

PERRY MESA

A VISITOR GUIDE

SCOTT WOOD, TONTO NATIONAL FOREST, 1999

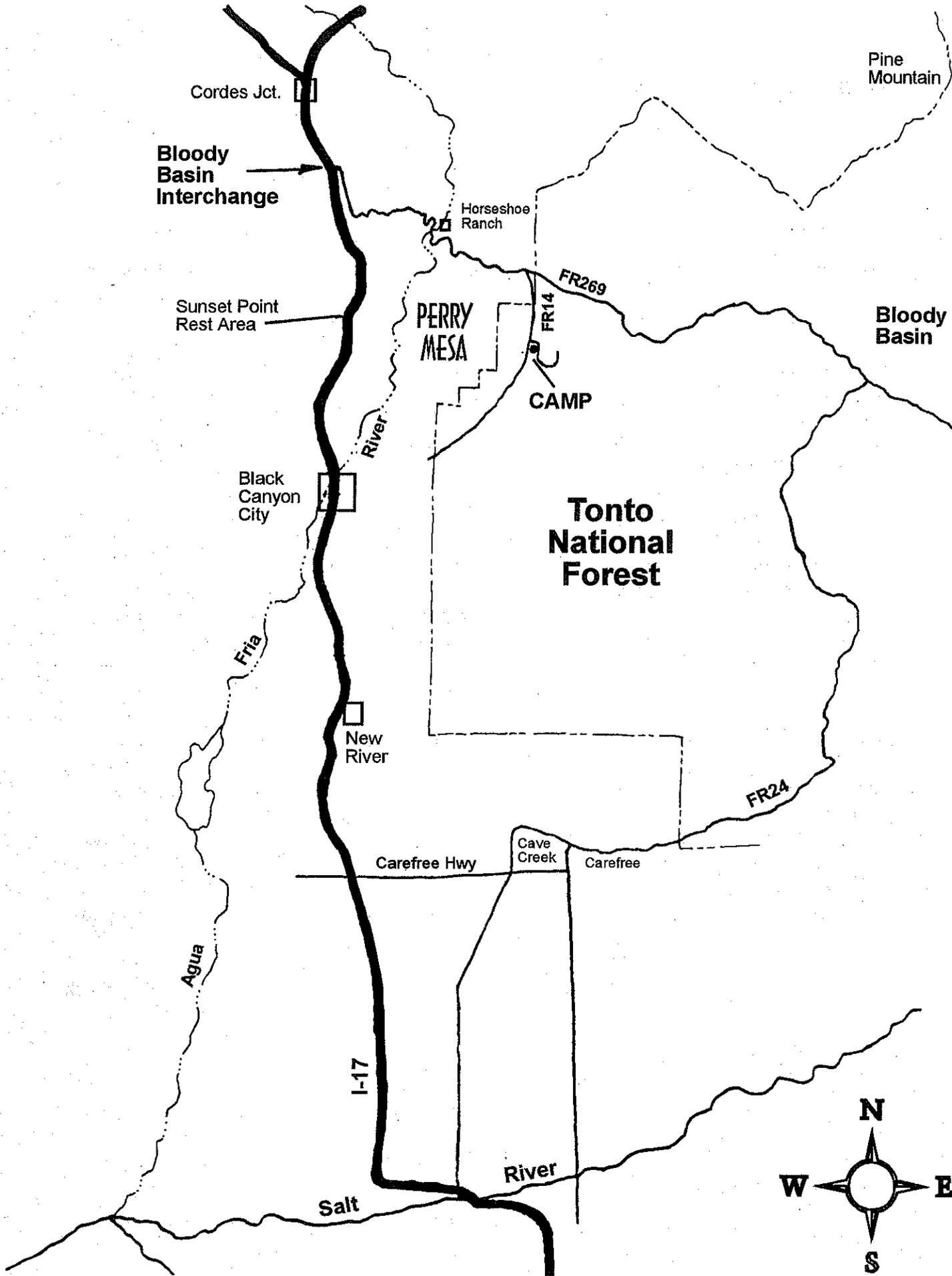
Travel with us to the windswept grasslands of the middle Agua Fria to camp under the stars, pound your kidneys into *paté* on some of the roughest, rockiest roads in Arizona, and visit the breathtaking cliff edge ruins and countless petroglyphs of **Perry Mesa**.

The primary access to Perry Mesa begins at the **Bloody Basin turnoff from I-17**, north of Black Canyon City. From there you will follow the Bloody Basin Road (aka Forest Road 269) east across the Agua Fria River to Forest Road 14 on the Tonto National Forest, where you will turn south along the back side of Perry Mesa to the edge of **Brooklyn Basin**. One of the best camp sites in the area is located just off the road, on the edge of the mesa overlooking the basin (no facilities, of course). From there you can easily visit **Squaw Creek Ruin** and its petroglyphs (including the former Archeology Month poster child, the famous **Red Deer of the Tonto**), **Pueblo Pato Ruins** with their petroglyphs (including the **infamous duck petroglyphs** and a collection of mythological humanoids), **Baby Canyon Ruin** and its petroglyphs (including a broad array of abstract and geometric forms), and whatever else suits our fancy and stamina.

A few words of caution. Once you get off the relatively well maintained Bloody Basin Road (FR 269), the local roads tend to be rough and rutted much of year (that is when they are not the uniquely nasty mud that they turn into when it rains), and there is the perennial problem of fording the Agua Fria. In other words, you would be advised to come in at least a pickup or some other utility or high clearance vehicle. Like most field trips on the Tonto, **this is not for the faint hearted or low clearanced**. Beyond the camp site, visiting most of the ruins is an adventure in rough country four wheeling. Petroglyph lovers should be prepared for scrambling up and down (actually, down and up) some very steep and rocky basalt cliffs that frequently overlook a drop of 1000 feet or more. **If you have acrophobia, have someone else show you their slides when you get back**. Because of these minor considerations, and the fact that rain may shut your whole trip down by turning large parts of the mesa into a sea of mud that will be expensively damaged by sucking your vehicle into it, it is always advisable to call the Cave Creek Ranger District and/or the BLM Phoenix Area Office ahead of time to check the conditions of the roads and the river.

The Perry Mesa Locality

Perry Mesa is actually a series of basalt-capped mesas and canyons along the Agua Fria River that resulted from the relatively gentle eruption of the shield volcano known today as Joe's Hill (the mesa was named for William Perry, who ran cattle there from 1880 to 1929 when he moved to the Buckeye Valley to found the "town" of Perryville; it's



anybody's guess who Joe was -- though he may have been the unknown shepherd who left the collapsed remains of a small stone hut near the top of said hill). This mesa-canyon complex covers an area of about 75 square miles, from I-17 on the west to Hutch Mesa on the east and from Silver Creek in the north to Squaw Creek in the south. It contains one of the most fascinating groups of ruins in Arizona, among the best known and least studied, best preserved and most vandal-ravaged sites you are ever likely to see. It also has some of the most spectacular and enigmatic rock art in the Southwest. Unfortunately, very few of its many large ruins have ever been adequately mapped, much less intensively investigated; excavation data is available only from a handful of small sites. Nevertheless, a relatively large percentage of the mesa top has been surveyed, by the Museum of Northern Arizona in the 60's and 70's and by Prescott College and Southern Illinois University in the 70's. Although the surveys to date have been relatively haphazard or limited in focus, they have resulted in an inventory of over three hundred sites on both Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land. Most recently, as part of a research and interpretive development partnership, the Forest Service and BLM contracted both a systematic sample survey of the entire mesa and an Overview of its archeology and culture history.

The Agua Fria Grassland Ecosystem

Perry Mesa constitutes the southern end of what is known as the Agua Fria Grasslands, a distinctive ecosystem covering several hundred square miles of BLM, Prescott, and Tonto National Forest land on either side of the Agua Fria River. At an average elevation of 3500-4000 feet, it is made up primarily of rolling tobosa grassland and juniper savannah cut by ribbons of riparian forest and patches of mesquite and catclaw. The soils, at least on Perry Mesa, are deep but rocky and often heavy with clay, but they offer surprisingly good potential for agriculture, as they hold moisture well (sometimes *too* well!). It would have been a good place for farming corn and cultivating agave and it once swarmed with deer and antelope — which may be why Perry Mesa was the most densely populated part of the grassland ecosystem prehistorically. Still, it was no idler's paradise, since it would have been a poor place for harvesting fuelwood or construction timber, most of which probably had to come from Hutch Mesa or Pine Mountain to the east. It is also somewhat lacking in surface water — in many parts of Perry Mesa the closest drink would have been 1000 feet straight down. On the other hand, it possesses a unique rainfall regime in that it presents a sudden rise in elevation to storms tracking up the Agua Fria. The orographic effect this produces tends to capture a lot of rain and snow that might otherwise fall on the higher elevations to the north. As a result, the basalt traprock is usually well supplied with water for springs around the cliff edges and the tributaries draining the mesa into the Agua Fria tend to run water for months at a time (and in many cases were probably perennial in the not too distant past).

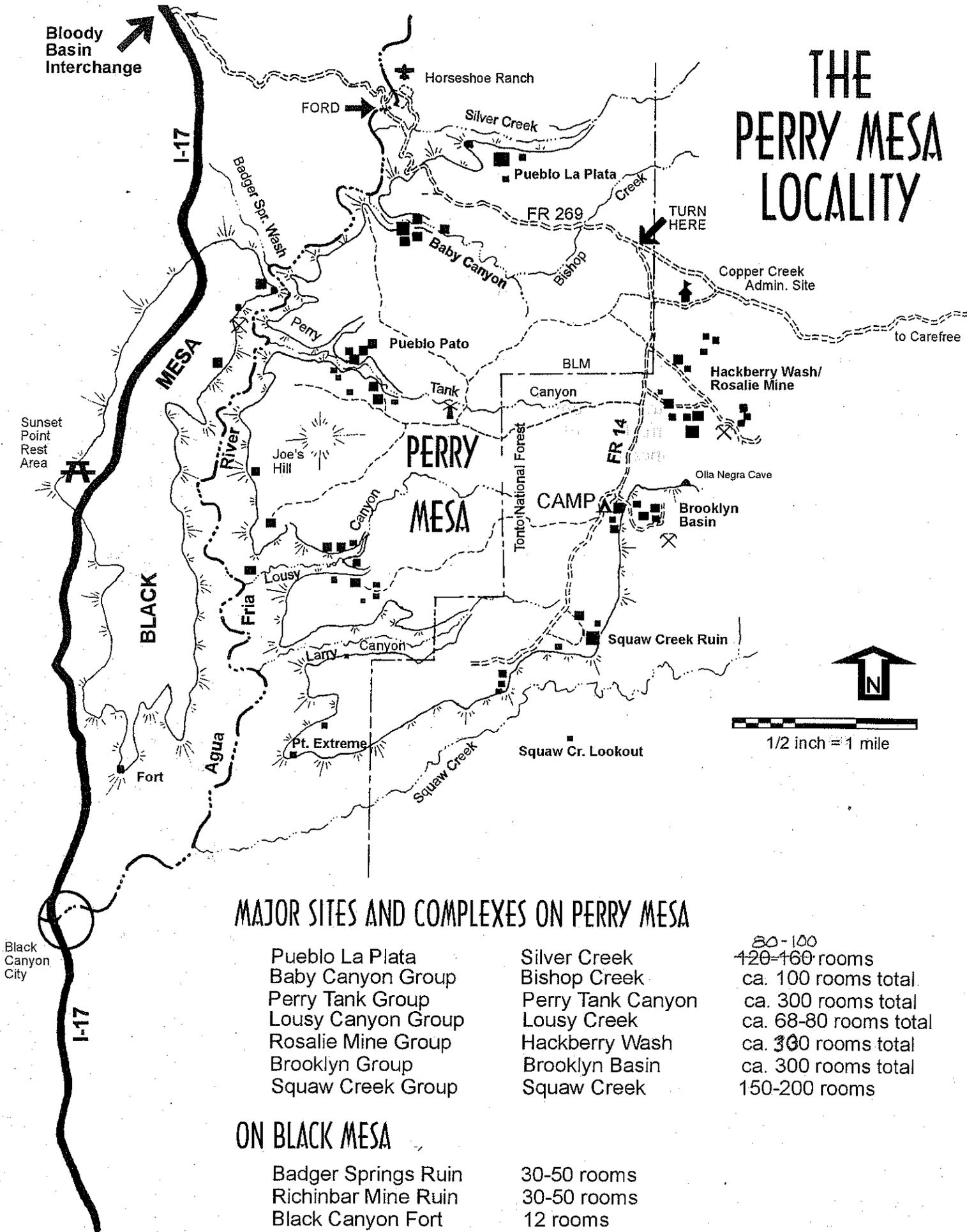
Perry Mesa Culture History

Somewhat in contrast to the rest of the Agua Fria Grasslands, which has a relatively gentle but varied topography, there are only two kinds of land surface on Perry Mesa — horizontal and vertical. For the most part, the Agua Fria River is almost inaccessible in the bottom of Black Canyon and offers little more than a (difficult) source of water and the occasional wide spot suitable for agriculture. It is in these few select spots along the river that we find the earliest inhabitants of the area — small colonies of Hohokam from the Salt River Valley. There are, of course, Archaic sites and projectile points scattered throughout the grasslands, but little evidence to date of any extensive occupation, except perhaps in the Badger springs area at the north end of Black Mesa. We suspect that there are also Paleoindian sites, given the presence of Clovis and other contemporary points in the upper Agua Fria drainage, but so far none have been found on Perry Mesa. We also suspect the presence of an indigenous Early Ceramic period population derived from the Archaic occupation, based on sites found near Mayer and in Bloody Basin, but, again, nothing has yet come to light from Perry Mesa itself. At any rate, the Hohokam colonies along the river are the first documented residents and our story, for the time being, will begin with them.

The Hohokam appear to have prospered, more or less, for some time, baking in the concentrating solar oven of basalt in the bottom of Black Canyon, but it didn't take too long (well, not more than a few centuries, anyway) before these folks discovered that the tributary canyons leading to the east up onto the mesa top had some special qualities of their own to offer. Most of them carry water year round (or would have then) and many support a lush riparian vegetation and lots of wildlife. Near the mesa top, many of them also have natural rock tanks that can hold a year's worth of water. In addition, several of these contain small, neat patches of arable floodplain above the tanks which are suitable for *ak chin* types of farming. These tributary canyons are what probably led the first Hohokam colonists onto the mesa top sometime around 1000 AD. What they found on top was mile after mile of tobosa grassland, prickly pear, an occasional juniper, good soil, and large herds of pronghorn and deer. What they left was a mere handful of residential sites. Only one of these is of any great size, a pithouse village a quarter of a mile long on the eastern shoulder of Joe's Hill. Most of them are located on the open mesa top, well away from the edges, though an earlier pithouse occupation has been detected at several of the later cliff edge Classic period villages. One of the few things that help identify these earlier components is the presence of well-finished early Wingfield pottery types which dominate the Preclassic period in the Agua Fria drainage. On the other hand, Wingfield types continued to be made here well into the late 14th century. At least one of the Preclassic villages also contains a fairly substantial representation of Hohokam buffware and traded-in black-on-white pottery from northern Arizona.

The earliest and most common Hohokam sites on the mesa top are just small gathering/processing stations and temporary camps — a few sherds and lithics, bedrock metates, and petroglyphs. There are probably dozens of such sites on Perry Mesa, all but indistinguishable from the hundreds of similar sites dating to the later Classic period, many of which were probably used repeatedly throughout the duration of the occupation.

THE PERRY MESA LOCALITY



MAJOR SITES AND COMPLEXES ON PERRY MESA

Pueblo La Plata
 Baby Canyon Group
 Perry Tank Group
 Lousy Canyon Group
 Rosalie Mine Group
 Brooklyn Group
 Squaw Creek Group

Silver Creek
 Bishop Creek
 Perry Tank Canyon
 Lousy Creek
 Hackberry Wash
 Brooklyn Basin
 Squaw Creek

80-100
 120-160 rooms
 ca. 100 rooms total
 ca. 300 rooms total
 ca. 68-80 rooms total
 ca. 300 rooms total
 ca. 300 rooms total
 150-200 rooms

ON BLACK MESA

Badger Springs Ruin
 Richinbar Mine Ruin
 Black Canyon Fort

30-50 rooms
 30-50 rooms
 12 rooms

Black Canyon City

Bloody Basin Interchange

FORD

TURN HERE

Copper Creek Admin. Site

to Carefree

Sunset Point Rest Area

Hackberry Wash/Rosalie Mine

PERRY MESA

CAMP

Olla Negra Cave

Brooklyn Basin

BLACK MESA

Fria

Lousy

Larry

Pt. Extreme

Agua

Fort

Squaw Creek

Squaw Cr. Lookout

Squaw Creek

I-17

I-17

FR 269

FR 14

Tonto National Forest

BLM



1/2 inch = 1 mile

These early sites seem to cluster around the natural tanks near the heads of the tributary drainages. Unfortunately, these were popular places from quite early on through to the historic period; some of the petroglyph styles seen at several of them are similar to Archaic styles seen elsewhere in central Arizona while others may be identified with ethnographic Piman and Yavapai. Still others appear to resemble some Hopi or Zuni designs.

By the late 12th and early 13th centuries, the population living on top of the mesas had abandoned pithouses in favor of surface masonry architecture and began spreading out. As population rose on the mesa, it would have quickly outgrown the capacity of the original *ak chin* fields. New agricultural strategies and technologies had to be developed or borrowed and employed in new environmental settings as newcomers were forced to make do with less desirable locations. This apparently led to a rather intensive development of runoff control agricultural facilities. The eventual result was the near total modification of large portions of the mesa top by the construction of numerous and complex field systems made up of a wide variety of runoff harvesting structures. Today, owing to the gentle slopes, centuries of silting up, and the dense grass cover, many of these are only visible from the air or after a fire. Along with this development went the construction of the hundreds of fieldhouses and tiny seasonal hamlets that are found everywhere on Perry Mesa. Of itself, this is nothing unique — such developments are common to most parts of central Arizona during the Classic period. What makes Perry Mesa so special is the concentration of large villages that flourished there in the late 14th century.

Based on the somewhat suspect evidence of pilfered surface collections and the leavings of particularly rabid pothunters, the earliest of these large settlements appear to have been founded in the early to middle 13th century, when most of the population on the mesa was scattered about in homesteads and small hamlets. Recently we have found that many of the full masonry villages are associated with earlier 13th century cobble and adobe walled compounds and "rancherias," settlements made up of separated individual cobble walled houses. The construction of the massive masonry room blocks for which Perry Mesa is famous seems to date exclusively to the 14th century (though there are precursors in several of the local fortified sites built in the previous century). Of course, with as little controlled excavation data as we have for this area, we really don't know if they sprung up as a new innovation or built up gradually from smaller settlements, though there does seem to be a consistent pattern of association emerging between the bigger late Classic period sites and much smaller early Classic settlements. At any rate, by the mid 1300s it looks like most if not all of the Perry Mesa population was concentrated into seven nucleated communities, each made up of one or more large (30-50+ room) structures with a series of smaller satellites or outliers arrayed around them. The contemporary settlements on Black Mesa make up an eighth. With the exception of Black Mesa, these seven communities appear to have each controlled roughly equivalent territories from around the edges of the mesas and most are within easy one day round trip walking distance from each other. Each of the site clusters making up these communities contains at least 100 rooms (even the Lousy Canyon group, which includes at least one very large structure on a bench below the mesa top in

Black Canyon). There is also a curious symmetry to their size — the two largest communities, Perry Tank and Brooklyn Basin, each contain over 300 rooms and are located along the central axis of the mesa on opposite sides. There are also two single structures that contain 75-100+ rooms located at opposite ends of the mesa.

All of the largest sites consist primarily of massive room blocks; in stark contrast to 13th and 14th century developments by the Hohokam and Salado to the south or east, there are very few true compounds among the later sites on Perry Mesa, though they are present during the early Classic period occupation. There are even fewer true “pueblos” (i.e. room blocks defining a large plaza) such as are found on the Colorado plateau. The architectural plan of these structures typically involves a compact block of contiguous rooms, usually a single storey in height. The rooms themselves are characteristically large and rectangular with doorways (when present) in the center of the long walls, clay lined basin firepits just inside the doors, and two central roofing support posts on the long axis — a pattern established early on throughout the lower Verde and Agua Fria drainages with roots in the Hohokam Preclassic architectural tradition. The rooms are generally laid out in irregular patterns but tend to be arranged so as to present a minimum number of exterior walls. Like the late 14th century Salado structures of Tonto Basin and Globe which they most resemble, there are very few doorways (usually none at all) through the outer walls. A few sites appear to have originally had such entrances but by the mid 14th century or so, they were pretty much all sealed up. Why the Perry Mesans would have done this is, of course, open to speculation, but to a culture lacking siege engines, the solid outer walls of such a structure would have made a formidable passive defense. From the outside these sites were accessible from the outside only by ladders. Once gaining access this way, one entered a suite of rooms through rooftop entryways; the only ground level doorways were between the rooms in a suite, hidden away inside. What they had then, were these foreboding blocks of thick double coursed or rubble filled basalt masonry sticking up like turrets along the curtain wall of cliffs that ring the mesa top like a medieval castle -- an astute observation that I would love to take credit for but which was provided by Capt. Jerry Robertson, USA (Ret.) of Sedona.

For the most part, the Perry Mesa villages appear not to have adopted the characteristic “community rooms,” “kivas,” and interior courtyards found in some sites in the nearby Verde Valley nor do they contain anything like the platform mound architectural forms of the Hohokam and Salado. Several of the larger structures may contain “ceremonial”/communal features, but they have yet to be positively identified at any Perry Mesa site and corroborative evidence from controlled excavation or even detailed mapping is sadly lacking. One site from the Lousy Canyon Complex appears to have a “community room” of sorts, but the recorder described it as a possible corral, a result of historic modification by Basque shepherders. Others appear to have round rooms in amongst the rectangular but these are also the result of later modification, in this case by the Yavapai or Apache, who would often rearrange the walls of ruins to provide anchors or windbreaks for building brush wickiups. Several Perry Mesa sites have features similar to the so-called “dance plazas” found in the Verde Valley at such sites as the Clear Creek Ruin, but these are just walled courtyards attached to the room blocks — who knows what they were really used for?

While we have little controlled excavation, the extensive vandalism has opened up the interiors of many of the large sites for examination. Unfortunate as that is, it has allowed us to see a great deal of the architecture of these settlements. What we have seen indicates that they were made up simply of multiple replications of standard domestic residential and storage units — in other words, like late Salado sites, they appear to have no specific non-domestic or “ceremonial”/communal use architecture (but read on...). For the most part, then, the big sites on Perry Mesa appear to have been little more than densely packed and massively constructed hives. Since they aren't compounds, they are frequently referred to as “pueblos,” despite the fact, as mentioned above, that they do not exhibit the requisite characteristics. A better term might be “caseron” (pl. “caserones”), a Spanish term meaning large house and implying the residence of an entire settlement. The term “pueblo” as it is used here, then, will more closely approximate its original definition, which can be roughly translated as “town” and will refer to groups of residential structures. As such, a Perry Mesa pueblo is not a single building but a complex of individual residences forming an apparent contemporary community.

The sudden rise of the Perry Mesa pueblos in the 14th century has something of the appearance of a population boom. Obviously, without better excavation data it is difficult to make accurate assessments, particularly where the big sites are concerned, but the population level on the mesas during the period before about 1300 seems to have been relatively small. Perhaps coincidentally, at around 1275-1300 most of the area west of Perry Mesa — the upper Agua Fria, Bradshaw Mountains, and Prescott Highlands — was abandoned, bringing about the demise of the Prescott Cultural Tradition as a recognizable entity. This was, for a long time, a flourishing tradition with roots deep in both the Hohokam tradition and that barely visible indigenous population of the mountainous Transition Zone known loosely as the Central Arizona Tradition. Based on a few scattered bits and pieces of information which have come to light in the last few years, this is the same “parent tradition” present at the end of the Archaic which also gave rise to the Sierra Anchans, the Salado, the lower and middle Verde folk, the Perry Mesans, and perhaps even the Hohokam themselves (at least in part). In any case, as the Great Drought set in, the Prescott area was abandoned; much of this population seems to have emigrated to the Verde Valley, but at least some portion of it appears to have considered the moisture retaining rich clay soils of Perry Mesa with its orographic rainfall pattern a viable option for resettlement. It seems reasonable to suggest, then, that a lot of the 14th century population increase on Perry Mesa may have been made up of Prescott folk.

Unfortunately, the operant word here is “may,” since much of the evidence is largely circumstantial. If the Prescott folk came over in large numbers, they brought very little of their past with them. Prescott Plain pottery is relatively rare at most of the larger villages and the old traditional (and highly distinctive) Prescott Black-on-plain decorated forms had pretty much died out by 1300. On the other hand, there are several sites around the edges of the mesa (primarily forts) that probably date to the late 13th century and do have a lot of Prescott Plain and Wingfield Plain pottery similar to that found around the

Bradshaw mountains to the west — but more about this later. For the moment, lacking a large body of evidence one way or another, it must suffice to say that Perry Mesa did experience an apparent episode of population growth in the early 14th century and that there is some ceramic evidence suggesting that at least some of these people residing in the outlying settlements on the western edge of the Mesa included -- or had close ties to -- these people and others from the middle and lower Agua Fria. Otherwise, we know little about how it came about or who it involved.

Settlement Patterns

The basic structure of a nucleated Perry Mesa settlement involves a nucleus of one or two large caserones surrounded by an irregular ring of smaller satellite structures called, imaginatively enough, "outliers." For the most part, these outliers, which are often within hailing distance of the nucleus, appear to be primarily residential and are frequently substantial, often having up to 30 or so rooms. They are distinctly different from the readily recognizable fieldhouses, which are very much like fieldhouses anywhere in central Arizona. The smaller outliers may even hold a clue as to the architectural definition of social units on Perry Mesa, as they frequently involve pairs of one relatively large, presumably residential, room with a second smaller, equally presumably, storage room. The rooms in these pairs are frequently connected by a ground level doorway, with entry into the unit probably restricted to roof entry into the residential room only. Where the larger sites have been adequately mapped, this arrangement appears to hold up fairly well as a building block for the structure of whole communities. If this bit of speculation stands the test of future analysis, it may indicate that the social/hierarchical differentiation of Perry Mesa society was fairly limited, at least within the individual communities of village size or smaller. Differentiation between communities, on the other hand, given the variation in size and structure between the "seven cities," is another question, however.

Another interesting aspect of the structure of the Perry Mesa communities is their association with surface modification features traditionally known as "racetracks." While the usual prehistoric "ceremonial"/communal architectural features of central Arizona appear to be lacking here, the large caserones, at least, all seem to be associated with large cleared exterior plazas and most have as well one or more cleared linear features that look like roads. These "racetracks" are relatively short and don't seem to go anywhere in particular or connect sites or follow any special directional alignment, and they are sometimes difficult to see on the ground. They stick out like sore thumbs from the air, however. The distribution of these features is apparently highly restricted; to date, only a few others are known outside of the Perry Mesa locality, one in Bloody Basin and one, possibly two, on Polles Mesa east of the Mazatzals, and a couple in the Hackberry area south of Camp Verde. The origins and use(s) of these features remain open to debate, but they do bring to mind such processional ceremonialism as was practiced historically by the Zuni kachina societies, particularly the Shalako. They may even represent an evolved form of the well known Hohokam ball court, several of which are known from Preclassic sites along the Agua Fria. An alternative explanation might be

that they were built as fuelbreaks to protect villages from rampaging grass fires... or have I worked for the Forest Service too long?

Getting back to the larger picture, five of the seven nucleated communities on Perry Mesa proper were located on or near the mesa edge overlooking the canyons of Silver Creek, Bishop Creek (Baby Canyon), Perry Tank Wash, Lousy Canyon, and Squaw Creek. The other two are located on the eastern or "back" side of the mesa where the basalt soils become mixed with the decomposed granite of the lower foothills of Hutch Mesa. Despite the apparent similarity of all these locations, each one has a unique environmental character relative to soil types, slopes, exposures, and access to other plant and mineral resources. In a sense, all of the seven communities could have operated as a single organic unit to minimize agricultural risk, spreading their eggs among a variety of baskets, so to speak, by exploiting variability in the environmental parameters of production. Curiously (or perhaps not...) this pattern and the number of major components it entails, is roughly similar to that seen in late prehistoric and early historic contexts in the Hopi and Zuñi areas. There has been speculation over the years by some that a local polity or ethnic group structured into five to seven closely related individual communities represents an optimal decision making political structure. However, it remains to be seen whether or not the pattern described here will hold up under detailed analysis of site structure, dating, and artifact distributions.

Another potentially important aspect of the Perry Mesa settlement system is the network of forts and lookouts found around the edges of the mesa. They are not particularly numerous compared to the New River area or the Bradshaw Mountains or Prescott Highlands, nor do many of them appear to have been occupied much past the mid 1300s when the big caserones reached their maximum size, but they do seem to have housed a considerable population for a while. One possible function they may have served (the one illustrated here being a good example) could have been to provide "guard villages" for the less defensively built mesa top settlements of the early and middle Classic Period. Occupied by immigrants rather than locals, they may have provided early warning and initial contact to protect primary points of access, serving the established Perry Mesa population in much the same way as the Tewa occupants of Hano once served the Hopi village of Walpi. The fact that the pottery on these sites (including the one illustrated, while it still had some...) was primarily Wingfield and Prescott while the majority of the mesa top settlements preferred Verde-style plainwares and Gila/Salt Redwares may even support this analogy. Military service may have been the price of admission to Perry Mesa society. Eventually, these facilities were abandoned (as was the use of Wingfield and Prescott pottery); perhaps as people were concentrated into the more easily defended caserones and as the immigrants became more fully assimilated into the general population. In any case, whatever speculative interpretation you want to invoke to explain them, the rise and fall of the fortified site type and the development of the massive caserones during the period between 1275 and 1350 is fairly typical of patterns throughout central Arizona during this period, which was characterized by evidence of both recurrent violence and rapid organizational change and experimentation as everyone was reacting to changes in rainfall and runoff predictability.

What is not so typical, however, is how the entire 14th century Perry Mesa complex may have operated as an integrated defensive unit -- Robertson's "castle." Analysis of the locations of these sites compared with routes of access onto the mesa top suggests that nearly every approach is covered and the distribution of forts and fortified lookouts could have provided early warning with sufficient time to gather forces from multiple villages to repel or entrap an attack from nearly every possible direction and particularly from the south. Two of the most important lookouts are located off of the mesa on nearby high points that could only have been selected for their ability to provide critical line of sight connections at either end of the settlement system.

The Perry Mesa Tradition

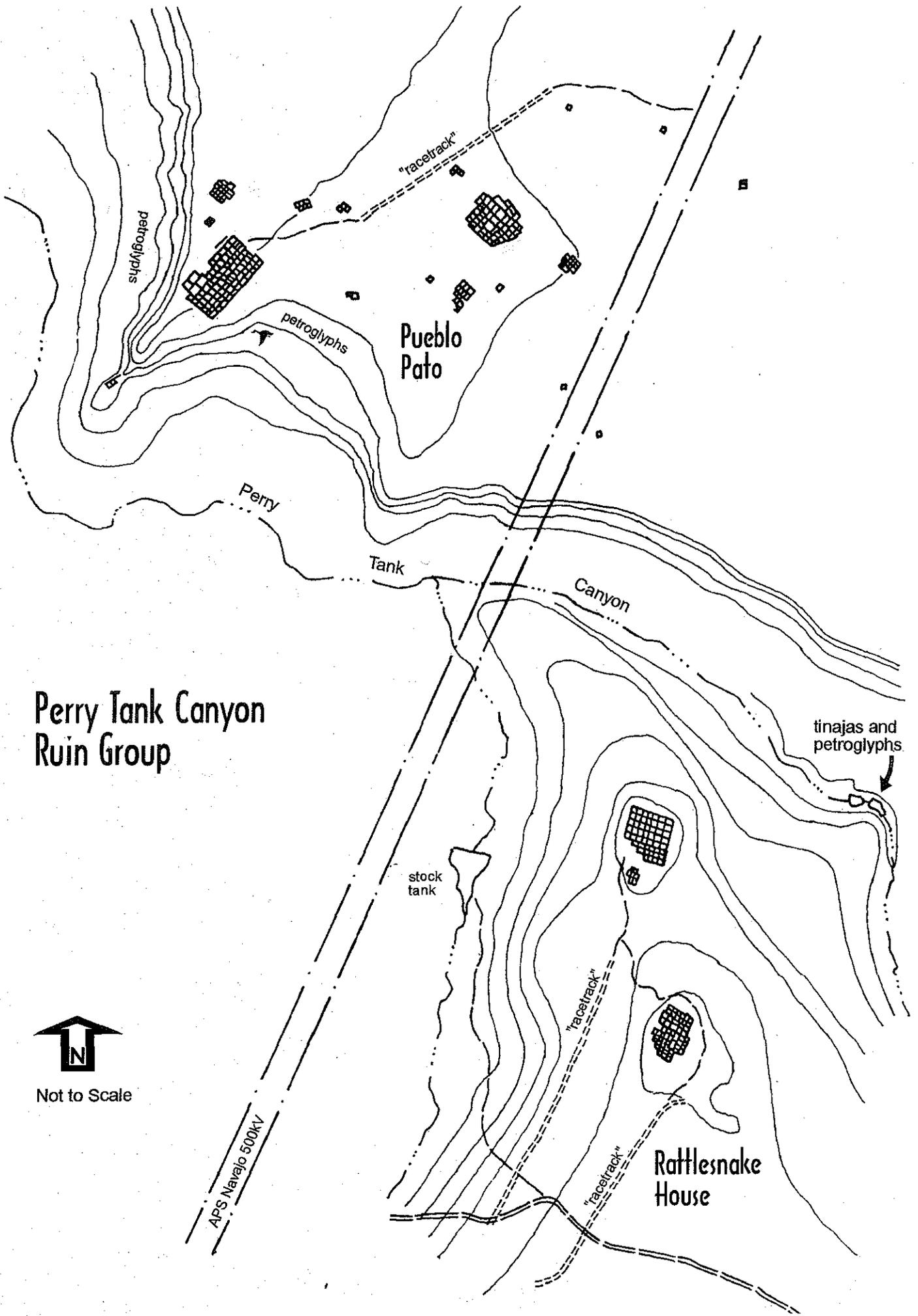
So, who were these people? Good question. Too bad we don't have a good answer to go with it. Instead, we call them the "Perry Mesa Tradition" and trace their origins back to the equally nebulous "Central Arizona Tradition." Not terribly satisfying, but it at least gives us something to call them and recognizes the unique character of their society.

Architecturally, the Perry Mesa Tradition is most similar to contemporary developments in Bloody Basin, the lower Verde, Tonto Basin, and the Globe-Miami area, at least in the mid to late 14th century. Recent findings suggest that it also has the same underlying compound and rancheria traditions that characterize these other areas in the 13th and early 14th centuries. Certainly, the earliest sites on the mesa show clear similarities to Preclassic Hohokam sites in the greater Phoenix Basin. Burial patterns on Perry Mesa, based on the recollections of pothunters, were apparently the same as those in contemporary Salado, Hohokam, and Sinagua societies. They used the same $\frac{3}{4}$ grooved axes and tabular rhyolite mescal knives common to both Salado and Hohokam and built the same type of "brush kitchen" style roasting pits commonly found in the lower Verde and Tonto Basin as well as elsewhere throughout central and southern Arizona.

Ceramically, the characteristic polished redwares of later Perry Mesa sites is virtually indistinguishable from Salt Red, implying close ties with the Hohokam of the Salt River Valley. On the other hand, similar pottery is also found in the Verde Valley. However, Perry Mesa redwares are very rarely smudged, a characteristic which sets them apart from all other central Arizona ceramic traditions. The Perry Mesa folk appear to have had no indigenous decorated ceramic industry at all, at least until they began to make some Gila and Tonto Polychrome in the mid 14th century. In fact, the most common reported decorated type from the late sites there is Gila Polychrome. This, along with the occasional presence of Fourmile Polychrome from the eastern Mogollon Rim country, implies a fair amount of trade to and through the Salado. However, there is also a lot of Jeddito Yellow Ware and a bit of Winslow Orange Ware on Perry Mesa. While these types are also found in Salado contexts and could have been derived from that trade link, they are also known to have formed the backbone of another ceramic trade link between the Hopi, Sinagua, and Verde Valley communities, in which context they are very rarely found in association with Gila Polychrome (neither Gila Polychrome nor Fourmile Polychrome are found in the Verde Valley -- or any farther north along the Verde River than Fossil Creek). Curiously enough, though, analysis of Yellow Ware from Perry Mesa

indicates that it was in fact derived from the Verde Valley connection, as most of it seems to have come from the Hopi town of Awat'ovi (most Yellow Ware in Salado contexts came from one or more of the other Hopi towns). Thus, we have on Perry Mesa a ceramic trading pattern with distributional similarities to that of the Verde Valley but an assemblage whose selection of types is more closely parallel to that of the Salado.

To make a long story short the origins and ultimate identity of the Perry Mesans are still waiting to be determined archeologically, though there are clear indications that they began with and retained some very strong connections to the Hohokam. At best we can say that they formed part of a distinctive group of local traditions centered on the lower Verde River between the Agua Fria and the East Verde on the other side of the Mazatzals and from Fossil Creek down to Horseshoe Dam. Even so, despite the lack of controlled excavation, the extensive (though not all pervasive) damage done by pothunters, and the fact that we know even less about immediately surrounding areas, there is considerable archeological value to this place. Its geographic circumscription allows us to look at its many sites as a single settlement system with known boundaries, making it easier to see how the different individual settlements may have been able to work together as a social, political, economic, and military unit, one of many such units, each with its own developmental history and patterns of alliance and opposition to other groups, that we may soon be able to identify across the prehistoric Southwest.



Perry Tank Canyon Ruin Group



Not to Scale

Pueblo Pato

Rattlesnake House

petroglyphs

petroglyphs

Perry

Tank

Canyon

tinajas and petroglyphs

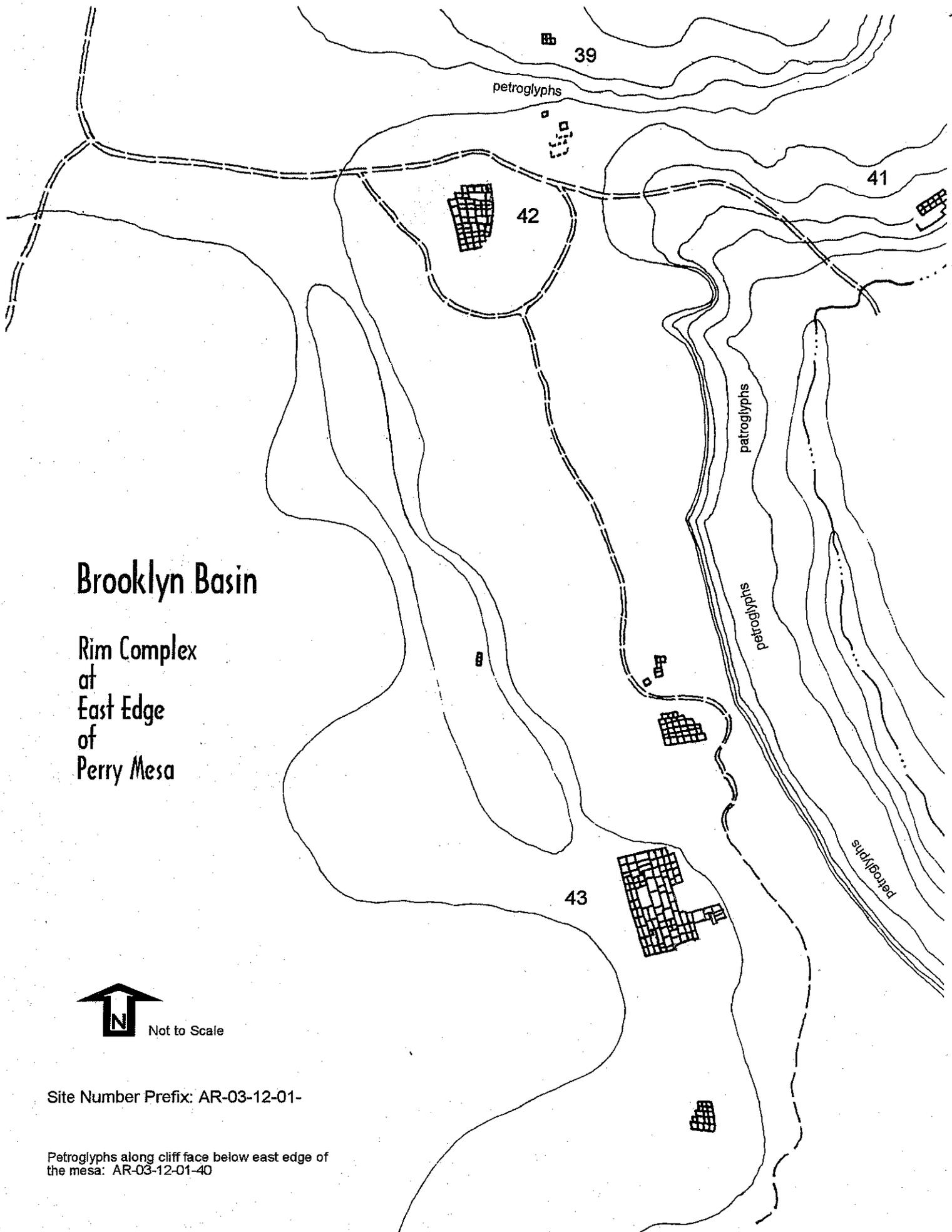
stock tank

"racetrack"

"racetrack"

"racetrack"

APS Navajo 500kv



Brooklyn Basin

Rim Complex
at
East Edge
of
Perry Mesa

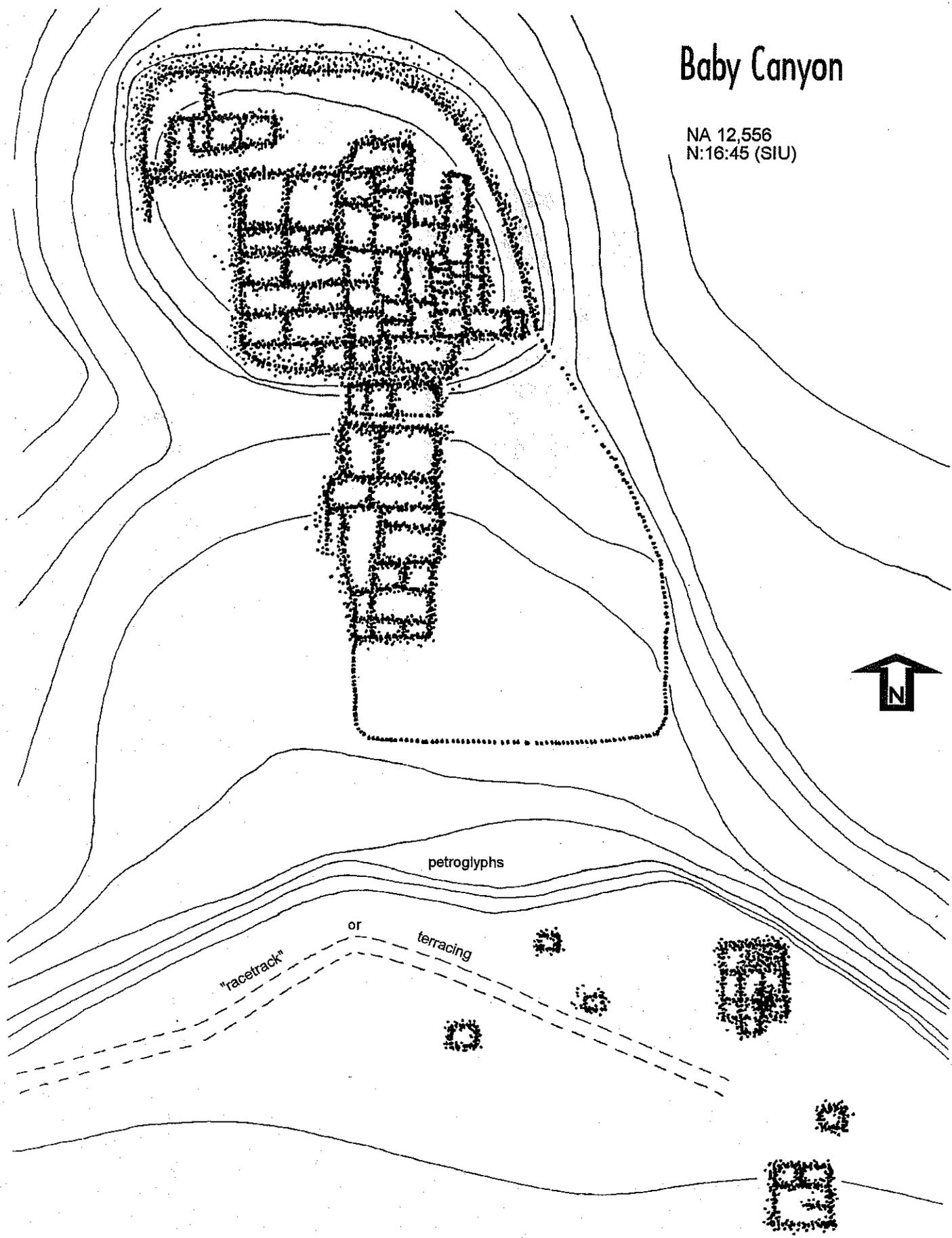


Site Number Prefix: AR-03-12-01-

Petroglyphs along cliff face below east edge of
the mesa: AR-03-12-01-40

Baby Canyon

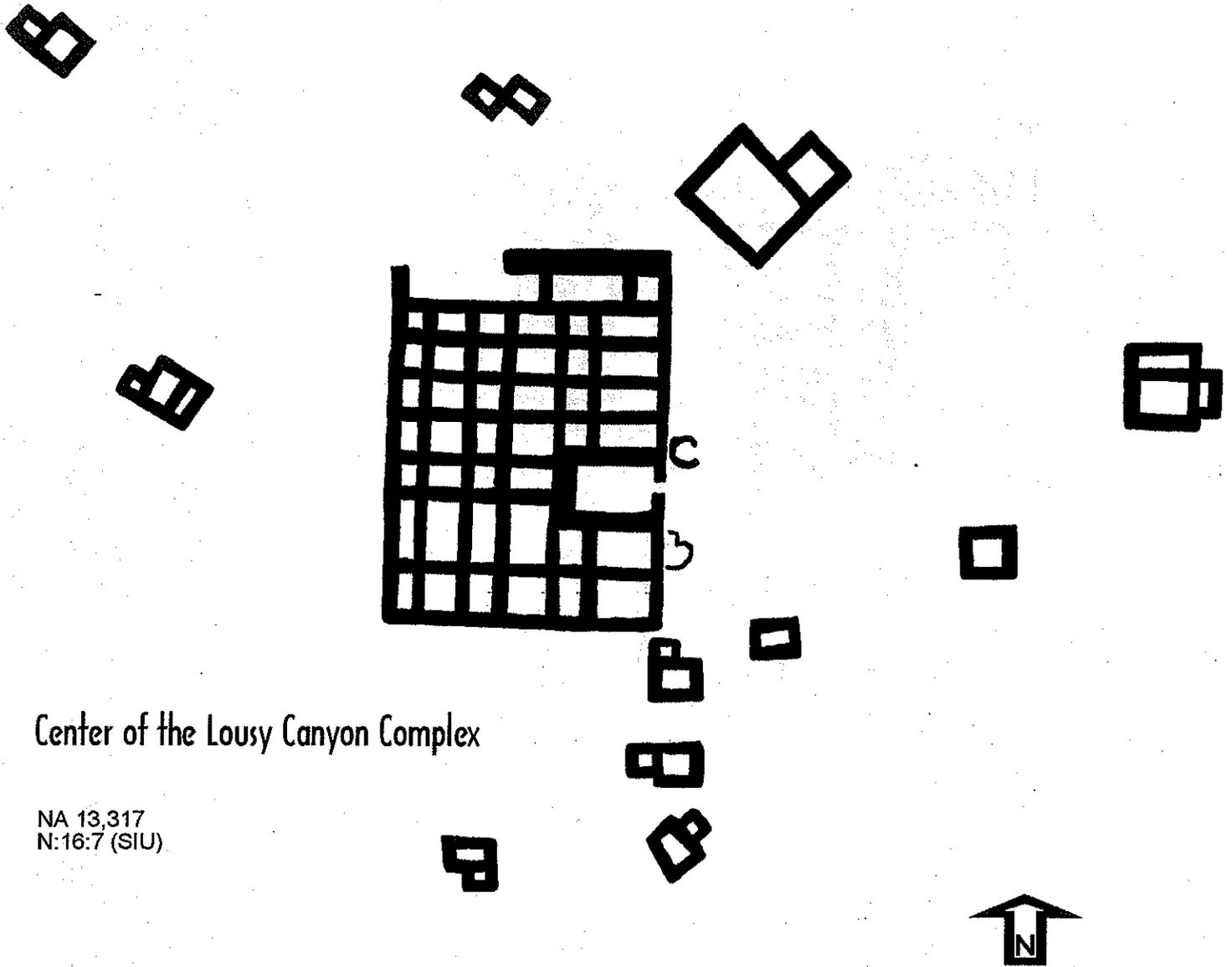
NA 12,556
N:16:45 (SIU)



petroglyphs

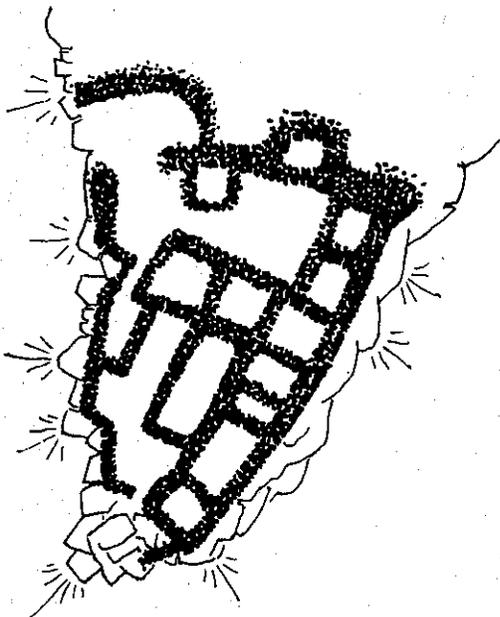
"racetrack"
or
terracing





Center of the Lousy Canyon Complex

NA 13,317
N:16:7 (SIU)



Fort on the Southern Tip of Black Mesa

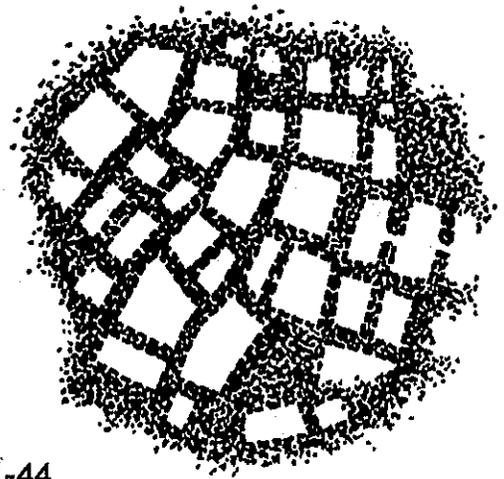
NA 11,646
N:16:1 (SIU)

Smaller Sites from
around Brooklyn Basin
and Squaw Creek

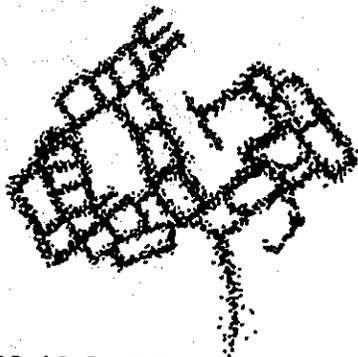
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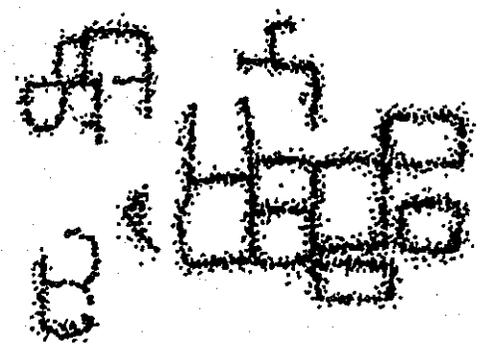
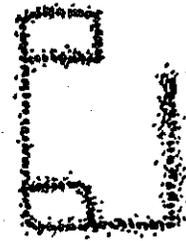
AR-03-12-01-44



AR-03-12-01-72



N:16:47 (SIU)



Mesa Top

A Small Farmstead with Terraces and Waffle Gardens

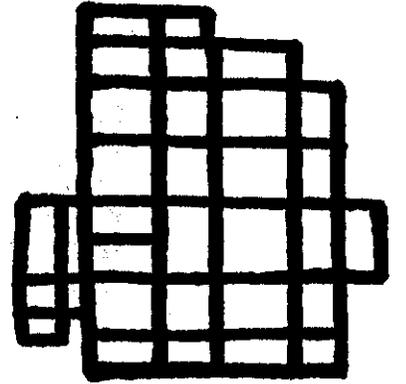
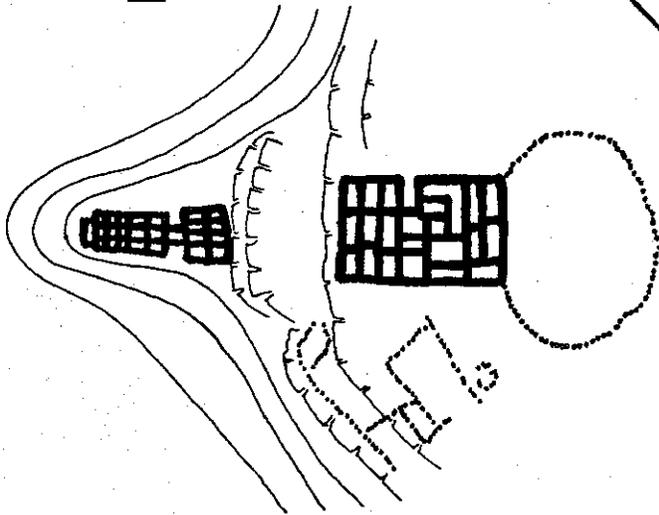
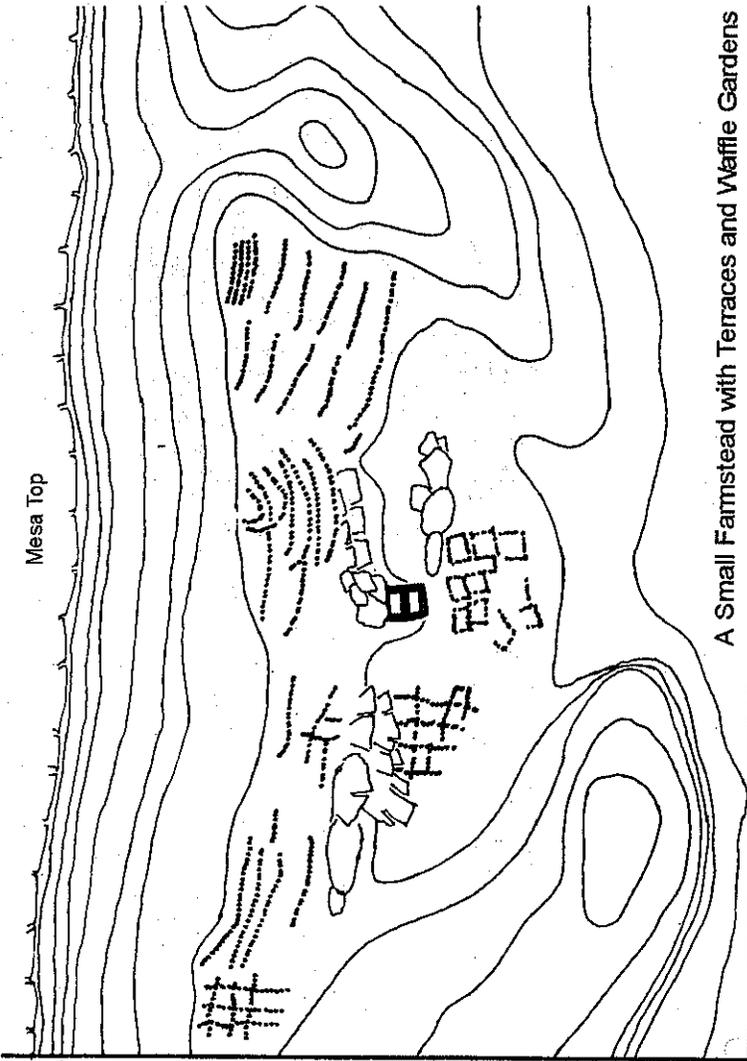
A Few Odds and Ends
from Various Parts of
Perry Mesa

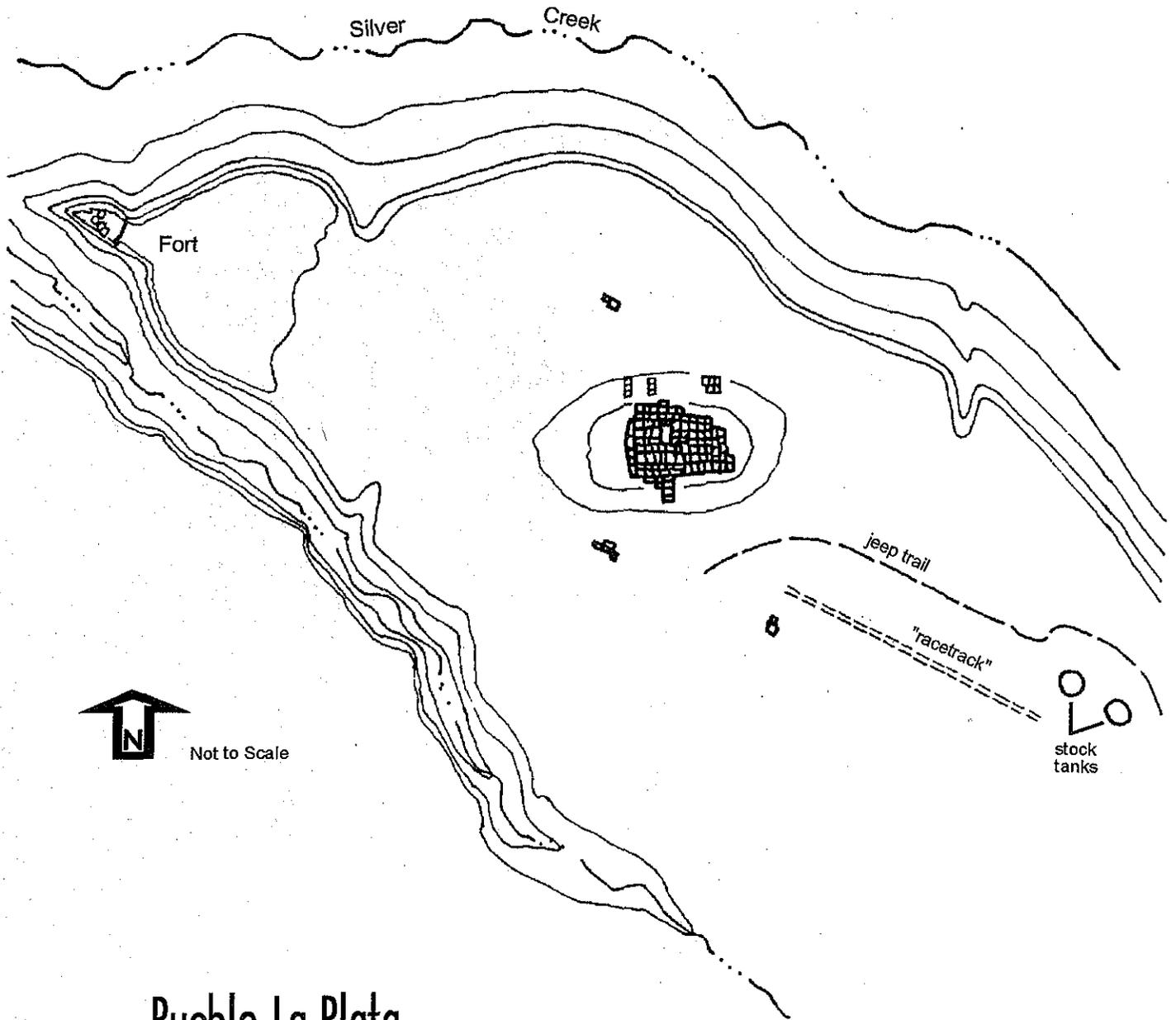
Baby Canyon

N:16:46 (SIU)

Lousy Canyon,
North Side

N:16:80 (SIU)





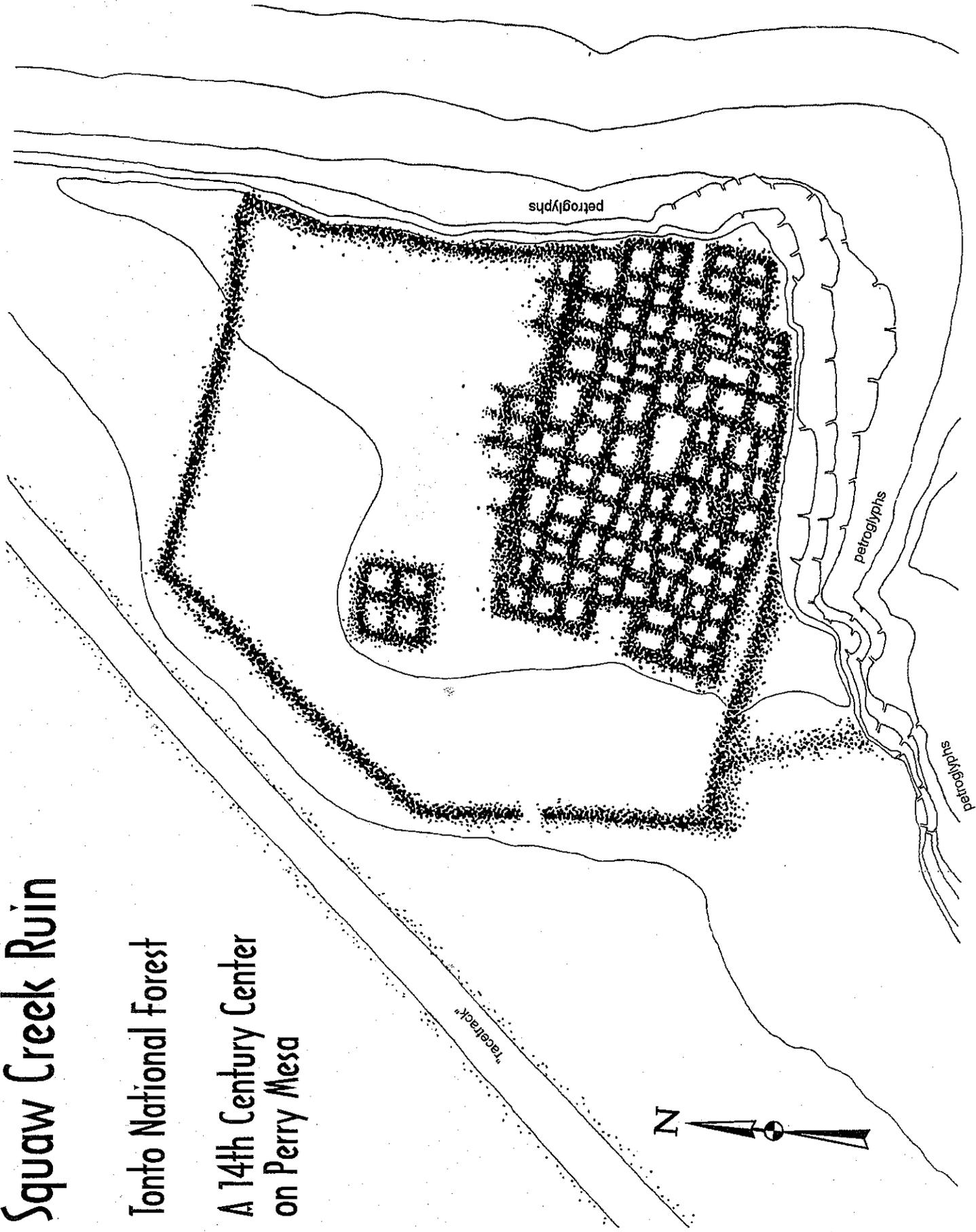
Pueblo La Plata

A Major Center on the North Rim of Perry Mesa

Squaw Creek Ruin

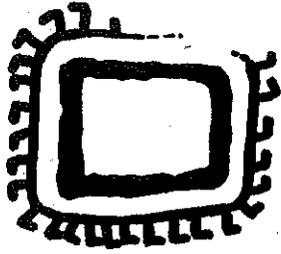
Tonto National Forest

A 14th Century Center
on Perry Mesa

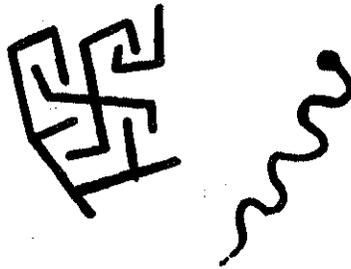


Perry Mesa Petroglyphs

Abstracts and Geometrics



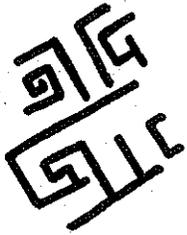
Baby Canyon



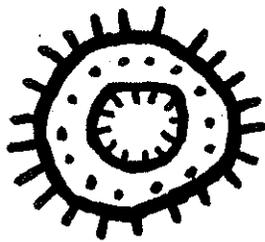
Baby Canyon



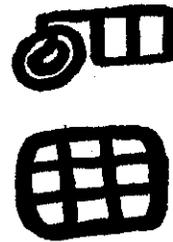
Baby Canyon



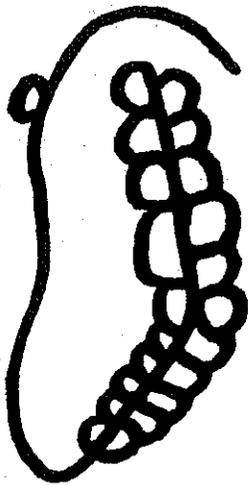
Baby Canyon



Baby Canyon



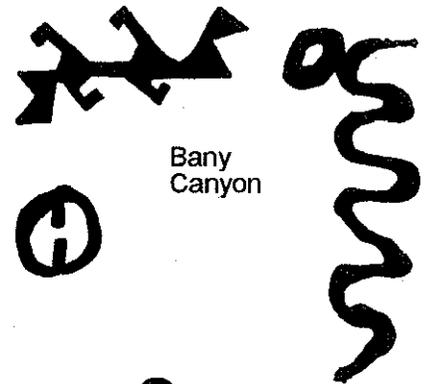
Baby Canyon



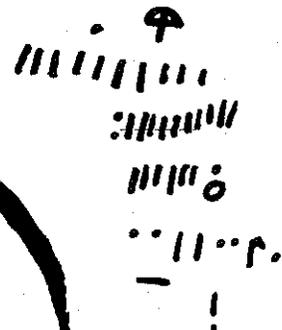
Baby Canyon



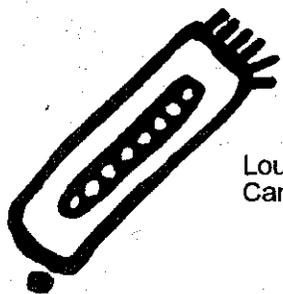
Squaw Creek



Bany Canyon



Baby Canyon



Lousy Canyon



Lousy Canyon



Perry Mesa Petroglyphs

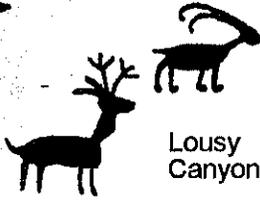
Animals, etc.



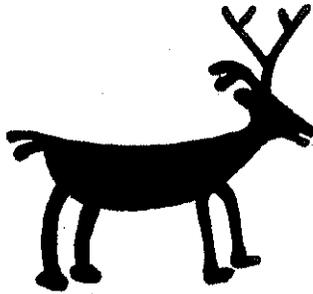
Perry Tank Canyon



Lousy Canyon



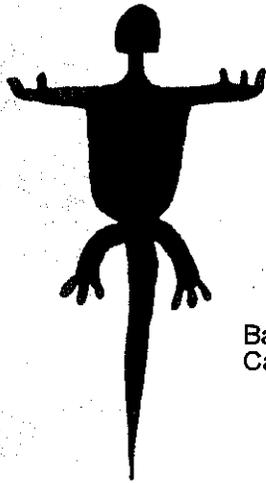
Lousy Canyon



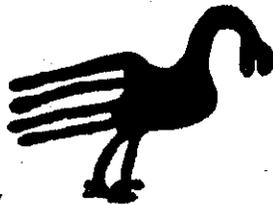
Squaw Creek



Baby Canyon



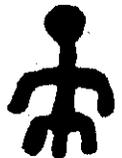
Perry Tank Canyon



Baby Canyon



Squaw Creek



Baby Canyon



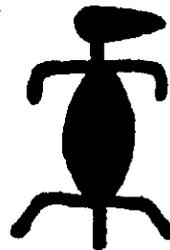
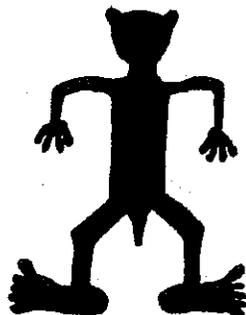
Lousy Canyon



Baby Canyon



Lousy Canyon

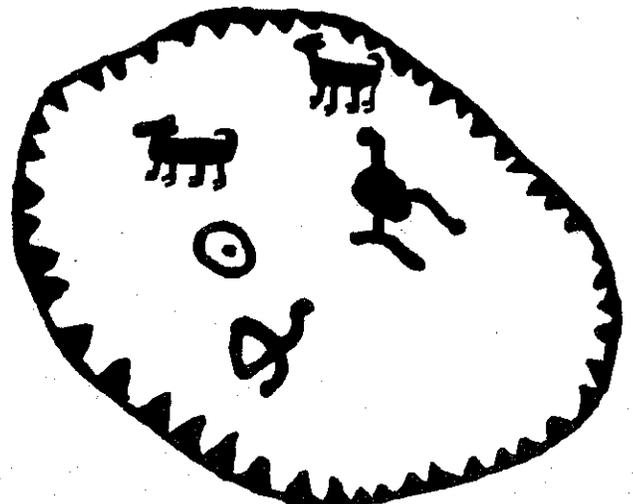
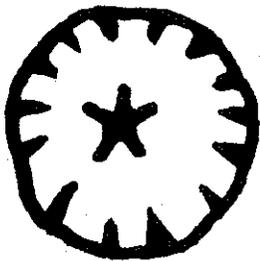
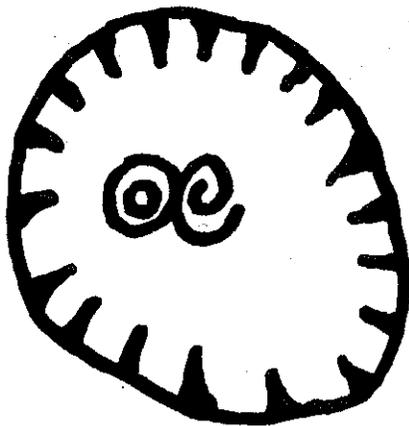
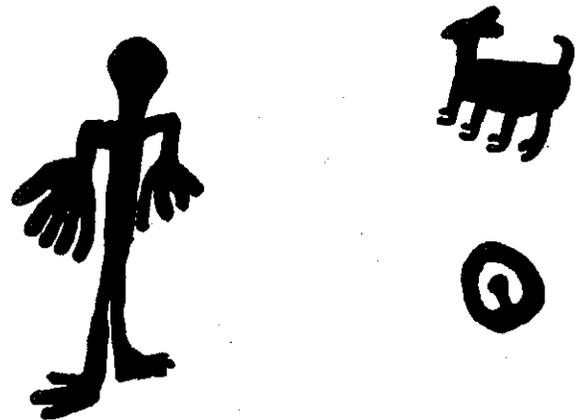
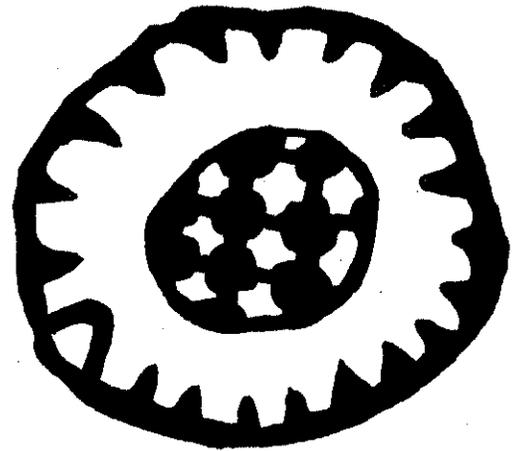
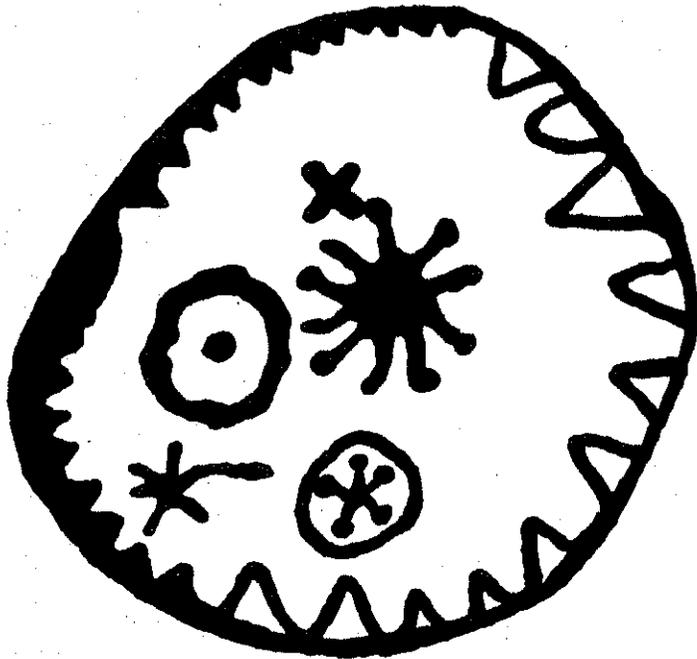


Perry Tank Canyon



Perry Mesa Petroglyphs

A Few Odd Ones...



all of these are from Perry Tank Canyon

