

University of Northern Colorado

UNCOpen

Yucca House National Monument

Colorado National Parks

July 2024

Master Plan Development Outline for Yucca House National Monument from 1952

W G. Carnes

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digscholarship.unco.edu/yoho>

Recommended Citation

Carnes, W G., "Master Plan Development Outline for Yucca House National Monument from 1952" (2024).
Yucca House National Monument. 6.
<https://digscholarship.unco.edu/yoho/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Colorado National Parks at UNCOpen. It has been accepted for inclusion in Yucca House National Monument by an authorized administrator of UNCOpen. For more information, please contact Nicole.Webber@unco.edu.

Master Plan Development Outline

Yucca House National Monument, Colorado

3. Operation (Continued)

b. INTERPRETATION

(1) Principal Characteristics

Yucca House National Monument is completely archeological in its significance. Its archeological importance is well indicated by the statements of men who saw it before sheep destroyed many of the surface indications. Mr. W. H. Holmes, after mapping it in 1875, stated that it was "the most imposing pile of masonry yet found in Colorado". In 1919, Dr. Jesse Walter Fewkes, after visiting all of the major pueblo ruins in the region, stated that he "saw no ruined prehistoric villages in the Montezuma Valley that so stirred his enthusiasm to properly excavate and repair as that at Aztec Spring".

From surface indications the ruins appear to date from the Classic Pueblo Period of the 12th and 13th centuries. Exposed masonry is of the late Mesa Verde type, with possible Chaco influences, and surface potsherds are predominately of late Mesa Verde wares. A few earlier sherds have been found, however, and considering the importance of the water supply to the ancient Indians, it will not be surprising if eventual excavation reveals an occupation as early as Developmental Pueblo times.

The ruins can best be described by dividing them into two parts, as Holmes did in 1875, when he spoke of the "upper house" and the "lower house". The upper house contains the most imposing pile of masonry. While now almost completely covered with earth, this mass of masonry, about 80 by 100 feet in size, appears to represent a structure that once stood at least three stories high. Around this mound is an area of several acres which, from surface irregularities, appears to contain a mass of rooms and kivas. In 1875, Holmes drew a ground plan showing 150 large rooms in this area. If, at that time, there were surface indications of walls, they have since disappeared because of excessive trampling by sheep.

The lower house, which is 350 feet east of the upper, is entirely different in plan. Rectangular in shape, it contains a row of rooms, 200 feet in length,