

Documentation of Perishable Artifacts in the Green and Lang Collections at the Field Museum of Natural History

Canyonlands Natural History Association Discovery Pool Grant 11-1-BLM

Final Report, August 23, 2012, 2012

Submitted by Laurie D. Webster, Principal Investigator

This report provides a scientific and financial summary of work conducted under Canyonlands Natural History Association Discovery Pool Grant 11-1-BLM. The primary goal of the project was to systematically survey and photodocument archaeological perishable artifacts in the Green and Lang collections in southeastern Utah at the Field Museum of Natural History. A secondary goal was to make information about these collections more widely available to archaeologists, the public, and the Monticello Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM archaeologist Don Simonis supported and sponsored the project. Work began in September 2011 and was completed in August 2012.

Project Background

My work builds on the pioneering investigations of the Wetherill-Grand Gulch Project (Blackburn and Williamson 1997; Phillips 1993), which traced the locations of thousands of artifacts removed from Basketmaker and Pueblo-period rock shelters and cliff dwellings in southeastern Utah by amateur collectors in the late 1800s. These objects made their way into such institutions as Brigham Young University, the Field Museum of Natural History, the American Museum of Natural History, the University of Pennsylvania Museum, and the Phoebe Hearst Museum in Berkeley. Except for a handful of artifacts illustrated by Blackburn and Williamson (1997), a small catalog describing a portion of one collection (the Lang-Lyman collection) (Allen and Baker 2000), and an occasional artifact citation (Plog 1979:Fig. 11, lower), these important collections have not been published or studied in depth.

The focus of the current project is the Green and Lang collections at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. A Visiting Scholar grant from the Field Museum provided matching funds for the CNHA grant. The Green collection was compiled in 1890-1891 by local “cowboy” archaeologists Charles McLoyd and Charles Cary Graham with the help of the Reverend C.H. Green, their Durango, Colorado, sponsor. Green (1892) published a 17-page catalog of the collection, listing the artifacts by material type and provenience, but did not illustrate any specimens. In 1894, Green sold the collection to the Field Museum. The history of the Green collection and its journey to the Field Museum is well-summarized by Hayes (1993). Most of the artifacts in this collection are from Grand Gulch, Utah, and many are perishable objects of wood, fiber, or other plant materials.

The Lang collection at the Field Museum, more formally known as the Ryerson-Lang collection, was compiled by Charles Lang of Bluff, Utah in 1894 and 1895. He was accompanied in the field by two local individuals, Robert G. Allan (sometimes spelled Allen) and Franklin J. Adams.

The collection includes artifacts from Grand Gulch and Hammond, Cottonwood, Allen, and Butler canyons. The collection was purchased by a Mr. M. Ryerson of Chicago and was on loan to the Walker Art Museum in Chicago until its transfer to the Field Museum in 1923. The vast majority of these artifacts consist of perishable organic materials. An unpublished, handwritten catalog compiled by Lang (1895) provides unusually good provenience information for its time.

Description of Work

The project was initiated on September 15, 2011, with a visit to the Edge of the Cedars Museum in Blanding to conduct research with the Wetherill-Grand Gulch Project files and to obtain copies of the Green and Lang field catalogs. Work was begun at the Field Museum on September 17 and concluded on October 7, 2012. Two Northern Arizona University (NAU) graduate students assisted in the project, Erin Gearty for three weeks and Rechanda Lee for one week.

During our three weeks at the Field Museum, we surveyed approximately 400 textiles, baskets, and other perishable artifacts, and generated 1500 record shots and close-up digital artifact photographs. Detailed measurements were recorded, as well as concise descriptions of each artifact's form, construction, and raw materials. Whenever possible, we attempted to link the artifacts to their field catalog documentation. During the survey, we encountered numerous artifacts with incorrect or duplicate catalog numbers, and as a result, we discovered the total number of perishable objects in the collection to be far greater than originally estimated by the museum (approximately 800 artifacts instead of 500). In 2012 I applied for and received a grant from CNHA to return to Chicago to survey and photograph the remaining artifacts in these collections (Canyonlands Natural History Association Discovery Pool Grant 12-1-BLM).

On October 6, 2011, BLM archaeologist Don Simonis of the Monticello Office visited the Field Museum to view the Green and Lang collections. After a tour of the collections storage area, we closely examined approximately 60 selected artifacts in the collections storeroom and discussed their significance. In our discussions, we emphasized the importance of developing a better understanding of the chronology of these collections through AMS dating. Funding for AMS dating was included in the 2012 CNHA grant.

After my return to the Field Museum, I labeled the digital photographs with catalog numbers and captions. A sample of these images is provided in Figures 1-10. Survey data were also entered into an Excel spreadsheet. I am currently in the process of updating and expanding the worksheet with data collected during the 2012 survey and making corrections to catalog numbers. The final worksheet will be provided to the BLM at the end of the 2012 project. An example of the worksheet is shown in Figure 11.

A Brief Description of the Collections

The 2011 survey of the Green and Lang collections revealed a remarkable assortment of raw materials, weaving tools, woven textiles, sandals, coiled and plaited baskets, feather and fur blankets, hide and hide containers, and wood artifacts. These collections offer excellent potential

for the study of textile and basketry production, hide working, and woodworking, as well as studies of social identity, technological style, agricultural technology, mortuary practices, botanical research, pigment use, and hunting and caching behavior. The Lang collection, especially the material from Battle Cave (now known as Atlatl Cave) in Battle Canyon, a tributary of Allen Canyon, is particularly strong in Basketmaker II materials. The Green collection from Grand Gulch is stronger in Pueblo-period materials. Highlights of these collections include:

- **Textile raw materials:** skeins of prepared yucca fiber; bundles of human-hair fiber and skeins of human-hair cordage, one still threaded through two beautifully worked bone needles (Figure 1); several balls of fine animal-hair yarn, probably dog or rabbit hair; well-preserved turkey-feather-wrapped cordage; and a Pueblo-period collection of cotton fiber with seeds from Grand Gulch
- **Weaving tools:** a Pueblo-period cotton beater (Figure 2), several weaving battens, and numerous loom anchors
- **Woven textiles:** Basketmaker II twined and looped yucca bags (Figure 3), women's aprons, human-hair warp-faced bands, and fur and feather blankets; a pristine Basketmaker painted yucca tumpband (Figure 4); Pueblo-period human-hair leggings, tapestry- and twill-tapestry yucca and cotton bands for tumpbands and cradleboards
- **Sandals:** Basketmaker II four-warp plain-weave sandals, cordage sandals with buckskin fringe at the toe, including a child's pair with human-hair decoration (Figure 5) and several with colored designs; possible Basketmaker II twill-plaited sandals; a Basketmaker II hide sandal and a probable Basketmaker II sandal of mountain-lion paws (Figure 6); Pueblo-period twined sandals with colored designs on the upper surface and raised decoration on the sole (Figure 7); Pueblo-period twill-plaited sandals, some in the process of manufacture
- **Baskets:** Basketmaker II trays and bowl-shaped baskets, some with geometric designs, and some containing food residues (Figure 8); a large carrying basket; Pueblo-period plaited ring baskets and a superbly made elliptical basket (Figure 9)
- **Hides and hide containers:** well-preserved fawn, deer, and coyote hides; carefully-stitched hide containers, some with their original contents (cornmeal, seeds, possible smoking material, mineral pigments)
- **Wood artifacts:** two Basketmaker II atlatls and wooden foreshafts, some with broken dart points embedded in the base; a pair of crutches with padded hide supports (Figure 10); a figure-4 hunting trap; hafted knives, awls, and axes; numerous agricultural implements with spatulate blades; a wooden crook; a ceremonial stick in the shape of a bear claw; a wooden pipe bowl with smoking residue; Basketmaker and Pueblo-period cradleboards

- **Artifact caches:** a Basketmaker II basket made from a complete yucca plant that contained three pairs of children's sandals; a Basketmaker II buckskin that contained a bundle of sinew, a hide bag with pigment, a string of seed beads, and the pristine painted yucca tumpband; a Pueblo-period elliptical basket that contained pigments, balls of beautifully colored yucca yarn, three bone fleshers, a cotton bag with salt, and numerous other items

Dissemination of Results

A key goal of this project was to make information about these collections more widely available to researchers and the public to foster appreciation for these collections and to encourage their use for future exhibition and research. I have met this goal by sharing information about these collections through a series of public presentations and by planning for physical and digital access to the data through the establishment of two archives.

Since October 2011, I have presented public programs about this work to the Hisatsinom chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society, the Edge of the Cedars Museum, the Arts Club of Chicago, the Albuquerque Archaeological Society, and a Bluff rock art group. I am scheduled to present a public lecture about the project at the Moab Information Center in late September 2012. I also presented papers about this project at the Pecos Conference in 2011 and 2012. All presentations have generated extremely strong interest in these collections.

In April 2012 I attended a workshop offered by tDAR, The Digital Archaeological Record, at the Society for American Archaeology meetings in Memphis, Tennessee. This organization is devoted to providing access to archaeological information via the worldwide web and ensuring its preservation. Once all the images from the 2011 and 2012 projects are labeled and the spreadsheet is complete, I will upload this digital information to tDAR to make it more available to a wider audience. I will also deposit the photographs and data at the Edge of the Cedars Museum, which has agreed to serve as a perishable archive and repository for the project.



Figure 1. FMNH 165172, Pueblo III bundle of 2z-S human-hair cordage joined to two exquisitely worked bone needles. Butler Canyon, Lang Collection.



Figure 2. FMNH 21565, Pueblo III cotton beater for ginning cotton. Grand Gulch, Green Collection.



Figure 3. FMNH 165250, Basketmaker II narrow twined yucca bag with oval base and six self-patterned bands. Battle Canyon, Lang Collection.



Figure 4. FMNH 165170, Basketmaker II (?) painted yucca tumpband with black and red design of fringed triangles and stepped meanders. Battle Canyon, Lang Collection.



Figure 5. FMNH 164802, Basketmaker II pair of child's cordage sandals with buckskin fringe, buckskin loops, and red and black chevron design. Butler Canyon, Lang collection.



Figure 6. FMNH 164827, Basketmaker II (?) hide sandal of mountain lion paws with toe loop, upper face. Note paw pads at toe end. Battle Canyon, Lang Collection.



Figure 7. FMNH 164834, Pueblo III twined sandal with brown and tan interlocking diamond design, lower face. Grand Gulch, Lang Collection.



Figure 8. FMNH 165289, Basketmaker II decorated coiled basket bowl with five butterfly or dragonfly motifs, upper face. Battle Canyon, Lang Collection.



Figure 9. FMNH 165274, elliptical basket, plan view. Battle Canyon, Lang Collection.

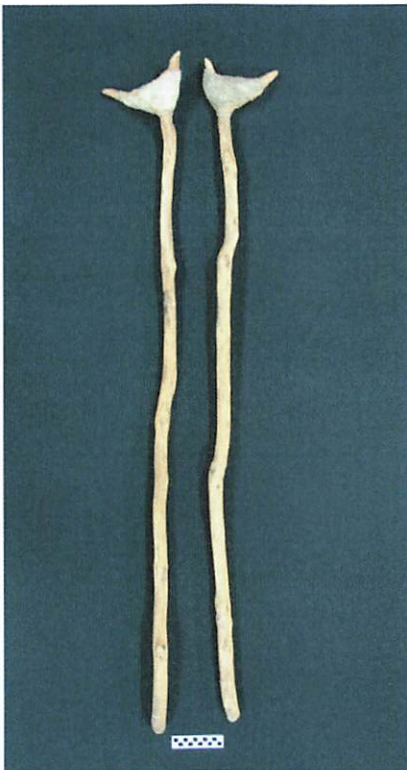


Figure 10. FMNH 21516, Basketmaker II (?) pair of wooden crutches with buckskin-covered pads. Grand Gulch, Green Collection.

Figure 11 inserted here
(Excel spreadsheet)

Financial Summary
Canyonlands Natural History Association Grant 11-1-BLM.

	Original budgeted amount	Actual expenses
Travel to Edge of the Cedars Museum for archival research, 9/15/11	Fuel \$25 Lodging \$120 Meals \$50 Total \$195	Fuel \$25 Lodging 0 Meals 0 Total \$25
Travel to Field Museum of Natural History to survey the Green and Lang collections, 9/17-10/8/11	Airfare \$300 Lodging \$2000 Ground transportation \$200 Meals \$800 Total \$3300	Airfare \$117.50 (\$77.50 airfare and \$40 checked luggage fee) Lodging \$2587 (Webster \$1677; Gearty \$735; Lee \$175) Ground transportation \$268 (cab fare to and from Midway Airport and International House \$80; daily commute to the Field Museum via METRA rail \$60; 3 weeks airport parking \$128) Meals \$571.85 Total 3544.35
Salary - archival research	\$400	\$325.65
Salary – on-site survey and photography	\$3000	\$3000
Salary – off-site processing of data and images	\$2000	\$2000
Subtotal	\$8895	\$8895
Minus Matching funds from Field Museum Visiting Scholar grant	(\$1500)	(\$1500)
Total CNHA grant	\$7395	\$7395

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