

The Crimson Cowboys: The 1931 Claflin-Emerson Expedition



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James M. Aton



James M. Aton has been professor of English at SUU since 1980. He received his BA from Spring Hill College, his MA from the University of Kentucky, and his PhD from Ohio University. He has published seven books on the rivers, artists, and explorers of the Colorado Plateau. Those books have won four awards and been finalists for two others. Aton's research over the

years has involved not only archival work, but extensive field work in the canyons, rivers, and mountains of the Colorado Plateau. He has a passion for this region and spends considerable time in the backcountry trying to discover what stories that landscape can tell. Aton serves as President of the Board of the Colorado Plateau Archaeological Alliance, a non-profit dedicated to the preservation of cultural resources on public lands. As such, since 2006 he has participated in scores of archaeological surveys around the Colorado Plateau under the direction of archaeologist Jerry D. Spangler, especially in Nine Mile Canyon and Desolation Canyon.

Aton has twice represented the U.S. State Department as a Visiting Fulbright Scholar of American Studies--in the Republic of Indonesia (1989-90) and the People's Republic of China (1997-98). This is the fourth time he has delivered SUU's Distinguished Faculty Lecture. He is married to Carrie Trenholm, a fused glass artist and his soulmate. His daughter, Jennifer Aton Parietti, lives in Seattle with her husband Ryan and son Jack.

The Distinguished Faculty Lecture

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The Crimson Cowboys: The 1931 Claflin-Emerson Expedition

James M. Aton

WELCOMING REMARKS AND RECOGNITION

I am honored to have been selected as the 2019 Grace A. Tanner Distinguished Faculty Lecturer. I would like to dedicate this year's talk to my coauthor, Jerry D. Spangler. This lecture is based on our book, The Crimson Cowboys: The Remarkable Odyssey of the 1931 Claflin-Emerson Expedition (University of Utah Press 2018). Jerry began this project in 2002 and worked on it sporadically through the years, along the way publishing four other books and a dozen book-length technical archaeological reports. Jerry is an esteemed archaeologist, one of the world's experts on the Fremont Complex. And he is an indefatigable researcher, writer, and advocate for cultural resources on public lands. I met Jerry in 2006 and joined him and his archaeology non-profit, the Colorado Plateau Archaeological Alliance. I began assisting on archaeology surveys around the Tavaputs Plateau and elsewhere; during that time I helped him coauthor two of those technical reports. In 2015 he invited me to help him complete the Crimson Cowboys book.

I would also like to thank Prof. Paula Mitchell and the Distinguished Faculty Lecture Committee, as well as Dr. Lynn Vartan and APEX for facilitating this lecture. President Wyatt, Provost Cook, Former HSS Dean McDonald, and my chair, Dr. Jessica Tvordi, supported my 2016-2017 sabbatical which allowed me to complete my part of the Crimson Cowboys book. My English Department colleagues helped cover my classes that year, and I thank them as well.



The Clafin-Emerson crew excavating in Lower Hill Creek (ET6-26) on July 29, 1931.

Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, PM No. 971-21-10/100162.1.361, File 99380229.

In July 1931, the Clafin-Emerson Expedition from Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology set out north from Green River, Utah, toward the Tavaputs Plateau. Its members probably had no inkling that they were participating in what would be the last great horseback adventure in the history of American archaeology. The 1931 field season was the last of four summers of working the "Northern Periphery" of the Colorado Plateau, but it would be unlike any of the previous three. Not only was the area massive in its geographic scope (the Tavaputs Plateau is an area larger than the entire state of Massachusetts), it was also a rugged canyon wilderness with no roads or towns, an area largely unexplored, unmapped, and uninhabited. And the team's journey would involve traveling at least four hundred miles on horseback, sleeping on the ground for nearly two months, and battling the ever-present demons of the desert—thirst, fatigue, and suffocating heat—all in the name of scientific inquiry. We call the team the "Crimson Cowboys," a reference to Harvard University's official school color and nickname.

In a sense, this expedition marked the end of an era when archaeology was about adventure and discovery. Archaeology would eventually evolve into a structured science with laboratory analyses, mathematical formulas, predictive modeling, and other esoteric pursuits. Today, computers are more important to archaeologists than trowels. The Crimson Cowboys, then, are a reminder of a bygone day when archaeology was rooted in the thrill of discovery.



Alfred Vincent "Ted" Kidder. Kidder was the acknowledged dean of southwestern archaeology.

Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, PM No. 2010.1.5, File 99380316.

The Claflin-Emerson Expedition was, by all accounts, inspired by Alfred V. Kidder, the dean of his field and, in 1927, the curator of Southwestern Archaeology at the Peabody. Kidder's motivation was clear: explore the Northern Periphery, a term used to describe ancient peoples north and west of the Ancestral Puebloan centers of Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon, and Kayenta, which consumed the lion's share of archaeological attention in those days. But just how far did the periphery extend? How prevalent was this sphere of influence? No one really knew.

When Donald Scott, assistant director of the Peabody, and Henry B. Roberts, the project's co-director, first planned their excursions to southern Utah in early 1928, the Tavaputs Plateau was not even part of their itinerary. The 1928 expedition focused on the Fremont River country near Torrey, Utah, the Boulder Mountains south of that, and the Kaiparowits Plateau south of Escalante, Utah. In 1929 and 1930, they explored the Dirty Devil River, Moab, and Barrier Canyon (now known as Horseshoe Canyon) in the San Rafael Desert.¹ It was here that Scott and Roberts—with assistance from Noel Morss, whose classic study defined the Fremont Culture—came to recognize that the prehistoric peoples of the Northern Periphery were decidedly different from the Ancestral

Puebloan cultures south of the Colorado River.²

The ancients here foraged and hunted more, their ceramics and architecture were simpler, and their rock art was generally far superior to that found south of the river. The expedition leaders were undoubtedly excited at the prospect of being the first archaeologists to describe and define a new culture, now known as the Fremont Complex.³ But they still did not know the geographic reach of this new culture and how it related to peoples living to the south. The 1931 trip would help them answer that question.

An archaeological expedition of such scale had never before been attempted in the United States, and no one to our knowledge has attempted anything similar since.⁴ The fact that Scott and his crew pulled it off should have been an exclamation point in the history of American archaeology. But it wasn't. The expedition produced remarkably detailed field notes, sketches, and hundreds of photographs of immeasurable wealth to modern researchers, yet it was quickly forgotten. The anticipated monograph, to be written by Roberts, was never published. Scott transcribed the 1931 field notes and wrote a seventeen-page preliminary report, but neither document circulated among scientists outside the museum.⁵ What should have been one of the greatest archaeological expeditions in American history ended up in boxes and file folders, hidden away in the basement of the Peabody Museum.

In the mid-1960s, a young scholar named James Gunnerson dusted off the Claflin-Emerson Expedition files for the first time while writing his dissertation at Harvard. Gunnerson faithfully synthesized some of the field notes of some of the expedition sites.⁶ He basically ignored the photographs and the individuals involved in the 1931 trip: the benefactors, organizers, students, guides, and Utah cowboys and families who helped the Harvard boys. Gunnerson visited a handful of the sites that were accessible by truck, but the vast majority were not visited by archaeologists until 2003. Since that time, using photographs, field journals, and other archival material, the Colorado Plateau Archaeological Alliance (CPAA) has been identifying, documenting, and re-photographing the majority of the hundreds of sites that the 1931 expedition recorded in and around Desolation Canyon, the Uinta Basin, and points north.

Alfred V. Kidder's desire to survey the Northern Periphery needed financial backing, which he found in two wealthy Harvard alumni, William H. Claflin, Jr. and Raymond A. Emerson. Both were interested in archaeology and the West. Emerson was the grandson of the preeminent American philosopher, essayist, and poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Claflin was curator of Southeastern Archaeology for the Peabody and, with Emerson and their wives, had excavated with Kidder at Canyon de Chelly in northeastern Arizona in 1925.⁷

A 1900 Harvard graduate, Donald Scott returned to his alma mater in the late 1920s to pursue graduate work in his true passion, archaeology, after a lucrative career in cotton and publishing. Scott was fifty-two years old and wealthy when he embarked on the last of the four expeditions. He was already a seasoned archaeologist and a thorough organizer.⁸

Scott's cohort, Denver born-and-educated Henry Buchtel Roberts, was a rising star in the Harvard anthropology graduate program.⁹ He was supposed to write the monograph entitled "Peripheral Cultures of the Southwest with Special Reference to the Archaeology of Utah," which he never completed because of health and other issues.¹⁰ Roberts might have been too busy (he took a position at the Carnegie Institution in 1930), and he might have figured that Noel Morss's 1931 classic report on the Fremont had said it all. Or perhaps the Peabody just did not have the funds.¹¹

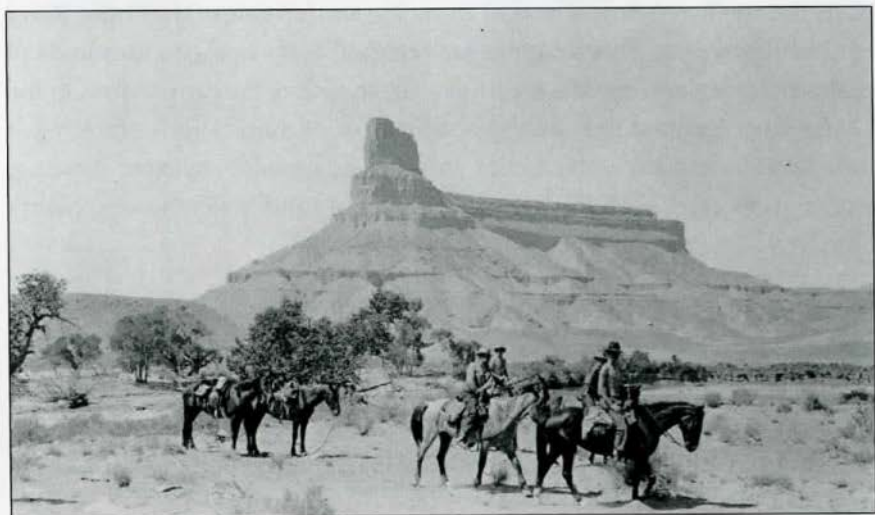
Of the five Harvard students, only one, the graduate student John Otis (J. O. or "Jo") Brew, had working-class roots.¹² Fifteen years later Brew would achieve fame for his work farther south at Alkali Ridge in San Juan County, Utah.¹³ All four undergraduates—William Benton Bowers II, Alfred (Alfie) Kidder II, James Thurber Dennison, and Waldo Emerson Forbes—had family connections to the Peabody, to Scott, or to Emerson. All had previous experience in the field.¹⁴

Perhaps the one individual most important to the success of the expedition was the man who actually knew the canyon country. David Dexter Rust was about as seasoned and expert of a guide that the Colorado Plateau could offer. He was born near Payson, Utah, in 1874 to Mormon parents and was educated at BYU and Stanford.¹⁵ He could quote Shakespeare, John Dewey, or Susan B. Anthony. Rust guided all four years of the Claflin-

Emerson expeditions, but his last was the most challenging because the terrain was difficult and he did not know the Tavaputs Plateau. He was smart enough, however, to hire local men who professed to know the country, at least somewhat: Dafton Thompson and Oliver Rasmussen.

Scott, the students, Rust, and his guides all gathered in Green River, Utah, on July 10, 1931, to purchase last-minute items at J. Beebe and Sons and W. F. Asimus general stores. There would be no tolerance for error. Once the group started into the wilderness, they could not backtrack for forgotten camp equipment or missing supplies. Resupply along the route would not be an option until weeks later in Hill Creek.

On July 13 the expedition members checked out of the Midland Hotel and headed north up the east side of the Green River.¹⁶ After more than a year of planning, they were finally on their way: nine men on horseback, each trailing a pack animal. July days in Green River are brutally hot, usually in the triple digits, and July 13 was probably no different. But heat did not deter the group as they set out to do what no archaeologists had done before, probe the heart of the unknown Tavaputs Plateau. The crew took two days to travel thirty-nine miles to the Cradle M Ranch near the mouth of Florence Creek.¹⁷



Members of the Harvard crew on horseback, beginning their trek. Gunnison Butte, which is north of Green River, Utah, is visible in the background.

Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, PM No. 971-21-10/100162.1.1028, File 99380318.

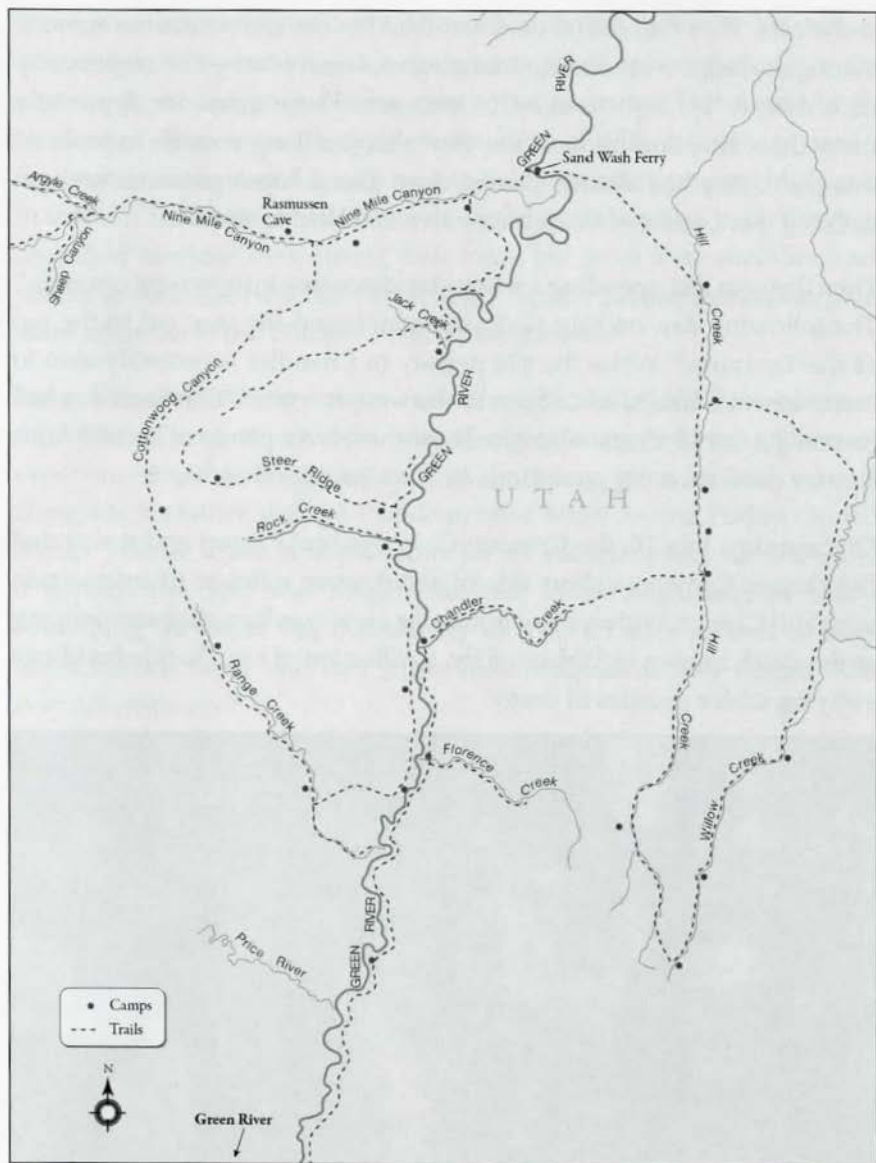
The following morning, July 15, saw the expedition split into two groups. Donald Scott and Waldo Forbes made a brief foray into Florence Creek to explore for ruins, while the remainder of the party headed to the mouth of Chandler Creek, about eight river miles to the north.¹⁸ Scott and Forbes's ride into Florence Creek marked the first time anyone had directly observed the remarkable archaeology of the Tavaputs Plateau with scientific intent. In all, Forbes's field journal mentions four cliff granaries and three rock art sites, none of which we (the CPAA) have re-identified.¹⁹

This number of sites certainly represents a tiny fraction of the sites actually located here. During our informal reconnaissance during the last decade-and-a-half, we have noted nearly a dozen granaries and another dozen or so rock art sites, none mentioned by Scott and Forbes. There are many score more. Scott and Forbes might have been rusty since this was their first foray into the area; further, spotting sites from horseback is much more difficult than finding them on foot. This discrepancy between the number of archaeological sites identified by the Peabody group and the present-day CPAA has become a major theme of our reassessment of the 1931 expedition.

Upon leaving the creature comforts of the Cradle M, the Clafin-Emerson party followed a narrow cow trail along the eastern side of the Green River to Chandler Creek. This drainage was undoubtedly home to hundreds of prehistoric farmers over the centuries. The mouth of the canyon next to the Green River featured the optimal combination of conditions for farming: a broad, flat floodplain with sandy soils renewed annually by river flooding, a permanent creek with fresh water for drinking and irrigation, and plenty of fuel to abate the winter's cold.

As with Florence Creek, modern archaeologists have not formally investigated this canyon, but one can see evidence of past cultures everywhere, from the rock art on the cliff walls to massive stone and adobe granaries on the cliff ledges. Yet based on the sparse journal entries, it appears that the expedition spent very little time actually looking at the ruins of Chandler Creek.

On the morning of July 16, the reunited team packed their horses and mules for the long ascent of Chandler with the goal of reaching Hill Creek



From July 13 to August 16, the Peabody team surveyed and excavated a few hundred miles of canyons around the Tavaputs Plateau.

Reprinted courtesy of the University of Utah Press.

to the east. They had found no fewer than ten storage structures, some of them quite large, within a hundred meters of each other—an exceptionally high density by any standard of measure. These granaries apparently drew their attention because the crew stopped long enough to look. At this point, they had already passed more than a dozen granaries without noticing them, some of them impressive and hard to miss.²⁰

Then they got lost, spending a whole day detouring into “wrong canyons.” The following day, on July 17, Rasmussen found the way out to the top of the Tavaputs.²¹ While the site density in Chandler is probably akin to better-known Nine Mile Canyon to the west, it appears that Scott was hell bent to get to Hill Creek where he knew there were plenty of ancient ruins ripe for excavation. He gave Florence and Chandler short shrift.

On Saturday, July 18, the Crimson Cowboys broke camp and descended Big Doggie Canyon, a short ride of about seven miles to its intersection with Hill Creek.²² Within a few hours, the crew was lounging and napping at the ranch known as Webster City, a collection of ramshackle buildings swaying under decades of decay.



Waldo Forbes, left, and J. O. Brew, right, after their arrival at the Webster City Ranch on July 18, 1931.

Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, PM No. 971-21-10/100162.1.465, File 99380250.

Rasmussen apparently did not know this country prior to his arrival here in July 1931, but he was a designated guide nonetheless. Over the next week, he led an exploring party that ascended Hill Creek to its headwaters, then crossed a divide to the head of Willow Creek, a parallel drainage to the east, and finally back to the main base camp in Hill Creek. In terms of archaeological discoveries, the trip was largely a bust. Yes, they described nineteen sites during their foray, but most were small rock art panels or rock shelters. Not surprisingly, Scott's subsequent report paid scant attention to the Willow Creek investigations.²³

James Dennison, Waldo Forbes, and Alfred Kidder joined Rasmussen on the Willow Creek trip. Kidder was placed in charge—he was the most experienced archaeologist because of the many years he had worked alongside his father at Pecos Pueblo in New Mexico—and Forbes created a map. Willow Creek is noted today for its abundant rock art sites, and it appears the crew was diligent, at least in the beginning, in noting everything they saw. But the number of rock art sites seemed to have overwhelmed them, and they made little progress as they inched their way downstream.²⁴

Near the Hazelbush Ranch at the mouth of Dry Gulch, they discovered an outcrop—locals call it Mushroom Rock—with a commanding view of the valley (ET6-18).²⁵ On the top, the ancients had erected a dry-laid stone wall defining the outer perimeter that was in places nearly a meter high, limiting easy access. This site, the first substantial architecture they had encountered, is commonly referred to in this region as a "fort." Archaeologists, who prefer the more neutral term "tower," tend to agree such features were defensive in nature. With only a few exceptions north of the Colorado River, they are unique to the Tavaputs Plateau. Towers usually stand on the bedrock surface of a prominence high above the valley. Dry-laid rock walls block or greatly limit access to the towers, and in most instances they possess few artifacts. This suggests they were used only temporarily, perhaps as places of refuge during times of perceived threat. Most tower sites feature a single room, although a few have three or four rooms on the pinnacle top.

This particular tower site (Kidder called it a "lookout") loomed three hundred feet above Willow Creek on a nine-meter-high pinnacle top.

Access required a steep climb up a slippery shale slope to the base of the pinnacle. The crew then leaned a pole into a crevice and shinnied up the natural chute to the top of the fourteen-by-twenty-three-meter pinnacle. Unlike other towers in the region, traces of adobe exist that once held the wall matrix in place. The expedition found a few artifacts nearby.²⁶

After seven days exploring a few more sites, they crossed a divide between Hill Creek and Willow Creek, riding another seventeen-and-a-half miles to the Aus Wardle Ranch on Hill Creek, where Donald Scott and the rest of the expedition had their base camp. But that shortcut to Hill Creek also meant they never saw the spectacular historic rock art panels in lower Willow Creek—some of the finest examples to be found anywhere.

While the Willow Creek team was exploring sites to the east, Scott put Brew, Bowers, Dave Rust, and Daft Thompson to work in Hill Creek. The prehistoric architecture of Hill Creek Canyon is spectacular by any standard of measure: stone towers top what seem to be inaccessible mushroom-shaped outcrops. Clusters of stone rooms, perhaps small villages, perch high on defensible mesa tops aloft the valley floor. And the canyon walls boast hundreds of pecked and painted images depicting the natural world and the supernatural. In some instances, the tower walls stand twenty feet high or more, inspiring awe and myriad questions. Who were these ancient builders? What was the purpose of these buildings that have stood the test of time? If indeed defensive, who were they afraid of and why?

The Hill Creek ruins were no secret in 1931, but they had never really been studied, and no trained archaeologist had ever sunk a shovel into them. In fact, excavating the Hill Creek ruins appears to have been one of two overriding priorities of the Claflin-Emerson Expedition that year; the other was excavating Rasmussen Cave in Nine Mile Canyon. Hill Creek might well have been an internal measuring stick by which the success—or failure—of the 1931 expedition would be gauged.

Hill Creek came to Scott's attention through two brief reports written by Dr. J. Walter Fewkes, chief of the Bureau of American Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution.²⁷ Fewkes and his team had base-camped at the Taylor Ranch in 1916, the same ranch that served as a two-day camp

for the Claflin-Emerson Expedition fifteen years later. In addition to excellent drawings and photographs, Fewkes asked the questions that have bedeviled archaeologists ever since. He said, for example, that their locations suggest,

that these towers were constructed for lookouts and for defense, but the questions might very pertinently be asked why should either of these uses necessitate three or four almost identical buildings grouped together, when one would be sufficient? Why are some of them in places where there is no broad outlook? The massive character of the walls suggests a fortification, but why if defense were the only explanation of their use would not one large building be preferable to many, especially as it would be more easily constructed?²⁸

Fewkes's questions probably whetted Scott's appetite to study the ruins more closely because, by 1931, most places in the Southwest had already been pilfered and picked over by looters as well as by museum expeditions from Europe and the eastern United States.²⁹

Another character also had his sights set on Hill Creek at this time: Dr. Albert B. Reagan, a school teacher with the U.S. Indian Field Service in Ouray and a geologist by training. Reagan was not a trained archaeologist, but he had spent decades exploring and excavating archaeological sites, publishing scores of short reports in natural history journals as he went. He had somehow cajoled the Secretary of Interior into giving him an excavation permit for public lands. By Reagan's own account, he first investigated Hill Creek sites in 1930 (and most years after that through 1935), using Fewkes's report as a road map to find those sites described in 1916. In some instances, the Harvard boys arrived at sites only to find that someone, probably Reagan, had beat them to the punch.

On July 19, Donald Scott and his company stopped at the Elery Wild ranch about a mile above Horsecorn. They found a few structural sites and a granary, all of which they excavated. Elery Wild told Brew at this point that "Utes were in the canyon for a considerable time, and remains of their camps are all over, both on the cliffs and the flats."³⁰ The Harvard crew, however, seemed to have dismissed Ute sites altogether.

At the Wardle Ranch farther north, the expedition found itself surrounded by ruins and rock art on every side—they were in the thick of it. They excavated a number of towers with structures below. They did not discover much, but enough to lay to rest Fewkes's idea that the structures were not residential. All three structures had charcoal layers at the base of the pinnacle, along with animal bones from cooking fires, and a mano and a metate that implied seeds had been processed into meal.³¹

By the following day,³² they had begun to investigate the impressive ruins at Fortification Rock (ET6-7), situated on an isolated, narrow mesa top at the mouth of Horsecorn Canyon just above the Wardle Ranch.³³ Isolated mesa tops are common in this part of the world, and small villages often perch on top of them, many with defensive walls blocking access to the main living area.

The Crimson Cowboys were the first trained archaeologists to plant shovels and trowels in these ruins, but they weren't the first to dig here. They found that someone had already left his mark, "gophering," as the



Crew members use ropes to reach the top of Pedestal Rock (ET6-4) in Hill Creek, July 21, 1931. Note that guide Dave Rust is walking into the frame on the left.

Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University (PM No. 971-21-10/100162.1.303, File 99380224)

crew referred to it.³⁴ The “gopher holes” might have been Reagan’s excavation pits from the year before.³⁵

Descending from the mesa, they also found another residential site within a shelter at the base of the cliff.³⁶ The Peabody Museum later submitted four chunks of charcoal from this site to the Tree-Ring Laboratory at the University of Arizona. All the samples revealed outside tree-ring dates between AD 957 and AD 1073, the height of the Fremont Complex occupation of the East Tavaputs and West Tavaputs Plateau.³⁷

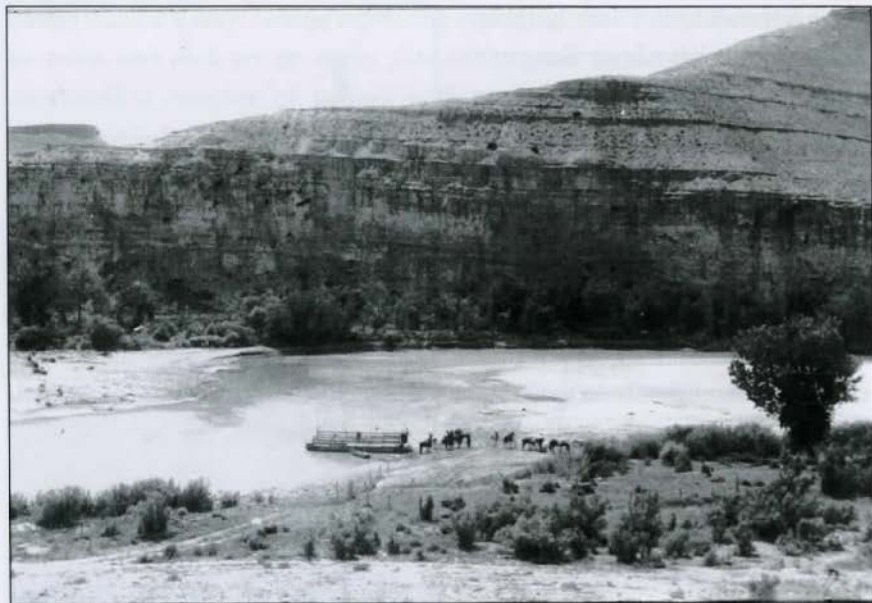
By June 25, 1931, the Willow Creek group had rejoined Scott’s team. About a mile above the Taylor Ranch they stopped and scaled a site known locally as the Jugs: twin pinnacles with a structure on top of each and

another structure at the base (ET6-12).³⁸ Fewkes and Reagan had both been there previously.³⁹ North, at the mouth of West Squaw Draw and the Taylor Ranch, they visited what they called Fort Rocking Chair (ET6-13), one of the largest and most enigmatic of all the sites they encountered.⁴⁰ Fort Rocking Chair was a massive stone tower on a point 250 feet above the ranch, with finely coursed stone walls extending about twenty feet high. The amount of wall rubble suggested it was once even higher. On the interior, a stone bench six to ten feet wide and about twenty feet long rimmed one side of the room. The bench led Fewkes to conclude that it was a kiva, which would make it unique in the Tavaputs country.



A massive stone tower at Fort Rocking Chair (ET6-13) above the Taylor Ranch, as photographed on July 27, 1931.

Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, PM No. 971-21-10/100162.1.27, File 99380244.



The expedition prepares to cross the Green River on Hank Stewart's ferry at Sand Wash, July 30, 1931.

©President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, PM No. 971-21-10/100162.1.24, File 99380238.)

On July 30, the group left Hill Creek, traveling west over the plateau and descending to Sand Wash, where they crossed the Green River on Hank Stewart's ferry. At this point, over the course of only eleven days, they had documented seventeen sites and excavated nine others. They had investigated roughly forty miles of Hill Creek and its tributaries. If artifacts for the Peabody collection were a priority, then they did not have much to show for their efforts. They documented some important towers, but even now, the canyon itself remains largely unknown and the sites undocumented. Hill Creek is still an important piece of the puzzle that is the Fremont Complex in this part of the world. It will be up to future generations of archaeologists, working with the Ute tribe, to finish piecing that puzzle together.

The Crimson Cowboys crossed the river and headed up and over to Nine Mile Canyon, whose archaeological riches were hardly a well-guarded secret in 1931, at least not to locals. For this team, most likely, the initial seed of interest was planted by one of their own, Noel Morss, a member of the 1928 and 1929 Claflin-Emerson Expedition. In 1929, Morss and

his local guide Clarence Mulford took a break from their investigations near Torrey in central Utah and drove roughly a hundred miles north to Nine Mile Canyon. Once there, Morss noted an abundance of masonry architecture but did not assign any great antiquity to it, attributing it—incorrectly—instead to more recent Ute arrivals. But Morss did stop long enough to excavate Rasmussen Cave, where he recovered the burial of a child.⁴¹

The 1931 expedition members focused their attention on the area around three ranches in lower Nine Mile Canyon: Oliver Rasmussen's place at the mouth of Dry Canyon, Neal Hanks's lower ranch two miles farther east at the mouth of Cottonwood Canyon, and Al Pace's ranch another four miles to the east at the mouth of Maxies Canyon. Over the next two weeks, the expedition would base camp at all three locations, paying the cash-strapped ranchers thirty-five cents a day for pasturage for their horses, and, on occasion, thirty-five cents per person for an evening supper.⁴² But they had a skeleton crew: Alfred Kidder, J. O. Brew, guide Dave Rust, and wrangler Daft Thompson. Donald Scott was in Salt Lake City, and Dennison, Bowers, and Forbes would depart on August 2 on an epic journey around the West Tavaputs, Plateau, Range Creek, and Desolation Canyon.

The amount of archaeological sites in lower Nine Mile Canyon is spectacular. In some areas, the number approaches nearly a hundred per square mile—far more than Kidder and Brew could hope to visit in the short time allotted to that area. Brew, who was in charge of the Nine Mile crew in Scott's absence, seems to have preferred a slow, methodical approach to the investigations.

Brew, Kidder, and the crew began recording and excavating sites on August 1 near the mouth of Bull Canyon at what is now called Sunstone Village, one of the largest village sites in the canyon.⁴³ Later, near the Pace ranch, Brew and Kidder found "the Pinnacle," now known as Nordell's Fort. It is a massive stone tower perched on a bedrock outcrop high on the south side of Nine Mile Canyon. It remains the best-preserved and best-crafted prehistoric structure anywhere in the Tavaputs Plateau region.

Scott had probably returned from Salt Lake City by the evening of

August 5 or the morning of August 6, just in time to help the crew move the base camp about four miles up canyon to the Neal Hanks Ranch, near the mouth of Devils Canyon. His return seemed to have sparked a renewed urgency to investigate more and investigate faster. Over the next several days, they documented sixteen more sites, conducted important excavations at Devils Playground (PR4-25) and Rasmussen Cave (PR4-31), and obtained a wealth of photographs of various sites and rock art that have proven invaluable to later researchers. And the Rasmussen Cave excavations would greatly influence archaeological understanding of the Tavaputs Plateau for generations to come.

Rasmussen Cave had been an expedition priority since day one of the adventure. In 1929, Morss excavated a small area of the shelter and recovered a burial. What else might be found with a more thorough investigation? For the most part, the expedition so far had little in the way of spectacular artifacts, mostly potsherds, stone flakes, and corncobs. Rasmussen Cave represented their opportunity to change that.

The cave itself is quite large by Nine Mile standards, nearly thirty meters wide and six-and-a-half meters deep. The back walls display dozens of vivid pictographs in red, white, and black, as well as pecked figures. A nearly life-sized elk painted in red dominates the catalog of images, but there are other unusual elements here, including animals that appear to be dancing on their hind legs. The boulders at the east end of the cave are covered in petroglyphs and bedrock metates. Unlike the other shelters the 1931 team had so far investigated, this one had all the signs of an extended occupation.

After months of anticipation, it is hard to imagine what must have passed through their minds when they finally saw Rasmussen Cave. Instead of a pristine cave ripe for excavation, Scott lamented that "it had been gophered by a large number of local enthusiasts, and the total number of burials removed, according to various reports, runs between three and eight."⁴⁴ Looters had beaten them to the site, ravaging it only a few weeks before. Digging on private property is legal if the land owner grants you permission. We do not know whether Rasmussen, the owner, gave such permission before heading off to Green River to join the Claflin-Emerson Expedition. If he did, it would have been a monumental betrayal of trust: he knew that Scott and company intended to dig there and had granted

them permission to do so.

One of the gophers was likely Alfred E. Gaumer who found a “puppy” associated with the burial of a child. Another one of his excavated burials had a string of beads associated with it, 2,771 beads in all.⁴⁵ Because of such looting, the excavation’s focus shifted to the “refuse pit” or midden. There they found the byproducts of daily life but nothing remarkable that warranted elaboration.



The crew pauses from excavating for a photograph in front of Rasmussen Cave in Nine Mile Canyon.

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On the eastern part of the midden, however, they found a body with artifacts from a different time period. The individual apparently lived in the Fremont era (AD 600–1250), while the other artifacts nearby—especially the leather leggings under the head—pre-date the body by at least 300 years (having come from the Basketmaker II era, 500 BC to AD 500). Numerous possibilities exist to explain this disparity, especially given the recent dating of the body by archaeologist David Yoder.⁴⁶

Why the difference in dates? Yoder provides several different explanations. First, one of the two radiocarbon dates could simply be wrong, because

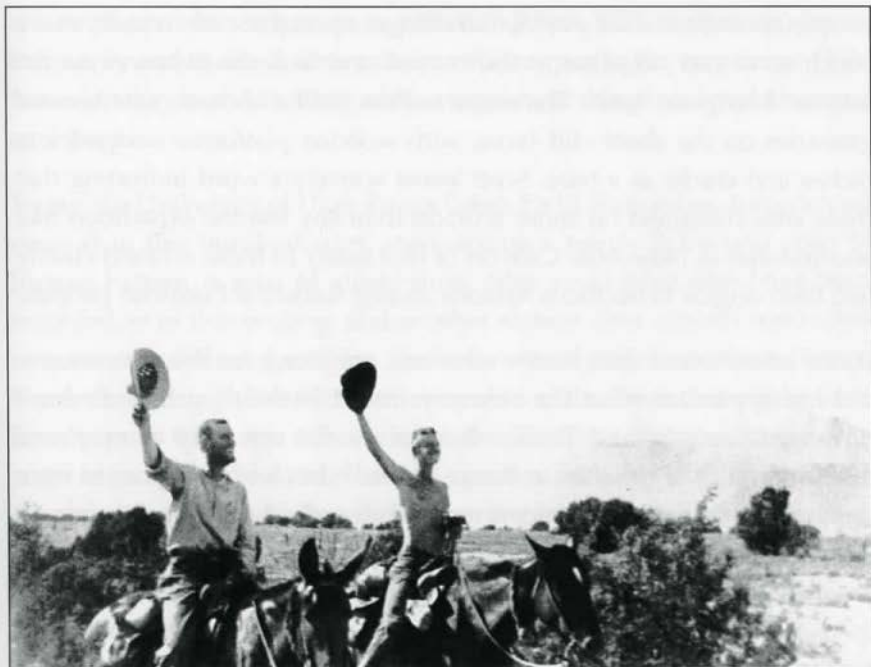
materials can get contaminated during museum storage. Another possibility is that the artifacts Scott and Brew thought were associated with the burial were actually not part of it. Rather, a deceased Fremont farmer just happened to be buried over the top of artifacts left behind by earlier occupants, making the burial and Basketmaker-like artifacts unrelated to one another.

Or maybe the leather cord used to bind the leggings (Yoder dated the cord that wrapped the leggings, not the leggings themselves) had been floating around the cave for some time, and the owner of the leggings recycled the loose cord, making it unrelated to the leather bundle and burial. Or maybe the leather sample Yoder dated was not the one he thought it was.

Whatever the explanation, the child burial, which Yoder dated to the Basketmaker II era, and the rawhide strap represent the two oldest dates (AD 124 and AD 460, respectively) yet reported from Nine Mile Canyon. And both dates suggest that people lived here at a time when foragers throughout the region began to add maize farming to their subsistence. Almost nine decades after "Basketmaker" was disinterred and carted away to the Peabody Museum, he continues to generate more questions than answers.

While all of this was going on in Nine Mile Canyon, Bowers, Dennison, and Forbes embarked on the most strenuous, dangerous, and remarkable part of the expedition. They were covering over one hundred miles of plateaus, canyons, and river bottoms in the West Tavaputs Plateau. It was a place so inaccessible that government surveyors had scarcely mapped it, and the maps the Harvard boys carried with them were generally useless. Streams and canyons appeared in the wrong places. The few cow trails, as they would soon discover, did not always lead to their desired destination, and their guide, Oliver Rasmussen, would prove underqualified for the task ahead.

Once these young men rode out of the Pace Ranch in lower Nine Mile Canyon, they would be on their own for the next two weeks, far from resupply and even farther from help. The first priority was Range Creek, a place with no roads and only two lonely cabins inhabited by cowboys.



William Bowers, left, and Waldo Forbes, right, celebrate their arrival in Range Creek.

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The expedition members knew next to nothing about the land deep in the heart of the West Tavaputs. They had certainly talked to cowboys, and they had Oliver Rasmussen, a veteran of the country for at least the past decade or so. They knew of the ruins of Range Creek and also of a distant drainage called Flat Canyon, filled with rock art and granaries. They had heard enough that Scott wanted to investigate the reports.

Yet Scott must not have been impressed upon their return. The two-week adventure—where his students saw things no archaeologist had seen before—received two short sentences in the expedition summary: “This reconnaissance revealed a continuation of the same types of pictographs as found in the main canyon of Nine Mile. Very few of the open sites were encountered but a large number of stone and adobe granaries with pole roofs are to be found there.”⁴⁷

Not only does that summary fail to adequately represent what the students observed in Range Creek, but it was flat-out wrong in many ways. Scores

of open residential sites, even small villages, spread out on virtually every bench level and ridgeline in the canyon and in some instances on the canyon floodplain itself. The ancients here built elaborate, cantilevered granaries on the sheer cliff faces, with wooden platforms wedged into niches and cracks as a base. Scott wrote scarcely a word indicating that these sites contained far more artifacts than any site the expedition had encountered in Nine Mile Canyon or that many of these artifacts clearly had their origins in northern Arizona among Ancestral Puebloan peoples.

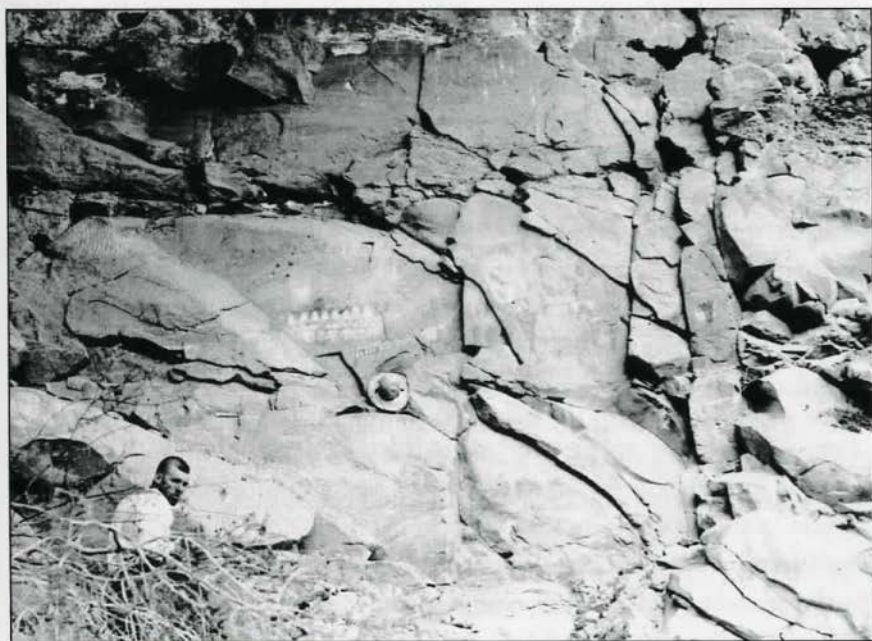
It can be surmised that Scott—who was not along for the adventure—did not appreciate what the observers noted in their journals. Perhaps Bowers, Dennison, and Forbes themselves did not fully comprehend the importance of the sites in Range Creek. What we have gleaned from the journals is that they discovered and described twenty-nine sites in just four days, took a wealth of photographs, and even conducted some excavations. Unfortunately, the observations of these first archaeologists to visit Range Creek would remain largely forgotten and unappreciated for decades to come.

The area was rumored to be rich in archaeological treasures, and in 2002, the rancher Waldo Wilcox sold his ranch to the Trust for Public Land. Archaeologists from Uinta Research, the Utah Rock Art Research Association, and the University of Utah knew of the lore surrounding Range Creek, so they jumped at the chance to visit the area. They were left speechless by what they actually saw. In a matter of four days in 2002 they discovered and documented nearly fifty sites, ranging from elaborate rock art panels to ancient farming villages to granaries large and small on nearly every cliff face. Everywhere they looked they found something new. And they had only examined a tiny portion—less than 1 percent—of the canyon.⁴⁸

Even more unbelievable was that, with a few exceptions, the sites were in pristine condition—no looters' holes, no graffiti, no vandalism. To archaeologists accustomed to the widespread pillaging of ancient sites, an entire undisturbed human ecosystem where the past could be carefully studied, layer upon layer, was nothing short of a holy grail. Understandably, this scientific treasure trove eventually garnered international headlines. Hundreds of articles were written, many focusing on Wilcox's life-long

efforts to save the canyon from looters.⁴⁹ When William Bowers, James Dennison, and Waldo Forbes rode into the canyon in the summer of 1931, however, they had no inkling of how important this place would become to science.

Today, the University of Utah Range Creek Field Station has documented more than five hundred sites, representing a nearly 2,000-year span of human history. A total of ninety-three open residential sites have been recorded as of this writing, and another sixteen sites contain residential structures in sheltered settings. Quite simply, in prehistoric times, Range Creek teemed with farmers, with population densities that might have been greater than any other area of the Tavaputs Plateau. Based on a suite of radiocarbon dates, the first farmers probably arrived at Range Creek in about AD 400, but they were few in number. The populations seem to have exploded between AD 850 and 1200. Of the thirty-three radiocarbon dates, twenty-nine are attributed to this narrow window of human history.⁵⁰



William Bowers documents a rock art site inside an alcove above the team's first camp in Range Creek.

Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, PM No. 2004.24.10537, File 120770002.

When the crew—Bill Bowers, Waldo Forbes, Jim Dennison, and their cowboy guide, Oliver Rasmussen—finally left Range Creek and turned their horses toward the unknown canyons along the west bank of the Green River, they were venturing into a place where no archaeologists had gone before, a natural fortress of sheer cliffs, box canyons, and intense heat. For forty-six of their 104-mile route, they traveled along the western bank of the Green River, a fine source of water for the horses but laden with so much sand as to make it highly unpleasant for humans. The most important person on this leg of the expedition was undoubtedly Rasmussen, who probably knew the locations of the few scattered fresh-water springs tucked in the side canyons. Finding fresh water would dictate the course of their foray along the Green River.

Again, it is unclear from the field notes or correspondence why the expedition members wanted to explore this formidable country or what they expected to find here. It is possible that local cowboys had regaled Scott with stories of unspoiled cliff ruins that teased him with the prospect of a grand discovery. Or maybe it was simply because the land was still unexplored: a last frontier of sorts for archaeological discovery. Dave Rust was enthusiastic about the region's potential, selling Scott on the idea that "such a region is a like place of habitation for our prehistoric brethren."⁵¹

Most likely, Scott did not appreciate what he was asking of his crew or just how remarkable it was that they accomplished this feat safely. Even weathered cowboys today would pause at such a journey. It required the most sure-footed horses, accustomed to narrow trails on canyon ledges, where one slip could mean death to horse and rider. The rocky, unstable trails were, in many places, cut into steep slopes of sixty to eighty degrees, where rock slides had removed all traces of the trail itself, requiring riders to dismount their horses and lead them through the boulder fields. Cowboys who use the trails to this day say it can take hours to travel a mile or two, picking one's way around the rock slides.

The West Tavaputs Plateau is one of the last great wilderness areas in the lower forty-eight states, composed of hundreds of square miles of untamed canyon country. More than a dozen major canyon tributaries flow from west to east from the high plateau to the Green River, and dozens of minor, unnamed canyons drain to the river as well. The highest

spot on the plateau is Bruin Point, a boney outcrop at 10,131 feet above sea level; the lowest point the expedition would encounter was 4,200 feet at the mouth of Three Fords Canyon, along the Green River. In other words, they experienced an elevation change of nearly 6,000 feet.

Desolation Canyon's escarpments are often sheer, rising in ascending levels to hundreds of feet above the narrow floodplains. Almost all are devoid of permanent, clear water. Today, despite the natural gas development on the high plateau, these narrow canyons have stymied the attempts of humans to build roads or otherwise develop the land. Only one permanent ranch was ever established here, at Rock Creek. This land remains as untamed today as it was in 1869, when John Wesley Powell and his band of explorers first floated the Green River.⁵² The Peabody Museum horseback odyssey has, to our knowledge, never been duplicated by archaeologists. Seventy-five years would pass before archaeologists returned to Desolation Canyon to study the ancients, not on horseback but rather floating on rubber rafts laden with modern amenities. In terms of difficulty, modern research projects share little in common with the 1931 expedition.

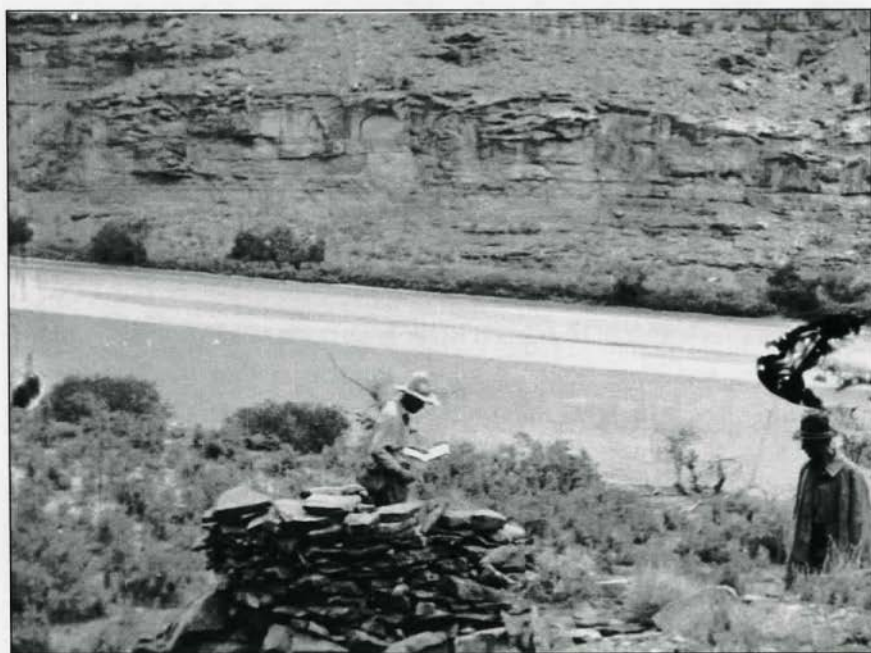
When the Harvard group left Range Creek, they followed an old cowboy trail east onto Last Chance Bench. At Trail Canyon they found a two-chambered granary and six groups of red-and-yellow pictographs at Lion Hollow.⁵³ The following day, Bowers led the crew north toward the remote ranch at the mouth of Rock Creek, following the trail as it hugged the edge of the river.

The Rock Creek area of the Green River is an oasis of sorts, with its broad floodplains and clear water. Fremont farmers settled there at least a thousand years ago, and Anglo ranchers found it no less enticing. After camping at the mouth, the crew then began moving west up the creek. They followed a well-worn trail, first pioneered by the Seamount brothers and now called the Van Dusen Trail, up the bottom of Rock Creek Canyon. Cattlemen used it to move livestock back and forth from the ranch at Rock Creek to their summer range on the high plateau. They photographed numerous granaries and rock art panels, and they passed other sites without mention, which suggests they were moving fast with a specific destination in mind.⁵⁴ That destination might well have been a famous

petroglyph site that lures hundreds of river runners today and was probably known to Rasmussen. At about two miles from the mouth sits an impressive rock art panel with more than a hundred images of bizarre human shapes, bighorn sheep, and abstract compositions. Bowers offered a brief description of the site, which they photographed in panoramic fashion to capture its size and complexity.⁵⁵

The goal for the next day, August 10, was to “ride to Flat Canyon to investigate three structures and one group of petroglyphs reported there.”⁵⁶ But they had to take a route that is today called the Son-of-a-Bitch Trail—an aptly named labyrinth of ups and downs and rock slides that still evokes curses. The group spent an entire day to traveling those five miles to the mouth of Steer Ridge Canyon. From there they could not find a trail to Flat Canyon because none exists. Their guide, Rasmussen, should have known this.

If the expedition had made it to Flat, they might have been awestruck at the sheer density of prehistoric sites there: dozens and dozens of masonry



The expedition visited this small tower site (ET5-1) on August 14, 1931.

Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, PM No. 971-21-10/100162.1.385, File 99380317.

granaries, the largest petroglyph panel anywhere in Desolation Canyon, and a complex of prehistoric residences perched on an outcrop overlooking the broad Flat Canyon floodplain. It has the highest concentration of prehistoric sites on the West Tavaputs Plateau outside of Range Creek and Nine Mile Canyon. Archaeologists are still grappling with why this is the case. One reason is that the climate may have been wetter and, hence, allowed more farming.

On August 12, the crew finally decided to leave the Green River behind and ride to the high plateau to a reliable water source, Johnson Spring. Local legends say early cattleman Shadrach "Shed" Lunt blasted this horse path in the late 1870s or early 1880s using dynamite.⁵⁷ They camped at the cabin of Cecil Rouse, a small-time cattle operator.⁵⁸

At this point, uncertainty seems to have permeated the expedition. Rasmussen apparently did not have known this country all that well. They eventually gave up going into Flat and descended Jack Canyon toward the canyon mouth, another ten miles distant. They found some rock art sites but nothing to suggest that ancient farmers had worked those floodplains.⁵⁹

On the morning of August 14, the crew headed north, hugging the river's edge. No formal pack trails exist in this area, so they bushwhacked along the edge of the river, choked in places with thorny greasewood. Opposite Peter's Point they found granaries and a house foundation, and at the mouth of Rock House Canyon they described and photographed a petroglyph panel.⁶⁰ All of the journals abruptly go silent at this time.

It is unclear how far the expedition traveled that day, but their return to Nine Mile Canyon did not even warrant a mention in any of the journals. In fact, the entire Range Creek-Desolation Canyon foray seems to have been casually dismissed. As noted above, the editor of the journals, Scott, devoted only a single paragraph to the remarkable odyssey, lumping the Range Creek and Desolation Canyon observations into a mere two sentences.⁶¹

Perhaps the later chronicles would have been more effusive had Bowers, Dennison, and Forbes spent more time exploring the rich archaeology of Rock Creek or if they had actually made it to Flat Canyon, where they would have found spectacular granaries and rock art panels. Archaeologists

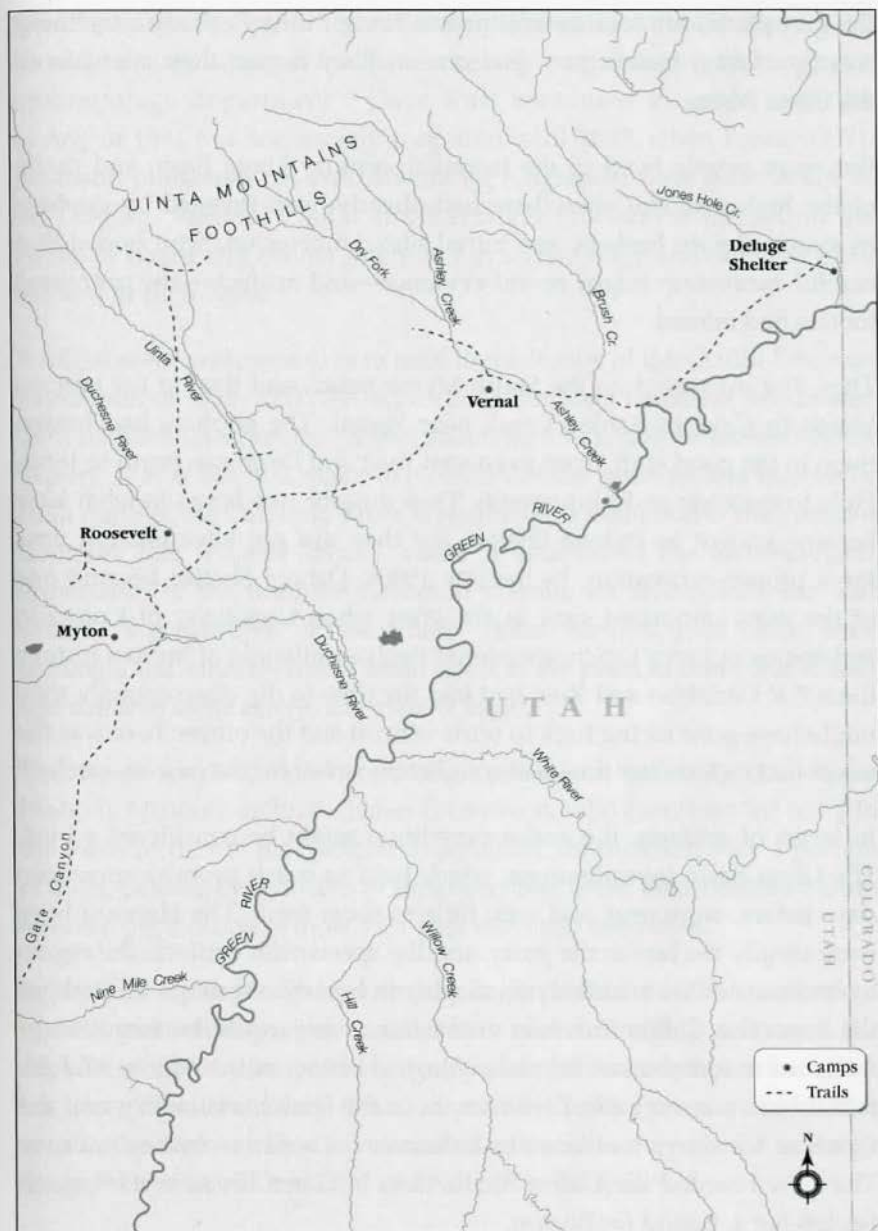
from CPAA have now documented more than 275 archaeological sites in Desolation Canyon and its tributaries, including all but one of the sixteen sites mentioned in the 1931 field journals.

While the Harvard boys got it monumentally wrong when they concluded that Range Creek had plenty of granaries but not much in the way of residential sites, that assessment appears to hold true for Desolation Canyon. At least forty-three sites with granaries are tucked along the Green River and in the side canyons, but the canyon has only seventeen sites with open residential structures. Almost all of these sit in the side canyons instead of along the river corridor, and there appears to be a higher use of rock shelters as temporary residences.

In other words, ongoing research in Desolation Canyon paints a picture of prehistoric farmers working the river floodplains during the spring, summer, and fall, using rock shelters as temporary homes. They built multiple granaries near their fields to store their harvest. Once cold weather arrived, they retreated to more permanent residences two or three miles up side canyons where fresh water and firewood were plentiful. Forays to recover their stored maize probably occurred throughout the winter. By early May, they would have again scattered to the distant fields to begin the planting and tending of fields, some along the river corridor and others along the side canyons with suitable floodplains.

These ancients were probably country cousins to the families living in Nine Mile Canyon and Range Creek and unusually adapted to the isolated environments of Desolation Canyon. The first archaeologists here—Bowers, Dennison, and Forbes—had no way of knowing this during their 104-mile trek, but they did have the distinction of being the first to explore the scientific potential of this remarkable landscape. And they did it on horseback, a feat likely never to be duplicated.

The saddle-weary Crimson Cowboys had just completed the unthinkable: a roughly four-hundred-mile horseback odyssey through the wildest canyon country imaginable. The adventure, conducted on a scale never before attempted by archaeologists, might be over, but there was work still to be done and seventeen days left to do it. The expedition was nonetheless lean on exhibit-quality artifacts, and we assume that Scott,



From August 16 to September 5, the Crimson Cowboys explored the Uinta Basin and Jones Hole.

Reprinted courtesy of the University of Utah Press.

the group's leader, was determined to bring to the Peabody something worthy of their benefactors' investment. They turned their attention to the Uinta Basin.

But more people lived in the twentieth-century Uinta Basin and many of the high-potential sites there had already been ravaged by gophers in search of pots, baskets, and burial sites. Undeterred, Scott hoped that careful excavation might reveal evidence—and artifacts—the untrained looters had missed.

They first excavated on the South Myton bench and then at the famous Elizabeth Cave in Ashley Creek near Vernal. The gophers had beaten them to the good stuff. Scott even sent Rust and Dennison north to Jones Hole to excavate and photograph. They dug for two hours in what later became known as Deluge Shelter, but they did not have enough time for a proper excavation. In the late 1960s, Deluge Shelter became one of the most important sites in the West when University of Colorado archaeologist Larry Leach uncovered twelve millennia of human history there.⁶² If Dennison and Rust had had the time to dig deep enough, they might have gone racing back to retrieve Scott and the others: here was the unspoiled rock shelter they had sought to no avail for the past six weeks.⁶³

In terms of artifacts, the entire expedition might be considered a bust. The Uinta Basin investigations, which held so much promise seventeen days before, were over and with little to show for it. The Harvard boys were simply too late to the party, and the spectacular artifacts the region once concealed were already on display in homes and shops throughout the area. The Claflin-Emerson excavations here would be forgotten or relegated to footnotes in the archaeological history of the region. All told, it had been a remarkable seven weeks in the Utah backcountry, and the Crimson Cowboys had acquitted themselves well in cowboy country. The crew boarded the Union Pacific train in Green River, Wyoming, on September 4, bound for Boston.

Four of the five students would return to school at Harvard and Donald Scott to the Peabody. Besides Scott, three of the crew went on to work part or all their lives in archaeology or anthropology: J. O. Brew, Alfie Kidder, and Bill Bowers. Jim Dennison and Waldo Forbes, who remained close

friends, followed very different career paths into family businesses. All would be later honored for their scholarly contributions to Harvard's anthropology department.⁶⁴ Dave Rust continued to guide until the spring of 1941 but was mostly forgotten until 2007, when Frederick H. Swanson published his award-winning biography, *Dave Rust: A Life in the Canyons*. William Claflin and Raymond Emerson remained on the Peabody board and stayed interested in archaeology and the West until the end of their lives.

It might seem presumptuous to refer to the legacy of the Claflin-Emerson Expedition of 1928–1931: the expedition's findings remained overlooked until decades later. Yet the project stands as a hallmark of archaeological inquiry. It was the first major exploration of the most remote regions of Utah north of the Colorado River. It resulted in a definition of the Fremont Complex that remains largely intact. It established the archaeological importance of the northern Colorado Plateau, an accomplishment that successive generations of researchers—Julian Steward, John Gillin, Jesse Jennings, and others—would build upon in the years to come. But it was, and still is to some extent, a neglected legacy.

The expedition field notes were never published, gathering dust in the Peabody Museum archives. James Gunnerson, who examined the notes in the 1960s as part of his doctoral dissertation, summarized only a portion of them, passing over dozens of sites described in the field journals.⁶⁵ Until recently, the location of most 1931 sites remained unknown.

In 2003, the Colorado Plateau Archaeological Alliance (CPAA) embarked upon a multi-year project to re-identify and thoroughly document the expedition's 1931 sites. Working closely with the Peabody Museum, CPAA has now identified more than a hundred Claflin-Emerson Expedition sites in the region, including almost all of the sites they visited in Range Creek,⁶⁶ Desolation Canyon,⁶⁷ and Nine Mile Canyon.⁶⁸

Through comparison of historic photographs taken in 1931 (there are hundreds of them in the Peabody's archives) to a site's current condition, we can evaluate the rate of site degradation over time. We can begin to understand which sites are at risk to vandals and looters, and we can even estimate when past looting might have occurred. These efforts will assist

land managers and private property owners to better protect the region's rich archaeological legacy for future generations.

But in 1932 Donald Scott's decision not to return to the northern Colorado Plateau punctuated the end of the Peabody's grand expeditions into the American West. They returned periodically in the years to come but always on a much smaller scale and never with such a grand geographic vision. Gone were the days of horseback archaeology—crews dispatched for weeks on end into the wilderness in search of the unknown and undiscovered. In a very real sense, the 1931 Claflin-Emerson Expedition closed one era and started another. It was the last of what we call "adventure archaeology," or exploration for the sake of discovery.

The real value of the expedition to archaeology today lies not so much in the artifacts themselves but in the detailed journals of the young scholars and in the hundreds of photographs now curated at the Peabody Museum. Many of the sites they visited in 1931 no longer exist or have been damaged beyond recognition, sometimes through natural erosion but more often by the thoughtless acts of individuals.

The 1931 expedition was essentially the last when archaeologists endured these kind of privations and hardship in the spirit of new discoveries. Within a few years, the entire discipline underwent another theoretical shift. Archaeologists are now preoccupied with understanding the context of artifacts and the human behavior behind them, the interrelation of features within sites and of different sites to one another, and the natural environment that influenced, as Gordon R. Willey described it, "the way in which man disposed himself over the landscape."⁶⁹

Instead of describing archaeological remains—and the Crimson Cowboys were certainly good at that—the next generation of archaeologists focused their scholarly efforts on explaining how and why prehistoric humans behaved the way they did. In a way, as archaeology became more and more of a science in the years after 1931, it also became more and more clinical, perhaps even boring to most. At least it would have been by the standards of the Crimson Cowboys, who thought nothing of a four-hundred-mile horseback trip into the Utah wilderness armed only with note pads, trowels, and a camera.

Endnotes

1. This paper is based on a portion of the book, *The Crimson Cowboys: The Remarkable Odyssey of the 1931 Claflin-Emerson Expedition* by Jerry D. Spangler and James M. Aton (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2018); it is also drawn from the article "The Crimson Cowboys: The Remarkable Odyssey of the 1931 Claflin-Emerson Expedition," by Jerry D. Spangler and James M. Aton, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 86.2 (Spring 2018): 78-101; James H. Gunnerson, *The Fremont Culture: A Study in Culture Dynamics on the Northern Anasazi Frontier, Including the Report of the Claflin-Emerson Expedition of the Peabody Museum*, Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology 59, no. 2 (Cambridge: Peabody Museum Press, 1969): 23.
2. See Noel Morss, *The Ancient Culture of the Fremont River in Utah*, Peabody Museum of American Anthropology and Ethnology 12, no. 3 (1931). This was the now-classic report that established the name and the outlines of what is now known as the Fremont Complex, named after the river near Torrey, Utah.
3. "Fremont Complex" is used by Utah archaeologists as an umbrella term to describe farmers and foragers north of the Colorado River, although there are distinct differences in adaptations from region to region. In some areas, the Fremont peoples were highly dependent on cultivated maize, and in other areas they depended more on wild plants, especially marsh resources. A hallmark of the Fremont was their ability to shift adaptive strategies between farming and foraging as conditions warranted.
4. Don D. Fowler, the foremost expert on the history of western archaeology, correctly observes that the Glen Canyon Project—the archaeological investigations done in advance of the Glen Canyon Dam construction in southern Utah and northern Arizona in the late 1950s and early 1960s—probably surpassed the geographic scope of the 1931 Claflin-Emerson Expedition, but it did not begin to approach it in terms of logistical difficulty. The Glen Canyon crews primarily used trucks and rubber rafts to complete their surveys, occasionally resorting to horses and backpacks to access certain roadless areas like the Kaiparowits Plateau. The 1931 expedition, conducted almost

exclusively with horses and mules, benefited only rarely from any motorized vehicle support.

5. Donald Scott, "Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance in North Eastern Utah Conducted by The Peabody Museum of Harvard University, July, August and September, 1931," Claflin-Emerson Expedition Field Records, 31-16-10/100240.1.7 (hereafter Claflin-Emerson Records), Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (hereafter Peabody Museum).
6. Gunnerson, *The Fremont Culture*.
7. See Amelia Emerson Forbes, *Recollections and Ramblings of Amelia Forbes Emerson* (Boston: Thomas Dodd, 1968), 119–26.
8. "Donald Scott," *Harvard University Gazette* (November 4, 1967): 62; "Donald Scott," *Harvard College Class of 1900: Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Report* (Cambridge: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1925), 605; David L. Browman and Stephen Williams, *Anthropology at Harvard: A Biographical History, 1790–1940* (Cambridge: Peabody Museum Press, Harvard University, 2013), 340.
9. Browman and Williams, *Anthropology at Harvard*, 370–71.
10. *Ibid*, 371.
11. *Ibid*, 370–71; Jerry D. Spangler, *Nine Mile Canyon: The Archaeological History of an American Treasure* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2013), 51.
12. Donald Scott to Rust, April 9, 1931, Claflin-Emerson Records. Biographical information obtained from 1910 U.S. Census, Malden Ward 5, Middlesex, Massachusetts, roll T624_601, page 15A, enumeration district 0900; Massachusetts, Marriage Records, 1840–1915; United States, Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1861–1865; 1920 U.S. Census, Malden Ward 5, Middlesex, Massachusetts, roll T625_713, page 2B, enumeration district 278, image 523, all accessed December 19, 2017, ancestry.com.

13. Richard B. Woodbury, "John Otis Brew, 1906–1988," *American Antiquity* 55, no. 3 (July 1990): 452; Browman and Williams, *Anthropology at Harvard*, 372–73.
14. Browman and Williams, *Anthropology at Harvard*, 413, 426; "William Benton Bowers, II," box 7, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Student Folders, 1890–1999, UAV 161.201.11, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Scott to Rust, April 9, 1931, Scott to Julian Steward, May 5, 1931, and Scott to Henry S. Bowers, June 18, 1931, box 31-16, fd. 4, Claflin-Emerson Records; Frederick H. Swanson, *Dave Rust: A Life in the Canyon* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2007), xv, 231–33; Karen L. Mohr Chavez, "Alfred V. Kidder II, 1911–1989," *Expedition* 30, no. 3 (1988): 4; J. O. Brew to John Walcott, June 25, 1931, box 31-16, fd. 4, Claflin-Emerson Records.
15. Swanson, *Dave Rust*, xv.
16. "Journal of Expenses, Utah 1931," 31-16-10/100240.1.7, box 31-16, fd. 3, page 3, Claflin-Emerson Records.
17. For a more extensive discussion of the Cradle M Ranch's history, see James M. Aton, *The River Knows Everything: Desolation Canyon and the Green* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2009), 103–112.
18. This would be the only occasion on the entire expedition where Donald Scott, the senior archaeologist, split off to investigate something. In all subsequent instances (Range Creek, Desolation, Argyle, and Willow Creek), he sent the young men to do the exploring.
19. Waldo Forbes, "Field Journal of the 1931 Claflin Emerson Expedition," 2, PM no. 971-21-10/100162.3.8.6, Donald C. Scott Collection, 971-21-10/100162, Peabody Museum.
20. *Ibid.*, 9–11; James Dennison, "Field Journal of the 1931 Claflin Emerson Expedition," 4–6, PM no. 971-21-10/100162.3.8.5, Donald C. Scott Collection.
21. David Rust, "Journal 1931 Claflin-Emerson Expedition," 1, reel 1, David Dexter Rust Papers, 1870–1963, MS 1143, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

22. Topographic maps today refer to this feature as Big Doggie Canyon, but the journals actually called it Little Doggie Canyon.
23. Donald Scott, "The Claflin Emerson Expedition Field Notes," 5-6, Claflin-Emerson Records.
24. Alfred V. Kidder II, "Journal of the 1931 Claflin-Emerson Expedition," 14, Donald C. Scott Collection.
25. Scott's site numbering system was based on United States Geological Survey topographical maps. "The number is composed of three elements: the letter or letters indicating the name of the topographical sheet; a number indicating in which of the sixteen divisions of the map the site lies, counting from the top left-hand corner; and a third number which is the actual numerical indicator of the site. Thus ET 6-6 signifies a site on the East Tavaputs sheet; second section from the left in the second row from the top (there being four rows of four sections each): and the sixth site encountered in that section. The exploration covered parts of four sheets: East Tavaputs, Price River, Uinta, and Ashley." Scott, "Claflin Emerson," 2, Claflin-Emerson Records.
26. Kidder, "Field Journal," 14-15, Donald C. Scott Collection.
27. J. Walter Fewkes, "Archaeological Investigations in New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah," *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections* 68, no. 1 (1917): 1. See also J. Walter Fewkes, "Prehistoric Remains in New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah," *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections* 66, no. 17 (1917): 76-92.
28. Fewkes, "Archaeological Investigations," 33-34.
29. From the 1880s through the 1920s, the most prestigious museums in the world dispatched crews to the Southwest to harvest rich collections of artifacts with little or no thought to understanding the people behind the artifacts. In some instances, the museums even paid locals to hunt their collections for them, which led to the rural tradition of pot hunting. The preoccupation with artifacts gave way to the emergence in the 1910s of archaeology as a scientific discipline oriented towards careful attention to detail, record keeping and

reporting, and attempts to place archaeological resources in spatial and temporal context. Alfred Kidder's father was at the forefront of paradigm shift, and the Claflin-Emerson Expedition of 1928-1931 represented one of the earliest attempts to implement these new practices on a grand scale.

30. John Otis Brew, "Field Journal of the 1931 Claflin Emerson Expedition," 5, 6-7, PM no. 971-21-10/100162.3.8.4, Donald C. Scott Collection. Gunnerson's synthesis indicates the site is two miles above Horsecorn Canyon. Donald Scott, "The 1931 Claflin Emerson Expedition," 29, Claflin-Emerson Records.
31. Brew, "Field Journal," 18, Donald C. Scott Collection.
32. Bowers's journal indicates they began excavations here on July 21, but this is probably in error and it is not consistent with Brew's journal. The only way this date would be accurate is if Bowers began working here by himself while all the others were at Pedestal Rock and the other sites in the same area.
33. James Gunnerson revisited this site in 1954 and assigned it the site number 42Un120.
34. Brew, "Field Journal," 16, Donald C. Scott Collection.
35. Albert Reagan, "Some Archaeological Notes on Hill Canyon in Northeastern Utah," *El Palacio* 31, no. 4 (1931): 235.
36. Scott, "Claflin Emerson," 24, Claflin-Emerson Records.
37. Edmund Schulman, "Dendrochronology in Northeastern Utah," *Tree-Ring Bulletin* 15 (1948): 2-14.
38. Kidder, "Field Journal," 23-25, Donald C. Scott Collection.
39. Fewkes, "Archaeological Investigations," 32-33; Reagan, "Notes on Hill Canyon," 230.
40. This site was redocumented in 2004 by Montgomery Archaeological Consultants. It had earlier been assigned the number 42Un105.

41. Noel Morss, *The Ancient Culture of the Fremont River in Utah*, 28. Clarence Mumford's name was etched into a cliff face just outside of Rasmussen Cave where it is still visible today.
42. "Journal of Expenses, Utah 1931," box 31-16, fd. 3, Claflin-Emerson Records.
43. Jerry D. Spangler, "Site Distribution and Settlement Patterns in Lower Nine Mile Canyon: The Brigham Young University Surveys of 1989-91" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1993), 261-63.
44. Scott, "Claflin Emerson," 82, Claflin-Emerson Records.
45. Alfred E. Gaumer, "Basketmaker Caves in Desolation Canyon, Green River, Utah," *Masterkey* 11, no. 5 (1937): 160-65.
46. David Yoder, email communication with Jerry D. Spangler, December 7, 2016. The child burial dated to 1,842 \pm 21 years BP, with a 2 Sigma range of AD 124 to 237 (D-AMS 011271). The maize from the west side of the cave returned a date of 1,083 \pm 24 BP with a 2 Sigma range of AD 895 to 1,016 (D-AMS 010871).
47. Scott, "Claflin Emerson," 10, Claflin-Emerson Records.
48. Jerry D. Spangler was the lead archaeologist on the 2002 expedition, the first archaeological exploration of the canyon in forty-seven years.
49. One of the more colorful, if embellished accounts, is David Roberts's *The Lost World of the Old Ones: Discoveries in the Ancient Southwest* (New York City: W. W. Norton, 2016).
50. Shannon Arnold-Boomgarden, Duncan Metcalfe, and Corinne Springer, "Prehistoric Archaeology in Range Creek Canyon, Utah: A Summary of the Activities of the Range Creek Field Station, *Utah Archaeology* 27, no. 1 (2014): 9-32.
51. Ibid.
52. John Wesley Powell, *Exploration of the Colorado River and its Tributaries* (New York: Dover Press, 1961); Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, *A Canyon Voyage: The Narrative of the Second Powell Expedition Down the Green-*

Colorado River from Wyoming, and the Explorations on Land, in the Years 1871–1872 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1908).

53. Dennison, "Field Journal," 36–38, Donald C. Scott Collection; William Bowers, "Field Journal of the 1931 Claflin-Emerson Expedition," 41–42, Donald C. Scott Collection.
54. Dennison, "Field Journal," 39–40, Donald C. Scott Collection.
55. Bowers, "Field Journal," 48, Donald C. Scott Collection.
56. *Ibid.*, 50.
57. Jerry D. Spangler and Donna Kemp Spangler, *Last Chance Byway: The History of Nine Mile Canyon* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016), 96.
58. Lloyd M. Gerber, *Heroes Are Made, Not Born: Stories of the Life of Lloyd M. Gerber* (Eagle, ID: Red Canyon Corporation, 1998), ch. 36.
59. Bowers, "Field Journal," 54, and Dennison, "Field Journal," 40, Donald C. Scott Collection.
60. Dennison, "Field Journal," 42, Donald C. Scott Collection.
61. Scott, "Claflin Emerson," 10, Donald C. Scott Collection.
62. Larry L. Leach, "Archaeological Investigations at Deluge Shelter (42Un1)" (PhD diss., University of Colorado, 1970).
63. Dennison, "Field Journal," 48–50, Donald C. Scott Collection.
64. See Browman and Williams, *Anthropology at Harvard*.
65. Gunnerson, *The Fremont Culture*, 80–130.
66. Jerry D. Spangler, K. Renee Barlow, and Duncan Metcalfe, *A Summary of the 2002–2003 Intuitive Surveys of the Wilcox Acquisition and Surrounding Lands, Range Creek Canyon, Utah*, Utah Museum of Natural History Occasional Papers 2004-1 (Salt Lake City; University of Utah, 2004); Jerry D. Spangler, Shannon Arnold, and Joel Boomgarden, *Chasing Ghosts: A GIS Analysis and Photographic Comparison of Vandalism and*

Site Degradation in Range Creek Canyon, Utah, Utah Museum of Natural History Occasional Papers 2006-1 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2006).

67. Jerry D. Spangler and Kevin T. Jones, *Land of Wildest Desolation: Final Report of the Desolation Canyon Intuitive Surveys and Baseline Site Condition Assessments of 2006 to 2008* (Ogden, UT: Colorado Plateau Archaeological Alliance, 2009).
68. The Nine Mile Canyon sites were documented over the course of many years and are reported in more than fifteen different technical reports by the Colorado Plateau Archaeological Alliance.
69. Gordon R. Willey, *Prehistoric Settlement Patterns in the Viru Valley, Peru*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 155 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1953), 1.

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