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Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology

Title

Pastron and Walsh: *Archaeological Excavations at CA-SFR-113, the Market Street Shell Midden, San Francisco, California*

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6t54f56h>

Journal

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology, 13(1)

ISSN

0191-3557

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Publication Date

1991-07-01

Peer reviewed

There will be a sequel forthcoming to the CA-VEN-110 reports reviewed here. Greenwood and Associates documented a 19 percent loss in site deposits over six years based on comparisons with prior investigations. Because of the demonstrated significance of the site, the severity of continued erosion, and the need for further flood control work, a mitigation phase was authorized. Excavations took place in 1986 under the direction of Mark Raab of California State University, Northridge, and a final report is nearing completion. An entire cemetery was uncovered during the mitigation excavations that was not encountered during the testing phase. An extremely acrimonious situation then ensued when a segment to the local Native American community appealed to the courts to stop all archaeological work, preferring instead to let the burials wash out to the lagoons rather than have archaeological research undertaken. The judge ruled that the American Indian Religious Freedom Act did not apply in this case and that proper legal procedures had been followed by Ventura County, the Corps of Engineers, and other defendants (U.S. District Court 1986). The burials and all associated artifacts from the mitigation phase were eventually reinterred at Oakbrook Regional Park near Thousand Oaks after completion of archaeological and physical anthropological studies.

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Archaeological Excavations at CA-SFR-113, the Market Street Shell Midden, San Francisco, California. Allen G. Pastron and Michael R. Walsh. Salinas, CA.: Coyote Press *Archives of California Prehistory* No. 25, 1988, vi + 91 pp., 10 figs., 7 tables, 5 appendices, \$7.45 (paper).

Reviewed by:

THOMAS L. JACKSON

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In 1986 archaeologists discovered buried prehistoric midden deposits some four meters below present street level at a construction site in the heart of modern downtown San Francisco. The authors describe the discovery of site CA-SFR-113 as "serendipitous." It would seem all the more so because these vestiges of prehistoric culture had survived the late 1850s leveling of the natural sand ridges that incorporated them and subsequent construction episodes atop them.

The discovery of the midden deposits is fortuitous because archaeologists conducting exploratory studies prior to new construction were intent on finding historic period architectural features and only their diligence in probing apparently *in situ* dune sands revealed the presence of the prehistoric cultural remains.

This report of the CA-SFR-113 archaeological field and laboratory studies is generally written in a prose style that is easy to read although often lacking technical and scientific precision. The contents of this monograph include introductions to the history of the lower Market Street area of San Francisco, to the project, on the physical environment, ethnographic background, and previous archaeological research in the San Francisco Bay area. These are well-done synopses, although the authors discuss previous archaeological research in the San Francisco Bay area from a dated perspective, scarcely acknowledging studies more recent than the early 1970s. In the absence of any explicit theoretical perspective, research design, or other rationale for the archaeological investigations carried out, the report section on "Previous Archaeological Research in the San Francisco Bay Area" serves as an ersatz research design, to wit: "we shall focus only on certain aspects that are pertinent to an analysis of the archaeological materials recovered at CA-SFR-113—specifically, the issues of chronology, and mound constituent analysis and its ecological implications."

Subsequent sections of the monograph describe field methods, stratigraphy and site configuration, chronology, artifacts, nonartifactual materials, features, and there is a perfunctory summary. Five appendices report radiometric assays (by Beta Analytic), obsidian hydration analysis (by Thomas S. Kaufman), obsidian source analysis (by Jonathan E. Ericson, Michael Walsh, George Miller, and J. Kimberlin), mammalian and avian fauna (by Jeffrey T. Hall and Dwight D. Simons), and

piscatory fauna (by Kenneth W. Gobalet). A diverse assemblage of features was excavated including charcoal and rock concentrations, pits, and hearths interpreted to be associated with food preparation. Artifacts reported from CA-SFR-113 are (to use the authors' terminology) debitage (obsidian, chert, chalcedony, "volcanics," and quartz), bifaces, scrapers, flake cutting tools, choppers, a punch or drill, hammerstones, pestle and mortar fragments, and pieces of modified bone.

Perhaps the most arresting element of the report is the suite of radiometric age determinations (RCYBP) made on seven charcoal samples: $1,830 \pm 70$, $1,980 \pm 70$, $1,990 \pm 120$, $2,050 \pm 90$, $2,070 \pm 70$, $2,100 \pm 80$, and $2,110 \pm 80$. Having elsewhere decried the apparent lack of temporal and taxonomic information available from the material culture inventory, the authors (p. 25) conclude the remains from CA-SFR-113

date to the later stages of the traditional Middle Horizon of Central California (cf. Bennyhoff and Hughes 1987:149), regardless of ones [sic] personal preference or chronological bias. This is an especially secure assignation [sic] in light of the general tendency for Bay Area sites to lag somewhat behind the Interior Valley in the taxonomic sequence (Bennyhoff cited by Fredrickson 1968:135-136). Indeed the northern reaches of the San Francisco Peninsula may show the most exaggerated lagtime (cf. Pastron and Walsh 1966). The traditional expectations of Middle Horizon deposits color much of the descriptive text that follows.

Unfortunately this type of thinking is typical of interpretations made throughout the report. There is no serious effort to compare the information from CA-SFR-113 with other site assemblages and components elsewhere.

Our knowledge of the "Middle Horizon" in the San Francisco Bay Area comes almost exclusively from large, multi-component, complex midden sites. Excavations at smaller, less complex, task-specific or limited activity sites from this time period are very rare. The opportunity to explore carefully and extensively such

a site in a now extinct environmental setting seems to have escaped.

The authors and Coyote Press have brought us another contribution to the California archaeological data base. The descriptive material in the report documents an unusual and exciting find and these data will be valuable to archaeologists building a synthetic view of regional prehistory.



Archaeological Investigations at CA-SLO-99, Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo County, California. Gary S. Breschini, Trudy Haversat, and R. Paul Hampson with contributions by J. A. Bennyhoff, M. F. Rondeau, and A. L. Runnings. Salinas, CA: Coyote Press *Archives of California Prehistory* No. 26, 1988, iv + 80 pages, 11 figs., 5 tables, plus 4 appendices with tables, \$6.20 (paper).

Reviewed by:

CLAY SINGER

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This publication is a slightly modified copy of an impact mitigation report prepared by Archaeological Associates of Salinas in 1986. Although it bears a single title, it actually is three separate reports with a breakdown of midden constituents and a partial catalog of specimens. The text begins with a description of a small-scale excavation carried out in 1985 as part of a motel construction project. A very short introduction is followed by a section called "Project Location," after which is a review of previous work entitled "Project Background," and a roughly-outlined scope of work. Next come sections on field methods and laboratory procedures, and finally results of the investiga-

tions. These results are presented in a series of descriptive paragraphs, supplemented by graphs and illustrations, within sections entitled "Nature and Distribution of the Midden Deposit," "Previous Disturbance," "Artifactual Materials," "Non-Artifactual Materials," "Features," "Temporal Placement," "Cupules," and "Conclusions."

The text contains no explicit research or sampling design and no testable hypotheses, but the purposes of the work are clearly stated in the scope of work: (1) to preserve the "primary archaeological deposit" (not defined); (2) to monitor the grading and look for burials and recognizable features; and (3) to recover and analyze samples and generate a report.

The primary text is followed by four appendices. Appendix 1 is an analysis of shell artifacts by James A. Bennyhoff. Appendix 2 is an analysis of flaked stone artifacts by Michael F. Rondeau. Appendix 3 is a breakdown of midden constituents (no author), and Appendix 4 is a partial catalog of specimens, that is, a list of 33 items "judged to be artifacts" (the authors must either expand their definition of artifacts or cite references documenting when flakes ceased being artifacts).

On-site work consisted of sketch-mapping the project area, recording and mapping the distribution of cupules on a large rock outcrop, excavation of four 1 x 1-m. test units, and removal of 10-cm. square column samples from two of the excavated units. Materials excavated from the test units were dry screened with 1/8-in. mesh, whereas the column samples were processed with water and graduated screens to 1/16-in. mesh. Analyses revealed a variety of materials and artifact forms including 22 shell beads and ornaments, 3,899 pieces of flaked stone debitage, two finished bifaces and two other retouched pieces, a mortar rim fragment, a grooved net weight, two pitted stones, an angular (?) hammer, a shallow mortar, and part of a tubular glass bead. Nonartifactual materials