

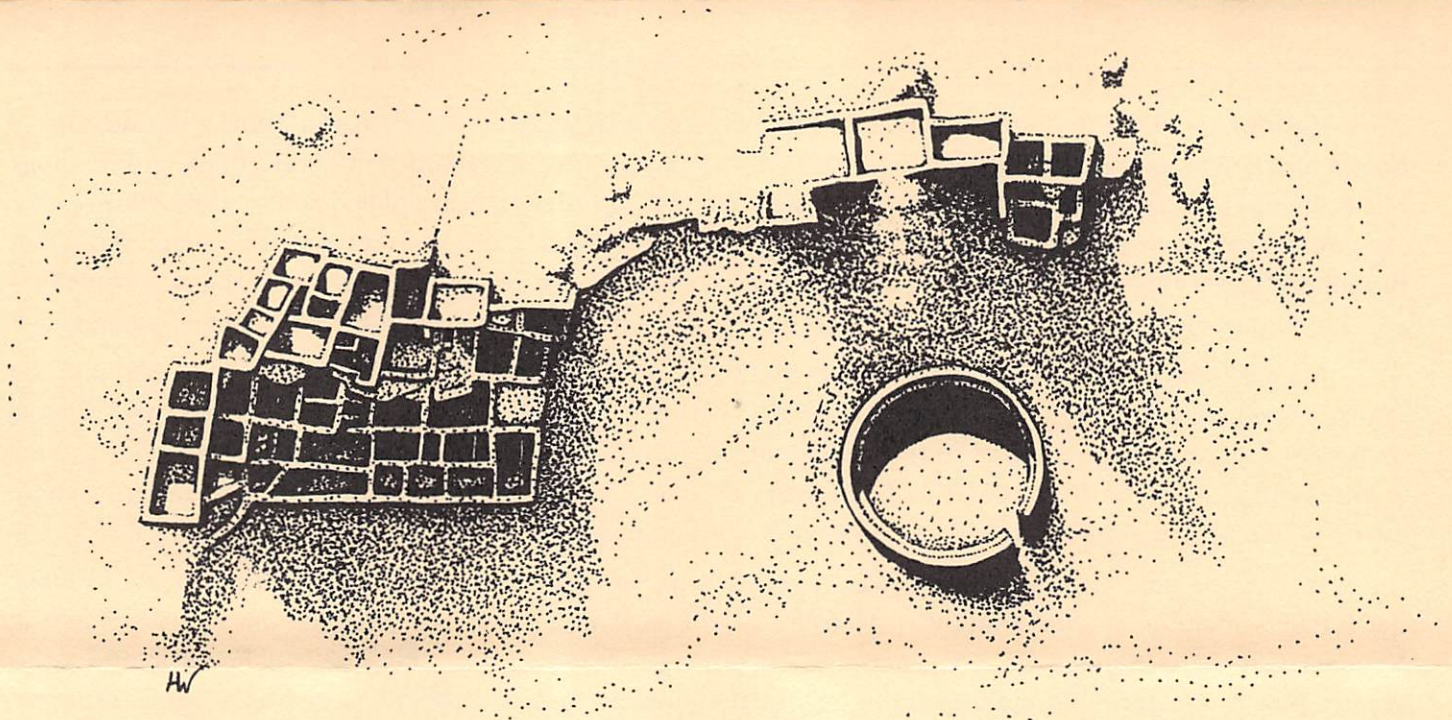
## The HISTORY of EXCAVATION and STABILIZATION at WUPATKI RUIN

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Rarely can one look at a prehistoric ruin like Wupatki and not wonder: What did this pueblo look like when it was occupied? What changes have taken place over the past eight hundred years?

Between its abandonment in the late 1200's and the mid-1800's, Wupatki was visited only by transient groups. The Hopi passed through the area on hunting and trading missions to the San Francisco Peaks and Grand Canyon. Spanish explorers passed near the area between the mid-1500's and the late 1700's on their explorations of New Spain. The first Anglo to record seeing Wupatki Ruin was Lt. Sitgreaves on his 1851 expedition to see if the Little Colorado River was navigable to the sea, and he included a lithograph etching of it in his report of the expedition. In 1862 Arizona became a territory of the United States. Soon after, John Wesley Powell surveyed and mapped several sites at Wupatki.

The arrival of the railroad brought an influx of Anglos from the east. Wupatki lay in a black cinder dune area where travel was difficult, but at this time a road was built into Wupatki Ruin and visitation became more common. The Babbitt brothers began ranching near Wupatki, and Anglo and Navajo sheepherders used the area for grazing. The large rectangular doorway seen in Wupatki Ruin today was a modification made by a sheepherder who cleared a few rooms for his herders and built a windbreak between the two sections.



As the community of Flagstaff grew, word of the location of the ruins spread, and the problem of pot-hunting, or the removal of artifacts from sites, became apparent. Ben Doney, a veteran prospector, pothunted at Wupatki in the 1890's, and had an extensive collection from the ruin which was later sold and has now disappeared.

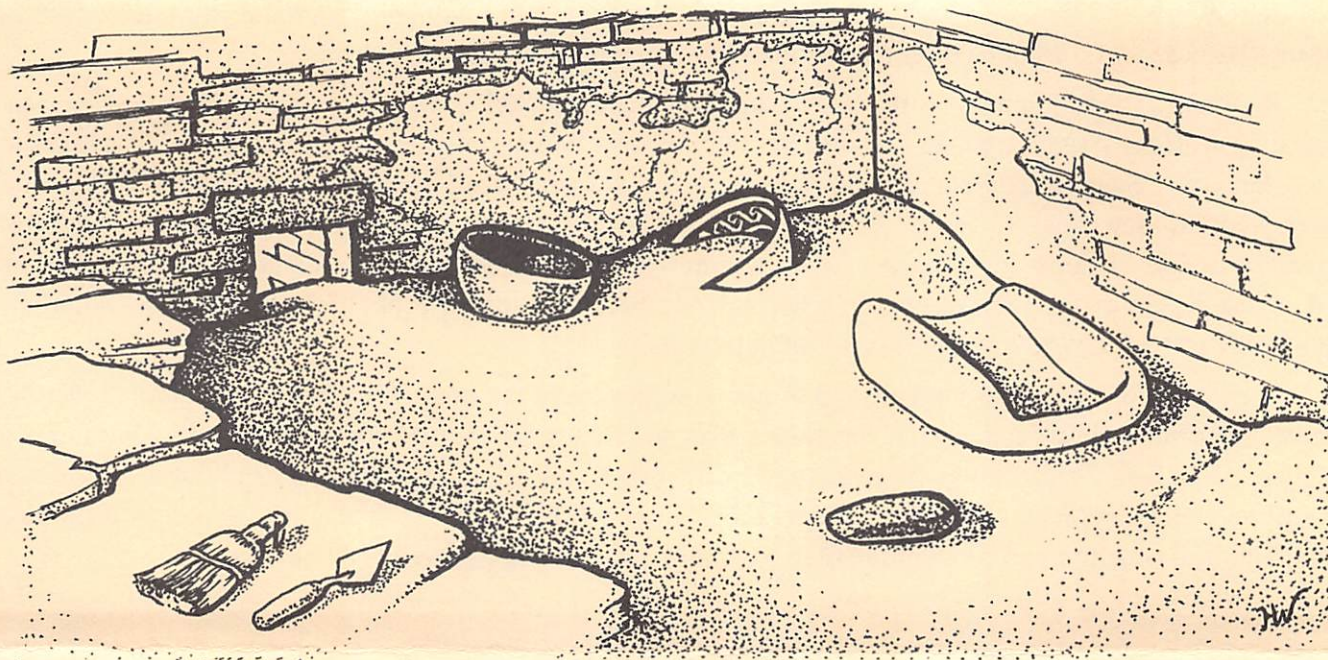
The first systematic archaeology at Wupatki was done by Jesse Walter Fewkes. Doney guided Fewkes to Wupatki Ruin and others which he photographed and mapped. Fewkes named the large ruin Wukoki, but it was given its present name in 1921 by J. C. Clarke, the first custodian of Wupatki.

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In response to the problem of pothunting, a group of concerned citizens began to call for protection of the ruins in the Wupatki area. As a result, Wupatki National Monument was set aside in 1924 to preserve and protect thousands of prehistoric sites from needless destruction. Harold S. Colton was instrumental in this action, and went on to establish the Museum of Northern Arizona in 1928.

As research in dendrochronology developed, Andrew E. Douglass became interested in recovering beams from ruins for dating. Wupatki Ruin, at that time, contained a number of timbers in good condition. Douglass, aided by Colton, excavated 3 rooms in 1926-27 to remove some of these beams. Many dates now on file at the Laboratory of Tree Ring Research, University of Arizona, resulted from this work. This was fortunate, because in the early 30's an illegal whiskey still was operating near the ruin, and the operators were accustomed to digging timbers out of the ruin to fire their vats.



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During the 1930's and 40's several excavation projects were undertaken at Wupatki Ruin by the Museum of Northern Arizona, and the artifacts uncovered are in the Museum's or the monument's collections. Archaeology was a young field of study at that time, and it was felt that in order to gain public support for archaeological endeavors, ruins such as Wupatki should be restored. In 1933-34 about 37 rooms were excavated and stabilized, the amphitheater was reconstructed, and several rooms were reconstructed and roofed. One room was made into a small museum and headquarters, and two others were converted into living quarters for the custodian and his wife.

Stabilization differs from reconstruction in that it involves repair of existing walls only. Stabilization efforts include bracing weak walls, remortaring walls where the original mortar has eroded away, and capping walls with mortar to prevent water from seeping into their interior. When the first stabilization work was done in the 1930's, concrete mortar was used. Mortar today is much like the clay mortar used originally. Stabilization is an on-going project and is necessary to prevent the ruins from deteriorating further.

In 1952-53 about 18 more rooms were excavated which had been covered with 10 to 14 feet of rubble; the artifacts found are in the Southwest Archaeological Center in Tucson. At this time there was a change in National Park Service policy stressing preservation rather than restoration. Because it is impossible to know exactly how a ruin appeared prehistorically, reconstruction may present an erroneous or unauthentic representation of the structure's original form. Most of the 1933-34 restorations were removed. All the rooms were stabilized at this time, and the drainage system was renovated to prevent erosion. In 1965 the Wupatki ball court was excavated and reconstructed because the few remaining wall segments were inadequate to contain the loose cinders of the wall core.

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Wupatki Ruin has had a colorful history since its occupation by the Anasazi and Sinagua people. It has felt both beneficial and destructive influences. From the research done at the ruin we have learned valuable information about the prehistory of the area. Protected and preserved by the National Park Service, Wupatki Ruin will continue to educate both researchers and the general public for future generations.

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