

## NOTE ON THE DURANGO DATES

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The salient features of Basket Maker II culture as manifested in the vicinity of Durango, Colorado, have been presented in a previous issue of the *Tree-Ring Bulletin* (15:33-34). Sites on which this characterization was based are three: The Talus Village (Ignacio 7:101) and the North and South Rock Shelters (Falls Creek Caves). At that time (1949) the earliest established cutting date from any of these sites was A.D. 203, from the North Shelter (TRB 15:27, specimen 2H-30), while the latest evidence of constructional activity was afforded by a beam from the Talus Village with a good many of its outer rings missing but its terminal one falling at A.D. 322 (TRB 15:27, specimen I-12).

The bark date of A.D. 46 from the North Shelter announced in the present issue, and confirmed by specimens from at least two different trees (Table 1, Specimens ADE-5; ADE-70), pushes back Basket Maker presence in the Durango region by 157 years. Unfortunately, the source of these earliest specimens does not throw any particular light on the sequence of constructional activities in any of the several units of the shelter. They were among residue of conflagration cleared out of an unknown portion of the site and dumped where found. Above them the surface of the deposit was cut into to prepare level spaces for later floors. Hence subsequent occupation of the shelter is all that the positions of these specimens confirms.

Should this A.D. 46 date be accepted at face value? There is always the possibility that a specific timber could have died several years before it was used. However, in this case, two timbers show the same outer ring and their life span is largely paralleled by a goodly number of other which do not retain their outside rings. Therefore the date would seem as well substantiated as are most of those from other southwestern ruins. On the assumption that A.D. 46 is a valid cutting date, the range of B.M. II occupation, continuous or recurrent, of the North Shelter reached from then to A.D. 260+ (TRB 16:13, specimen AB-1) or a minimum of 214 years. For the general region it is shown by a ring record from the Talus Village to have continued until at least A.D. 324+ (TRB 16:13, specimen I-Y) or a known total of 278 years. It must be stressed that 278 years should not be interpreted as a full measure of B.M. II presence in the Durango vicinity. There is every reason to believe that the original inhabitants of the Animas Valley continued in residence until the advent of pottery and different house types wrought the transition into Basket Maker III. Presumably this took place in the late 400's or very early 500's. And A.D. 46, although it is gratifyingly early, almost certainly does not mark the nether limit. On the basis of archaeological evidence, the AFE series of charcoal sections, discussed in the final paragraph of Dr. Schulman's article, should represent the earliest evidence of man in the North Shelter. If it is permissible to do so, it may be predicted that when the AFE series is dated—as it surely will be—it will confirm human frequentation of the shelter before the year 1 A.D.

To judge from evidence thus far in hand, during the positively established 278 years there was no change in any of the material arts, indicating a material culture that remained static for some three centuries.

The two much later dates from the North Shelter, A.D. 543+ and 575+ (TRB 16:13, specimens AC-8 and AC-21) are representative of a scanty re-occupation of the site during Basket Maker III.

It is worthy of note that the Durango sites have yielded, with a single exception, all of the dates so far determined for Basket Maker II. The exception is du Pont Cave, one timber from which shows a cutting date at A.D. 217 (TRB 8:3-6).