

BLOOM MOUND

by

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The Bloom Mound, a small sedentary village site of the Jornada complex, is located on the west bank of the Hondo River, approximately 12 miles south-west of Roswell, New Mexico in Chaves County. The site consists of two parts; the lower village, approximately fifty yards from the present bed of the Hondo River, and the Upper site, one half mile south-west of the river bed located on a small hill 123 feet higher than the flood plain where the lower village is located. Cultural materials gathered from both sites are identical and it appears that both areas were occupied by the same people and during the same period.

This concentration appears at a guess, around 1200 to 1250 AD, and it is assumed that the sites were not abandoned until the early part of the seventeenth century (?) more or less according to material dating, at least sufficiently long enough to render the site of great archaeological importance. It should be born in mind that the majority of prehistoric pueblos were briefly inhabited and the great wealth of evidence indicates that communities quite frequently shifted their places of residence, in many instances the tenure being very often less than a single generation, this resulted in the many hundreds of ruins thruout the south-west, each reflecting in their individual midden deposits and burials, materials illustrating primarily the culture in fashion during their insignificant span of existence.

During the excavation, special attention was devoted to pottery, quite abundant and considered a most reliable criterion of cultural exchange. Several chronological sequent groups have been recognized and are contained in the ceramic portion of this paper. In terms of general south-western cultural history, the Bloom Mound might well have come into being late in the Pueblo III period, existing through the Pueblo IV phase and probably not abandoned until early in the Pueblo V period.

The site was exceptionally rich in specimens, and as an open site, lies in the region of relatively light rainfall area which was quite fortunate in that items of a perishable nature were found to be in an excellent state of preservation. As in most pueblos, there appeared to be a gradual with-draw, but in the case of this particular site, a hasty with-drawl, coupled with the fact that only three normal burials were found, along with what appears to be a great degree of violence as is indicated by the many burned, charred and disarticulated skeleta remains found in the individual rooms. One major example in this instance was the finding of 7 skeletons, badly burned and in hopeless disarticulated positions.

For pueblo life, the enviornment was considered quite ideal. The Hondo River, a perrenial stream lies less than 100 feet to the east of the site. For many miles along its course, there are many acres of flat land which could if necessary, be irrigated. During this period of occupation, rainfall was considered generally amply sufficient for successful dry farming by Indian methods. These people like other Indians of this period, undoubtly kept large stores of corn in reserve against emergency as is attested to by the discovery of a large cache of burned corn during the course of excavation.

Animal and bird bones were found in abundance, not only in the midden deposits, but also in dirt excavated from the individual rooms and while trenching was accomplished, indicating game was of great importance. Rabbit, bird, deer and antelope being predominant. Deer and antelope ranged in the open country. These animals supplied not only meat but hides, bones and sinews, which were used for many utilitarian purposes.

Wood for roof beams, fuel and implements was available. Along the river are willows, cotton woods and some evidence of box elders, scrub oak is in evidence and every sort of plant from desert to Alpine could be obtained within several days travel.

Permission to excavate the site was obtained from Mr. Edward Bloom in 1934 (for whom the site was named) lessee of that portion of the ranch on which the site is located. After considerable deliberation as where to dig, it was un-animously agreed that the method of trenching would be employed, since the method of actually digging units, like the method of locating them, varies according to the character and content of the site. Trenching in this instance was employed as an exploratory measure in attempting to locate existing walls and to check stratification and content at the edge of the site as well as other points distant from the main point of excavation.

Accordingly, two trenches were effected, one trench starting at the base of the slope and well to the edge of the site and directly in the center of the mound, commencing at the north perimeter. At the same time, a similar trench was commenced at the eastern perimeter of the site. Throughout all levels of trenching, considerable amounts of charcoal, bone fragments, flint, spalls, arrow points and pot sherds were encountered. After trenching a distance of 42 feet from the east, and at a depth of 28 inches from the surface, an adobe wall was encountered and after carefully trenching around the wall, it was discovered there were two adjoining rooms.

It was now safe to establish the site as a unit type dwelling, consisting of approximately six rooms, lying in an east-west direction. Walls were constructed of puddled adobe, in most instances, 14 inches thick with all rooms measuring within inches, the same in length and width, that being approximately 8 feet in width and 9 feet in length.

At this point, it was decided that the adoption of a method be utilized to pin point the location of artifacts and other materials. A datum stake was located in the south-west perimeter of the site, and the following grid system was established. Stakes were driven into the mound at ten foot intervals after careful survey. One row of stakes running north and south, the other row running east and west so as to grid the site into ten foot squares, reducing these to five foot plots and indicated by the letters A,B,C and D, etc. Each stake was labeled with its individual designation in writing, and as an assurance of a more accurate measurement, small nails were driven into the center of each stake. The designation for each section or unit of the grid system is derived from their stake at its south-western corner and this designation was used for the gross location of materials which were assigned to individual level bags.

Upon establishing the grid system, the unit level method was employed throughout the remainder of the excavation. That is; all levels of excavation were accomplished in six inch layers, making possible a clear stratification

and to preclude losing the approximate vertical location (depth) of any artifact. All deposits were immediately screened for recovery of materials.

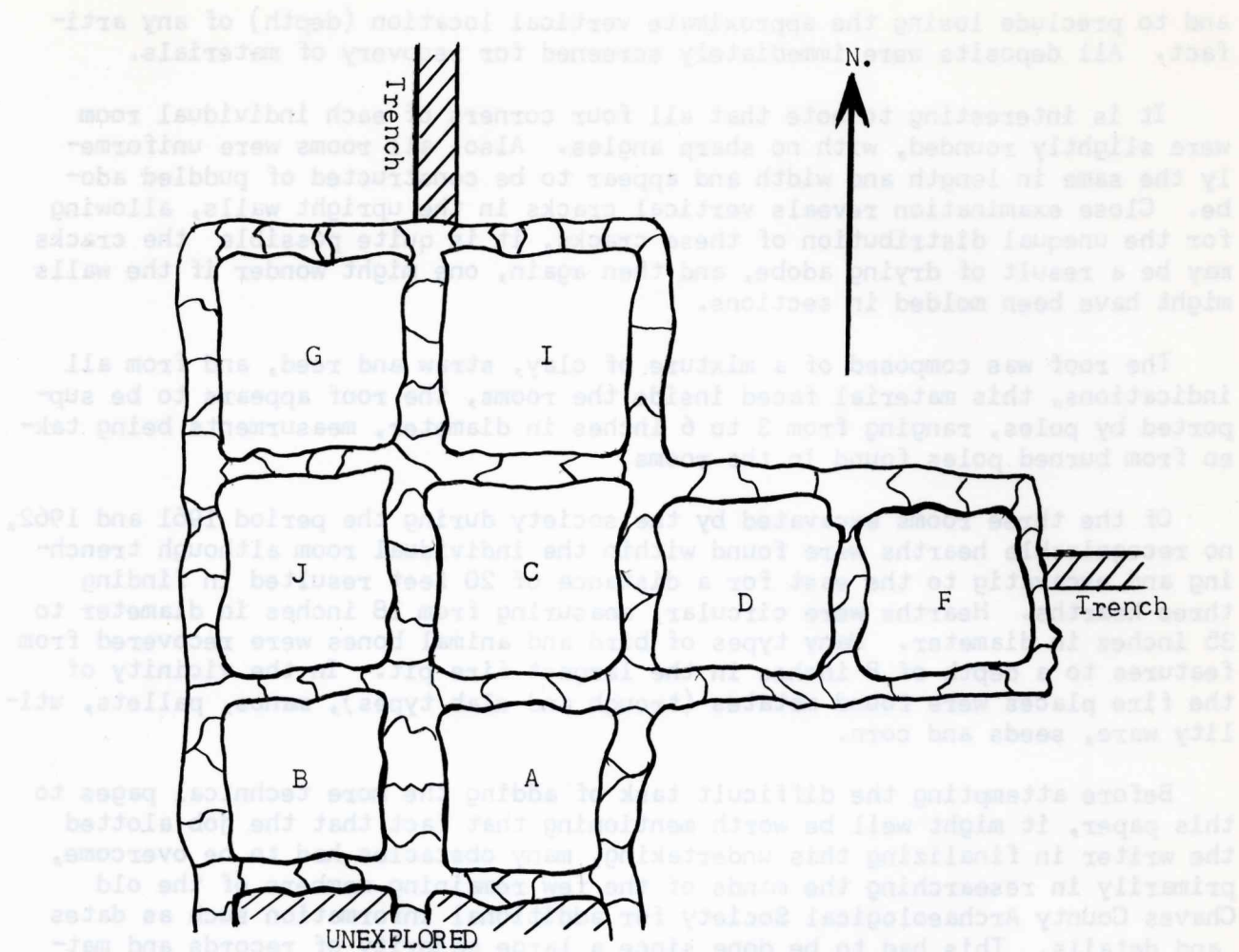
It is interesting to note that all four corners of each individual room were slightly rounded, with no sharp angles. Also; all rooms were uniformly the same in length and width and appear to be constructed of puddled adobe. Close examination reveals vertical cracks in the upright walls, allowing for the unequal distribution of these cracks, it is quite possible the cracks may be a result of drying adobe, and then again, one might wonder if the walls might have been molded in sections.

The roof was composed of a mixture of clay, straw and reed, and from all indications, this material faced inside the rooms, the roof appears to be supported by poles, ranging from 3 to 6 inches in diameter, measurements being taken from burned poles found in the rooms.

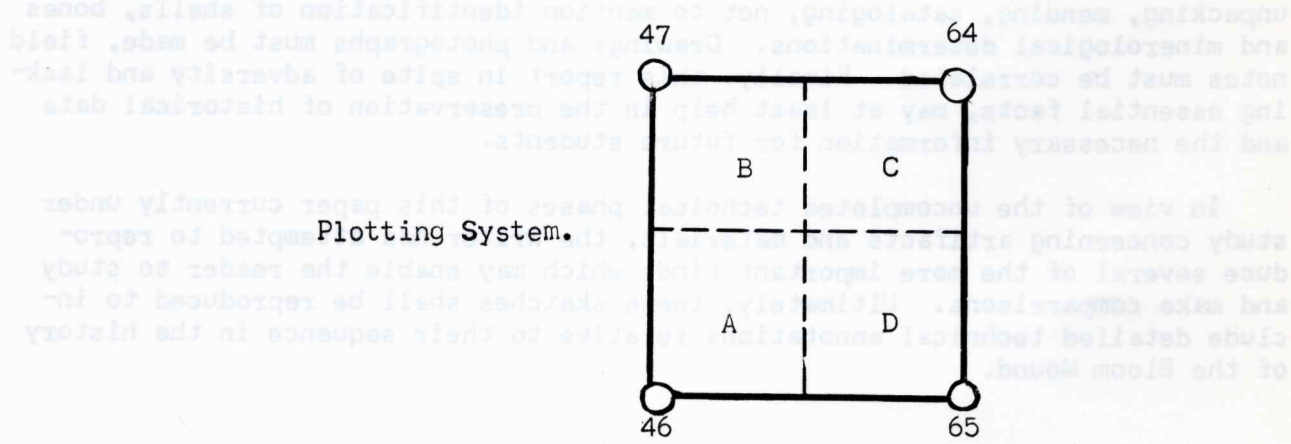
Of the three rooms excavated by the society during the period 1961 and 1962, no recognizable hearths were found within the individual room although trenching and excavating to the east for a distance of 20 feet resulted in finding three hearths. Hearths were circular, measuring from 18 inches in diameter to 35 inches in diameter. Many types of bird and animal bones were recovered from features to a depth of 8 inches in the largest fire pit. In the vicinity of the fire places were found metates (trough and slab types), manos, pallets, utility ware, seeds and corn.

Before attempting the difficult task of adding the more technical pages to this paper, it might well be worth mentioning that fact that the job allotted the writer in finalizing this undertaking, many obstacles had to be overcome, primarily in researching the minds of the few remaining members of the old Chaves County Archaeological Society for additional information such as dates and details. This had to be done since a large majority of records and materials had been destroyed several years ago by a flood that had invaded the basement of the museum where the records and materials had been stored. Along with this, I must offer profound apology for the failure in the past for improper methods in the proper study and classification of materials as an essential and immediate sequel to field work. The arduous task imposed on the curator in unpacking, mending, cataloging, not to mention identification of shells, bones and mineralogical determinations. Drawings and photographs must be made, field notes must be correlated. Finally, this report in spite of adversity and lacking essential facts, may at least help in the preservation of historical data and the necessary information for future students.

In view of the uncompleted technical phases of this paper currently under study concerning artifacts and materials, the writer has attempted to reproduce several of the more important finds which may enable the reader to study and make comparisons. Ultimately, these sketches shall be reproduced to include detailed technical annotations relative to their sequence in the history of the Bloom Mound.



General ground plan view of the Bloom Mound. Units F and G excavated by members of the museum of Texas Technological College.

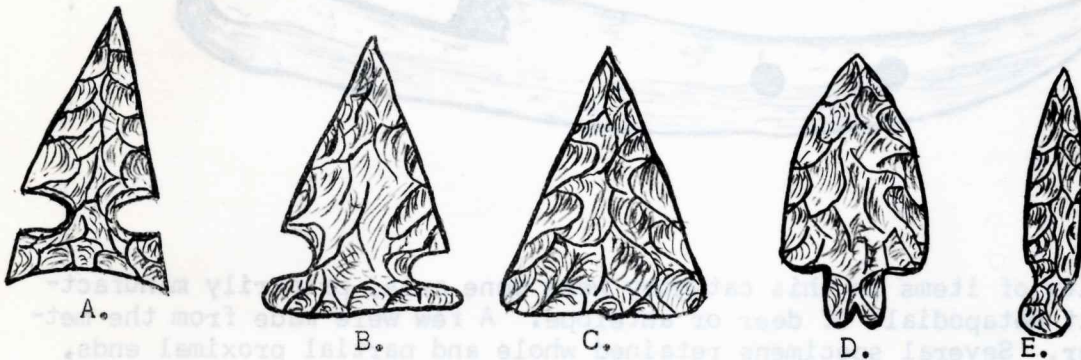


Plotting System.

Example of method used in identification of artifacts by layer or level. X found in 1-A-L, all excavations in 6 inch layers.

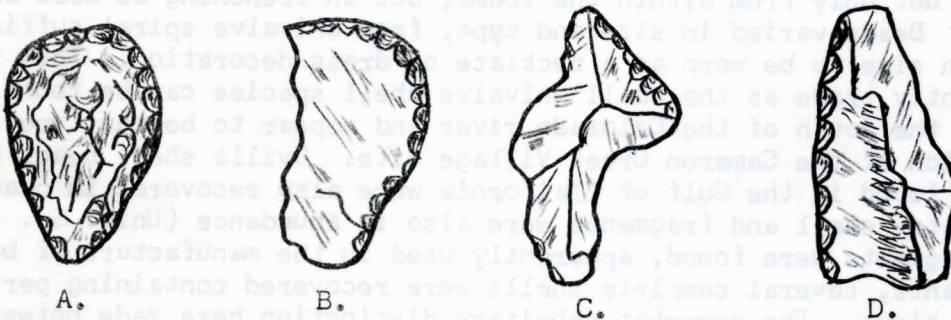
PROJECTILE POINTS

Well aware of the facts of indiscriminate usage of the various terms in describing differences among artifacts, the problem of classification was approached with considerable caution, and no attempt to postulate positive functional use of each class of artifacts throughout this paper other than general discussion should be clearly understood. In general the Bloom Mound produced points of excellent quality in workmanship, represented below are examples of projectile points, shape and types, used in classifying the Bloom Mound series.



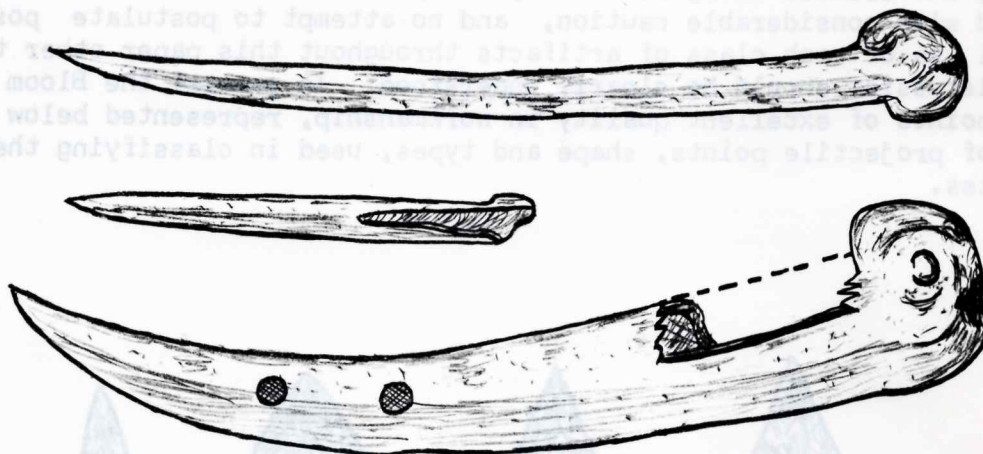
SCRAPERS

These appear to be made from random flakes which are secondarily chipped along one, all or both sides to produce a scraping edge.



BONE AND ANTLER

A considerable amount of bone objects were recovered. Namely, bone whistles and needles, awls and punches of varying lengths. Two delicately carved but broken bone items resembling a two tined fork, quite possibly a hair ornament.



The majority of items in this category were bone awls, primarily manufactured from split metapodials of deer or antelope. A few were made from the metatarsus of deer. Several specimens retained whole and partial proximal ends, and in some cases the head bone being detached or modified.

The rib awls were found and run true to type. That is; they are made from short section cut from the edge of a large rib, the butts being rounded, the sides straight or slightly convex, usually sharply pointed.

SHELL AND BEADS

Of all the materials collected from the Mound, beads were most prolific and were recovered not only from within the rooms, but in trenching as well as surface checking. Beads varied in size and type, from univalve spiral sufficiently large enough in size to be worn as a necklace or dress decoration. This type bead is apparently trade as the small univalve shell species can be found in abundance near the mouth of the Colorado river and appear to be the type found in the excavation of the Cameron Creek Village site. Ovilla shell beads near alike as those found in the Gulf of California were also recovered in quantities. Fresh water shell and fragments were also in abundance (*Unio*. Sp. local). Hundreds of fragments were found, apparently used in the manufacture of beads and small pendants, several complete shells were recovered containing perforations near the hinge. The somewhat arbitrary distinction here made between beads and pendants is based on the position of the perforation. i.e; centrally drilled holes, medium or longitudinal, or perforated near one edge. Recovered also, were varying lengths and sizes of bird bone beads.

TINKLER PENDANTS

These are univalve shells, cut to bell-like shape and perforated for suspension. Apparently reduced by trimming, wear, decay and so badly burned that specific identification is not possible. The spire is completely cut away and the remaining whorl is nearly completely conical. Close to the top of the cone and near the edge of the lip, there appears a groove in the wall, a horizontal or slightly oblique groove deep enough to give access to the interior of the aperture so as to provide a means of suspension.

CUT SHELL PENDANTS

Approximately 7 of these beautifully executed ornaments were found during the screening process. All were fashioned from fresh water clam, and close examination shows them to have been cut from the flattest portion of the shell. The finished objects are in most cases faintly concave or convex. In outline, they appear round, oval, rectangular. In length (or diameter) they range from $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to nearly two inches. Single and double suspension holes are drilled at one edge or end. In some instances, there were noted small marginal incisions or shallow cuts.

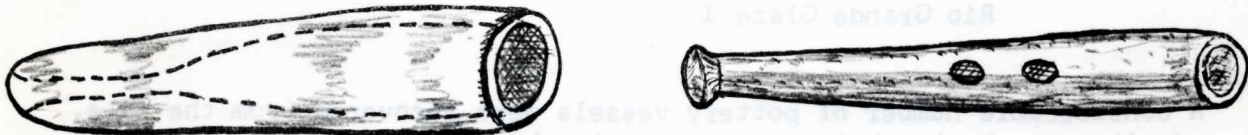
PIPES

Pipes recovered from the Bloom Mound are a particularly interesting item and bear some elaboration. They appeared to be extremely well made and in one particular instance, uniquely decorated.

Most specimens were made of clay, with little or no tempering material. The color ranges from brown, light brown, gray to a light green. The coloring differences possibly depending more upon the firing heat rather than the types of clay used.

All specimens are rather unique in their construction and quite similar in all respects. A typical pipe having a lone narrow bowl, measuring from 4 to 6 inches in length, the largest specimen having an orifice of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. A unique feature of the pipe is the inner construction at the mouth end, which is slightly constricted, forming a short smoke passage approximately one inch long. All specimens are of plain tubular form. Their greatest diameter lies at or just below the bowl end, tapering evenly and gradually to the mouth end and are round throughout their entire length.

One unusual specimen of this type was recovered on the floor of room C among the debris. It measures 7 inches in length and its most unusual feature is the inlaid settings of two small stones in the center of the pipe.



OBJECTS OF STONE

A total of 8 axes were recovered. These axes are characterized by their smoothness of contour, the poll, or head of the axe being that portion of the tone, natural or water worn and almost entirely unworked in all instances. Dolomitic limestone, basalt and fibrolite materials were used in the manufacture of these axes.

Two specimens located, were grooved for the reception of a shaft, but shorter than mauls, have practically flat, rather than rounded ends, the groove encircling the implement are continuous. Specimens measure from 2½ to 3 inches in length, and are carefully worked from hard stones. In the cases of both implements, the ends are bruised and for this reason have been classified as possibly pemmican pounders.

CERAMICS

Of the many types of sherds collected for study, the Brownware complex type appears most often throughout the site along with Jornada Brown with nearly an equal amount of El Paso Polychrome. These together with an unknown type and several small quantities of intrusive sherds are listed numerically as follows:

SHERD COUNT AND TYPES

Jornada Brown.....	48%
El Paso Polychrome.....	34%
Corrugated.....	7%
Chupadero Black on White.....	6%
Lincoln Black on Red.....	5%
Three Rivers Red on Terracotta.....	4%

Listed below and found to a lesser degree of quantity, are several types of sherds which could be considered as intrusive:

St. Johns Polychrome
Mimbres Black on White (Bold face?)
Santa Fe Black on White
Rio Grande Glaze I

A considerable number of pottery vessels were recovered from the site, the majority were broken but many were restorable. Represented below are several types (not to scale).



BLACK/WHITE



BUFF

An item of unusual interest was the recovery of one-half portion of a badly broken Chihuahua polychrome bearing an elaborate bird design. This was the only type of this pottery recovered from the site.

BASKETRY, MATTING, TWINE

Many fragments of matting (charred) were recovered. The matting consists of bundles of reed, about three-eighths inch in diameter. Placed side by side and held in place by two-strand fiber cords, similar to twined weaving, the cords becoming the weft elements. In weaving, the two cords were passed on either side of the bundle, then crossed and given a half turn before enclosing the next warp element.

Several charred fragments of basketry were recovered. The coils are from bundles of thin woody stems. There are three coils to the inch. Stitches are neatly spaced, approximately one-eighth inch apart and cross the basket surface diagonally. There are five stitches to the inch. The outer surface shows rows of split stitches, while the inner surface shows plain sewing.

Several short pieces of cordage were recovered through screening and in an excellent state of preservation. Both specimens are one-eighth inch in diameter; the longest piece is $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length. Both pieces are three strand, with a left hand twist. Specimens appear to be made from yucca and closely resemble modern hemp cordage.

METAL

Of extreme interest and unique among the many items recovered, were the recovery of six cast copper bells, similar to Hohokam specimens. This particular cluster of bells was not associated with a burial of any type, but found lying in the northwest corner of a room. Specimens are quite similar to Sacaton copper bells (Gladwin, 1937).

ADDITIONAL STONE OBJECTS

Several hammerstones were recovered, represented as spherical lumps of flint and quartzose rock, quite possibly found in stream beds. Specimens varied in size from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, nearly all reflecting battered surfaces. Believe this was done in order to effect angular projections for the purpose of abrading.

Recovered from several of the rooms are what conjecturally might be considered "floor smoothers" or polishers. These items appear to be manufactured from smooth water worn pebbles, 4 to 5 inches in length, generally oval in shape and all show considerable wear, as both sides in several instances have been ground to a plane surface. Several specimens are manufactured from sandstone and several of dark igneous rock.

Several metates along with manos were recovered. A typical metate is rectangular, with rounded corners. In several instances, the underside being flat or slightly convex, the upper surface being even and shallowly concave from end to end, flat from side to side. In length, specimens range from 17 to 28 inches in length, and 8 to 14 inches in width. All specimens show considerable usage.

Of the many manos recovered, several contained more than one grinding surface, some with as many as three grinding surfaces. The average is from 7 to 11 inches in length, by 3 by 6 inches in width. All specimens are of fine grained sandstone, or of micaceous schist.

Two fine specimens of paint grinding stones were recovered. The upper surfaces having been worked into a depression of rectangular form. Specimens measure from 3 to 9 inches in length, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in thickness.

At this point and until more technical data can be obtained, I shall terminate this paper, sincerely hoping that this contribution in some small measure has been of sufficient interest in stimulating others to effect documentation and cataloging of materials in their respective areas so as to preclude loss of valuable and specific information.