

81. NOTES ON EXCAVATIONS MADE IN INDIAN BURIAL PLACES
IN CARPINTERIA

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ABSTRACT

Excavations made in 1877 are reported upon in this article, reprinted from the Report of Proceedings of the Santa Barbara Society of Natural History, pp. 11-19, March, 1887. Descriptions of sites virtually untouched by relic-hunters and of a range of artifacts typical of the late prehistoric and early historic Santa Barbara Channel region are presented.

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In Carpinteria, on the rancho of S. H. Olmstead, Esq., twelve miles from the City of Santa Barbara, is, probably, the site of one of the twenty-six villages enumerated by Cabrillo upon his voyage of discovery and visit to this coast in 1542. Evidences of a large population having existed from a remote period still remain in the immense deposit of shells, bones of small quadrupeds, birds and fish scattered over a wide area. A hill rising perhaps one hundred feet above, and distant from the sea one fourth of a mile, is covered at its apex and extending down its slopes to the extent of thirty-five or forty acres with the bleached fragments of the Chione, a bivalve that seems to have afforded the most abundant food of the inhabitants, the deposit being several feet in thickness in many places. This mollusk must have been much more numerous at the period of the inhabitation of this rancheria than at present, as but few specimens can be obtained of those now living in the adjacent sea, and examples are rarely met in the more recently occupied villages nearer the water. Scattered along the bluff overlooking the ocean, between the mouth of the Carpinteria creek and a slight ravine further down the coast, are the "kitchen middings" of the later inhabitants of this locality. Here we find, in mound-like elevations, vast quantities of the shells of crustaceans similar to those living in the sea to-day, mixed with large numbers of oval pebbles of various sizes, known as boiling stones, many of which still bear marks of the fire in which they were heated. The broken valves of the Mytilus californicus predominate in the deposit, yet the Tapes staminea, Pachydesma crassatelloides, Pomaulax undosus, Trochiscus norrissii, Donax californicus, Lunatia lewisii, Luponia spadicea, Solecortus californianus, Haliotis cracher-

odii, and most of the living species now found in the neighboring waters are abundant. Fragments and chippings of chert, obsidian, jasper, quartzite, etc., are scattered over the surface of the entire neighborhood, and occasionally arrow points of the same material are picked up. The sites of these rancherías were admirably selected to meet the requirements of their denizens, being contiguous to an abundance of fresh water in the Carpinteria creek on one side and some springs of large volume on the other. Much of their food could be obtained from the outlying rocks, which at low tide extend far out from the shore; and the soil in the vicinity is well adapted to the raising of corn. Perhaps these people also had some appreciation of the beautiful, as, from the summit of the hill may be obtained a grand view of the mountains, and the valley of Carpinteria, together with the distant islands of Anacapa and Santa Cruz. In the rear of the most recent ranchería, near the sea, and in front of the higher elevation, occupied by an older population, in our opinion, was found the burial place of the later inhabitants. The usual indications of sepulture, viz., bones of the whale set perpendicularly in the soil, were formerly found by Mr. Olmstead, and the locality remembered by him after the bones had been scattered by the plow. The first excavations were recently made by Dr. Stephen Bowers and others, and many objects of interest were obtained. Having received the consent of Mr. Olmstead to continue the researches in the name of the Santa Barbara Society of Natural History, we spent several days in prosecuting the work. Human bones were found at from two to five feet below the surface, showing widely different periods of burial. Those buried in the upper strata were lying in various positions, no system having been observed in the disposition of the body; but most of those of lower and apparently antecedent inhumation were found lying upon the left side, with the knees brought up to the chin and the face towards the east. The mortars, ollas and other objects were always found near the head. Some of the former were inverted over the skulls, some were lying upon their sides, and still others were upright. Above the skeletons, and sometimes under them, were placed broad whalebones or layers of chalky shale from one to two inches in thickness, and in one instance slabs of the Sequoia sempervirens, partially smeared with asphaltum, were found on each side of the body. Redwood seems to have been held in a sacred light by these people, as it is often met in their burial places, and sometimes above ground, to mark the place of sepulture. Some of the skeletons were found without any of the usual domestic accompaniments, others with an inferior or broken olla or mortar, and still others with nothing but a Halictis shell or bit of paint.

The amount of articles found near each body seems to indicate the wealth or poverty of the individual. Many of the most prized objects were wrapped in the fur of the sea otter, well preserved fragments of which were often met. We found several quartz crystals in the ollas and mortars which appear to have been valued and deposited simply for their beauty. In one of the

ollas were found the fragments of a shallow basket, similar in form and construction to those found in the possession of the Pueblo tribes of Arizona today. This vessel contained a substance which appeared to be powdered corn or acorns, with slightly crystalized particles intermixed, and evidently once prepared for food. Large quantities of a small, black seed were placed in or near some of the ollas or mortars, nothing but the hull of which remained. This was also probably used as food. Balls of paint, made of burnt ochre, were occasionally found. Near one skeleton were obtained numerous flint flakes, and among them several slender pieces of the same material, wrought for purposes unknown, some round and others triangular in shape. These may have been used as drills. In the same deposit were many cylindrical shell ornaments, from two to three inches in length, and about one-fourth of an inch in diameter, nearly all pierced longitudinally by some exceedingly delicate process. These were cut evidently from the thick shell of the Pachydesma crassatelloides, and the drilling of so minute an aperture must have required more than ordinary skill. Several implements, made in the form of a bodkin, with a spiral groove from head to point, from the columella of the Pomaulax undosus or Siphonalia kelletii, apparently, were also found in this deposit. These were mostly pierced in the manner of the other ornaments, above mentioned. Many shell beads of various sizes and forms were common, and from a small olla were obtained about forty oblong pieces, perforated at each end, having the pearly lustre of the Haliotis, and when properly strung may have been used as a necklace. From the Olivella biplicata they seem to have constructed their wampum, several examples of which were found. Over several of the crania were inverted shells of the Haliotis corrugata and Haliotis splendens, the apertures of which were closed with asphaltum. In one case asphaltum was found enclosed in the two valves of the Mytilus, and in another case it was found in the shell of the Haliotis cracherodii, covered by a Lottia gigantea. A multitude of asphaltum ornaments were obtained from one of the mortars, the use of which is difficult to determine, but we conjecture that they were attached as pendants to some portion of the clothing. There are several oil springs in the neighborhood from which these aboriginal inhabitants probably obtained the supply of asphaltum which seemed to be applied to so many purposes by them.

Upon the surface was found a shallow cup molded from this substance [asphaltum], and it was often applied as a cement in repairing their broken utensils. The mortars obtained were of various sizes, from the capacity of a pint to that of several gallons. They were mostly made from a tenacious sandstone, some rudely constructed, and others symmetrical, as if made by rule. Some bear evidence of an attempt at ornamentation, the upper portion having a series of cavities about one-fourth of an inch in depth and one and one-half inches long, filled with asphaltum to the general level of the rim. Whenever one had been fractured, great pains seems to have been taken to repair it with

asphaltum cement, showing the value of the utensil and probable labor and difficulty of obtaining another. This burial place yielded a unique specimen, being a mortar constructed from fossiliferous sandstone, similar and apparently identical with that found in the canyons of the Santa Ynez mountains. Unfortunately a portion had been lost before burial, but its rare beauty had evidently been prized, even in its fragmentary condition. In one of the graves we found a solid stone, beautifully rounded, and of about the diameter of a medium sized mortar. Our conclusion was that this had been partially finished and abandoned for some cause, perhaps on account of a fracture that occurred in the upper portion. There is no evidence, however, that these utensils were manufactured at this village, but they were probably obtained and wrought in the mountains of the Coast Range. The pestles were of the same material as the mortars, and varied as usual in length and size, and [were] well adapted to the pounding of corn, acorns, or other seeds. The ollas, or cooking pots, were manufactured from the usual magnesian mica or steatite. The question, from what source did these people obtain this material, still remains open, but further research will undoubtedly locate the quarry within one hundred miles from Santa Barbara.

Deposits of steatite are found in the San Rafael Mountains and on Catalina Island. At the latter place, in the quarry where the material abounds, partially constructed ollas were found by Schumaker and others.

If the habits of these aborigines were nomadic, the transportation of their heavy stone utensils must have been laborious. One of the ollas which we unearthed was sixteen inches in height and nearly the same in diameter, and weighed nearly seventy-five pounds, and the mortars often weighed even more. The larger olla has a very small aperture, and like most of the others, the thickness increases towards the bottom. A somewhat smaller one has a much wider mouth, and is ornamented below the rim with markings in the form of a chevron. Another is low and flat in proportion to its height, and also has a broad opening. Both the latter had been fractured, and mended in an ingenious manner, by perforations on each side of the fracture, joined on both the inner and outer surfaces by a groove in which was found asphaltum cement, probably covering a decayed cord of sinew or other tying material. A small olla differed from the usual pattern by having a form similar to a common mortar. Schumaker says that domestic articles deposited with the dead were rarely broken, and when so, the breakage was caused by the pressure of the soil. Our observation leads us to a different conclusion, as we did not find an instance in which the damage appeared to have occurred subsequent to the burial, a fact that might, however, be attributed to the lightness of the soil in this locality. The tortilla stones, made also of steatite, were of the usual structure, with or without a line along the outer margin. Most of these, together with the ollas, bear marks of fire.

No metates were found, but a fine implement used as the accompanying crusher, was obtained, its length being about two feet, diameter three inches, with tapering ends.

The crania of these people exhibit various degrees of intelligence, but the aggregate seemed to indicate a higher order than is found among the present race of aborigines. The teeth were almost invariably sound, but the majority were much worn, showing the advanced age of the individual. The skeletons found near the surface were in a fair degree of preservation, while those in the lower strata were badly disintegrated, and fell to dust on exposure to the atmosphere.

To us, the most interesting utensils exhumed were two rudely molded vessels of pottery, one about five inches in diameter and four inches in height, and the other about double the size. Both are without ornamentation. They appear to have been used over a fire. Fragments of pottery had been previously picked up on the surface in this locality, but so far as we ascertain, these are the only perfect specimens that have been secured in this county. The arrow points were not numerous, yet a variety of forms were represented and broken specimens were common. A flake of selenite among the number seems to have been of too soft a material for their uses, for it bears marks of an endeavor to fashion it into an arrow point and an evident failure. A fragment of a square green glass bottle was observed, and near it was a finely finished arrow point with serrated edges, made from the same material. Large quantities of glass beads, of varied size, form, and color, showed a traffic with the early Spanish adventurers, or the later Jesuit missionaries, and the lower half of a common pint bottle, oxydized remnants of steel knives and other iron trinkets, together with a brass ring, bear the same testimony. Previous to our excavations, parties obtained from the same burial place several ollas, mortars, two pipes, a metallic cup and other objects, some of which will come into the possession of our Society of Natural History. Excavations were also made on an elevation nearer the point where the Carpinteria creek enters the sea. Human bones were found, but no objects of interest were secured. We are inclined to the belief that a much more extensive burial place exists in the immediate neighborhood of the higher elevation before mentioned, that must have been used by the earlier population occupying it, but thus far we have been unable to detect the locality, the plow having obliterated all evidence. Near this hill, on the bank of the neighboring creek, is a vertical section cut by the washing of the water, showing a deposit of shells usually found in the older rancherias, ten or twelve feet below the surface, over which a stratum of sand and yellowish soil has accumulated, either by flood or drifting, and above this a more recent deposit of shells and soil, dark with vegetable matter. The lower accumulation would indicate the human occupancy of this locality at a very remote period, and

again at a comparatively recent day. Mention of this deposit has been made by Dr. Stephen Bowers, and he concurs with us in opinion as to its great age. The neighborhood still affords a rich field for the archaeologist, and patient investigation may yet give us many interesting facts connected with the daily life, customs and religion of the race that occupied these shores and enjoyed the delicious climate and charming scenery that has fallen such a pleasant heritage to us.

82. OBSERVATIONS MADE IN THE RUINS OF THE VILLAGES
OF THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF THE
PACIFIC COAST OF NORTH AMERICA

Paul Schumacher

ABSTRACT

This article is reprinted in translation from the Mittheilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien, Vol. 7, pp. 287-93, Vienna, 1876. It was submitted by the author from San Francisco, California, during the same year as its publication. Schumacher's observations mostly concern the characteristics (formation, composition, use as burial places) of the shell heaps of the Santa Barbara coastal region, although examples of sites from Oregon are also included.

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The hills of mussel shells along this coast mark the ruins of villages of the original inhabitants. An exception to this is found only where the collections of mussels are in places where edible mussels were found in abundance and thus were visited from time to time. The mussels were freed from their shells at these temporary campsites to make their transportation to the permanent home easier. Thus these mounds of shells were built up through the centuries by means of countless meals consumed at these places. We do not find signs of the existence of huts at these temporary campsites. There are no pieces of flint and nothing which points to the manufacture of weapons and utensils. We find only cobbles in small piles which, with ashes and charcoal, give clear evidence that these used to be fireplaces. It is remarkable that the shells found at the temporary campsites are only of