

SAN JUAN BASIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chapter of Colorado Archaeological Society



FIELD TRIP REPORT

Date: **May 18 - 21, 2017** Destination: **Hopi Land, Rock Art Canyon Ranch, Petrified Forest National Park**

Leaders: **Kathy and Rusty Chamberlain** Number of Participants: **12**

Twelve SJBAS members had a wonderful visit to Hopi Lands. The weather was terrific, sunny and mild. We all travelled to Winslow on our own, arriving on Thursday afternoon or evening. After dinner, we gathered for a campfire at the Homolovi State Park Campground. It threatened rain, but we only had a few sprinkles and a breeze later in the evening. We did what anyone does at a campfire, we reviewed plans for Friday and we told stories. Toward the end, Joan Kellogg remembered a quote she read recently. I paraphrase here, "a campfire makes everyone a storyteller". That was certainly true of us.

FRIDAY

Friday morning the group gathered at the Best Western. Here is the group, Rege and Nancy Leech, Rusty and Kathy Chamberlain, Susan and Don Hicks, Irene Wanner, Joan and Byron Kellogg, Tish and Pete Varney and Jill Tripp. At 9:00 AM we caravanned to Rock Art Canyon Ranch. While this is a working ranch, it has prehistoric Ancestral Puebloan sites, historic Navajo sites and a canyon with flowing water that contains over three thousand petroglyphs. We were met at the ranch's museum by Brantley, the rancher, his granddaughter, Torrie and their dogs. Outside the museum is a rock and desert plant garden and a display farm tools and old cars. Inside the big barn, they have displays for artifacts from prehistory to pioneer times up to today. The first thing Brantley showed us were two rooms of artifacts that have been found on the ranch including complete Anasazi pots, arrow heads, including a Clovis point, and old firearms.

The Canyon

From the ranch museum, Torrie lead us to a room block that had been recently excavated by the U of A field school and then to an historic Navajo site with a female Hogan, a male Hogan and a sweat lodge. But the big deal of this day was the actual canyon. Following a quick lunch overlooking a bend of Chevelon Canyon, we climbed down into the canyon. It was so fantastic, I am lost for words.

Homolovi State Park

We left Rock Art Ranch a little after 2:00PM and caravanned to Homolovi State Park. Well, most of us did. The Kellogg contingent realized they had a tire problem and went into Winslow. Although there have been

earlier periods of occupation, Homol'ovi (the Hopi spelling) was a Hopi town from 1260 to about 1400. They still return there for ceremonies.

We had dinner reservations at La Posada, an historic Fred Harvey hotel later in the evening, so we all returned to camp or hotel to freshen up, rest or get a tire fixed. We gathered at the bar at La Posada between 6:60 and 7:15 or so for drinks and more stories before dinner. Everyone enjoyed the food and fellowship.

SATURDAY

Today was Hopi day. We met our guide, Bertram Tsavadawa, at the Tsakurshovi Arts & Crafts Shop on Second Mesa. The shop has beautiful jewelry, textiles and Kachina figures. Bertram met us at about 9:30. After introductions he told us that Shipaulovi village was having a Kachina dance and that we of the Pahana tribe are welcome attend as long as we are respectful. Bertram spent about 30 minutes on an introduction to the Hopi people and history. He then led us north of Third Mesa to Taawaki Petroglyph site. I estimate cliff wall extends for over a mile.

Bertram showed us around old Oriabi on Third Mesa where he was raised. It is said to be one of the oldest continuously occupied sites in the US. While he was showing us artifacts in front of Aunts house, his mother can out of the Piki House. She had just finished baking a big box of the traditional Hopi paper thin bread. What a great opportunity in interact with a local. She invited us in to see where and how she bakes the bread and how they dry and store their corn. We were all invited to try some of the fresh Piki. Bertram continued our tour showing us the Corn Clan house, the plaza and the ruins of the older part of the village that was abandoned village split between the Traditionalists and the Progressives in 1906. Since the houses still belonged to the Progressives who left, they were not occupied or maintained. Now that is was past lunch time, we went to the Hopi Cultural Center with Bertram for lunch.

Kachina Dance

Our original plan was to tour Walpi, the oldest village on First Mesa. However, because of the opportunity to attend the Kachina dance in Shipaulovi, we returned to the Tsakurshovi Art Shop to say our thanks to Bertram and shop, of course. From there we took the back way to Shipaulovi, climbed the hill and climbed ladders to the roof to watch the festivities amongst the Hopis. The little plaza below was ringed with spectators and in the middle was an oval of perhaps 70 Kachinas all dressed the same. The first dance started shortly after we arrived. A drummer set the pace by beating on a pad of bound sheepskin with a thick stick. Two elders led the singing. The Kachinas responded with their chant while dancing in place. It took a while to understand that the dancers were repeating the same series of subtle gestures followed by a shake of their rattles and a 180 turn, or was it the other way around. After the first dance, the Kachinas left the plaza, a little boy came over to Rusty and Kathy to explain that there would be another dance and that we should stay and watch.

The Kachinas returned carrying baskets of fruit, vegetables and bread and placed them in the plaza, then returned with more. When the plaza was full, the Kachinas distributed produce people in the plaza and also threw it up to spectators on the roofs. Rusty, Kathy and Joan, at least, were recipients. When all the food was distributed, the dancing continued. It was the same dance except that the positioning was changed. We all thought this was one of highlights of our trip.

Star Party and campfire

That evening some of us gathered with a small crowd to view celestial bodies with telescopes provided by group of local astronomers at the Homolovi Visitor Center. This is something the park does monthly through the summer. Then we enjoyed a campfire and, yes, more stories.

SUNDAY

Sunday was Petrified Forest day. We met at the Rainbow Visitor Center Museum at the south entrance to the park. The museum is dedicated to the Triassic Period which is when the parks fossils were alive. From the museum, we walked up to Agate House a Pueblo room block made of petrified wood. There are hundreds of such sites in the area. This was the first one found and excavated. On the way, we saw a bright green lizard enjoying the warmth of the asphalt pathway. Don identified the critter as a *Crotaphytus* Collared Lizard. After a stop at the gift shop for refreshment and shopping, we headed Newspaper Rock, Lunch, Painted Desert Inn and home.

Kathy and Rusty wish to thank Jim and Rhonda Mueller for sharing the experience and advice from the trip they led to the area some years ago. It very much aided in our putting this trip together. It turns out that leading a trip for SJBAS member is quite rewarding.