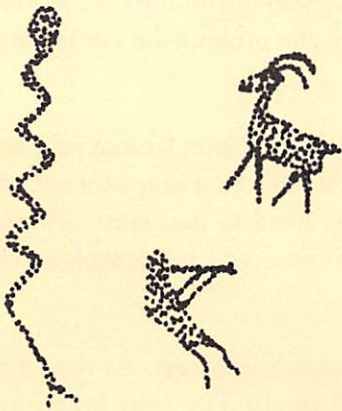


Wupatki

National Monument
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Help Save Our Cultural Heritage!

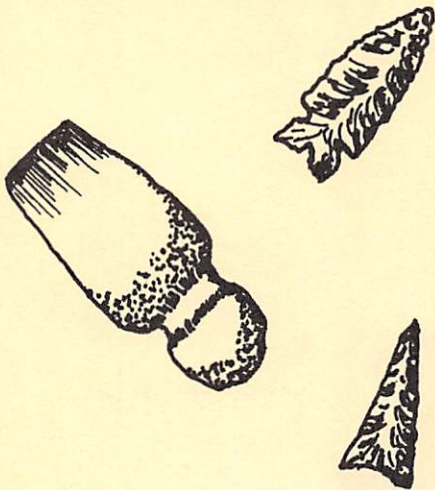


In the past year alone, more prehistoric sites in the Southwest have been damaged or lost than in the several hundred years since they were abandoned.

Does this upset you? It should. Because with every prehistoric artifact removed, with every ruins wall crumbled by careless climbers, with every petroglyph spray-painted by vandals, you are losing a link to your past.

99% of the evidence of human life in North America was made by people who left us no written record. As a result, we must look for other clues to their existence. Ruins of buildings, pottery pieces, ornaments of shell and turquoise, stone tools, and rock art are but a few of the remains which tell archeologists the story of our past.

You, as a visitor to the prehistoric sites at Wupatki, can appreciate the beauty of ancient craftsmanship. But the trained eye of the archeologist sees even more.

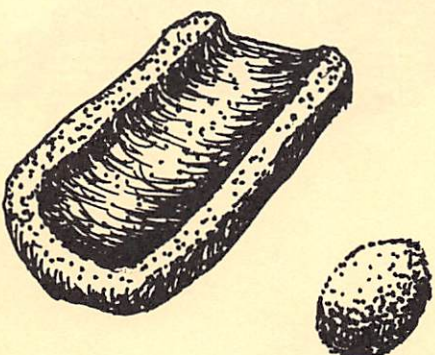


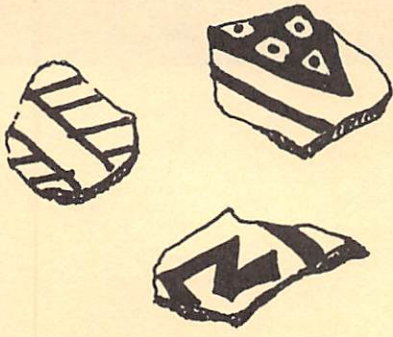
A shred of woven textile indicates cotton was grown locally. Sherds, or pieces, of distinctive pottery styles identify the type of people who lived here. Brilliant Mexican macaw feathers sewn in a robe reveal the incredible extent of prehistoric trade routes. Mummified remains show the heights, weights, and bone structures of prehistoric humans. Even the smallest fragment of wood lodged in a ruin can be used to date the site precisely, using carefully calculated tree-ring charts.

Every object associated with a prehistoric site has value to the professional, who uses it as a clue to the lives and livelihoods of Wupatki's previous occupants. It is only through artifacts, burials, and remnants of structures that archeologists can piece together the story. It is critical that we preserve these links to our past.

There are federal laws that support the preservation of prehistoric objects. In 1906, the Antiquities Act was passed by Congress, making it illegal to "appropriate, excavate, injure or destroy any prehistoric ruin or object of antiquity."

That law still exists, but because of flagrant damage and theft since 1906, the Archeological Resources Protection Act was passed in 1979. It defines archeological resources as material remains of human life and activity over one hundred years old. Specifically, the law states it is "illegal to excavate, remove, damage, alter or deface any archeological resources." Stiff penalties accompany the law, and it is being enforced.





Should you happen to see someone in the act of vandalizing archeological sites or removing prehistoric materials, do not attempt to confront the offender. Instead, report your observation immediately to a Park Ranger. A law enforcement Ranger who is trained in handling cases of vandalism and pot hunting can be dispatched to the scene.

And, if your information leads to a civil or criminal conviction, you may receive a reward of up to \$500 through provisions of the Archeological Resources Protection Act.



We must all share the responsibility of saving our rich cultural heritage. By using care in walking through prehistoric sites, by staying off the fragile walls of ruins, by leaving all artifact objects in place, we can prolong the existence of these precious cultural resources.

It may be tempting to remove a pot sherd or projectile point from a ruin and take it to the Visitor Center for identification. But even that innocent act can destroy the context of the object. Archeologists need to associate artifacts with their original settings so the story they reveal will be complete and accurate.

Please, enjoy your visit to Wupatki and the entire Southwest. At the same time, treat the area with care as you travel through. The sites here have survived 700 years since prehistoric man left — help them withstand the devastating impact of modern man, so you won't lose any links to your past.

