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EARLY PECOS RUINS ON THE FORKED LIGHTNING RANCH

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In a report published in *El Palacio* last year, it was stated that the work of Phillips Academy at Pecos had been brought to a conclusion. During the past summer, however, a discovery was made which renders necessary at least one more season of excavation.

About a half-mile southwest of the Pecos ruins, on the far side of the arroyo bounding the State Reservation on the west, is a stretch of pinyon and cedar-covered land that slopes gradually up to the base of the high west mesa. As long ago as 1880, A. F. Bandelier had noticed in the arroyo-bank, ashes, potsherds and other signs of human occupancy. When the expedition's camp was built on this spot in 1922, in digging the foundations for our house, we ran across more evidences of a settlement, and during that and subsequent years, collected along the face of the bank a considerable number of specimens all obviously of an earlier period than that of the main Pecos pueblo. Trenches cut in from the edge revealed a few skeletons, but no housewalls could be found, and as there were no mounds, nor any fallen building-stone on the surface, we concluded that

although the site had evidently been occupied for a long time, the houses upon it must have been small and scattered, and that it had never borne a large, compact building of the pueblo type.

In order to add to the collection of potsherds made in previous years, we opened, at the beginning of the present season, a small trench in the arroyo-bank at a place where there was an exposure of ashes and charcoal. This was done by permission of Mr. Tex Austin, the owner of the property, who has not only allowed the expedition to live on his land, but has done everything in his power to facilitate our work. Almost at once there was found the end of an adobe wall; we followed this in and uncovered a room whose floor proved to overlie the rubbish-bed we were excavating. As this of course meant that the refuse must have come from an earlier settlement further back up the slope, we continued digging. The first room abutted against a second, also underlaid by rubbish, it was joined on either side by a third and a fourth, and we were soon aware that we had blundered into a very extensive pueblo built almost entirely of adobe and quite invisible on the surface.

An adequate force of men could not be employed because we had not expected to do any heavy excavation, and had therefore not requested a large appropriation. Four diggers, however,

were kept going for two months. They cleared forty rooms and outlined the north and east sides of what is evidently an extremely big ruin, but how big there is as yet no sure way of telling, for, as was said above, no walls can be seen on the surface. Nevertheless, it seemed worth while to attempt to get a general idea of the extent of the settlement by sinking testpits; by trenching in from the banks of side-arroyos; and by examining the ground itself for the telltale potsherds and flint chips that are usually scattered about the edges of pueblo ruins. This survey showed that there were surely two, and very likely three, groups, each of several hundred rooms. Whether they were inhabited simultaneously cannot be determined without further excavation. It is even possible that all the groups were actually connected to form a single great structure.

Of the forty rooms cleared this summer, all but five were built of adobe, not laid in the form of bricks, as is done by the Mexicans and the modern Pueblo Indians, but constructed in long horizontal courses, each course having been allowed to dry before the next one was applied. The first course was always the highest, often nearly two feet, upper courses vary from eight or nine to fourteen inches. How the courses were made, whether the adobe was poured in

some sort of movable form, as in concrete work; or whether it was puddled on and smoothed up by hand, has not yet been determined. The walls of the rooms so far uncovered only run to a height of from three to four or five feet; there are left, therefore, no standing remains of second story construction. From the amount of fallen adobe in lumps and chunks, however, it is obvious that many at least of the rooms were topped by others, but to how great a height the building was terraced, is also still uncertain.

The present season's work indicates a very compact structure, but one which obviously grew by accretion, as the rooms are of various sizes and were added to each other in a more or less haphazard way. Fortunately, the lines of abutment, where wall joins wall, are unusually clear, and several different sorts of adobe were used. Hence it will be possible, when a larger part of the ruin has been excavated, to identify the original or nuclear structure, and trace out the various additions that were made to it. This will be of particular value for the study of the development of village planning in the Pecos valley, because most of the early ruins at Pecos proper have been so covered by later buildings that it has been impossible to examine, in its entirety, any one of them. Here is no such overburden, the ground plan can be worked out in every de-

tail, and it is probable that a close study of the contents of the rooms will allow us to reconstruct even the former elevation with some accuracy.

The actual digging was unusually interesting because we were working in entire ignorance of what we were going to find. Constant vigilance was necessary to keep from cutting through the adobe walls, even the best preserved of which were so nearly the color of the fill of the rooms that only their slightly greater hardness and a certain tendency of the earth to fall away from them, permitted their identification. The irregularity of the groundplan was also puzzling. In most pueblo ruins all rooms are not only of the same size, but are arranged in a definite order. But here the chambers conform to no set standard, either of shape, dimension or axis, and the location of corners was a matter of much difficulty. The following of the few stone walls was, of course, simple. The masonry, as compared with that of Pecos, is excellent; it is well laid in adobe mortar and is composed of stones with flat faces.

There were found two rooms (Nos. 10 and 40) that appear to have been for ceremonial use. They are hardly kivas, as that term is understood in Southwestern Archaeology, because they are neither round nor subterranean. Both of them are incorporated in the house cluster, with

ordinary living-rooms on at least three sides. Both are roughly square rather than of the rectangular shape usual in pueblo living-rooms. Each one has a round firepit and an eastward-opening ventilating shaft; No. 40 still exhibits, and there is evidence that No. 10 once had, a deflector made from a single large slab of stone. All the above features suggest a cult rather than a domestic purpose, and I believe that these rooms may perhaps be the prototype, not only of certain peculiar square ceremonial rooms found at Pecos, but also of the square kivas in some of the modern pueblos.

I said above that the Forked Lightning Ruin was older than Pecos. This is proved by the pottery, which is preponderantly of a type of black-on-white ware that was rapidly going out of style when Pecos was founded. There may have been a young settlement at Pecos before Forked Lightning was abandoned, but the bulk of the occupancy of the latter town was surely in pre-Pecos times, and I am inclined to think that the people from the flat, open site moved to the easily defensible Pecos rock to secure themselves from attacks by savage, nomadic enemies. We seemed to see evidence of such attacks even in the small amount of excavation that we did. Many parts of the pueblo had been burned, and in three different rooms we found the skeletons of unburied bodies, one of them with the head and face frightfully battered.

Of true burials about fifty were encountered. The bodies lay in flexed or semi-flexed positions, and most of the graves had been dug close against the outside wall of the pueblo. It was either not customary to place much in the way of offerings with the dead or else such offerings were of perishable nature, for we found almost nothing with the skeletons. The exceptions, however, made up for the general poverty of the graves, for in one we got a very beautiful red bowl of Little Colorado type with black interior decoration and a handsome exterior design in white; and in a second one was the richest collection of offerings so far found in a grave in the Pecos valley. The skeleton was that of a man of middle age. He had been buried alongside the then outer wall of the pueblo, but later a room had been added above the grave, and we found the interment only after breaking through the floor. The body lay on the right side with the head south. Over it were two black-on-white food-bowls. Back of the head was a mass of white shell disc-beads, about 5,700 in number, which when strung formed a strand 48 feet in length. Under one arm was an unusually fine axe of light-green stone, its rotted shaft still tracable in the soil. In front of the body was a long pouch or sack containing two pencil-like medicine stones, a set of oddly shaped concretions, two bone

whistles, paint-stones red and yellow, a fossil, a crystal and several pieces of raw turquoise. A second sack near the hips held more medicine-stone, and against the breast was a large tubular pipe of white stone.

Shortly after the excavation of this skeleton, work was discontinued - regretfully because all the indications were that we were just coming into an area of considerable richness and unusual interest. During 1927, however, it is hoped that we may be able to clear a large part of the site. Excavation at the Forked Lightning ruin is much less laborious than at Pecos, because one is not bothered by great masses of superimposed remains, and the back dirt can be taken out easily and cheaply with team and scraper. Best of all, the buildings are in such condition that they can be emptied and left open, and Mr. Austin has undertaken to protect them from the attacks of vandals which have necessitated the refilling of the unguarded Pecos ruin.

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