

Publications in Archeology 7H  
Wetherill Mesa Studies

# LONG HOUSE

**Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado**

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Three-fourths of the bowl and jar sherds were slipped on the interior, but only one-fourth of the bowls were slipped on the exterior. All sherds were polished to a low luster, with the exception of one bowl exterior sherd, which was matte. The polished surface of a fourth of the bowl and jar sherds was crazed, and polishing was spotty on about half the sherds.

Jar exteriors and both bowl surfaces were somewhat bumpy or uneven on about half the specimens. Surface texture was fine grained on all sherds, excepting jar interiors.

As with all of the later black-on-white pottery, scraping was undoubtedly the method used in obtaining the smooth curves of the vessel walls. However, there is no definite evidence of this on any of the sherds. Wiping is visible on the jar interiors, and is less obvious on bowl interiors and jar and bowl exteriors. The final rubbing and polishing has obliterated evidence of most of the preliminary work. Jar interiors were unslipped and, for the most part, slightly grainy in texture.

### PIEDRA BLACK-ON-WHITE

On the basis of design only, there is a sharper "break" between Piedra Black-on-white and Cortez Black-on-white than between any other two pottery types in the Mesa Verde White Ware continuum. Perhaps this is due only to the very limited material from Long House—70 sherds of Piedra, about the same number of Cortez and Chapin Black-on-white. Although the relationship between Piedra and Chapin is close, with many transitional sherds that defy classification, there seems to be little in the Piedra design to suggest what was to come in Pueblo II times with Cortez Black-on-white.

Piedra Black-on-white is a Pueblo I pottery dated by Reed (1958, p. 79) at about A.D. 750 to 900. Although not described for Mesa Verde, its appearance in the Mancos Canyon and the area around the Mesa Verde would suggest that it should be well represented on the mesa top. Most of the sherds illustrated in figure 212 show the relationship to Chapin Black-on-white, the Basket-maker III—early Pueblo I pottery from which it is derived. Several sherds (fig. 212c and k) show the trend toward Cortez Black-on-white design. Without evidence from other sites, such as the two Piedra vessels illustrated by Reed (*ibid.*, p. 76), it would be very easy to separate the Piedra material from Long House into Chapin and Cortez Black-on-white and to place the "questionable" sherds in a transitional category. Rims were commonly painted solid black, but two showed possible ticking. Only one rim was undecorated. Two sherds bore carbon paint, the others mineral paint.

Bowl sherds were most common, although jar sherds were also present. For the most part, the bowl rims were tapered and rounded (fig. 213b) but several flat and almost flat rims were found (a and c).

Vessel wall thickness ranges from 3 to 7 mm., and averages just under 5 mm. All but two of the bowl sherds were tempered with crushed igneous rock. These two had a mixture of crushed rock and sherds. The jar sherds were tempered primarily with crushed igneous rock, but also represented were igneous rock and sherds, sandstone and igneous rock, and sherds and sand. Most of the sherds were moderately tempered, a few sparsely and a few heavily, with medium to coarse particles. The grains are primarily angular, with only a few sherds showing subangular particles.

All of the sherds were unslipped. As with other pottery types already discussed, the bowl interiors were better finished than the exteriors. Most of the interiors were polished to a low luster, the remainder being matte. About two-thirds of the bowl exteriors were matte, with the rest having a low luster. The surface finish on jar

exteriors was almost equally divided between low luster and matte. Polishing was spotty on about a third of the sherds. Crazing of the surface was present in only four cases: the interior surface of three bowl sherds and the exterior of one jar sherd.

Few bowl sherds were uneven or bumpy on the interior surface, but about two-thirds of both bowl and jar sherds had a rather bumpy exterior. Pitting is found on all surfaces but is especially prominent on bowl exteriors, where it is present in slightly more than a fifth of the specimens. The surface texture of the interior of bowl sherds is overwhelmingly fine, with only a few slightly grainy. That of the exterior is slightly grainy for the most part.

Almost all of the sherds show both wiping and rubbing of the surface. This is in striking contrast to the later pottery, on which most evidence of wiping or scraping, or both, was usually obscured by final finishing. Jar interiors were unslipped, scraped, and wiped, with a slightly grainy to grainy surface. About half the specimens had a slightly uneven surface.

### CHAPIN BLACK-ON-WHITE

La Plata Black-on-white, Lino Black-on-gray, and Chapin Black-on-white are essentially one pottery type, with Chapin being the local manifestation. Types of paint and temper definitely vary, at least in proportion, from one type to another, but all are Basket-maker III pottery types which undoubtedly extend into Pueblo I. There may be subtle temporal and spatial differences between the types, but these should not be allowed to obscure the broad relationship.

Abel (1955, Ware 12A—Type 1) has designated the earliest Mesa Verde black-on-white pottery as Chapin Black-on-white, dating it at A.D. 500–850 or 450–850 if the more polished Twin Trees Black-on-white is included. The material from Long House does not provide an adequate basis for arguing against the validity of this pottery type, so I am using the name he applies. I feel that adding another name to the literature confuses the picture and would much prefer to call this pottery La Plata or Lino (redefined). If it is necessary to separate the local development from that found elsewhere in the San Juan area, I would prefer to call it La Plata Black-on-white: Chapin Variety.

A similar situation exists with many other pottery types, both black-on-white and plain or corrugated, where the broad relationships are being buried under a mass of regional names. The local names are necessary for analysis, but surely there must be a better way of handling the taxonomy than by merely adding one name after another for every minor although perhaps significant variation of a "basic" type found. The type-variety concept offers a possible way out, but many archeologists have objected to tying up the word "variety" in this manner, and thus effectively deleting a rather useful word from the archeological vocabulary. It would seem to be a step in the right direction, however. It is certainly useful to be able to designate regional varieties, such as Mesa Verde and Chaco, but of course the designation does not have to be made part of the type name. In any case, the type descriptions need to be expanded to include these regional variants.

Despite the large amount of Chapin Gray, there were very few sherds (77) of the companion painted type, Chapin Black-on-white, from Long House. Figure 214 shows a rather limited number of designs which are, nevertheless, very typical of Chapin Black-on-white. There was one sherd each with carbon paint (fig. 214b) and fugitive red exterior.

Rim decoration was divided into three equal groups: painted

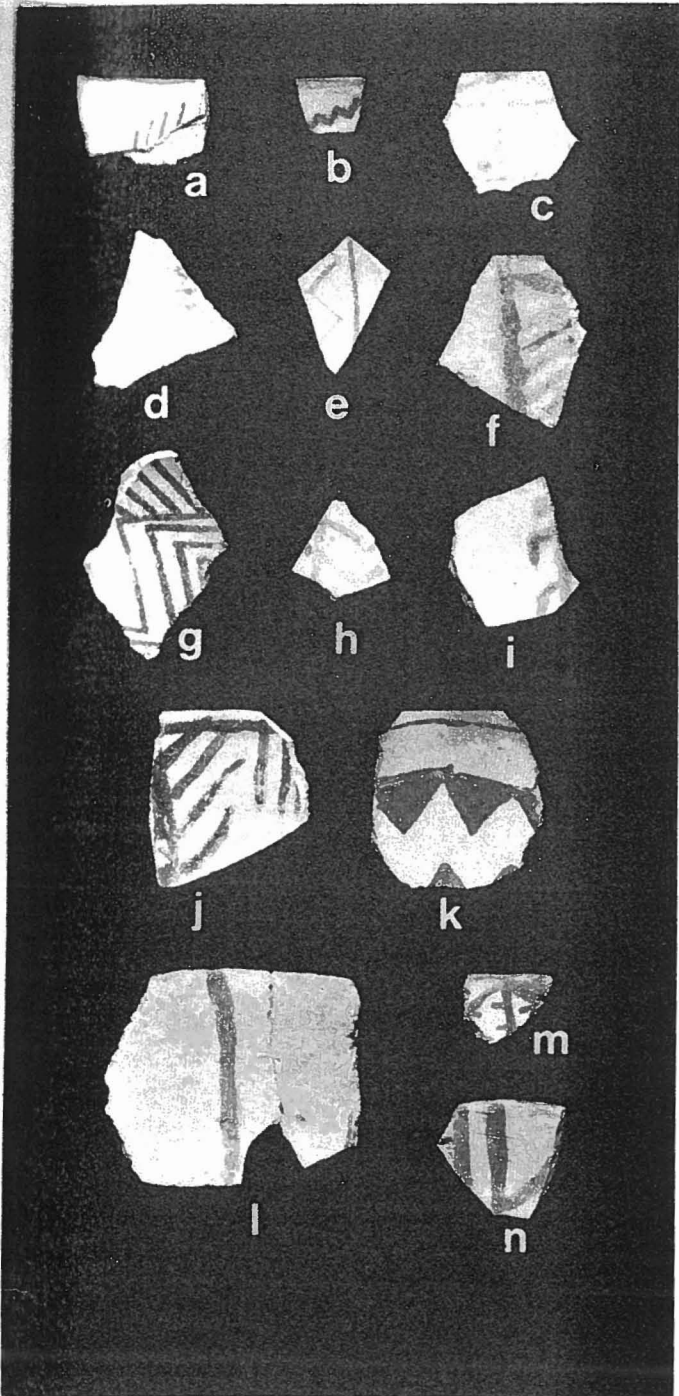


Figure 212. *Piedra Black-on-white sherds.*

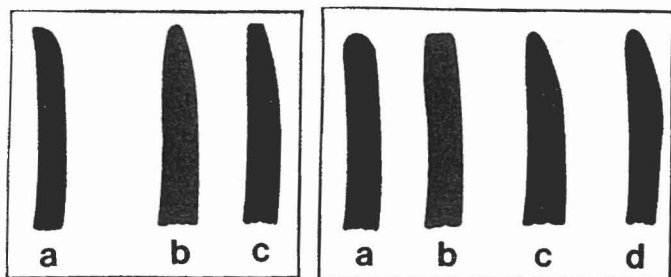


Figure 213. *Piedra Black-on-white bowl rims.*

Figure 215. *Chapin Black-on-white bowl rims.*

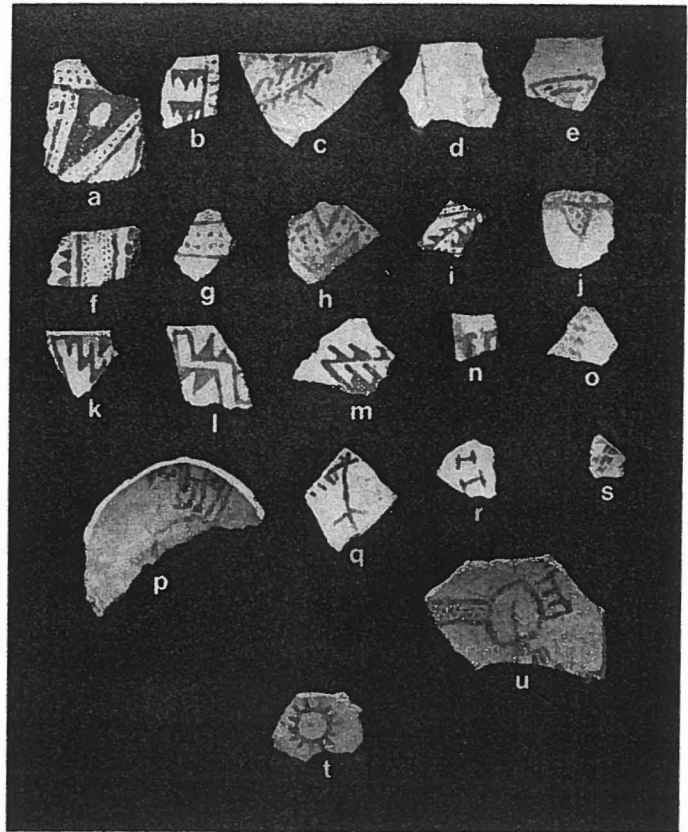


Figure 214. *Chapin Black-on-white sherds.*

solid black, plain, and possibly decorated (the weathered edges making it difficult to know for sure).

Once again little can be said about vessel form: all sherds but one are from bowls; the exception is a jar sherd. The bowl rim shape is usually tapered and rounded, (fig. 215c), with an occasional flat-tipped specimen (b). The outer vessel wall of one unusual sherd swelled outward slightly before tapering down to the lip (figs. 214k and 215d).

The thickness of the vessel wall ranges from 3 to 9 mm., and averages just under 5 mm. Temper is almost entirely crushed igneous rock and is moderate in most cases. Grain size is predominantly coarse, and becomes very coarse in about a third of the sherds. Almost all of the particles are angular, with the remaining few being subangular.

The interior and exterior surfaces of the bowl sherds were unslipped; both surfaces of most of the sherds show definite evidence of having been wiped and rubbed. All traces of wiping have been obliterated from the interior of about a fifth of the specimens, and to a slightly lesser extent, from the exterior. Rubbing of the interior surface has resulted in a spotty polish of low luster in about a third of the sherds, but similar results were obtained on the exterior in less than a fifth of the sherds. Except where a low luster was achieved, the surface was matte. None of the sherds showed the crazing of the surface so typical of the later pottery.

Strangely enough, few of the sherds were especially uneven or bumpy on either surface. As usual, the interior is somewhat better finished than the exterior. Only four sherds showed any significant amount of pitting. About two-thirds of the sherds showed an interior surface that was fine grained in texture, with the remainder slightly grainy. On the exterior the situation was reversed, with about two-thirds of the specimens being slightly grainy in texture and the rest roughly divided between grainy and fine.