



Old Pueblo Archaeology Center's "Third Thursday Food for Thought" Series

Recent University of New Mexico Research at Chaco Canyon with some Background and Future Free Zoom Presentation by Archaeologist Wirt H. Wills, PhD



Left: Geologist David Love in deep section of Pueblo Bonito Middle Trench.



Right: Sampling for radiocarbon dating in the Chaco Arroyo.

About a millennium ago in the high desert of northwestern New Mexico, Chaco Canyon became a major Ancestral Pueblo culture center with monumental architecture, complex social organization and community life, and far-reaching influence. Beginning in the mid 800s, people of Chaco, possibly aided by visitors, began constructing preplanned, massive, multistory stone buildings containing hundreds of rooms using distinctive, recognizably Chacoan masonry styles. Many of these "Great Houses" were laid out in cardinal directions, and some were oriented to solar and lunar alignments. Several were linked with formal roads, and they were associated with formal earthen mounds, communication features, and elaborate water control devices. By 1050, Chaco had become the ceremonial, administrative, and economic center of the region, but by 1130 its influence had waned.

This presentation will offer a brief historical overview of the University of New Mexico's archaeological investigations at Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, with an emphasis on the 1969-1984 joint National Park Service-UNM Chaco Project. More recent UNM work includes studies of water control features, agricultural suitability modeling, and remote sensing applications that have built on the innovative research of the Chaco Project.

See next page.

Thursday February 15, 2024



7 to 8:30 pm Mountain Standard Time

To register for the Zoom program go to

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rHpfWqbkQdeiUNI2YNLLLw

For more information contact Old Pueblo at [520-798-1201](tel:520-798-1201) or info@oldpueblo.org

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Our Third Thursday presenter **W. H. Wills**

received his PhD in Anthropology from the University of Michigan in 1985 and in 1986 joined the University of New Mexico Department of Anthropology, where he is now Professor of Anthropology and Regents' Lecturer. Since 1978 he also has been employed as an archaeologist, researcher, teaching assistant, adjunct lecturer, and visiting professor for the National Park Service's Chaco Center, the NPS Division of Remote Sensing, University of Michigan, University of Virginia, Southern Illinois University's Center for Archaeological Investigations, National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution), and UNM's Maxwell Museum of Anthropology.



Dr. Wills in the field



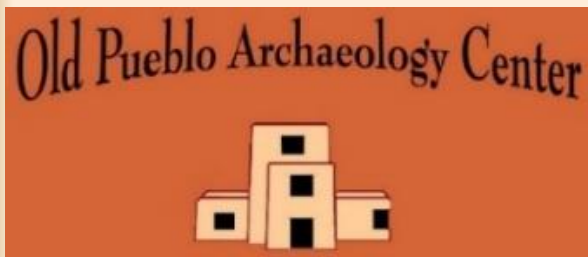
Real Time Kinetic Base Station for subcentimeter control of subsurface Ground Penetrating Radar

Professor Wills is the author of the book *Early Prehistoric Agriculture in the American Southwest* and co-editor with Robert D. Leonard of *The Ancient Southwestern Community: Models and Methods for the Study of Prehistoric Social Organization*. He has written and co-authored other volumes as well as 28 articles in refereed professional journals, 27 chapters in edited volumes, and 8 encyclopedia contributions, and has more publications on the way. He has received numerous national and international awards and fellowships.

Below: Robotic camera on South Mesa for 360 degree photography

Dr. Wills's research concerns how new socioeconomic organization has emerged in the past, especially with respect to agriculture and food production. At the University of New Mexico his fieldwork has been in the American Southwest, primarily New Mexico, and his field research has been fundamental to his work in four major problem areas:

- 1) the introduction of agriculture during the Late Archaic period, ca. 4000 to 3000 BCE.
- 2) the emergence of village communities during the Early Ceramic period, ca. 200 to 500 CE.
- 3) the development of hierarchically complex corporate groups after 1000 in the Colorado Plateau.
- 4) the formation of northern Rio Grande Valley Hispanic irrigation communities during the 18th century.



These research problems represent widely different time periods, but his approach to each has been based on a common theoretical perspective in which broad patterns of economic change are explained as the product of interaction among relatively small social groups. For this Third Thursday Food for Thought program he will relate how this perspective has guided recent University of New Mexico research at Chaco Canyon and its potential for future investigations.