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# Archaeological Work in Mesa Verde Park

EXPLORING THE RUINS AND RECOVERING TOOLS AND REMAINS FROM A ONCE THICKLY SETTLED COUNTRY OF THE CLIFF DWELLERS.



Boulder House, in Mesa Verde National Park.

BY JESSE L. NUSBAUM.

The work of the Colorado division of the Archaeological Institute of America on the Canon Ball ruin in a small branch canon of the Yellow Jacket, which is tributary to the Main McElmo, was closed Aug. 1. Altogether the results are very satisfactory.

The Canon Ball ruin is of the common McElmo type, surrounding the head of the canon on the rim rock. It is composed of two large divisions, separated by a dry water course. The north ruin is much the larger of the two divisions and as the appropriation would not cover nearly all the work, it was decided that the south ruin was the one to work on. These ruins are not situated in a cave, as in the Mesa Verde national park, and are exposed to the action of the elements at all times, hence their poor state of preservation. Many walls of the ruin are standing in part, but the main portion has fallen and appears more as a huge rock pile with walls projecting here and there, sometimes the circular wall of a central tower, while a large depressed

The ruin is now so laid open, that the traveler can see, not the customary rock pile with walls projecting, but the ground plan, the kivas, the main central tower, the size and shape of the rooms, etc. The ruin can be easily reached by the tourist and is well worth the trip. The D. & R. G. railroad will take one to Mancos or Dolores, from there one stages it to Cortez and from there takes the Bluff City stage to Holly's ranch. One can here get accommodations and saddle horses to go to the ruin, only a 40-minute trip from the ranch. Ruin and Holly canon, with their finely preserved towers and buildings, some three stories high and perfect, are all within a two hours' easy ride of the ranch, and Mr. Holly, who has lived in the center of the McElmo ruin for 25 years, makes a most excellent guide.

As photographer for Mr. Hewitt in this region, my work carried me to all the principal ruins and away from the explored regions located and found. One in particular, I wish to mention, about 20 miles from Holly's ranch in Hovenweep canon, a ruin to which few have ever been outside of the cattle men of this section.

Mr. Holly calls the point on which it

For a long time represented a kiva.

This ruin has been potted by diggers and va years, but their finds l confined to the upper largest finds were made mounds where digging is tery the most abundant remains.

The first few rooms forth very little outside tools, a stone ax and with many manos and grinding their grain. W in the lower west end proceeded across the lo level was found to conta fering widely in details, uniform. In one kiva altar or firescreen was nected with both sides something never seen be struction. The middle was connected to the or side by a walled passag lar phase of construction fore. These kivas are the masonry being part uniform, and superior to in Mesa Verde. The each case had fallen a were filled with dirt and of some six or eight f

In these much was fo man skeletons, many ax stones used in the diff bone awls, several fine bowls and many fra which were set up almo

The upper part of the vated next and two mor covered. Each added being made a few more fied kiva, very peculiar found on the hill side be shape being due, no d causes, as large rocks v unable to move and the made the regular form

In ail, some eight kiva one large circular tower, and the collection made about 30 stone axes and tools, seven skeleton, nea two ollas, 30 bowls and spear heads, several sto skinning knives, one high large black sale and ma ed stone, the use of wh well known.

The excavation work w Mr. Sylvanus G. Morley Pa., while camp manager was taken care of by Dr Denver, part of the tim of the time by Jess Nus Mr. Morley was assisted wood of Boston, B. A. Toz the Atlantic, Warner M Cambridge, Henry Morley Mr. Parsons of New Yo Fritsch of Canada.

The spring at the ruin i of a cup full of poor, w water had to be packed nearly seven miles and c than stronger things do costing at camp nearly 15



remains.

The first few rooms excavated gave forth very little outside of several bone tools, a stone ax and maul, together with many manos and metattas used for grinding their grain. Work was started in the lower west end of the ruin and proceeded across the lowest level. This level was found to contain five kivas, differing widely in details, but in essentials, uniform. In one kiva in particular, the altar or firescreen was rounded and connected with both sides of the kiva wall, something never seen before in kiva construction. The middle kiva of this row was connected to the one next on either side by a walled passage, another singular phase of construction never noted before. These kivas are very well made, the masonry being particularly fine and uniform, and superior to most of the work in Mesa Verde. The timbered roof in each case had fallen and all the kivas were filled with dirt and rock to a depth of some six or eight feet.

In these rooms was found, several human skeletons, many axes, some polished stones used in the different ceremonies, bone awls, several fine mugs, some whole bowls and many fragmentary pieces which were not up around intact.

The upper part of the ruin was excavated next and two more kivas were uncovered. Back about to the collection being made a few more pieces. A modified kiva, very peculiar in shape, was found on the hill side below the ruin, its shape being due, no doubt, to natural causes, as large rocks which they were unable to move and the wall of the canon made the regular form impossible.

In all, some eight kivas, 15 rooms and one large circular tower, were excavated and the collection made is composed of about 30 stone axes and mauls, 100 bone tools, seven skeletons, nearly all complete; two ollas, 30 bowls and mugs, four fine spear heads, several stone fleshing and skinning knives, one highly polished; one large black silex and many small polished stones, the use of which is not very well known.

The excavation work was in charge of Mr. Sylvanus G. Morley of Swathmore, Pa., while camp management of finance was taken care of by Dr. A. J. Fynn of Denver, part of the time, and the rest of the time by Jess Nusbaum of Greeley. Mr. Morley was assisted by Paul Stanwood of Boston, B. A. Tozzer from across the Atlantic, Warner MacLaughlin of Cambridge, Henry Morley of Swathmore, Mr. Parsons of New York, Hugo DeFritsch of Canada.

The spring at the ruin is now a matter of a cup full of poor water a day and water had to be packed in on horses nearly seven miles and cost much more than stronger things do in some places, costing at camp nearly 15 cents a gallon.

is located Rain point, and so the ruin will undoubtedly go by that name from now on. The ruin is situated on a rocky point between two little side canons on the east side of Hovenweep canon. This canon is reached from Holly's by crossing the Home mesa, up the Yellow Jacket to Nigger canon and up Nigger to Moki lake, thence into Hovenweep and up about five miles. The point is about 200 feet high and covers about 14 acres. At first the point looks like a huge rock pile, but as one nears it, one can see walls cropping out here and there, and by the depressions, note the kivas. Mr. Holly and I started to try to size up the ruin and decided to count the kivas. We counted some 31 in the wash below the ruin and we each took a side and worked up to the top. In our rather hasty count, we found a total of better than 70 kivas, a large number by far than any ruin found so far to my knowledge. The main ruin on top of the rim rock at the west end of the point covers the rock to a depth of 10 to 12 feet with stone and dirt, indicating the ruins of several stories. It is not improbable at all that work will be done there this coming year. Mr. Holly said that he sincerely believed that he could locate 150 ruins within a three-mile radius of this ruin.

At it was, we visited and photographed three more within a half mile, which were very large. Two days exploring and photographing in Yellow Jacket canon netted 9 ruins, mostly new, from one-room cliff ruins to immense ruins covering nearly an acre, while two more in Hog and Sand creek, added 60 ruins of the Mesa Verde type to the known list. Centuries ago this was undoubtedly the most thickly populated part of the great West. Now water is a thing to be treasured, and hot degrees in the shade not the exception. The remains of an old irrigating ditch with stone checks has been seen by cattlemen here, but as we were out of water, 20 miles from home over bad country, with night coming on, we dared not go farther up the canon. Moki lake, called by the cattlemen Mohkey lake, is now partially filled with water after rains, and is the remains of one of the ancient storage reservoirs. It is situated but a hundred yards from the Moki Lake ruin. The lake still bears the signs of a splendid piece of ripping on the dam.

One thing in particular prompts me to say a few words about the support given this country by Colorado people. Why will Colorado people spend their vacations here little is to be gained and much lost, whereas in the southwestern part of their state, they have the finest sample of an ancient civilization to be found anywhere, the mountain scenery, curious and picturesque sandstone formations, the greatest natural bridges in existence, just across the line in Utah and, and other natural phenomena which rival that of other districts. Maj. H. M. Randolph, superintendent of the Mesa Verde National park, Mr. Frank Wadleigh of the Denver & Rio Grande, Charles B. Kelley, outfitter for the ruins, or James Holley, are able to supply anyone contemplating a trip to this section with all necessary knowledges, including expense estimates.