

Reports of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

No. 73

PAPERS ON THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF
WESTERN GREAT BASIN

University of California Archaeological Research Facility
Department of Anthropology
Berkeley
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PREFACE

Robert F. Heizer

The three papers which comprise this report represent some, but not all, of the information secured by the authors, who are graduate students in the Department of Anthropology of the University of California at Berkeley, with the aid of other student members of the work parties.

In the summer of 1965, there were a number of graduate students at Berkeley who were interested in North American archaeology and who were in the beginning stages of their work toward the doctorate. Some of them had done archaeological field work, but none had undertaken field research on his own, and it was felt to be important that they learn how to solve the problems of organizing a field expedition and carrying it out. For this reason, I accompanied the group of five students to the Humboldt Valley in Nevada, an area I knew from earlier field work and where more investigation was desirable, and worked with them for one of the two months that they spent in the field. The group carried out some site reconnaissance in order to bring the survey of this area to a greater degree of completeness, and worked at the site known as NV-Ch-15, the large open village site which is situated at the terminus of the Humboldt River as it empties into the Sink of the Humboldt. Considerable earlier work, mainly in the form of surface collecting, had been carried out there in 1936 and 1950, but no archaeology had been done, and the profusion of circular storage pits containing burials or refuse had never been investigated. A portion of the site was laid off in a grid, pits were mapped, and a number were excavated and their contents, dimensions, and the nature of their fill were recorded. We were at that time informed of the existence of site NV-Pe-67 and spent several days there, excavating circular house pits exposed by the removal of the surface sands.

In the Fall 1965 term, the group carried out a laboratory analysis of materials in the Lowie Museum of Anthropology which had been collected earlier from site NV-Ch-15, to which was added the information secured during the past summer. A report of substantial size was written, but has not been published because the illustrations have not been prepared.

Lovelock Cave (NV-Ch-18) was visited briefly in the 1965 season and a collection of well preserved human coprolites was made. Laboratory analysis of fifty of these was carried out during the academic year 1965-66, this work being generously supported by a grant awarded by Dean S. S. Elberg of the Graduate Division. Results of this work were published in this series,

Report No. 70, Papers I-VI, 1967, and the findings at site NV-Pe-67 are published here. We now have available the following information on open archaeological sites in the vicinity of Humboldt Lake, Nevada: a report on site NV-Pe-5 by A. B. Elsasser printed in this series, Report No. 44, Pt. 2, 26-51, 1958; L. L. Loud's account of archaeological materials from a number of surface sites in the Lower Humboldt Valley published in University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol. 25, No. 1, 129-150, 1929; details on the projectile points from site NV-Ch-15 published in Report No. 71, 59-88, 1968; and the present paper on site NV-Pe-67. A large amount of information on other open sites has been collected but is not yet published.

The 1965 field work was supported by the Archaeological Research Facility and by small individual grants from subvention funds awarded to the Anthropology Department by the Graduate Division.

In the summer of 1966 several members of the group which had worked in Nevada in 1965 wished to continue doing field work. A large site in the California delta region (CA-CCo-138) was threatened with early destruction, and the graduate students organized a work party which spent one month excavating burials there. During this period sixteen persons, graduates and undergraduates, participated in the field work. At the end of that time the group divided into two, graduate students C. W. Clewlow, Jr. and R. A. Cowan heading for the Black Rock Desert, Nevada, with five undergraduate aides, and J. F. O'Connell, B. J. Moyer, and R. D. Ambro going to Surprise Valley in Lassen County, California, with five undergraduate students who were willing to work in exchange for their keep. The reports on the Rodriguez site (CA-Las-194) and on the Black Rock Desert survey in this volume detail the findings made in these two areas at that time.

The field work of the summer of 1966 was again supported jointly by the Archaeological Research Facility and individual student research grants awarded from subvention funds.

During the summer of 1967, J. F. O'Connell and his colleagues continued their work in Surprise Valley. The Black Rock project was continued with the excavation of site NV-Pe-104 at Barrel Springs, under the direction of R. A. Cowan, this being supported by the Nevada Archaeological Survey.

Great Basin archaeology now shows promise of being accorded the attention it deserves. The University of Nevada, with its Nevada Archaeological Survey, may be expected to develop a substantial long range program of survey, excavation, and publication. The Nevada State Museum in Carson City has contributed a large amount of important research and publication

in the past ten years. The University of California campuses at Davis, Berkeley, and Los Angeles appear to have a long term interest in research in this region, partly because it is nearby and relatively inexpensive to support research there, and in part because much of California prehistory can only be understood if we know the history of human occupation in the Great Basin. It is hoped that archaeologists will find the papers which follow in this volume useful. They are being published because we believe it is the archaeologist's responsibility to communicate to his professional colleagues the results of his research.

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