

Heartbreak Hotel

Sites and artifacts can be messengers from the past. If we know how to read their messages, they can tell us about the people who made and used them and then left them behind. Although the owners of the artifacts and the inhabitants of the sites may have lived hundreds or even thousands of years ago, they undoubtedly had many of the same needs and concerns, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows that we have today.

These sites are also capable of providing scientific information about the history of the region.

Located in a small mountain valley east of the town of Salina in central Utah, Nawthis Village is one of the largest Fremont villages ever investigated.

Nawthis Village was excavated by University of Utah archaeologists between 1978 and 1983. Fourteen of the 50 to 75 structures were partially or completely excavated, including the Heartbreak Hotel.

Made of blocks of adobe, the Heartbreak Hotel has the most complex floor plan of any structure so far associated with the Fremont. Unlike the one or two room structures or pithouses usually encountered in Fremont excavations, Heartbreak Hotel had at least nine rooms.

Dr. Duncan Metcalfe from the Utah Museum of Natural History and his colleagues examined microrefuse (artifacts smaller than 2.5 millimeters or 1/100 of an inch) found across the floors of the house to determine where its occupants conducted various household activities.

Some rooms are thought to have been used for storage; others show evidence of use as food preparation areas. At least 2 rooms had hearths and may have been utilized as central living and cooking areas. There were also rooms that contained the microrefuse of stone tool making and maintenance.

Nawthis Village is an exciting site that gives scientists a glimpse into one of Utah's remarkable past cultures.

