

SURFACE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE CACHE CREEK  
AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN,  
LAKE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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ABSTRACT

During 1987, 34 Native American and 7 Euroamerican archaeological sites were identified along North Fork and main stem Cache Creek in Lake County approximately five miles northeast of Clear Lake. Five of the 34 Native American sites had historic materials. The study area encompasses some 3500 acres of public lands wilderness under joint Federal and State management. As part of long-term cultural resource management, a data base was established through intense examination and recordation of each site plus surface collection of specific cultural materials such as diagnostic projectile points, tools, beads and ornaments, and obsidian specimens for hydration analysis and sourcing. Preliminary results suggest four periods of use: 1) the Middle Archaic Period, 5000 to 3000 B.P.; 2) Phase 1 of the Emergent Period, A.D. 900 to 1500; 3) Phase 2 of the Emergent Period, A.D. 1500 to 1800; and 4) the Historic Period, from A.D. 1800.

INTRODUCTION

In late 1985, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) acquired private lands, known as Wilson Valley, as part of an ongoing federal and state land consolidation program to preserve sensitive and threatened wildlife. Wilson Valley became part of a larger public land holding, the Rocky Creek-Cache Creek Wilderness Study Area. A limited acreage remains in private ownership within this study area.

The study area is in Lake County, a part of the southern North Coast Ranges, east of Clear Lake. Beginning at the North Fork Cache Creek Bridge at Highway 20, the study area follows North Fork Cache Creek easterly to its confluence with the main stem of Cache Creek, includes the main stem of Cache Creek beginning about four miles northeast of the Clear Lake Dam to the above mentioned confluence, continues easterly to Harley Gulch where Cache Creek turns and runs southerly to the end of Wilson Valley, and includes all the intervening lands (see Figure 1).

To date, 34 Native American sites, 5 with historic materials, and 7 Euroamerican sites have been identified within the 3500 acre study area. These sites include the first 11 prehistoric sites recorded in Lake County from a 1947 River Basin Survey team (Drucker 1948, n.d.). Since that

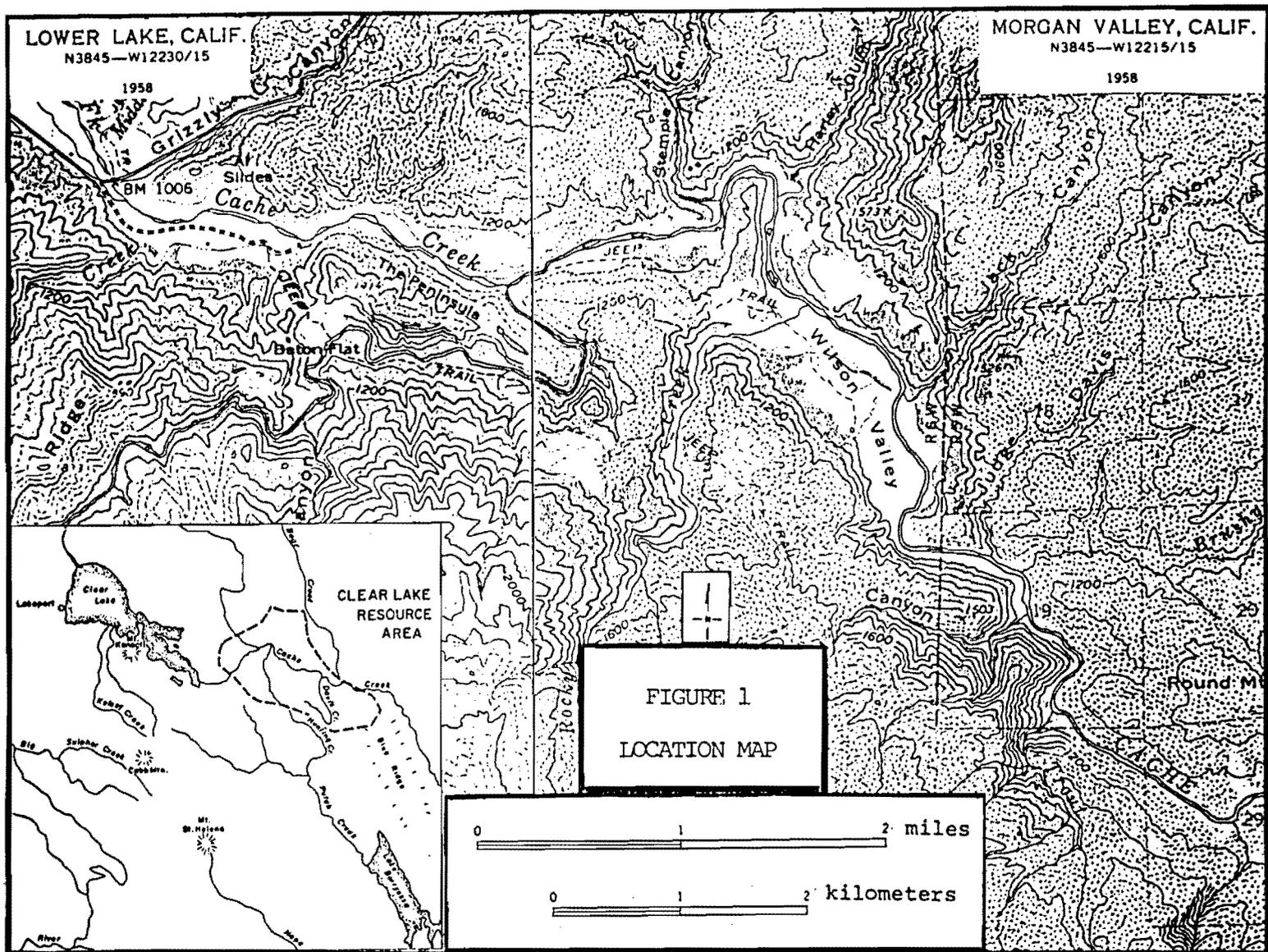


Figure 1. Study area location map.

time, one site, LAK-3, has been removed completely by a private hunting camp development. After the 1947 survey, several sites were recorded or re-recorded by Pilling and Fenanga (LAK-75) in 1949; Mauldin (LAK-11) and Meighan (LAK-77) in 1950; Branscomb (LAK-504, LAK-505, LAK-506, and LAK-507) in 1976; and Berg (LAK-1374) in 1983. Flaherty and Werner recently conducted a survey of the flood plains between the Bridge and LAK-2 for a gravel extraction permit, but did not add any new sites. It should be noted that an archaeological field party of five from Sacramento Junior College under the direction of J. B. Lillard excavated at LAK-11 and LAK-75 in 1935 (Neitz 1935).

#### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Research for the Cache Creek study area has several basic purposes:

1. Record all visible cultural resources within the Cache Creek corridor between Clear Lake Dam and the lower end of Wilson Valley.
2. Assess resource conditions.
3. Assess each site for its research potential, examine surface materials, and collect obsidian samples, beads, and other diagnostic artifacts for analysis.
4. Catalog collected materials and classify them by observable attributes.
5. Submit obsidian specimens for hydration analysis to establish "units of contemporaneity" (Fredrickson 1984).
6. Use diagnostic artifacts such as beads and projectile points for cross-comparative purposes.
7. Establish the temporal range, depth, and extent of each site where possible.
8. Use the Cultural Historical Approach following the hypotheses set forth under research domains of chronology; exchange; land use, subsistence, and settlement patterns; socio-cultural relationships and organization; and environment and site formation.

#### METHODS

##### Field Methods

Archaeological reconnaissance was carried out within the 3500 acre study area from December of 1986 through June of 1987. A crew of from 1 to 4 spent approximately 2 days per week methodically inspecting the landscape, collecting specific samples of cultural materials, recording and mapping cultural resources, and photo-documenting site conditions. Mapping was necessarily restricted by use of a hand held

compass; distances were paced or measured with a metric tape measure. An obsidian sample was collected from each site and site loci for sourcing, size, and hydration analysis. All diagnostic projectile points, beads, and ornaments were collected for typological and stylistic analysis. A mixed strategy survey was employed to fit the landscape. Crew members were spaced approximately 10 meters apart and used a zigzag transect within predetermined areas. All areas were surveyed except cliff faces and extremely brushy areas. Poison oak was minimal and did not constitute a problem in the study area; likewise for rattlesnakes. All sites were revisited by the author for an in-depth evaluation of use areas, relation to other sites in the area, tool kits, presence of midden, burials, exotic goods, historic materials, vegetation, water, slope, aspect, soils, useful plants, and geology.

#### Laboratory Methods

Collected cultural materials were cleaned, sorted by site and category, measured, weighed, and cataloged. The catalog and collection are curated at the Anthropological Studies Center, Collections Facility, Department of Anthropology, Sonoma State University under Accession Number 87-4. Obsidian specimens were submitted to the Obsidian Hydration Laboratory, Department of Anthropology, Sonoma State University under Hydration Laboratory Number 87-H-537. Diagnostic artifacts were compared with specimens from collections located at Sonoma State University, University of California, Davis, Sacramento State University, and the Lowie Museum, Berkeley. Dating scheme B1 (Bennyhoff and Hughes 1987:149), see Table 1, was used in conjunction with obsidian hydration analysis (Origer 1982), archaeological site evaluation, and the ethnographic record (Barrett 1908, 1919; DuBois 1939; Green 1880; Hudson 1897, 1902; Johnson 1978; Kroeber 1925, 1932, 1962; Mauldin 1950; McKern 1922, 1923; McClellan 1953; Menefee 1873; Merriam 1903, 1957; Palmer 1881; Powers 1877; and Rogers 1891) in temporally ordering the sites.

#### Other Research Methods

Field notes, manuscripts, catalogs, and collections were examined at the Northwest Information Center and the Anthropological Studies Center at Sonoma State University; the Collections Department of the University of California at Davis; the Archaeology Laboratory at Sacramento State University; the Archives at the Grace Hudson Museum; and the Archaeological Research Facility of the Robert H. Lowie Museum of Anthropology, Berkeley.

#### THE SITES

Sites consist of lithic scatters, hunting areas, major villages with ceremonial centers and burial grounds, habitation sites, and possible hunting camps, satellite housing areas, refuge camps, and isolated housepits.

The sites in the study area are located mainly on river

Table 1.

Alternative dating schemes for the central California archaeological sequence.

1987		BENNYHOFF AND HUGHES: SHELL BEAD AND ORNAMENT EXCHANGE				
1800	scheme A2		scheme B1		scheme B2	
	Phase 2B		2B		2B	
1500	Phase 2A		2A		2A	
	Phase 1C	Period	1C	Period	1C	Period
1B			1B			
1000	Phase 1B	Late	1A	Late	1A	1000
			Middle/Late Period Transition			
500	Phase 1A	Period	Terminal	Period		500
			Late			
A.D. 0	Middle/Late Period Transition	Middle	Intermediate	Middle		A.D. 0
			Early			
B.C. 500	Terminal	Period	Early/Middle Period Transition	Period		B.C. 500
			Late		Windmill E	
1000	Intermediate	Middle	D3	Middle		1000
			Early		D2	
1500	Terminal Windmill (Bear Creek, E)	Period	D1	Period		1500
			Early/Middle Period Transition		C3	
2000	Terminal Windmill (Phelps, D)	Period	C2	Period		2000
			Terminal		C1	
2500	Late Windmill (Erich, C)	Early	B2	Early		2500
			Windmill		B1	
3000	Middle Windmill (Goldman, B)	Period	A	Period		3000
			Early Windmill (Blossom, A)			

Alternative dating schemes for the central California archaeological sequence.

terraces from 20 to 60 feet above both branches of Cache Creek. Several sites are on higher terraces and ridge tops. Aspect does not appear to be a factor in site location. No spring sites have been noted. Ecotonal locations enhanced the human exploitation of riparian, chaparral, mixed oak, pine forest, and grassland resources.

#### RESULTS

As a result of the analysis set forth above, occupation of each site within the study area is tentatively assigned to one of four time periods as follows (see Table 2), subject to further information and interpretation:

1. The Middle Archaic Period, 5000-3000 B.P.
2. Phase 1 of the Emergent Period, A.D. 900-1500
3. Phase 2 of the Emergent Period, A.D. 1500-1800
4. The Historic Period, after A.D. 1800

Data (see Figure 2) so far suggest the following six sites had the earliest prehistoric use: LAK-1575, a hilltop site; LAK-2, on a high terrace; LAK-1563, on a ridge top with several knolls; LAK-1569/H, on a long high terrace; LAK-1570, 10 acres of chamise on a high terrace; and LAK-1580, on a narrow high terrace. Projectile point typologies, obsidian hydration rim readings, obsidian sourcing, anomalous soils, and the absence of hopper mortars, house pits, beads, and apparent midden are evidence used to assign these sites to the Middle Archaic Period.

The projectile points (see Figure 3) from these sites are larger, sometimes cruder, with a number of stemmed and concave base points present. There is a milling slab and a rough river cobble pestle present at one site but milling tools are absent at the remaining 5 sites. Rock rings, present at one site, may or may not indicate great age. While Borax Lake obsidian makes up the largest percentage of obsidian used at these sites, the Napa Valley and Mt. Konocti sources are well represented. Mean obsidian hydration rim readings (Napa and Konocti correlated to Borax Lake temporal equivalency) for these sites (n=18) range from 7.0 to 4.1 microns with an average of 5.5 microns overall (see Table 3).

TABLE 2.

## CHRONOLOGICAL ORDERING OF SITES BY TIME PERIOD

<u>Site</u>	<u>Historic</u>	<u>Phase 2</u>	<u>Phase 1</u>	<u>Middle Archaic</u>
LAK-8	X			
LAK-77	X			
LAK-504	X			
LAK-506	X			
LAK-507	X			
LAK-1561/H	X			
LAK-1562/H	X			
LAK-1564H	X			
LAK-1565H	X			
LAK-1566	X			
LAK-1567/H	X			
LAK-1574H	X			
LAK-1572/H	X	X		
LAK-1		X		
LAK-4		X		
LAK-5		X		
LAK-7		X		
LAK-11		X		
LAK-1560		X		
LAK-1568		X		
LAK-1571		X		
LAK-1573		X		
LAK-1576		X		
LAK-1578		X		
LAK-1579		X		
LAK-6		X	X	
LAK-9		X	X	
LAK-10		X	X	
LAK-75		X	X	
LAK-505			X	
LAK-2		X	X	X
LAK-1563				X
LAK-1570				X
LAK-1575				X
LAK-1580				X
LAK-1569/H	X			X

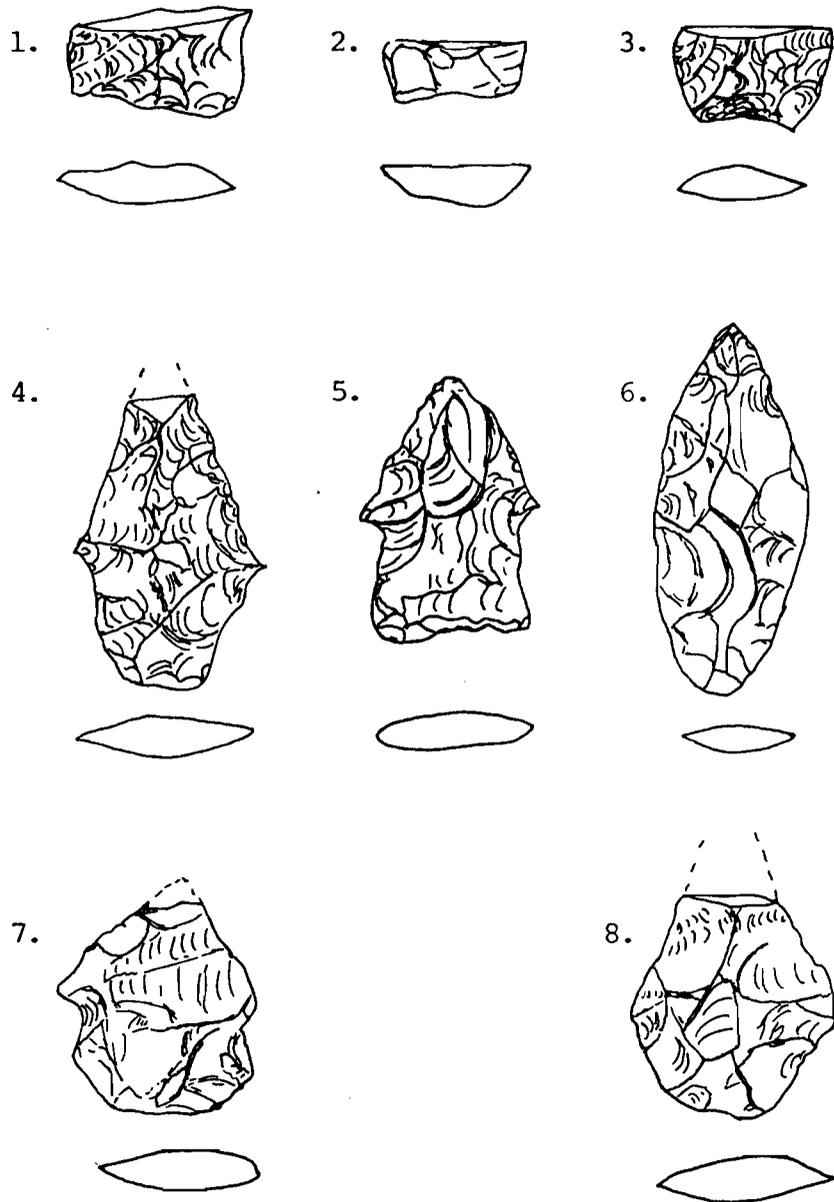
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### EXPLANATION OF FIGURE 3

Item #	Catalog #	Site Trinomial	Obsidian Source
1.	87-4-530	CA-LAK-1570	Mt. Konocti
2.	87-4-635	CA-LAK-1570	Borax Lake
3.	87-4-529	CA-LAK-1570	Mt. Konocti
4.	87-4-541	CA-LAK-1570	Borax Lake
5.	87-4-552	Isolate	Napa
6.	87-4-640	CA-LAK-1570	Borax Lake
7.	87-4-189	CA-LAK-1575	Borax Lake
8.	87-4-514	CA-LAK-1570	Borax Lake

FIGURE 3

PROJECTILE POINTS FROM MIDDLE ARCHAIC SITES



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Figure 3. Projectile points from Middle Archaic sites.

TABLE 3.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF OBSIDIAN HYDRATION MEASUREMENTS

ALL SITES

BL = Borax Lake  
 K = Konocti  
 N = Napa

Total n = 37

\* Napa and Konocti obsidian hydration values correlated to Borax Lake temporal equivalency (after Tremaine, Origer, and Fredrickson 1986).

<u>Rim Readings in Microns</u>	<u>Obsidian Distribution by Source</u>
1.0	BL BL
.2	BL
.4	BL
.6	BL
.8	K N
2.0	BL BL
.2	BL
.4	
.6	BL BL
.8	N BL BL BL
3.0	BL
.2	
.4	
.6	BL BL
.8	
4.0	N
.2	BL
.4	BL BL K
.6	BL
.8	
5.0	
.2	
.4	BL N
.6	BL BL BL
.8	BL
6.0	
.2	K
.4	N N K BL
.6	
.8	
7.0	K

Six sites appear to have been in use at least as early as Phase 1 of the Emergent Period, ca. A.D. 900 to 1500 (see Figure 4). They are LAK-75, LAK-2, LAK-6, LAK-9, LAK-10, and LAK-505. This proposition is based on tool types (see Figure 5), *Olivella* bead type M2a (see Figure 6), basketry awls, obsidian hydration rim readings, presence of manos, grinding slabs, hopper mortar slabs, and several type B2 shaped pestles (see Figures 7). Housepits are present at four of the six sites, but in a poor state of preservation. Two Phase 1 sites (LAK-75 and LAK-9) have medium large ceremonial "dance house" depressions or sudatories which are in a very deteriorated condition, most likely due to the aging process. Burials are eroding out of the ground or being moved up by ground squirrel activity at the same two sites. It is possible that one other site (LAK-10) from this time period has burials in the small midden mounds located among its housepits.

Sourcing suggests Borax Lake obsidian was predominantly used. Limited obsidian hydration analysis (n=9) for the Phase 1 sites includes no Konocti and only one Napa specimen. Mean obsidian hydration rim readings (Napa correlated to Borax Lake temporal equivalency) for these sites range from 3.7 to 2.6 microns with an average of 3.0 microns.

Eighteen sites (see Figure 8), LAK-75, LAK-11, LAK-1, LAK-4, LAK-2, LAK-1576, LAK-5, LAK-1568, LAK-6, LAK-7, LAK-9, LAK-10, LAK-1571, LAK-1572/H, LAK-1573, LAK-1560, LAK-1578, and LAK-1579, exhibit indications of use during Phase 2 of the Emergent Period, ca. A.D. 1500 to 1800. These are distinguished as follows: the habitation areas have well developed midden and well defined housepits with the exception of two sites, (1) LAK-4, where gravel extraction disturbed the lower terrace of the site and obscured most of its features, and (2) LAK-75, where Cal Trans stockpiled site midden for road work.

The Rattlesnake Corner-notch projectile point is present along with other late point types (see Figure 9). Obsidian hydration analysis confirms the temporal placement of these sites. Sourcing shows that between 92 and 96% Borax Lake obsidian was being used. Many hopper mortar slabs with river cobble pestles are present; however, only one site, LAK-1560, has bedrock mortars. Incised bone tubes (a major innovation), miniature abalone pendants, and thin lipped olivella beads are present (see Figure 6). The Clam Shell Disk Bead Complex is fully represented along with magnesite disk beads. Clam shell and magnesite disk beads were being manufactured. There is evidence that mortuary practices had changed to include cremations as well as burials at LAK-7, LAK-9, LAK-11, and LAK-75 during this time period. The evidence is calcined and burned beads, ornaments, and bone in ashy midden.

While some Napa and Konocti obsidian is present at Phase 2 sites, use of the Borax Lake source again predominates.

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EXPLANATION OF FIGURE 5

Item #	Catalog #	Description	Site Trinomial
1.	87-4-52	Green chert tool	CA-LAK-505
2.	87-4-53	Basalt knife	CA-LAK-505
3.	87-4-112	BL obs. barbed proj. point	CA-LAK-6
4.	87-4-50	BL obs. tool	CA-LAK-505
5.	L-16075	BL obs. drill	CA-LAK-75
6.	87-4-382	BL obs. pentagonal point	CA-LAK-9
7.	1-87418	BL obs. serrated CN point	CA-LAK-6
8.	L-16101	BL obs. serrated CN point	CA-LAK-75

FIGURE 5

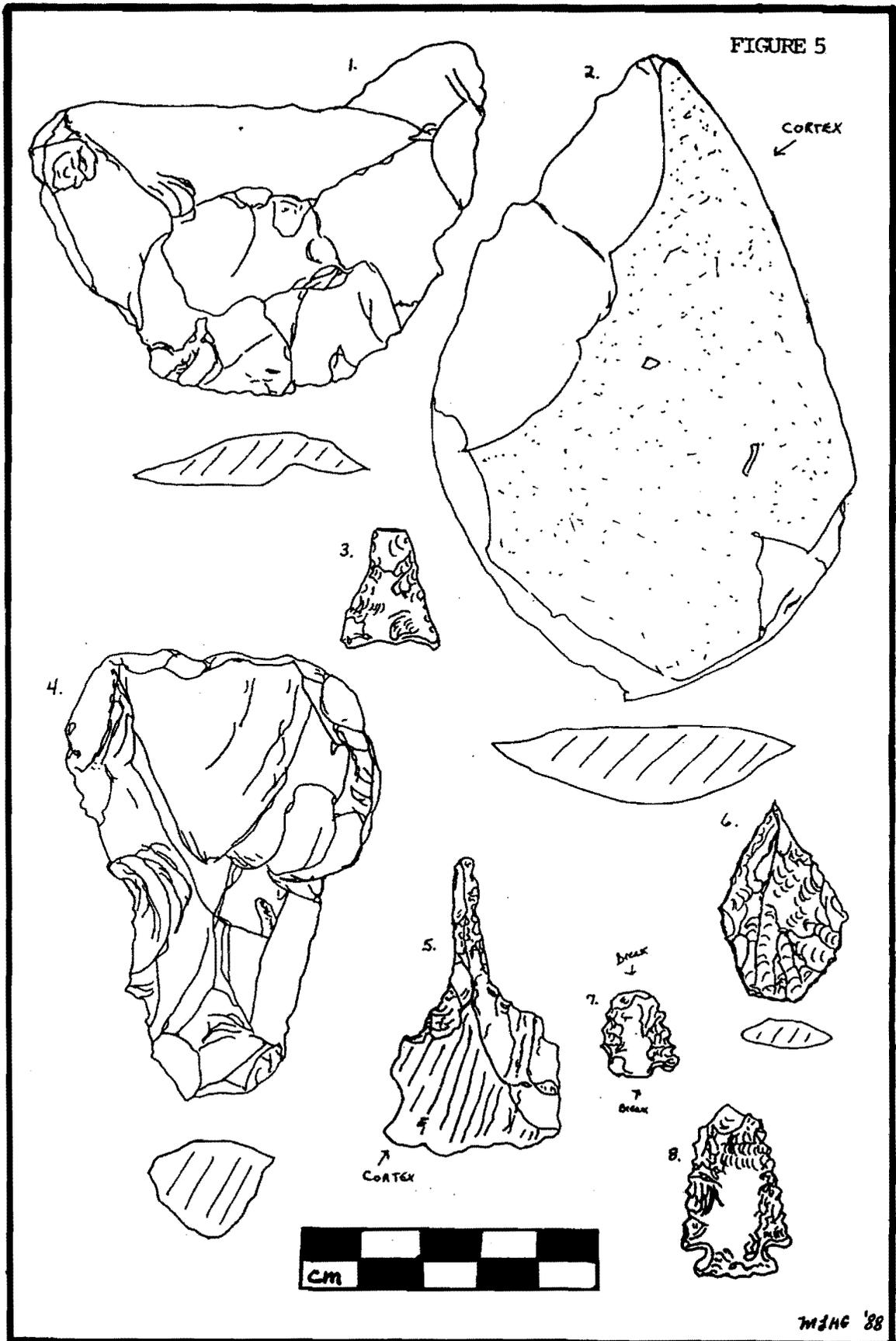
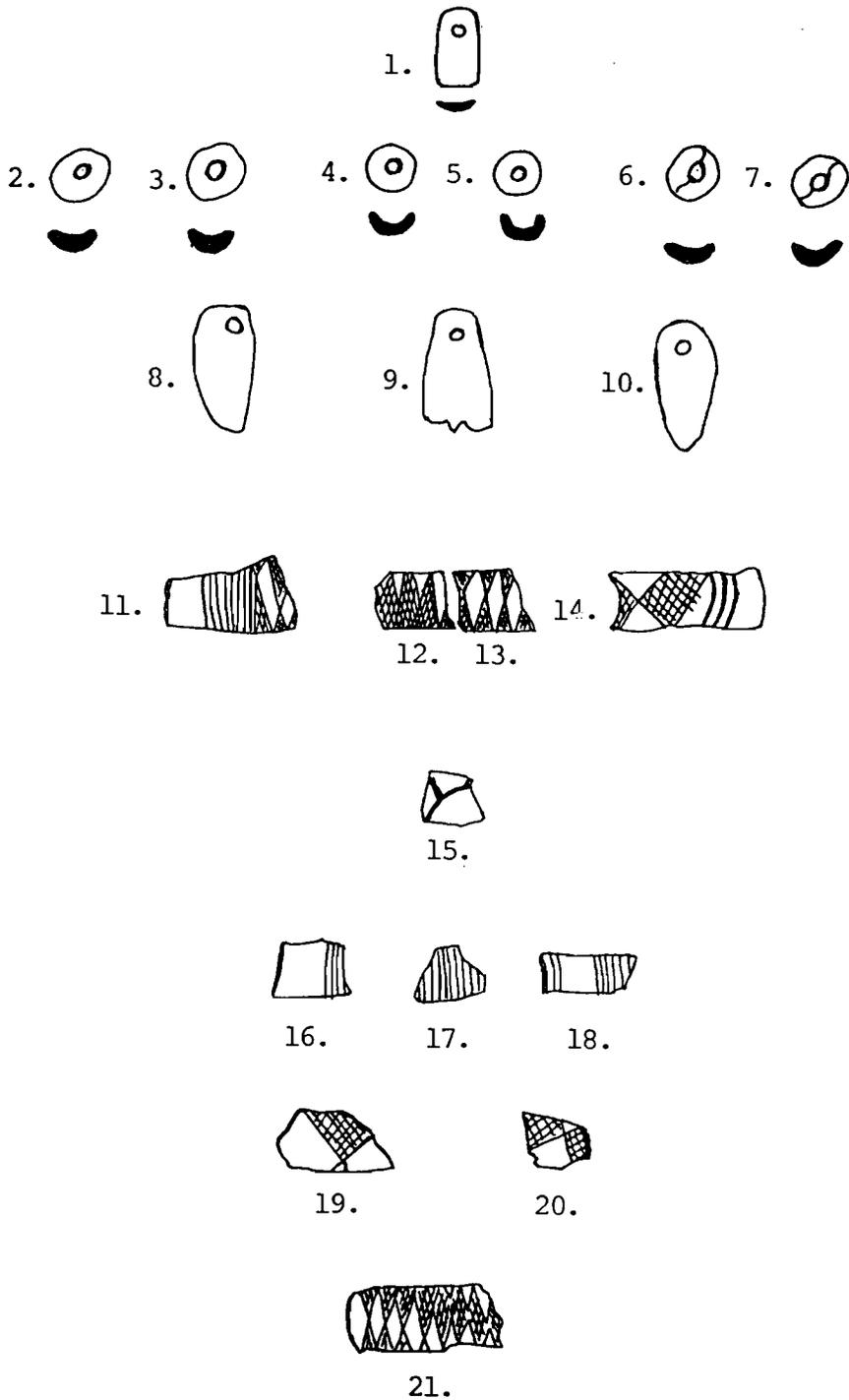


Figure 5. Tools associated with Phase 1 sites.

EXPLANATION OF FIGURE 6

Item #	Catalog #	Description	Site Trinomial
1.	87-4-604	Olivella M2a thin rectangle	CA-LAK-6
2.	87-4-460	Olivella Ela thin lipped	CA-LAK-9
3.	87-4-459	Olivella Ela thin lipped	CA-LAK-9
4.	87-4-468	Olivella K1 cupped	CA-LAK-9
5.	87-4-461	Olivella K1 cupped	CA-LAK-9
6.	87-4-467	Olivella Ela thin lipped	CA-LAK-9
7.	87-4-466	Olivella Ela thin lipped	CA-LAK-9
8.	87-4-470	Abalone ornament, miniature	CA-LAK-9
9.	87-4-472	Abalone ornament, miniature	CA-LAK-9
10.	87-4-471	Abalone ornament, miniature	CA-LAK-9
11.	87-4-480	Incised bone fragment	CA-LAK-9
12.	87-4-483	Incised bone fragment	CA-LAK-9
13.	87-4-484	Incised bone fragment	CA-LAK-9
14.	87-4-479	Incised bone fragment	CA-LAK-9
15.	87-4-488	Incised bone fragment	CA-LAK-9
16.	87-4-486	Incised bone fragment	CA-LAK-9
17.	87-4-487	Incised bone fragment	CA-LAK-9
18.	87-4-485	Incised bone fragment	CA-LAK-9
19.	87-4-48	Incised bone fragment	CA-LAK-9
20.	87-4-482	Incised bone fragment	CA-LAK-9
21.	87-4-634	Incised bone fragment	CA-LAK-9

FIGURE 6



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Figure 6. Beads, ornaments, and incised bone.

FIGURE 7

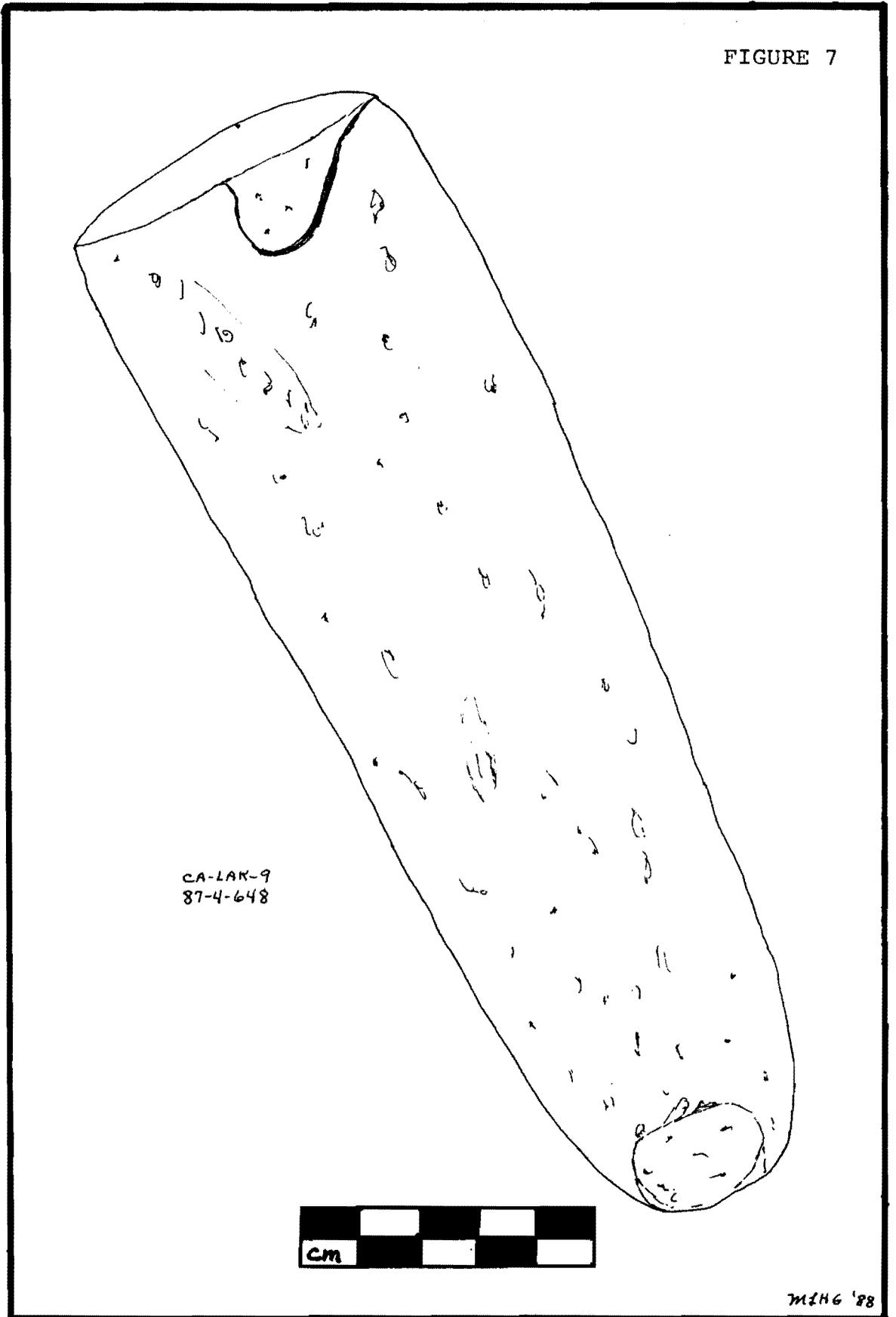


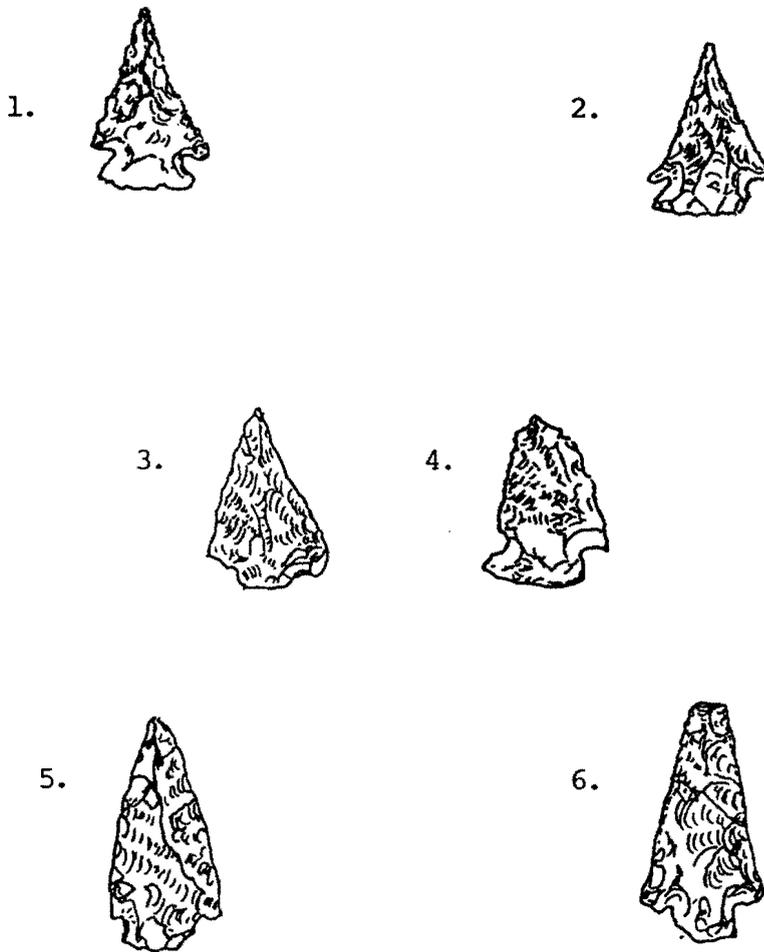
Figure 7. Flat-ended pestle.

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EXPLANATION OF FIGURE 9

Item #	Catalog #	Description	Site Trinomial
1.	87-4-275	BL obs. Rattlesnake Corner-notch	CA-LAK-7
2.	87-4-274	BL obs. Rattlesnake Corner-notch	CA-LAK-7
3.	87-4-277	BL obs. corner-notch	CA-LAK-7
4.	87-4-278	BL obs. corner-notch	CA-LAK-7
5.	87-4-63	BL obs. corner-notch	CA-LAK-1
6.	87-4-376	BL obs. corner-notch	CA-LAK-9

FIGURE 9



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Figure 9. Projectile points associated with Phase 2 sites.

Mean obsidian hydration rim readings (Napa and Konocti correlated to Borax Lake temporal equivalency) for Phase 2 sites (n=10) range from 2.2 to 1.0 microns with an average of 1.6 microns.

Of the eighteen Phase 2 sites, four (see Figure 10) are ethnographic Chenposel Hill Patwin villages: Holokome (LAK-11) on the terrace above Grizzly Creek where it empties into the North Fork of Cache Creek; Talok (LAK-1) where Perkins Creek exits the canyon; Opi (LAK-4) at the confluence of North Fork and the main stem of Cache Creek; and Kuikui (LAK-7) on the east side of Cache Creek opposite Elk Ridge at the north end of Wilson Valley. Holokome and Kuikui are notable for their very large ceremonial dance house depressions; both are more than 22 meters in diameter. These can probably be associated with the Kukusu, hesi, and other related cult societies.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 sites appear to exhibit the Hill Patwin characteristic of a single larger building for multiple use as a sudatory and a ceremonial place as opposed to their Pomo neighbors where these were separate buildings.

The last distinct period of Native American use is the Historic Period (see Figure 11) as manifested at twelve sites: LAK-507, LAK-506, LAK-504, LAK-77, LAK-1561/H, LAK-1562/H, LAK-8, LAK-1572/H, and possibly LAK-1567/H, LAK-1564H, and LAK-1565H. All of these sites, with the possible exception of LAK-1564H and LAK-1565H, have evidence of Native American use. Sites not specifically Euroamerican are not included here. These sites are temporally placed based on several premises differing from site to site, including the absence of midden or poorly developed midden at housepit sites and the presence of deep green bottle glass tools (see Figure 12), pre-1900 iridescent glass, metal objects such as hinged lids and wire-handled coffee pots, tin cans, and white glass beads datable to ca. 1700 to 1840. These sites, with the exception of LAK-506, are also notable for the limited amount of obsidian. Several of these sites may represent refuge locations for Native Americans escaping from 1) the late Mission Period, or 2) the Indian reservations established in the 1850's and 1860's. This remains to be proven.

The Historic Period is also represented by early homesteads dating from ca. 1860 such as those belonging to the Daniel Hansons, Grigsbys, Batons, Burdicks, and the Wilsons and Brenards of Wilson Valley. It is my contention that some of these early homesteaders may have employed Native Americans as ranch hands. Evidence for this has yet to be found, however, the Chenposel and Lolsel were still functioning as Hill Patwin tribelets during the 1870's (Powers 1877; DuBois 1939) which is well into the homestead era.

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FIGURE 12 - GLASS TOOLS



CA-LAK-1562/H  
87-4-58



CA-LAK-8  
87-4-361



CA-LAK-507  
87-4-45



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Figure 12. Glass tools associated with historic sites.

#### FUTURE RESEARCH

This archaeological research is completely based on surface data as the first step in providing a foundation for further archaeological undertakings. There are several areas for future research: 1) involvement of Native Americans in site management; 2) detailed site mapping (to be carried out by a field school in 1988); 3) continued site monitoring; 4) excavations by field schools at sites with heavy disturbance and research potential; 5) paleoenvironmental studies and soil analysis; 6) archive research to establish connections between homesteaders and Native Americans; and 7) management of sites with burials eroding out or being moved to the surface by ground squirrel activity.

#### CONCLUSION

Using a Cultural Historical approach, archaeological data were acquired and analyzed to produce a temporal and spatial synthesis with an emphasis on identification. The Cache Creek study area, extremely rich in prehistory and history, provided surface archaeological data as evidence for establishing a tentative chronology representing four periods of use. Efforts were directed towards creating a framework for future archaeological undertakings in the Cache Creek study area.

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