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SHOWING

THE OPERATIONS, EXPENDITURES, AND CONDITION  
OF THE INSTITUTION

TO

JULY, 1895.

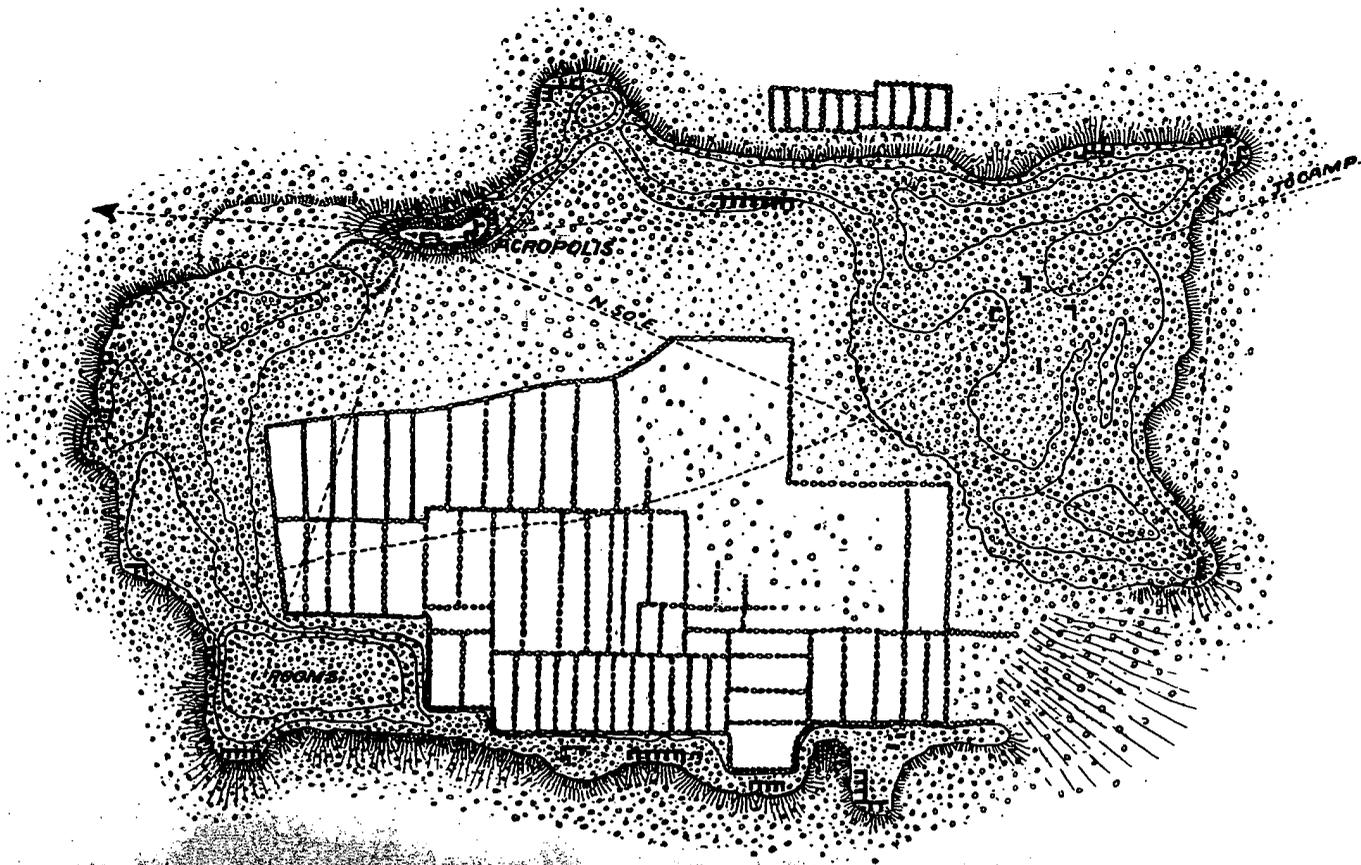


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its inhabitants and those of Walpi, which was then situated on foothills to the west of the mesa, not having yet been moved to its commanding position on the summit. The outcome of many disputes between the two pueblos brought on a tragic destruction of the place, after which such of the hostile element as escaped fled to Awatobi, then a flourishing village, 15 miles away; the remainder were incorporated with the population of the victorious town. A sanguinary story of adventure is woven into the legends relating to the causes of this destruction of a whole village. One of the youths of Sikyatki, disguised as a dancer and wearing a mask, killed a woman spectator while a ceremony was in progress at Walpi. He escaped from the town, ran along the cliffs, taking off his mask and boasting of his deed. These taunts inflamed the Walpians to vengeance, and when the men of Sikyatki were occupied in the fields their warriors fell upon the town and destroyed it. There is no way to prove the truth of this legend, but there can be little doubt that Sikyatki fell many years ago. It is interesting to remember that in those old days Walpi was probably the only other Tusayan town at the East mesa, and therefore the only rival which Sikyatki had near by. The Tanolan people, whose descendants now inhabit Hano, the nearest village, had not migrated from the Rio Grande, and the little town Sitomovi, midway between Hano and Walpi, had not been built on the mound covered with flowers which gave it its name.

As one crosses the plain following the road from the entrance to Kears Canyon to the modern Moki settlement near Isba or Coyote Spring, the main water supply of Hano, he sees far to the right, on the mesa top, two conical mounds, which are conspicuous for miles. These teocalli-like elevations are called Kilkitcomo, and are circular ruins, possibly contemporaneous with Sikyatki, of which they were defensive outposts. They are situated just above the mounds which mark the ruins of that village on the foothills beneath, and were no doubt wisely chosen for defense against the Walpians. Between them and the present towns the mesa narrows, and what was once a strong defensive wall can still be traced, crossing the mesa at its narrow point. Sikyatki lies among foothills, surrounded by stretches of sand, elevated a few hundred feet above the plain. Elsewhere than in Tusayan its site would be regarded most desolate, but an enterprising Indian, claiming the ruin from the relationship of his wife, still harvests from these barren sands a considerable crop of melons and squashes, planting his vines where the plaza once was. Other Indians claim the stunted peach trees which grow near by. Not a trace of the walls of ancient Sikyatki stand above the mounds, although the outlines of houses can be followed everywhere on the surface. Since the village became a ruin roofs have fallen in, drifting sand has blown into the chambers, and the sagebrush and other desert plants have taken root in the covering debris, forming a succession of mounds of rectangular



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arrangement, whose only habitants are reptiles and noxious insects. Such is the desolation of an ancient pueblo where once lived a people who manufactured in prehistoric times some of the most artistic pottery ever made in North America. Even the Indians from the neighboring villages who visited me and saw the beautiful ware which I exhumed from these desolate mounds and sands did not fail to contrast the past with the present. The best potter of the East mesa, an intelligent woman from Hano, named Nampio, acknowledged that her productions were far inferior to those of the women of Sikyatki, and she begged permission to copy some of the decorations for future inspiration. The sight of this dusky woman and her husband copying the designs of ancient ware and acknowledging their superiority was instructive in many ways.

The northeast corner of the rectangular mounds of Sikyatki rises into a rocky pinnacle, steep on the north and sloping by a gentle rise from the south and east. This elevation was formerly crowned with houses, as will soon be made evident, and from its commanding position was early in our work called an acropolis. The accompanying plan of the whole village shows that it was rectangular, with northern and western ranges of houses much higher than the southern and eastern. This is readily referred to the contour of the foothills chosen by the ancient builders as the site of their town, the high rock of the acropolis being, without doubt, the first part on which houses were erected. The four elongated sides which give the rectangular form to the mounds inclosed a rectangular court in which are smaller mounds, remnants possibly of kivas and level spaces now marked off with rows of stones inclosing modern fields of melons and squash plants. At the southern angle two significant buttresses in the bounding mound suggest a gateway by which the court of the village was entered. Some archaeologists have asserted that the rectangular form of pueblos is a modern type, but the ruins of Sikyatki take this form back to prehistoric times.

In considering a ruin as large as Sikyatki, it is quite impossible for me in the limited space allowed in this preliminary report to do more than choose a few typical rooms in order to give an idea of the character of the architecture of the habitations of the Sikyatkians. I have, therefore, chosen as a type the rooms of the acropolis, which were carefully excavated under my direction by Kopell the Snake chief, one of the best Indian workmen employed.

When I began excavation at this part of the ruin, we had no trace of the acropolis, but by removing the surface debris we found a complete line of rooms forming a ridge extending about north and south above the rise to the top of the rock, which was about level at this point. The rooms were excavated to their floors, where a stone pavement resting on the rock was found six feet below the surface. The walls were constructed of squared stones, set in adobe mortar and smoothly plastered with the same material.