DATES FROM THE SITE 1060 PITHOUSE, MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

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ABSTRACT

Seven charcoal tree-ring specimens from Site 1060 yielded outside dates with the range A.D. 544-608. It is concluded that A.D. 608 most nearly represents the time of construction of the pithouse.

Several charcoal specimens, collected from the Site 1060 pithouse excavation described by A. C. Hayes and J. A. Lancaster in the following article, were sent to the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research at the University of Arizona for dendrochronological analysis. Examination of the specimens during the spring of 1960 indicated that a total of six different specimens of pinyon *(Pinus edulis)* and five of juniper *(Juniperus* sp.) were represented. All six of the pinyon samples and one of the juniper sections were dated (Table 1). As developed by Bannister (1959), the symbols and

TABLE 1. Dated charcoal specimens from the site 1060 pithouse, Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado.

Specimen number	*Form*	*Species*	*Date A.D. inside — outside*	
MV-1002-1	fragment	Pnn	495 p — 562 +	vv
MV-1002-2	fragment	Pnn	494 p — 575	vv
MV-1002-3	fragment	Pnn	518 — 587	vv
MV-1006	¾ section	Pnn	532 p — 608	r
MV-1007	fragment	Pnn	517 p — 579	vv
MV-1008	section	Jun	350 ± p — 544	vv
MV-1009	fragment	Pnn	512 p — 586	vv

All six specimens are charcoal. Pnn—pinyon; Jun—juniper; p—pith ring; ± p—pith ring present, center rings not readable; vv—outside shows extreme erosion, last ring very variable around the circumference; +—possibly one or more absent rings on the outside (A.D. 563 is often very small, therefore could be missing on specimen MV-1002-1); r—outer ring constant over a significant portion of the circumference (probable cutting date).

abbreviations used in Table 1 provide maximum possibilities for archaeological interpretation.

The A.D. 608 outside date of specimen MV-1006 is believed to be a cutting date. The outer ring of this specimen, which does not show the latewood of a complete year's growth and which is very regular around the circumference, indicates that erosion had little or no effect on a large part of the surface of the specimen. Since the latest date from the group is from MV-1006, and because the outside dates of all the other specimens cluster in the few years prior to its date, it is highly probable that A.D. 608 represents the period of construction of the Site 1060 pithouse.

Crossdating of the individual pinyon specimens with each other and with the Master Growth Index of Mesa Verde Pinyon (Schulman 1954, master figure) was, on the whole, very good (Figs. 1 and 2). The consistent absence of A.D. 526 was, however, particularly disappointing. Since the pinyon samples exhibit little evidence of growth trend, the mean for the Site 1060 pinyon is derived from the average of the actual measurements of ring series from individual specimens rather than of standardized values (Table 2). Because the ring widths of specimens MV-1002-1 and MV-1002-2 are relatively very narrow, the measured values are doubled for the computation of the site mean.

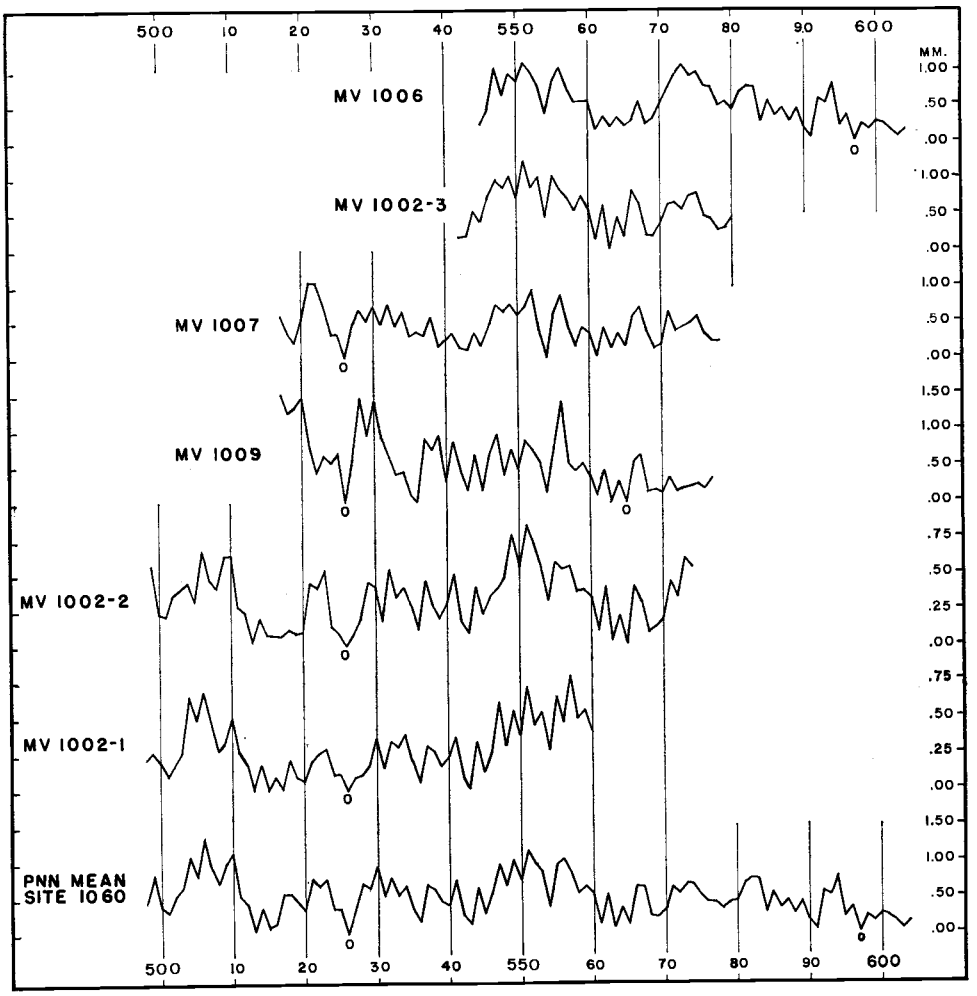

FIG. 1. Measured ring-widths for dated pinyon charcoal from the Site 1060 pithouse. Zeros below the curves indicate absent rings.

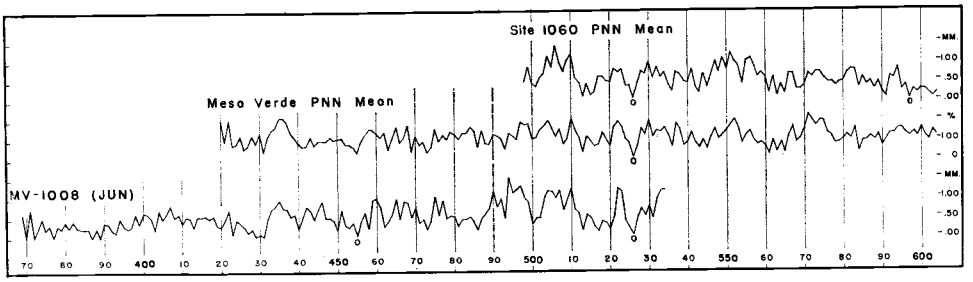

FIG. 2. The Site 1060 pinyon mean and the single dated juniper specimen compared with the standardized Mesa Verde Pinyon Mean.

TABLE 2. Adjusted mean ring-widths of pinyon *(Pinus edulis)* specimens from the Site 1060 pithouse, Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado. Unit .01 mm.

A.D.	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*
490									44	82
500	39	31	54	66	109	81	135	94	70	98
510	114	54	42	5	38	10	17	57	57	48
520	133	78	68	76	35	36	0	35	70	63
530	92	52	80	54	67	35	19	67	61	46
540	40	74	27	14	63	30	59	95	68	102
550	75	118	98	84	37	95	103	87	58	66
560	56	14	54	9	37	12	64	64	23	22
570	32	64	56	69	69	52	44	42	33	41
580	44	68	75	74	29	54	36	45	28	43
590	18	3	58	51	79	21	35	0	22	17
600	26	23	17	5	16					

Specimen MV-1008, the only piece of juniper from the group with an interpretable ring record, crossdated exceptionally well with the pinyon master chronology (Fig. 2). It is possible that a centuries-long juniper chronology eventually will be established for the Mesa Verde area.

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SITE 1060, A BASKET MAKER III PITHOUSE ON CHAPIN MESA, MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

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ABSTRACT

A Basket Maker III pithouse excavated in 1959 provides a cluster of tree-ring dates which terminate at A.D. 608. Features in the structure are typical of pithouses from the same time period in the area, with a north-south orientation and a large southern antechamber having an inclined entranceway. Atypical features include a low bench encircling the main room and the presence of small adobe pellets at the bottom of each of the four post holes.

In September, 1959, an unsuspected archaeological site on Chapin Mesa, in Mesa Verde National Park was revealed by a pipeline trench. Immediate salvage operations by Lancaster and his stabilization crew indicated a shallow pithouse with the wall above the bench along the entire west side destroyed by the ditcher. Excavation help was requested from the Wetherill Mesa Archaeological Project and Hayes and part of his survey group were assigned to the undertaking.

Site 1060 falls into the general pattern of Basket Maker pithouses of the San Juan area in that it consists of a roughly rectangular chamber with rounded corners, large post-holes near the corners, remnants of a partition south of the firepit, and a short passageway into a smaller, raised anteroom (Fig. 1). In outline, it closely resembles Pit House Number 1