DAVIS ROCKSHELTER (5EP986), EL PASO COUNTY, COLORADO:
A PRELIMINARY REPORT

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ABSTRACT
Davis Rockshelter is a stratified prehistoric site located on the Palmer Divide that contains archaeological evidence dating from the Early Ceramic (Plains Woodland) through the Late Ceramic. Evidence from the Early Ceramic is by far the most extensive, and represents a long series of brief occupations. The site is in most respects a twin of the nearby site of Lehman Cave.

INTRODUCTION
Davis Rockshelter (5EP986) is a multi-component site located in El Paso County, Colorado, that presents evidence for Early, Middle, and Late Ceramic (Protohistoric) occupation. The site is important because of its relatively long, stratified sequence and its location along the Palmer divide, which marks the boundary between the Arkansas and Platte river drainages. The site is also very similar to the nearby site of Lehman Cave (Lyons and Johnson 1994).

The Pikes Peak Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society (CAS) surveyed the site and conducted initial excavations in 1987 and 1988, under the supervision of Mary Jo Kraus. Further excavations were conducted in the summer of 1992 by the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS)Archaeological Field School in conjunction with the Chapter. All those involved wish to thank Mr. Joe Davis of Peyton, Colorado for allowing these investigations to be conducted on his property.

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SETTING AND DESCRIPTION

Davis Rockshelter is located in northern El Paso County, approximately 11 km (7 mi.) north of Peyton, Colorado (Figure 1). The site lies on the eastern portion of the Monument-Palmer Divide at an elevation of 7,260 feet. This location places the site on the western edge of the High Plains and in the extreme northern portion of the Southeast subarea of the Colorado Plains region as defined by Eighmy (1984:2-3).

The site itself is a southwest-facing rockshelter formed into the side of a low sandstone bluff with a clear view of the surrounding area (Figure 2). Black Squirrel Creek lies about 7.8 km (4.8 mi.) to the southwest. An intermittent drainage 250 m (820 ft.) to the west, and a spring that now feeds a cattle pond about 200 m (655 ft.) west of the site, constitute water sources in the vicinity of the shelter. The shelter consists of two "chambers" and a low recessed area under an overhang. The ground beneath the shelter is relatively level but slopes abruptly to about 40 degrees only a few meters beyond the overhang. Rockfall boulders ranging from 20 cm to several meters in diameter litter the site. The area beneath and in front of the shelter has been heavily disturbed by rodents and domestic animals, as well as by the natural agents of wind and water.

GEOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT
(with assistance of Michael Hertz)

The shelter was formed in the Dawson-Arkose formation, which is a mixed sandstone conglomerate that also contains petrified wood. The sediments range in size from large cobbles being sand-sized. The interbeds appear to be characteristic of rapid deposition. The soil in the immediate vicinity is coarse sand derived from the Palmer Mountains and has an annual precipitation that occurs in the spring or the summer. Summers and cold winters are typical, with about 82° F and an average winter temperature of about 32° F. Pollen analysis conducted from every level, pollen analysis to be conducted.

FIGURE 1. Site vicinity map.

FIGURE 2. Site contour map.
ments range in size from large cobbles to clay, with the majority of the sediments being sand-sized. The irregularity and variation of the bedding appears to be characteristic of rapid alluvial accumulation (Grose 1972:233). The soil in the immediate vicinity of the site is composed of a sandy loam to coarse sand derived from the Dawson formation.

This area of the Palmer Divide lies in the rain shadow of the Rocky Mountains and has an annual precipitation of about 15 inches, most of which occurs in the spring or the summer in the form of thunderstorms. Dry, hot summers and cold winters are typical, with an average summertime high of about 82° F and an average winter high of about 31° F. Vegetation at the site and surrounding areas consists of wild rose (Rosa sp.), needle-and-thread (Stipa comata), pincushion cactus (Coryphantha vivipara), mullein (Verbascum thapsus), yucca (Yucca glauca) and a variety of native grasses, as well as Gambel oak (Quercus gambelii) and Ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa). Goosefoot (Chenopodium berlandieri), which is commonly found in the region, was not evident in the immediate vicinity of the site. While soil samples were taken from every level, pollen analysis to identify prehistoric flora has not yet been conducted.
FIELD METHODS

In 1987, the CAS crew established a datum point to the west of the rockshelter on a firmly embedded boulder; from this point, an east-west baseline was established below the shelter. Magnetic north was used in order to be consistent with other chapter investigations being conducted at the Homestead Ranch less than two miles away. A grid was set up in which the 1x1m units were labelled according to their relation to datum.

The CAS crew excavated five units in 1987 (0N/7E, 6N/10E, 6N/11E, 6N/15E, and 6N/16E), and six more units in 1988 (4N/8E, 5N/9E, 5N/12E, 6N/12E, 6N/13E, and 6N/14E) (Figure 2). In 1992, the combined crew of CAS members and UCCS students focused attention on the slope in front of the shelter, and excavated a total of 16 additional units. Given the complicated nature of the stratigraphy, excavation was done in 10-cm increments using trowels. In 1992, each of these increments was excavated parallel to the surface, due to the steepness of the slope in front of the shelter. Backdirt was screened through 1/4-inch mesh screens. When recovered in situ, cultural material was measured and mapped, then placed in labelled individual bags.

STRATIGRAPHY AND RADIOCARBON DATES (with assistance of A. Grundman)

The stratigraphy at Davis Rock Shelter is complicated. Archaeological material has been subjected to movement by water and burrowing animals. In some cases, historic artifacts (shell casings and round-headed nails) were found in levels that are otherwise clearly prehistoric. The stratigraphic profiles of trenches outside the drip line are especially complex and include ash lenses with varying degrees of definition and lateral extent. Here, it was virtually impossible to recognize laterally extensive cultural components. Nevertheless, the profiles taken from the deep trenches excavated in front of the drip line suggest four natural stratigraphic units (Figure 3).

Unit One consists of a surface layer of organic material and cattle dung that covers most of the site. Depths range from 5 to 15 cm, with the deepest accumulations occurring immediately in front of the drip line. Prehistoric surface finds recovered from this unit are presumed to be out of context; a recently dug-out hearth containing aluminum foil was found at the bottom of this unit and is the only in situ feature.

Unit Two, which covers the entire site, consists of a mixture of ashy and gravelly sand ranging in thickness from 10 cm under the shelter to about 70 cm on the outside slope. This unit produced the majority of artifacts; however, numerous rodent burrows throughout the unit suggest that the cultural materials may have undergone some vertical and horizontal movement.

Unit Three consists of ashy sand that is slightly darker than the layer above. The unit begins at the shelter drip line and does not extend into the shelter. Thickness ranges from 1 to 70 cm. Artifact density tends to be higher at the uppermost layer where Unit Three interfaces with Unit Two and decreases considerably towards the two clearly delineated dug-out basins. Unit Four contains very little artifact material. Thickness ranges from 40 to 90 cm at the base of this unit, but the profile decreases considerably towards the surface, respectively, within stratigraphic deposits in front of the drip line, excavated in 1992 near the base of trench 1N/4E, which was situated behind Unit Four. These dates are stratigraphic in nature and do not necessarily represent the chronology of the deposits described in this report.

CULTURAL MATERIALS

The cultural material samples included pottery, ground stone, and charred plant remains.

Pottery

The ceramic sample consists of 29 vessels, and 20 body sherds (Figure 4). Diagnostic artifacts of the entire sample are consistent with affiliations of the inner shield, which is a region along the eastern edge of the homestead.

Rim sherd A was recovered from 35 cm in trench 6N/16E. The rim exhibits oblique tool impressions (Figure 5).
decreases considerably towards the lower levels. This unit includes at least two clearly delineated dug-out hearths.

**Unit Four** contains very little ash, consisting mostly of a fine sand. Thickness ranges from 40 to 90 cm. Few artifacts were recovered from lower levels of this unit, but the presence of two hearths testify to human activity.

Three charcoal samples have yielded the following radiocarbon age estimates (uncalibrated):

A. 1070 ± 60 B.P. (Beta-28511)
B. 1810 ± 60 B.P. (Beta-28510)
C. 1420 ± 50 B.P. (Beta-61745)

The first two samples were excavated in 1988 from a single trench (6N/10E) beneath the shelter, at depths of 35 cm and 55 cm below the surface, respectively, within stratigraphic Unit Two. The third sample was excavated in 1992 near the base of Unit Two, at a depth of about 95 cm, in trench 1N/4E, which was situated immediately in front of the drip line.

These dates are stratigraphically consistent, given the much deeper deposits in front of the drip line.

**CULTURAL MATERIALS**

The cultural material sample consists of over 3,600 artifacts, including pottery, ground stone, and chipped stone.

**Pottery**

The ceramic sample consists of three rim sherds from three different vessels, and 20 body sherds (Figure 4). The rim sherds are the most diagnostic artifacts of the entire sample, and point to three separate cultural affiliations.¹

**Rim sherd A** was recovered underneath the shelter at a depth of about 35 cm in trench 6N/16E. The rounded lip is decorated with closely spaced oblique tool impressions (Figure 5). The rim is slightly flaring. The sherd
FIGURE 4. Ceramic fragments: A-C, rim sherds; D, body sherds.

measures 33 mm high and 6 mm thick. Extrapolation suggests that the mouth of the vessel was 12.6 cm in diameter. Temper is fine sand. The slightly micaceous sherd has a relatively smooth exterior surface with traces of obliterated, horizontal ridges and an interior surface that shows evidence of scraping. The sherd has a very dark core but the surface color is light brown (dry, Munsell 7.5YR 6/3).

This sherd resembles pottery from the Protohistoric (Late Ceramic) Plains Apache/Dismal River aspect dating to A.D. 1500-1800. The diagonally incised lip resembles rim sherds from Apahe sites in Nebraska (Cassells 1983:187, Figure 10-1) and represents one of several types of lip decoration of Dismal River pottery (Gunnerson 1978:165, Figure 23). The Protohistoric period is not well documented in eastern Colorado, but sites that have been identified as Protohistoric all appear to be associated with the Dismal River aspect (Eighmy 1984:144-151). Gunnerson (1978) describes Dismal River-type sherds recovered from various locations, including eastern Colorado, that have attributes similar to those of rim sherd A.

FIGURE 5. Rim sherd A.

Rim sherd B was recovered from the trench 6N/11E. It has a rounded restricting neck. The sherd measurement suggests an mouth diameter of about 9 cm. Temper is fine with vertical ridges that are part blackened, the exterior surface color is light brown (dry, Munsell 7.5YR 3/1).

Based on the combination of late Terminal Woodland/early Burial tradition. A transitional stage, defined as Cliff Swallow Cave and Jarre (in Gunnerson 1987) has been commonly has conoidal bases, incised and burnished, appears to incorporate both of these.

Rim sherd C was found unusual characteristic: slightly micaceous sherd has an although a faint pattern of very this rim. Three evenly spaced, slightly incurving rim; a neck is 4 mm high and about 4 mm in diameter of 15 cm below the surface substituted neck. The sherd measurement suggests an mouth diameter of about 9 cm. Temper is fine with vertical ridges that are part blackened, the exterior surface color is light brown (dry, Munsell 7.5YR 3/1).

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Rim sherd C resembles ceramic (A.D. 1000-1400). This focus on an Early Ceramic, Plains Woodland, is part of a transitional stage, defined as Cliff Swallow Cave and Jarre (in Gunnerson 1987) has been commonly has conoidal bases, incised and burnished, appears to incorporate both of these.

The body sherds are cordmarked and fragments are highly micaceous. The blackened, the exterior surface color is light brown (7.5YR 3/1) to brown (7.5YR 5/1). The deep cord-marking evident on an Early Ceramic, Plains Woodland sherds have been found at numer
from Davis Rock Shelter. In addition to the lip decoration, these include such characteristics as slightly flared rims, smoothed surfaces, and light-colored exteriors with dark cores.

**Rim sherd B** was recovered on the slope in front of the shelter at a depth of 15 cm below the surface (trench 1N/9E). It has a flattened lip and slightly incurving rim; a neck is not evident. The rim is decorated with two incised lines, 5 mm apart, running parallel to the lip. The sherd measures 41 mm high and about 4 mm thick. Extrapolation suggests a mouth diameter of about 9 cm. Temper is fine sand. The exterior surface is cord marked with vertical ridges that are partially obliterated. The surface color is dark brown (dry, Munsell 7.5YR 3/2).

Based on the combination of attributes, this sherd is most likely very late Terminal Woodland/early Upper Republican (about A.D. 1000) in affiliation. A transitional stage, defined as the Franktown focus by Withers (in Gunnerson 1987:76), has been recorded in the Denver Basin at sites such as Cliff Swallow Cave and Jarre Creek. The Franktown focus pottery, which commonly has conoidal bases, incurving rims, and partially smoothed cord marks, appears to incorporate both Woodland and Upper Republican attributes.

**Rim sherd C** was found underneath the shelter at a depth of 25 cm in trench 6N/11E. It has a rounded lip, gently flaring rim, and slightly constricting neck. The sherd measures 37 mm high and 5 mm thick. Extrapolation suggests a mouth diameter of 10.5 cm. Temper is fine sand. The slightly micaceous sherd has an exterior surface that is relatively smooth, although a faint pattern of very fine, slanting striations are discernible on the rim. Three evenly spaced, stitch-like indentations are also visible just below the lip on the right half of the sherd. The surface color is grey (dry, Munsell 7.5YR 5/1).

Rim sherd C resembles ceramics of the Middle Ceramic Apishapa focus (A.D. 1000-1400). This focus is a localized manifestation of the Plains Village tradition that developed on the Chaquaqua Plateau (Campbell 1969:389-390) and does not appear to be clearly identified farther north than the Avery Ranch site (Zier et al. 1990) in Pueblo County. Campbell defines the shallow, cord-marked pottery from the Chaquaqua Plateau as Borger Cord-marked ware. Apishapa vessels, however, appear to exhibit considerable variation in attributes (Ellwood 1991:15-17), some of which are manifested in rim sherd C from Davis Rockshelter. These include constricted necks, slightly flaring rims, undecorated lips, and fine striations on exterior surfaces.

The body sherds are cord roughened and sand tempered. A few of the fragments are highly micaceous. Although several of the sherds are extremely blackened, the exterior surface color generally ranges from very dark grey (7.5YR 3/1) to brown (7.5YR 5/2). Thicknesses vary between 4 mm and 8 mm. The deep cord-marking evident on some of the body sherds suggest an Early Ceramic, Plains Woodland affiliation (Ellwood 1991:6). Similar sherds have been found at numerous sites throughout the region, including

**Ground Stone**
A total of 45 manos and mano fragments and 11 metate fragments were recovered from the site. In addition, 14 other specimens show evidence of a grinding surface but are too fragmentary to classify. The shapes and sizes of the manos suggest that they are small enough to be one-handed. Numerous fragments are fire cracked and several mano fragments have a certain amount of pecking visible on their extant ends. The raw material used is predominantly a fine-grained sandstone, although stream cobbles were also utilized. The large number of ground stone fragments suggest that plant processing took place at the site. However, recent ethnographic and use-wear analyses indicate that one-handed manos were also used in the defleshing and dehairing stages of hide processing (Adams 1988:307).

**Projectile Points**
A total of 26 points and point fragments were recovered. Locally available petrified wood is the most common raw material. Specimens of chert, as well as one fragment of non-local quartz, are also part of the assemblage. The fragments include several tips, partial bodies, and a few base fragments. Unfortunately, many of the fragments are too incomplete for typological analysis. The classifiable points and fragments, some of which are illustrated (Figure 6), fall into three main categories: corner-notched, side-notched, and unnotched points.

The projectile points are not very informative. Most derive from stratigraphic Unit Two, but there is no correlation between depth and point style. Indeed, the point with the deepest provenience (Figure 6E) is, stylistically at least, a Middle Ceramic point. However, the range of point types corroborates the evidence from ceramics that Davis rockshelter was visited by varying groups of people over a period of at least 1,500 years.

**CORNOR-NOTCHED POINTS (FIGURE 6A-D)**
Points 5A-5C are representative of this category. All derive from stratigraphic Unit Two. They are made of brown petrified wood, although specimens of brown chert and white opalized wood also occur. The points in this category are triangular, with barbed shoulders and often serrated edges. Stems tend to be expanding, with either straight or convex bases. The three points illustrated, as well as several body fragments, are bi-convex in cross section. These three points, and many of the point fragments, are similar to the Scallorn type generally associated with Early Ceramic sites. Similar points have been found among Woodland components at Crow’s Roost (McDonald 1992:93, 135), Torres Cave (Hoyt 1979:11), and Willowbrook (Leach 1966:33).

Point 6D differs from the other corner-notched points. It is a large triangular dart point made of a golden brown petrified wood. It has some
serration along the edges, a thick expanding stem, and a straight base. The cross section is slightly bi-convex. The point resembles Ensor points (Bell 1989:34), as well as Type IIID points from the Late Archaic Level 3 at Willowbrook (Leach 1966:33). However, like the Scallorn-type points discussed above, it derives from stratigraphic Unit Two, and at a comparable depth below the surface.

SIDE NOTCHED POINTS (FIGURES 6E AND 6F)

The best specimen is the base fragment 6E, excavated from stratigraphic Unit Three at a depth of 130 cm below the surface. It is made of brown petrified wood, has a straight base, and exhibits a short, squared stem that is almost as wide at the base as it is at the shoulder. While a single base fragment should not be overemphasized, it is important to note that it is quite different from the rest of the assemblage and bears a resemblance to
Upper Republican points from Buick Campsite (Wood 1971:72) or Apishapa Type I points from Avery Ranch (Zier et al. 1990:168). Its stratigraphic position underlines the difficulty, at Davis Rockshelter at least, of using simple depth as an indicator of age.

Specimen 6F also appears to have been side-notched. It derives from stratigraphic Unit Two. It is a large triangular dart point made of grey chert that is somewhat worn and has a polished appearance. The base is missing but the side notching is discernible. The body edges are slightly convex at the widest point and seem to flare out at the barb. Some serration is evident along both edges. The point is slightly concavo-convex in cross-section. The size and overall shape of the point body is not unlike dart point 6a from the Late Archaic Williamson site in Kansas (Schimits 1987:160) and point types 6 and 6A from Cherry Gulch (Nelson 1981:13-14).

**UNNOTCHED PROJECTILE POINTS (FIGURES 6G-I)**

Point 6G is is crudely triangular, with convex edges and a concave base; the raw material is a brown petrified wood. Point 6H is made of an amber-colored, somewhat translucent chert, and derives from stratigraphic Unit Two. It has convex edges with flaking more prominent along one edge, and the base is slightly notched in the center. These two points are not readily classifiable. Unnotched points of similar shape and size occur in numerous assemblages, including those from Terminal Woodland sites on the Chaquaqua Plateau (Campbell 1969:105, Figure 11-1, 381-388), Woodland/Upper Republican transitional sites such as Cliff Swallow Cave (Morton 1954:35, Figure 2-a), and sites like Cedar Point Village (Wood 1971:60, Figure 4a-e) which may be affiliated with the Dismal River aspect. Dismal River assemblages from sites in Nebraska, such as the Humphrey site (25NO21) and White Cat Village (25HN37) (Gunnerson 1978), often include similar points. However, none of the assemblages referred to above have projectile points that exhibit the kind of notched base that is evident in point 6H.

Point 6I is made of a dark brown petrified wood with white inclusions. It derives from stratigraphic Unit Two. It has serrated edges and a fishtail stem. It resembles a crude version of a Schild Spike point (Type R, for example) which is usually associated with Late Woodland sites (Perino 1971:101).

**Scrapers**

A total of 28 scrapers were recovered, a small sample of which is illustrated (Figure 7). Four of the scrapers are made on cores (Figure 7A, for example), while 24 are made on thick flakes. Seven of the flake scrapers are broken fragments. End, side, and a combination of end and side scrapers are represented in the assemblage. The raw material used is primarily petrified wood, although chert (Figure 7B) and quartzite (Figure 7D) were also utilized.

**Bifacial Tools**

A total of 11 bifaces and bifacial specimens vary considerably in size. 8A and 8B, for example, are tears. Biface 8A is quite large, measuring dish-brown petrified wood. Bifacial assemblages. A similar specimen has been classified as a bifacial flake (Luebbers 1971:7). Another specimen from Woodland assemblages is made of dark red chert, and has...
Bifacial Tools

A total of 11 bifaces and bifacial tool fragments were recovered. The specimens vary considerably in size, style and raw material (Figure 8). Bifaces 8A and 8B, for example, are teardrop shaped and very thick in mid-section. Biface 8A is quite large, measuring 6.5 cm in length, and is made of reddish-brown petrified wood. Bifaces of this type are found in some Woodland assemblages. A similar specimen from Willowbrook, for example, has been classified as a bifacially flaked scraper (Leach 1966:39, Figure 5, Type I). Another specimen from Wilbur Thomas Shelter has been classified as a chopping core (Luebbers 1971:76, Figure 12i). Biface 8B is 3 cm in length, is made of dark red chert, and has been more intensively worked. Specimen
FIGURE 8. Bifacial tools.

8C is a light brown petrified wood flake, bifacially worked along only one edge. Biface 8D is a core-like specimen made of pinkish grey quartzite with large flakes removed along the entire perimeter.

Bifaces 8E and 8F are blade-like specimens made of grey quartzite. Each has one bifacially worked edge and one unifacially worked edge. While it is tempting to group them together, it should be noted that the former was recovered at a depth of 10 cm whereas the latter was found at a depth of almost 110 cm.

Miscellaneous Tools

A total of 20 artifacts fall into this category and representative examples are illustrated in Figure 9. Of these, one appears to be a graver (Figure 9A), one a spokeshave (Figure 8B), and one a borer (Figure 9C). The raw materials used are orange/purple-banded petrified wood, respectively. Five that do not readily lend themselves a slab of grey petrified wood (Figure 8F); faint grooves may be a shaft strand; no obvious categories.

Modified Lithic Artifacts

Twelve artifacts have some extensively enough to fit any of the flakes, five petrified wood chunks.

Debitage

The debitage consists of over 100 fragments. The raw material is mostly not yet been analyzed to reconstruct that have been analyzed, approximated of which are extremely small and facture or tool resharpening acti...ary flakes as well as secondary.

In addition to the flakes and flake fragments were recovered. tural in nature.
rials used are orange/purple-banded chert, dark red jasper, and a light brown petrified wood, respectively. Five others are unifacially retouched specimens that do not readily lend themselves to classification. The largest of these is a slab of grey petrified wood (Figure 9D). One sandstone fragment with faint grooves may be a shaft straightener. The remaining artifacts fit into no obvious categories.

Modified Lithic Artifacts

Twelve artifacts have some secondary trimming but are not modified extensively enough to fit any of the above categories. These consist of five flakes, five petrified wood chunks, and two cobbles.

Debitage

The debitage consists of over 3,000 flakes and 400 cores and core fragments. The raw material is mostly petrified wood and chert. The cores have not yet been analyzed to reconstruct manufacturing techniques. Of the flakes that have been analyzed, approximately 75 percent are interior flakes, some of which are extremely small and fine, suggesting final stages of tool manufacture or tool resharpening activities. The cortical flakes include large primary flakes as well as secondary flakes with some cortex still attached.

In addition to the flakes and cores, 235 pieces of shatter and raw material fragments were recovered. Some of these, however, may be non-cultural in nature.
FEATURES

Due to the disturbed nature of the site, overall spatial patterns in features are unclear. Deposits of charcoal, fire-blackened rock and charred bone fragments were encountered at most levels throughout the site. Instances where such remains were clearly associated with one another suggest the presence of at least ten hearths. In addition, three dug-out hearths or fire pits are clearly visible in wall profiles: one at a depth of 30-40 cm; one at a depth of 60-80 cm, partially dug into bedrock of the shelter; and one at a depth of about 100 cm. The presence of several ash middens are also indicated by dark patches of ashy soil. All the hearths and fire pits tend to be small in size and relatively shallow.

A line of rocks between the two chambers in the rock shelter was first believed to be a dry-laid wall. However, the excavated "wall" turned out to be insubstantial and is presumed to be of recent origin.

FAUNAL REMAINS

A total of 455 pieces of animal bone were recovered from the site. None of the bones are articulated and most are highly fragmented and often charred.

The identifiable elements were compared to examples in the CAS faunal collection at the University of Denver. The sample includes a minimum (MNI) of one bison (Bison bison), one elk (Cervus canadensis), and one mule deer (Odocoileus hemionus). Numerous cervid bones and one possible bobcat vertebrae are also part of the assemblage. Rodent and bird bones appear to be intrusive and were not included in this analysis.

The body parts represented consist almost entirely of limb bones, foot bones, jaw fragments, and teeth. The pattern is consistent with secondary processing activities, where low utility parts such as skulls are left at kill sites and parts with high economic value are transported for further processing (Metcalfe and Jones 1988:487). The shattered and charred nature of the bone fragments at the site is consistent with bone marrow extraction and grease preparation (Wheat 1978:88; Vehik 1977:169).

INTERPRETATIONS

Site Activity

While the artifact and faunal assemblages are not large, they are consistent with what one would expect from short-term camps. The variety of artifacts is low. Pottery sherds are scarce, and bone tools, such as awls, which might suggest longer term occupation with maintenance activities, are absent. No structures are present. The faunal remains suggest secondary processing of game, and the grinding stones may have been used for plant processing. The local origins of much of the lithic artifacts (perhaps from the shelter itself) suggests lithic manufacture, but by no means does the site appear to have been a quarry. Beyond this, we cannot provide a clear picture of just what people were doing here.
Culture History

Davis Rockshelter presents an occupational sequence extending from the Early Ceramic to the Protohistoric periods. The complicated palimpsest of sterile and ash lenses, and dugout hearths, indicates that occupation of the site consisted of a large number of relatively short-term episodes. These episodes cannot be easily combined into larger, discrete components to which cultural affiliation can be assigned. However, the radiocarbon dates and the styles of certain artifacts do suggest that the site was utilized by different archaeologically defined groups.

No clearly recognizable and dated Archaic occupation of the shelter is evident. However, the earliest radiocarbon date of 1810±60 B.P. (uncalibrated), and the presence of cultural materials below the hearth from which this date was obtained (all of Unit Three lies stratigraphically below the deposits in the shelter, which contained the hearth in question), suggest that the site may have been occupied prior to the Early Ceramic period.

As is true for most sites in this part of Colorado, the Early Ceramic period is well represented, both in terms of number of artifacts and the apparent depth of deposit. Sherds with deep cord markings, corner-notched projectile points of Scallorn type, and bifaces are all diagnostic. Radiocarbon dates of 1810±60 B.P. and 1450±50 B.P. (uncalibrated) are appropriate. Sites with components similar to the Early Ceramic material at Davis Rockshelter include Crow's Roost (McDonald 1992), Jackson Creek (Wynn et al. 1985), Bayou Gulch (Ellwood 1987), Moonshine Shelter (Tucker 1991), Recon John Shelter (Zier and Kalasz 1991), and Lehman Cave midden (Lyons and Johnson 1994).

The Middle Ceramic period is not as well represented, which is again consistent with the culture history of this area. Side-notched projectile points and ceramics are diagnostic of this period, and the radiocarbon date of 1070±60 B.P. (uncalibrated) is appropriate, albeit early. The artifacts point to two different cultural affiliations, Upper Republican and Apishapa. The side-notched points and the sherd with parallel incised lines below the rim (sherd B), are consistent with an Upper Republican occupation, or one during the terminal Woodland/Upper Republican transitional period (Gunnerson's [1987] Franktown focus, perhaps). The latter interpretation fits well with the radiocarbon date. Evidence of structures or horticultural implements, which are diagnostic of the Upper Republican occupations of western Kansas, are absent. This finding is consistent with all evidence of Upper Republican occupation in eastern Colorado, which has most often been seen as representing short-term utilization of the area by Upper Republican groups from Kansas and Nebraska (Cassells 1983:173).

One sherd (Figure 4C) appears to be Apishapa. The external surface of this sherd is relatively smooth, with very fine, slanting striations. Its attributes are consistent with those found on such Apishapa examples as the Cramer vessel (Ellwood 1991:16-17). Apishapa sites are best represented in southeastern Colorado (Campbell 1969). To date, the northernmost
published site with an Apishapa component is Avery Ranch in Pueblo County (Zier et al. 1990). However, there is archaeological evidence that inhabitants of Apishapa sites in the Pueblo County area had access to lithic raw material from the Dawson Arkose formation north of Colorado Springs (Van Ness et al. 1990:37), so an Apishapa presence in this area is not unexpected.

While there are no radiocarbon dates from the Protohistoric period at Davis Rockshelter, the presence of a micaceous sherd with oblique incisions on the rim (Figure 5), along with unnotched points, indicates that people with a Dismal River affiliation did use the rockshelter. The Dismal River aspect is generally attributed to Protohistoric Plains Apache groups (Gunnerson 1978). Dismal River sites have not been reported from the central area of Colorado that includes El Paso County. Almost all of the Protohistoric sites in eastern Colorado have been assigned to the Dismal River aspect (Eighmy 1984:146-150), although recently a claim has been made for Great Bend aspect, as well (Lyons and Johnson 1994). These assignments have been made on the basis of pottery, as is ours. The unnotched points are not out of place in a Dismal River context, but they have also been found in components of very different affiliation.

Comparison to Lehman Cave Midden

Davis Rockshelter is very similar to the nearby site of Lehman Cave Midden (Lyons and Johnson 1994). The sites are at similar elevations and in virtually identical environments. Both have shallow chambers in sandstone bedrock, with midden deposits in front. From the description of the stratigraphic context of Lehman Cave midden, it appears to be very similar to the one at Davis. Moreover, both have evidence of prehistoric occupation from the Archaic through the Protohistoric periods. Even though the Lehman assemblage has a greater number of artifacts, the general assemblage composition is similar. In most respects, the sites appear to be twins.

But, there are some differences. One of the sherds from Davis resembles Middle Ceramic Apishapa pottery, but Apishapa elements are absent among the Lehman sherds. Evidence of a possible Late Ceramic Great Bend aspect pot is found at Lehman, but the only Late Ceramic artifacts at Davis appear to be Dismal River in affiliation. These differences should not be surprising, however. Many groups of people visited or passed through the area of the Palmer Divide in Late Prehistoric and Protohistoric times. None appear to have stayed long.

The two sites fill an important lacuna in the prehistory of eastern Colorado, where most research has been centered on the drainages of the Platte and Arkansas rivers.

CONCLUSIONS

Prehistoric Americans occupied Davis rockshelter off and on for well over 1,500 years. They seem never to have stayed long, but rather used the location as a temporary camp. They hunted and they gathered local plants, but their primary reason for using this place was the presence of chert erod-
ing out of the local bedrock. Several different groups of people visited the shelter. The first visitors came over 1,800 years ago, and left little behind other than a few hearths and the waste from tool manufacture. After this, the site appears to have been visited fairly often by people who made corner-notched projectile points and cord-roughened pottery, and who built fires in shallow pits. The artifacts they left behind are indistinguishable from those left in hundreds of sites along the Front Range between A.D. 200 and 1000. They may well have been the very same people who visited Lehman cave, several miles to the north. Then, as in many other places, the intensity of occupation declined dramatically. People still visited the rockshelter, but either they stayed for brief periods, or they came less often. At least two different groups appear to have used the shelter. One group made cord-roughened pottery with parallel incised lines, which resembles pottery made in contemporary sites in western Kansas. The other group made smooth, undecorated pots resembling the ceramics made in contemporary sites in southeastern Colorado. Later still, about the same time Europeans had begun to explore the region, a group of Plains Apache visited the site.

Further analysis of the Davis Rockshelter evidence should provide many more details to this rough sketch, and thereby add to our understanding of the prehistory of this part of the Colorado Plains.

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NOTES:

1Priscilla Ellwood of the University of Colorado reconstructed the sherd.

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NOTES:
1Priscilla Ellwood of the University of Colorado Museum assisted us in the identification of the sherds.