Donald E. Lawyer

Archeological Excavations

at

CHILCOOT ROCKSHELTER

Plumas County, California

by
L.A. Payen
and
D.S. Boloyan

State of California
Department of Parks and Recreation
Division of Beaches and Parks
Interpretive Service Section

ARCHEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT CHILCOOT ROCKSHELTER PLUMAS COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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ARCHEOLOGICAL REPORT

No. 4

State of California
Department of Parks and Recreation
Division of Beaches and Parks
Interpretive Services Section

December, 1961

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
TECHNICAL SERVICES OFFICE

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INTERPRETIVE SERVICES SECTION
DIVISION OF BEACHES AND PARKS
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

PREFACE

The archeological excavation of the Chilcoot Rockshelter, as documented in this present report, was made possible with funds provided to the State Division of Beaches and Parks through Interagency Agreement #350919 with the State Department of Water Resources.

With a vast program of water use and development in progress in this state it was realized that destruction of a certain portion of the state's historical and archeological resources would occur. To keep such a loss to a minimum the Department of Water Resources initiated an archeological survey and salvage program for those areas under its jurisdiction. Such a program, as it unfolds, will do much toward saving for future generations information and objects of the former cultures of the State of California. Such work will stand as a monument, in its way, as will the dams, reservoirs, canals and other engineering features of this great water project. It is good to know that our state has men whose vision encompasses many aspects of human needs and interests. Their vision and planning not only provide us with a basic requirement, water, but help us in a better understanding of our environment, and our history and prehistory through these archeological studies.

Francis A. Riddell, Archeologist
State Division of Beaches and Parks

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L. A. Payen and D. S. Boloyan

INTRODUCTION

An archeological reconnaissance of the Frenchman Dam and Reservoir, Plumas County, California, was carried out in June of 1960 (Riddell, 1960). The survey, done for the State Department of Water Resources, revealed seven archeological sites in and about the reservoir area (see Map 1). One of these sites was a rockshelter containing cultural debris. This site was designated Plu-44, and further labeled with the name Chilcoot Rockshelter, after a nearby community of that name.

The crew consisted of the authors and Philip Coleman, and it is to the latter whom the authors express their gratitude for assistance in the field, and especially for the preparation of the figures following. Mr. Coleman also made an examination of the faunal remains, for which we thank him. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Riddell for his guidance and helpful comments on this project. And above all we want to thank Mr. Jack Garber, Resident Engineer, and his staff for their many courtesies extended to us during our work in the project area. They made our work easier and more pleasant than it would have been otherwise by their friendly and cooperative spirit.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

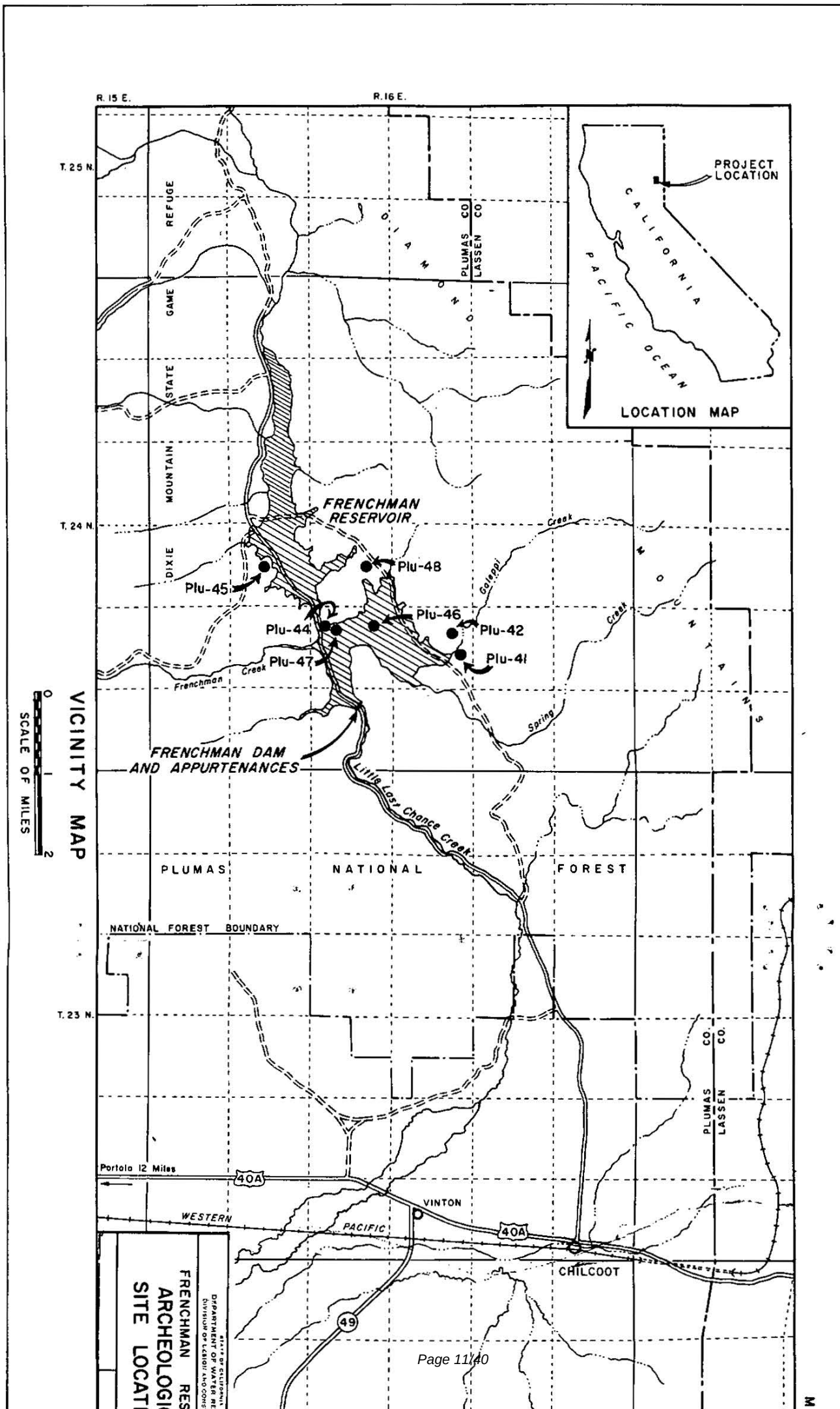
The Chilcoot Rockshelter is located in a small canyon in the area known as Little Last Chance Valley, eight miles north of the town of Chilcoot, in eastern Plumas County at an elevation of about 5600 feet. The canyon containing the shelter has a north and south axis, and is in a formation of volcanic rock interspersed with layers of ash of the same origin. The site is at the base of an outcrop of rock where the ash strata have weathered away forming a small grotto in the cliff (Pl.1a). This grotto, or rockshelter, is approximately 25 feet wide and 15 feet deep. Two deposit-filled recesses extend back an unknown distance on the north and south sides of the shelter (see Fig. 1). The entrance faces west, and is about 35 feet above the canyon floor, at the top of the talus slope. Above the shelter is a nearly vertical cliff of rock approximately 40 feet high which slopes in at the entrance forming the ceiling five to ten feet above the present floor (Figs. 2 and 3). The Chilcoot Rockshelter is one of a number of small caves in the area, but none of the others visited had any evidence of having been used by the Indians.

Vegetation in the area of the site consists of scattered Jeffrey Pine, Pinus jeffreii, with the open hill areas covered with sagebrush, Artemisia sp. A small grove of Quaking Aspen, Populus tremuloides, as well as Mountain Mahogany, Cercocarpus sp., grow on the west slope of the canyon. The floor of the canyon is covered with a growth of willow,

a.

b.

Plate I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T. 25 N.
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T. 23 N.
PROJECT LOCATION
CALIFORNIA
PACIFIC OCEAN
LOCATION MAP
PLUMAS CO
LASSEN CO
DIXIE MOUNTAIN STATE GAME REFUGE
FRENCHMAN RESERVOIR
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Frenchman Creek
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VICINITY MAP
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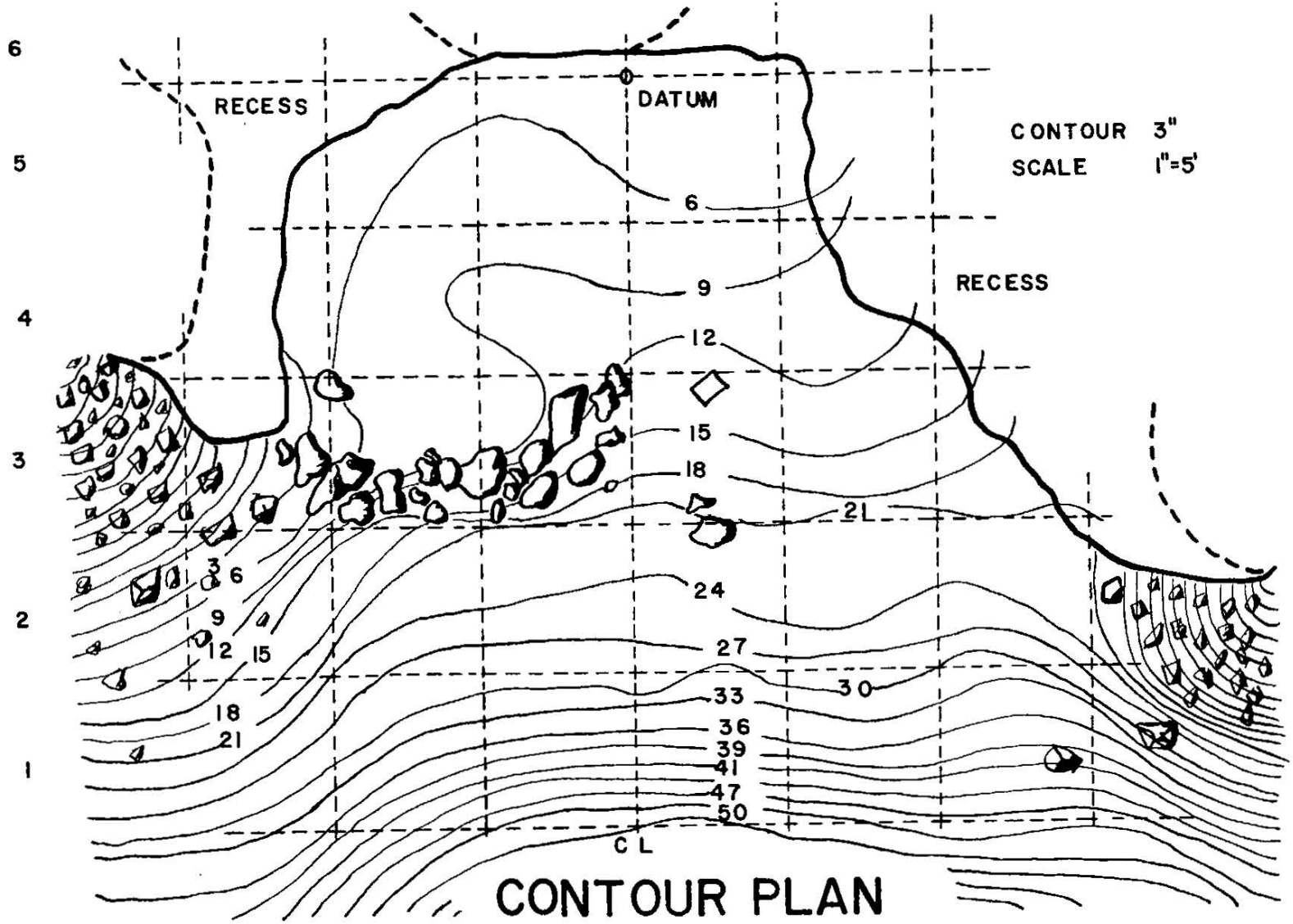
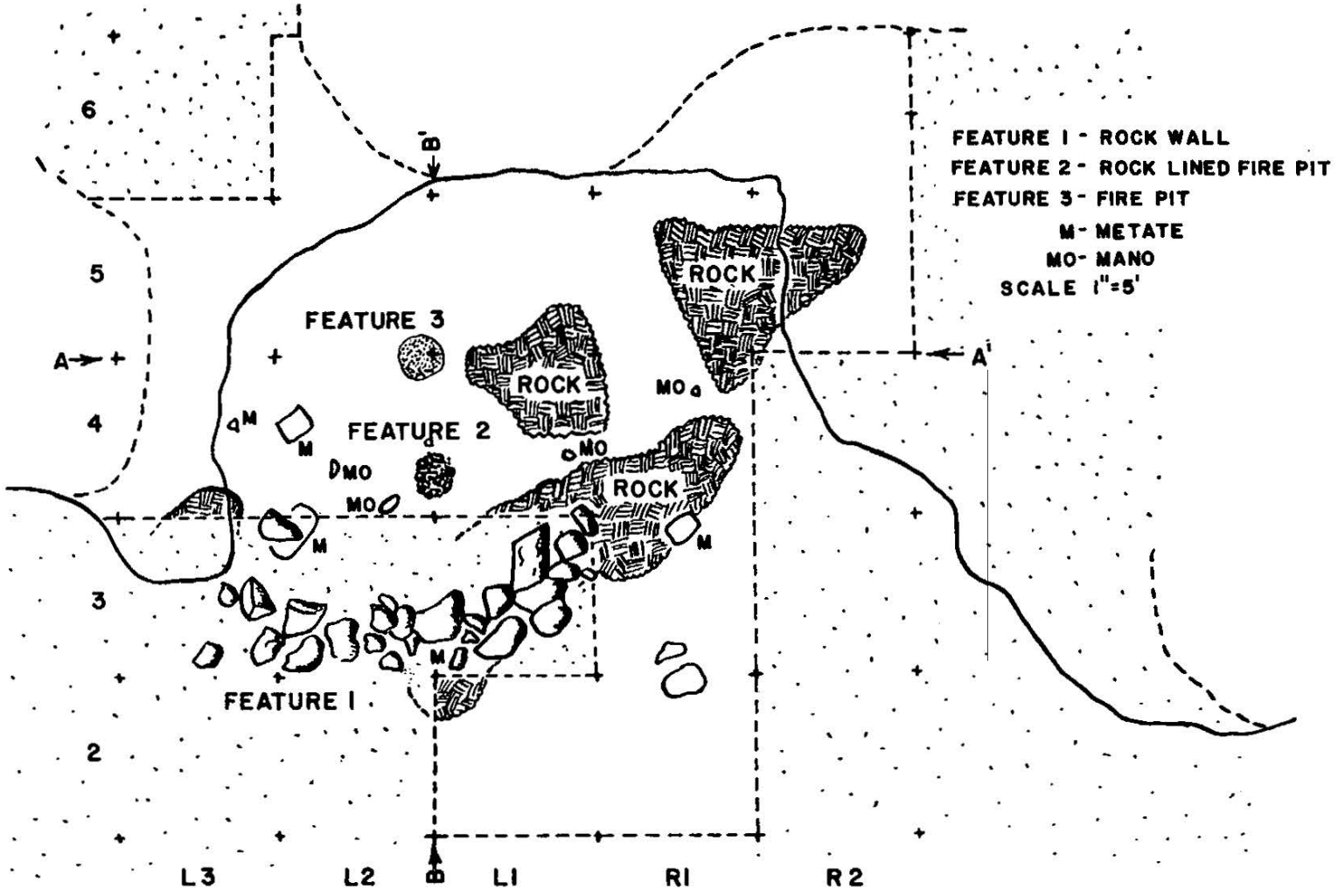


CONTOUR PLAN

Figure 1



GROUND PLAN

Figure 2

Salix sp., and meadow grass. Wild birds and mammals were abundant in the region and deer, coyote, and various small rodents were noted near the shelter. The stream in front of the site (Little Last Chance Creek) contains fish and fresh water clams.

A consideration of climate is of importance because of the limit it places on the time and length of annual occupation of the area by the Indians. Summers are cool with thunder showers common. The summer nights are often cold and become increasingly so as fall approaches. Winter storms usually begin in November, and from then on a long and severe winter sets in.

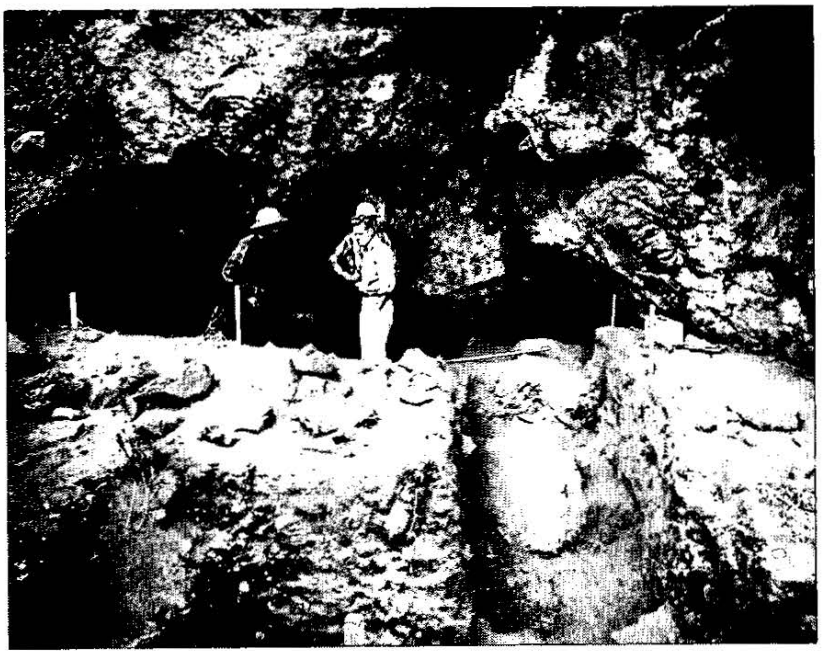
METHOD OF EXCAVATION

The surface of the shelter was divided into five foot square units to form a grid established from a line east and west through the center of the site. The units were numbered according to the location, right or left of this line, and from front to back of the grotto (Fig. 1). This system of establishing a horizontal control, or grid, was used in order to expand the units into the recesses. Vertical control of materials was obtained by using arbitrary six inch levels measured from the surface. The deposit was stripped off in these six inch levels and passed through 3/8 inch galvanized wire mesh. All artifacts, and refuse materials such as chips, bone and shell were saved. Several units were excavated to the depth of 80 inches, but the average depth reached for the overall excavation was 30 inches. The small yield of materials below this depth made it unprofitable to excavate the entire site to the sterile base material.

The artifacts and refuse items, bagged according to unit and depth, were washed, sorted and cataloged on arrival at the laboratory. The materials were then classified and data were compiled for the writing of the report. The collection is housed at the State Indian Museum, Sacramento, under Accession #234. Perhaps sometime in the future this collection, along with the other artifacts collected on the July survey, will be returned to the project area for display in some public facility for the enjoyment and education of visitors.

THE DEPOSIT

Occupational refuse was recovered to a maximum depth of 72 inches in a light gray, sandy deposit. This deposit contained scattered charcoal throughout, with the greatest amount, or concentration, in the upper levels. The cave fill was dry and very dusty at the time of the excavation, but the open nature of the shelter allows snow and rain to seasonally dampen the deposit. Graph 1 shows the relative number of items recovered by depth and clearly indicates that the amount of material decreases with the increase in depth. Considerable amounts of roof scale were present in the fill in the form of small angular fragments of rock. In the lower part of the occupation deposit, and resting on the sterile base (a yellow sand with angular rocks), were several large sections of fallen roof rock. These large blocks appear to have fallen prior to the occupation of the site, but several smaller ones were included in the occupation fill indicating fall during this period. Time did not allow any extensive exploration of the base sand of the shelter.

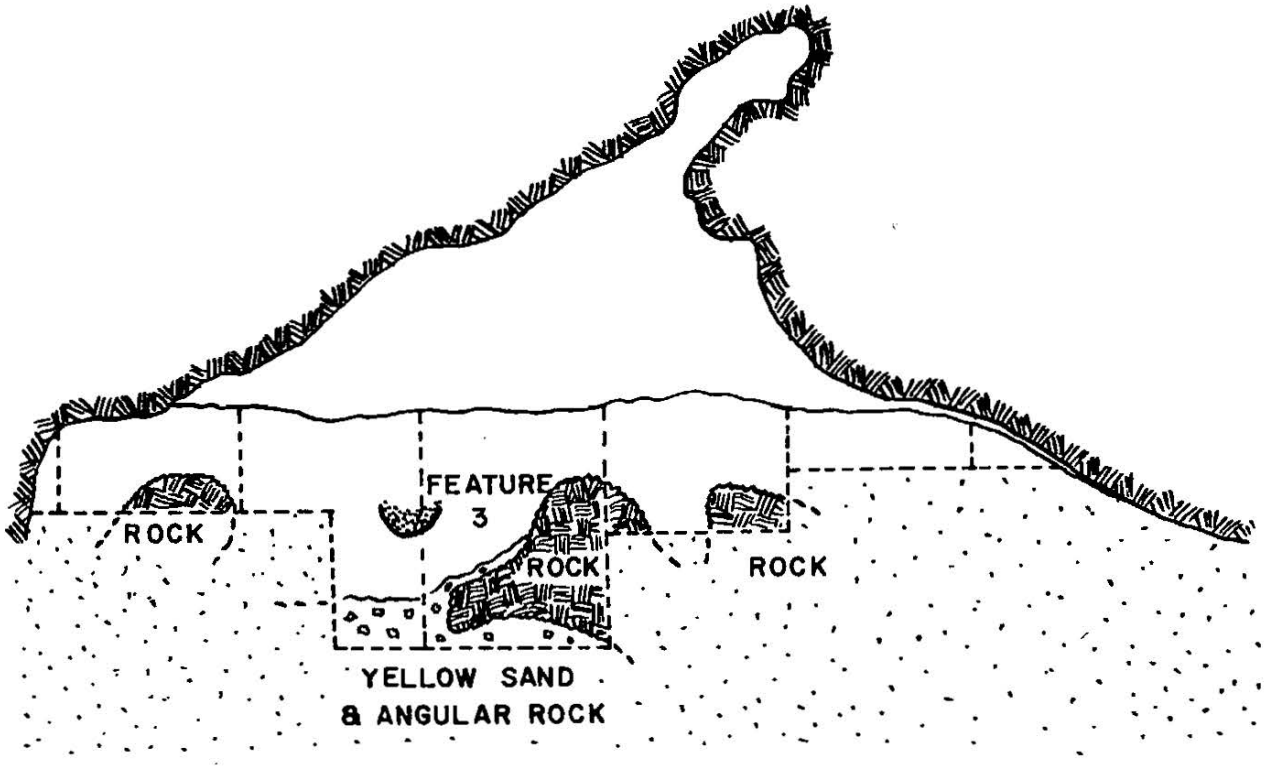


a.

b.

c.

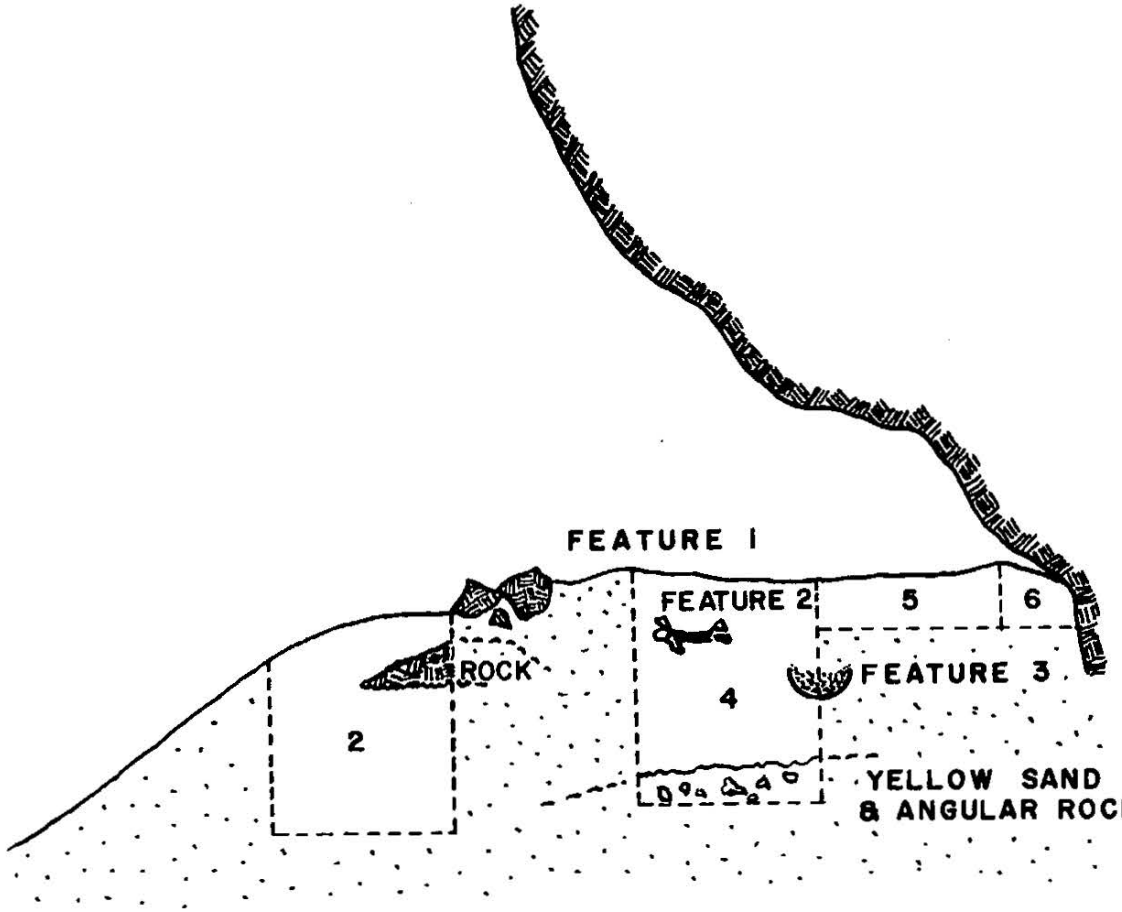
Plate 2



CROSS SECTION A-A'

SCALE 1"=5'

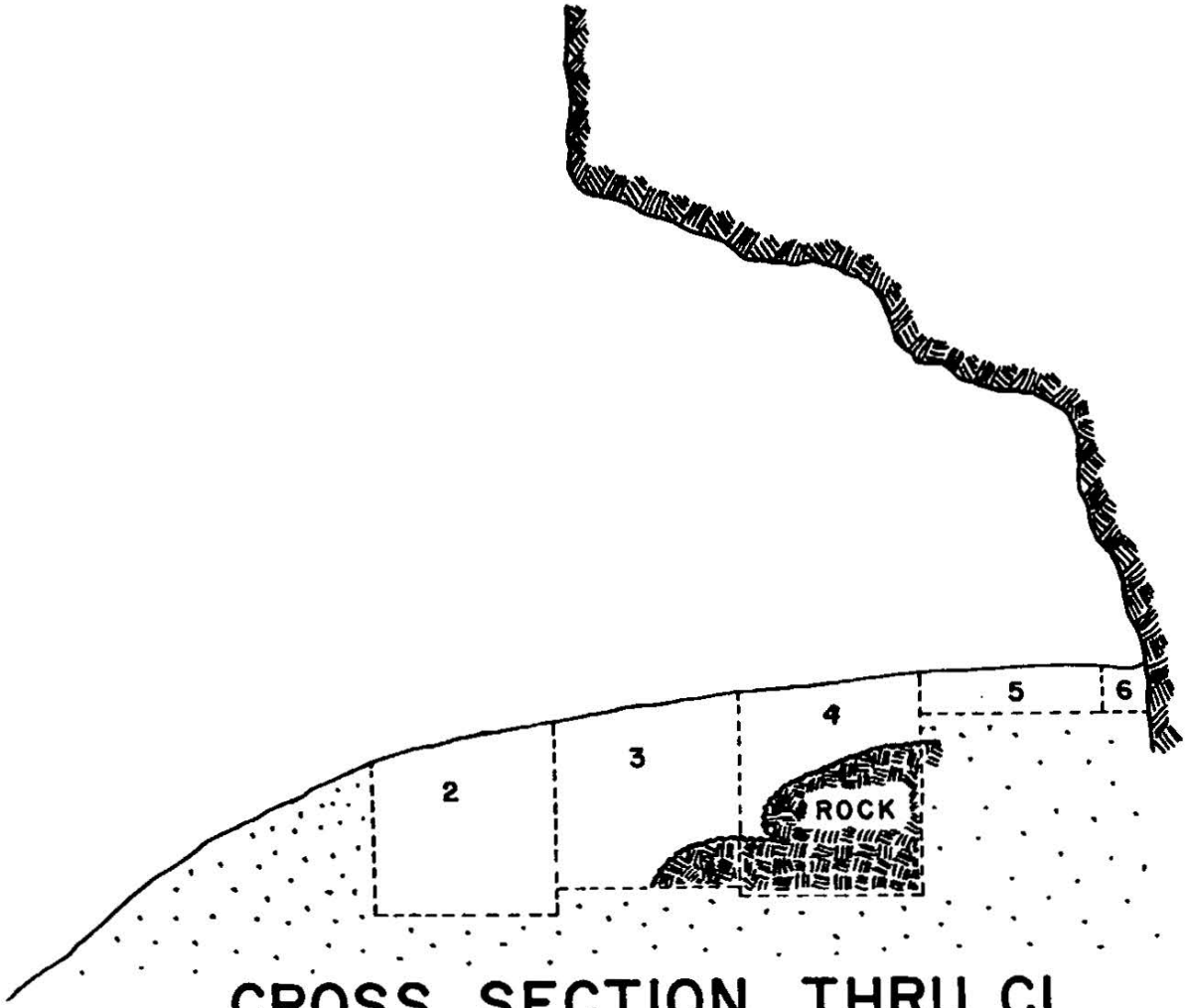
Figure 3



CROSS SECTION B-B'

SCALE 1"=5'

Figure 4



CROSS SECTION THRU CL

SCALE 1"=5'

Figure 5

The nature and origin of the occupation deposit is somewhat puzzling. The fill is not that of dark midden, as often found in living areas, but is a sandy fill with occupation debris scattered through it. No stratigraphy could be seen and the soil sample also indicated that the fill was the same from top to bottom. The recesses were almost devoid of any appreciable amount of charcoal or chips which suggests that the filling of the shelter was independent (or partly so) of the activities of the inhabitants. The nature and quantity of artifacts suggest no long span of occupation, perhaps not more than several hundred years. This would mean the six feet of fill accumulated in a relatively short time. The sloughing in of the talus on both sides of the entrance caused some filling. Swallow's nests noted on the walls and roof of the cave indicate it is a regular nesting place for these birds, and an examination of the ten nests demonstrated each contained about two pounds of material, thus making a total of about twenty pounds. Assuming that the swallows nested here every season in the same numbers and the nests fell each year, in a hundred years some two thousand pounds of sandy silt material would be deposited in the cave. A burnt fragment of a mud nest was recovered in the 6 to 12 inch level indicating that this process may have been taking place during the Indian habitation.

The shelter was probably abandoned by its inhabitants at least one hundred years ago as a result of pioneer pressures but the deposit does not show any sterile layer over the occupation fill. A series of soil samples was taken from the site in two locations, one from inside the drip line of the shelter, the other from outside. These samples were submitted to the Department of Water Resources Engineering Laboratories for analysis. It was thought that such a test might show stratification of the deposit, and perhaps give some clue to the building process of the deposit. The results of the soil analysis showed that the fill was more-or-less consistent throughout and was the same as the soils on the hill slope near the shelter. The soil of the shelter, however, was more acid than samples taken from the open. This is probably due to less leaching of the material in the protected shelter.

FEATURES

FEATURE 1. A dry wall of angular stones ranging in size from six to twenty-nine inches in diameter was built across the entrance of the shelter. The wall was about two rocks wide and not more than two rocks high when exposed. This rockwork forms a semi-circle about 12½ feet in length, extending from the north edge of the opening and ending 10 feet short of the other side of the shelter (Pl. 2b,c). Deposit had filled up to the top of the stones on the inside. During the period of excavation at the site it was noticed that winds came down the canyon in the morning and reversed in the afternoon. Without some sort of wind break, or wall, the shelter would have been very undesirable because of the winds, and as the afternoon sun shines into the shelter it becomes uncomfortably warm at times. The rock wall probably was part of a combination brush and rock lean-to affair which covered the entrance of the grotto. This arrangement would form a room that could be entered from the south side of the shelter. Rock walls similar to the one discussed here were noted at the Loyalton Rockshelter

on the southeast side of Sierra Valley. The Loyalton shelter also suffered from daily winds that made a windbreak desirable (N. L. Wilson, personal communication). Other rock walls in entrances of caves in this part of the state have been noted in Sierra County, Douglas County (Nevada), and at Tommy Tucker Cave in Honey Lake Valley (Riddell, 1949).

FEATURES 2 and 3. Two fire pits, or hearths were noted in the central part of the shelter. Both were in the upper 20 inches of the fill. One of the fire pits appears to have been lined with small angular stones (Feature 2). The other (Feature 3) was a small cup-shaped pit 15 inches in diameter and 12 inches deep. Both hearths do not appear to have been used extensively, and in the case of Feature 3, only a thin lens of charcoal remains to provide an outline of the pit.

MATERIAL CULTURE

FLAKED STONE

The flaked stone artifacts total 106 specimens. Of these, 59 percent are of jasper, a material not readily available locally. Obsidian and basalt also were utilized. The flaked stone specimens have been classified into five categories as follows: Projectile points, blades, scrapers, drills, and cores. A brief analysis of the implements in these categories follows:

Projectile Points: Projectile points comprise 48 percent of the total number of the flaked stone implements found. The classifiable specimens have been grouped into six major divisions: 1) Desert Side-notched, 2) Leaf Shaped, 3) Triangular, 4) Corner Notched, 5) Large Stemmed, and 6) Miscellaneous, each with various subdivisions. Fourteen fragments of points were found which were too incomplete to be classified.

Desert Side-notched

1. General subtype (Pl. 3c, top row). A total of 12 specimens were recovered for this subtype, all with concave bases. The average length of these specimens is 2.1 cm. with a range 1.7 to 2.5 cm. The average weight is 0.75 grams and the range 0.46 to 1.25 grams. The material utilized was basalt, obsidian and jasper.

2. Delta Subtype (Pl. 3c, bottom row, second from left). One specimen is so classified. This obsidian projectile point has a V-shaped base, a length of 3.5 cm., and weighs 1.0 gram.

3. Sierra Subtype (Pl. 3c, bottom row, left, and left center). Two specimens were recovered that fit this classification. The bases of these two obsidian points were notched, and had an average length of 1.75 cm., and an average weight of .62 grams.

Leaf Shaped (Pl. 3d, lower left, two specimens)

There are seven specimens within this group, one of which is too incomplete for length and weight measurements. Of the remaining six specimens, all are complete enough for analysis. The average length of the six points

a.

b.

c.

d.

Plate 3

is 2.9 cm. with a range of 2.1 to 3.5 cm. The average weight for them is 3.2 grams with a range of 2.8 to 0.5 grams. The material used was obsidian, basalt, and jasper.

Triangular (Pl. 3d, upper left, four specimens; center, two specimens)

There are nine specimens within this group, six with straight bases and three with concave bases. The material utilized was obsidian and jasper. Of the three specimens with concave bases all are incomplete so that it is not possible to do more than assign them to type. The average length of the remaining six straight base points is 2.1 cm. with a range 1.3 to 3.0 cm. The average weight of the points is 1.1 grams and they range from 1.8 to 2.0 grams.

Corner Notched (Pl. 3d, lower right, five specimens)

There are 11 corner notched specimens within this group, but two are incomplete so that it will not be possible to do more than assign them to type. The materials utilized are obsidian, basalt, and jasper. The average weight of the nine complete specimens is 1.1 grams, with the range from 0.3 to 1.8 grams. The average length of the specimens is 2.2 cm., and the range is 1.6 to 3.6 cm.

Large Side Notch (Pl. 3c, lower right, three specimens)

Five specimens compose this group, two of which are so incomplete that it is not possible to measure or weigh them. The bases of these five specimens are straight, and the material from which they were made is obsidian, basalt, and jasper. The average length of the three complete specimens is 3.8 cm., and with a range of 4.9 to 3.0 cm. The average weight is 3.7, and the range 2.6 to 4.5 grams.

Miscellaneous Points (Pl. 3d)

There are five specimens within this group, and all are basal fragments. The first two listed below are probably of the same type, although with the present sample it is not possible to be certain.

Cat. No. 234/54: Large concave base fragment of jasper material; width 2.4 cm; thickness 0.4 cm.
Cat. No. 234/55: Large, slightly concave base fragment of jasper. The width is 2.0 cm. and the thickness is 0.5 cm.
Cat. No. 234/56: Large, shouldered stemmed point base fragment of red jasper. The width is 1.7 cm. and the thickness is 0.5 cm.
Cat. No. 234/57: Large, rounded, brown jasper base fragment. The thickness of this specimen is 0.8 cm. and the width is 2.4 mm. This specimen could possibly be a knife fragment.
No number: This basal fragment of a basalt projectile point came from the 0 to 6 inch level. The fragment appears to be either a large point or a small incipient projectile point. The specimen has a "V" base and is 3.9 cm. long, 1.7 cm. wide and 0.8 cm. thick (Fig. 10f).

Type \ Depth	0-6 in.	6-12 in.	12-18 in.	18-24 in.	24-30 in.	30-36 in.	36-42 in.	42-48 in.	Total
General Sub type	3	3	3	1	2				12
Delta Sub type			1						1
Sierra Sub type		1	1						2
Leaf shaped		4	1	1			1		7
Triangular	4	1	4						9
Corner notched	3	3	1	2	1			1	11
Large stemmed	4	1							5
Misc. points	2		1		2				5
Total	16	13	12	4	5	0	1	1	52

Table 1 Distribution of point types by level

Blades. The four specimens in this category probably functioned as knives. They differ from scrapers in shape and degree of flaking, and in that they are generally larger in size. The specimens are listed separately below because of their variation in form.

Cat. No. 234/1: This specimen, recovered from the surface, is a short thin knife of basalt which has been carefully retouched on all edges. The base appears to be broken. The length is 4.9 cm., the width is 2.1 cm., the thickness is 0.7 cm., and the weight is 7.5 grams (Riddell, 1960, Photo 2.).
Cat. No. 234/1006: This red jasper specimen is leaf-shaped, and was recovered from the 24 to 30 inch level. It is 5.4 cm. long, 2.8 cm. wide, 0.8 cm. thick and weighs 9.7 grams (Fig. 10e).
Cat. No. 234/1001: This well-made, shouldered basalt blade was recovered from the 0 to 6 inch level. It is 7.8 cm. long, 3.5 cm. wide, 0.8 cm. thick, and weighs 26.2 grams (Fig. 10c).
Cat. No. 234/1002: A blade of light brown chert, was recovered from the 0 to 6 inch level. It is 7.1 cm. long, 2.8 cm. wide, 1.5 cm. thick, and weighs 24.8 grams (Fig. 10d).

Scrapers. The site produced 26 specimens in this category, or 25 percent of the total flaked stone artifacts. These are irregularly shaped flakes of jasper, basalt and obsidian. They vary from crudely chipped basalt flakes to rather carefully worked jasper flakes.

The scrapers are generalized in shape and appear to be nothing more than flakes used as scraping tools (Figs. 9a; 10g-k). Jasper scrapers account for 83 percent of the 26 scrapers, basalt accounts for 17 percent and obsidian less than 1 percent of all the scrapers. The average length of the 26 scrapers is 3.0 cm. and range from 7.3 cm. to 1.3 cm.

Drills. Two specimens were recovered which have been classified as drills. They represent two types, both of which were recovered from the 6 to 12 inch level. One specimen (234/1093), (Fig. 10a) is of a basalt material, with a length of 7.3 cm., a width of 2.5 cm., and a thickness of 1.0 cm. The other (Fig. 10b) (234/1092) is of a light colored chert and is 6.1 cm. long, 2.5 cm. wide and 0.6 cm. thick. They are the same general type that has been described for the Martis Complex (Elsasser, 1960).

Cores. There are six specimens within this group, one is of red jasper and five are of basalt. All six specimens were found in the upper levels of the site. They are poorly defined, but are included to show the kinds of materials which have been used for the making of the finer implements. One specimen (Cat. No. 234/1110) (Fig. 9b) has been battered along one edge, indicating use as a chopping tool or perhaps a metate sharpener. A complete listing of the cores and their measurements is given below.

Cat. No. 234/1110: This specimen is a small unifacial basalt core with a length of 8.2 cm., a width of 6.6 cm., and a thickness of 2.7 cm. (Fig. 9b).
Cat. No 234/1123a: A large basalt core with a length of 11.7 cm., a width of 9.4 cm., and a thickness of 6.0 cm.

Material / Depth	Obsidian	Basalt	Jasper	Total
0-6 in.		2	4	6
6-12 in.	1	2	6	9
12-18 in.			6	6
18-24 in.			4	4
24-30 in.				
30-36 in.				
42-48 in.			1	1
Total	1	4	21	26

Table 2 Distribution of Scrapers by Level

Cat. No. 234/1126: Another large basalt core 8.0 cm. long, 8.5 cm. wide and 6.7 cm. thick.
Cat. No. 234/1097: This specimen is a small basalt core with a length of 5.3 cm., a width of 5.4 cm., and a thickness of 4.3 cm.
Cat. No. 234/1107: This is a small basalt core measuring 5.4 cm. in length, 3.9 cm. in width and 2.9 cm. in thickness.
Cat. No. 234/1095: A specimen of red jasper with a length of 7.6 cm., a width of 6.6 cm., and a thickness of 4.2 cm.

GROUND AND PECKED STONE

Manos. Four handstones, or manos were recovered from the shelter. Three were found in the upper 18 inches of the deposit, and one at a depth of about 60 inches. The three upper specimens have been skillfully shaped by pecking to a loaf-shape form with one grinding surface. The largest and finest example recovered measures 21 cm. long, 8.5 cm. wide and 5.5 cm. thick (Fig. 8d). It is large enough to have been used in a two hand fashion. The second is 12.0 cm. long, 7.5 cm. wide and 3.0 cm. thick, and had been broken and reused (Fig. 8a). The third is an end fragment of a mano which would have been somewhat over 6.5 cm. wide and 3.0 cm. thick (Fig. 8e). The fourth mano was recovered in the 54 to 60 inch level. The specimen is a river cobble 14.0 cm. long, 10.5 cm. wide and 8.5 cm. thick, and has one grinding surface (Fig. 8b). The stone has some surface modification in the form of pecking on several edges and on one surface apparently in an attempt to shape the tool.

Metates. Three grinding slabs, or metates were recovered from surface or the upper 12 inches of the deposit. The surface specimen was noted at the time of discovery of the site (Riddell, 1960, p.5), and is a natural rectangular slab measuring 35.0 cm. by 23.0 cm. and 6.0 cm. thick (Fig. 8f). The grinding surface is polished and shows only a very slight concavity. The second example is represented by four fragments, of which one was found in the stone wall (Feature 1). When fitted together the fragments make half of what was once a rather well finished metate. It appears to have been broken by an intentional blow from the upper side as indicated by a large bulb of percussion along the main break in the stone. This metate differs from the first by having definite shaping of the surface and edge. The grinding surface is smooth with a very slight depression. The stone is 35.0 cm. wide, 6.0 cm. thick, and the half recovered is 26.0 cm. long (Fig. 8c). A third grinding slab, found in the 6 to 12 inch level, is a large angular rock 50.0 cm. by 35.0 cm. and 12.0 cm. thick. The uneven, slightly convex surface has only the high points ground down, otherwise there is no other sign of modification.

The mano and metate were used by the Washo and Paiute in historic times for preparing seeds for food. A natural flat stone was selected and then pecked to further shape it. This practice has been recorded for the Surprise Valley Paiute (Kelly, 1932, p. 138), and was a technique familiar to those who lived in this rockshelter.

Hammerstone. One unspecialized stream cobble, recovered in the 6 to 12 inch level, has two edges battered to indicate its use as a hammer, or percussion tool. This white quartz artifact is 6.0 cm. long, and 3.0 cm. in diameter. Such a tool would have been useful for removing flakes from cores during the process of making chipped stone artifacts, and for other jobs where a hammer would have been needed.

MISCELLANEOUS STONE

Ocher. Eight lumps of ocher were recovered in the first 12 inches, while an additional piece came from the 36 to 42 inch level. The material grades from orange to dark red in color. The lumps average about 2.5 cm. in diameter, but with an irregular outline. No pictographs were noted in

the shelter or on the cliffs nearby, although several miles north an elaborate red painting on the side of a large boulder was noted. The ocher represented by the pieces from the shelter may have been used for personal adornment rather than for making pictographs. Red and yellow ocher was used for face painting by the Paiute (Kelly, 1932, p. 116) and other Californian and Great Basin native peoples.

Unmodified Stream Cobbles. Two hundred and twenty seven unmodified stream worn stones and pebbles were recovered throughout the deposit. The greatest number occurred in the first 24 inches of the fill, but were found to the depth of 60 inches. The size varies from 1.0 cm. to 11.0 cm. in diameter with a variety of shapes represented. About 30 examples are greater than 5.0 cm. in size, with the remainder less than this. The pebbles match in material and general form to the gravel in the nearby stream bed. The only exception may be a number of broken fragments of quartz cobbles which must have been obtained in Galeppi Creek. No quartz was noted in Little Last Chance Creek, above its confluence with Galeppi Creek where such material is plentiful. Quartz fragments were not recovered below 36 inches and they were evenly scattered through the upper part of the fill.

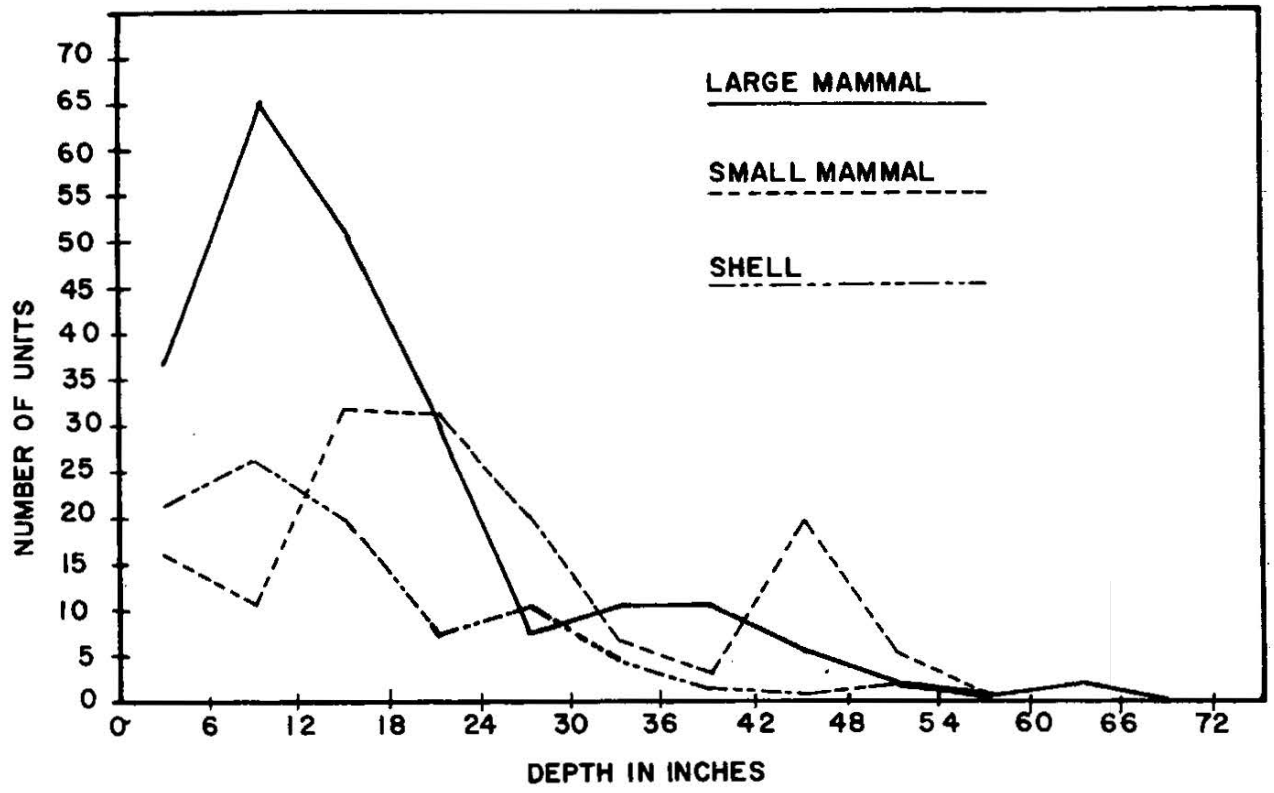
The use of the larger stones may have been for stone boiling, a common process in cooking food in California. Barrett states that stones the size of one's fist were used by the Washo for this method of cooking (Barrett, 1917, p. 14). Several of the larger stones from the shelter show evidence of having been subjected to heat of a fire. The use of the smaller stones is not clear, but they may have been carried into the site as oddities although none of the stones found have any special shape or color. There is also a possibility that the very small stones were introduced into the shelter by packrats.

BONE

No bone artifacts were recovered, but 354 splinters and fragments of mammal bone were recovered from the occupation fill. The bone was divided in the laboratory by level into those belonging to large mammals and those of small mammals. The distribution of both large and small mammals is concentrated in the first 18 inches with the only exception occurring in the concentration of small mammals in the 42 to 48 inch level. There was also a horizontal distribution concentration in units L1-4, L1-5, L2-4, and L2-5. Thus placing the concentration in the room area formed by the north and east walls and the dry wall (Feature 1). This indicates the area of the cave most heavily used.

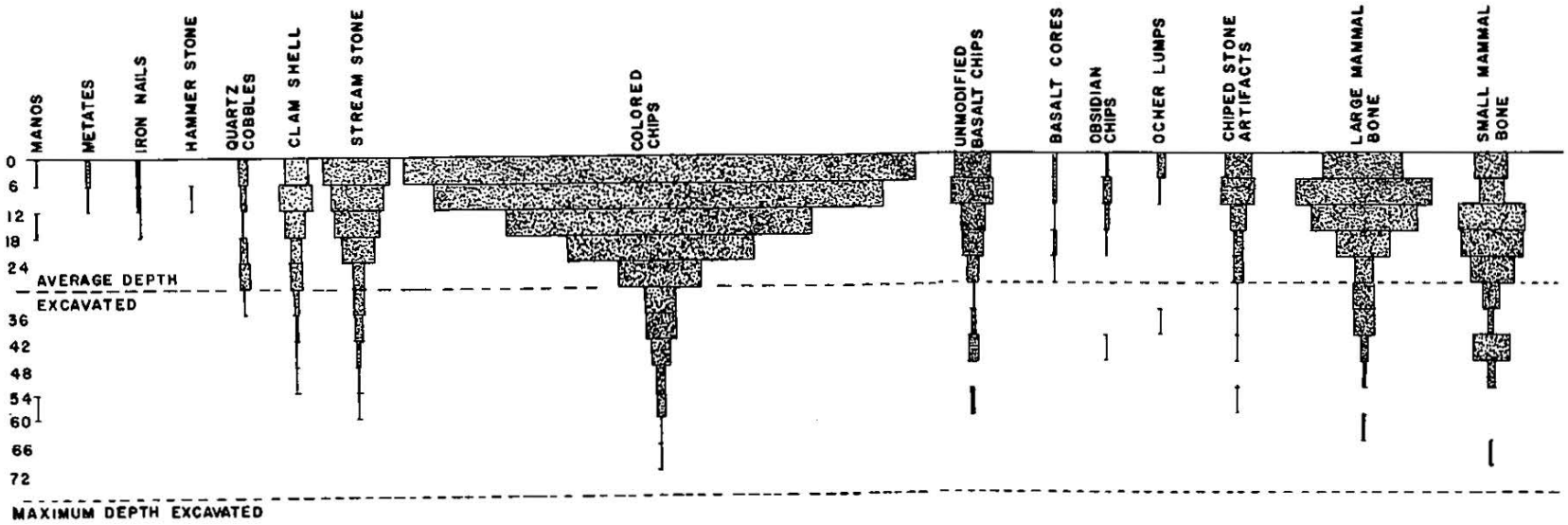
Although most of the sample was composed of fragmentary specimens a few of the more intact specimens were identifiable. Five genera were identified and three of these as to species.

Ovis canadensis (Big horn Sheep) 1 specimen
Marmota flaviventris (Yellow bellied Marmot) 2 specimens
Citellus lateralis (Golden Manteled Ground Squirrel) 9 specimens
Eutamias sp. (Chipmunk) 2 specimens
Thomomys sp. (Pocket Gopher) 1 specimen
Unidentified large mammal 205
Unidentified small mammal 134



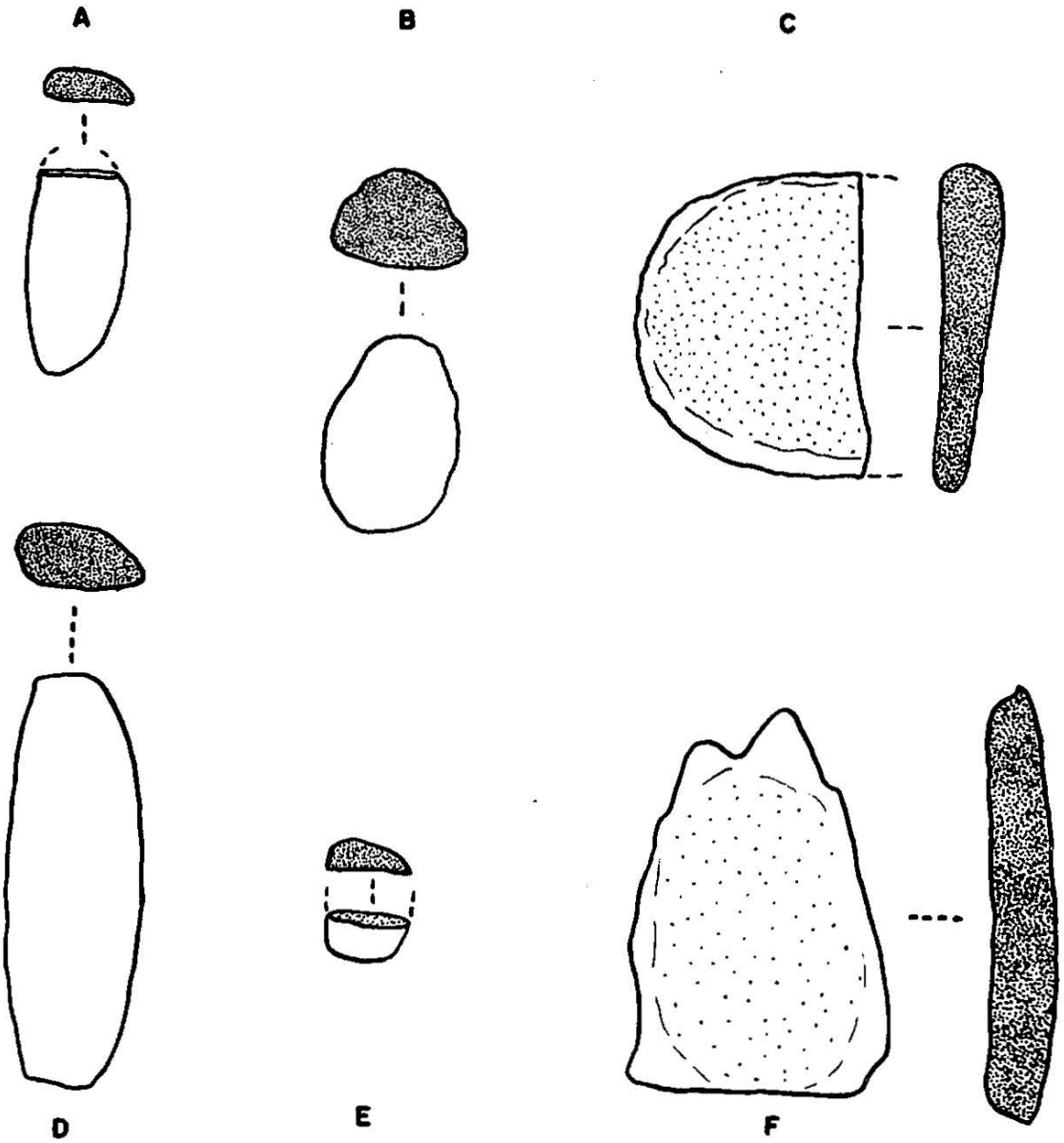
OCCURANCE OF BONE AND SHELL PER LEVEL

Figure 6



OCCURANCE OF STONE CHIPS BY LEVEL

Figure 7



GROUND STONE

Figure 8

All of the large mammal remains were probably food refuse which explains their fragmentary condition. In almost all cases the bone appears to have been intentionally split or broken to remove the marrow. Also, the majority of the larger bones exhibit butcher marks indicating the use of a sharp tool for cutting up the carcass.

Although no deer or antelope specimens were identified as such it can be assumed that these animal remains are present in the site as both forms are reported to have been favored as foods by the Indians in this area. Deer were abundant in the area during the period of excavation of the cave.

The number of small rodents in the Chilcoot Rockshelter is certainly due, in part, to the natural death and burial of ground squirrels, Citellis lateralis, observed living in the shelter.

SHELL

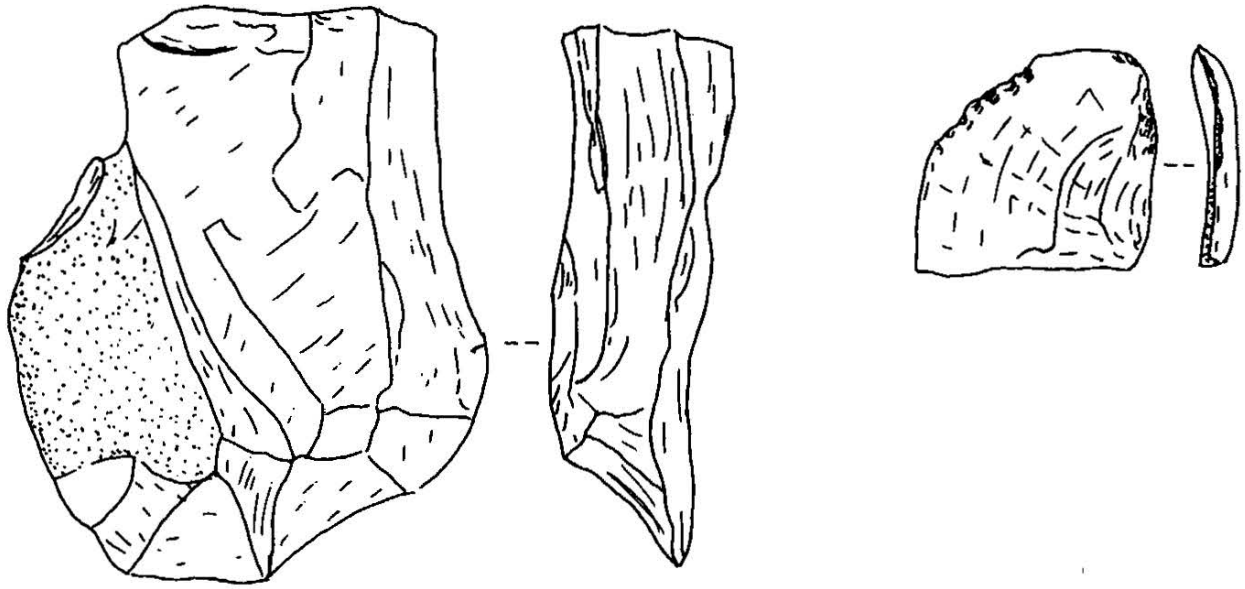
Shells of the freshwater clam, Margaretifera margaretifera, were recovered scattered throughout the occupation deposit to the depth of 54 inches. The concentration of the specimens occurred in the first 18 inches and become less with the increase in depth. The shells were in very poor condition but still had the outside covering, or periosteum, adhering to them. It is evident that fresh water clams were an important food item to these people. Today these clams are found in the stream in front of the shelter.

MISCELLANEOUS

Iron Nails. Six square-cut iron nails came from the central part of the shelter. Two were found in the 0 to 6 inch level, two from the 6 to 12 inch level, one from the 12 to 18 inch level, and one from the 18 to 24 inch level. All but one are lacking the head and all appear to have been subjected to burning. The fact that these nails were found at varying depths suggest possibility of Caucasian contact. The suggestion is one of contamination as they are the only historic items found. It is likely that the nails were from a modern camp fire kindled by old wood containing the nails. A fragment of partly burned milled wood was noted on the surface and lends support to this supposition. The depth of the nails within the deposit is puzzling but they may have reached their position as a result of rodent activities.

Plant Material. Two cut sticks were found in the upper part of the fill in the north recess of the shelter. The twigs, of willow, had been cut by a sharp tool. Due to the seasonal dampness of the deposit it is unlikely that the specimens are of Indian origin, but are more likely from the clearing of the reservoir area and were carried into the shelter by rodents.

Several partly burnt sagebrush twigs were recovered in the 0 to 6 inch level and may be from recent camp fires rather than of native origin. Examination of other lumps of charcoal from the deposit indicates that sagebrush, pine and other woods growing near the site were used as fuel.



CHIPPED STONE

Figure 9

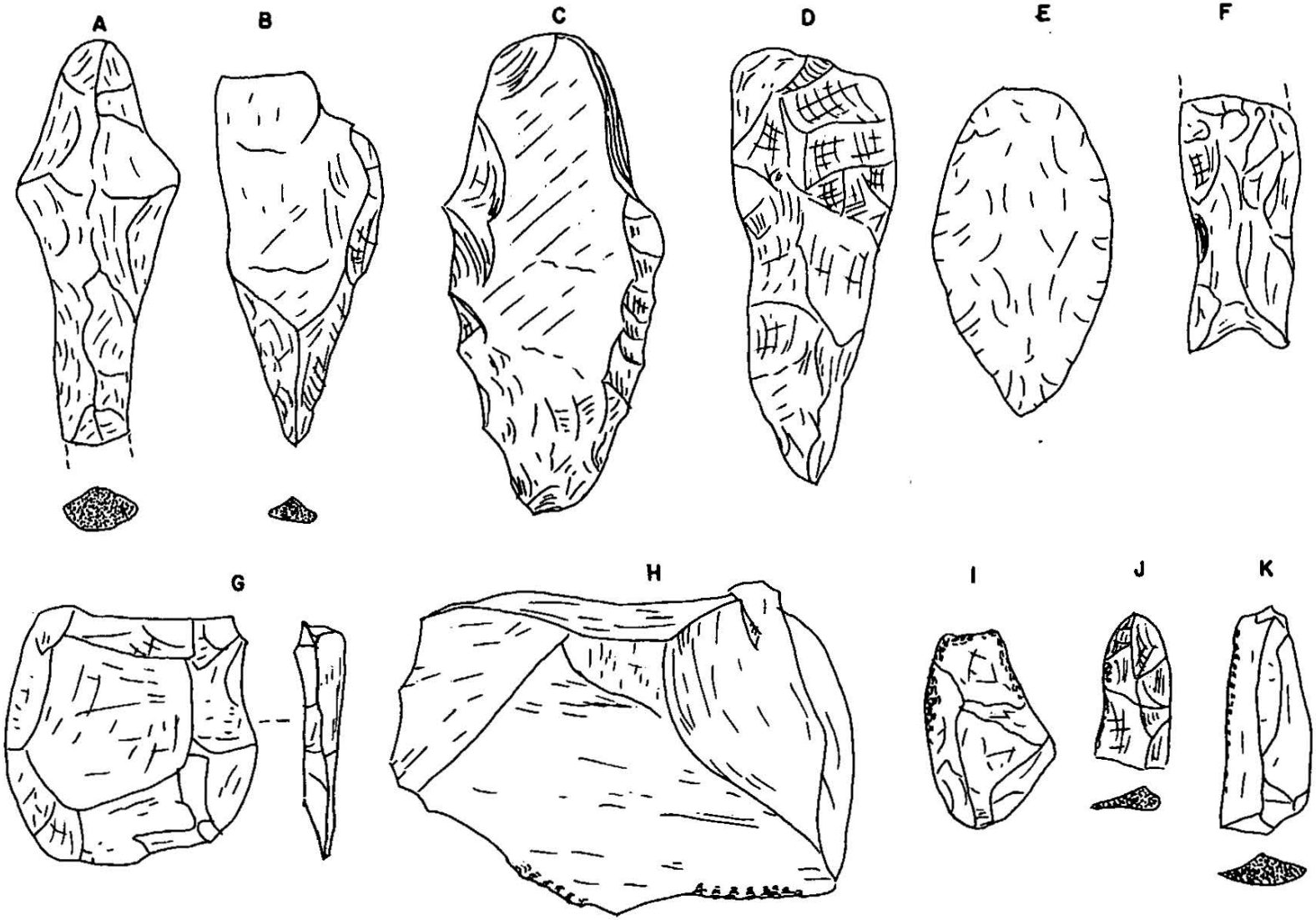


Figure 10

CHIPPED STONE

SUMMARY

The lack of definite cultural midden and the relative small amount of artifactual materials suggest that Chilcoot Rockshelter was an intermittent seasonal campsite. The shelter was probably a stop-over place during summer hunting and fishing activities in the area. The size of the living area of the site would not accommodate more than 10 people, so perhaps the shelter was used by a family group.

The deposit was sufficiently protected from the weather that bone and shell specimens were reasonably well preserved. The remains of Big Horn Sheep suggest the site may have been used as a hunting blind as the animal's natural habitat is in rough terrain such as is found near the site. The cave's location affords some natural concealment of its occupants from possible hostile groups. However, the location of the shelter on the east side of the canyon is unfavorable as it only receives the afternoon sun. In addition, the site is exposed to wind, although this problem seems to have been taken care of by the construction of a dry stone wall and possibly of brush and poles, at the entrance. All but a few of the artifacts recovered from the site belong to the late prehistoric period. The exceptions to this are several large basalt points which may be attributed to the Martis Complex (cf. Heizer and Elsasser, 1953). The square nails recovered from various depths in the upper half of the deposit suggest some historic use of the cave, possibly by whites, rather than Indians.

The small side notched projectile points made from colored jasper belong to the Kings Beach Complex as described for the Tahoe Area (Ibid.). The Desert Side Notched points which constitute 30 percent of the total number of projectile points found, are the best time markers of all the specimens recovered from the site. Baumhoff suggests that such points appear in this section of California around 1400 A.D. (Baumhoff, 1959). The older, Martis specimens all occurred in the upper levels of the deposit to suggest that they were picked up at an older site and carried into the shelter by people of the later period. The site certainly suggests a date not older than 1400 A.D., and perhaps not later than circa 1850 which would place the site wholly within the Kings Beach Complex time period.

The inhabitants of the cave used a simple form of rock architecture in their shelter. It perhaps was used as a blind for hunting from the shelter itself. The Surprise Valley Paiute, as well as tribes in the Sierra, hunted on established deer trails. The Paiute placed a brush fence at the entrance to a canyon to force the deer to pass through a narrow place where a concealed hunter was waiting (Kelly, 1932, p. 82). The location of the Chilcoot Rockshelter in the canyon would seem to have been ideal for this purpose since the natural rock out-crops at this point force the animals to go through a narrow passage in front of the shelter as they proceed from one portion of the valley to the other.

The inhabitants of the rockshelter favored jasper of red, yellow, and dark brown color for making chipped stone artifacts. Basalt was used to a limited degree, and obsidian was present in even more limited amounts. The chipped stone artifact assemblage includes projectile points, blades,

scrapers, and cores. Use of seed foods can be inferred by the presence of manos and metates, and the occurrence of burnt stream cobbles suggest the use of the stone boiling method for cooking food. Freshwater clams also seem to have been of some importance as indicated by the number of discarded shells in the site. Lumps of red ocher suggest use of paint for decorative work and personal adornment.

The archeological value of the Chilcoot Rockshelter lies in the isolation of Late Horizon components in this cultural setting. The shelter did not yield a large amount of material, but it was felt that the site gave up more information than would any of the other sites within the project area. This excavation is, therefore, important in providing data aiding in the description and temporal placement of the late cultural phases in this section of California.

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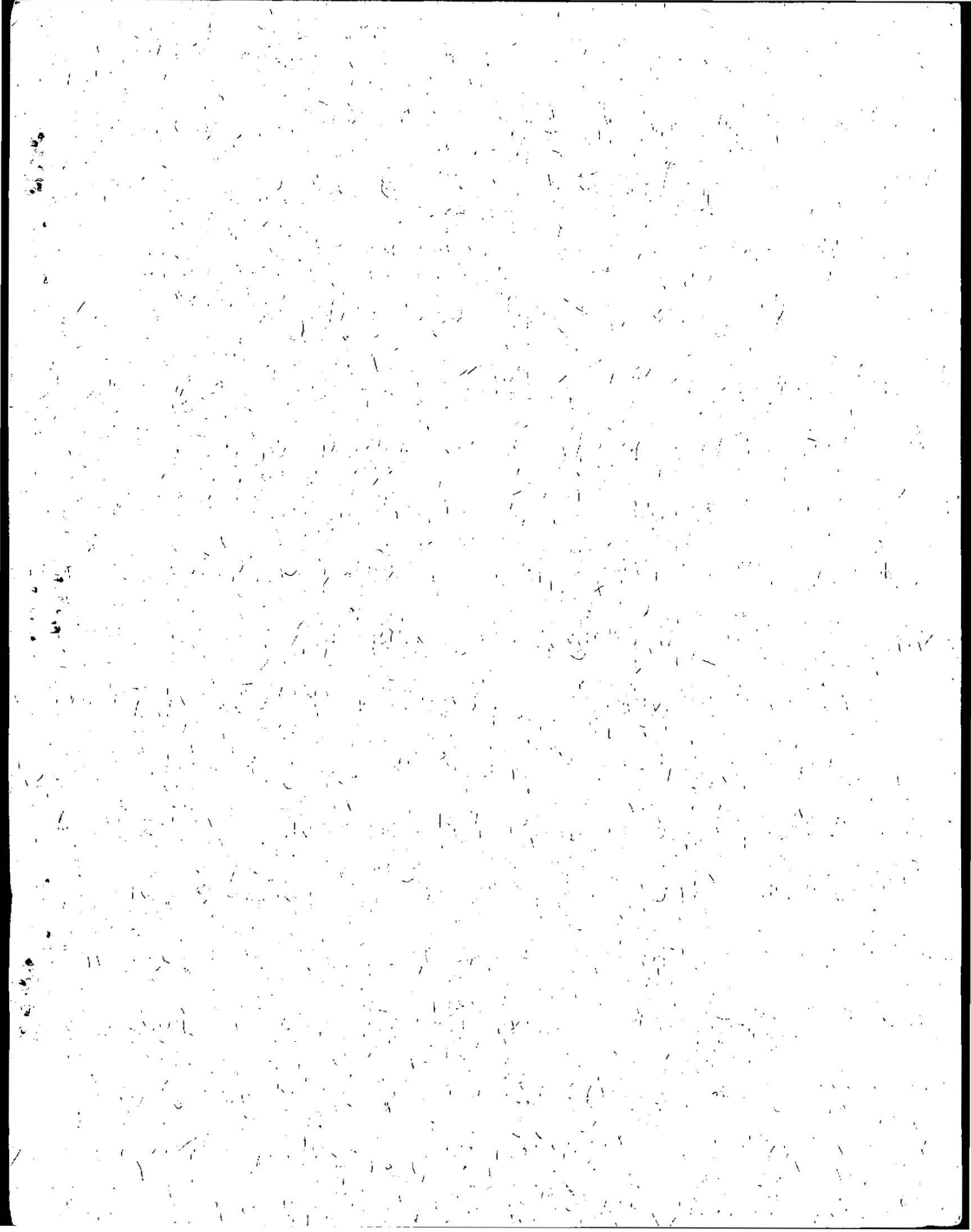

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