

Goat Camp Ruin Interpretive Development Project

Progress Report

Season 3 Operations from 10/11/2014 through 9/7/2015

Arizona State Museum Permit 2012-107ps 7/17/2012

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September 7, 2015

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Fieldwork

After the scheduling difficulties and delays experienced during Season 2 (Wood, 2014), the project was able to address those issues and make considerable progress toward implementing the goals established in the Excavation and Stabilization Plan (Wood 2012) with continued excavation work in Rooms F1 and F15 and the initiation of work in Room F6 (Fig. 1). In particular, a great deal of progress was made toward understanding the site's architecture and construction techniques (see Fig. 2), something that has not consistently been addressed by previous excavations in the Payson area, but which is vital for planning future stabilization. As always, this work was performed by volunteer members of the Arizona Archaeological Society (primarily the Rim Country, Desert Foothills, and Santan Chapters) under professional supervision provided by myself, Deil Lundin, Ron Ryden, and Connie Darby.

Room F1

Excavation of the interior of this feature was completed the previous season and the floor protected with geocloth and partially backfilled. During season 3 the excavation focus was on wall definition in order to understand the construction methods employed in its building. Three quarters of the perimeter of the wall were excavated to original ground surface (OGS) and in several areas below OGS to make that determination (see Fig. 2). This excavation was also extended for several meters along a wall (F. 1a) that intersects the room. It was discovered that one side of the wall was built directly on the OGS while the other was built on cultural deposits filling some kind of pit structure which was left undefined but which will be examined next Season.

Room F6

After excavating a test unit in the SE ¼, the remainder of that unit was excavated to floor, uncovering few in situ artifacts and only one floor feature, a well preserved clay basin hearth inside the entry way. The NW ¼ and SW1/4 were partially excavated, but the floor in those units remains to be exposed in Season 4. While excavating the SW ¼, several anomalies were noted in the upper fill and examined more closely. These consisted of an unusually high number of projectile points, a metate fragment, and an arrangement of rocks that were unlike those used in

wall construction. As a result, we were able to identify what appears to be an Apache hearth and portions of a poorly defined but lightly compacted activity surface surrounding the hearth. Given the ephemeral nature of the surface it seems likely that it had at one time extended farther across the rest of the room and represented a brief reoccupation of the room long after its original abandonment, possibly related to the construction and use of the three small presumably Apache roasting pits on the site.

Room F15

Excavation of the interior of this room was finally completed. Unlike Room F1, which had burned and had multiple artifacts in situ on the floor beneath a thick layer of burned roof debris, Room F15 did not burn and its compacted clay floor was clean, the only notable exception being a well-preserved clay-lined basin hearth. The fill, on the other hand, was full of unstratified trash and looked like it had been used as a dump. A small sub-floor unit opened up adjacent to the large juniper stump that disrupted the center of the room identified a second floor several centimeters below the first. Further examination of the floor indicated that the upper surface was not consistently added across the entire room, but only, apparently, in the vicinity of the entry way, hearth, and left side of the room as it was entered. While not ruling out the possibility of one day attempting to expose the original floor, it was decided, given the primary goals of the Excavation and Stabilization Plan, not to go any further. The floor as it was exposed and its hearth were protected with geocloth and partially backfilled. During the course of this work it was discovered that the back wall of the room had collapsed in antiquity, something that actually aided our attempts to understand the room's construction (and may help explain the final use of the room as a trash dump). As with Room F1, several sections of the outer perimeter of the wall were excavated to original ground surface (OGS) and in several areas below OGS to make that determination (see Fig. 2).

In addition to the work at the features listed above, several new features have been added to the site inventory from excavation or continued examination of the site surface.

- F36 Partial rectangular masonry room outline SW of Room F2
- F37 Oval masonry surface room outline SE of Room F12
- F38 Partial oval masonry surface room outline SE of F37
- F39 possible masonry retaining wall SE of Room 13
- F40 Apache(?) hearth in upper fill of Room F6
- F41 Partially compacted activity surface associated with F40
- F42 Subsurface cultural deposit below wall F1a, possibly a storage pit of pithouse

Features 36-39 are scheduled for definition and mapping in Season 4; Features 40 and 41 were excavated in Season 3, as described above; F42 is scheduled for definition and excavation in Season 4.

Artifact Processing and Analysis

All of the artifacts from the excavations done in Season 3 were washed and re-bagged. In addition, rough sort analysis based on the Checklist of Pottery Types for the Tonto National Forest (Wood 1987) was completed on all of the recovered ceramics.

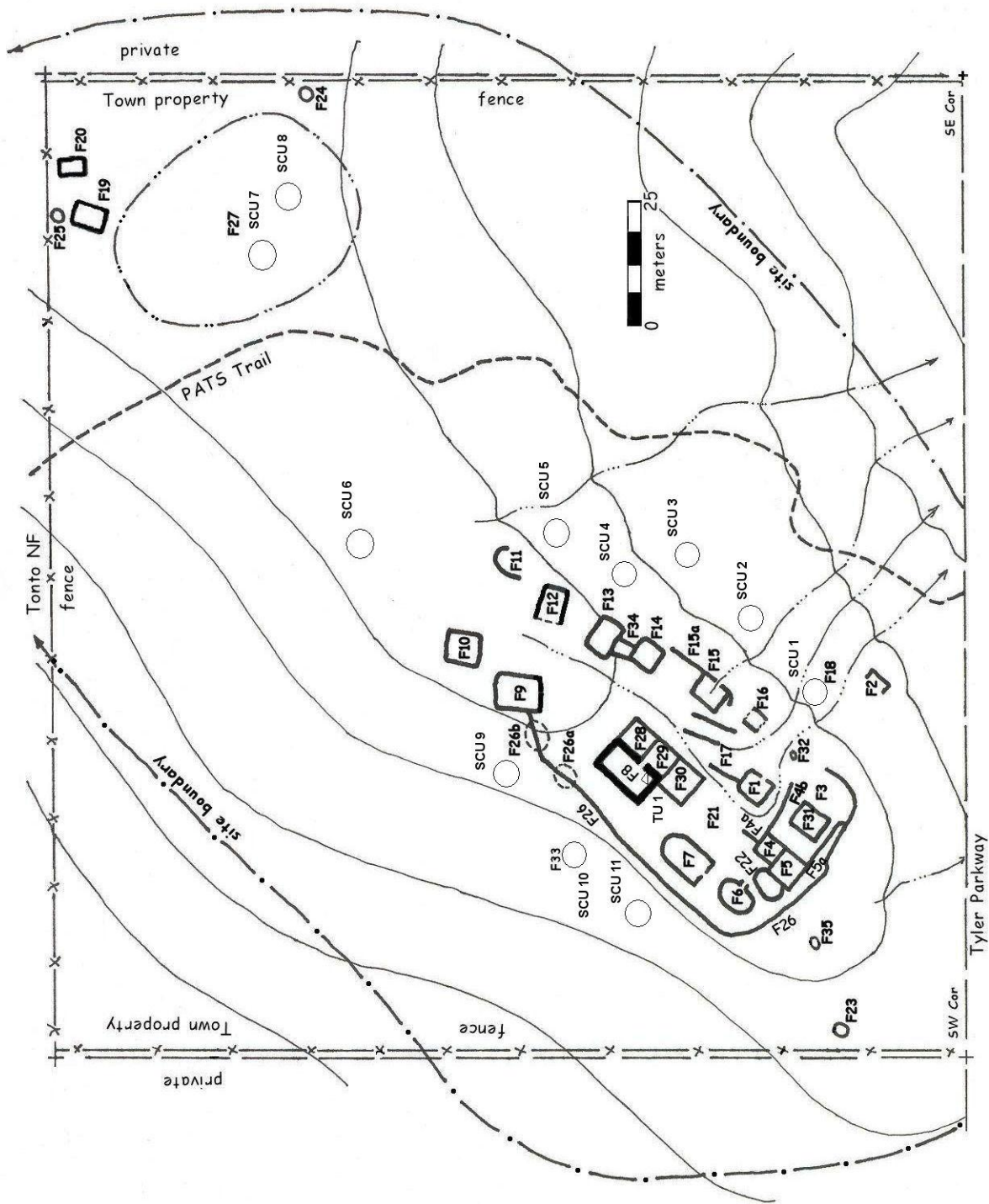


Fig. 1. Showing the final locations of the Surface Collection Units (SCU) and the Test Unit (TU) in room F8. Excavations in Season 3 were carried out in rooms F1, F6, and F15.

Total recovery of ceramics to date amounts to 14,393 sherds. 10,702 of these are plainware (74.4%), 3,520 and redware (24.4%), and the remaining 171 sherds (1.2%) are decorated and/or imported, including imported Gila Plain, Gila variety pottery from the Salt-Gila Basin. The bulk of the plain and red pottery appears to be local, though several varieties from the Sierra Anchas, Tonto Basin, and other relatively nearby central Arizona sources were recognized during the rough sort.

Over 70% of the imported/decorated pottery came from Hohokam sources in the Salt-Gila Basin; in fact, over half of it was comprised of buffwares, beginning with Snaketown R/b and continuing through Gila Butte R/b, Santa Cruz R/b, and Sacaton R/b. Other decorated wares that occurred in much smaller quantities and percentages were Tusayan Whiteware, Little Colorado Whiteware, and Cibola Whiteware, in that order. Dating from the few whiteware sherds identifiable to type ranged from the AD700s (Kana'a B/w, White Mound B/w) to the mid-1200s (Snowflake B/w, Walnut B/w).

Curiously enough, the total of lithic artifacts, while not yet fully counted, appears to be less than 10% of the ceramic total.

Other artifacts recovered to date include 54 pieces of ground stone (mostly mano and metate fragments and hammerstones, but also a whole and a partial $\frac{3}{4}$ groove ax), 18 projectile points, most of which are whole, 25 beads, tinklers, bracelet fragments and other jewelry items (mostly shell but also including turquoise, argillite, and other carved stone), 6 quartz crystals (possibly associated with the Apache re-occupation), fragments from two different slate palettes, at least 4 tabular rhyolite and schist mescal knife fragments, and at least 7 charcoal samples suitable for dating – as well as carved antler artifacts, a ceramic spindle whorl, and a variety of samples of burnt daub and several different pigment(?) minerals.

During the upcoming 4th season, we will continue to process new artifact collections, expand our analysis of the pottery, and initiate analyses of the lithics, ground stone, shell, and other material recovered to date. This effort will likely continue during the summer of 2016 after the close of the spring field session. If funding becomes available, we will again attempt to contract radiocarbon analyses for samples taken from room F1 and any new samples that may be acquired.

Time and Value

To date, a total of 2780 hours have been contributed by the volunteer staff and crew, not counting travel for those who are not full time Payson residents. At a conservative in-kind valuation of \$20 per hour of volunteer labor, the Arizona Archaeological Society has contributed the equivalent of \$55,600 to the project on behalf of the Town of Payson over the last three years.

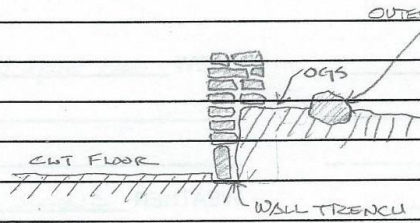
Some Preliminary Conclusions

Based on the architecture and ceramics we have observed so far, Goat Camp Ruin appears to have been founded ca. 750-800 AD by Hohokam colonists from the Salt-Gila Basin – or local Central Arizona Tradition folk with very strong Hohokam ties. We still haven't seen any of the Preclassic architecture, but the surface masonry houses are consistent with such an interpretation. The ceramics clearly indicate that the major outside influence or trade partner for Goat Camp was Hohokam, the next closest being the folks making Tusayan Whiteware. However, there appears to be a clear drop off in trade with anyone after about 1150 or so.

WALL CONSTRUCTION NOTES

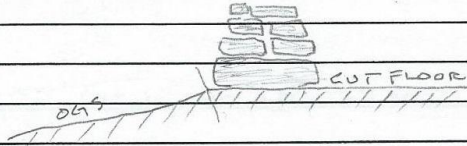
ROOM 1

NE WALL



NW - SW WALLS
LIKE NE WALL

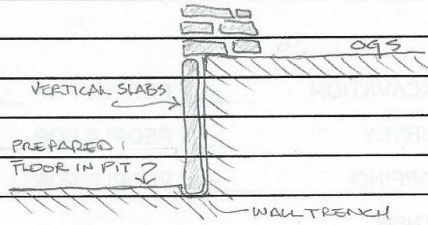
SE WALL
(FRONT)



MASONRY FULL HEIGHT

ROOM 6

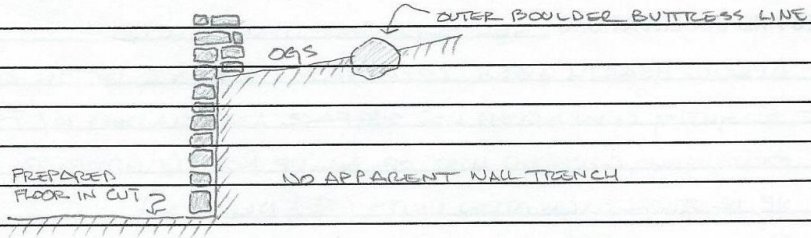
ALL WALLS



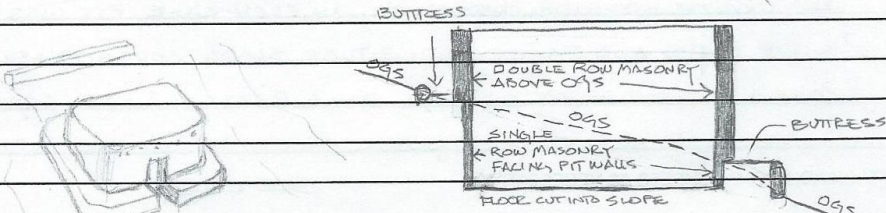
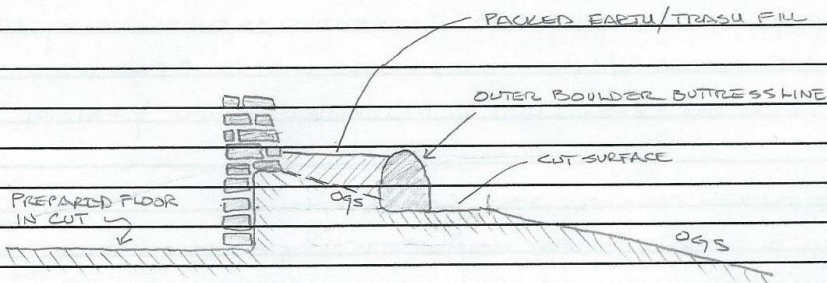
MASONRY FULL HEIGHT

ROOM 15

N WALL



S WALL
(FRONT)



NOTE: Rm 15 HAS 2 FLOORS ABOUT 4 CM APART

Fig. 2 Field notes regarding wall construction techniques at Goat Camp Ruin

The original hypothesis for the development of the village put its origins in the upper part of the site, the area identified as F27, after which that area was abandoned in favor of the point of the ridge, where the Classic Period architecture is now concentrated. The F27 area contained a high percentage of buffwares and early plainwares and whitewares with virtually no redwares in the dense surface trash, and no visible surface architecture. In the Payson area, this is usually a pretty conclusive signature for a Preclassic pithouse settlement.

However, the distribution of early buffwares across the site, including their consistent presence in the fill of the later structures excavated so far, suggests otherwise. This, combined with the identification of black/gray organic midden deposits showing up continuously in recent rills and anthills all across the site from F27 all the way down to F6, suggests that at one time, the entire ridge top was occupied. It further suggests that the occupation may actually have begun at the point of the ridge and expanded to the northeast to F27, especially since the earliest buffwares on the site (as well as the latest and all others in between) have so far been found on the south end. If this is the case, towards the end of the Preclassic the Goat Camp settlement extended along the ridge for at least 200 meters, covering approximately 5,000 square meters, making it the largest currently known Preclassic settlement in the Payson area.

The Classic Period portion of the settlement, then, may represent something of a retraction back to the core and a loss of population – or possibly just a compaction of the previously spread out pithouse settlement into a higher density unit on that portion of the ridge having the best defensive advantage.

Obviously, much remains to be discovered and some of these questions will be difficult if not impossible to answer without expanding the excavation area beyond what was proposed in the Plan. Nevertheless, just from what has surfaced to date it is possible to characterize the Goat Camp Ruin site as a very stable settlement location that was occupied continuously from the time of the first Hohokam colonial expansion into central Arizona to the final prehistoric abandonment of the Payson highlands. More work needs to be done....

Outline of Work Proposed For Season 4

Excavation Work

- Room F1 Room 1 is essentially finished. Goals for this season would be to relocate the backdirt and rock piles prior to stabilization. As soon as the eastern backdirt pile is moved, we can excavate F. 32, the slab-lined cist, and perhaps see how it relates to the original ground surface in front of the room.
- Feature 1a The wall intersecting Room 1: excavate the unit we set up on the SE side to determine the nature and extent of the sub-wall cultural deposit encountered last season. Clear and define the rest of the wall.
- Room F6 Complete the SW ¼ to the floor; same for the NW ¼. Cover with geocloth and backfill upon completion (at this point I don't anticipate doing the last ¼ since that would require removing another tree). In addition to the interior excavations, finish defining the entry and continue clearing the exterior of the walls to locate OGS, especially between the entry and Room F22, to determine the relationship between Room F6 and Room F22. Also, trench out to/through the retaining wall at the back of the room.

Room F7 Begin investigations by excavating at least two quarters this season, beginning with the one with the test unit (SE ¼), which should be laid out so as to take in both the early and late walls and the later entry. Clear and define the east wall.

Room F15 Relocate the backdirt and rock piles prior to stabilization.

Room F22 Clear the walls, excavate a 1x1 m. test unit in the NE corner, excavate at least the NE and SW quarters.

Room F31 Clear the walls, excavate a 1x1 m. test unit in the SW corner, excavate at least the NE and SW quarters, including the entry.

F. 36-39 Clear brush and duff to expose walls, map and add to master site map.

Lab Work

Reorganize and upgrade the lab; stay caught up on artifact processing with continued progress on ceramic rough sorting and initiation of description and analyses of lithics, shell, ground stone, etc. Begin type sorting of plain and redwares.

Other Work

Prepare a long term stabilization plan for rooms 1, 6, and 15 that we can begin implementing next season (we may just completely backfill Room F7 over geocloth unless it turns out to be particularly interesting).

Survey/recording of contemporary and earlier sites in the Goat Camp area not already covered by FLEX or ADOT excavations. This will include compiling survey and excavation data from Risser Ruin for comparisons. This may need to get pushed back to the Spring or even next summer.

References

Wood, J. Scott

1987 Checklist of Pottery Types for the Tonto National Forest. The Arizona Archaeologist 21. Phoenix, Arizona

2012 *Excavation and Stabilization Plan for Goat Camp Ruin, Payson, Gila County, Arizona.* Rim Country Chapter, Arizona Archaeological Society, For the Town of Payson Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department, Tonto National Forest Cultural Resources Report 2008-12-58a

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