

Conjectural Evolution of the Slab House of the Panhandle

by E. B. Sayles

Six-page hand-written manuscript dated August 16, 1932
filed with the notes from site Texas B 6:1,
Sayles designation for the site also known as
Antelope Creek Ruin 22 and 41HC23

From the Sayles archives housed at the
Texas Archeological Research Laboratory
The University of Texas at Austin

Tex: B: 6:1

Conjectural evolution of the
Slab House
of the
Pawhandle.

From the evidence now on hand, it appears that the Pawhandle people brought with them the knowledge of pottery making, and fine flint work, which appears consistently throughout the area. Also, probably a knowledge of house construction, using four principal upright timber supports for a flat or conical roof, with side walls thatched and plastered; or a room construction, using a similar roof support, but having side walls and roof covering of sod.

The floor plan of
Such a building is square or rectangular in frame, but when finished would likely be circular.

No. 1

Probably this was the original type of dwelling brought to the Pawhandle and used until it was found unfit for the environment. In the first place, lack of suitable timber would prohibit the building of extensive timbered rooms, and the sandy sod of the region

does not lend itself to use in house building.

No evidence of the remains of this type of building exists, but experience would soon teach the builders that the foundation of such a structure must be reinforced to withstand the Plains' winds, and such evidence does exist.

No. 2

From this step, future buildings would follow the plan of reinforced foundations, even where the roof was carried on inside supports, and particularly where the timbered material of the side walls was light. It appears

No. 3

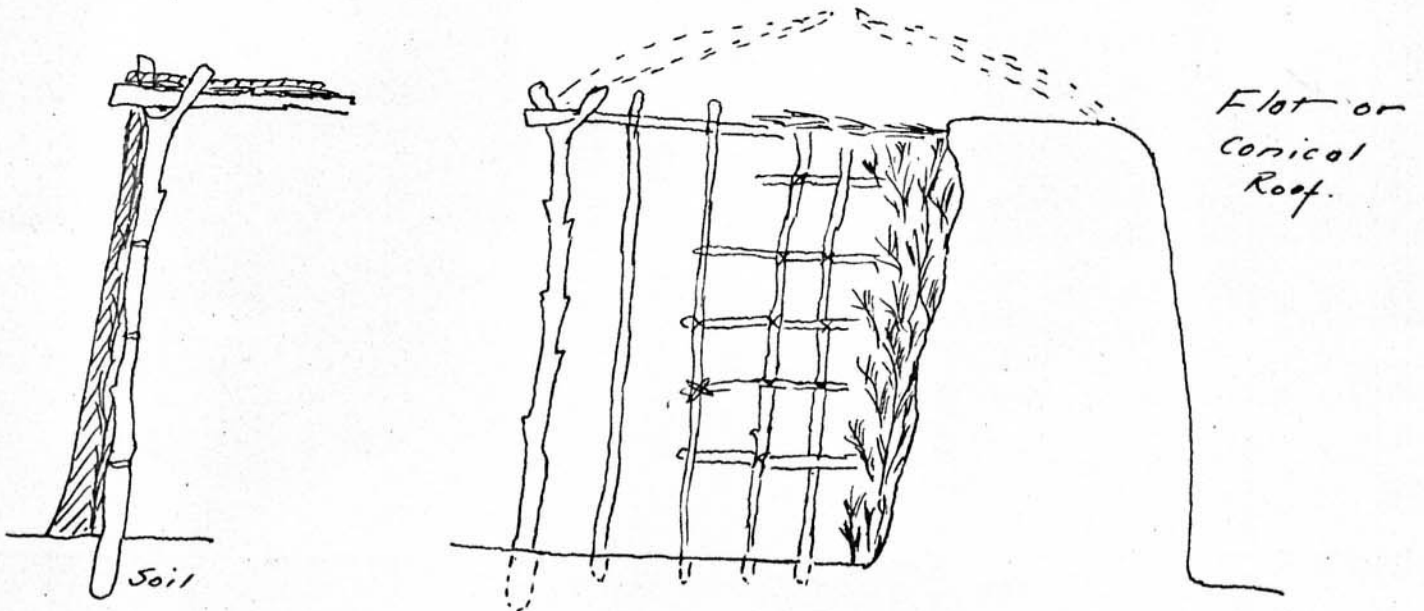
That Room A was of this type of construction (No. 3 - without separate roof supports).

Because of the lack of timber, for better protection from the weather, and probably due to S.W. influence, side walls of vertically laid slab foundations (Room C) and horizontally laid masonry took the place of the plastered and timbered construction, though the latter must have been continued in use

No. 4

in temporary structures - storage cists, additions to the main building &c.

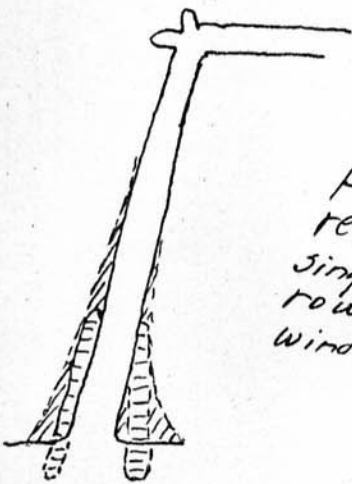
The change from circular buildings to rectangular, or square, ones appears natural in following the already established plan of the roof supports. And the continued use of the circular floor plan, for one or more corners (Room A), as well as in cists generally, is to be expected in such buildings as temporary ones, separate structures from the group, cists &c. In group buildings rooms, naturally the shape of the rooms must be rectangular or square, even tho' the interior corners were frequently rounded.



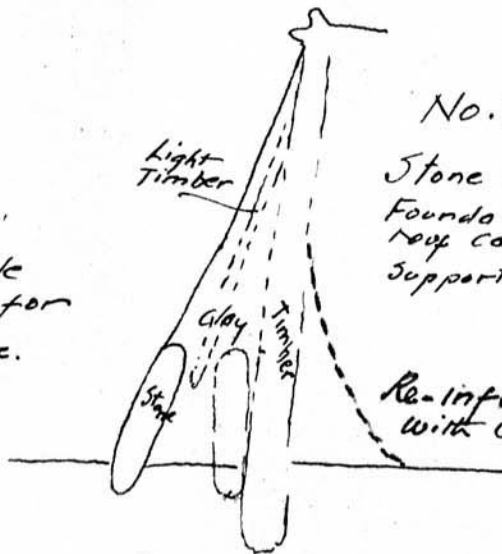
Circular
Clay plastered, wattle and brush.
or
Jod house, flat roof.

Floored with clay.

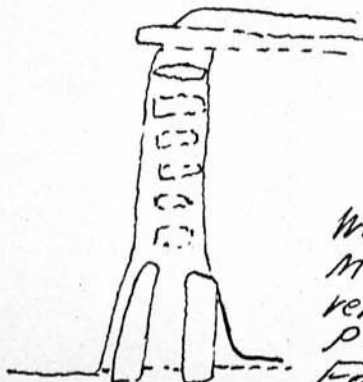
No. 1.
Original structures



No. 2
Foundations reinforced by single or double row of stones, for wind resistance etc.



No. 3.
Stone used consistently as Foundation, even where roof carried on inside supports of timber
Re-inforced on interior with clay and stone



No. 4
Wide spaced H. Masonry replace vert. timbered and plastered walls.
Foundation Reinforced with slab stones.

Due to lack of suitable timber, SW influence.

Through the courtesy of Dr. W. C. Holden, Tex. Tech. Col., Lubbock, who has been carrying on excavations for several years at this site, and in co-operation with him; and through the courtesy of Mr. Floyd V. Studer, Amarillo, who holds the land owner's permit to excavate these ruins, certain investigations were made of the Antelope Creek ruins N.W. of Amarillo, heretofore reported by Mr. Studer and Dr. Holden in the *Bull.* of the T. A. & P. Soc. and elsewhere, during Aug. 12, 13, 14, 15, 1932.

These investigations were made primarily to determine:

- (1) The nature of the ~~ruin~~ ^{ruin} indicated by Room A on the accompanying sketch.
- (2) Further data on doorway openings.
- (3) Additional data on room construction, especially as to whether or not there is any indication of pit house.
- (4) And cultural affiliations, in connection with the survey of the State now under way, by stratigraphic tests in midden heaps.

In addition to the accompanying sketches of floor plans and elevations, and lists of artifacts, the following conclusions were reached:

- (1) Room A was a dwelling, added after the principal ruins had been erected, and upon their debris heaps. Apparently it contained no outside opening accessible to the ground level without some artificial means. Or the doorway was merely an opening left in the wall. Its probable construction is indicated by the accompanying sketch.
- (2) Doorway openings are definitely shown leading from Room A, and at B; and probably occur at 1, 2, 3, 4, and else where. The nature of these is indicated by ~~enclosed~~ attached sketches.
- (3) There was no indication of any pit house construction.

(4) From the material obtained from the midden heaps, the cultural affiliation is with that of the Pauhaule. It may be that the whole or a part of the ruins were erected on an older occupied site, and it is definitely indicated that the smaller rooms along the east side of the ruin are of later date than the balance. But no change in culture is suggested, other than a probable change in architecture indicated by the accompanying sketches.

The exact connection of the S.W. is not determined, as the level of the sherd from that area was not known.

These conclusions are my own, arrived at from this investigation on the ground, without regard to previous publications on this site, and on this area.

8/16/37 E.B.S.