Testing and Excavation of an Early Aceramic Navajo Site in Carrizo Cañon

Dabney Ford

Report 78-SJC-080
of the
Cultural Resource Management Program
San Juan Campus
New Mexico State University

January 1979

NN028450

Report 78-SJC-080
Permit 78-NM-102

Testing and Excavation of an Early Aceramic Navajo Site in Carrizo Canon

Dabney Ford
Cultural Resource Management
San Juan Campus
N. M. State University

January 1979

NN028451

Testing and Excavation of an Early
Aceramic Navajo Site in Carrizo Cañon

I INTRODUCTION
- A. Background
- B. Location
- C. Objectives

II ENVIRONMENT
- A. Geographical Setting
- B. Vegetation

III METHODOLOGY
- A. Testing/Excavation
- B. Sampling

IV DISCUSSION
- A. Site Data
  - 1. Structures
  - 2. Artifacts/Samples
- B. Previous Research
- C. Comparisons

V CONCLUSIONS

NN028452

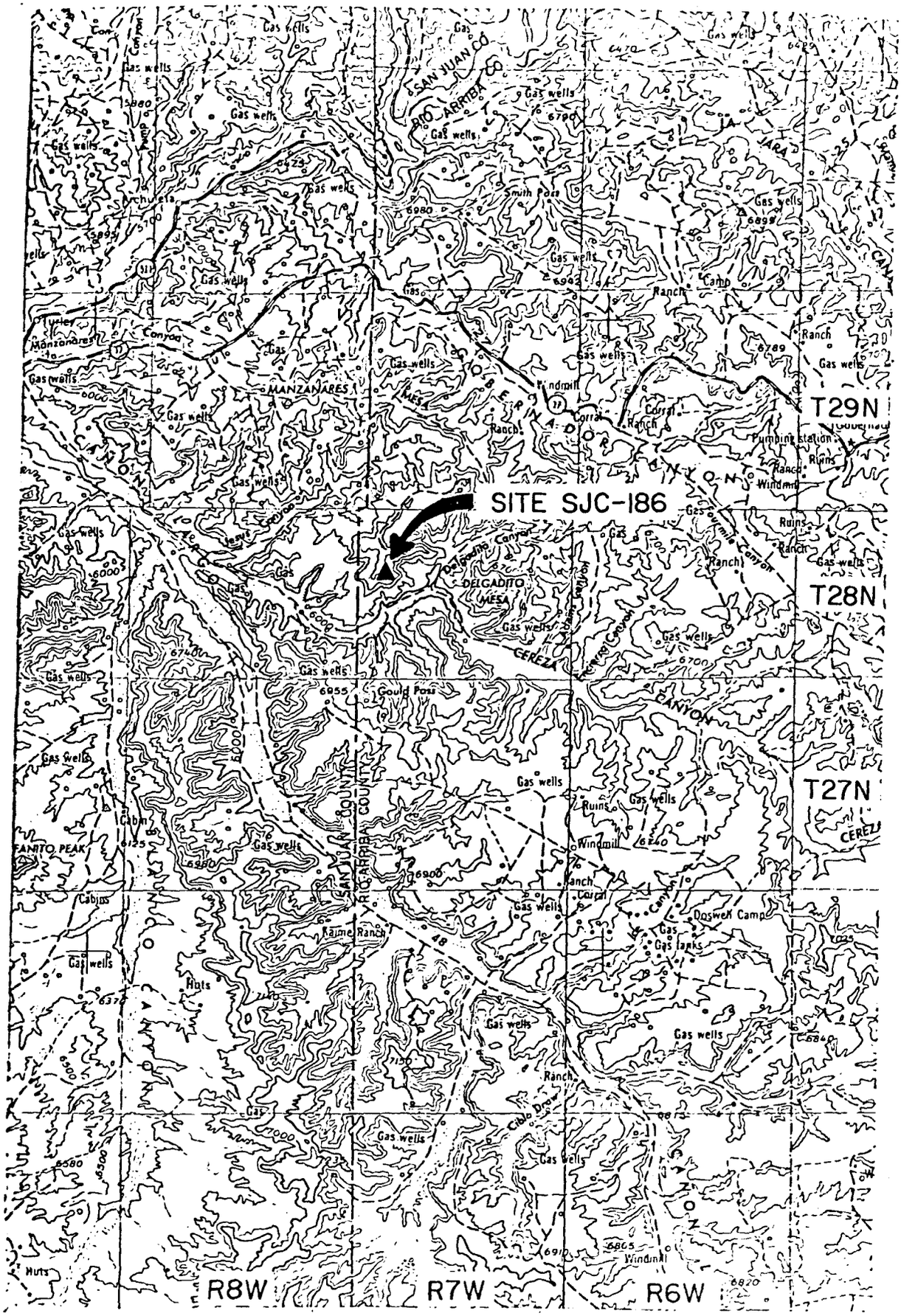


FIGURE I

NN028453

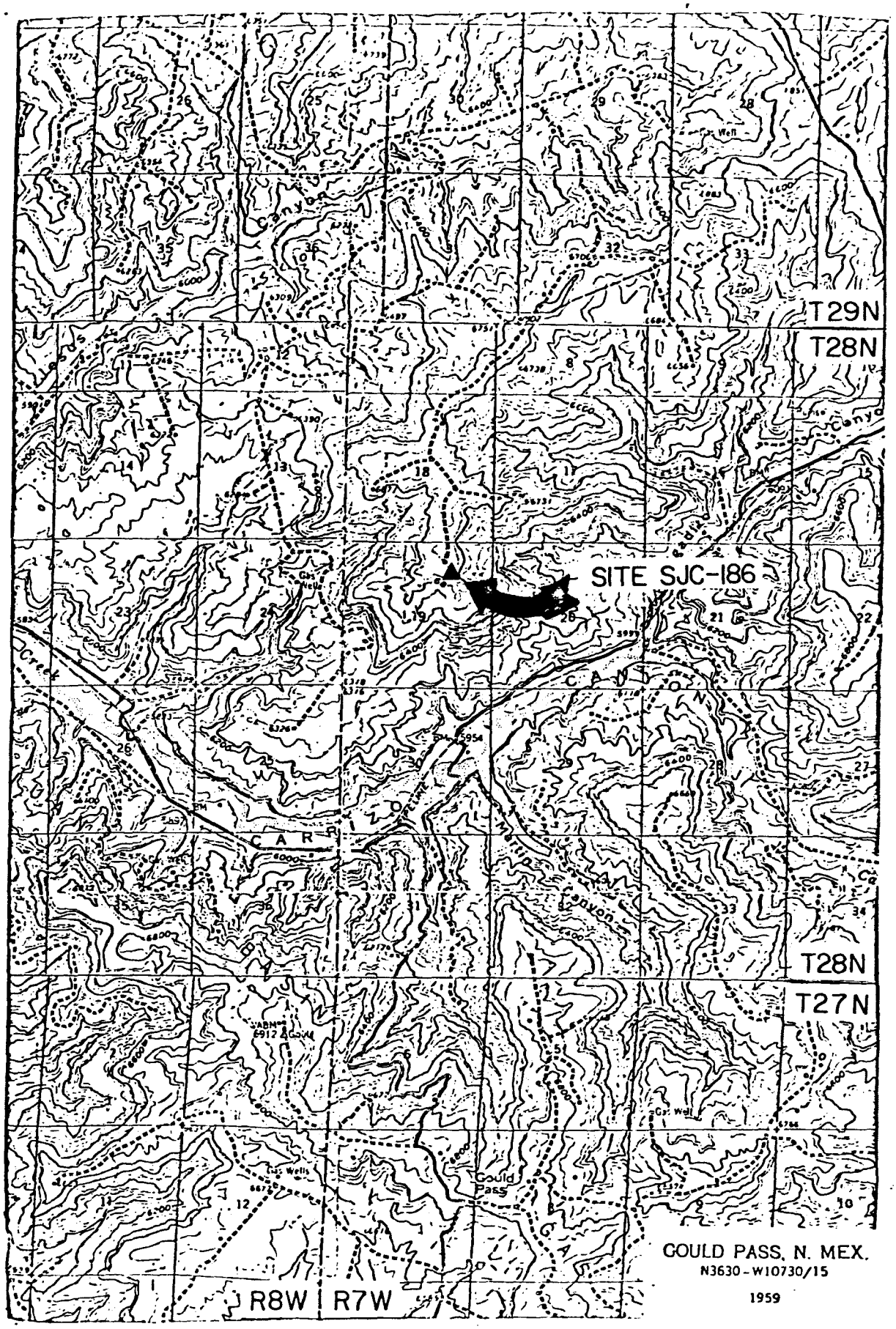

T29N
T28N
SITE SJC-186
T28N
T27N
R8W
R7W
Gould Pass
GOULD PASS, N. MEX.
N3630-W10730/15
1959

FIGURE 2

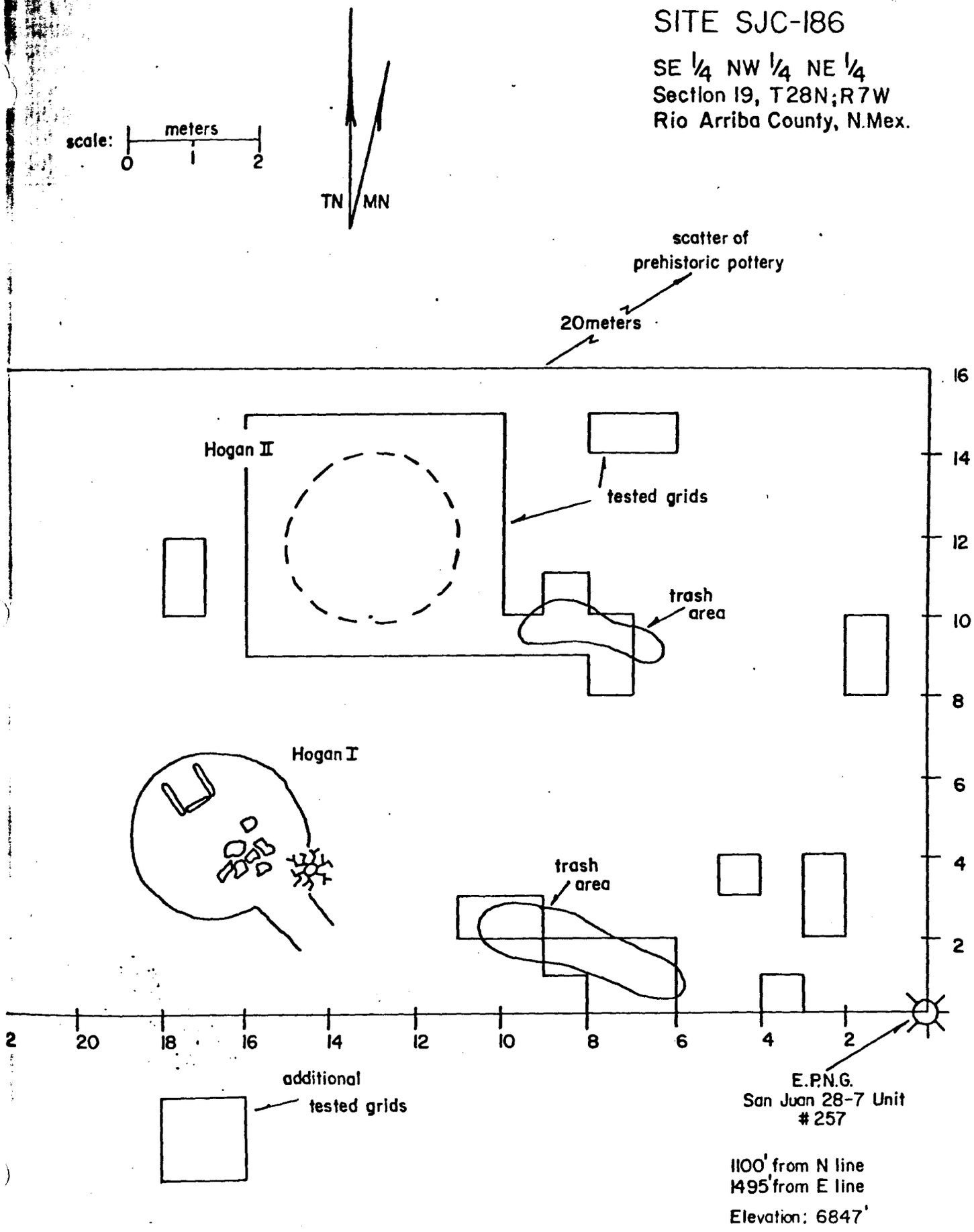


Figure 3

NN028455

Testing and Excavation of an Early
Aceramic Navajo Site in Carrizo Canon

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On April 6, 1978, Site SJC-186 was found during a well location inspection for El Paso Natural Gas Company. The testing and excavations were carried out during the last of May 1978. Provisional clearance was granted for construction of the location with the stipulation that initial surface removal be monitored. Surface scraping was monitored in July, and concurred with the testing results that no further subsurface features were present.

Site SJC-186 is in the SE¼ of the NW¼ of the NE¼ of Section 19, Township 28 North, Range 7 West, N.M.P.M., in Rio Arriba County, New Mexico. The exact location of the site is 1125 feet (342.90 meters) from the north line and 1535 feet (467.87 meters) from the east line of Section 19 and at an elevation of 6850 feet (347.98 meters) above sea level. Universal Transverse mercator coordinates at Site SJC-186 are 13-266-660 Easting and 4059-170 Northing.

OBJECTIVES

The research proposal focused on explanations of the site's location. Three hypotheses, following those formulated by the Southwest Anthropological Research Group (Euler and Gumerman, 1976) addressed this problem. The hypothesis are:

NN028456

1. Site SJC-186 was located with respect to available resources.

2. The site was located where resources could be acquired or used most efficiently.

3. The site was located where inter site resource and information movement was easiest.

There were no diagnostic artifacts, structures, or other features found during the initial survey. However, in the area surrounding the site there are numerous early Navajo and Navajo-refugee phase sites. It was felt that conjectures concerning inter-site relationships might be useful if testing/excavation data were lacking. Based on the survey information it was suspected that the site may not contain habitation features and several conjectures were made:

A. if the site does not contain features related to habitation and is located near potential farming and/or gathering areas, then it may be surmised the function is that of storage, procurement and/or processing.

B. if the above conjecture is correct and the site is near habitation sites with farming and/or gathering economies, then an association between the two can be made.

C. if the site does not contain features related to habitation and is located in areas of high visibility and restricted access, then it may be surmised the function is that of a lookout.

D. if "C" is correct and the site is near or within view of defensive occupation sites, then an association between the two can be made.

During the surface collecting, testing, and excavation, no ceramics were found. Further testing within and outside the site area was done to determine if the site was truely aceramic. An unassociated scatter of Basketmaker III - Pueblo I sherds was found

in an arroyo 20 meters distant, but no ceramics were recovered from the site. This poses an interesting question and several possible postulates/explanations were added to the research outline These are:

a. The site is aceramic because the population was aceramic.

b. The site is aceramic because although the population had pottery, it was not used at the site.

c. The site is aceramic because the population had pottery but none was left or broken at the site.

d. There was pottery on the site but the archaeologist did not find it.

ENVIRONMENT

Site SJC-186 is on a high southeastern finger of Jesus Mesa approximately 800 feet above the Carrizo Cañon bottom. This narrow piece of land is bounded by steep sandstone escarpments formed on the east by Delgadito Cañon and on the south by Carrizo Cañon. Soil on the mesa top is in the Travesilla-Rockland Association and in the vicinity of the site, very shallow. The thin surface layer is a pale brown sandy loam and ranges from 20 to 30 centimeters above the rotting sandstone bedrock. The escarpments and ledges south and east of the site are classified in the Rockland association. There are shallow deposits of silty clay loam soils on the ledges and benches. Vegetation in the immediate site area includes juniper (Juniperus monosperma), piñon (Pinus edulis), Gamble's oak (Querqus Gambelii), bitterbrush (Purshia tridentata), mountain mahogany (Cercocqrpus montanus), broad leaf yucca (Yucca baccata), snakeweed (Gutierrezia microcephala), rabbitbrush (Chrysothamnus nauseousus),

NN028458

prickly pear (Opuntia sp.), barrel cacti (Echinocereus sp.), Eriogonum sp., locoweed (Astragalus sp.), blue grama (Bouteloua gracilis), Indian rice grass (Oryzopsis hymenoides), and galleta grass (Hilaria jamesii).

TESTING/EXCAVATION METHODS

Mr. Fred Kerr from Kerr Land Surveying surveyed and staked the well location on February 24, 1978. Mr. Kerr's well stake was used as the southeast corner of the grid system and as the elevation datum. An area 22 by 16 meters was gridded, mapped, and surface collected. Those grids with structure, artifacts, charcoal stains, or soil (much of the area was exposed bedrock) were tested to determine depth and extent of the cultural material. The grids in and near the hogans and trash areas were taken down to sterile soil or bedrock, .40 meter below ground surface. The other grids proved to have only surficial artifacts if any and were not tested below a .20 meter depth. As stated previously, an area 100 X 100 meters around the site was scraped and monitored for additional subsurface cultural features, none of which were found.

All artifacts were collected and analyzed in the San Juan Branch Lab. Flotation samples from the hogan floor were also processed and

analyzed in house. Dendro samples procured from both hogans were sent to the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research in Tucson, Arizona. Pollen samples taken from the structures and control areas were not analyzed but remain in storage here at the Lab. Photographs and field maps are on file here as well.

SITE DATA

HOGAN I

The most prominent feature on site SJC-186 is Hogan I. Prior to testing/excavation only three of the sandstone slabs making up the bin and a slight depression could be seen on the surface. Initial surface removal revealed heavy deposits of charcoal and large burned wood fragments. The outside diameter of the structure, averaging 4.3 meters, was easily determined by the charcoal stain and sandstone slabs just below ground surface. A juniper tree growing in the southeastern portion near the entrance obscured a portion of the periphery and entryway, however the remainder of the hogan was in quite good condition.

Floor features in Hogan I include a bin, ground stone, hearth, cores and flakes. There were traces of a prepared mud plaster floor in the center and western parts of the hogan which rested directly on bedrock. In the eastern ½ the bedrock was fire reddened as if there had not been a mud floor present when the structure burned.

The three-sided bin inside the hogan and opposite the entrance

NN028460

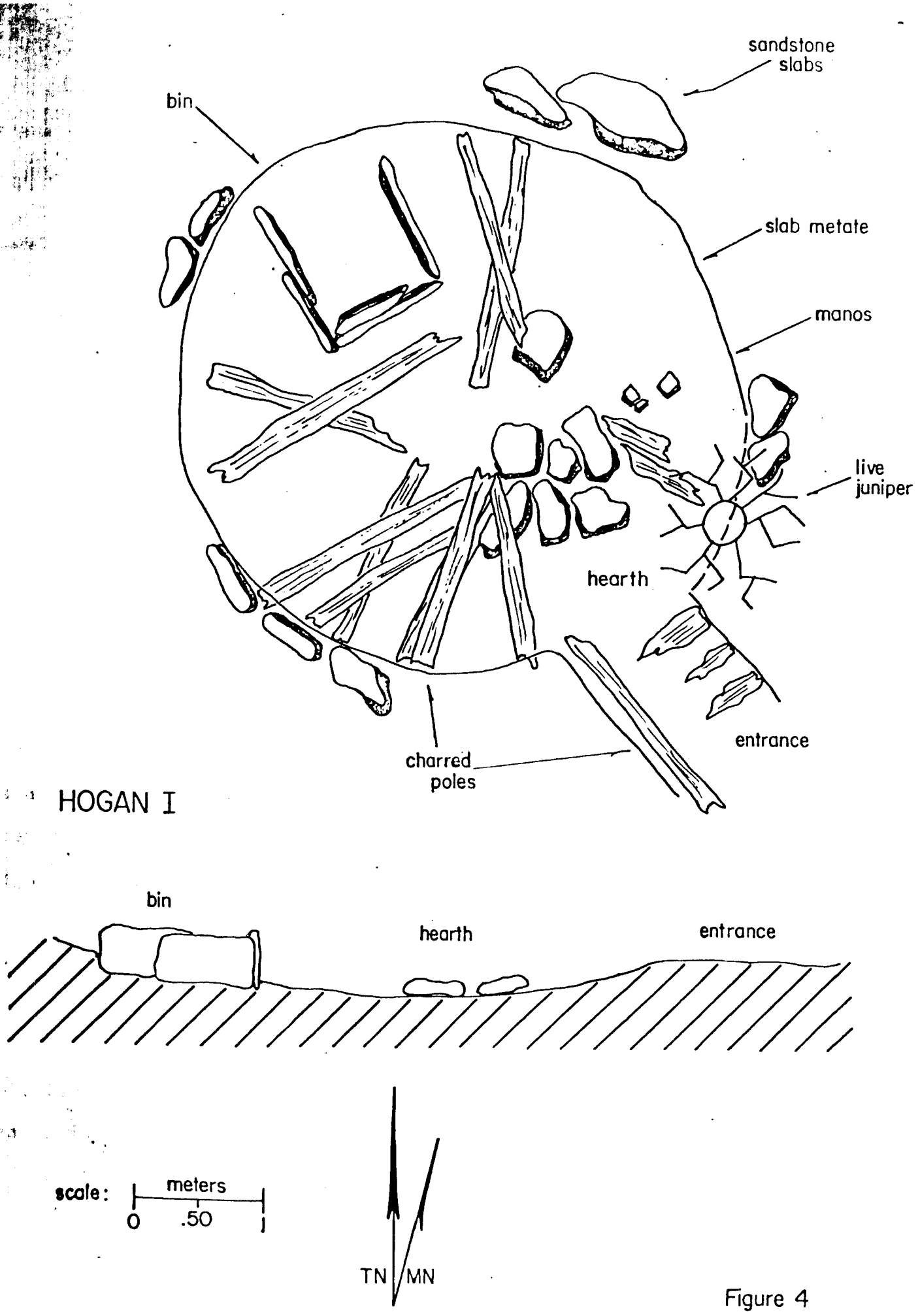


Figure 4

NN028461

measured 1.2 X 1.1 meters. Five sandstone slabs were set in 10 centimeters below the floor into bedrock. There was no trace of a prepared floor or fire reddening inside the bin. No artifacts were found inside or directly associated with this feature.

A sandstone slab metate was found on the oxidized bedrock just east of the center of the hogan. It is unifacial with the surface only slightly abraded. Two sandstone mano fragments were found .60 and .80 meter southeast of the metate, on the same surface.

The hearth is in the south-center area of the hogan, in a line between the entrance and bin. Although it was collapsed when found, it was probably composed of upright sandstone slabs with a lined bottom. It is possible that one of the scattered slabs was employed as a deflector but there is no direct evidence of such. All of the slabs are highly burned on at least one side. Whether the charring is a result of being employed in the hearth or incidental burning when the roof fell cannot be known.

Five cores, one hammerstone, and 20 flakes and flake fragments were found on the floor of Hogan I. Most of these tools and artifacts were found in the south half of the hogan, near and to the east of the hearth. The five cores are all petrified wood and have ample potential flaking material on them. The hammerstone found near the hearth is quartzite and shows considerable wear. Fifteen whole flakes, four pieces of non-diagnostic shatter, and one flake fragment were found on floor contact. One flake is quartzite and the remainder are

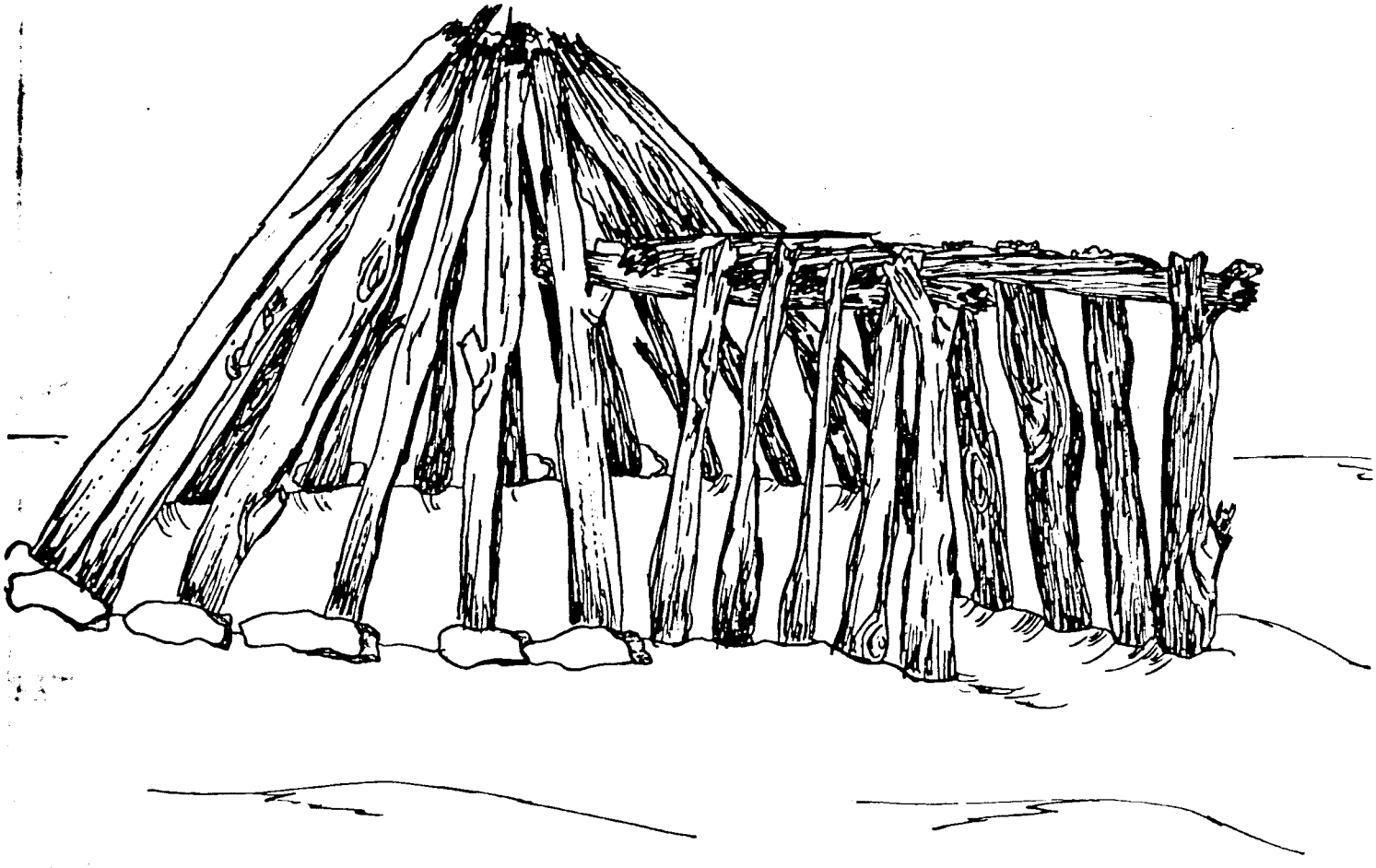
NN028462

petrified wood. Figure 6, Item A, depicts the only discernable tool found on the floor; a small petrified wood flake with flake scars possibly resulting from use as a scraper and as a graver. Figure 6, D, is a sketch of a flake tool found on the surface in the entrance way.

The sandstone slabs around Hogan I and burned log orientations provide clues to construction methods. In the immediate site area bedrock is very shallow. The builders may have found it easier to use sandstone slabs to anchor the butt ends of the logs than to dig into the bedrock. The logs found outside of the hogan perimeter to the southeast probably represent an entranceway. Figure 5 is a sketch of what Hogan I, specifically the entrance, may have looked like.

A light artifcat scatter and charcoal stain was found from 3 to 8 meters east southeast of Hogan I. The cultural fill was not more than 10 centimeters in depth and appears to be badly washed. This scatter has been labled a trash area and appears to be directly associated with Hogan I. A total of 19 pieces of debitage, mostly petrified wood, and 1 quartzite core were found in the trash area. The flake tool depicted in Figure 3 is the only lithic with identifiable wear patterns. A little over half of the debitage are identified as thinning flakes and indicate on-site reduction processes. While no flaked tools were recovered during testing and excavation, the presence of these thinning flakes provides some evidence for biface or uniface tool making by the hogan inhabitants.

NN028463



Reconstruction of Hogan I without brush and mud covering

Figure 5

NN028464

HOGAN II

Surface indications for Hogan II were minimal; a very slight depression and several burned sandstone rocks randomly scattered. Initial testing revealed a thick layer of charcoal indicating a structure similar to Hogan I. However, no definite perimeter could be defined and no floor was found. The only artifacts recovered from the surface or in the fill of the structure were 2 hammerstones. An almost imperceptible charcoal stain was found to the southeast of the structure with one associated flake.

Designating this structure a hogan is somewhat presumptuous but was done to simplify field cataloging. It is the opinion of this author that "Hogan II" was probably a ramada/lean-to contemporary with Hogan I. The tree ring samples were not datable so did not provide any clues. The soil stain labled 'trash area' on Map appears to be associated with Hogan II. It consists of an eroded charcoal scatter and one flake, both of which were surficial.

LITHICS

The flaked stone found in association with features of the site are briefly discussed above. In this section they will be treated as an assemblage and several general comments will be made. These comments include: 1) material selection, 2) reduction processes or tool manufacture, and 3) tool use. It should be kept in mind that the total number in this assemblege is quite small and of course limited to one site. Therefore, while grandiose statements about

early Navajo knapping technology connot be made from this study, a general concept and basis for further work and comparison can.

A total of 42 pieces of debitage, 6 cores, and 3 hammerstones were recovered. Table I is a breakdown of the debitage into material types and shows percentages and totals of the monitored attributes. Table II breaks down the cores.

Silicified wood is the most common of the four material types in the assemblage. All four of these rocks are found in the sedimentary strata and alluvial deposits of Carrizo and Delgadito Cañons. It was observed (although not quantified) that quartzite is in the vast majority, followed by silicified wood and trace occurances of chert and chalcedony. It appears the knappers were selecting for fine grained silicious rock but were not going out of their way to do so.

Reduction processes or tool manufacture, as with material selection were carried out in an expedient manner. The four identifiable tools are flakes or flake fragments and do not show intentional shaping or resharpening. There is a relatively high core to debitage ratio (12.5%) suggesting frugality in knapping processes. The lithics found in the Hogan I trash area are probably thinning flakes. They are small (less than 1 centimeter in length and width), have single or multi-faceted platforms and feather terminations. It is possible these are debitage from unifacial or bifacial tool flaking. The early Navajos were probably performing the entire core reduction process in or near the habitation structures as seen

NN028466

TABLE I	TOTAL ASSEMBLAGE		SILICIFIED WOOD		CHERT		CHALCEDONY		QUARTZITE	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
TOTAL DEBITAGE	42	100	33	79	1	2	2	5	6	14
DEBITAGE TYPE:	42									
Whole Flakes	30	71	23	69	1	100	2	100	3	50
Flake Frags.	3	7	2	6	0		0		1	16
Undiagnostic	9	21	8	24	0		0		2	33
CORTEX:	30									
On Platform	0		0		0		0		0	
Elsewhere	19	63	16	61	1	100	0		2	66
Both	11	33	10	38	0		0		1	33
PLATFORM PREP.:	33									
Cortex	10	30	10	40	0		0		1	30
Single Facet	10	30	6	24	0		2	100	1	30
Multi-Facet	13	39	9	36	1	100	0		3	40
USE OR WEAR:	4									
Degree:										
facial	1	25	3							
marginal	3	75			1					
Flake Removal:	4									
unifacial	2	50	2							
bifacial	2	50	1		1					
Shape:	4									
concave	1	25	1							
concave & convex	1	25			1					
projection	2	50	2							
Scar Direction:	4									
perp. to edge	4	100	3		1					
Assumed Use:	4									
scraping	4		3		1					
drill/graver	2		2							

F = frequency

NN028467

TABLE II	TOTAL ASSEMBLAGE		SILICIFIED WOOD		QUARTZITE	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
TOTAL CORES	6	100	5	83	1	17
Deminsions:						
Max 2-4cm	3	50	3	60		
5-7cm	3	50	2	40	1	100
Min 2-4cm	6	100	5	100	1	100
5-7cm						
Weight:						
Max 30- 40g.	1	17	1	20		
90-100g.	1	17	1	20		
110-120g.	1	17	1	20		
160-170g.	1	17			1	100
170-180g.	1	17	1	20		
210-220g.	1	17	1	20		
Platform Prep.:						
cortex	4	67	3	60	1	100
single facet	1	17	1	20		
multi-facet						
cortex/single	1	17	1	20		
Extent of Use:						
minimal (30%)	1	17	1	20		
excessive (30%)	5	83	4	80	1	100
Terminations:						
feather	3	50	2	40	1	100
step	1	17	1	20		
hinge	2	33	2	40		

F = frequency

NN028468

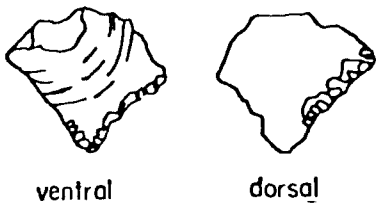
by a high percentage of debitage with cortex (71%) and the range from primary decortification flakes to ones with multiple flake scars on the dorsal surface and the thinning flakes. The numbers indicate that there was no preference among the three types of platform preparation (or lack of) seen; cortex platform, single face or multifaceted platforms.

All four of the flake tools recovered show evidence of use as scrapers, and two with projections probably were used as gravers. Worked surfaces are less than 2 centimeters long and none show evidence of resharpening or shaping. In all cases the flake scars are perpendicular to the edge and are characterized by step terminations. Polish and striae could not be seen with the 20X microscope used for analysis. This set of attributes falls neatly into the description of tools used as scrapers, but determining tool use is not a simple problem (see Chapman in Reher, 1977: 381-386 for detailed explanation). However, for the purposes of this report, and when used in context, these assumptions of tool use are valid. Farmer also reports finding scrapers made from "primary percussion flakes with a little secondary flaking on one edge" (Farmer, 1942).

In summary, data from the flaked lithics indicate the early Navajos' inclination toward expediency. Some selection for fine grained knapping material may have been made, but only out of the locally occuring deposits. The core - debitage ratio and unmodified flake tools also exhibit a thriftiness. Wear patterns on the 4 tools suggest use as scrapers and on two, as gravers. Tasks such as hide

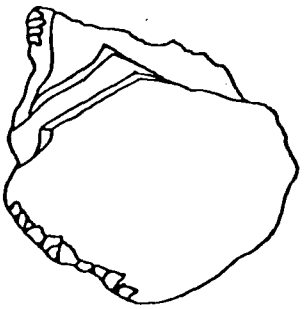
NN028469

A.



Southwest quarter of
Hogan I, floor contact

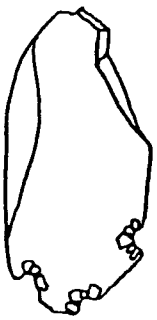
B.



dorsal

Outside of Hogan I to east
14W;5N, 10 cm below surface

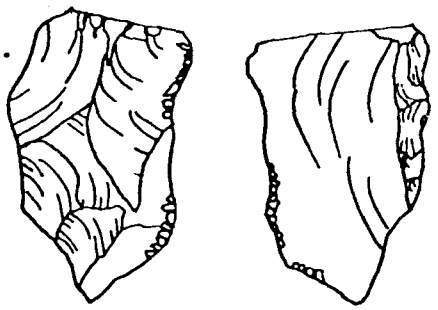
C.



ventral

Hogan I trash area
7W;1N

D.



Entrance of Hogan I
3N;15W

Figure 6

NN028470

treatment, bark or wood processing, and possibly basket weaving could require tools similar to these and would produce like attrition.

Three pieces of ground stone were recovered, all from the astern portion of Hogan I on the floor. The sandstone slab metate as not shaped or prepared and shows minimal wear. One rectangular andstone mano is unifacial and well worn. The other mano, of the ame shape and material is bifacial and ground slightly on the uter edges as if it had been used on a trough metate. It is possible that the manos were appropriated from nearby Anasazi sites or use on the sandstone slab; a practice common to later Navajo.

ERAMICS

Twenty-eight sherds, all from the same vessel, were found n an active arroyo bottom 24 meters northeast of Hogan II. The ajority of the sherds were in an area 1 X 2 meters, 10 to 15 cm. elow the surface, and in sterile alluvial sand. They are identified s Rosa Smoothed, a local Basketmaker III - PI utility ware common n the Largo-Gobernador drainages. It is certain that these sherds re an isolated occurence and not associated with Site SJC-186.

Were it not for the fact that Rosa Gray and Dinetah Utility (an early Navajo ware) are notoriously similar, nothing more would e said about the sherds. Because of this problem, a short description of the sherds is provided and comparisons with Dinetah Utility .Brugge, 1963) and Rosa Smoothed (Hall, 1944) are made.

NN028471

SHERDS NEAR SJC-186

References: described directly from sherds found near SJC-186.

Construction: coil and scrape

Firing Atmosphere: reducing

Core Color: dark gray

Temper: quartz sand - majority very fine with a few larger grains, small particles of mics (probably from clay)

Core Testure: medium fine to fine

Vessel Walls: 5 mm. (medium)

Fracture: sharp, clean

Surface Finish: smoothed then scraped with shallow scraping marks showing. Marks are generally random but on rim sherds are parallel to rim on interior, perpendicular to rim on exterior. Flecks of mica show on surface and finish overall is slightly bumpy.

Surface Color: light to medium gray, fire clouds present

Vessel Form: jar

Rims: straight walls

Comparisons: With Dinetah Utility: temper is finer and in smaller percentages than Dinetah Utility. Texture is finer, fracture sharper and is generally harder. Finish is smoother with less scraping marks and protruding temper particles. Surface color lighter. Rim flatter

With Rosa Smoothed: Temper same, texture finer, surface manipulations, color, and rims same.

From the above description it can be seen that the sherds are Rosa Smoothed. They were found a considerable distance from the site, represent a single vessel rather than an assemblege, and were not found in cultural fill. Therefore, the pottery is not associated with SJC-186.

FLOTATION SAMPLES

Flotation samples were taken off the floor; near the hearth, entrance, and around the perimeter. The vast majority of floated material is wood charcoal fragments, most of which are juniper. Several pieces may be piñon, but were not positively identified as such. Other identified vegetal material include bark fragments, grass stems, and seeds and seed fragments.

The grass stems bear no identifiable features so only their presence can be noted. Three pieces of juniper bark were identified. Two whole seeds and four seed coats were recovered and identified as fleshey coated gymnosperms; Juniperus sp..

The identified vegetal remains probably represent roof construction materials and not items originally found on the floor. There were no appreciable differences between samples indicating homogeneity of fill. Clusters or caches of various plants would be expected if they had been used individually and stored on (or in) the floor. Therefore, it is believed that the identified bark, grass, and juniper seeds (off of branches) are remains of the stick and brush roof.

TREE-RING SAMPLES

Twenty dendro samples were taken from the site, fifteen from Hogan I and five from Hogan II. An attempt was made to sample from all areas of Hogan I however more were taken from the west side where

NN028473

the wood was better preserved. One log was thought to be piñon but was juniper like all the rest. Very few good samples could be taken from Hogan II and according to Dr. Robinson, none were datable. The logs in Hogan I were highly burned except on the butt ends where they were under the sandstone slabs. These ends however, were rotted and weathered and no evidence of how the logs were felled could be found.

Dr. Robinson's letter and results are included in this report. The letter explains the situation quite well and the reader is refered to it for dates and explaination of the dates.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH & COMPARISONS

The sequence of early Navajo archaeology, from Mindeleff's findings in Canyon de Chelly to the large Land Claims Survey and Navajo Project, is well outlined and discussed by James Hester (1962). Subsequent work by Brugge (1963, 1972), Carlson (1965), and Wilson & Warren (1974) as well as numerous gas well and pipeline surveys have added to the early Navajo studies. Although the majority of this research has focused on stone towers and pueblitos, several reports also deal with forked-stick hogans. Keur (1941) discusses such hogans at Big Bead Mesa and Guadalupe Canyon as well as her excavations in Rio Arriba County (1944). Farmer (1942) reports excavating two forked-stick dwellings on the drainages of upper Blanco and Largo Cañons, and at least thirteen hogans were excavated in conjunction with the Navajo Dam Project (Eddy, 1966).

NN028474

In comparison with the above reported excavations, the hogan on site SJC-186 fits well within the characteristics. The diameter (14.1 feet) is slightly larger than the ten to thirteen foot average diameter (Hester, 1962: 40). Interior features, saucer shaped floor, orientation, and entrance are all typical features. Even support stones around the base of the timbers is a characteristic found at Big Bead Mesa (Keur, 1941: 21). The one exception is the lack of pottery. No mention could be found of forked-stick hogan sites which were not associated with ceramics, even, of course, ones unassociated with pueblitos or towers. Many isolated forked-stick hogans contained Dinetah Utility, Gobernador Polychrome, and/or Francis Polychrome, although several hogans had only Dinetah Utility wares (Keur, 1944). One good explaination for discrepancy is that collapsed forked stick hogan sites are often quite obscure. One lacking pottery is likely to go unnoticed or be mislabeled as a campsite or hearth area.

In summary then, based on existing excavation and research data, Site SJC-186 fits well into the pattern for forked stick hogans, and could probably also fit into the Dinetah Phase as defined by D. Hurt, et al, 1961: pp. 245-246). However, the lack of ceramics and the inconclusive but suggestive tree ring dates are disturbing. It is recognized that although these anomylies are not major, and limited at present to one site, they require a second look.

NN028475

CONCLUSIONS

A research proposal should be a blueprint, or a way of putting an idea or ideas into a workable form. The blueprint initiates preparatory research, guides excavation, and directs analysis and the final synthesis. If a carpenter follows the blueprint, he knows exactly where he is from the beginning of the project to its end. But an archaeological job has an added dimension. The archaeologist does not know what will be underground and must draw up the blueprint based on theories and past research. Therefore, an archaeological research design must be flexible enough (flexible, not vague) to deal with "unattained goals and unanticipated discoveries (Haury, 1976: 39)."

In the original research proposal the three major core hypotheses drawn up by the Southwest Anthropological Research Group (Euler and Gumerman, 1978:VI) were used. These problems were supposed to be "broad enough to encompass the interests of individuals with diverse goals for their archaeological projects, while at the same time being sufficiently narrow to permit a true test of the design (Ibid: V)." Either Site SJC-186 did not contain the necessary data or the author did not fully grasp the potential of these broad goals. At any rate, they were of little use during excavation and synthesis.

Based on the survey data, the site was not thought to contain habitation features and four supportive conjectures about non-habitation sites were made. Unfortunately these conjectures were too narrow and because the site does have habitation features, were also of little use.

NN028476

Thus, the blueprint took several mid-stream changes and ended in four deductive postulates. Questions arose during excavation and analysis and these possible explanations were added to the research outline. It seems that there is no remedy for the broadness or narrowness of research proposals when very little is known about the site itself. Perhaps as long as the objectives are flexible and the archaeologist is equally flexible, the research design will serve its purpose.

The four postulates or possible explanations and discussion on each follows:

a) The site is aceramic because the population was aceramic.

It is thought by some that when the Navajo entered the Dinetah (Blanco, Largo, Gobernador, Frances, LaJara, upper San Juan and lower Los Pinos drainages) they did not make or have pottery. While Keur (1944) suggests that hogan sites with only Dinetah Utility are 'pure Navajo', that is,the earliest Navajo preceeding Puebloan contact, Brugge (1972) believes Dinetah Utility exhibits many puebloan traits and that it 'postdates the arrival of the pueblo refugees (Ibid, 1972: 2)." Brugge further states that "we have yet to identify the original ceramic type of the southwestern athabaskans, but it does not seem likely that it will closely resemble Dinetah Utility, if pottery was indeed produced by the Navajos prior to this time (Ibid)." In addition, there are as yet no good tree ring dates for Navajo occupation prior to the later years of the Pueblo Revolt. Hall (1944, p.100, in Kerr, 1944) reports a tree ring date of 1541 ± 20 from a forked stick hogan in the Gobernador Cañon area, and

NN028477

Kuer has a 1656 ± 20 date from a Pueblito Canyon hogan. These dates however seem to be isolated occurences and do not represent clusters. Wilson and Warren (1974) have tree-ring dates which cluster at 1690, but their site is a pueblito with definite puebloan contact.

Therefore, in light of the present evidence and especially Brugge's work, postulate "a" seems to be a plausible explanation for the absence of pottery on SJC-186.

b) The site is aceramic because although the population had pottery it was not used at the site.

It is possible that the activities preformed at the site did not require the use of pottery. If the site functioned as a look-out, storage area, or very temporary camp, there may have been no need for cooking vessels. The artifact density was quite low and no remains of foodstuffs were found. Neither was there evidence of procurement and/or processing, storage, or having been used as a lookout/watch tower. The hogan has typical habitation features and was substantially constructed, and with the exception of pottery, had a full range of artifact types normaly found associated with occupation sites. Therefore, the function of the site was that of day-to-day living, and if pottery was indeed a part of the culture's artifact assemblege, it should have been present.

c) The site is aceramic because the population had pottery but none was left or broken at the site.

"The modern Navajo mode of disposing of broken pottery requires

NN028478

that the sherds be deposited in an out-of-way place, under a bush or rock...away from the dwelling (Brugge, 1972: 8, and 1963: 22). This practice seems to show up in the later half of the eighteenth century. If SJC-186 dates to this period, it might be effected by this custom. However, there is substantial evidence; Kidder (1920), Farmer (1942), Keur (1941, 1944), the Navajo Project (1966), and the author's observations, that broken and whole pottery is common on these early forked stick hogan sites. This cultural practice should be kept in mind, as should the existing archaeological record.

d) There was pottery on the site but the archaeologist did not find it.

Since the excavator and author are one in the same, there is little chance this postulate will be supported here. Actually, human error is always present and should be recognized (in as subtle a manner as possible). During the excavations, the lack of pottery was obvious and every effort was made to assure the absence was real and not error. Therefore, this final explanation of why the site is aceramic is of minor importance - very minor.

In conclusion and summary, a quote from Charles Amsden:

"Thus do tradition, science, and history combine to sketch the nebulous outline of the early Navajo. Vague and meager the details, yet we have a large and significantly harmonious body of evidence bearing upon the romantic career of that handful of Athapascan people who seemingly filtered through the mountain valleys of the southern Rockies sometime between 1000 and 1500 A.D. to become in an astonishing short time the scourge of a far flung line of stout Pueblo and Spanish communities, lords of a territory comparable to New England, and the largest tribe of Indians in North America... Behind these meager factual details lies an epic human drama (Amsden, 1932).

NN028479

Behind the meager factual details recovered from Site SJC-186 lies perhaps not an epic human drama, but an insight into early aceramic Navajo sites.

NN028480

LABORATORY OF TREE-RING RESEARCH

Archaeological Date Report

Site SJC-186 Page 1 of 1

ssion Number A-453 Control Number Date 9 August 1978

nience	TRL Number	Field Number	Species	Dating Inside	Dating Outside	Remarks
n 1, Log #6	NMS-20		JUN	0972fp-	1190vv	Probably all
Log #7	NMS-21		JUN	0852+ -	1209++vv	from same
Log #3	NMS-17		JUN	1072fp-	1289vv	original tree

NN028481

LABORATORY OF TREE-RING RESEARCH
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS

e symbols used with the inside date are:

year - no pith ring present

p - pith ring present

fp - the curvature of the inside ring indicates that it is far from the pith

±p - pith ring present, but due to the difficult nature of the ring series near the center of the specimen, an exact date cannot be assigned to it. The date is obtained by counting back from the earliest dated ring.

± - the innermost ring is not the pith ring and an absolute date cannot be assigned to it. A ring count is involved.

e symbols used with the outside date are:

B - bark present

G - beetle galleries are present on the surface of the specimen

L - a characteristic surface patination and smoothness, which develops on beams stripped of bark, is present

- the outermost ring is continuous around the full circumference of the specimen. This symbol is used only if a full section is present

r - less than a full section is present, but the outermost ring is continuous around available circumference

v - a subjective judgment that, although there is no direct evidence of the true outside on the specimen, the date is within a very few years of being a cutting date

vv - there is no way of estimating how far the last ring is from the true outside

+ - one or more rings may be missing near the end of the ring series whose presence or absence cannot be determined because the specimen does not extend far enough to provide an adequate check

++ - a ring count is necessary due to the fact that beyond a certain point the specimen could not be dated

ymbols, B, G, L, c and r indicate cutting dates in order of decreasing confidence, s a + or ++ is also present.

ymbols L, G, and B may be used in any combination with each other or with the symbols except v and vv. The r and c symbols are mutually exclusive, but may with L, G, B, + and ++. The v and vv are also mutually exclusive and may with the + and ++. The + and ++ are mutually exclusive but may be used in nation with all the other symbols.

NN028482

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amsden, Charles
1932 Navajo Origins. New Mexico Historical Review, Vol.7 No.3, Albuquerque, pp. 193-209.

Bahe, Eugene and E. P. Sewell
1972 Dwellings of the Navajo. Southwest Heritage, Vol. 2, Llano Estacado Heritage, Inc., Hobbs.

Brugge, David M.
1963 Navajo Pottery and Ethnohistory, Navajoland Publication, Series 2, Navajo Tribal Museum, Window Rock.
1972 The Navajo Exodus. Archaeological Society of New Mexico Supplement No. 5 (December), Las Cruces.

Carlson, Roy L.
1965 Eighteenth Century Navajo Fortress of the Gobernador District, Northwestern New Mexico. University of Colorado Series in Anthropology, No. 10, Boulder.

Eddy, Frank W.
1966 Prehistory in the Navajo Reservoir District Northwestern New Mexico. Museum of New Mexico Press, No. 15, Parts I & II, Santa Fe.

Euler, Robert C. and G. J. Gumerman
1978 Investigations of the Southwestern Archaeological Research Group, Proceedings of the 1976 Conference, Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff.

Farmer, Malcolm F.
1942 Navajo Archaeology of Upper Blanco and Largo Canyons, Northern New Mexico, American Antiquity, Vol. 8, No. 1, Menasha, pp. 65-79.

Hall, Edward Twitchell Jr.
1944 Early Stockaded Settlements in the Governador New Mexico. Columbia University Press, New York.

Hester, James J.
1962 Early Navajo Migrations and Acculturation in the in the Southwest. Museum of New Mexico Press, No. 6, Santa Fe.

NN028483

Hurt, Wesley R. Jr.
1942 Eighteenth Century Navajo Hogans from Canyon de Chelly National Monument. American Antiquity, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 89-104.

Keur, Dorothy L.
1941 Big Bead Mesa: An Archaeological Study of Navajo Acculturation, 1745-1812. Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology, No. 1 Menasha.

Kidder, Alfred V.
1920 Ruins of the Historic Period in the Upper San Juan Valley, New Mexico, American Anthropologist, N.S. 22 (4) pp.322-329.

Maker, H. J., J. J. Folks, J. U. Anderson, and V. G. Link
1973 Soil Associations and Land Classification for Irrigation, Rio Arriba County. Agricultural Experiment Station Research Report 254, Las Cruces.

indeleff, Cosmos
1898 Navajo Houses. Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1895-1896. Part 2. Government Printing Office, Washington. pp. 469-517.

Reher, Charles A.
1977 Settlement and Subsistence Along the Lower Chaco River: The CGP Survey. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Wilson, John P. and A. H. Warren
1974 LA 2298 The Earliest Pueblito. AWANYU Vol. 2 No. 1, Las Cruces, pp. 8-26.

NN028484