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Heizer and Elsasser: *The Natural World of the California Indians*

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effort since initial investigations in the 1930's, discusses the excavation of CA-Mno-584, a relatively high-altitude (6900 feet) site located on the east slope of the Sierra Nevada between Bishop and Mammoth Lakes, California. The initial test investigations were mandated by the proposed construction of a CALTRANS project associated with Highway 395. The research was directed toward determining the depth, areal extent, activity areas, range of potentially recoverable data, and cultural-chronological placement and significance. Additional limited excavation was carried out after the initial test phase to further determine the nature of the site.

In a format similar to the past University of California Archaeological Survey Reports, the report presents an excellent contextual background section dealing with the environmental setting, ethnographic background, and previous archaeological research with succinct subsections on recent regional research concerned with subsistence-settlement patterns and exchange systems. The basic components of the report are well presented, although I would have liked additional illustrations/photographs of the chipped stone artifacts as well as detailed descriptions and metrics for the various artifact categories (e.g., scraper, knife, etc.) other than projectile points. Comparison with other regional sites is often not possible without this basic information, although, in contrast to the chipped-stone specimens, the ground-stone artifacts are dealt with in more satisfying detail.

Special studies, including obsidian trace-element determination, obsidian hydration, and identification of both floral and faunal remains, lend excellent support to the report's data base and aid in the interpretation of Mno-584. The projectile point section is sufficiently detailed in both descriptive and metric attributes to allow future researchers adequate data to pursue further comparative studies.

The site is interpreted by the authors as a base-camp locality supporting a wide range of seasonal activities including the finishing of obsidian bifacial tools for export to other California localities. Chronologically the site appears to have been occupied from ca. 3000 B.C. to the protohistoric period. The monograph concludes with a useful discussion of late prehistoric cultural change in central eastern California which is of some value in its suggestion of a number of working hypotheses that may be tested by future research.

The report is well produced, and the authors and CALTRANS must be complimented for the publication. It is hoped that additional reports of a similar format may appear in the future and that other public agencies may follow suit in disseminating data gathered on similar public archaeology projects.



The Natural World of the California Indians.
Robert F. Heizer and Albert Elsasser.
Berkeley: University of California Press,
1980, 271 pp., 130 figs., \$12.95 (cloth),
\$7.95 (paper).

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Upon receiving my copy of Heizer and Elsasser's *The Natural World of the California Indians*, I slipped the volume into my jacket pocket and walked to a favored nearby knoll to read without disturbance. If I had chosen comparable works such as Kroeber's *Handbook of the Indians of California* (1925), Heizer and Whipple's *California Indians* (1957), or Volume 8 of the Smithsonian's *Handbook of North American Indians* (1978),

I would have required, by comparison, a burden basket to carry them.

Besides its compact size, modest price (\$12.95 hardback), and readability, the book approaches its subjects from a unique perspective: viewing the numerous and diverse lifestyles of pre-Hispanic California as products of their environments. The insights into the varied cultures are all made by the authors with regards to the ecological frameworks within which they had developed.

Chapter One addresses the diversity of cultures first by linguistic stock and geographical locale, comparing and contrasting the six major regional lifeways (i.e., adaptation to climate, food resources, terrain, availability of water, and carrying capacity of the land) occurring within the boundaries of present California. The lifeways theme is expanded in succeeding chapters dealing with material culture, food quests, and non-food resources. Thus, we learn of the great natural wealth once possessed by early Californians and the varied means by which a relatively large population lived harmoniously with its land for many centuries.

Following the excellent section on natural resources, the book addresses California anthropology and the ancient traces remaining as art objects. The book is copiously illustrated with black-and-white photographs, old etchings, and with 20 color plates of artifacts and pictographs representative of many media and of varied cultures.

As a bridge between archaeological and recent California Indian history, the authors present a moving chapter on world views representative of the major inhabited biomes of the state. We are introduced to some interesting myths of creation and learn how the everyday and the spiritual worlds merged as one with people of the natural world, revealing "the true ecological man—people who were truly a part of the land and the water and the mountains and the valleys in

which they lived."

After the text, there are two valuable appendices and lists of selected references by chapter. The first appendix is a list of native and weedy plants used commonly by people within the state. The list is alphabetically arranged by generic name; common names are listed as well as the uses and the parts collected. The second appendix is a list of museums, libraries, and other places in California that house or display collections relative to California Indians.

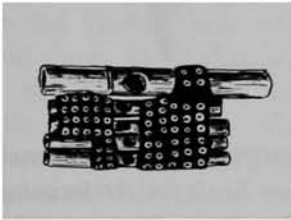
My criticisms of this work are few. In the food-plants section, the authors analyze wild tree fruit productivity and the efficiency of the foragers. They make assumptions that an adult could have harvested 75 pounds of acorns per hour. My personal experience and much sweat argue for a much lower figure. I also doubt that California Buckeye fruits could have been stored for any appreciable period of time, thus not playing much importance in diet. The authors also state that coyote flesh probably was not consumed due to the rank taste of scavengers' flesh. I would guess that people avoided killing coyotes due to the mythological powers of Coyote as a creator/trickster/benefactor in many California cultures. Finally, Heizer and Elsasser hypothesize that people accustomed to a particular diet are reluctant to change to new foods; thus, the California Indian preferred acorns to maize. This may have been true, but the important fact is overlooked that corn will not grow well in most of the state without irrigation to supplement the winter rains of our Mediterranean climate.

Despite these few minor disputes, I find this new book delightful, thought provoking, and very full of good, basic information about California Indians presented in a unique manner. I highly recommend this volume to all interested in the anthropology of western North America, both novices and professionals. The first will find it to be an excellent

introduction to California Indians, and the latter will perhaps find new insights.

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1978 Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 8: California. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.
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- Kroeber, A. L.
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Life is with People: Household Organization of the Contemporary Southern Paiute Indians. Martha C. Knack. Socorro: Ballena Press *Anthropological Papers* No. 19, 1980, 106 pp., map, tables, references, \$6.95 (paper).

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Dr. Knack appears to be caught up in the modern American culture pattern of finding book titles that do not reveal the contents of the book. For this old-fashioned reviewer, *Life Is With People* is superfluous. The subtitle might have added the words "of Utah," inasmuch as the Southern Paiute of Arizona and Nevada are only mentioned in passing. This is a very important study because it provides a careful analysis of the economic and social life of Indians of southern Utah

who were "freed from Bureau of Indian Affairs control," i.e., terminated, in 1954, twenty years before the field work for the excellent report. There is a clear and irrefutable answer to the question: "What happens when 'the yoke of Federal supervision is removed'?" (p.13).

About three-fourths of the total Paiute population of Utah was included in the number interviewed and observed in seven communities, primarily Cedar City and Richfield. In those Mormon towns where the Indians remain, they are at the bottom of the social and economic ladder, well below other laborers. The nineteen tables fully document the position of the Paiute in relation to their neighbors. Indians are less educated, less trained, less employed, and isolated. To survive under these conditions, the Southern Paiute have maintained older, aboriginal household organizations.

Knack's concluding paragraph (p. 99) can serve well for the conclusion of this review:

My data show that Paiutes occupy both educational and employment levels which are far below those of others in the area in which they live. In many cases these levels are below those occupied by the much-deprived reservations populations. Despite geographic proximity to towns and their services, and despite termination with its presumed assimilation, Paiutes earn an inadequate and unstable income for their labor. They experience discrimination and social isolation. Because of this relative deprivation, Paiutes have found that kinship networks are advantageous and necessary. The resultant large kinship networks persist and will continue to persist because they still fulfill necessary functions within the present social and economic environment in which the Paiutes find themselves.

