

Arizona Archaeological Field Trip

April 11- 14, 2014

Twenty Sacramento Archeological Society Members stepped back in time to visit notable archeological sites in the Flagstaff and Sedona area on April 11 through 14. The main period of investigation through these sites was A.D. 700 to 1300 when a group of people identified as Sinagua farmed in the arid land and lived in pueblo structures. This people abandoned the sites about A.D. 1300.

Museum of Northern Arizona

The first stop was the Museum of Northern Arizona founded in 1928 by Dr. Harold Sellers Colton and Mary Russell Ferrell Colton. We saw artifacts from the *Ethnographic*. (historic Native American) and *Prehistoric* Collections. The *Ethnographic* Collections contain significant holdings of baskets, katsina dolls, and jewelry. Smaller collections represent the material culture of the Navajo, Zuni, Hopi and Pai. The *Prehistoric* Collections focus on the ancient Puebloan cultures and include rope, arrow points, ceramic vessels, and many other types of artifacts of the Colorado Plateau. www.musnaz.org



Museum of Northern Arizona



Anthropology Section

Walnut Canyon National Monument

Archaic peoples probably occupied the canyon seasonally for thousands of years. Starting about 1400 years ago Sinagua people appeared. They first built one-room pit houses near their fields where they employed dry-farming techniques to grow corn, squash, and beans. Dwellings sheltered by overhanging cliffs in the canyon were developed from about A.D. 1125 to 1250. By A.D. 1250 they moved to new villages a few miles southeast along Anderson Mesa. It is generally believed that they were eventually assimilated into Hopi culture.

We were able to walk along the pueblo dwellings in the canyon and observe pit houses on the plateau.



Walnut Canyon



Walnut Canyon Pueblo

Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument

In about A.D 1065 Sunset Crater erupted and disrupted life in immediate area. “The lava flows and erupting cinders that followed forced these farmers to vacate the rocky lands they had cultivated for 400 years. A few generations later, at Wupatki and nearby Walnut Canyon, families returned to grow crops for another 100 years in the shadow of Sunset Crater.”*

*Wupatki and Sunset Crater Volcano National Monuments, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior Brochure



Lava Flow from Sunset Crater



Sunset Crater with Spatter cone

Wupatki National Monuments.

Before about A.D. 1150, this area remained a crossroads between established groups of Sinagua, Cohonia, and Kayenta peoples. In a warm and dry period, dense populations flourished in the Wupatki area. By A.D. 1180 thousands of people were farming on the Wupatki landscape. By A.D. 1250, when the volcano had quieted, pueblos stood empty, the people of Wupatki had moved on.

The Wupatki landscape contained homes ranging from one story, single-family structures to the approximately 100 room Wupatki Pueblo, and a multi-level, high-rise with about 100 rooms.

We explored the Wukoki Pueblo, Wupatki Pueblo and Lomaki Pueblo. It is amazing to find the ruins in such good shape after more than 700 years of weathering and vandalism.



Wukoki Pueblo



Wupatki Pueblo



Wupatki Pueblo with SAS group



Lomaki Pueblo

Palatki Heritage Site.

Cliff dwellings of the Sinagua were built in the Verde Valley between A.D. 1100 and 1400. The visited pueblo consisted of a complex of 20 rooms. Approximately 40 to 80 people lived at Palatki. They grew corn, squash, beans, and cotton.

The exceptional rock art (pictographs and petroglyphs) includes art created over 6000 years. The pictograph figures can generally be attributed as follows: archaic (geometric designs), Sinagua (red), Pai (white, yellow, black). Shadows on a wheel figure were shown by Ken Zoll to mark solstice and equinox.



Palatki Pueblo



At Palatki Ken Zoll pointing to pictographs



SAS group looking at pictographs at Palatki



Palatki pictographs



Astronomical figure



Multiple pictographs

Honanki Heritage

Honanki meaning “Bear House” in the Hopi language is located in the Verde Valley near Palatki site. Honanki site has both pueblos and pictographs. One set of rooms is located in a large alcove and have been reconstructed over time. There were more than 60 ground floor rooms and

another row of rooms in front of what is visible today, bring the total to 72 rooms. The Sinagua and ancestors of Hopi lived here from about A.D. 1130 to 1280 based on tree-ring-dating from a wooden beam in the ruin. Later Yavapai and Apache people lived here. Pictographs dating between 1400 and 1875 CE can be attributed to these two groups.



Honanki pueblo

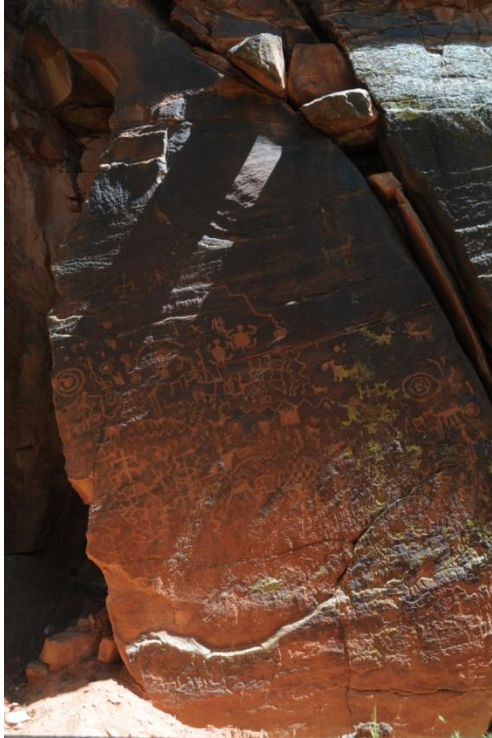


Honanki pictographs

V-Bar-V Heritage Site.

This well-preserved site includes more than a thousand individual petroglyphs (Beaver Creek style) on 13 panels. Unlike many rock art sites, petroglyphs here comprise only one style and do not include early Archaic Period or later Yavapai and Apache art.

Ken Zoll has discovered that shadows on the rock panel of petroglyphs highlight astronomical events such as solstice and planting time. For more information see “Sinagua Sunwatchers”, Kenneth Zoll, VVAC Press, Camp Verde, 2008.



V-Bar-V petroglyph with early shadow



Later shadow on petroglyph panel



V-Bar-V SAS group in front of petroglyphs

Montezuma Castle.

The Sinagua are credited with above-ground masonry dwellings when they moved south into the Verde Valley around A.D. 1100. The castle was constructed and occupied from about A.D. 1200 to 1450 and has been extensively reconstructed. Starting around A.D. 1100, the Sinagua built the large, multi-room complexes in the Verde Valley, including Montezuma Castle, Montezuma Well, Tuzigoot, the cliff dwellings around Sedona, and Walnut Canyon (near Flagstaff). After about 300 years of habitation, the sites were abandoned between A.D. 1400 and 1450, a period that marks the collapse of major civilizations in the American southwest.



Montezuma's Castle



Montezuma's Castle lower pueblo

Montezuma Well

The "well" is a cenote (sinkhole) that is replenished with natural water flow of 1.5 million gallons per day. On the rim of the "well" are cliff dwellings; the "well" is habitat for five unique species found nowhere else on earth. The "well" area includes a pit house.



Montezuma's Well



Montezuma's Well Pueblo



Skip Larsen describing of Montezuma's Well



Montezuma's Well Cave at Water Level

Tuzigoot National Monument

Tuzigoot which is Apache for “crooked water” is the remnant of a Sinagua village built between A.D. 1000 and 1400. It sits on a long ridge in an oxbow of Verde River. The original pueblo was two stories high with 87 ground-floor rooms. Entry was by ladders through roof openings. The site was excavated in the 1930's and reconstructed as shown today.



Tuzigoot Pueblo



Group exploring Tuzigoot