



## ***Santa Cruz Archaeological Society Newsletter***

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### ***A Seasoned “Seasonal” Works and Plays in Sierra National Forest – Part Two***

February 20, 2013

Mary A. Gerbic, SCAS Member



North Fork, our headquarters, is a quiet little town, once bustling before the lumber mill closed in 1996. Many people moved away or started commuting to Fresno for work. The townspeople didn't give up. There is still one grocery, two gas stations, three restaurants, a museum, post office, high school, Tribal headquarters for the North Fork Mono, and a District office of the US Forest Service.

The town has been working to convert the old mill site into

commercial and residential space. Part of the new development will include a 1.0 Megawatt gasification plant fueled by “forest biomass from sustainable forest management.” The brush and thinned out trees from the forest will be trucked down to burn at this plant instead of being piled and burned in the forest. The gasification plant is considered “new bioenergy” as described in Senate Bill 1122 recently signed by Governor Brown.

North Fork is also home to the “geographic center of California,” as featured on Huell Howser's “California's Gold,” and the starting point of the Sierra Vista National Scenic Byway. It's a wonderful drive, featuring the canyon of the San Joaquin River, amazing wildflowers, numerous granite domes and wide vistas. The Byway is a gem with many campsites and trailheads but few travelers on the road, even in summer. Everyone knows about Yosemite and that is where the crowds go. If you decide to drive the Byway, plan to spend the entire day enjoying the trip. Fuel up in North Fork, pick up a free tour guide and bring your picnic lunch, water and camera.



**Mountain Lady's Slipper Flower at Nelder Grove (*M. Gerbic*)**

Start your trip on the Byway by driving south out of North Fork and continuing on Forest Route 81, also known as Minarets Road. It is no coincidence that there are two Minarets roads. They are both named for the "Minarets," spiky peaks in the Ritter Mountain Range. The gap between the ends of the two Minarets Roads is only about 10 miles.

Back in the 1960s, there were plans for a federal highway to cross the Sierra Nevada from the Central Valley to Bishop near Minaret Falls and Devil's Postpile National Monument. When the California Wilderness Act of 1964 was passed, a corridor between Wilderness Areas in the Sierra was reserved for this possible freeway. In 1972, then-governor Ronald Reagan took a horse pack trip through the area and declared that it should remain Wilderness, and helped scuttle the freeway plans. During his Presidency, the California Wilderness Act of 1984 was passed and the Ansel Adams Wilderness was created from the former Minarets Wilderness and the highway corridor.

A side branch of the Byway is Sky Ranch Road, a road worth taking (if you watch out for the potholes) where you will see Fresno Dome, the sites of several old logging camps, and Nelder Grove - a beautiful stand of *Sequoiadendron giganteum* trees, relative of the coastal Redwood. Nelder Grove has free camping, an interesting logging exhibit, and knowledgeable docents. At the Grove I photographed two species of orchids I have never seen before: the Mountain Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium montanum*) and the Phantom Orchid (*Cephalanthera austinae*). I didn't have to go on an 'off-trail expedition' to find these flowers; they were right next to the trail in the center of the grove. The Mountain Lady's Slipper blooms about the same time as the must-see Dogwoods, and the Phantom Orchid was found while visiting the grove to see Western Azaleas.

If you continue up Sky Ranch Road, there is a turnoff to Soquel Meadow Campground, which is close to Soquel Meadow and the site of the old Soquel Mill. When I saw that name on the map, I had to know why a lumber mill in the Sierra Nevada would be called "Soquel."

I knew that the western slope of the Sierra Nevada south of Yosemite had been logged since the 1870s by the California Lumber Company, the Madera Flume and Trading Company and its successor, Madera Sugar Pine Company, and others. The US Forest Service eventually purchased the logged land in the late 1920s.

In the early years, the California Lumber Company built a massive flume system fifty-five miles long to move timber from the mountains to their planning mill in Madera. The name Madera means “wood” or “lumber” in Spanish. Logs were converted to boards at sawmills in the forest and then clamped together and sent down the flume to the mills in Madera to be finished. From Madera, the finished lumber could be shipped out on the railroad which had reached the Central Valley in the early 1870s. The flume was considered to be an economical way of transporting the wood and the water was used for irrigation of crops in the valley around Madera. Unfortunately for the Company, there was a severe drought in 1877 and not enough water. The California Lumber Company declared bankruptcy in 1878.

The drought was over in 1880 and a new company, the Madera Flume and Trading Company was incorporated from the remains of the California Lumber Company. New sawmills were built in the woods, including one at Soquel Meadows, with equipment purchased from Mr. Smith Comstock. Mr. Comstock had just used that equipment to log the Soquel, California area. The meadow and mill were named for the place where the equipment was last used.

The trees that were most in demand for lumber were sugar pines, but the lumber companies also tried to cut the Sequoia. What a waste! Sequoias have brittle wood. When cut only the lower part of the tree made it to the ground without splintering into pieces, with an estimated 75% of the tree left unused. Many trees remained uncut because they were too big, and the loggers gave names special trees and let them stand. Today, those trees form the core of Nelder Grove.



**Central Camp Rail Road Site (*M. Gerbic*)**



By 1892, the Madera Flume and Trading Company had run out of trees to cut and there was a Depression. Again, the Company folded and was reorganized, this time as the Madera Sugar Pine Company in 1899. Their company headquarters in the woods was established near the modern town of Sugar Pine, and a new flume was built, linking Sugar Pine to Madera.

Another of my crew's summer tasks was to survey road buffers for archaeological sites. A 'road buffer' is the area that bounds a road at a certain distance, in our case, 100 meters on each side of the road. A drawback was the long drive up and back, giving us less time to survey each day. On the other hand we saw more prehistoric archaeology than historic logging sites which was a change of pace, and the forests were drier and more open instead of dark and disorienting. I don't think it was much cooler in the backcountry, but you could usually see where you were going.

It's clear that the Mono Indians utilized this part of the Sierra Nevada. I was prepared by background reading and the forest Geographical Information Systems (GIS) database to find sites on this road buffer survey: there were many sites with bedrock mortars on the granite outcrops, often with obsidian flakes, and the occasional projectile point in close proximity. We rarely found flakes that were not obsidian. One memorable site had obsidian artifacts in nearly all its varieties, from glossy to sugary, smoky-clear to red and black streaks.



**Obsidian projectile points in the Sierra Nevada (*M. Gerbic*)**

Seasonal rounds took the Mono Indians down into the Central Valley to fish and hunt, and up into the foothills for black oak acorns and cooler temperatures. The French Trail, which runs along the San Joaquin River canyon and not far from our Reconnaissance Creek area sites, is an ancient route used by the Mono to access the east side of the Sierra. In 1879, John French started redeveloping the trail as a wagon road across the mountains to the Mammoth Mines but he lost his financial backing and it was never finished. Today the French Trail has become part of the San Joaquin River Trail project, in development, to link the valley floor near Fresno to the Pacific Crest Trail and to the Owens Valley via the Mammoth Trail.



**Humboldt Series obsidian projectile point fragment** (*M. Gerbic*)

If you are a person who likes a little adventure with your work, enjoys being in the outdoors, and you would like a seasonal job, you should consider applying with the Forest Service. Think about where you would like to work: if you have always wanted to work in Colorado, for instance, here's your chance. Your living situation will be comfortable, but may lack the conveniences and entertainment of a city. This can be a hardship for some, so plan ahead how you are going to pay your bills and keep in touch with your friends. You will do a lot of hiking on survey, and you must be prepared for all kinds of weather. I have found that the people of the Forest Service and the National Parks as well, are very friendly and helpful. In return, you will be living for months in places that people drive to for weekend vacations. You can enjoy the beautiful outdoors on a daily basis, through the changing seasons, and exploring on your days off.





## UPCOMING GENERAL MEETINGS

*All General Meetings are held at the historic Sesnon House on the campus of Cabrillo College, located at 6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos, CA and begin promptly at 7:30 PM.*

### June 20, 2013

#### ***"Consuming Identity: The Role of the Feast in Iron Age Britain"***

Andrew Woodhead will discuss the Iron Age in prehistoric Britain, which witnessed a major restructuring of people's ways of life. Understanding the changing social, political, and economic discourses of this period requires an understanding of an important social institution: the feast. This talk will explore the numerous roles feasts can play and highlights the importance of feasting for understanding certain aspects of society.

Andrew Woodhead grew up in Santa Cruz, attended Santa Cruz High School, and received a BA in anthropology/archaeology from the University of California, San Diego. He then studied in Scotland and received a Master's degree in European Archaeology from the University of Edinburgh. His research interests have largely focused on prehistoric Britain and Ireland and the archaeology of foodways.

## OTHER EVENTS

### Sunday June 9, 2013

#### ***Friends of Historic San Antonio Mission***

<http://www.californiahistorian.com/Members/SanAntonioMission.htm>

The annual Fiesta is a fun filled day for all! Beginning with a special Fiesta Mass at 11:00am followed by a traditional oak-fired barbeque offering your choice of half-chicken or top sirloin dinners. Dance to music provided by local bluegrass and Mariachi bands. Buy a homemade dessert, enjoy a glass of beer or wine, or visit with local artisans whose wares will be on display. Your children will have a great time winning prizes at the game booths. This is a real community-oriented family event that's not to be missed! This event is a Mission fundraiser - please NO personal coolers permitted, thank you. Go to <http://missionsanantonio.net/the-fiesta> for more information.





Santa Cruz Archaeological Society

SCAS

## Over Forty Years of Community Archaeology in Central California

### Who we are

The Santa Cruz Archaeological Society is a non-profit organization that works with multiple agencies to preserve and monitor local prehistoric and historic resources. Our commitment to community archaeology means we strive to connect people with their local heritage through education and hands-on experiences.

### What we do

#### Education

One of the goals of the SCAS is to provide education on recent and on-going archaeological finds and theories. Lectures, slides, and films on local and other specific archaeological topics are presented at monthly general meetings and provided free of charge to the public. The SCAS also participates in public outreach education programs.

The SCAS also puts out a quarterly newsletter which contains articles on local and international archaeology, volunteering opportunities, local event information, and updates on SCAS affiliated projects such as surveys and excavations.

#### Hands-on Experience

The SCAS has been involved in and led several projects such as field surveys, site recordings, and excavations. These projects not only contribute to the preservation of our local heritage, but get communities directly involved with (and excited about) their own heritage. They also provide excellent training and practical experience for students and amateur archaeologists.

### Get involved!

Anyone with an interest in archaeology and the desire to learn more about our priceless, vanishing heritage is invited to attend our lectures and get involved in our projects. Please join our efforts to preserve the past for the future.



www.santacruzarchaeology.org



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## First Evidence of Pottery Used for Cooking

Science NOW : April 10, 2013

by Sid Perkins

Flakes of charred material scraped from shards of ancient pots are the earliest direct evidence of pottery use for cooking, a new study suggests. Possibly the biggest surprise, scientists say, is that these prehistoric chefs weren't part of an early agricultural community, and they weren't cooking grain: They were hunter-gatherers who lived in Japan during the waning phases of the last ice age, and they were apparently boiling up a seafood stew.

Pottery was invented somewhere in eastern Asia between 12,000 and 20,000 years ago, but exactly where and when—and particularly why—isn't clear. Indeed, virtually nothing is known about how the first pots were used, says Oliver Craig, a biomolecular archaeologist at the University of York in the United Kingdom. Regardless of why such vessels were invented, they undoubtedly offered new and attractive ways to process and consume food, he notes. Layers of blackened material on the inner surfaces of some pot shards, many of them palm-sized or smaller, hinted that the vessels had been used for cooking, but scientists hadn't performed detailed studies to confirm the notion.

So Craig and his colleagues analyzed small samples of charred material taken from 101 ceramic vessels or fragments found at 13 sites spanning the length of Japan. In previous studies, researchers had dated the sites to between 11,200 years and 15,300 years ago, an interval that archaeologists call the Incipient Jōmon period. In Japanese, *jōmon* means “cord-marked,” a distinctive feature of the pottery produced by the Jōmon people, the prehistoric inhabitants of the Japanese islands. Most of the sites are inland near rivers or lakes, and at the time they were occupied they would have been even farther from the coasts than they are today, because sea levels were lower.



Pottery Vessels in Tokamachi City Museum (left) and Wakasa History and Folklore Museum (right)  
(Fukui, Japan)



First, the team looked at the ratios of carbon and nitrogen isotopes in the charred scrapings. Although the ratios varied widely, the nitrogen isotope ratios in more than 75% of the samples suggested that the pots had been used to cook aquatic creatures, most likely fish, at or near the top level of their food chain. Detailed analyses of larger samples taken from 57 pots and shards at two of the sites revealed that nearly one-third of the scrapings included fatty acids, which typically derive from oils naturally found in freshwater and sea-dwelling organisms such as fish and marine mammals, the researchers report online today in *Nature*. Such substances result only from the oils' prolonged exposure to high temperature—a strong sign that the vessels had been used for cooking, Craig says.

The shapes of the pot fragments suggest that most of the vessels had volumes between 1 and 4 liters, he says. It's possible that the Japanese hunter-gatherers were cooking fish, shellfish, or even marine mammals caught along the coast. However, considering that the sites were some distance inland, it's also possible that the itinerants were catching and cooking migratory fish such as salmon, which spend much of their lives in the sea and then swim upstream to spawn.

The new findings are starting to broaden the view of late ice age hunters, once thought of as chiefly chasing big game such as mammoths, says Simon Kaner, an archaeologist at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, U.K. "This suggests they were exploiting a range of resources," he notes, possibly including some that were available only during certain seasons.

The techniques used by Craig and his team should now be used to analyze other samples of early pottery, Kaner says. That might shed light on the factors that influenced the development and spread of pottery, which dramatically expanded after the ice age ended a little less than 12,000 years ago. "We're just at the beginning of this, exploring what was going on with early societies."



"What? ... You mean *no one* brought the buns?"

## More Evidence of Tequesta Civilization Unearthed Near Miami River

WRLN Miami News : April 30, 2013

*Edited from article by Nathaniel Sandler*

Henry Flagler, one of Miami's most ambitious early twentieth century developers, placed tons of fill dirt in downtown Miami to level out the natural bedrock under the city and expand the borders of his vast property. The fill is now being taken away from an archaeological dig on Third Avenue, right off the mouth of the Miami River. The excavation is being led by South Florida archaeologist Bob Carr, who undertook the well-publicized first Miami Circle site that was uncovered in 1998.

As the fill is removed, you can see the lines of orange dirt, delineating the earth that Flagler deposited from Jupiter Florida via his famous railroad. What Carr and his team have uncovered at the going Third Avenue dig site, where plans for an upscale movie theater are in motion, is of great historical significance, with artifacts and remnants spanning thousands of years of Miami history.

In 2005, on the north bank of the Miami River across from the original circle, a second Miami Circle was found. The discovery went relatively unnoticed, though there were some mentions in the press. The second circle, dubbed the "Royal Palm Circle" did not garner the vast attention that the first did. At the time, Carr and his team worked on the Royal Palm Circle site until the economy caused the developer to tighten its funding across the board. Both the archeological dig and the development itself were tabled until recently.



**Archaeologists Discover another "Miami Circle" on Third Avenue in Miami, Florida**



The project is called the Metropolitan Miami Complex, and includes multiple buildings in the downtown area including an entertainment complex with the aforementioned upscale movie theater. The developer is MDM Development Group in collaboration with the O'Neal group, whose executive team includes former Miami Heat star Shaquille O'Neal. This part of the development is located in one of the last vacant lots in downtown Miami.

The most distinct evidence of this third circle at Third Avenue is the existence of multiple post holes bored into the limestone bedrock and arranged in a circular fashion. The team believes that holes were resting places for wooden posts that would allow the Tequesta to create shelter.

The difference between this third circle and the first more famous Miami Circle is the lack of large stone basins. It seems that the Miami Circle may have been a more important dwelling, possibly religious in nature, where as both the second Royal Palm Circle and now the Third Avenue Circle are potentially more standard domestic abodes.

Proof of a flourishing Tequesta village, and the original shoreline, are not the only thing the dig has revealed. Carr's team has unearthed thousands of artifacts dating as far back as 500 B.C. all the way up to the Royal Palm Hotel, built by Henry Flagler in 1897 and torn down in 1930. There was also a freshwater well, pulling from a natural spring underneath Downtown.



**Brick-lined freshwater well believed to be from Flagler's "Royal Palm Hotel" (N. Sandler)**

Most importantly the developer has agreed to build a private park with public access, which will include the Royal Palm Circle on display and an interpretive plaza. Though the Royal Palm Circle will need to be relocated and the plaza will allow visitors to learn about the history of the mouth of the Miami River and how the Tequesta lived. There has been no decision made on what will happen with the foundation of the Royal Palm Hotel or newly discovered Third Avenue Circle. Any artifacts found will go to *History Miami*.



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