



## LAS November 2014 Headlines:

### **SELDOM SEEN SITES**

A book report by Dell Crandall

At the end of the Basketmaker 3 period and the beginning of the Pueblo 1 period, the Anazasi culture was found in three principal regions, Chaco Canyon, Kayenta, and Mesa Verde. Lesser communities were beginning to form in the Virgin River region, north and west of Kayenta, along the Little Colorado River south of Kayenta, and the Rio Grande division along the Rio Grande River east of Chaco. Although the Basketmaker lifeway was still followed, each region developed certain practices and characteristics making them different from the others.

The Mesa Verde culture has its regional center at the present National Park, but there are a vast number of sites to the east and the west, which are seldom seen by visitors. Roughly the region stretches from the Colorado-New Mexico border on the south, then to the west into southeastern Utah, north to Cahone and Delores Colorado, and on the east along the Mancos and La Plata drainages.

In 1903, T. Mitchell Prudden wrote a summary report of the Mesa Verde region. In the westernmost section, Prudden divided his survey into 12 geographic areas.

The first of Prudden's divisions was Monument Valley in Colorado. The most important site in this division is the Aztec Spring Ruin.

The second division was the McElmo group near Cortez, with notable ruins like Burkhart's Ruin, Battle Rock, and the cliff dwellings in Sand and Rock Canyons.

Third in Prudden's divisions is the Yellowjacket group in Colorado. West of Delores are the Yellowjacket Springs Ruins. It was estimated to have at least 300 rooms. It also has ruins of large reservoirs and ditches leading to them.

The fourth division is on the tributaries of the Yellowjacket drainage. Best known are the Cannonball Canyon ruins which are clusters of rooms and towers surrounding the heads of gulches. Jessie Fewkes in his 1919 Bureau of Ethnology report describes this area as having the most valuable collections of rock art in this part of the country, with both petroglyphs and pictographs. Three of the northern tributaries, Ruin, Bridge, and Hovenweep Canyons contain the most noteworthy ruins.

So interesting was this area, at the urging of archeologists, President Harding issued a proclamation creating Hovenweep National Monument in 1923.

Fifth in Prudden's divisions are the ruins in the Yellowjacket uplands. Most notable being the ruins at Lowry.

Seventh are the ruins in Utah's Montezuma Creek Valley. Included are the rows of erect slabs at the "Island" at the mouth of Coal Bed Canyon.

One of the largest ruins lies between the mouth of Bug and Pierson Canyons; it probably contained 250 rooms and at least 10 kivas.

Numerous unit type ruins are scattered up and down the upper part of the valley. Another large ruin is at the head of Jackson Canyon, consisting of two buildings facing each other across a wash. Together the two buildings enfold more than 150 rooms.

Eighth are the ruins on Recapture Creek, with numerous small valley sites and cliff dwellings. One of the largest has 40 rooms.

Ninth is the Cottonwood Creek Ruins, one ruin that sits on a high bench by the mouth of Dry Wash contained 50 to 60 rooms. Farther north in Allen, Hammond, and Cottonwood Canyons, caves have been found with early Basketmaker burials.

Tenth on Prudden's list is the Butler Wash Ruins. Many side canyons have caves and alcoves with cliff dwellings, with one being a large ruin with many burials.

The eleventh division is the Comb Wash Ruins. With only a few small ruins at the mouth, a few scattered sites at the valley's head, and a few small cliff dwellings in the side canyons of Elk Ridge.



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The 12<sup>th</sup> and last are those in Grand Gulch. Most of its ruins are clustered in large caves. Basketmaker relics have been found there.

This area is a mecca for rock art enthusiasts.

OOPS --- I think I forgot the sixth division which is the ruins of the Montezuma Creek upland area lying between the Delores River and the Abajo Mountains.

On the west side at Alkali Ridge, 13 sites have been excavated yielding important information about architectural development in an area with about 300 surface dwellings and storage rooms, along with many large and small pithouses.

The east side is a rather arid and forbidding country, and there are only a few ruins, mainly small valley sites and small cliff dwellings.

Exceptions to this are the SELDOM SEEN SITES of the Pierson Lake and Bug Lake Ruins. Pierson Lake is an Anazasi made lake, and is situated on top of a pinion and sage covered mesa that rises between Cross and Pierson Canyons. Close by the reservoir are two unit type ruins with several ruins on the north side of the village, short wings, and a kiva in the front.

The main ruin is a short distance from the lake. With between 250 and 300 rooms it forms a compact group about 90 meters square. About 270 meters west of the main ruin is a second ruin measuring about 30 meters long at the back. A few hundred meters northwest are several unit type ruins.

The Bug Lake Ruins are located east of the Pierson Group and are on a high mesa between Pierson and Bug Lake Canyons. Bug Lake, another Anazasi made reservoir is still in use today.

The main ruin is near the lake and is composed of two groups of buildings facing each other a crossed a drainage. Both have parts of walls still standing and roof timbers present. The larger group faces southeast.

About 140 meters long, it includes a number of circular kivas surrounded by rooms. Some kivas are located side by side while some are separated by passageways that lead from the building to a court.

Across the wash are several small and isolated structures. Two are about 35 meters apart with a small earthen dam built between. There is also a large dam across the main wash.

West of the main ruin are two benches like stair steps. On the first bench are five unit type ruins. Each has one row of south facing rooms and from two to four circular kivas in front of the rooms. The second bench has another assemblage of scattered sites, each with its own kivas.

Summary ----- Prudden found the Bug Lake group of ruins to be of "Peculiar interest", because it confirmed his impression of different periods of occupancy in a single locality, and it excited his curiosity about the relationship of time and culture within the associated ruin groups.

These ruins were of interest to me because a friend of mine, Donnie Dale, now living in Moab, told me about living next to them as a child with his family, and playing in the ruins.

Condensed from {The Pueblo Children of the Earth Mother, by Thomas E. Mails, 1983.}

-Special thanks to Dell Crandall for the submission.

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## LAS Find of the Year:

Voting took place at the November 2014 meeting, and the masses have spoken. The Loveland Archaeological Society's Find of the Year, October 2013 through September 2014, was made by Shane Skutvik. This was the August 2014 Find of the Month, along with Steve Campbell's Clovis.

Type: Clovis  
Material: Translucent Red Hartville Uplift  
Location: Morgan County, Colorado

Congratulations Shanel!



## More Eye Candy:

Larry Cunningham, one of our members who lives in New Mexico, found this Tularosa basal notch point at 8,000 foot elevation on private land in northern New Mexico on September 1, 2014. The point is 1 1/2 inches long, 1 1/8 inches wide, and 1/8 inch thick. The material is translucent agate-chalcedony. Larry says the blade edges exhibit fine secondary flaking with light serrations.

Larry added "Only a small number of this point type have been reported in the high altitude (7,000'+) settings of northern New Mexico & S.W. Colorado, which appears to be the northern limit of its distribution. Also, some basic morphological similarities are observed between Late Archaic types from central Texas, but any connection is very doubtful. Examples of these foreign types (i.e., Bell, Andice, etc.) deriving from the Edwards Plateau, Alibates, Burro Mesa, or some other conspicuous raw material source in



Texas...have been virtually nonexistent in the Tularosa Region. Excavations at Tularosa Cave (in southern N.M.) produced a basal notched Tularosa point hafted onto a wooden atlatl foreshaft. This dart-point type is placed chronologically dating from 300 B.C. until about A.D. 700. This type is also diagnostic of the early Mogollon Culture."

Unfortunately Larry couldn't attend the October meeting to enter his point in the Find of the Month competition, but we wanted to share it with you here. Enjoy!



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### LAS Find of the Month, November 2014:

Members can bring an artifact to be entered into the competition at the monthly meeting, which will be judged based on the following rules:

1. Must be a member of LAS in good standing.
2. The artifact must be a personal find.
3. It must have been found within the specified time frame, i.e., within the month prior to the meeting.
4. The artifact doesn't have to be a Colorado find—all that matters is that it was found in the last month.

The Find of the Month for November 2014 was made by Bryan Morgan

Type: Plains Side Notch

Material: White Chert

Location: Converse County, Wyoming



### LAS News and Upcoming Events:

- Speakers Needed!** We need speakers for our 2015 meetings! If you would like to give a presentation or know of someone who would give a great program please contact Andy Coca, Jean Steinhoff or Kevin Zeeck. No experience is necessary. All that is needed is a passion for our hobby and a willingness to share that passion. Thanks!
- December 2, 2014** December meeting. This will be our annual Christmas party. Bring a dish to share for the annual feast. If you'd like to bring a Christmas beverage (non-alcoholic please) feel free to do so. Also, we will be taking donations in the form of gifts, gift cards, or money to provide a Christmas for Native American families in the area. If you can't attend and would like to make a donation please contact Sharon Lundt at (970) 669-2375. Annual LAS officer elections will be held at the beginning of the December meeting.
- January 6, 2015** January meeting. Program: to be announced.