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The author, shown here with his wife, directed the excavation of many of the strange stone structures. They found that each told the same story: 700 years ago, the occupants had been killed defending it.

FINTO

# The Mystery of the Stone Towers

In the wild, uncharted country of Northern New Mexico, archaeologists have found strange, medieval-looking fortifications whose full story is a riddle which science has not yet solved.

JOE AREANO was the first one who saw them. He called them "*torreónes*," and so they were. Some of the Navahos had known about them, of course, and it was they who had led Joe Areano into that part of New Mexico in his search for gold. Joe first dug in these ruins because the slag around them seemed to show that the ancients had been smelting gold there. It was only by accident that we heard about the affair at all.

And so, because a Mexican rancher went gold hunting, we uncovered a 700-year-old story. It was an archaeological story, but it lacked none of the human passions because of its age. There is something fascinating in that which is old, anyway. This was a story of violence and bloodshed without a beginning and without an end.

The north-central section of New Mexico is wild in many places, unmapped, and in a few sections is almost unexplored. Most of this is Government land, and there are laws that take care of Government land, even if it is unmapped. Joe Areano ran afoul of one of these laws.

Joe stoutly maintained during the inquiry, at Santa Fé in 1933, that he hadn't been looking for antiques at all. He was looking for gold. But he found an-

tiques—as a matter of fact, some very nice ones. He brought, at that time, eight ancient, painted pottery bowls into Santa Fé, wrapped in an old newspaper. There is a law which states that you cannot dig up antiquities on Federal land without a permit, so the Government got the bowls and Joe Areano kept just his experience.

More important than the bowls, however, was Joe's story of the *torreónes*, or towers. He persisted in calling them towers, stone towers, and, he said, there were many of them.

Our Southwestern states are full of pueblo ruins. There are the remains of seven ancient pueblos beneath the town of Albuquerque, New Mexico. If you dig a cellar in Santa Fé, you find prehistoric pottery. Flagstaff, Arizona, is built on top of an ancient pueblo. They are peppered over the country from Kansas to Nevada and down into Mexico. But none of these pueblos are stone towers that look like castles along the Rhine. Here was something different.

Consequently, we fitted out an expedition—in 1933, that was—and went to see if Joe Areano's story of the stone towers was as romantic as it sounded. It turned out to be more than romantic—it was thrilling.

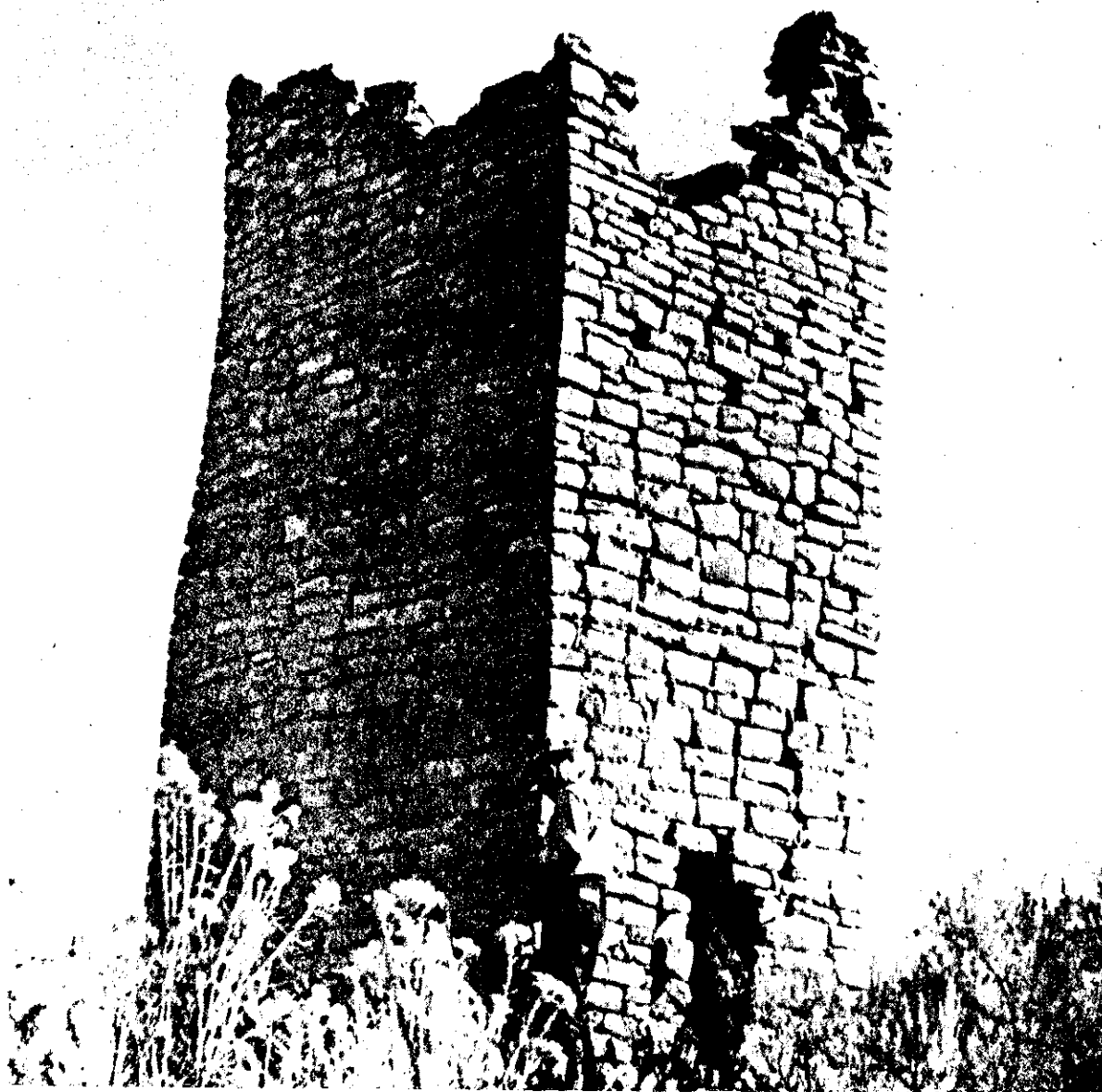
#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frank C. Hibben is an anthropologist who, for a number of years, was on the faculty of the University of New Mexico. Although he was too modest to say so in the accompanying article, Mr. Hibben led the expeditions which he tells about. The exploration and excavation of the stone towers was sponsored by the University of New Mexico.

The country along the Gallina River, where Joe led us, has really been very little investigated since the time of the first Spaniards. This whole section, some sixty by seventy miles, is unbelievably rough. It is high—characterized by forest-covered mesas, bisected by jagged, colorful canyons. There is only one small mud road that leads into this whole canyon country, and that is impassable through the winter months. To both sides of this one little road, the canyons and mesas stretch off on either hand, practically unknown, except to the Navahos who habitually winter there.

We drove our car, loaded down with all the equipment, as far as we could, to the headwaters of the Gallina Canyon. There we borrowed a wagon and team from a small Mexican rancher who herded goats and hunted mountain lions for a living. With the wagon, we drove down the bed of the Gallina, then almost dry in the middle of June. On either hand, the towering cliffs showed unbelievable colors and variations of colors. In one cliff face there were red, blue, yellow, purple and white. The canyon country is always a place of brilliant contrasts—dazzling sun and dark shadows. Side canyons stretch away around intriguing bends and curves, and nowhere is there any

A preliminary technical review of this work has appeared in *American Antiquity*, a scientific publication, but this is the first popular account of one of the most fascinating archaeological discoveries of our time. Hibben, who is now a lieutenant in the Navy, says: "It is only since I have been in the Navy and have stood long hours of watch that I have had time to think that there might be a human-interest side to this work."  
—The Editors.



indication that civilization had passed that way. It is rough, wild, austere and beautiful.

We saw the first tower as we came through a narrow place in the Gallina Canyon where the wagon hubs almost scraped the walls on either side. Beyond these narrows, the sandstone walls opened up in a basin, possibly a mile long and 200 or 300 yards wide. The cliffs on both sides were cut into a series of long, jagged points that jutted out on both sides of the basin, like the jaws of a great steel trap spread wide open. The wagon lurched out onto a low terrace at the upper end of the basin, and there we saw our first *torreón* against a blue sky.

The tower was perched on top of one of these rocky pinnacles, close to one side of the encircling cliffs. Even though it was high above us, we could see that it was artificial, even though it apparently grew out of the rock on which it stood. Outlined against the dazzling sky, as we viewed it from the floor of the canyon below, the tower looked medieval.

Even as we looked at this first tower at the head of the basin, we saw another, and another. We stopped the wagon and looked around the open canyon with our field glasses, and we could see stone towers, singly and in clusters, perched on the edges of the cliffs and on the rocky points and headlands that jutted from them. They looked like castles along the rimrock. The colored cliffs below fading down into the darkness of the lower canyon and the stone towers standing out against the southwestern sky produced a picture of fancy and beauty. Our thoughts and speculations ran riot.

But pictures and colors and reveries do not make information. Who built these towers? Where did they come from? Why did these unknown people go back into this unbelievably rough country and perch their stone defensive works in these precarious places? Obviously, the problem was something different from anything we had encountered before. These were no ordinary pueblo ruins. Nor, indeed, could we attribute any such remains to Navahos or Apaches, or any of the so-called "predatory" Indians. Here was a story which we must have.

Energetically, we set to work. We set up camp in the colorful basin and spent the next several weeks in an extensive survey by foot and by horse. We scaled the cliffs on either side of the canyon and penetrated back for many miles in every direction, following the canyons to the north and to the south. We photographed, mapped, surveyed and examined. What had at first appeared to be a small cluster of stone towers

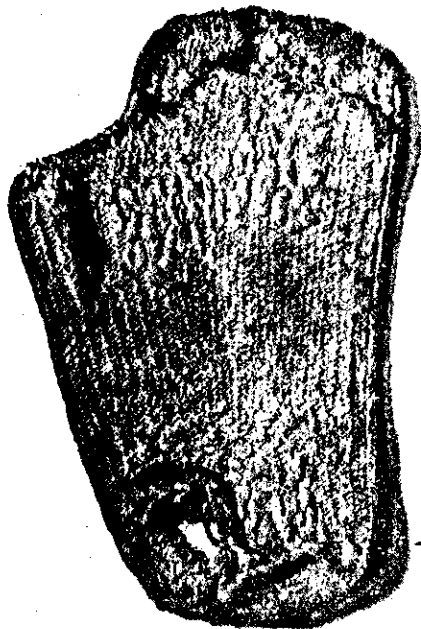


An archaeologist of the Gallina survey examining one of the towers. They were first discovered by a Mexican rancher in search of gold.

in one isolated canyon soon turned out to be but one of a whole series of towns or villages made up of these towers. In this one section alone, in 1933, we located more than 500 of the stone towers, spreading over an area of some thirty-five by fifty miles.

It was a riddle of first magnitude, and it would never be answered simply by surveying the area and counting the *torreones*. Obviously, we had to dig, but it was too late to start the chore that season.

The next summer, armed with the necessary permits, we went back (Continued on Page 68)



This woven sandal is one of those found on the warriors' bodies.



Some of the flint weapons used by the Gallina people during their last, tragic battle in the thirteenth century.



The skeleton of a warrior who fell with an obviously mortal wound in his forehead.

THE NEXT  
TIME  
YOU BUY GAS  
SAY...  
"ADD PYROIL  
PLEASE"



## THE MYSTERY OF THE STONE TOWERS

(Continued from Page 15)

prepared to excavate. Students, both male and female, jolted down the Gallina Canyon with us. We hauled shovels, trowels, whiskbrooms, notebooks, cameras, cheesecloth, preservatives and all the other paraphernalia that modern archaeology demands. In the midst of the ancient towers a small tent city sprang up.

For a time, we continued our exploration and mapping. We followed unnamed canyons to their sources and mapped and photographed the towers along their edges. We climbed on top of the mesas and explored the canyons from the top down, and even then we did not find all there was to see. Nor do we yet know the exact edges of the territory of the People of the Stone Towers. For lack of any better name, we called them the "Gallina people"—from the canyon where Joe Areano had first found them.

For our first season of digging, we chose a group of eight stone towers perched on a rocky pinnacle on one side of the basin of the Gallina Canyon, where we had first seen them. I think it was as much sentiment as archaeological necessity that led us to choose this one particular spot. It took us three months to excavate five out of the eight towers on this one site.

Archaeological interest is a disease of a consuming variety. It has to be, for in the basin of the Gallina not all things were so beautiful as the cliffs that surrounded it. There was, for instance, only one very meager source of water in this locality, a spring which came out from underneath the very pinnacles on which these towers were located. This spring was heavily charged with a combination of gypsum, alkali and Epsom salts. This produced on the excavating party just the effect you would expect. A sign was erected above this spring by one of the junior members of the party: "Before the dawn of sin and beer... Gallina man

been no rough defensive forts. As the earth fell away on the interior, the first edge of a painted design appeared on the plaster wall that covered the stone on the inside. Plants and birds and flowers, interposed with pennantlike flags, appeared one after another.

The interior of this first tower was some twenty by twenty feet. The floor was covered with massive slabs of carefully fitted sandstone, so as to form a pavement. Around the edges of this one room was a series of benches of stone and adobe which were hollow, so as to form bins for storage. The bins were carefully capped with other slabs of sandstone, and some of them were sealed with mortar. Slightly to one side, and let into the floor of the room, was a fire pit carefully made with a coping around the edge. At one side of the fire pit, built in the thickness of the wall, was a shaft for ventilation; a sort of chimney which started in at the level of the floor.

Everywhere in the interior was evidence of life—and also death. It was a thrill to open the sealed bins around the room. The puff of centuries-old air that came out was like the breath from an Egyptian tomb. The bins were full of intimate things—buckskin bags full of

before the fire had got well under way, the whole roof had collapsed, along with the flagstone parts of the upper walls. The few defenders on the parapet doubtless had fallen in with the roof. The remarkable dryness of the Southwestern climate, together with the charring action of the fire, had perfectly preserved the bodies and the evidence with them. They were better preserved than many Egyptian mummies.

Here was the body of a woman sprawled backward over one of the storage bins. She had been crushed by falling stones from the top of the wall, but her body was remarkably preserved, even to a look of intense agony on her somewhat flattened face. Studded in her breast and stomach were the charred ends of sixteen arrows of cane with flint heads. She still clutched in her left hand a bow, even with a part of the string still on one end. It was a short bow, powerful looking, of oak wood, and yet the body was undoubtedly that of a woman.

In the center of the floor of the tower, where they had apparently fallen when struck from the roof, were two men, one crosswise on top of the other. In the hands of one were three bows, two of oak and one of juniper wood, and in his other hand was a bundle of twenty-seven arrows. Evidently this man had been passing the ammunition when he was struck down.

The other man, too, was a warrior, and had met the same harsh end. A stone ax with a jagged edge was embedded in his skull over his left eye, clear to the middle of the blade, and still stuck there.

Another woman had apparently been fighting at the same time. These were remarkable people, these Gallina warriors, the women as well as the men. This woman had an arrow in her shoulder, and possibly others. It was difficult to tell, as the falling roof had crushed her badly. Her hair-do was in perfect shape, however, and looked remarkably modern. She had very carefully parted her hair in the middle and swept it down on either side in three braids. These three braids on each side were looped up again and worked into a little knot at the very



### Score for Step Up and Take Your Cut (Page 63)

INNINGS	RUNS
1. sate, stite, stated, started, started	4
2. rise, raise, praise, praised	3
3. best, beast, breast, abreast	3



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rected above this spring by one of the junior members of the party: "Before the days of gin and beer, Gallina man drank water here, God rest his soul!" Also, there were the black flies that buzzed around those colorful cliffs in an uncolorful manner. These caused the skin to burn, and then to swell, producing throughout the excavating season, an effect similar to a continual dose of poison ivy.

But what did we care for these petty irritations, or the fact that our food was scanty or lacking altogether, or that we had no place to wash? We had a problem before us, and we had to dig to find it.

The first of the Gallina towers was perfectly typical, as we found later on. The story was multiplied only in detail by the other towers that we excavated. Originally, apparently, that edifice had been twenty-five or thirty feet high. The walls were built of sandstone blocks, roughly squared into shape. These walls were put up with adobe mortar in the form of a double wall, with rubble in between, forming a wall about six feet thick at the base. In plan, the towers are generally square, although some of them have rounded corners, so as to appear almost circular.

Part of the roof of this first tower was preserved, which showed it to be some twenty-five feet high. The top was built like a castle, with a stone parapet from which the occupants could fight. There was no entrance on the outside of the tower, but the only means of entrance and exit was through a hatchway in the roof. There had been a ladder, then, to the roof, and another ladder leading from the roof down into the interior. We found parts of these ladders in the debris.

As we carefully shoveled accumulated dust and fallen masonry from the interior of the first tower, we saw that these had

3. best, breast, breast, abreast . . . . .	3
4. male, maple . . . . .	1
5. fury, furry, flurry . . . . .	2
6. done, drone, droned, drowned . . . . .	3
7. gape, gaped, gasped, grasped . . . . .	3
8. quip, equip . . . . .	1
9. ever, lever, clever, cleaver . . . . .	3
<b>TOTAL . . . . .</b>	<b>23</b>

ceremonial face powder, shell ornaments, painted prayer sticks of wood and feathers, good-luck pieces, buckskin clothing, feather robes, extra arrows of cane and flint, and ceremonial masks and horns.

But these things that had been left so casually there were not the most interesting things in the tower. What fairly made us gasp as we carefully uncovered them was the occupants of the tower itself. They were still there, and their story was with them.

In all, scattered about the tower in various positions and attitudes, were sixteen people. These people we got to know very intimately. We even named some of them. There was little "Itchy Fingers" and "Big Bruiser" and "Bold Titania," the woman warrior, and others.

Every place in the Gallina tower there was evidence that this fortification had been attacked, the occupants killed and the whole place burned, either during the attack or just afterward.

As the defenders buckled before the onslaught of still other unknowns, the towers were fired with fire arrows, and the wooden timbers of its roof and the wooden ladders and other combustibles of the interior had started to burn. The roof timbers had burned through, and

either side in three braids. These three braids on each side were looped up again and worked into a little knot at the very back of her head. The looped braids, which drooped down to about her shoulder, were fixed with little pieces of painted buckskin in a very modern manner. Her scalp along the part of her hair was painted red.

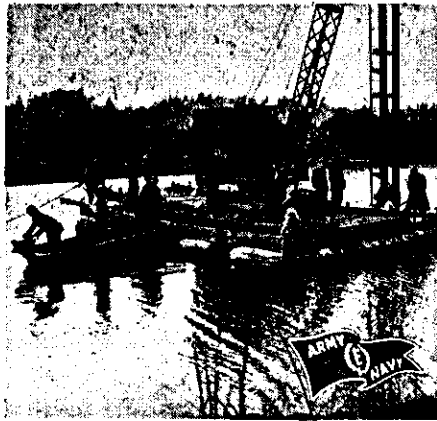
A whole cluster of warriors had apparently fallen or been thrown down the hatchway where the ladder had entered the house from the roof. Their feet were still shod with finely woven yucca sandals, tied with thongs around the instep and ankle. They looked remarkably like modern beach shoes, and even had designs woven into their soles in a sort of nonskid effect. One man had a buckskin breechclout hanging down from a twisted belt on either side of his waist. Another had buckskin breeches that covered his whole lower body, and charred remnants of the porcupine quilling that had ornamented them still adhered to the stiff leather.

In the ventilating shaft behind the fire pit was the most pathetic of them all. A young boy, fifteen or sixteen years old, with his hair in long, slender braids, had crawled into the small aperture as far as he could. Apparently he was still living when the burning roof fell, for only the lower part of his body was burned. One arrow had struck him in the hip from behind, and the half-charred flesh was sucked in around the shaft as it penetrated. You could almost read on the dried and mummified face the look of terror and fear that it still held, centuries after the boy had crowded himself into the hole, trying to get away from the heat.

Thus, the first of the Gallina towers told an interesting story—a story of relentless fire and bloodshed, and vengeance without any quarter. In the next

(Continued on Page 70)

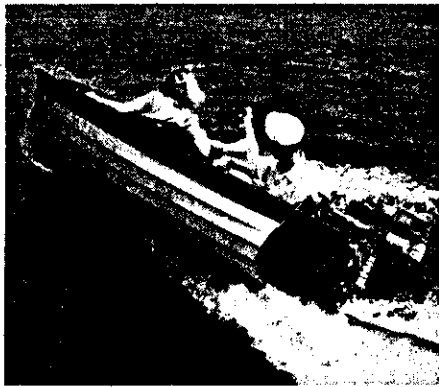
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## TOMORROW

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(Continued from Page 68)

Gallina tower we found the same, although only five defenders remained there. In another tower we found eleven bodies, and again one was a woman with her weapons in her hand.

We continued our work through several summers, and up to the time the present war started, we had excavated some seventeen Gallina towers, and each one of them gave us more details of the same terrible story. Each tower had been burned, and each tower had been defended to the last by men and women whose bodies we found in them. Our curiosity and scientific thirst for the answer to the question of who built the towers was augmented by another question: Who destroyed the people that built them?

For several years now, we have been able to date these ruins by the specimens of wood that we find in them. By the patterns of successive dry and wet sequences of years—as revealed in the tree rings in the roof beams and ladders—the date may be ascertained. The trees that made up the roof beams of the Gallina towers were cut from the year 1143 A.D. to the year 1248 A.D. Apparently, in about a century, most of these towers were built. Equally apparent is the fact that some people around the middle of the thirteenth century swept through the country and destroyed them all.

It seems obvious that the Gallina people were not ordinary Pueblo Indians. The physical make-up of the skeletons in the towers was slightly different. Many of their utensils and weapons were radically different. For instance, their typical cooking pots with the pointed bottoms are absolutely un-Pueblo-like. The fact that they used elk antlers for axes and adzes is unlike the Pueblos. The very fact that they built stone towers in itself distinguishes them from any of the Pueblo peoples that we now know. In one of the towers we found a handful of pieces of pottery of a type which is not indigenous to the Southwest at all.

This is a variety of pottery known in Nebraska, and even farther to the east in the Mississippi Valley.

We also found that the inhabitants grew a kind of corn and varieties of pumpkins that were known to the early people in the vicinity of Iowa and the Missouri Valley.

Near the stone towers we found round pits, thirty to fifty feet in diameter, dug deeply into the ground. These were apparently early Gallina house types. Pit houses were known to Indians on the Great Plains in early times.

On a basis of many bits of evidence, of which these are just a few, we concluded that the Gallina people had entered the Southwest at a very early date, possibly several hundred years before they were destroyed. They came from the plains, possibly as far east as the Mississippi Valley itself, and brought with them a number of their characteristic traits. What caused them to move into the Southwestern area, we do not know, but it seems that they found it already populated by others—which possibly explains why they picked the rough but beautiful Gallina country for their home. Where they got the trait of building towers is not known. Possibly they found some other peoples who built towers for defense; possibly they invented this type of architecture themselves, when the need arose to protect themselves.

But who were those who swept down through the Gallina country around the year 1250, and sacked and burned these stone towers one by one? Our first impulse is to turn to some of the so-called predatory, or nomad, tribes that we know ravaged the Pueblo peoples several centuries later. Perhaps the Navahos themselves swept down from the north and killed and burned the Gallina people in their homes. Yet it is believed that the Navahos and the Apaches, their cousins, are latecomers into the Southwestern area—arriving there, probably from the north, within the past 500 years. If that is true, they came a couple of centuries

after the Gallina people were destroyed. Hence that explanation doesn't quite fit, unless we revise our theory as to when the Navahos arrived.

If any of the bodies of the attackers lie among the bodies of their victims, we have not yet identified them. The only definite clue that we have as to who killed the Gallina people lies in the arrows which are actually embedded in the bodies which we found in the towers. Both the Navaho and the Apache habitually used broad-headed, barbed arrowheads on heavy shafts. The arrows which were embedded into the Gallina bodies were compound arrows, made with a shaft of reed and wood and a point of flint. The arrows are three-feathered, and painted with identification marks on the butt end, so that you could add up the score when the fight was over. The flint heads are small and triangular. These compound arrows with the small triangular flint heads are exactly the type used by the Pueblo Indians.

The trend of thought induced by these ancient ballistics leads to all kinds of speculation. Did some Pueblo group resent the intrusion of the Gallina people, and wipe them out? Were some Pueblos to the north displaced, and did they in turn displace the Gallina people? We can think of a thousand theories, a thousand stories, to cover the situation. We are not sure of any one of them yet. We are only certain that the Gallina towers, perched on inaccessible cliffs and ridges, were picked off one by one by an unknown enemy. Every tower is a part of the same tragic story, a story that happened 700 years ago.

The other day we got a letter from Joe Areano. He has found a cliff house far back in the Gallina country, in a canyon we have not yet explored. In the cave house are several Gallina towers, and everything in them is perfectly preserved by the dryness. When the war is over, we will go again to the tower country, to find the rest of the lost story if we can.

## THE PHILADELPHIA MURDER STORY

"No, Sweetie-pie." He spoke with elaborate irony. "It wasn't mine, and you knew damned well it wasn't."

a mile a minute. Monk and Travis were both staring grimly down at the table.

"I thought she would be here, sir." Sam