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Excavations at San Diego Mission, New Mexico

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M. Jacobs, Assist. Prof. Anth., Ph.D., 1931, Columbia.

V. Ray, Inst. Anth., M.A., 1933, Washington.

V. Garfield, Assoc. in Anth., M.A., Washington.

WILLAMETTE U.

S. Laughlin, Prof. Soc. & Anth., Ph.D., 1921, Iowa State U.

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It will be much appreciated if all errors of commission and omission are brought to the attention of the compiler of the above survey. These corrections will be printed in a later issue of the NEW MEXICO ANTHROPOLOGIST. Also, it is planned to print lists of all M.A. and Ph.D. dissertations that have appeared to date in western institutions. So far, lists for New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas have appeared in earlier numbers.

D. D. B.



EXCAVATIONS AT SAN DIEGO MISSION, NEW MEXICO

By JOSEPH H. TOULOUSE, JR.

Since 1935, the Museum of New Mexico at Santa Fe, in co-operation with the Civilian Conservation Corps, has conducted a project for the repair of the former San Diego Mission and Monastery and the accompanying Pueblo ruin of Guisewa located at Jemez Springs, New Mexico, some seventy-two miles northwest of Albuquerque. Earlier work had been done at this site some fifteen years ago by the Museum under the supervision of Professor L. B. Bloom, now of the Department of History of the University of New Mexico and the Historical Society of New Mexico.

This past summer's work has been under the supervision of Ele M. Baker, from June to August, 1937, and under the writer during the months of June and September, 1937; also, for the past two years, Wesley Bliss, Charles Hutchinson, Gordon Vivian, and Francis Elmore have served as supervisors. The major aim of the work was the preservation and repair of the Mission and Monastery. Work has been planned for further excavation of some of the rooms of the pueblo ruin, in preparation of the site as a State Monument.

The labor used was furnished by the Civilian Conservation Corps division of the United States Forest Service, from the Fly-Camp at Battleship Rock four miles above the ruin.

A total of nineteen rooms in the pueblo ruin have been cleaned out adjacent to the Mission in order to facilitate its repair. Nine rooms in the Monastery were cleared with the same purpose in mind. Notes and catalog of all material and data found were kept. The bulk of the artifacts came from the pueblo rooms while very little came from the Monastery; even material of undoubted Spanish origin was extremely rare.

Of the nineteen rooms cleared, eighteen of them presented extremely little in the way of charred beam material, but all contained room fills composed mostly of refuse with small pieces of charcoal. Apparently all the rooms opened were rather early in their abandonment but not necessarily prehistoric. The evidence of no roofing logs and the room fills being of refuse, tend to suggest the abandonment of this block of the pueblo before the final abandonment at the time of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. The inhabited portion of the pueblo lay just to the west of the Mission itself.

The principal forms of pottery from the ruin were: Jemez-Black-on-White, Glazes five and six, some Vallecitos Black-on-White, a few pieces of possible Spanish pottery, and large quantities of utility ware.

Twenty-nine burials were taken from the room fills of the pueblo. The predominant form of burial seems to have been as follows: cist in the refuse, all cases. The flexed form of burial was the predominant type (17 cases), the head was generally to the south (16 cases), and secondarily to the west (7 cases), to the east (3 cases), the others had been disturbed and were undeterminate. The favored position in the grave appeared to be on the face, and secondarily on the left side. Six out of the twenty-nine had black-on-white or utility pots as offerings. Only one burial showed any signs of matting.

Of the 139 artifacts the two chief materials were stone and bone, with bone predominating. The stone metate was generally of the flat slab-type and the mano of the square form or oblong form. The stone hammer was generally a river-rolled pebble with a pecked hafting groove. A fair number of the pottery-smoothing stones were found which were all river pebbles. Sandstone, tuff, and vesicular lava were the predominating materials of the larger stone implements. The few arrow points found were of the side-notched form, and averaged about an inch or an inch and a quarter in length. Of the other artifacts the following were of interest: a clay elbow-type pipe, a single-flake obsidian knife, a spatulate awl, and an excellent carving in gypsum of a rattlesnake's head, this last on the terrace in front of the Mission.

Of the architecture the distinguishing features between that of the pueblo ruins and that of the Mission and Monastery ruins are as follows: the pueblo walls are of blocks of shaped volcanic tuff, of a single thickness, varying from ten to twelve inches in thickness; the walls of the Mission were generally from two to ten feet in thickness and built up of red sandstone or gray limestone slabs. The walls of the pueblo rooms were plastered with adobe and whitewashed to several layers in thickness. Where the walls of the Mission and Monastery were plastered the hard plaster was of a gypsum base.

The site was a very promising one. The finding of superimposed walls and floor levels in the Monastery suggests two building periods and needs further investigation. This and the determination of the historic and prehistoric pueblo rooms will undoubtedly prove an important addition to the knowledge of the early missions in the Southwest and in New Mexico particularly.