President

Joe the Plumber wants to be an archaeologist! Sarah Palin monitors Russian excavations from front porch!

I have no idea if this is true, but after a very entertaining political year, I wanted to get your attention for a look at NMAC's past year in retrospect. There is an incredible combined wealth of knowledge in NMAC. Usually within minutes, members responded to requests for help or information from colleagues or the public. I don't think that any question ever stumped the entire membership. Members also contributed thoughtful opinions on the issues of deaccessioning and repatriation, issues that really have no clear resolution because current laws and policies are ambiguous. The vagueness of these laws led many members to draw upon their personal ethical principles to assess the situation. Yet, unlike politics, where showdowns over ethics can be mean and nasty, not one ugly word was exchanged among members. The debate was free of acrimony and each contributor sought to offer a compelling case for their point of view without attacking someone else. That was refreshing in a political year when personal attacks were in the news daily.

The skills and knowledge of members was also reflected in the ceramic workshop and the Lower Rio Chama/Gallina region field trip. If you attended, I'm certain that you learned something and also made a connection with colleagues who you didn't know beforehand. In addition, NMAC made efforts to further provide its membership with more information by revising and expanding its website, and preparing a new publication.

Thanks again to all who contributed to NMAC committees and the wide-ranging dialog. I am positive that NMAC will have a successful future.

NMAC is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to maintain and promote the goals of professional archaeology in New Mexico.

NMAC's goals are to:

- promote archaeological research within New Mexico and disseminate knowledge arising from that research
- promote awareness of New Mexico's cultural resources among public agencies, corporations, and members of the public
- encourage the legal protection of cultural resources, and encourage high standards for professional archaeology

2008 NMAC Contacts

Mail: PO Box 25691, Albuquerque NM 87125

Web Site: <http://www.nmacweb.org>

News Group: nmac-l@list.unm.edu

2008 Officers

President: Deni Seymour (505) 934-3364

DeniJSeymour@aol.com

President-Elect: Bill Doleman (505) 476-1277

wdoleman@swcp.com

bill.doleman@state.nm.us

Vice President: Cherie Walth (505) 506-6168

cwalth@swca.com

Secretary: Matthew Barbour

Office: (505) 982-1375

Cell: (505) 220-3270

matthew.barbour@state.nm.us

Treasurer: Phillip A. Young (505)-466-8903

pyoung2002@comcast.net

NewsMAC Editor: Jim Railey (505) 980-2532

jrailey@swca.com

Committee Chairs

Membership: Jean Ballagh (505) 332-0885

jhballagh@hotmail.com

Grants: Chris Turnbow, (505) 277-5853

cturnbow@unm.edu

Legislative: Open

Publications: Bill Doleman (505) 476-1277

Bill.Doleman@state.nm.us

- and -

Andrew "JR" Gomolak

(575) 572-3931

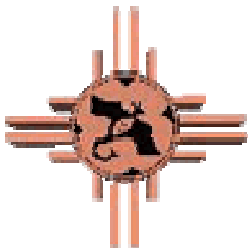
Andrew.Gomolak@us.af.mil

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PO Box 25691

Albuquerque NM 87125



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