

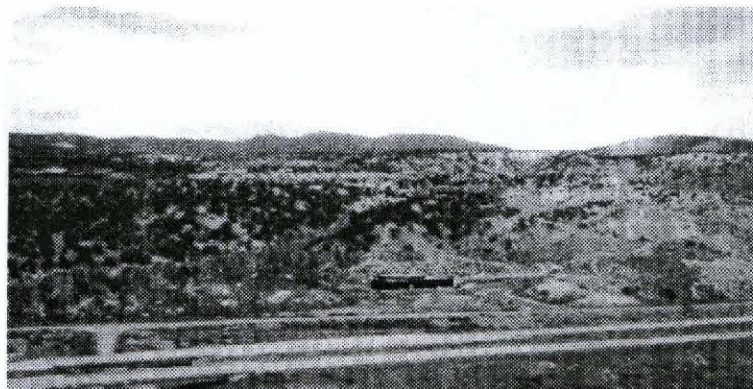


After having their curiosity piqued by seeing and hearing about Five Finger Ridge in the museum and video, many want to climb it themselves. This will be your chance!

To get there, turn right on the frontage road and then immediately turn left on the first road and go under I-70 and over Clear Creek. The parking area is up the hill to the left by the shade structures. Walk up the dirt road going south to the trail (which takes off from the right). The trail winds its way to the top of Five Finger Ridge. Please stay on the trail. You are on an archaeological site where research is still taking place. Do not pick up artifacts or other material.



FIVE FINGER RIDGE



Relax and enjoy the view! Imagine the view that the Fremont saw without the visitor center, I-70 and other modern features. The ridge would be about 100 feet higher and Clear Creek would be farther north. You would be able to see the corn fields in the flood plains of Clear Creek and along the creek in the valley to the west of you.

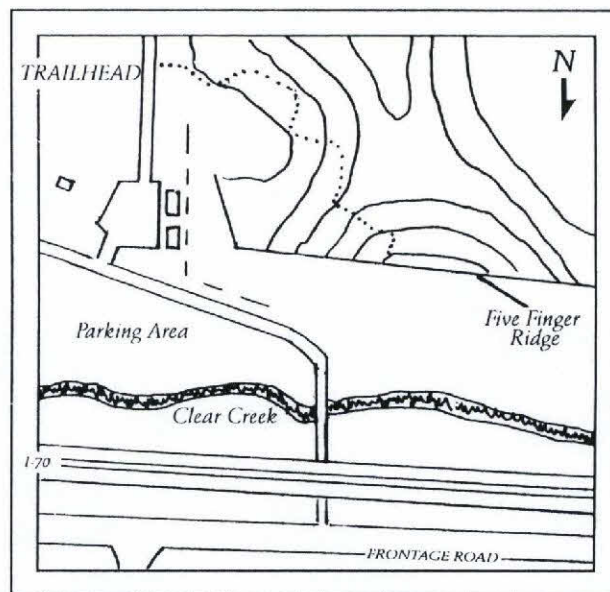
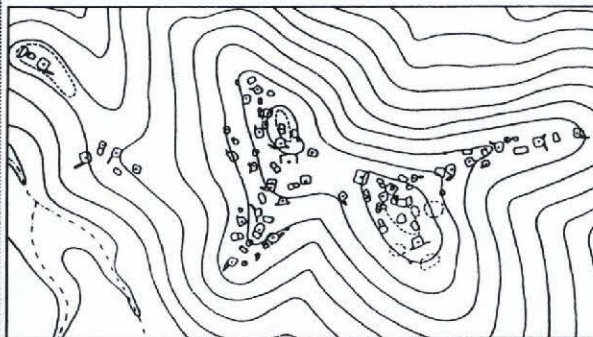
Do you think that this view was a factor when the Fremont decided to build their village on this hill top? Reasons speculated for the hill top location are:

1. A better access to passive solar heat.
2. A stronger breeze.
3. A good view up and down the canyon.
4. A way to get away from the mosquitos.
5. Easier defense from enemies.
6. To not build in the flood plain and possible agricultural area.

During the excavation of Five Finger Ridge, in 1984-5, over 100 distinct structures were unearthed. These structures included:

- 60 pit houses
- 19 storage granaries
- 23 to 26 other structures, activity areas and borrow pits.

The village as shown in the diorama in the museum, however, never existed. The first pithouses were built near the top of the ridge between A.D. 1100 and 1150. These were added to, about A.D. 1200, both near the top, and also 80 feet lower on the west finger. There were other building spurts that filled the top and went down the sides of Five Finger Ridge in about the A.D. 1240's and 1280's. Some of the pithouses built in these periods were constructed over previously built pithouses. A pithouse and storage structure on the western finger were built about A.D. 1350. Based on this data (which was taken from radiocarbon and tree-ring dating) it can be determined that the largest population was in the late A.D. 1200's when 12 pithouses were occupied and there were about 60 to 100 inhabitants.



We hope that by visiting this village site that you can gain a respect and understanding for the people that once lived here. Please return to your car by the way of the trail. Going down the exposed cut slope can leave scars that may take years to erase.