

PREHISTORY IN THE NAVAJO RESERVOIR DISTRICT  
NORTHWESTERN NEW MEXICO

by  
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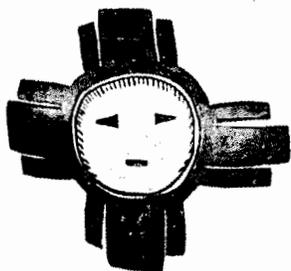
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and 1700 (Hack, 1942). This pre-A.D. 1700 floodplain land use within the Reservoir District may have been entirely for farming and hunting, but not habitation.

Therefore, Navajo archaeology reported in this volume is classified as either Gobernador Phase (A.D. 1700-1775) or indeterminate Navajo (A.D. 1550-1775), the latter term referring to any time within the entire Navajo Period.

#### Gobernador Phase (A.D. 1700-1775)

Seventeen components of Gobernador Phase occupation have been excavated, 12.1 per cent of those recorded on site survey (Dittert, *et al.*, 1961, fig. 32). Of these only one site, LA 4072, is doubtfully assigned to the Gobernador Phase, because masonry architecture was relied on, as a definitive criterion, rather than ceramics.

#### SETTLEMENT PATTERN

Site survey data indicated that Gobernador Phase sites may have contained the following types of units: hogans, a lean-to, a ramada, masonry rooms (built on top of a boulder, on the ground surface attached to a boulder, or in a rock shelter), metate rests, exterior pits, and refuse (Dittert, *et al.*, 1961, fig. 8). These remains were grouped into single-unit, multiple-unit, and village-sized sites, based on the number of hogans or masonry structures observed on survey. A single-unit site had one hogan or masonry room and associated refuse, a multiple-unit site had two to three living units, and a village contained three or more such residential structures.

The excavated sites included two villages, four multiple-unit sites, three campsites, and five rock shelters. The villages contained as many as four to five hogans, a ramada, four rock piles, two metate rests, several fire hearths, and an undercut oven. Additional features found on multiple-unit sites were a menstrual hut and a sweat lodge. Other constructional units at single-unit sites included a masonry structure, work space, and a bin. Campsites were places of temporary occupation lacking habitable units but containing a rock pile, hearths, and scattered refuse.

Occupied rock shelters were occasionally in pairs but were more commonly single cavities. One example contained habitable hogans, some of which were still standing, while others contained masonry rooms or were themselves walled up. One masonry room served as a burial crypt

for a cremation, others were used for storage or habitation. Rock shelters containing only fire hearths and dry fill had been used as campsites, temporary work areas, and places of storage. These site types and the associated architecture were described in some detail from excavated data by Hester (Hester and Shiner, 1963, chap. V, 1964).

On site survey, Gobernador Phase sites were found clustered to form communities and also scattered in isolation. The communities were found in the following locations: a large site cluster at the junction of the Pine and San Juan Rivers, a small site cluster in the upper end of Frances Canyon, a small cluster of sites in the Rosa Section at the mouth of Sambrito Creek, and a cluster in the lower Sandoval Section near the junction of the Piedra and San Juan Rivers. These communities were all located at major stream confluences where there was ample arable land. Some sites at the Pine and San Juan River junction as well as those in the Rosa Section were sampled by excavation. However, the other two communities were ignored. Three isolated sites in the upper Pine River Section were also investigated in detail.

The density of Gobernador Phase sites in some sections of the district exceeded that of any other cultural period. The highest concentration was in the narrow, confining Pine River Canyon where an average of 8.6 sites was found per mile. The open, broad valley of the San Juan River in the Rosa Section contained the lowest density, only 1.1 sites per mile.

Terrain utilized for habitation and impermanent camps followed, in general, the earlier Pueblo land use, reflecting the limited possibilities of the river canyon topography. Seven sites were excavated on the first Pleistocene bench, three on the second, and one each on the mesa top and the Recent terrace.

## ARTIFACT ASSEMBLAGE

Locally made Navajo pottery consisted of Ceramic Group A, including Dinetah Utility and Gobernador Indented, and Frances Polychrome, the indicator for Ceramic Group Bb. Trade pottery associated with these products were polychrome types derived from the Rio Grande Valley and the western Pueblos. Dinetah Utility is thought to have been the basic utility pottery brought by the Navajo when they entered the Southwest. This supposition is based on the resemblance in form and surface texture between Dinetah Utility (especially its pointed bottom) and the Woodland pottery. Gobernador Indented was an adaptation of utility ware to the indented treatment of Jemez culinary.

Frances Polychrome is thought to have been the first Navajo attempt to decorate pottery with paint. The model for designs and manufacturing

technique was the Gobernador Polychrome made by the Pueblo Refugees and traded to the Navajo. Frances Polychrome developed into Navajo Polychrome after the Navajo left the Reservoir District for their present homeland on the Navajo Reservation.

Very few clay artifacts have been recovered from Gobernador Phase sources. Todosio Rock Shelter produced necked jars of Gobernador Indented and Dinetah Utility. Cloud-blower pipes found at several sites were either reused from the earlier Pueblo Period or were manufactured by the Navajo from Dinetah Utility paste. Since these pipes were nearly identical to those used by the earlier Pueblo occupants of the district, the knowledge of their use and the ceremonial ritual to produce rain magic may have been introduced to the Navajo by the Refugee Pueblos.

Stone tools from the Gobernador Phase were similar in many respects to those of the earlier Pueblo Period, due, in part, to the Navajo reuse of many artifacts from prehistoric sites, and to the fact that such simple tools as utilized flakes cannot be made in many forms. Stone tools found on Gobernador Phase sites included: projectile points (triangular; stemmed, indented base; and corner-notch, broad-spur styles), blades (unclassifiable fragments), intentionally chipped knives, flanged drills, scrapers (utilized flake, side), axe (uniface), pointed graters, cores (unclassifiable), choppers (uniface, biface), hammers (edge, multiface, pebble), manos (two-hand, trough; two-hand, slab most common), slab metate, palettes (grinding, paint), shaft tools, mauls, polishers (pot, floor), ground pendants, comal, abrader, and saw. Lithic tools particularly characteristic of the Gobernador Phase were the slab metate, two-hand slab manos, shaft tools, and comal.

Projectile points and blades made up 15.8 per cent of the total lithic tools recovered from uncontaminated Gobernador Phase components. Such hunting tools overbalanced milling tools (10.2% of the total stone tools recovered). Other stone tool classes which occurred in large numbers were scrapers (21.5%), graters (11.2%), and hammers (13.1%).

Bone tools found on Gobernador Phase sites included awls, weaving tools, and tubular beads. No antler artifacts were recovered.

Shell artifacts found in uncontaminated sources were whole and disc beads. No perishable Navajo artifacts could be indisputably associated with Gobernador Phase components, but many were found in indeterminate Navajo rock shelters.

## BURIAL PRACTICES

The only probable Navajo burial recovered was a cremation found in the walled-up rock shelter, LA 4072. Dating of these remains was