THE EASTRIDGE SITE, CA-SCL-327

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents data from archeological excavations at the Eastridge site, CA-SCl-327, in the City of San Jose. The site is located on the lower Santa Clara Valley floor near the confluence of Thompson and Silver Creeks and close to the interchange of Highways 101 and 680 (Figure 1). Studies of the site's chronology indicate that the midden deposit ranges, circa 2400 B.P. to 890 B.P. Artifacts and features unearthed at the site correlate with the radiometric dating. Of particular interest in the assemblage are diagnostic classes of cut Olivella shell beads and inhumations. Correlations are seen between these data and data from other assemblages of this time period in central California.

EARLY EXCAVATIONS, 1979-1980

The Eastridge site was first found by archeologists in 1978 during a surface survey which yielded a single flake of Monterey Banded chert. Exploratory excavation revealed a rich prehistoric site buried below the surface under approximately 60 centimeters of alluvial deposition. Hand-excavated units were used to extract a quantitative sample of the midden. Features encountered in these initial excavations included concentrations of fire-altered rock and fire-baked clay interpreted as cooking areas. Artifacts and carbon samples analyzed from the early excavations dated the deposit as Middle Period (radiocarbon dates 2400 $\pm$ 130 and 2020 $\pm$ 140 B.P.). Other studies of the assemblage characteristics included a detailed look at soils chemistry, shell content, and types and frequencies of chipped lithic materials. The studies carried out in 1978 and 1979 also indicated that the site boundaries extended beyond the property accessible for study at that time; particularly to the north, west, and south from the tested area. Informal verbal reports mention archeological materials having been unearthed in the construction of a nearby shopping area--Eastridge Mall--to the north of the study area.

MAJOR EXCAVATION, 1982

In 1982, additional properties to the west of the original site location were examined for possible extensions of the deposit. Sample excavation and surface reconnaissance showed the possibility of the site extending into this new

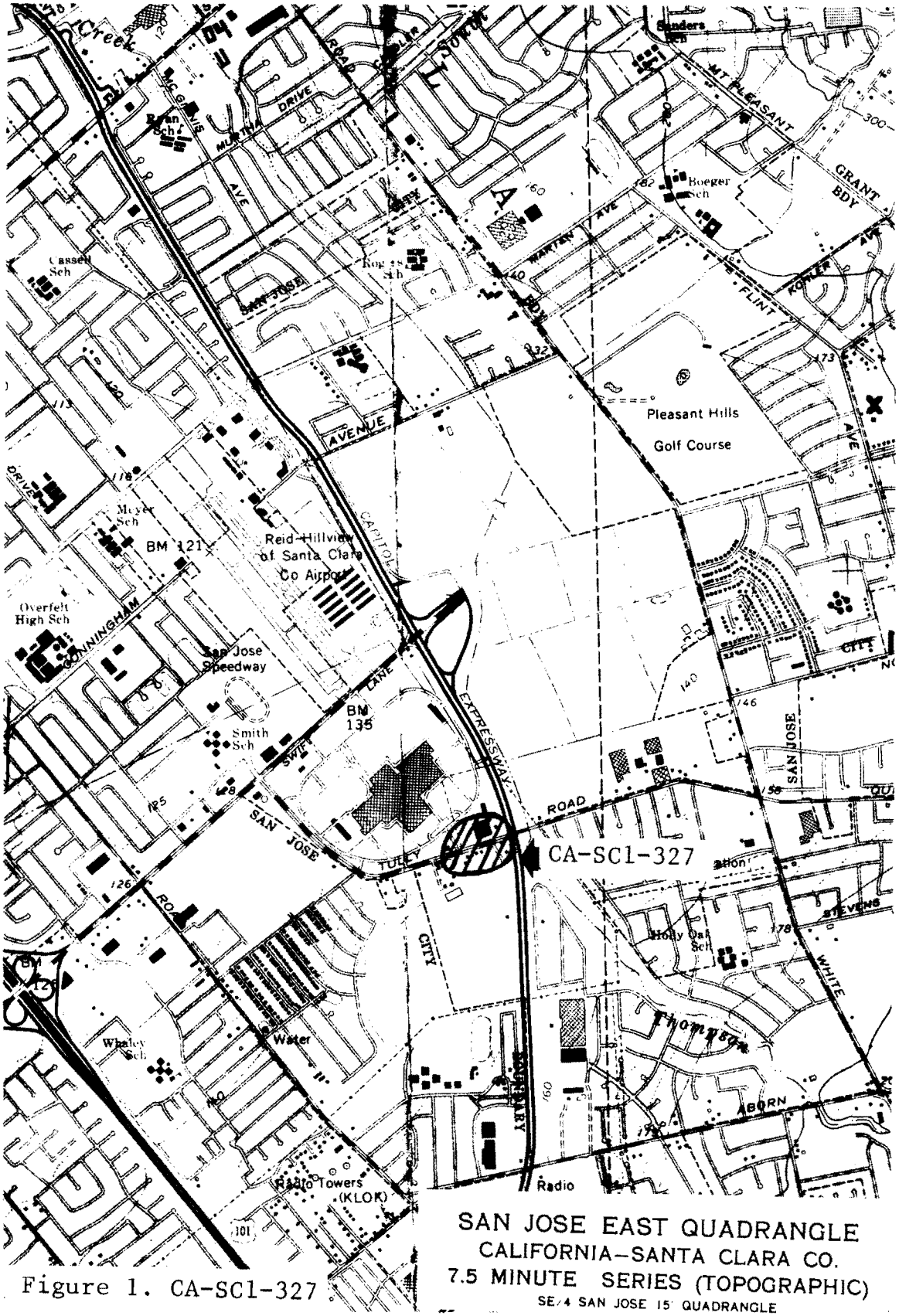


Figure 1. CA-SC1-327

westerly property. Archeological excavations in areas of construction trenching and grading recovered a meaningful assemblage of artifactual materials, some grave lot data, and twenty-two inhumations (Table 1). This portion of the deposit was marked by pockets of midden with fire-altered rock, burnt clay, and burial features.

TABLE 1

INVENTORY OF OSTEOLOGICAL REMAINS AT CA-SCL-327

Burial #	Age	Sex
C-B	35-45	Male
C-D (1)	neonate	Indeterminate
C-D (2)	35+	Female
C-E (1)	0-18 mo.	Indeterminate
C-E (2)	25-26	Male
C-E (3)	22-24	Male
C-F	adult	Indeterminate
C-G	30-40	Female
C-H	25+	Male
C-I	35-40	Female
C-L	16-18	Female
C-M	25-35	Female
C-N	27-30	Female
C-O	39-40	Female
C-P	30 mos.	Indeterminate
C-Q	adult	Indeterminate
C-R	16-18	Female
C-S	25-30	Female
C-T	adult	Indeterminate
C-U	3	Indeterminate
C-V	18-22	Indeterminate
C-W	8	Indeterminate

One of the most interesting findings consisted of a mass burial (designated Burial C-L through Burial C-R). When this feature was initially encountered, there were no indications as to the total number of individuals at the outset of the exposure. The estimate of individuals present in the feature grew with the continued excavation of the feature from one, to four, to six, and finally to seven individuals. It was recognized at the beginning of the exposure that these burials were extended, an unusual trait for the general region and for the site itself. After the feature was fully exposed, it was noted that seven individuals were present all in the posture of ventral extension. The individuals were positioned with their heads toward the west, and based on the proximity of the skeletal elements they were all buried at the same time. Demographic analysis of the individuals in this feature show them to be ranging between approximately two to forty years of age, five of them adult females, one infant, and adult of indeterminate sex. The grave pit con-

tained no grave goods and there was no physical evidence of trauma. At the time of burial, it appears that two or possibly three previous interments (Burials C-S, C-T, and C-V) were unearthed during the digging of the mass grave pit and then the disarticulated elements were placed back on top of the new burials as the backdirt was used to fill the grave. A detailed discussion of their osteological characteristics is provided in a later portion of this report.

Intersite comparisons of mass grave data in the region are difficult to make for very few multiple burials of large number have been reported in the available literature. Regional sites, such as University Village, CA-Ala-328 and 329, the Holiday Inn site, and CA-Ala-413 report multiple burials; however, only CA-Ala-413 contains a multiple burial of similar large proportion. From information provided by M. Holman (1982) the multiple burial at CA-Ala-413, known as Complex A, contained seven burials. Complex A is described as a massive intrusive burial in which several inhumations appear to have been removed in the Native American's preparation of new graves and the earlier grave elements were reinterred with the backdirt in a very disarticulated and disorderly association. Thus, this one possible comparison in fact has little in common with the characteristics with the mass burial at the Eastridge site.

It was hypothesized during the excavation of the mass burial at the Eastridge site that the individuals in this grave were of a different social group and thus treated differently in the interment ritual. Anthropometric analysis of the remains was done in an attempt to discern physical differences in the size or morphology of the skeletal remains which might have possibly demonstrated a difference in social/physical identity. The multivariant analysis failed to distinguish, however, any meaningful contrasts in the skeletal remains. A detailed report of this analysis is contained in a later portion of this report.

It is notable that during this chronological period ventral extended burials have been reported in other portions of Central California. Although the burials in the mass grave were the only extended burials identified at the site, their presence is worthy of consideration in intersite comparison. It may be possible that the influence concept of a Meganos Culture could at play in the ventral extended orientation.

RADIOCARBON DATES

The chronology at this portion of the site (northwest corner) is based upon radiocarbon analysis (Table 2) and diagnostic artifacts. Two radiocarbon dates were produced from samples taken in this portion of the excavation. One sample dated the mass burial feature and the second sample dated a

bead lot. The radiocarbon date of the mass burial is 890 ± 90 whereas the carbon date of the bead lot is somewhat earlier, 1070 ± 100 B.P. These dates show a later occupation/utilization for the northwest section of the study area in comparison to the northeast section that had been dated at 2020 ± 140 and 2400 ± 130 B.P. (Figure 2).

TABLE 2

RADIOCARBON DATES FROM EASTRIDGE SITE, CA-SCL-327

Lab #	Sample	Provenience	Age B.P.	Date Recovered
B-6466	Collagen	Burials C-L to C-R	809 ± 90	3/21/1983
RL-1736	D1 shell	Bead Lot C-E	1070 ± 100	10/11/1982
RL-1274	Shell	East midden	2020 ± 140	3/14/1980
RL-1737	Charcoal	East midden Unit C-H	2400 ± 130	12/27/1982

SHELL BEADS AND OTHER ARTIFACTS

Cut Olivella beads in temporally diagnostic classes were present in this component of the site (Table 3). Most of the shell beads were found in association with the burial complex designated as C-E. This complex consisted of a 12-18 month old infant and two adult males in their early to mid-twenties. The graves had been disturbed by both agricultural and construction activities prior to the archeological investigation. Recovery of the shell beads was initially done with shaker screens of 1/4 inch mesh as the beads found were relatively large split-punched, saddles, and saucers. However, it was quickly learned that a very small Olivella shell bead type (small wall disk) was also present in this grave lot and being missed in the 1/4 inch shaker screens. Due to this fact, all of the previously screened and remaining soils associated with grave lots were wet-screened in 1/4 inch, 1/8 inch, and window mesh to insure maximal recovery. Approximately 3000 shell beads were recovered in this manner.

Perhaps the most diagnostic of the shell beads from this site is the split-punched Olivella, Type D1. Of the 1284 recovered, a 10% sample was individually measured. The average width in the sample was 11.6 mm., the average length 15.9 mm., and the average hole diameter 4.1 mm. D1 beads are spatially and temporally diagnostic. They tend to be common in the interior Central California, specifically the San Joaquin Valley. In the particular region of the south San Francisco Bay, they have been reported from the Ponce Facies of the Castro Mound, CA-SCl-1 (Bennyhoff 1972). They are known to be present chronologically in the Early Phase of Phase I of the Late Period as well as latter portions of the Middle. A sample of fifteen of the D1 beads were used for a radiocarbon analysis which produced a date of 1070 ± 100 B.P. This is

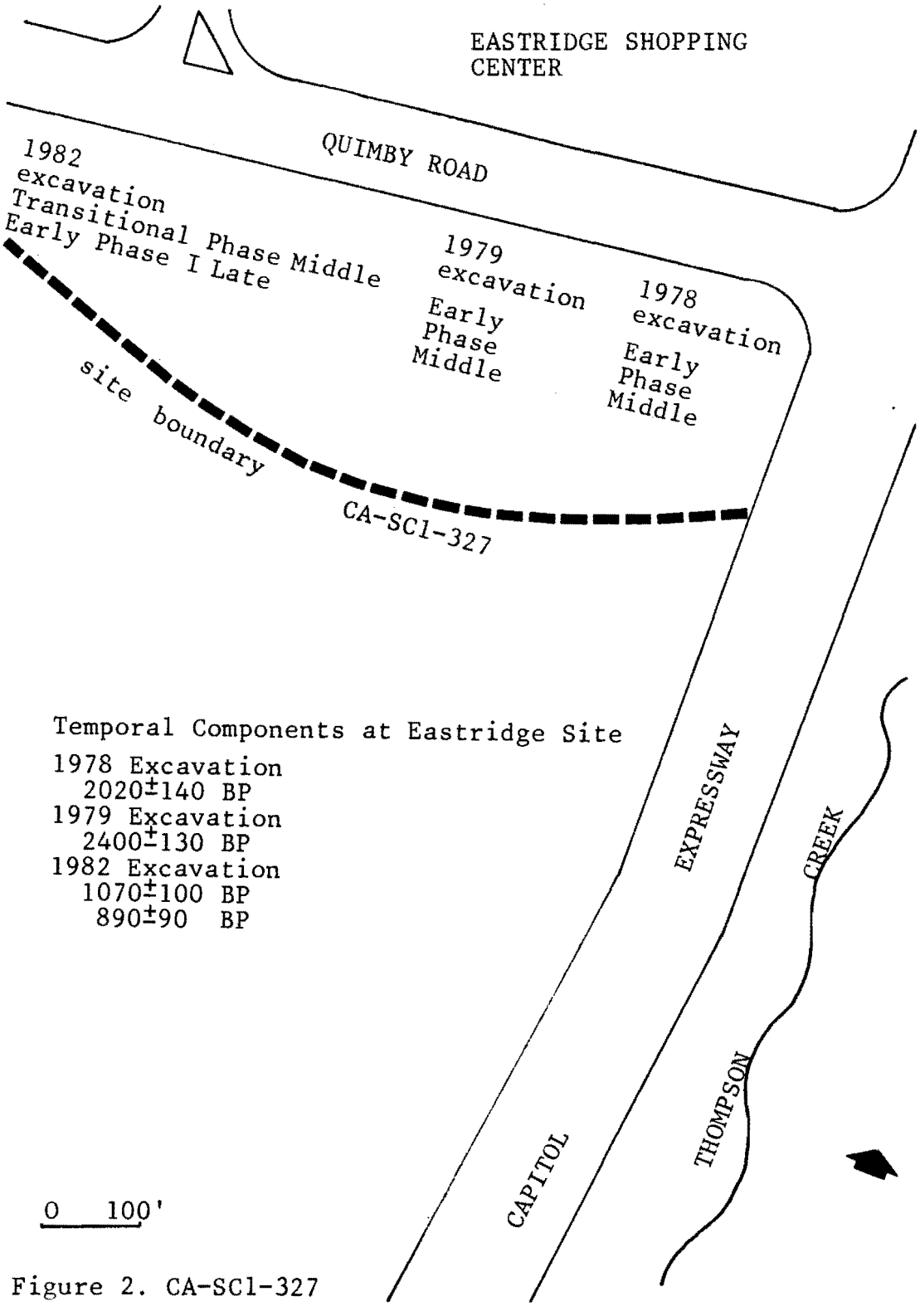


Figure 2. CA-SCl-327

TABLE 3

SHELL BEADS AND PENDANTS FROM CA-SCL-327
SUMMARY CHART OF BEAD TYPES AND LOCATIONS

Cat. #	# Elements	Type	Provenience	Notes
CB-06	1	B3b	Burial CB, 0-10cm	
CB-25	1	D1	Burial CB, backdirt	
CE-01	5	D1	Burial CE, 0-10cm	
CE-15	1	D1	Burial CE, 20-30cm	
CE-63	215	C3	Burial CE, backdirt	
CE-64	1284	D1	Burial CE, backdirt	
CE-64a	1491	G1	Burial CE, backdirt	
CE-65	2	C3	Burial CE, backdirt	1 w/4 G1
CE-66	1	C1	Burial CE, backdirt	6 holes
	1	L1	Burial CE, backdirt	2 holes
CE-67	2	A1a	Burial CE, backdirt	
	1	A1b	Burial CE, backdirt	
	1	A1c	Burial CE, backdirt	
CE-x	7	L4b	Burial CE	
	1	L4a	Burial CE	
	1	L1b	Burial CE	
CG-16		G2b	Burial CG, 10-20cm	
CJ1-60	1	A1a	Unit CJ1, 70-80cm	
CJ2-32	1	A2c	Unit CJ2, 30-40cm	
CJ2-38	1	A2b	Unit CJ2, 40-50cm	
S-32	1	G2b	Surface	
S-33	2	D1	Surface	
S-a	5	F3a	Surface	
S-b	7	G2a	Surface	
S-c	118	F3a	Surface	
S-d	20	F1	Surface	
	7	F3		
	9	L1		
	77	L2		
S-e	16	G2b	Surface	

somewhat earlier than reported in the previous literature for the region and may serve to extend the time range of this bead type, at least in the South Bay. The D1 beads were the second most numerous at the site, surpassed in number only by the small wall disk or G1 type.

Exemplifying some of the smallest of all types of Olivella shell beads is the small wall disks or G1, ranging down to 2.5 mm. in exterior diameter. A 10% sample of the 1491 G1 beads recovered at CA-SC1-327 was measured for exterior diameter and diameter of the hole. The size range in the 10% sample was 4.1 to 2.5 mm. in exterior diameter and the interior hole ranged from .9 to 1.5 mm. During the recovery of the G1 beads, samples were found in association with the other bead types particularly Type C3. In one case, the G1s were incrusted in asphaltum on the interior side of a C3 bead. Ethnographically it is known that the G1s were often used to artistically enhance other cultural items, such as bracelets, bone artifacts, headbands, shoulder and cradle straps and baskets. Their small size and light weight also facilitated in the function of monetary exchange. This bead type is known to have been associated with high status grave lots. In several specimens of the G1 beads recovered at the Eastridge site, asphaltum was found on one or both faces of the bead, indicating its attachment by this adhesive substance to another object or artifact. The G1 type has a wide temporal and spatial range.

Bead types series F and C from the site have been subdivided in this study by length, width, and hole diameter, presence of shelf, presence of grinding, and hole location. A total of 215 C series were recovered at the site with an average width of 10.5 mm., an average length 10.6 mm., and an average hole diameter 1.95 mm. A shelf or shelf remnant was present in approximately 18% of the sample. In the C series, subtypes present at the site included, C1b, C3, C4a, C7, and C8. In the F series, a total of 118 F3a and 20 F1 types were found, all of these from indeterminate provenience on the surface near the location of the other bead lots. (The uncertain provenience was due to disturbance by construction excavation prior to the archeological program). Cut Olivella shell beads assisted in the chronological assessment of the northwest component as some of the bead classes are temporally distinctive. The primary shell classes, D, C, and F, generally correspond to the radiocarbon dates which fall in the Terminal Phase of the Middle Period through the Early Phase I of the Late Period. The bead classes D, C, and F, represent a known progressive development in bead technology through time. This sequential development is from F types in the Terminal Phase of the Middle Period through several C types in the Early Phase. Conforming to this sequence in the presence of the D1 type coeval with type C. The temporal identification of the F, C, and D beads conforms well with the range of the radiocarbon dates discussed above, placing

the overall bead lot between Terminal Middle to Early Phase I of the Late.

Other artifactual materials recovered from the 1982 excavations at the site included Haliotis pendants, bone tools, and groundstone artifacts. A total of eighteen Haliotis shell pendants were recovered from the site, specifically from burial associations C-E and Unit CJ-3 (Table 4). Fourteen of the Haliotis pendants were disks, thirteen having evidence of incised edges, Type C1a. Five other Haliotis pendants in the assemblage included one plain disk, one ovoid disk, one trapezoid, one incised triangle, and one disk indeterminant due to fragmentary condition. The predominance of the C1a pendant form corresponds to the reported occurrence of this artifact type from CA-SF-7, Crocker Facies. One Mytilus pendant was found, "a spoon type" with end perforation.

Of the few bone artifacts recovered, there were one antler wedge and two bone awls. The antler wedge is approximately 13cm in length and has clear evidence of blows on its larger end. Of the two bone awls, the larger has a carefully carved/ground tip somewhat resembling rattlesnake rattles (Figure 3).

In the groundstone category, the more prominent artifacts include two small medicine mortars.

CONCLUSION

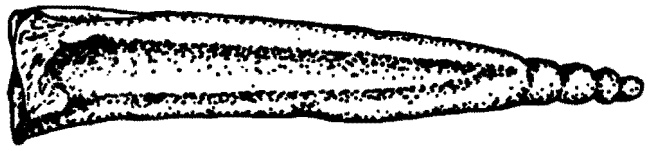
The assemblage from the Eastridge site primarily consists of grave data with bead lots. These data diagnostically and chronologically correspond well with other assemblages from the east San Francisco Bay, the San Francisco peninsula, and the Central Valley. The overall bead lot with its D, C, and F series is consistent with their temporal distribution previously reported in the literature and with the radiocarbon dates from the site. The mixed lot of C and F series represents a transition in bead types that is consistent with to the apparent temporal range established at this component of the deposit. A radiocarbon date of 1070 $\pm$ B.P. on the D1 bead type represents a Transitional Middle date for this bead form. This sequence of bead types extends their presence further south in the San Francisco Bay area than has been previously reported in the literature.

Inhumations exposed at the site contain a number of individuals in the flexed position and a mass grave of seven individuals in ventral extension. It is questioned whether ventral extensions bespeak of cultural influences seen in other regional sites of this general time period (Meganos Culture). The radiocarbon date on the ventral extensions of 890 B.P. seems to extend this otherwise Transitional Middle characteristic into the Early Phase I of the Late.

TABLE 4

SHELL PENDANTS FROM BURIAL CE AND UNIT CJ3

Cat. #	Material	Description	Provenience	Comment
CE-38	Haliotis	Incised disk	Backdirt	fragments
CE-40	Mytilus		Backdirt	broken
CE-46	Haliotis	Incised disk, sm	Backdirt	unperf.
CE-47	Haliotis	Incised disk	Backdirt	fragments
CE-48	Haliotis	Incised disk	Backdirt	
CE-49	Haliotis	Incised disk	Backdirt	fragments
CE-50	Haliotis	Incised disk	Backdirt	
CE-51	Haliotis	Plain disk	Backdirt	broken
CE-52	Haliotis	Incised disk	Backdirt	
CE-53	Haliotis	Incised disk	Backdirt	
CE-54	Haliotis	Incised disk	Backdirt	
CE-55	Haliotis	Incised disk, lg	Backdirt	broken
CE-56	Haliotis	Incised disk, lg	Backdirt	fragments
CE-57	Haliotis	Incised disk, lg	Backdirt	broken
CE-58	Haliotis	Incised disk, lg	Backdirt	fragment
CE-59	Haliotis	Ovoid disk	Backdirt	
CE-60	Haliotis	Trapezoid	Backdirt	poss frag
CJ3-40	Haliotis	Incised triangle	Unit CJ3 60-70cm	



#CE-029
Burial CE
backdirt
CA-SCl-327
Scale 1:1

Figure 3. Bone Awl

The Eastridge site with its small but diagnostic assemblage, has contributed key data to the picture of prehistory in the South Bay. The bead lots and other burial data expand the geographic area of previously recognized cultural traits, and also adds to our understanding of diffusion of these cultural characteristics within Central California.

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