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### 1949 Archeological Circular No. 2 of National Park Service Region Three

Erik K. Reed

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Supt. Great Sand Dunes

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
National Park Service  
Region Three  
Santa Fe, New Mexico



September 23, 1949

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Mesa Verde

From: Regional Archeologist

Subject: Region Three Anthropological Interpretation Circular  
Number Two

Attached for your and your interpretive staff's review and consideration is a second "Region Three Archeological Interpretation Circular," taking up a few of the topics which have recurred frequently in discussions at your area and elsewhere. This was written up several months ago and was somewhat revised only before the recent conference of archeologists here and my last field trip, so that there may be a few relevant points which have been brought up in the last month or so not yet included. Contributions toward a third such circular letter are invited.

*Erik K. Reed*

Erik K. Reed  
Regional Archeologist

Enclosures-2

Copy to: Superintendents, Aztec Ruins  
Bandelier  
Casa Grande  
Montezuma  
Navajo  
Tonto  
Tuzigoot  
Wupatki

Mr. King  
Director  
Archeologists Baldwin and Beaubien,  
c/o Region Two

All with enclosures

A. The Problem of the Enemy Peoples

In Notes 13, 30, and 55 of the Region Three Anthropological Notes series, I have implied a definite possibility that the Apaches were in Arizona and western New Mexico at least 150 years before the arrival of the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, and may have caused the Pueblo abandonment of some areas. Although I still think this may have been the case and should be kept in mind as one possibility, it has been too strongly stated in these notes and perhaps I have not introduced in that series heretofore any reasonably adequate statement of the opposite viewpoint. A very widespread opinion, and one which cannot be readily demolished or disregarded, is approximately the following:

1. There are no known Apache archeological remains indicating their presence in the Southwest proper at an early date. (Comment by E.K.R.: nor are there of the eighteenth century when we know they were here.)
2. In the sixteenth century, 1540-1600, the Spaniards found Apaches on the plains of eastern New Mexico but encountered no one between the Gila and Hawikuh, or between Zuni and Moqui. This is not due to Spanish neglect to mention non-puebloan tribes, because Espejo reports the Havasupai (Coconino) and Yavapai in the country from the Little Colorado Valley to the Verde Valley, as "Querechos" and "mountainous people," etc. (Comment by E.K.R.: possible that the Arizona Apaches were few and ineffective, and stayed out of the Spaniards' way -- but I admit they should have heard of them, instead of calling east-central Arizona a "despoblado," if they were around. Further, this does not lend much support to any idea of Apache attacks causing Pueblo withdrawals and decreases. No Spaniard entered the Navajo country proper until well after 1600, incidentally.)
3. Aside from the selection, and occasional deliberate fortification, of defensible sites, there is little evidence for warfare at the end of the Classic period in each area; the defensive sites and occasional hints of conflicts might easily indicate inter-pueblo strife due to increasing population and decreasing natural resources. (Comment by E.K.R.: perfectly true, although Apache attacks would perhaps have taken the form of harassment, not directly reflected in the archeology, rather than raids and battles and destruction. There was just such a destructive Apache campaign in the Galisteo in 1525, however.)
4. Consequently, it appears probable that the Apaches' southward descent from Canada took place not very long before the coming of Europeans to the New World, and largely or entirely by a route or routes just east of the Rocky Mountains; that there were no Apaches west of the Pecos when the Spaniards entered the Southwest, and only between 1580 and 1630 did certain Apache groups move west across the Rio Grande, to become the Chiricahua and the Western Apache (Coyotero-Tonto-Gila-Cibecue-White River, etc., and Navajo); only about and after that time, having penetrated to mountain fastnesses and having begun to acquire Spanish weapons and horses, did the Apaches become a serious and continuing menace to the settlements and goods and lives of settled farmers; the devastating raid on the Galisteo Basin in 1525 was perhaps the first real Apache attack on any Pueblo group, and the more westerly pueblos were unaffected prior to about 1650.



Against this view, which I believe I have stated fairly correctly and fully, though as concisely as possible, can be urged only a few arguments, such as that (1) negative evidence for no Apaches is inadequate, because Apache archeological remains have not been systematically sought, and there are hints that somebody was there, the only apparent satisfactory explanation for complete and permanent abandonment of certain districts by Pueblos being "Nomad enemy" attacks; (2) already in 1630 the Apaches (including the Navajo, in fact, particularly the Navajo) are described, probably with unintentional or else deliberate exaggeration, as a vast group of very numerous and very dangerous enemies entirely surrounding New Mexico; and as early as 1583 there are references to "Querechos" and "Mountaineers" around Acoma and Moqui, as well as to the Havasupai-Yavapai under those same names and to the Plains Apache as "Querechos"; (3) the Navajo in particular, and other Western Apaches to an extent, have many Pueblo cultural elements, at least some of which seem to antedate 1680; it is at least not impossible that small groups of ancestral Western Apache came down the western slope, passing between Shoshonean groups, into and in part across the San Juan country, possibly providing the final blow that tipped the scale for Anasazi already having a hard time; remaining few in number and relatively ineffective, the Western Apache were then inconspicuous, though present in Arizona until the seventeenth century. Which theory is nearer the actual truth I do not know. Personally, I'm temporarily convinced by each one successively as I outline it.

Probably at least the Chiricahua Apache, whose language is classified with the Mescalero subdivision and not with the Western Apache-Navajo subdivision, were indeed recent arrivals in their historic location. Still the Navajo, at least, and perhaps other Western Apaches, might have been west of the Rio Grande rather early.

For interpretation of Southwestern history and archeology to the public, in which we want to give fairly clear and definite statements to the greatest extent possible without being misleading, I think the way to handle it may be, at least for the present, to say just "enemy Indians" in connection with defensive sites or other evidence of warfare; and if pinned down by a question "What enemy Indians?" to reply "Possibly Apaches, if they were in the Southwest so early, which is an unsettled question, or else very possibly other Pueblo groups," -- except perhaps in the case of the several areas along or near the western frontier of the Pueblo area where the Yumans come into the picture (see Numbers 35 and 71 of the Region Three Anthropological Notes series).

It seems quite possible that an expansion of Yumans of the Walapai group up from the western Arizona desert, in the fifteenth century or thereabouts, might have had something to do with the disappearance of the Sinagua from the Flagstaff area and, or at least, the Verde Valley, and quite possibly also with the disappearance of the Salado from the Tonto Basin and vicinity. I believe it would be proper and reasonable to say "Yavapai" with a loud "maybe," at least at Tuzigoot and Montezuma. The comments of the archeologists stationed at those areas are specifically invited in this connection particularly. Al Schroeder has already made out a convincing case for no defensive aspect in the Verde Sinagua prior to 1300, and no evidence of pressure from outside after 1300, with sites such as those of Montezuma and Tuzigoot having been selected for reasons other than defense and with abandonment of the area having been caused by internal and environmental factors.



When Archeologist Schroeder has finished putting together the evidence on late arrival of Apaches in Arizona, possibly we'll all be fairly well convinced that they don't come into the picture west of the Rio Grande before the 1500's.

Areas in the San Juan regions can blame the abandonment primarily on the drought and arroyo-cutting, and can be pretty vague and cagey about "nomad enemies" (who would only have been the original Navajo or closely related Western Apaches).

Archeologist Schroeder has contributed, in a memorandum to the Superintendent, Montezuma Castle, dated April 24, the following: "The abandonment of the San Juan is always an interesting topic of discussion. The occurrence of a drought at the same time may be overly weighted as a reason. The drought, along these same lines of thinking, caused a depopulation of the Flagstaff area and also the north end of the Verde Valley, all areas without spring-fed streams where dry farming was practiced, or without springs. Other areas, which may have been affected by this drought, exhibit continued occupation or an increase. They were either close to the mountains, in spring-fed country, or in regions where irrigation was practiced. The abandonment of certain areas caused concentration in others -- the Hopi Mosas, the White Mountains region, the Verde Valley proper.

"I would like to point out that something definitely was occurring in the Southwest, prior to the drought, which may have had a large role in causing abandonment at 1300 in the San Juan area. The drought itself may have been the final blow.

"A point of beginning might be at Promontory Point in northern Utah, which is tentatively dated about 1100 A.D. The culture is one of a nomadic type, possibly Shoshonean. To the south, in the Virgin River area, abandonment occurred by about 1150 A.D. East of here we find the north rim of Grand Canyon abandoned about 1175 A.D. South of the Virgin River in the bend of the Colorado River, the Cerbat branch disappeared around 1150.

"The Yuman sites along the Colorado River moved downstream, contracting in Yuman II times according to Rogers, thus placing the date about this same time. Pressure first came from the north, toward the bend of the Colorado River in northwest Arizona and along the north rim of the Canyon. The pressure on the south of the Colorado was from west to east. Rogers also comments that the Yumans expanded toward the east at this time when driven away from the Colorado. Further east we find the Flagstaff area undergoing concentration from 1150 to 1200. Also a drift from west to east is noted in pottery traded, for Southern groups.

"Up to 1150 Tusayan White Ware was finding its way through Flagstaff into the Verde Valley and the Salt River Valley with lesser numbers of Little Colorado White Ware. The situation was apparently reversed about 1150. By 1200 the south rim of the Grand Canyon was abandoned, the Chino focus was gone, and depopulation of the Flagstaff area began. In the late 1200's the Hopi country became attractive: Flagstaff was depopulated aside from a pueblo or two in the southeasternmost portion, the north end of the Verde Valley was abandoned, and the San Juan gave up the ghost.



"In historic times the Havasupai were found below the Crossing of the Fathers, west of the Hopi Mesas, and near the Little Colorado River. Their legends claim this as former territory. The Yavapai were found in the Verde Valley. Both are Yuman groups. The abandonment of the White Mountains and the Verde Valley was in all probability due to inter-village hostilities.

"Apache inclusion is not feasible as the evidence is negative and the pressures involved are from the west, not east. The survival of the Shoshonean speaking Hopi is an interesting problem, perhaps the end of the trail for the Shoshonean and Yuman pressures."

\* \* \* \* \*

#### B. The San Juan Anasazi Branches

After a discussion with R. Gordon Vivian on February 17, 1949, my views on the general relationship between the Chaco and Mesa Verde Branches are abruptly modified, although perhaps not so radically as to require actual retraction of previous comments.

Mr. Vivian's reasons for the view that the "main Aztec ruin," and that alone among known pueblos north of the San Juan, may have been built by actual Chaco Canyon colonists, and for the view that certain of the small pueblos in Chaco Canyon were probably built by parties of Mancos people coming in from the north, convert me more or less to the established view that the Chaco and Mesa Verde developments are separate branches, not merely -- as I have been tending to argue -- successive periods with shift of emphasis.

The interpretation I would now suggest, after discussions with Mr. Vivian and Dr. Bertha Dutton, both Chaco students of long standing, would run something like this:

1. A general "eastern Basket Maker III" basic horizon, with "La Plata Black-on-white" the painted pottery-type all the way from the Puerco River north, began to differentiate in Pueblo I into local subdivisions (Kiatuthlanna, Chaco 1, Piedra; with the Alkali Ridge phenomenon a distinct outfit ceramically, though similar in most other categories);
2. Then in the period between 900 or 950 (the Red Mesa time-level) and about 1150, Chaco and Mancos are definitely separate, although broadly similar; with considerable mutual interpenetration -- actual colonization -- as well as interchange of ideas;
3. After 1150 or 1200, the Chaco group disappears as such, west of the Jemez Mountains (immigration of Chacoans to the Upper Rio Grande occurred about this time), and the final phase ("Montezuma focus") of the Mesa Verde branch is ubiquitous from the Chaco region to the Colorado River, until:
4. Abandonment of the whole area by the Mesa Verde group around 1300 A.D.

This conception resolves a number of difficulties which had bothered me and which I have heretofore glossed over or failed to explain



away satisfactorily; it also fits better with the probability, which I have had in mind for some time, of the correlation of Towa language broadly with Mesa Verde, of Jemez speech with Chaco in a general way, and of the Tiwa dialects with the original inhabitants of the Upper Rio Grande.

It is still true, however, that the Chaco and Mesa Verde developments are much more alike than either of them is like the Kayenta branch. The Kayenta and Chaco-Mesa Verde branches form the typical and distinctive Anasazi group of the San Juan region, as against other, more southerly, more generalized, Pueblo groups. This general San Juan Anasazi division of Pueblo culture falls in two major groups, western and eastern, or Kayenta and Chaco-Mesa Verde.

The western group consists of the Kayenta branch, which extends from the Chinle to the Colorado River and across the lower Little Colorado to Wupatki National Monument, with its peripheral extension north of the Grand Canyon into the Zion region of southwestern Utah, and thence down the Virgin River to the Moapa Valley in Nevada. Those far-western puebloan remains, beyond the Colorado River, may not be really true Anasazi; this material is not well known, except for the Kayenta-like pottery.

The eastern group (of San Juan Anasazi) is further subdivided into Mesa Verde and Chaco branches; with also slightly different local sequences, which are affiliated broadly with the Chaco branch, in the upper Rio Grande and the northeastern Little Colorado.

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### C. The Possible Origins of San Juan Orangeware

An unusual, even unique feature of San Juan Anasazi ceramics is the use, from the beginning, of firing methods which produced a reducing atmosphere and yielded gray pottery, ranging from white and light-gray to dark blue-gray, with a minor degree of oxidation giving some creamy or brownish-gray ware, especially in the early phases; with only black painted decoration (often partially oxidized, or else refired, to red brown).

These results may have been obtained by firing of pottery in kilns -- dug pits, such as found by Morris and reproduced by Anna Shepard (Morris, 1939, 111-112 and 263-266). A similar pit was excavated by J. L. Nusbaum in February 1926 at Step House in the Mesa Verde. Very probably such pits are to be found at many other San Juan Anasazi sites, but have not generally been recognized. Miss Shepard also found that brief firing, with minimum draft, in a fire of juniper-wood heaped around and over the vessels generally produces gray (reduced) pottery, and this may well have been the usual method.

An important inference is to be drawn from the evident difference in firing methods between north (Anasazi) and south (Mogollon and Hohokam), a distinction which is apparently constant prior to the 700's, and which is marked, though not complete and consistent, between 775 and 1275 A.D.; a point which I think has not been fully brought out.

That inference is, that contacts between Anasazi and Mogollon were not intimate and sustained, but rather were sporadic and largely indirect.



Cultural influences, mutual interchange of ideas, must have consisted largely of stimulus-diffusion, with occasional importation of objects, and with very little penetration of groups of people or individuals any great distance into territory of the other cultural division.

With reference to the one northern phenomenon which has on occasion been seriously regarded as perhaps due to an actual Mogollon colonization -- the early San Juan Orangeware of Alkali Ridge in southeastern Utah -- the effect of this thought is, to reinforce the view that it is indigenous there and not to be ascribed to Mogollon influence.

Bearing in mind the considerations mentioned above and the general picture of cultural criteria and classifications in the Southwest which I have been trying to advance for the last several years (mss. 1942-43, correspondence and discussions at that time and 1946-48, and published papers: Reed, 1942, 1946, 1948), it does not seem to me puzzling or startling that a group of San Juan Anasazi well north of Mogollon territory should develop a red ware and use both oxidizing and reducing techniques of pottery-firing. (Nor is it really surprising, I suppose, that the other Anasazi subdivisions did not do so, more conservative in this respect for no particular reason.)

The explanation I envision is a story on these lines: in the 400's, knowledge of the existence of pottery and of the fundamental idea of pottery-making spread to the San Juan Anasazi from a Mogollon group; from late in the 400's onward, the former made grayish pottery, some of it slightly oxidized; impermanent "fugitive red" slipping of vessel exteriors reproduced the appearance of oxidized Mogollon vessels (San Francisco Red), as is generally agreed; the idea of painted decoration ("black" on "white") arose almost immediately, whether an independent inspiration or derived, indirectly or directly, from some other source; unintentional oxidation ("overfiring") or, perhaps more often, accidental re-firing (--not that they are likely to have burned a house down, the roast-pig technique, every time a red vessel was desired), produced numerous "La Plata Black-on-White" bowls which are actually red-on-cream, through oxidation of the iron paint and of the buff-burning clay (Shepard, in Morris, 1939, 250), such as a restored specimen from the 1926 excavation at Step House in the Mesa Verde (J. L. Nusbaum in O'Bryan et al, in prep. 1949); this sometimes happened -- just once might be enough -- to a "black-on-white" bowl which chanced to be made of the red-burning clay sometimes used (Shepard, in Morris, 1939, 250), producing -- a red-on-orange! The lady liked it, and one group, or just one community, or perhaps at first only one family, began deliberately "over-firing" vessels made from a certain clay source and decorated with iron paint, although plain gray (Lino) continued to be made in the same way as before -- which suggests that the technique used for oxidized-firing was, or seemed to be, an additional effort rather than a simplification. The occasional use of buff-burning clay like that normal in black-on-white ware yielded occasional grayish "orangeware" (Shepard in Morris, 1939, 250, and Brew, 1946, fig. 101: s, t, u, v, and p. 254-255; some of the "Abajo Black-on-gray," however, is evidently not even this distinct -- certainly not a separate type in any case -- but merely under-fired, insufficiently oxidized).

The fact that the same techniques of manufacture, other than firing, were used in the production of Abajo Red-on-orange and of La Plata Black-on-white and northern Pueblo I black-on-white; the accompanying Lino Gray; and



the close similarity to other northern material (San Juan Anasazi) in all other categories of Alkali Ridge remains, convince me completely that San Juan Orangeware is purely autochthonous in southeastern Utah, with only a minimum of possible inspiration by Mogollon imports, and that it first appeared through some such sequence of events as I have outlined above. Once established, San Juan Orangeware was variously modified by later developments -- manganese paint, red slip, etc.

The exceptionally smooth surface finish and the distinct design system of Abajo Red-on-Orange remain to be explained. As to the first, I can only suggest that the good ladies who manufactured Abajo Red-on-Orange were proud of their handiwork and polished it more assiduously than contemporaneous producers of black-on-white types. The matter of decoration is partly answered by Dr. Brew's comparison to Basket Maker II and III basketry designs, though this, in giving the source of the decorative system, does not answer the real question of why it differs markedly from that of the black-on-white pottery, which is also supposed to derive from basketry. Although there is some overlapping with Piedra Black-on-white (Brew, 1946, 254, and Morris, 1939, 182), the general effect normally is sufficiently distinctive that red-on-orange bowls or sherds can be instantly recognized among black-on-white in uncolored illustrations before referring to the caption. As yet, I do not quite know why this should be. There seems to be no evidence of painted pottery being early in Mogollon -- see discussion, and references cited, in my paper on "Dating of Early Mogollon Horizons" which appeared in El Palacio 55-12, December 1948. Martin and Rinaldo compare Abajo design elements and layouts to Mogollon Red-on-Brown, and suggest that Abajo pottery is of Mogollon inspiration -- but so far as designs are concerned, it would go in the other direction because of relative time.

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#### D. The Sinagua and Little Colorado Branches

The following is quoted from Archeologist A. H. Schroeder's memorandum to the Superintendent, Montezuma Castle, of April 24:

"In referring to the Sinagua as less highly distinctive than the Anasazi some confusion arises. Basically both are generally similar prior to the adoption of masonry. They built pit houses, made pottery, buried their dead uncremated, and so on. After the adoption of surface dwellings, the same holds true. However, the treatments and details are quite different.

"The Anasazi made scraped pottery fired in a reducing atmosphere which was decorated in black-on-white. The Sinagua made a paddle-and-anvil pottery fired in an oxidizing atmosphere, which was undecorated aside from the practice of smudging the interior and slipping the exterior red.

"The Anasazi buried their dead in a flexed position, while the Sinagua laid them out extended.

"Pit-house shapes differed as well as house features. After the adoption of masonry structures, considerably earlier in northern Arizona, the Anasazi developed a coursed type of masonry, while the Sinagua used a rock-filled plastered wall. The Anasazi developed the kiva, which is not found in

There are enough probable exceptions to this, I suspect, that it may not hold up; but the idea is an interesting possibility which might be kept in mind, with the implication of emphasis on feathers which might be birds being kept for the sake of feathers at places where wild turkeys were not readily available.

It nevertheless seems possible that turkeys were eaten in the north; this may be another trait distinguishing San Juan Anasazi from other (i.e., Mogollon) Pueblo groups, along with circular kivas, full-grooved pebble axes, gray corrugated pottery, and the lambdaoid type of artificial deformation. The apparent general lack of turkey remains in older San Juan Anasazi phases would, however, fit in with Hargrave's suggestion.

Another point of importance was brought up in a recent discussion with Bandelier National Monument staff members and Fred Worman of Adams State College: if turkeys were really domesticated, not merely captive, there should be bones of young turkeys as well as full-grown, the mortality rate being generally pretty high in turkey-raising; but turkey bones found in Pueblo sites are generally, so far as known, adult.

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#### F. Tall and Small Skeletons

Among recent suggestions for "Region Three Anthropological Notes" topics was a request that the figures be given on the tallest and shortest adult Indian skeletons found in North America, to help combat notions of giants and pygmies. This I cannot do offhand; and it would be very difficult to determine positively, as some of the many publications give only the averages of series of skeletons. In any case, we'll have to restrict it to the Southwest; partly because it'd be an interminable job to check through all publications giving measurements for North American skeletons, and partly because there is at least one instance of "pygmies" -- not a race or group, but pathological individuals -- the smallest skeletons would be, a pair of adult chondrodystrophic\* dwarfs, stature of the male approximately 4'5" and of the female 4'1", found at Moundville, Alabama, in 1941.

In the Southwest, I know of two exceptionally tall pre-Spanish individuals -- a male skeleton found by Earl Morris at Aztec Ruins, with rather special accompaniments; and the famous "magician" of Ridge Ruin (Winona) with his abundance of offerings, including ceremonial paraphernalia. If anyone can recall any other especially tall Southwestern skeletons, I'd appreciate having the information, and also particularly any indication of unusual accompanying offerings, as well as suggestions as to smallest adult specimens in the Southwest.

\* Please do not ask me to explain this term.