

#### 41. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN LASSEN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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This report is concerned with that area of the western fringe of the Great Basin in Northeastern California in which Honey Lake is one of the major physiographic features. To be more precise, it is the area claimed by the ethnographic Honey Lake Paiute as their particular territory. This territory is primarily one of sage desert, or a combination of juniper and sage.

Restricted site surveys in this region since 1945 have resulted in the recording of 115 sites; records are filed in the office of the University of California Archaeological Survey. Until July and August of this year excavations have been limited to two caves and the recovery of a burial and two cremations from open sites. During the months of July and August, 1955, excavations, under direction of the writer, were carried out in an open site at Karlo, 15 miles north of Honey Lake. Published reports of archaeological work in Lassen County have been confined to an article (Fenenga and Riddell, 1949) on the excavation of Tommy Tucker Cave.

The definition of the late archaeological horizon for the region has been aided considerably by ethno-geographic studies and by the excavation of Tommy Tucker and Amedee Caves. From these excavations and the ethno-geographical observations it has been possible to place a number of the archaeological sites into the late period.

The artifacts recovered from Tommy Tucker Cave are of the recent Great Basin tradition. The twined basketry is similar to that from Massacre Lake Cave, Nevada, as reported by Heizer (1942), from Lovelock Cave, Nevada, as reported by Loud and Harrington (1929), and from Catlow Cave in southeastern Oregon as reported by Cressman (1942). The twined basketry is also similar to modern Achomawi, Atsugewi, and especially Klamath flexible twined basketry. The specimens of coiled ware resemble one type of Lovelock coil, i.e., coarse 3 rod triangular, and are duplicated by modern Maidu, and to some extent, modern Washo ware. An incipient coiled basket with feather decoration is like those found at Lovelock (Loud and Harrington, 1929, p. 68) and Humboldt Caves, Nevada (Heizer and Krieger, n.d.). Heizer (1951, pp. 94-95) considers the trait of making feathered baskets Californian in origin.

Bone and horn pendants from Tommy Tucker Cave have their counterparts in Lovelock Cave, and an incised birdbone tube is similar to a specimen from Lovelock Cave. The tubular bone beads from Petroglyph Point Cave No. 1 in Modoc County, California (Heizer, 1942), and Roaring Springs and Catlow Cave No. 1 in south east Oregon (Cressman, 1942) are like those recovered at Tommy Tucker Cave. The dot-and-circle design on bone implements also occurs at Lovelock Cave as well as at Tommy Tucker Cave.

Fire drills and hearths occur in similar forms from Roaring Springs Cave, Lovelock Cave, Massacre Lake Cave and Tommy Tucker Cave. The slow matches from Tommy Tucker Cave are like those reported by Isabel Kelly (1932) for the Surprise Valley Paiute, and for Etna Cave in southern Nevada (Whceler, 1942).

The projectile points from Tommy Tucker Cave fall into the small point, or late, tradition of Fenenga (1953), that is, the majority of the 43 projectile points recovered weigh between 0.4 and 3.5 grams. Only 4 projectile points fall into the large, or earlier, point tradition, with a modal character of 9.0 grams and a minimal character of 4.5 grams. Additional evidence of the use of the bow is the finding of arrow fragments. The arrows have hardwood foreshafts, three feathers, and occasionally they have hardwood inserts at the nock ends. No evidence of the atlatl was found, unless the 4 larger points may be taken as a suggestion of the presence of this weapon.

The following specimens from Tommy Tucker Cave are of recent ethnographic occurrence, and when not perishable, are common to many of the open sites as well: sagobrush bark sandals, twined and coiled basketry, two types of pine nut beads, Prunus seed beads, hematite lumps, flake scrapers, bone pendants and head scratchers, tubular bird and mammal bone beads, bone awls, six types of Olivella shell beads, abalone shell ornaments, freshwater mussel shell ornaments, fire hearths and drills, hoof rattles, porcupine quill braid, pumice arrowshaft smoother, and the gill net. It will be noticed immediately that Tommy Tucker Cave did not yield manos, metates, mortars or pestles, although it did yield a quantity of broken animal bone. The reason for this is not clear unless the great quantity of sharpened twigs tells us that the cave was a place of retreat at which time gambling was done. The sharpened twigs might well have served as elements for a form of the stick game which is known ethnographically in neighboring areas.

Both Tommy Tucker Cave and nearby Amedee Cave were known ethnographically. The former was avoided, while the latter was lived in by one of the writer's informants. Both caves, however, yielded knives made of scrap metal. Amedee Cave, in contrast to Tommy Tucker Cave, yielded a number of cached metates and numerous manos. Of the 35 projectile points from this historic cave site none fall into Fenenga's large point tradition. Amedee Cave, unlike Tommy Tucker Cave, yielded no bone or shell ornaments except for two bone bead fragments. In a sense the two caves complement one another, but show no great overlap in types of cultural material. This probably cannot be construed as representing any major temporal or cultural difference; it might be due only to a differing function of the two caves.

With the late archaeological horizon fairly well documented by the excavation of two caves in the Honey Lake region the next question is what do the projectile point types not found in the caves, but which occur on many open sites, represent? The opportunity to answer this question has been afforded by the excavation of a remarkably productive site in Secret Valley, 15 miles north of Honey Lake. This site, called the Karlo site, or Las-7 in the UCAS files, is remarkable for this area primarily because it has more than a thin veneer of deposit. The three to four feet of cultural deposit found at the Karlo site is outstanding when one considers that the ordinary archaeological site in this region seldom has more than a few inches of deposit. Since work at the Karlo site was completed but a short time ago there has been no opportunity to lay out and observe in detail just what has been recovered over the 6 week period of excavation. Despite this handicap it is possible to present some highlights of what has been produced.

A total of 31 burials and 9 cremations were recovered during the period of our excavation. In several instances cremations were in direct association

with the burials, demonstrating that two methods of interment were practiced. Both adults and children were subject to the two methods of burial; in addition, it seems at present that of all the adults buried, not cremated, the majority were females. In every instance the burials were flexed, and often very tightly flexed, on the side or back. There seems to have been no consistent direction for the orientation of the body at burial. All burials were placed in prepared circular or oval pits, often excavated a considerable distance into the sterile, indurated banded pumice sand and silt base. All the burial pits were filled with the midden deposit, telling us that the burial pits originated at a time when the site was sufficiently occupied that midden had accumulated. In some instances the burials evidently had been interred toward the end of the occupation of the site. At this time the site deposit was sufficiently deep so that the inhabitants no longer had to dig into the very hard base material (if they did so it was only for a few inches). Many of the burials had some sort of offering with them. In the case of the females, the burials were often accompanied by metates and manos, while male burials had such items as scapula saws, knives, projectile points, red ocher and shell beads. Cremations were accompanied by such objects as lemon-shaped gambling stones, rectangular abalone shell beads, a large basalt knife and a blade of obsidian measuring approximately a foot in length. This blade had been broken into a number of pieces before it had been placed with the cremated remains.

There is a tantalizing suggestion that the burials are of two periods of time. Some of the burials, particularly those in the deep burial pits, have a burned appearance. That is to say, the bones seem to be partially mineralized and have a dark appearance both on their exterior and interior. These burials tend to be very tightly flexed, to the extent that the bones may have been broken when the body was tied for burial. Other burials tend to be less tightly flexed, and are not in the deepest pits. The bones of these burials are much fresher looking, and do not exhibit the dark, or "burned" appearance. With few exceptions, the two types of burials tend to occur in mutually exclusive areas of the site. Physically both groups of burials seem to be, without exception, longheaded. Of the two skulls so far measured in the laboratory, both were of the mineralized group of burials. The male skull has a cephalic index of 68 while the female has an index of 72. There is no reason to believe that these two skulls are extremes for the burials recovered at the site.

Viewing the entire artifact assemblage from the site there is reason to suspect time-level differences, i.e. two periods of occupation at the site. These differences are observable only on typological grounds since, unfortunately, little reliance can be placed on the possible stratigraphy of the deposit. The sandy midden is relatively soft and loose and has apparently been a joy in the lives of a variety of burrowing rodents over a long span of time. Those activities have not been confined to mice and squirrels, but badgers have made the site their headquarters and have placed the shallow midden deposit in such a state of upheaval that original location for the specimens was not obtainable with certainty. Rodent damage to burials also was of a very serious nature.

The possible differences in the burials have been discussed above. With regard to artifacts, the differences consist of small versus large projectile points, and late type clamshell disc beads versus abalone shell

beads and ornaments of types found in Early Horizon sites in the Sacramento region of the California Central Valley (Heizer, 1949). The small points suggest the use of the bow while the larger ones suggest the use of the atlatl. In support of this suggested use of the atlatl is the recovery of several boatstone fragments, and two artifacts of bone and one of stone which are considered to be atlatl hooks. It would seem from this evidence that two complexes are to be found at the Karlo site. However, the temporal as well as the cultural relationships remain somewhat vague and obscured at this stage of investigation. For example, mention was made above of the lemon-shaped gambling stones which were recovered with cremations, and it was stated that the cremations seem to be associated with the deeper and more mineralized burials. The cremations by this reasoning should be expected to belong to the earlier of the two complexes. However, the present author has determined by ethnographic study that the lemon-shaped gambling stones were used as late as post-Contact times in this area. The solution to this and similar problems will simply have to wait until the material from the Karlo site can be studied in detail and at length.

Of interest as a part of the inventory of specimens recovered from the site are the artifacts of baked clay. Since all the excavated deposit was screened, it was possible to observe and recover items which otherwise might not be noted. It was found that the upper levels produced considerable numbers of pieces of baked clay about the size of the tip of one's little finger, or sometimes larger. These pellets often had impressions on them, fortuitously made when in the plastic state by contact with twigs, grass, fingers and basketry. Open twined burden basket impressions as well as those of diagonally twined and possibly coiled baskets were found. Also recovered was a female figurine of baked clay which was immediately named the Venus de Karlo. The figurine has the head missing and consists only of a slender roll of clay upon which two small clay protuberances, representing the female breast, have been placed. Fragments of several other figurines of the same type also were found.

House remains in the form of numerous post holes dug into the sterile base were noted in two areas of the site. Since there seems to have been an overlapping of several series of post holes it has been difficult to determine the type of house constructed. The pattern appears, however, to be circular and probably not unlike the ethnographic domed structures with juniper frames and tule or rye-grass thatch.

In summation it can be said that in the Honey Lake region of Northeastern California the late protohistoric culture complex has been fairly well defined, and a possibly earlier, atlatl-using complex has been outlined. A more complex definition of these two complexes seems assured when time permits the evaluation of the collections made at the Karlo site. Indication of aboriginal occupation in the region preceding that exhibited at the Karlo site is exceedingly rare and consists primarily of an Eden Yuma point (cf. Wormington, 1949, p. 58) found within a few miles of Karlo by a private collector. Just what may be the ultimate significance of this discovery is not clear at present. It is within the realm of possibility that there is a real relationship between this projectile point and the highly mineralized remains of a late Pleistocene and early Recent assemblage of extinct mammals which are weathering out in the vicinity in which the Yuma point was found.

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