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THE PUEBLO OF PECOS

By

A. V. KIDDER.

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THE Pueblo of Pecos in San Miguel County, New Mexico, was, at the time of the discovery of New Mexico by the Spaniards, probably the largest Indian town in the Southwest. It was described at some length by Castañeda, the chronicler of the Coronado expedition, as consisting of a large quadrangular structure of terraced form, on whose balconies one could make the circuit of the entire village without setting foot to ground. Its inhabitants were proud, warlike and much feared by the surrounding tribes.

When New Mexico was definitely settled by the Spanish, Pecos was made the seat of a Mission, the great adobe church was erected, and for over a hundred years, or until about 1720, the town enjoyed much importance and prosperity. Its situation on the eastern border of the Pueblo country exposed it, however, to raids by the Comanche which, becoming more and more severe, so harassed and wore down the Pecos people that by 1840, reduced to a mere handful, they left their homes and went to join the Jemez, a tribe allied to them by language and tradition.

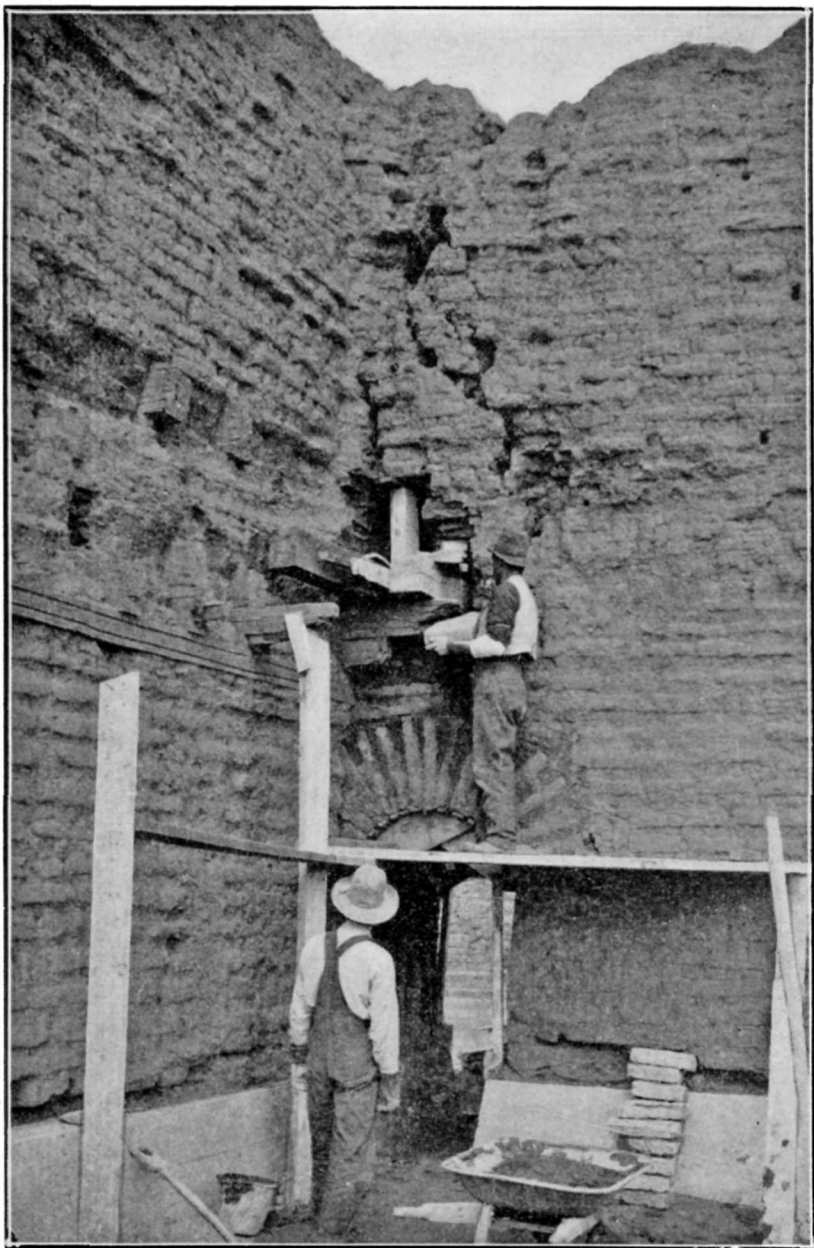
Such, very briefly, is the recorded history of Pecos; but a cursory examination of its ruins shows that it must have been inhabited for a long time prior to the coming of the Spaniards. This is proved by the great amount of debris scattered about the buildings and by countless scraps of pottery representing all the styles known in the central Rio Grande drainage from the very earliest times down to the present. It was because of this very long occupation that it was decided by the Andover Department of Archaeology to undertake the excavation of

the site. It was believed that remains would there be found so stratified as to give a cross-section, so to speak, of the development of Pueblo arts and thus, together with the researches of Mr. Nelson, enable students to place in the proper chronological sequence the many hitherto undatable ruins that occur in such abundance in the valleys and on the mesas of the region.

Permission to investigate the site having been most generously given by the Museum of New Mexico, headquarters were established at the Valley Ranch and the work was begun in June of the past year.

The repairs of the mission church under the direction of Mr. J. I. Nusbaum has already been described in "El Palacio." It was a task of much difficulty owing to the bad condition of the massive adobe walls, which had, since the destruction of the roof, been subjected to undermining by water and by the people of the neighborhood, who had for years used them as a quarry for adobes. Concrete foundations have now been placed under the walls; broken archways, doors and windows have been mended and the interior so cleared and drained as to guarantee the preservation of this most interesting ruin for many years to come. In addition to his engineering ability, Mr. Nusbaum is a close student of New Mexican mission and domestic architecture and, with the assistance of Mr. William Templeton Johnson of San Diego, he has gathered such data as to the elevation and system of ornamentation as will enable us to make an accurate restored model of the church.

The archaeological work consisted entirely of excavations in the great rubbish heaps on the east side



—*Photograph by Jesse Nusbaum.*

RESTORING THE PECOS CHURCH RUINS.

The work of restoration of the noble Mission Church ruin was in charge of Jesse Nusbaum, superintendent of construction of the Museum of New Mexico. The work offered some nice engineering problems. The Pecos Mission was one of the few in which the arch was used.

Spaniards, by the Mexican Indians who accompanied them, or whether it was a natural local development, cannot be stated without further research.

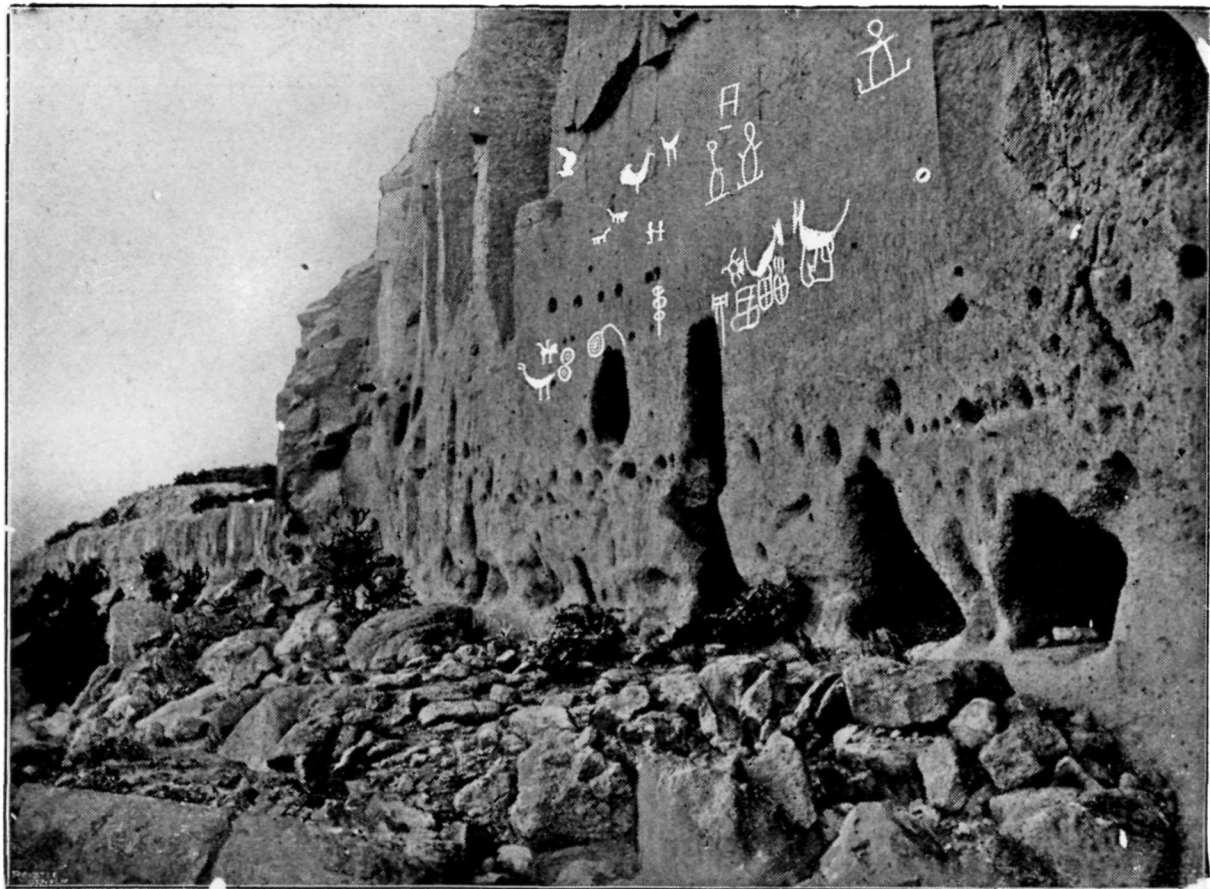
The most important results were, as was hoped, derived from the study of the stratigraphy of the rubbish heaps. Material for this study was gathered by "test sections" from which samples of pottery were taken at one foot intervals from the bottom of the deposit to its top. Many of these were made and, while the specimens have not yet all been studied, it may be said that the Pecos rubbish heap shows an orderly deposition of pottery types one above another from black-and-white and corrugated wares analogous to those of the San Juan cliff-dwellings, through four or five recognizable stages up to wares made during the last century and distinctly resembling the modern pottery of the Pueblos of San Ildefonso, Cochiti and Santo Domingo.

The work, then, during the past year was confined to the refuse deposits and no attempt was made to excavate the ruin itself. During the coming field season digging will

still continue in the rubbish but a start will also be made in the rooms. The amount of fallen building stone to be removed before actual excavation commences is enormous, but it is hoped that the use of a tramway and trestle will expedite the handling of this material. As the rooms are cleared their walls will be repaired and, if possible, put in such condition as to resist the action of the elements and stand for many years as a memorial to the patient industry of the people who built them.

As to the future of the Pecos ruin, the writer feels that it offers a great opportunity for intelligent development. He greatly hopes that funds may be raised to restore a small section of the pueblo to its original four stories; fit it up with its balconies, ladders and corn-drying frames; furnish it with fireplaces, pottery, matting and such other objects as excavation shows to be typical of the village. Further, he would recommend the installation, in a small museum on the site, of a representative collection of the actual antiquities recovered from the rooms and graves. If these

Image of human burial has been
removed from the electronic edition.



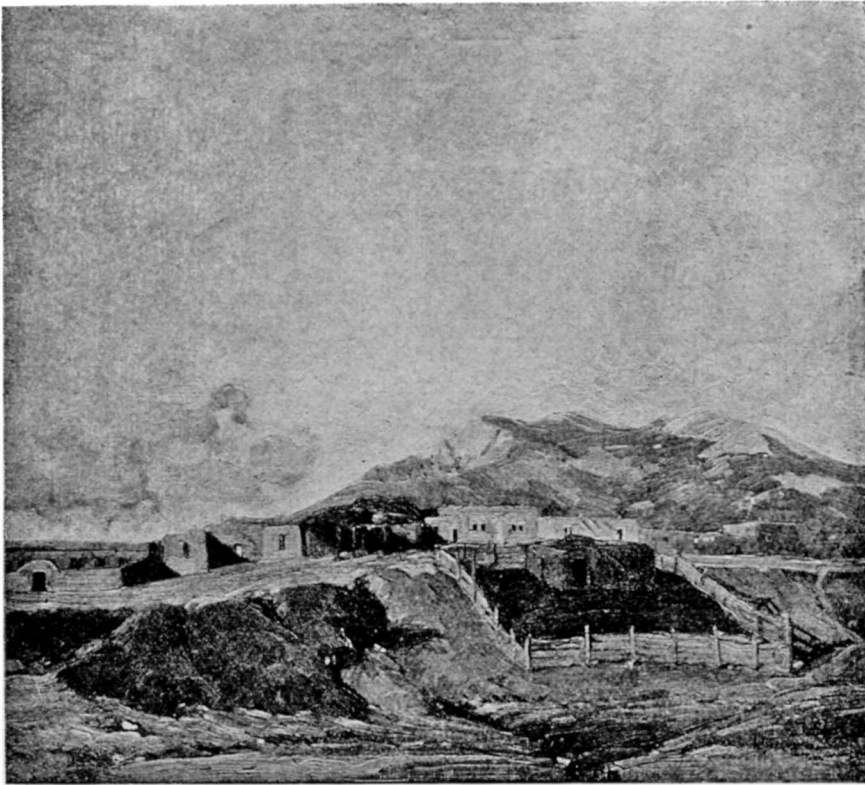
THE PUYE.

—Photograph by A. B. Craycraft.

Cave Dwellings and Petroglyphs in the face of the cliff upon which stands the noble Communal House, in part excavated by the School of American Archaeology. Typical of thousands of cave and cliff dwellings in the Pajarito Park.

things could be done visitors to New Mexico would be able to see one of the largest and historically one of the most important ruins in the whole Southwest, cleared of debris and in such condition that the features of its architecture, its ceremonial rooms, shrines and granaries could be studied without difficulty. Furthermore, the restored section would show the original shape and nature of the building and the way of life of the inhabitants; and finally, the museum would contain the very pottery, stone tools and weapons, bone im-

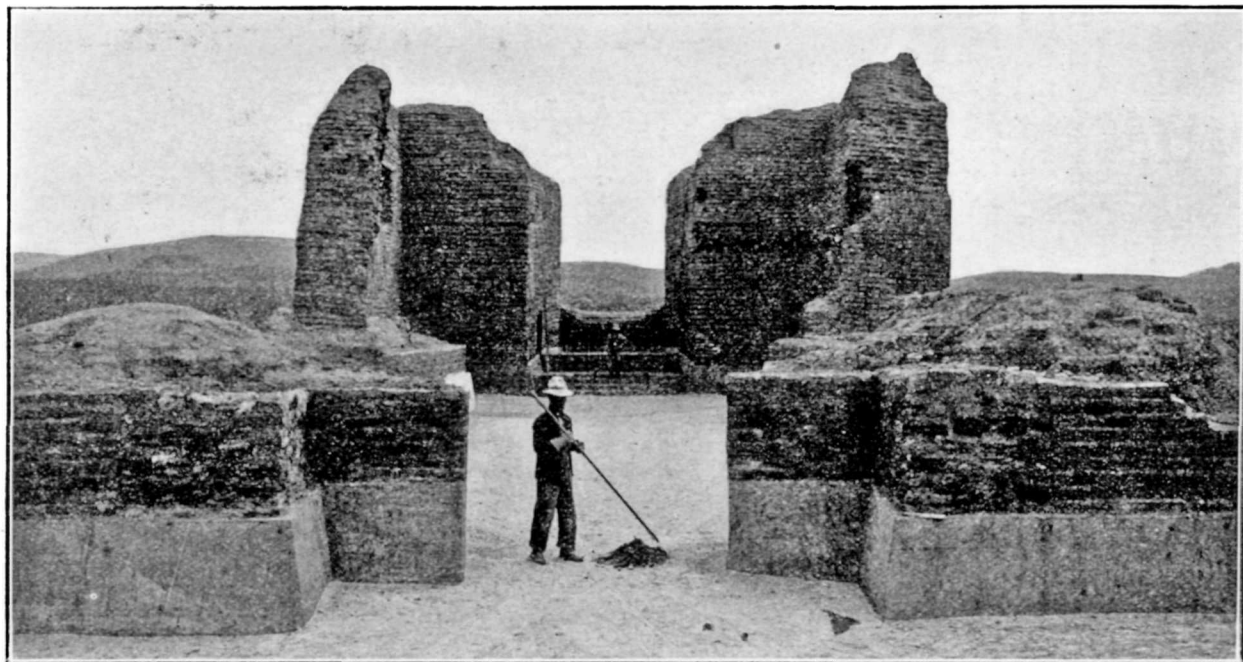
plements and the objects of personal adornment used and worn by the members of this now extinct tribe during the long prehistory of New Mexico. When it is considered that the ruin lies in a region of perfect climate and unsurpassed natural beauty, is within two hours' motor trip of Santa Fe, is on the main line of the Santa Fe Railroad and the coast-to-coast automobile highway, it becomes obvious that Pecos possesses possibilities of development into an educational monument not to be rivalled in any other part of the Southwest.



—By Courtesy of Art Institute of Chicago.

THE LOMA AT TAOS.

Painting by W. Victor Higgins, of the Taos Art Colony. Awarled the Edward B. Butler prize at the Art Institute of Chicago. This picture was first exhibited in the reception room of the Palace of the Governors, where at frequent intervals noteworthy exhibits of art are held. Santa Fe, like Taos, has an Art Colony of painters whose virile canvasses of Pueblo Indians and Southwestern landscapes are winning general recognition in eastern and foreign art centers.



—*Photograph by Jesse Nusbaum.*

PECOS MISSION AS RESTORED.

New foundations were placed under crumbling walls, windows and archways were restored, ancient vigas, some of them beautifully carved, were kept in place wherever possible, though most of them had rotted into a soft and brittle mould.

