

The Uncompahgre Journal

April 2024 CHIPETA CHAPTER OF THE COLORADO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY Volume 41 Issue 4

Our April Presentation

Mark Your Calendar

Apr 2: [Hisatsinom Chapter](#) monthly meeting with Shanna Diederichs on architecture and history at Pueblo Bonito. First United Methodist Church, 515 N Park, Cortez, 7:00 pm.

Apr 3: [Montrose County Historical Society](#) monthly meeting with Cara Miller on the history of the Colona school. Montrose County Events Center Rooms 1 and 2, 7:00 pm. This meeting will also be on Zoom.

Apr 10: [San Juan Basin Archaeological Society](#) monthly meeting with Dr. Piyawit Moonkham on the temples of Northern Thailand. Lyceum, Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, 7:00 pm. This presentation will also be on Zoom.

Apr 17: Chipeta Chapter monthly meeting with Sonny Shelton on evidence of the horse in western Colorado (*right*). United Methodist Church, South 1st and Park Streets, 7:00 pm.

Apr 24: CAS-GJ monthly meeting with Steven Simms on the prehistoric peoples of the Salt Lake Basin. Redlands United Methodist Church, 527 Village Way, GJ, 6:30 pm.



Hoofbeats From the Past: Archaeological Evidence of the Horse in Western Colorado

by H. "Sonny" Shelton

Dominquez Archaeological Research Group (DARG) archaeologists are actively working to document and record horse related rock art in western Colorado. These rare pictograph and petroglyph images depict the horse as it was experienced by the indigenous peoples who used, cared for, and valued them.

Recently, DARG researchers have discovered unexpected and surprising details in these images by applying decorrelation stretch technology to curation quality photographs of this very special type of rock art. Today, these fragile images are threatened by climate change, wildfire, and vandalism. Locating and scientifically documenting them aids in protecting and preserving them for the public, for Native American tribal members, and for future generations.

Join archaeologist H. "Sonny" Shelton as she takes you on a journey to explore the origins of the horse in western Colorado, including fossils found in the region, the history of the domesticated American horse, and the remarkable story of the horse as preserved in the Native American rock art of western Colorado.



Photo courtesy of George Decker

Our April Speaker: H. "Sonny" Shelton



Holly "Sonny" Shelton is an archaeologist, faunal analysis specialist, and volunteer associate with Dominquez Archaeological Research Group. Since the 1970s she has worked as an archaeologist performing surveys and excavations throughout the Southwest and primarily in western Colorado. In 2016 she initiated the Western Colorado Bison Project, a History Colorado State Historical Fund grant-supported DARG research project. She also works on the Colorado Wickiup Project.

Shelton has also been privileged to serve the western slope public for over 30 years as a Registered Nurse.

Photo courtesy of Sonny Shelton

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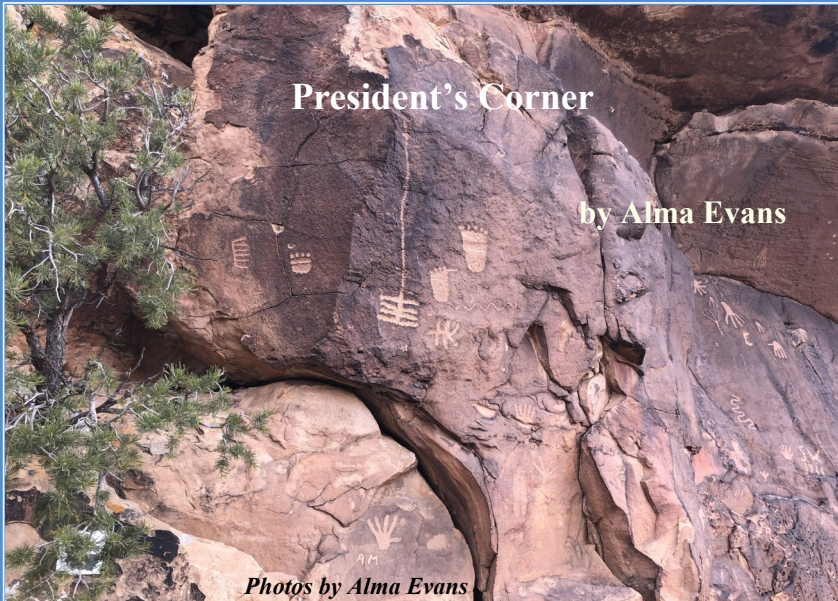


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On the Trail of Antoine Robidoux 1824-1844

A review

*Hats off to authors Glenn E. Stone and
Margaret E. Stone, Members of Chipeta
Chapter CAS*

Read the intriguing, short account of the Robidoux brothers as Antoine age 28 and Louis age 26 set out to bring trade to western Colorado and eastern Utah. The young men lured by stories of huge profits made by trading in Sante Fe since restrictions had been lifted with Mexico gaining independence from Spanish rule. They were off to the untamed West.

Follow along as Antoine and Louis build three forts, Fort Uncompahgre (confluence of the Gunnison River and Uncompahgre River), Fort Robidoux (confluence of the Green River and White River) and Fort Uintah (near Whiterocks, Utah). They achieve friendship and trade with the Utes. Learn how the two brothers through marriage, religion and bribery are given all the legal rights to become citizens of Mexico. Thus, having rights to continue doing business in Mexico.

You will enjoy pictures of original sketches of maps, showing the trails taken and the designs of the planned forts. Fort Uncompahgre is shown with measurement marked out in paces.

The forts suffered a variety of fates. Fort Robidoux collapsed when the Green River flooded a couple of years after it was built. With the collapse of the fur trade in 1844, the other two forts fell into disrepair. Fort Uncompahgre was in ruins in 1853, and Fort Uintah was abandoned but still standing in 1849. Today, it is difficult to even know exactly where the forts stood. Fortunately, part of the story is written on the canyon walls along the trails as documented in pictures in this article.

I encourage all of you to read this article in *Southwestern Lore* for a glimpse into yesteryear.

A large "Thank You" to Glenn & Margaret Stone.

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From the Editor

Have you thought much about flaked stone tools? Not projectile points, but something you hold in your hand to cut things with, like a knife or a chopper. We all know that societies that didn't have metal used stone instead, and more sophisticated societies devised handles to keep their hands relatively protected from the sharp edges of the stone—and stone blades could be wicked sharp. But what about older societies, that hadn't yet developed techniques for hafting stone points with antler, bone, or wooden handles? How did they keep from lacerating their hands every time they tried to cut something with a stone blade? One could certainly dull the edges on the hand side of the implement to make it less dangerous. But it would still be very uncomfortable, and probably difficult to hold onto.

Patrick Schmidt *et al.* inspected five stone tools recovered from the Mousterian type-site of Le Moustier, France. These artifacts had been collected in 1907 and carefully curated, but never analyzed. Detailed examination revealed traces of ochre and bitumen on one half of each artifact. The research team realized these were probably the remains of a paleolithic grip handle. They understood that the bitumen was used as a sticky substance, and after some experimentation realized that the ochre was used to reduce the stickiness of the tar.

As we saw in February, early *H. sapiens* (but also *H. neanderthalensis*) was capable of isolating really sticky tar-like substances from birch bark. Bitumen—tar—was also available in places. Either kind was very sticky. Bitumen was really good for helping to stick a point to a shaft, but it would also stick your hand to the point (see [illustration](#)). This is not good if you're planning on throwing the point. No matter how hard you throw the darn thing, it won't leave your hand, resulting in a sore arm but no dinner. Plus, you still have this point attached to your hand. (If you try to use your left hand to free your right, you might

well end up with both hands stuck to the point, which would really incapacitate you. That reminds me of the time when I was a little kid and I tried to pull a single spine out of a jumping cholla cactus at a motel in Las Vegas. I ended up with a thorn stuck in my finger and a cholla cactus joint dangling from it. So I tried to use my left hand to pull the joint away from my right finger. The result was my right and left index fingers connected to each other by a cholla cactus joint. I had to find a nice neighborhood guard of some kind to extract the cactus from my body. Good thing I didn't try to use my feet to get my hands unstuck!)

Where was I? Oh, yeah. The thoughtful, intelligent, and ever-resourceful early human played around with mixtures, and discovered that mixing a good amount of powdered ochre with the bitumen makes it more malleable and still nicely grippy, but not so sticky that you can't let go of it. Just add the powdered ochre until you have a soft, pliable mass that you can mold over the hilt end of the knife/chopper, into a cup-like grip that lets you wield the blade in relative comfort. When your stone blade gets chipped and dull, you can just remove the gripper and mold it around a newly knapped tool!

References

Hunt, Katie,

2024 Neanderthal Glue Points to Complex Thinking. CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/02/21/europe/stone-tools-glue-neanderthal-scn/index.html>.

Patrick Schmidt *et al.*

2024 Ochre-based compound adhesives at the Mousterian type-site document complex cognition and high investment. *Sci. Adv.* **10**, ead10822 (2024). DOI:[10.1126/sciadv.ad10822](https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.ad10822)



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Photos by Dennis DeVore



(email required to receive Chipeta Chapter newsletters & field trip info)

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Code of Ethics

As a member of the Colorado Archaeological Society, I pledge to:

- Uphold local, state, and federal antiquities laws.
- Respect the property rights of landowners.
- Report vandalism to appropriate authorities.
- Support only scientifically and legally conducted archaeological activities.
- Conduct field and/or laboratory activities using professionally accepted standards.
- Not condone the sale, exchange, or purchase of artifacts obtained from illegal activities.
- Be sensitive to the cultural histories and spiritual practices of groups that are the subject of archaeological investigation.
- Accept the responsibility, if serving as principal investigator, to publish the results and make the collection available for further study.

Signature: _____ Other Family Signature: _____

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- <https://www.chipetachaptercas.org>

TO JOIN OR RENEW:

- Go to the Chipeta Chapter website and follow the membership links.

Program for Avocational Archaeological Certification (PAAC)

For information, visit:

<https://www.historycolorado/paac>

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Upcoming Speakers

May: Ken Zoll on the
Dyck Collection Textiles

Field Trip Committee

Leigh Ann Hunt, Joe Oglesby, and George Decker

For more information on upcoming field trips and to sign up, please contact the Field Trip Leader

Masthead photo courtesy of Bill Harris. All other unattributed photos are by the editor.