

## HOMESTEAD IN RUINS: RICHARD WETHERILL'S HOMESTEAD IN CHACO CANYON

Frances Levine

### DEDICATION

Robert and Florence Lister have played a central role in the history of archaeological studies in Chaco Canyon. My introduction to Chaco was as a student of Bob's at the University of Colorado. Later, when I was an archaeologist on his staff at the National Park Service, Cultural Resources Center in Santa Fe, I learned to appreciate Bob as a deft administrator as well as a dedicated scholar. It is with great admiration and affection that I contribute to this volume in honor of Bob and Florence Lister.

### INTRODUCTION

Few visitors to Chaco Canyon leave there without being moved by the magnificence of the prehistoric architecture and without at least a rudimentary understanding of the regional expression of the Chaco Anasazi culture. Not many visitors are aware of the intellectual debates, political intrigues, and devoted efforts that accompanied the excavations of the Chacoan ruins and that eventually led to the creation of the Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

Richard Wetherill was among the first investigators of the

prehistoric ruins of Chaco Canyon. His place in the history of Southwestern archaeology has been the subject of some debate. The Listers' studies (1981, 1985) of Wetherill concluded that his work at Mesa Verde, Chaco, and Grand Gulch was consistent with the standards of the time and remains a lasting legacy to Southwestern archaeology.

Richard Wetherill began field work in Chaco Canyon as foreman of the Hyde Exploring Expedition in 1896 and settled there in 1897. His homestead is now an archaeological site; although surrounded by the monumental Pueblo III ruins of Pueblo Bonito, Pueblo del Arroyo, and Chetro Ketl it has not received much attention from archaeologists working in the Park. The site was not recorded during the National Park Service comprehensive archaeological survey of Chaco Canyon (Hayes et al. 1981) but has been surveyed recently by volunteers working with the Park archaeologist, Dabney Ford, and was surveyed by me and Thomas Merlan in August 1985.

The site area was occupied from about 1896, when the Hyde Exploring Expedition began its first season of excavation at Pueblo Bonito, to 1958, when the National Park Service dismantled

