

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING ALONG CERRILLOS ROAD,
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO**

**by
Laurel Teresa Wallace**

**OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES
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Laurel Teresa Wallace

Submitted by
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ARCHAEOLOGY NOTES 169

ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

At the request of the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, a limited archaeological testing program of a single possible hearth was conducted by the Office of Archaeological Studies, Museum of New Mexico, in the right-of-way on the east side of Cerrillos Road, near the intersection of Interstate 25. The work was completed in 2 days, on November 17 and 18, 1994. The results of the testing indicate that this site has no further potential for information important to the prehistory of the area. No further archaeological work is recommended.

MNM Project No. 41.593
Archaeological Excavation Permit No. SE-105
NMSHTD Project Nos. TPS-001-4(21)48, SP-OF-011-4(201)
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INTRODUCTION

At the request of the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, a limited archaeological testing program was conducted by the Office of Archaeological Studies, Museum of New Mexico, on a possible hearth eroding out of the highway right-of-way at the southern end of Cerrillos Road (NM 14), in Santa Fe County, New Mexico. The site (LA 106196) was located on the eastern edge of Cerrillos Road, approximately 0.5 km north of the Interstate 25 intersection with Cerrillos Road, and 0.2 km south of the Arroyo de los Chamisos (Fig. 1).

Site LA 106196 was recorded by Cibola Research Consultants in August of 1994, as part of a proposed widening and improvement of a 2.3-mile section of Cerrillos Road. The site was described as a single hearth defined by dark staining and fire-cracked rock, of probable prehistoric affinity.

Field investigations were conducted on November 17 and 18, 1994, by Laurel Wallace, assisted by Dorothy Zamora, Jenny Noble, and Joy Beasley. Yvonne Oakes served as principal investigator. Figures were drafted by Ann Noble, and the text was edited by Robin Gould. Testing was conducted under Archaeological Excavation Permit SE-105.

Time spent on the actual site location included 11 hours for 4 archaeologists. Hand-excavated test units were used to investigate subsurface deposits at this site. Test units were placed around the potential hearth and upslope at the top of the terrace.

The project area includes the SE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$, of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 18, T 16N, R 9E, UTM Zone 13, E406520, N3041450.

Current listings of the New Mexico Cultural Resource Information System (NMCRIS), the *New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties*, and the *National Register of Historic Places* were consulted, revealing no state or National Register properties within the project area. A single archaeological site was found in the NMCRIS files within the project area. This site was located on the western edge of Cerrillos Road, just north of the Interstate 25 intersection. The site was identified in a 1963 survey as a single hearth exposed in the road cut. This site was not relocated in 1994, with the assumption that it was removed by frontage road development.

This report complies with the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project area is located on the lower piedmont of the Sangre de Cristo range, within the Arroyo de los Chamisos drainage system. The project area is located on a road-cut terrace, 1,923 m (6,410 ft) in elevation. Local topography alternates between rolling terraces and alluvial plains inclined towards the Rio Grande (Kelley 1980:15).

Alluvial materials consisting of ancient and modern gravels were present in the slope wash and terrace deposits. These materials overlay Tertiary volcanics, Cenozoic sediments, and Precambrian basement rock.

Climate

The yearly weather conditions are influenced by the surrounding mountain ranges, which block maritime moisture and give the area a semiarid climate. The Gulf of Mexico air mass provides 70 percent of the total annual precipitation for the Santa Fe area during warm season thunderstorms. Moisture from winter precipitation arrives from eastward-moving low-pressure cells from the northern Pacific, producing large amounts of snow on the highest peaks of the Sangre de Cristo (Kelley 1980:27-29). Annual precipitation ranges from 229-254 mm (9-10 inches), with a mean snowfall of 35.6 cm (14 inches). The mean yearly temperature is 10.5 degrees C (51 degrees F, Kelley 1980:112).

Biotic Resources

Descriptions of biotic resources were taken from a special issue of "Desert Plants" (Brown 1982), including detailed information on the biotic communities of the Southwest, with contributions from several biologists working for state and federal agencies. The descriptions that follow list the flora and fauna seen by biologic experts from specific biomes, and are intended as accurate scientific descriptions of a biotic community, beyond the constraints of the few meters of biotic resources encountered during the immediate project area. Help in locating the project area to its proper biome came from OAS staff botanist, Mollie S. Toll.

The project area is located in a transitional area between the Great Basin Conifer Woodland and Great Basin Grassland biomes. One-seed juniper and Rocky Mountain piñon are the dominant trees, and are one of the most extensive vegetative types in the Southwest. Habitats tend to be rocky with thin soils predominating. The principal contact is with grassland composed of grasses and shrubs (Brown 1982:52-53). In this location, mixed and short-grass communities dominate, including blue grama or other grammas, along with buffalo grass, Indian rice grass, galleta grass, prairie Junegrass, Plains lovegrass, vine mesquite grass, wolftail or Texas timothy, and alkali sacaton. Shrubs such as four-wing saltbush, sagebrush, winterfat, wild rose, cholla, soapweed, prairie sumac, rabbitbrush, and snakeweed are also present (Brown 1982:117). Several cacti are

found in this area, including the Plains prickly pear, chollas, hedgehogs, a pincushion, and the grama-grass cactus. Larger Grassland mammals include the pronghorn and bison, while the list of smaller mammals is quite long. Prairie dogs, thirteen-lined ground squirrel, swift fox, Plains pocket gopher, and Plains harvest mouse are common and have adapted to spending most of their time underground. These burrowing mammals provide a habitat for a large snake fauna. The bullsnake and the prairie rattlesnake are common to prairie-dog towns. Other reptiles and amphibians include the Plains spadefoot, Great Plains toad, lesser earless lizard, southern prairie lizard, Great Plains skink, prairie-lined racerunner, and western box turtle.

Some of the birds most characteristic of Plains grasslands are peripheral as nesting species in the Southwest. These include the prairie chicken, upland sandpiper, mountain plover, lark bunting, grasshopper sparrow, and the long-billed curlew. Other grassland species like the meadowlarks, prairie falcon, and burrowing owl are found throughout this biome and other open landscapes (Brown 1982:121).

LOCAL PREHISTORY AND HISTORY

Paleoindian Period

The Paleoindian peoples were big-game hunters who entered the Southwest approximately 10,000-12,000 years ago. Their use of distinctive projectile points, such as Clovis and Folsom points, are significant temporal indicators for this period. No known Paleoindian sites have been noted in the Santa Fe area (Elliott 1988:12). Isolated artifacts have been recorded in and near Santa Fe and on the Pajarito Plateau, which may have been dropped by Paleoindians, or found by later peoples and brought into the area (Peckham 1984:276).

Archaic Period

The Archaic period dates from 5500 B.C. to A.D. 600. It is characterized as a hunting and gathering lifeway, with mobile bands of 25 or more people who moved through areas on a seasonal basis, taking advantage of game and wild plant foods. Archaic peoples lived in rock shelters, simple brush huts, and other temporary shelters. Six Archaic sites are noted in the Santa Fe area, generally occurring on the elevated margins of the Santa Fe River and its tributary arroyos (Elliott 1988:13). Within this area of the Southwest, the Oshara Tradition, as defined by Irwin-Williams (1973) has been the standard for lithic artifact sequencing. The sequence of phases is Jay (5500-4800 B.C.), Bajada (4800-3300 B.C.), San Jose (3300-1800 B.C.), Armijo (1800-800 B.C.), and En Medio (800 B.C.-A.D. 400). The latter two phases are generally considered to be the heaviest occupations for Archaic peoples in the Santa Fe area, although Irwin-Williams found the Bajada phase to be heavily occupied as well. Maize is first seen in this area by around 1000 B.C. (the Armijo phase), from sources in Mexico. The first attempts to grow corn in the northern Southwest did not immediately change the Archaic pattern of hunting and gathering (Elliott 1988:15).

Pueblo Period

The transition from mobile lifeways to more permanent habitation sites began by at least A.D. 600, but perhaps as early as A.D. 400. These early habitation sites consist of semisubterranean pithouses, which involve extensive labor to create. This suggests that maize horticulture and a general reliance on farming required a commitment to a specific locality. The population during the early part of this period was small, dispersed, and mainly settled along permanent streams draining the western slopes of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains between Santa Fe and Española (Peckham 1984:276). The first ceramic vessels were Lino Gray, Lino Black-on-gray, and San Marcial Black-on-white, brought in by immigrants or traded in from areas to the west. Southern pottery styles from the Mogollon area, like plain brown wares and red-slipped brown wares, are also found in association with these early gray wares. Projectile points are the large corner-notched "Basketmaker" styles (Elliott 1988:16-17).

The Late Developmental period (A.D. 900-1175) is well represented in the Upper Rio Grande area. In the Santa Fe area, these sites are found on the first terrace above the Santa Fe River flood plain. These sites range from one or more pithouses and surface rooms to large, 500 room sites. Occasionally, one of these rooms will have features similar to those found in kivas, and structures similar to great kivas have also been noted (Elliott 1988:17-18). Temporally diagnostic ceramics from this period are Red Mesa Black-on-white--a mineral-painted pottery associated with Chaco Canyon in northwestern New Mexico. By the eleventh century, other mineral-painted ceramics, such as Chaco II Black-on-white and Kwahe'e Black-on-white, indicate a continuing strong influence from the San Juan Basin (Peckham 1984:276).

The Coalition period (A.D. 1175-1325) marks the change from mineral to vegetal (carbon) paint on decorated pottery. The two diagnostic ceramic types are Santa Fe Black-on-white and Wiyo Black-on-white. A population explosion in the area can only be explained by the arrival of immigrants from the west or south, in response to many years of drought in the Chaco, Mesa Verde, and southwestern parts of New Mexico (Peckham 1984:279). A later occurring ceramic, Galisteo Black-on-white, is similar to Mesa Verde Black-on-white; possible evidence of a Mesa Verde immigration. Surface rooms ranging from 13 to 30 rooms, but not uncommonly up to 200 rooms, are found at this time. Pithouses were still constructed in this time period, but are not as common as surface rooms. At least six pueblo sites dating to this period are found along the Santa Fe River (Elliott 1988:18-19; Peckham 1984:279).

The largest sites in the Santa Fe area, such as Sapawe and San Marcos Pueblo, date to the Classic period (A.D. 1325-1600). This is the phase that represents the most complexity, in terms of population density, site size, specialization, and regional interaction. Large, multiroom and multistoried pueblos defined the architectural style of this period (Elliott 1988:19). Kivas now have rows of holes in the floor used for anchoring vertical looms. Most pueblos had at least one Great Kiva, measuring up to 14 m in diameter, with an inferred community ceremonial function. The concentration of larger populations into complex town sites may be a result of authoritarian control for needed public works, particularly for water control. Check dams and gridded gardens enabled large areas of marginal land to be farmed, while large reservoirs constructed near the pueblo provided drinking water and water needed for construction purposes. Ditch systems and water diversion from major rivers used for crop irrigation were also practiced and noted by early Spanish chroniclers (Peckham 1984:280). Around A.D. 1325, glaze-painted ceramics were made in the Upper Rio Grande area. Agua Fria Glaze-on-red, Cienegilla Glaze-on-yellow, and Cienegilla polychrome were made in the Santa Fe area by A.D. 1350. These glaze wares were widely traded throughout the Upper and Middle Rio Grande areas. Black-on-white wares continued to be made, and the "Biscuit" wares were also made during this period (Elliott 1988:20-21).

Historic Period

The Coronado Expedition of 1540-1541 was the first European contact in the Santa Fe area. By this time, the Santa Fe area was essentially unpopulated. In 1598, Don Juan de Oñate established the first colony in New Mexico using old pueblo sites as headquarters; first at San Juan de los Caballeros (the old pueblo Oke), and then across the Rio Grande at San Gabriel (the old pueblo of Yuqueyunque). Eventually, the Spanish relocated their capitol to what is now Santa Fe,

perhaps as early as 1607-1608, but definitely by 1610. Although the Santa Fe area was essentially abandoned by native peoples, one of the reasons that the fledgling colony had to relocate was that cultivable land around San Gabriel was in use by Pueblo people. The construction of Santa Fe was accomplished through forced Indian labor, and consisted of a small village of one-story adobe buildings placed around a rectangular plaza. The most important building was the Casa Real, or the Palace of the Governors, as it later came to be called. During the period of 1610-1680, conflict between religious and civil authorities over jurisdictional differences created an unstable political situation. In 1680, the Pueblo, Navajo, Apache, Manso, and other tribes united to overthrow the Spanish. After the Spanish Governor Otermin was forced to abandon the town, most of the buildings were destroyed, except for the Casa Real, to make room for cornfields. Multistoried, pueblo-style room blocks were erected in the plaza area. The reconquest of Santa Fe was accomplished by Don Diego de Vargas in 1693, and by 1694, there were 1,100 colonists in Santa Fe. All of the Pueblos of the Upper Rio Grande were finally controlled by 1696. The eighteenth century was characterized by almost continual raids by the Comanches, Apaches, Navajos, and Utes, who attacked Pueblo and Spanish settlements alike. Many pueblos were abandoned during this time, and smallpox epidemics caused much loss of life among the Pueblo people (Elliott 1988:22-29).

Spanish rule in New Mexico ended in 1846, when the United States declared war on Mexico, and American forces entered Santa Fe without firing a shot. Fort Marcy was built at this time, in anticipation of armed resistance. In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, and New Mexico was officially proclaimed a Territory of the United States in 1850 (Elliott 1988:36).

TESTING METHODS

The project area surface was intensively surveyed in transects, with crew members spaced 1 m apart, prior to excavation. No surface artifacts were noted, and no fire-cracked rock was noted surrounding the stain or in the immediate vicinity of the stain. A north-south baseline was established from the main site datum, with six 1-by-1-m test units excavated around the hearth, and one test unit excavated on the top of the terrace (Fig. 2). Each test unit was excavated with hand tools. Soil was removed in arbitrary 10-cm levels unless natural stratigraphic breaks were found. Test units ended when sterile soils were reached. Soil removed from test units was screened through ¼-inch mesh. One botanical and one soil sample were taken, assigned field specimen numbers, and taken to the Office of Archaeological Studies for analysis. Each excavation unit was described level by level on a form, including matrix descriptions, field specimen numbers, and ending depths. Photographs were taken of the site and feature. A plan map was produced using a transit. The plan map includes locations of test units and current topographic features.

Test pits were backfilled when the excavation was completed. All field and analysis records are on file at the Archeological Records Managements Section of the Historic Preservation Division.

Testing Results at LA 106196

Testing demonstrated that this dark stain was an eroded asphalt dump. No surface fire-cracked rock was noted after intensive surface examination. Excavation exposing the stain revealed many pieces of heat-altered and tar-covered rocks that were specific to the stain area. At the west and eroded downslope side of the stain, styrofoam cup pieces and a sugar packet from McDonald's were noted at the base level of the stain. Subsurface excavation around the exterior edges of the stain revealed more heat-altered, tar-covered rocks. In the test unit upslope, cement fragments and pieces of orange flagging tape were found subsurface at 10-20 cm. No artifacts were found on the surface or subsurface from any of the test units. A corn cob was collected from the surface, even though it appeared to be of modern origin, and brought to the botanist for analysis. It was confirmed to be of modern origin, but was analyzed for comparative purposes.

The whole project area, including the total width of the right-of-way, had been cut and earth moved around by mechanical equipment. Essentially all of the project area was disturbed. Layers of earth pushed down from above were noted in the excavation of the stain area, and the test unit on top of the terrace revealed levels of disturbed fill. This investigation concludes that during some previous Cerrillos Road asphalt paving and cutting of the steep slope, a small pile of asphalt was left half way up the slope. Either the asphalt was mixed with rock, thus heat-altering the rocks, or a hot mix of asphalt was dumped in this spot, heat-altering the native gravel present.

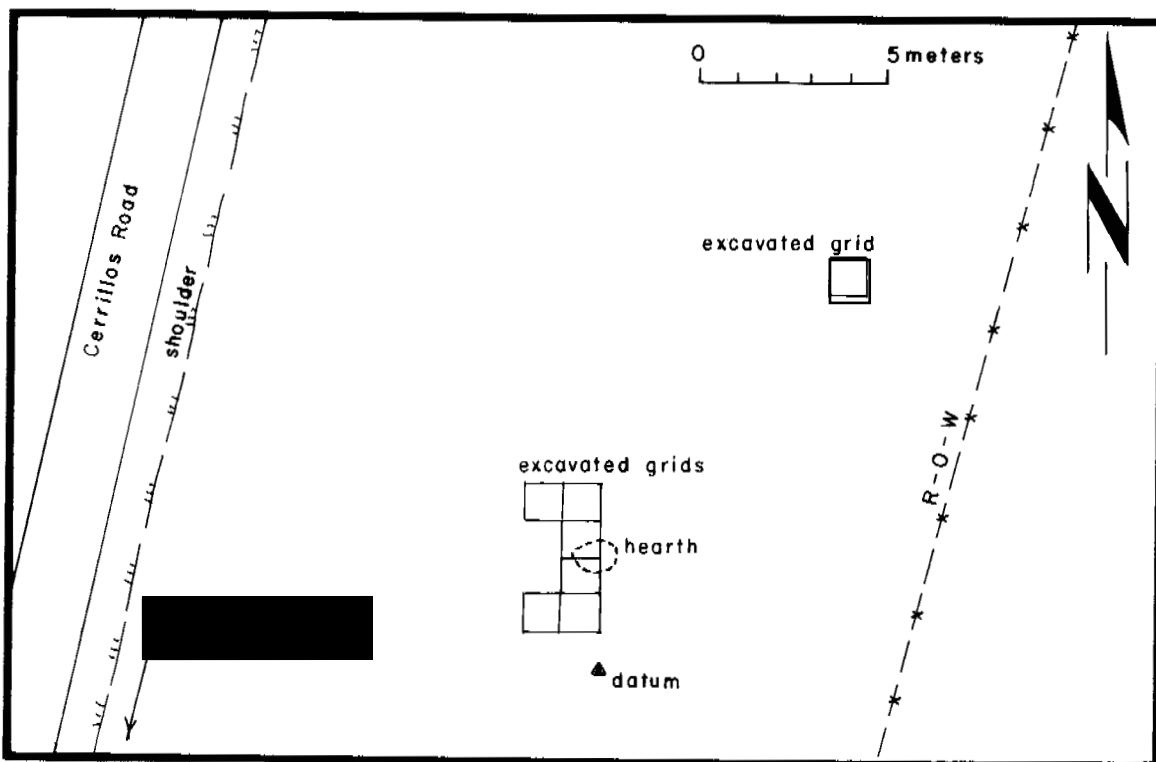


Figure 2. LA 106196 site map.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No cultural features or deposits were found after archaeological testing that are likely to add important information to the prehistory of the Santa Fe region. No further investigations are needed at LA 106196.

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