



SOUTHWESTERN LORE

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THE GEORGE W. LINDSAY RANCH SITE, 5JF11

by

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ABSTRACT

In July 1970, two Woodland stone enclosures were excavated just north of Golden, Colorado, on the ranch of the late George W. Lindsay. Such stone-walled enclosures have not been previously reported in connection with Front Range archaeology.

However, the archaeological material excavated is comparable with other Front Range Woodland occupations. These materials include small corner-notched projectile points which are often serrated, ovoid bifaced knives or point preform/blanks, and cord-marked pottery. This Woodland occupation is tentatively identified as the Hog Back Phase. Dates for similar material from other Front Range Woodland components have been around A.D. 600 to 1000.

DISCOVERY AND SITE DESCRIPTION

While excavating the Van Bibber Creek Site (Fig. 1) (Nelson 1969), an effort was made to locate other sites in the immediate vicinity where good grazing basins along the Eastern Slope of the Rockies are overlooked by rolling hills and rocky outcrops.

In the Leyden Creek drainage basin a rocky ridge rises to a height of 6,200 feet and gives a general view of the Leyden Creek basin. This outcrop appears to be an ideal location for a campsite for prehistoric man. The outcrop where the site is located is on the George W. Lindsay Ranch in Jefferson County, in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 28, Township 2 South, Range 70 West. It is composed of Fox Hills Sandstone (Van Horne 1957) and has been mined for a number of years by several clay companies. Large excavated areas have been cut into the sides of the outcrop and these give the appearance of nicely cut walls.

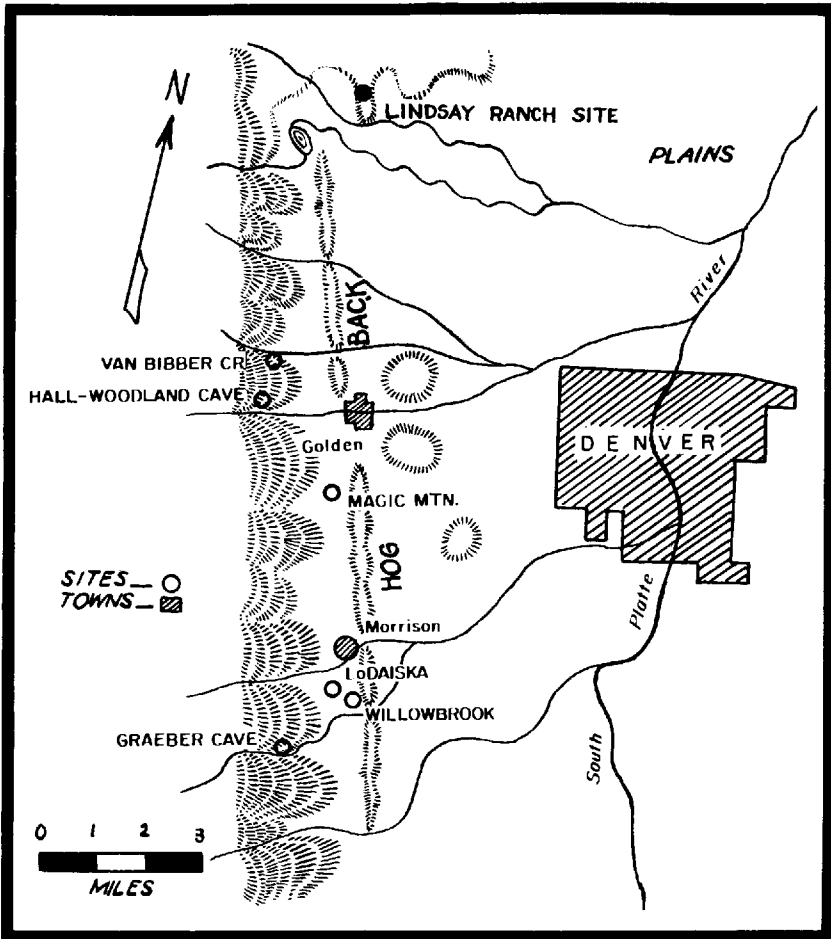


FIGURE 1. Front Range sites with Woodland occupations of the Hog Back Phase.

The top of the ½-mile long outcrop revealed two stone enclosures, each approximately 12 feet square and separated by a distance of 4 feet. The walls were not easily recognizable due to the rocky nature of the ridge. Vegetation has grown up around the stone walls and this blends with the general landscape (Fig. 2).

The term "stone enclosure" may fall short of an adequate description of the piled stones. But it is thought that we are dealing with an occupational area and that the stones were stacked and arranged in a general outline of a square. Consequently, "stone enclosure" seems to be about the only term that fits the situation. It is also thought that the stone enclosures are not tipi rings.



FIGURE 2. George W. Lindsay Ranch Site, looking south along the ridge top. The stone enclosures in the foreground are obscured by vegetation and rocks.

The present inhabitants of the area are mostly ranchers; there is little farming carried on, due to the rocky nature of the land. The general area is known as Rocky Flats, and in the winter and spring chinook winds rush down out of the mountain canyons at maximum speeds of over 100 miles per hour.

The faunal life at present is a blend of two zones, Mountains and Plains, with more emphasis on the Plains animals: coyote, skunk, chipmunk, jack-rabbit, cottontail, meadow mouse, and various snakes. Mule deer and wildcat may occasionally wander down from the mountain region just west of the site.

EXCAVATION

Prior to excavation, the area around the stone enclosures was surface collected and all artifacts and flakes were bagged. Only two surface artifacts were found, the tip of a serrated projectile point and the base of an ovoid biface "knife" or projectile point preform.

Each room was excavated separately (Figs. 3, 4). Vegetation and a number of cobbles which were not thought to be related to the structure were cleared from the inner portion of the rooms. Some stones, however, were left in position as it was thought that at one time these stones were once part of the piled stones which formed the boundaries of the rock enclosures.

Approximately 3 inches below the surface a dark layer of burned soil and charcoal was encountered. Below this level excavation proceeded with the use of trowel and other small hand tools. All excavated soil was put through $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wire mesh screen. All recovered materials were bagged and labeled in the field.



FIGURE 3. Stone enclosure Room B after excavation, looking southwest.

Room A

The floor of Room A was uneven and took on the natural contour of the hilltop, with some evidence that leveling took place to form a smooth floor. The outline of the room was roughly an open-ended square. The stones and rocks ranged in weight from just a few pounds to over 100 pounds, and they were lying in an irregular position to form a wall. There was no evidence of the use of mud to fill the cracks or the use of mortar in anchoring the stones. At the time of excavation, the height of the stone enclosure was about one foot above the ground surface.

The only feature in Room A was a firepit at the north wall. It was basin-shaped and filled with ash and small bits of decomposed charcoal (Fig. 4).

The irregular floor had a quantity of flakes scattered along the north and east walls. The heaviest concentration of flakes and artifacts was around the firepit. From the firepit to the southern end of the room the chipping debris gradually thinned out along with the dark cultural layer. At the southern end of the room the soil was devoid of cultural materials.

Room B

Removal of the overburden in Room B was basically the same as in Room A, with the discarding of small cobbles and unrelated stones which had broken off from a large rock just to the west of Room B.

The major difference between Rooms A and B is that Room B is a shallow excavated pit forming a complete square (Figs. 3-4), rather than an open-ended square. Features of Room B include three rock-filled firepits, and one possible storage basin approximately 8 inches deep and 14 inches in diameter. The major area of concentration of flakes and occupational debris lay in the eastern half of the room.

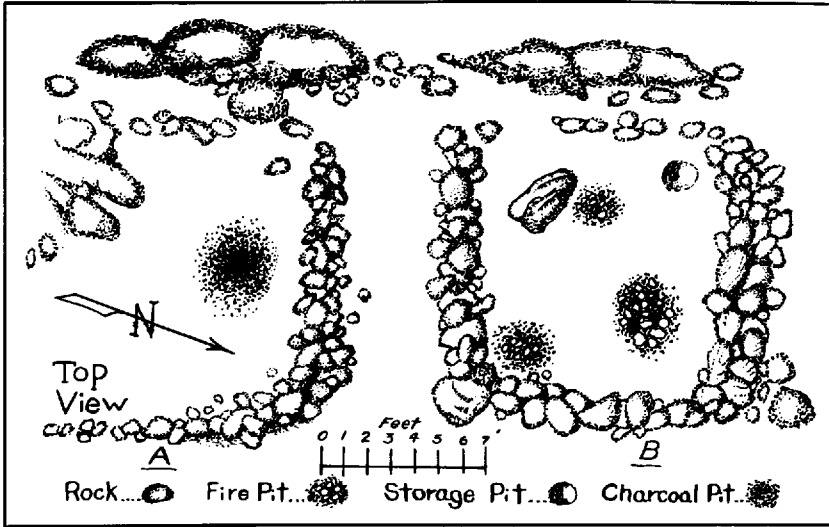


FIGURE 4. Plan of stone enclosures Rooms A and B.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE STRUCTURES

To reconstruct this site and the type of superstructure that may have been positioned on the stone enclosures is quite speculative. The existence of this type of site along the Front Range is unusual as there is no mention of stone wall sites in the literature. The only stone works that can be found in the area are the so-called tipi rings that are found throughout the High Plains area. However, the stone enclosures at the Lindsay Ranch site and the tipi rings have very little in common.

Based on personal observations and the studies of Mulloy (1960), Malouf (1960), Moomaw (1960), and others, there is some interesting conjecture about stone rings (tipi rings) that indicates the character of this type of archaeological remains.

The reports cited above indicate that these tipi rings are possibly not habitation sites. They are characterized archaeologically with little evidence of artificial material in association. Fire hearths with the tipi rings are also usually nonexistent (Wood 1967). It has been suggested that tipi rings are of a religious origin and that they have little to do with habitational sites. Also, tipi rings which do have evidence of interior hearths have been suggested as winter-occupied sites.

Consequently, tipi rings and the stone enclosures at the Lindsay Ranch Site appear to have very little in common.

As for the superstructure of the stone enclosures at the Lindsay Ranch Site, only a few decomposed branches, approximately 2½ inches in diameter,

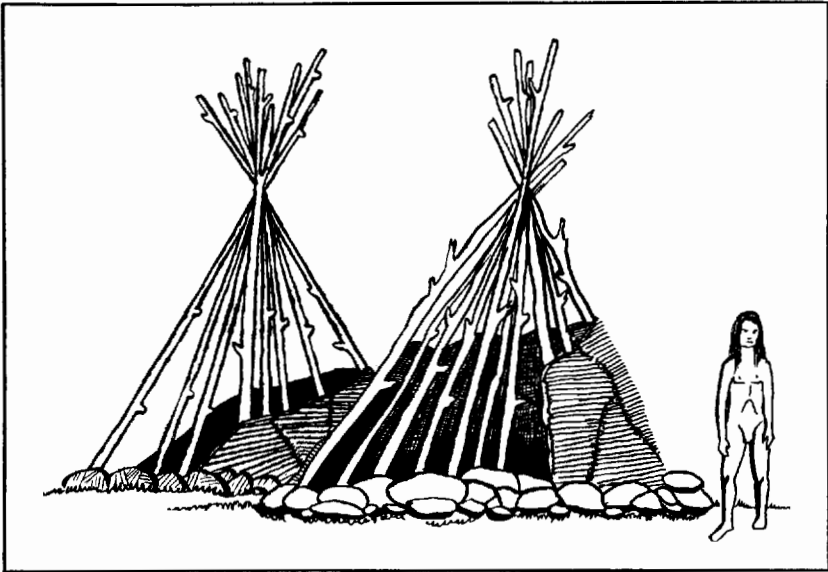


FIGURE 5. Hypothetical reconstruction of stone enclosures Rooms A and B.

were found. If we assume that these branches are the remains of the superstructure, we move to the question of the type of superstructure involved. To answer this question we must postulate that the Lindsay Ranch Site people were nomadic and did not build complicated or permanent dwellings. They had to rely on simple structures such as wickiups and tipi-like structures for shelter. It is reasonable to believe that tipi-like shelters, such as those used by the historic nomadic Indians of the Plains, were used long before the Spanish brought the horse to America.

The larger rocks were probably used to help anchor branches or poles to the ground during the windy season in the winter and spring. The branches were probably collected from the stream banks of Leyden Creek. The rocks also would have served as a dam around the shelter and may have been used to hold down some type of hide or thatch covering of the superstructure. With the ample supply of rocks on the ridge it seems logical that they would have utilized these as building material. Such utilization would also help clear the occupational area. Dr. Waldo R. Wedel (pers. comm., 1970) points out that, in the Woodland sites with which he is familiar, none yielded such features as those found at the Lindsay Ranch Site. Perhaps this difference is because in the Western Plains the Indians had learned to get along with a minimum of stones in the erection of shelters.

Baker (pers. comm., 1970) reports several sites in southeastern Colorado where stone-walled enclosures have been uncovered. These are believed to have been supported by a forked-stick superstructure. The inventory of artifacts from these sites contains cord-marked pottery with straight rims and

small corner-notched and side-notched projectile points. Baker thinks that these sites may be Upper Republican or Late Woodland (refer to Withers 1954).

A good example of the possible superstructure for the Lindsay Ranch Site stone enclosures occurs in North Park where several tipi-like structures in aspen groves have been reported (Johnson 1969). These structures of the historic Ute are believed to be some of the few tipi structures still standing in that area. I might add that the superstructures of these dwellings rested on the ground and no stones were used at the base. Also fire hearths were found in the center of the structures.

Figure 5 is a reconstruction of the type of structure which may have rested on the stone enclosures at the Lindsay Ranch Site about 1,000 years ago.

ARTIFACTS RECOVERED

The major portion of the artifact inventory is composed of projectile points, of which 44 complete and broken examples were taken from the two stone enclosures (see Table 1). All are of the corner-notched type (Figs. 6-7). Over 50 percent of the points are serrated; this occurrence compares nicely with the other materials from the Front Range where serrated points are quite common in Woodland sites. The only Woodland occupation in the Front Range area where serrated points do not occur is at the Van Bibber Creek Site (Nelson 1969). In the Woodland levels of other reported sites from this area, such as LoDaisKa (Irwin and Irwin 1959), Magic Mountain (Irwin-Williams and Irwin 1966), Hall-Woodland Cave (Nelson 1967), Willowbrook (Leach 1966), and Graeber Cave (Nelson and Graeber 1966), there are small, serrated, corner-notched points.

It is difficult to look outside this immediate area for relationships in projectile point types, mainly due to the lack of reported excavations. The high mountain parks, such as South Park, have produced a large number of small, serrated, corner-notched points very similar to those found in the Front Range Golden/Morrison area, but no definite relationship can be made from this material because it has all been surface collected. Also, several Woodland potsherds have been picked up in a campsite south of Fairplay in South Park where small serrated points have been found.

TABLE 1. Artifacts Recovered from Rooms A and B, George W. Lindsay Ranch Site

| Artifacts | Number |
|---|--------|
| Projectile points, complete and broken | 44 |
| Ovoid knives or projectile point preforms | 7 |
| Scrapers | 3 |
| Knives | 1 |
| Utilized flakes | 19 |
| Polished stones | 2 |
| Mano-metate fragment | 1 |
| Cord-marked Woodland potsherds | 27 |
| Total | 104 |

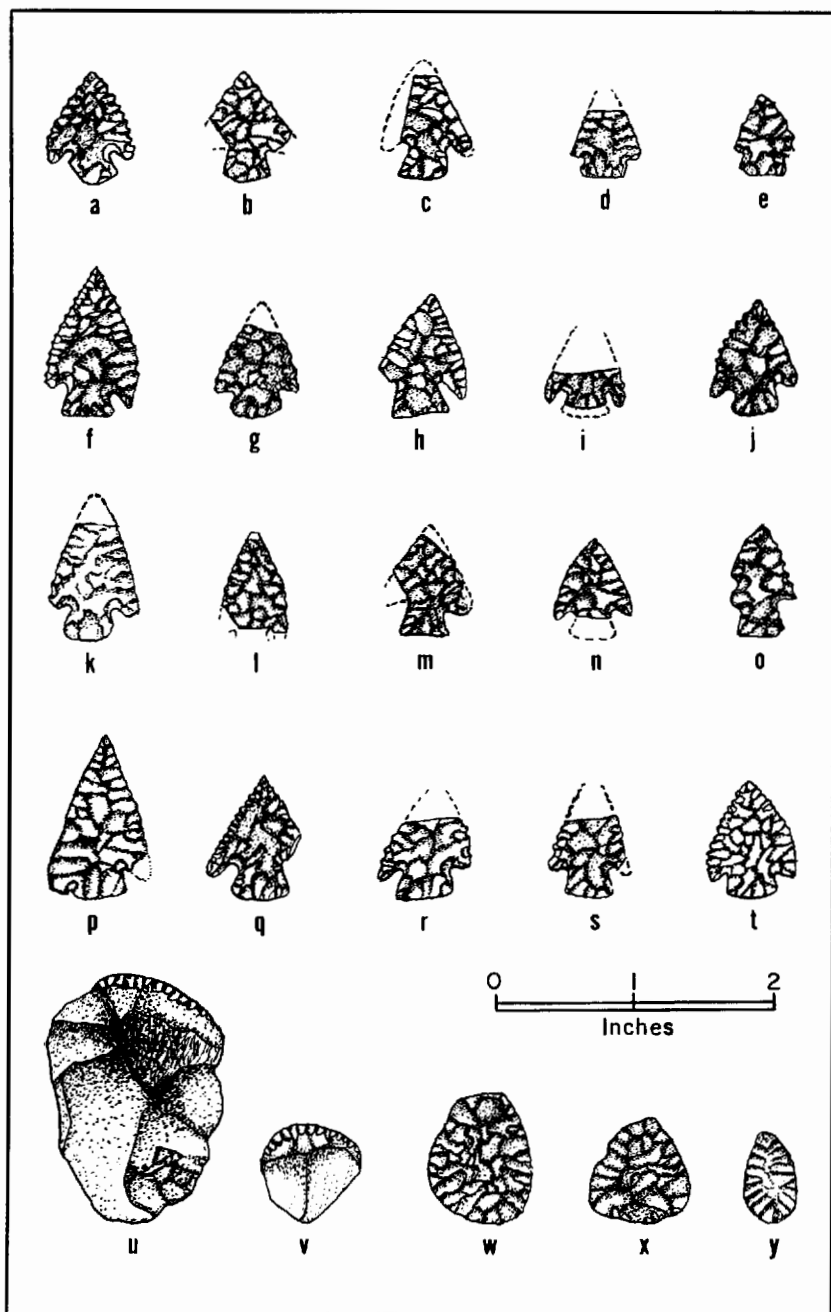


FIGURE 6. Chipped stone artifacts. a-t, projectile points; u-v, flake end scrapers; w-y, unnotched knives or projectile point blanks.

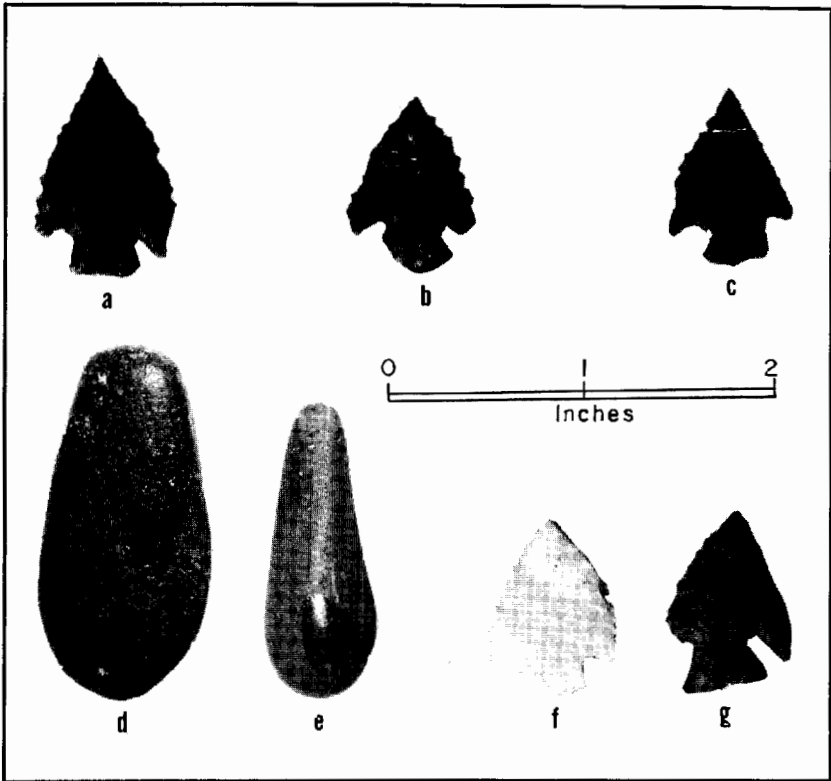


FIGURE 7. Projectile points and polished stones. a-c, f-g, projectile points; d-e, polished stones.

Perhaps the most interesting relationship that can be found outside the immediate Front Range Golden-Morrison area is a site excavated by C. T. Hurst (1939). Hurst's excavation, near Cochetopa Pass, revealed a number of serrated points that are very similar to points from the Lindsay Ranch Site and other sites along the Front Range west of Denver. Hurst thought the cave he excavated was of Shoshonean cultural make-up. Similarities between the Saguache County Cave and the Woodland Zone at Magic Mountain have also been pointed out (Irwin-Williams and Irwin 1966).

Two naturally polished stones were also excavated. The stones are believed to be either some type of gaming piece or charm stones (Fig. 7d-e). These compare with three examples excavated from the Woodland Zone at Magic Mountain. Perhaps these unaltered stones represent a diagnostic trait with the Woodland people who inhabited this area along the Front Range. Does the occurrence of a polished stone from the Saguache County Cave (Hurst 1939) also point to a cultural relationship?

Two projectile points plus one projectile point tip and one slightly re-worked chert fragment appear to have been heat treated as flakes before being pressure flaked into their final conformations. One piece of petrified wood was recovered which is not native to the immediate area. This unaltered object, plus five others (a projectile point, a projectile point tip, and three ovoid knives or point preforms) are petrified wood of the type common to the Bijou Basin east of the Golden-Morrison-Denver area.

Pottery is represented by 26 cord-marked sherds and 1 surface-roughened sherd (Fig. 8). All the examples are characteristic of Woodland sherds that have been reported from other sites along the Front Range west of Denver. The general color of these sherds runs from buff to gray to black. Thickness of the sherds ranges from just over $\frac{1}{8}$ inch to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. In general, the sherds are composed of a good sampling of quartz, iron, mica, and iron pyrite. They tend to fracture along irregular lines. One sherd is drilled (Fig. 8d). No identifiable rim sherds were recovered and the exterior markings appear to represent at least three separate vessels. Vessel construction indicates a patch-type construction with impression of an anvil on the interior and cord-wrapped paddle marks on the exterior.

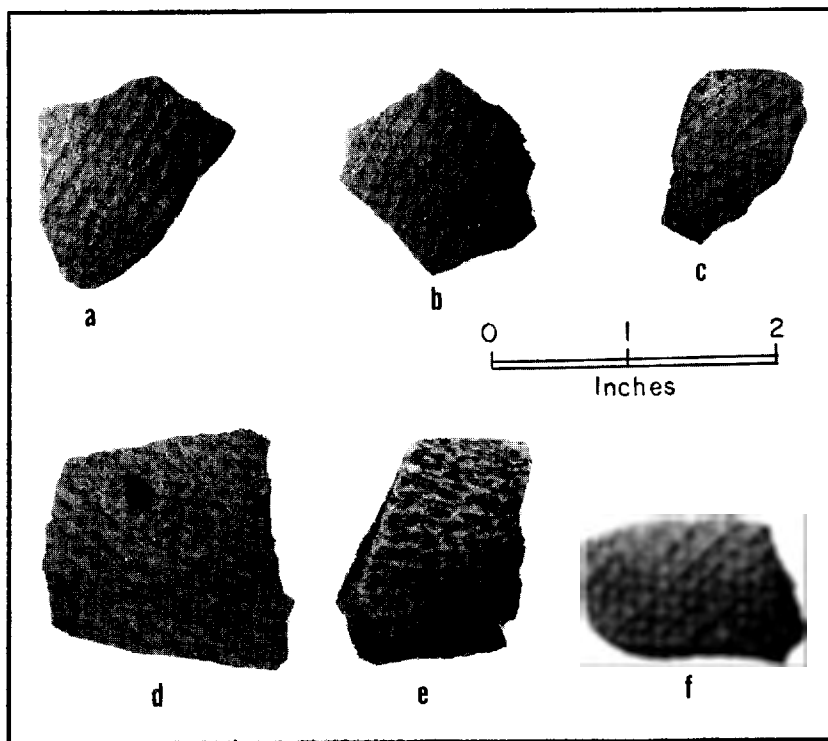


FIGURE 8. Cord-marked Woodland potsherds.

THE HOG BACK PHASE

The Front Range just west of Denver appears to have had all the basic requirements to sustain a nomadic Indian culture. The sites that have been reported from this area appear to be of seasonal duration, and the area probably represents a wintering situation (see also Breternitz 1971). Here, then, nomadic groups of Woodland people could hunt and forage in an area that combined certain aspects of both Plains and Mountains as a wintering area for a number of seasons.

To maintain fresh meat supplies for a number of months, other areas away from the main occupational camps had to be found. This type of site away from the main occupational sites is here then referred to as a hunting outpost, or hunting station. The hunters, alone or in family groups, would periodically visit such sites as the Lindsay Ranch Site. The general location of the sites is such that it gives a good view of two grazing basins. The artifacts recovered also indicate a hunting-type site.

The erection of the structures at the Lindsay Ranch Site is considered as further evidence that this was a hunting outpost. The stone enclosures are thought to represent repeated use of the site as a hunting outpost. If this interpretation is correct, and winter weather in the past was similar to today's, some sort of shelter would have been necessary because of the high winds and temperatures which occasionally drop below zero.

Thus, we hypothesize that the erection of the shelters came from repeated use of the site as a hunting outpost.

On the basis of the information produced from the excavation of the Lindsay Ranch Site and other sites in the Golden-Morrison Front Range area, the tentative definition of the Hog Back Phase is proposed. The Hog Back Phase exhibits the following traits: (1) seasonally occupied hunting camps are indicated; (2) the cultural affiliation is "Woodland"; (3) the dates are approximately A.D. 600 to 1000 (see Breternitz 1969); (4) sites occupied include small rock shelter overhangs and open sites on prominences; and (5) diagnostic artifacts that include small corner-notched projectile points with a high incidence of serration, ovoid knives or projectile point preforms/blanks, cord-marked Woodland pottery, although not particularly abundant, and naturally "polished stones" which are not indigenous to the area but do occur in the cultural deposits.

Representative sites include the Lindsay Ranch Site, LoDaisKa, Magic Mountain, Hall-Woodland Cave, Willowbrook, Van Bibber Creek (see Fig. 1), and possibly the Rainbow Creek Site (Scott 1963:48).

It is presently impossible to determine if the proposed Hog Back Phase should be included with the previously designated Parker Phase (Withers 1954), which has some similar attributes but does not correspond in all characteristics.

CONCLUSIONS

As previously pointed out, the Lindsay Ranch Site remains in the cultural framework of other Front Range Woodland sites. The most striking characteristic of these sites is the high incidence of serrated projectile points found in the Woodland levels and the interpretation that the sites represent winter hunting camps.

The location of the sites which have produced serrated projectile points seems to reflect a Mountain and Front Range trait, with numerous small serrated points being found at surface sites in Mountain areas such as South Park and in the Buena Vista area.

James Benedict (pers. comm., 1968) submitted a number of sherds and projectile points to me for identification. The sherds were determined to be of Shoshonean and Woodland affiliation. They were found at an alpine site near Nederland, Colorado, approximately 30 miles northwest of Van Bibber Creek and other sites along the foothills. Interestingly, the projectile points were nearly all serrated and very characteristic of the serrated points found in Woodland sites in the Golden-Morrison area.

Hurst's (1939) report on the Saguache County Cave, where serrated points were excavated, suggests that the site represents a Shoshonean hunting-type site.

Also at Graeber Cave (Nelson and Graeber 1966), over 100 sherds of a flat-bottomed Shoshonean vessel were excavated from this single component site. Although stone artifacts were scarce, it is interesting to note that the only complete point recovered from the cultural level was a highly serrated corner-notched point. The point is very characteristic of other serrated points that have been recovered from Woodland levels in Front Range area sites.

A number of excavations along the Front Range assigned to the Woodland culture indicate that a distinctive trait of small serrated corner-notched points has emerged from these excavations. This trait of serration is distinctive to an area that runs from south of Morrison to north of Golden, as based on data from excavated sites in the area. This statement does not mean that this Woodland trait is confined to this area; it is possible that the serration trait encompasses a much larger area and may be found to represent an occupation of the Mountain zones in summer and of the foothills and the headwaters of the Bijou Basin in winter.

Woodland sites on the Plains do not produce serrated projectile points in the same frequency as from sites along the Front Range (see Wood 1967). I suggest that the Woodland occupation of the foothills west of Denver be referred to as the Hog Back Phase.

Although resemblances between the Saguache County Cave, identified as Shoshonean, and Front Range sites, which have Woodland pottery and serrated points, have been pointed out, it is impossible to equate Woodland archaeological sites with proto-historic and historic Shoshonean peoples, or even Athabascan speakers. Hopefully, additional chronological and cultural evidence will shed more light on this situation.

In conclusion, the Lindsay Ranch Site seems to represent a seasonal hunting camp which was used intermittently about 1,000 years ago, the dating based on other sites with comparable material.

The rock enclosures at the Lindsay Ranch Site represent at least one form of protection utilized by the seasonal Woodland hunters in the area; another form of shelter utilized was the small cave shelter which occurs along the lower margins of the Front Range.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of people cooperated in the various phases of field investigation, analysis, and report writing. The site is named after the late George W. Lindsay, on the request of his widow, Mrs. George W. Lindsay, who gave permission for us to excavate. I am indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Lutz, who presently operate the Lindsay Ranch, and to Al Brooks and his son.

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