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THE ANCIENT HOUSE PEOPLE OF THE BRUSH
CREEK REGION, IN NORTHEASTERN
UTAH

ALBERT B. REAGAN

The Brush creek region is on the southeastern tip of the Uintah mountains, east of Green River, in northeastern Utah. Here, and in the Greendale district over the mountains to the northwestward, a house building people built their houses in the ages long ago. However, they were not the first people in the region; for they had been preceded by the Basket Makers who left their crudely made, square-shouldered pictographs of human beings on the cliff walls, and by an earth-lodge Puebloan people who left at least six earth-lodge villages to attest their having been in the region.

The houses they left, eleven of which were examined, are nearly all somewhat squarish in outline, of from fifteen to twenty-seven feet to a side. One of them now and then has a "vestibule" on its east side, the others being circular. They were all built of undressed river cobbles, which were laid up in thick walls chinked with mud mortar.

About each of these houses, at varying distances, there are stone mounds, and circular spaces inclosed in cobbles, each ranging from five to ten feet in diameter; and intermingled with these are smaller, irregular areas which are inclosed with slab-rocks set on end. The former were probably shrines; the latter, fire-boxes in out-residences of perishable material, as each was found to contain a layer of burned clay over which were charcoal and ashes, under the sand that now fills it. In the houses are quantities of charcoal; and scattered about them are milling, hammer, hand-hammer, and smoothing stones, arrow points, quantities of chipped stuff, stone plug-stoppers for jars, stone knives, lance or spear heads, stone drills, an occasional pestle, gaming balls, an occasional whole jar (found in excavating), stone agricultural implements, and fragments of coarse, undecorated, smoothed, gray pottery.

The people who built these houses were an agricultural people as is attested by their extensive irrigation ditches, one of which is now four steps wide and is still one and one-half feet in depth.

The ditches that can now be traced are many miles in length in the aggregate. Three of them have been cleaned out by the white settlers and are now in use, after they had been in disuse for hundreds of years. The remains of a reservoir with the foundation of a double rock wall of a dam, fifty feet in length, the walls being four feet apart, are also still visible. Corn and pumpkins seem to have been the crops mostly raised by these people on the land thus irrigated, as is attested by the storage caves of the region.

That the people who made these houses were a "small house" people, though they used caves when available, is very evident. The small, circular structures and stone-edged circles, squares and rectangles, and their rock-pile mounds would, however, seem to correspond to the shrines of the Small House People (Shrines of the Jemez mountains, Shrines of Cerro del Muerto, and Shrines of the Two Rivers) of Northern Arizona and would seem to indicate that the people of this region were a somewhat similar people, except that they were possibly a little farther advanced in civilization and less advanced in the art of pottery making. And again the structures they left were probably erected in the latter part of Pueblo I or at about the beginning of Pueblo II horizon, though the crude pottery of their makers and its scantiness might place them still earlier in the time scale. In other words, the people who made these houses were in their heyday sometime between 500 A.D. and the beginning of the Christian era.

In closing, it may be said that these finds were made while the writer was doing archeological work for the Laboratory of Anthropology at Santa Fe this last summer.

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