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Figure 1: *A prehistoric Sierra Pelona rock art boulder. Feature 1 at CA-LAN-540 has hundreds of small cupules ground into its surface, both singly and in combination. Note the "lozenge" design of multiple cupule lines at right center. This schist boulder overshadows other prehistoric site features, including midden deposits and multiple bedrock mortar boulders. Dillon photo, 1988.*

Sierra Pelona Prehistory: Fact and Fiction

Brian Dervin Dillon

Introduction

Despite its proximity to the modern megalopolis of Los Angeles, the Sierra Pelona remains poorly known archaeologically and ethnohistorically. Sadly, for the aboriginal inhabitants of the Sierra Pelona, the thread of cultural continuity was irreversibly broken over two hundred years ago. We do not know what language they spoke, much less what they called themselves. Always quite small, the prehistoric Sierra Pelona population may have occupied a "cultural crossroads" for thousands of years. We also have no idea what form prehistoric cultural interaction took. Was it peaceful and cooperative? Competitive or even warlike? Or did different neighboring groups simply ignore each other?[1] This lack of prehistoric information is not unique to

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Editor's Corner . . .

Welcome to the L.A. Westerners' Summer, 2017 issue of *The Branding Iron*. The lead article comes from Sheriff (and archaeology guru) Brian Dillon, on American Indian rock art of the Sierra Pelona. Later whites further east were more interested in removing rocks than decorating them, as detailed in the following article on *Old Hat* gold mining by Bob Chandler, the San Francisco Corral Sheriff and our L.A. Corral's newest member.

Next, our young contributors have preserved our Corral's activities for posterity. Patrick Mulvey provides photos and a wrap-up of our 2017 Fandango, and the monthly Roundup summaries come from Aaron Tate and Sarah Ouhida. Closing things off are book reviews by Mark Hall-Patton and Abe Hoffman.

The Branding Iron is a group effort, so hats off to our Corral contributors for making this something we can all enjoy. If you are interested in submitting to *The Branding Iron*, please feel free to contact me with your ideas.

Happy Trails!

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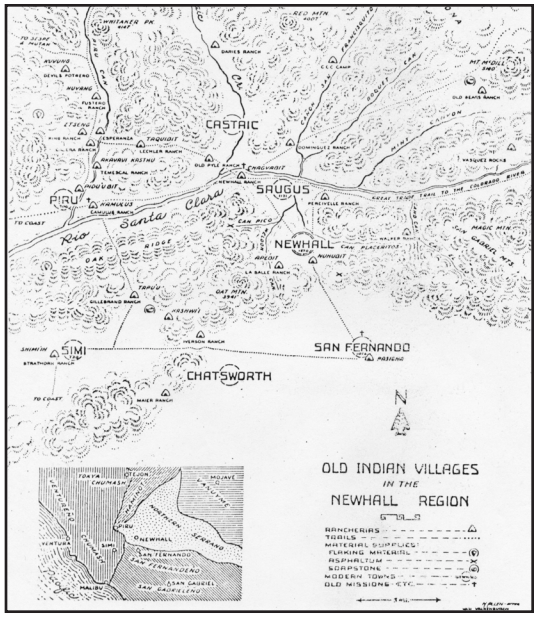

Figure 2 (Left): *Southern California, showing the location (arrow) of the Sierra Pelona. Base map from Atwood, 1965.* ***Figure 3 (Right):*** *Ethnographic locations circa 1770, in a portion of the Sierra Pelona and adjacent San Fernando Valley, by Van Valkenburgh, circa 1935, published by Landberg, 1980. Most of the photographs in the present study were taken in Castaic and Mint Canyons.*

the Sierra Pelona, but unfortunately common throughout California.

The low mountain range contains steatite (talc schist), prehistorically a material as rare and wonderful for the Native Californian Indians as gold would later be for the whites. It was easily shaped, and once heated in fires it did not explode as would other stones. Heated steatite (soapstone) slabs were used for cooking, for they retained heat better than any other local stone. Indian women made ownership marks on their cooking slabs, antecedent to, but not actual, writing. Steatite was traded all over Southern California and the Great Basin. Those controlling this wonderful stone were truly fortunate, for its natural distribution is spotty and isolated. We don't know if the ancient Sierra Pelona Indians exercised a steatite monopoly, or if prehistoric soapstone prospectors came from all over Southern California to the Sierra Pelona to extract the valuable material. If so, they probably entered via the great Santa Clara river drainage (Figures 2 and 3) bordering the southern Sierra Pelona: an easy pathway through the mountains from both the desert interior to the east and the Pacific shore to the west. All of the earliest Europeans who explored the Sierra Pelona were guided by Indians who lived far from the place but who were nevertheless intimately familiar with it through centuries of use of the "foot highway" along the Santa Clara River.

The Sierra Pelona's abundant rock art is the most compelling aspect of its prehistory. Petroglyphs (engraved) and pictographs (painted) in many different styles are found at many different archaeological sites. Some people believe that rock art was invariably "magical," "religious" or "sacred," meant to be kept secret, not profaned by the eyes of secular viewers. Maybe so, for examples of isolated, potentially "secret" rock art do exist in the Sierra Pelona. Yet some rock art is found in the middle of residential sites (Figure 1), accessible to both sexes and all ages. Are these, then, "secular" rock art sites? Or, more likely, are popular assumptions about rock art function overly simplistic, or just plain wrong?

Natural Background

The *Sierra Pelona* (the "Bald Range") is part of the Transverse Ranges of Southern

Figure 4: *Doing archaeology sure beats working. One of my high-powered field archaeology crews on site survey in the Sierra Pelona. Spectacular sandstone outcrops near Vasquez Rocks at upper right. The five youngsters up front were all UCLA students, while Richard H. Dillon, at rear, and his son the photographer and author, were both Berkeley boys. Of the six persons shown, three earned the MA degree, while the other three (plus the photographer) all earned Ph.D.'s. B. Dillon photo, 1981.*

California, the only major mountain system in the state that runs East-West instead of North-South. The Sierra Pelona separates the San Fernando Valley and adjacent Los Angeles plain from the Antelope Valley and western Mojave Desert to the north (Figure 2). Its name comes from the fact that, compared to the much higher-elevation Tehachapis to the north, and San Gabriel Mountains to the east, it is generally treeless. Most geographers place the western boundary of the Sierra Pelona in the Piru Creek drainage: this also works well as a culture-historic and archaeological dividing line between poorly-known people to the east, and slightly better-known ones to the west.

The low, rounded, Sierra Pelona contains a mélange of sedimentary and metamorphic rocks, including sandstone sculpted into weird and wonderful shapes by wind and water (Figure 4). Also present are schist, serpentine, and steatite or soapstone. Placer gold, discovered by Francisco López in the Sierra Pelona six years before Jim Marshall's big find at Sutter's Mill in 1848, is an historical footnote unfamiliar to most Californians.[2] The gold was there in Placerita Canyon, but not enough water was available to work it, so no "rush" developed.

The northern slope of the range drains into the Western Antelope Valley, much of it via Anaverde Creek, a watercourse created by and positioned above the San Andreas Fault for much of its course. The southern Sierra Pelona slope drains, via a number of short, steep parallel creeks into the Santa Clara River (Figure 3), one of the largest and most important watercourses of ancient Southern California. Agua Dulce Creek lives up to its name as the best source of water throughout the range, but Bouquet and San Francisquito Creeks and Mint Canyon also were reliable Winter and Spring water sources. For much of the year, local drainages carry all of their water underground. This was no secret to the local Indians, who for at least 8,000 years and probably much longer, dug down to the water table, creating the "Indian wells" diagnostic of much of aboriginal Southern California. Then as now, anywhere that Cottonwoods grew down in the canyon bottoms indicated a high water table that could be encountered only a few feet below the sunbaked ground. Natural food resources of the Sierra Pelona were abundant, and the ancient people who lived there enjoyed an ecotonal advantange over their neighbors, for in addition to the resources of the hills and canyons of the Sierra

Pelona they could venture down onto the desert floor to the north and onto the wide, flat, San Fernando Valley to the south, contemporary politics permitting.

Archaeology vs History

In California, you do not have to go very far back in time before history stops, and prehistory begins. Both history and archaeology are composed of two elements, the objective and the subjective, the first being the evidence (the "what") of the past, the second being our interpretation (the "why") of what we find. The two must be kept rigidly separate in all research, thinking, and writing, for if they are confused with each other, then what is being "studied" is not archaeology nor history, but make-believe, and what is being written is fiction. All of us old U.C. Berkeley archaeologists have a saying: that only after securing 95% evidence through fieldwork may you then indulge in 5% interpretation.[3]

So what is the difference between history and archaeology? In a nutshell, written records. Historians don't go out and interview dead people, they study the writings of people no longer with us, and the manuscripts, newspapers, books, maps, renderings, and, where available, even photographs of past people and events. We call this documentary evidence, none of which is available to the prehistoric archaeologist, because none of it ever existed in prehistory. And, if history is always *biographical*, despite specific emphases on political history, economic history, social history, and so forth and so on, then archaeology is always *anonymous*: we never know the names of the people who lived at the sites or made the features and artifacts we discover. Historians without documentary evidence are out of a job, but the absence of written records is taken for granted by all prehistoric archaeologists, and is our normal research point of departure.

Archaeological Evidence

The archaeologist deals with completely different kinds of evidence than the historian. Archaeological evidence consists of four things, and four things only: 1: sites, 2: features, 3: artifacts, and 4: associations.

Figure 5: *Features are, by definition, stationary, and non-portable. Prehistoric features of the Sierra Pelona include bedrock mortars like the ones above. Missing in this photo are pestles—the portable artifacts used to pound soft foods, from acorns to ground squirrels, in the mortar holes. Originally Figure 25 in B. Dillon 1988.*

Archaeological sites are places where ancient activities took place. They can be large or small, but all can be recognized because they are places where the other three categories of archaeological evidence are found. *Features* like housepits, midden accumulations, bedrock mortars (Figures 5, 6, 9), and rock art (Figures 1, 6, 8, 9), and/or *artifacts* like chipped or ground stone tools (Figure 7) once their *associations* have been carefully mapped, define the archaeological site area. We are limited to only what the accidents of preservation have left for us. At any given Southern California archaeological site during the time of its use upwards of 90% of all the *artifacts* present would have been of perishable materials: wood, fiber, basketry, skin, even human hair. So, unless conditions for dry preservation exist in all-too-rare caves or rock shelters we are left with only perhaps 10% of the total evidence that once existed.

Upon discovery, archaeologists assign newly-found prehistoric sites temporary designations to keep them separate from each other, and from earlier-recorded sites, which already have been assigned permanent site numbers. I either give them nonsense names, or simply TS (Temporary Site) numbers until the "official" site numbers are received back from the local office of CHRIS, the *California Historical Resource*

Figure 6: *The thrill of discovery: a green schist/steatite boulder, Feature 5 at CA-LAN-1443 in the Mint Canyon drainage. Small bedrock mortars and cupules exist on the same surface. CSULB student Nobukatsu Hasebe has just helped me expose this feature by hacking away the chaparral growth that obscured it. For field archaeologists, the machete is as important a field tool as the camera. Originally Figure 21 in Dillon, 1988.*

Information System, the most recent name for what used to be known as the SHPO (*State Historic Preservation Office*), and before that simply as the *California Archaeological Survey*.[4] The University of California pioneered the centralized site recording system that all other states eventually copied. Dozens of independent lists kept by local museums, colleges, even private individuals, were combined so that by 1948 a single, master list had been created for the entire state. Archaeological sites are listed by order of recording on a county-by-county basis: CA-LAN-1 in Topanga Canyon, for example, was the first site recorded in Los Angeles County by my old Berkeley professor R. F. Heizer. Archaeological sites have no "legal" existence until precisely plotted on a map, and their exact boundaries confirmed through mapping their features and artifacts.

Archaeological features are stationary, permanent, kinds of evidence. The Sierra Pelona contains a few sites with black, greasy, midden deposits, from years, decades, or perhaps even centuries of refuse accumulations, primarily carbon and ash from the fires that were kept burning continuously, and never let burn out. When and where you find middens, these typically indicate either a temporary camp, or, less commonly, a village. Other features commonly encountered in the Sierra Pelona are bedrock milling slicks, where hard grass and chaparral seeds were ground into paste, and bedrock mortars, where oily seeds and nuts were pounded prior to leaching and cooking through stone-boiling in perishable baskets. Another feature, of course, is rock art.

Archaeological artifacts are portable objects made, modified, or transported by human agency, which cannot be confused with accidents of nature. All intentionally-made tools of stone, bone, shell, wood, etc. are of course artifacts, but so are the unused, discarded, by-products of making such tools (chipped stone waste) or animal bone discarded after butchering. Even completely unmodified marine shell, if found in Sierra Pelona sites, thirty to fifty miles from the nearest sea-shore, must be considered arti-

factual: the mollusks didn't sprout legs and walk in, ancient people had to haul the shellfish in from the coast. Natural water-rolled cobbles common to streambeds, if found lying atop archaeological sites, are also artifactual, despite lacking evidence for intentional modification: ancient Indian women used them for stone-boiling. Other natural objects "out of place," moved for reasons unknowable to us today, are also artifacts.

Archaeological associations are the physical relationships between features and artifacts at prehistoric sites. Nothing tells us more about what went on at these places than the distributions of certain kinds of artifacts, and their relationships with each other. Associations can be horizontal, such as when manos and metates are found in one part of an archaeological site, while lithic cores, core-struck flakes, and unfinished chipped stone tools are found at the opposite side, indicating separate male and female activity areas. Or, they can be vertical (stratigraphic) where the sequence of deposition from top to bottom indicates occupations of ever-increasing age. Associations can also be found between specific kinds of features and their corresponding artifacts: portable pestles, for example, still emplaced within their own mortar holes, manos still lying atop their own metates, or hammerstones lying at the base of the petroglyph panels they were used to create. Looting and mechanical damage (roads, grading, etc.) to archaeological sites hurts them not so much through removal of specific artifacts, as the destruction of the assocations that, once lost, can never be reconstructed.

Of the four kinds of archaeological evidence, artifacts are most familiar to the lay public, for, being portable, they are the *only* kind of evidence on display in museums. In any archaeological study, writing, speaking or thinking, if what is being considered is not one of the four things defined above, then it is not archaeological evidence. And, if it is not archaeological evidence, then by default it must be something else: at best, thoughtful interpretation, at worse, wishful thinking, make-believe, or outright fabrication.[5]

Archaeological Overview

More than twenty years ago I lamented the underdeveloped status of scientific research within the Sierra Pelona:

> "Unfortunately, the Sierra Pelona has one of the worst records of archaeological report completion for any part of California, with no formal report publication for any single excavation made therein. As a consequence, the basic evidence upon which normal archaeological interpretation must be based remains inaccessible, and the little hard data which exists is fragmentary and incomplete."[6]

Nothing in the intervening years has improved this discouraging situation.[7] The first serious research in the Sierra Pelona was done in the 1930's by Richard Van Valkenburgh of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History. Van Valkenburgh discovered and recorded more than two dozen archaeological sites, and his fanciful map of the region (Figure 3) attempts to correlate prehistoric evidence on the ground with contact-period ethnohistoric clues. But this map only concerns the final expression of California Indian culture in the Sierra Pelona. The full span of culture history is much longer, and more complex.

No fluted, PalaeoIndian, projectile points have yet been found in Los Angeles County, although these are present in adjacent Kern, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Orange Counties.[8] The extinct megafauna most closely linked with the Fluted Point tradition in Western North America, elephants, were in fact present at no great distance from the Sierra Pelona over 10,000 years ago.[9] The earliest dated human skeleton from Los Angeles County, La Brea Woman, at 9,000+/- B.P., also represents our oldest homicide victim: unfortunately, not much has changed here over the past nine thousand years. Amongst the earliest physical evidence from the Sierra Pelona is a single San Dieguito style projectile point I found in the bed of lower Castaic Creek, on the L.A. County

Figure 7: *Steatite artifacts from the Sierra Pelona. Left: shaft straightener with K-bar knife pointing at groove, in situ, CA-LAN-1443. Right: fragmentary doughnut stone broken during the process of manufacture, and left on the surface of CA-LAN-1442 (top view, left, bottom view, right). Left photo originally Figure 16, right photo originally Figure 13, of Dillon 1988.*

Jail. Potentially 6,000 to 9,000 years of age, it dates to the Early Archaic Period.[10] This early point is completely rounded and polished from miles of downstream alluvial transport during thousands of years. The next earliest artifact claimed for the Sierra Pelona is a single olivella shell bead from CA-LAN-618 in the Agua Dulce Creek drainage, thought to date perhaps as early as 2000+/-years B.C.[11] Despite these two comparatively early finds, most archaeological evidence from the Sierra Pelona dates no older than about 1000 B.C.

The so-called Millingstone Horizon, well-represented throughout much of Southern California, is thought to have begun as early as 8,000 years ago. Nevertheless, millingstone technology continued essentially unchanged for at least 6,000 years, and the presence of diagnostic manos and metates at any site, including those in the Sierra Pelona, need not indicate extreme antiquity.[12] While some researchers believe that the Millingstone period ended in the Sierra Pelona by 1,000 B.C., others, including me, have shown that it continued right up to Spanish Contact throughout many other parts of Southern California: this could also apply to the Sierra Pelona.

A poorly-understood Intermediate Period may be intercalated between the old Millingstone Horizon and the subsequent, and much shorter, Late Prehistoric Period. The earliest human burials known from the Sierra Pelona may date to this shadowy time. The Late Prehistoric Period probably began in the Sierra Pelona around 500 A.D., or perhaps a few centuries later. Small projectile points appeared, indicating the arrival of the bow and arrow, and the earlier atlatl and dart became obsolete. An augmentation in natural plant food harvesting now incorporated oily nuts, probably acorns, into the diet, alongside the hard grass seeds that were ground on both portable metates and bedrock slicks for many preceding centuries. The new plant foods were pounded, rather than ground, so the most obvious evidence for them becomes bedrock mortars. Ubiquitous throughout most of the length and breadth of California, these occur wherever acorn-bearing oaks can still be found, and also within many places were such trees have recently been rendered locally extinct. Burials changed from inhumations to cremations, part of what is generally thought to have been the result of the "Shoshonean" intrusion from the Great Basin and Eastern California interior through mountain gateways all the way to the Pacific Coast. As with earlier traders, the Santa Clara River drainage would have provided such newcomers with an easy and familiar migration route. Whether the pre-existing Sierra Pelona population was displaced by these late-arriving Shoshoneans, was bypassed by them, or in some way amalgamated with them, remains unknown. In any event, the Late Prehistoric Sierra Pelona population embraced new technological ideas not only from the north, but also from the east.

At the time of most of my own Sierra Pelona research twenty to thirty-five years ago, the best scientific indicators for any extended human occupation were provided by obsidian hydration dating: over half a hundred samples were run. Obsidian, with no local sources, would be considered scarce within the Sierra Pelona were it not for the fact that the Santa Clara drainage was a major route for the importation of this valuable material from Eastern California and the Great Basin. So, at least some of the prehistoric Sierra Pelona people obtained obsidian probably from Mojave Indian traders, the most famous Southern California long-distance pedestrians. The earliest obsidian hydration dates from the Sierra Pelona equate with approximately 800 B.C.[13]

So Many Sites, So Few Indians

If you were magically transported back in time to 1500 A.D. in the Sierra Pelona, and asked any California Indian you met there, *"Where do you live?"* the response would probably be, *"What a ridiculous question!"* For just about all California Indians, certainly those of the Sierra Pelona, lived at many places during the course of a single year. Their settlement and land use patterns were completely different from Europeans', yet few California historians and fewer still lay persons today understand just how great this difference was. A much better question, consequently, would therefore be, *"Where do you live...when?"* Settlement patterns were characterized by annual cycles of dispersal and reconcentration, with completely different sites, both geographically and functionally, hosting different elements of the population part-time, yet repetitively, year after year, generation after generation.[14]

Most of the hundreds of recorded archaeological sites in the Sierra Pelona are small, shallow, and despite the general lack of excavation and scientific testing, are presumed to be comparatively late in age. A lamentable tendency of early researchers like Van Valkenburgh was to call any and every prehistoric Indian site a "village" (Figure 3). Van Valkenburgh's map is contradictory: while his key calls settlements *rancherias*, his map title bespeaks "Villages." The two are not the same, and should never be confused. Present-day archaeologists define them very differently: for every true "village" (places occupied year-round), in ancient California there were dozens, often hundreds, of temporary, seasonal camps, or *rancherias*. In fact, only three sites large and complex enough to be considered "villages" are positively known from the lightly-populated Sierra Pelona. All three were located close to dependable sources of water, and all three were south-facing, to take advantage of greatest warmth and longer hours of daylight during the winter months when they were occupied. Two lie within the Castaic Creek drainage, the third is in the upper Agua Dulce Creek drainage:

> On a ridge above the south bank of the Santa Clara River opposite its confluence with Castaic Creek, lay the Late Prehistoric village of *Chaguaya-bit*, at which, when visited by the Portolá expedition of 1769, some 300 local Indians were said to have been present. Many, if not most, of these people were probably visitors from other locations, in the Sierra Pelona, Santa Clara drainage, and even from the San Fernando Valley to the south.[15]

The second of the three possible Sierra Pelona village sites lies a few miles north:

> The Elderberry Canyon Site, CA-LAN-324, [lay] on the slope adjacent to and below the freshwater spring-fed stream of the same name, near its confluence with Castaic Creek…it...presently lies beneath the waters of [Elderberry] reservoir. Although excavated [in the early 1970's]...no site report was ever produced and this most important site remains essentially unpublished.[16]

The third and final of the three village sites lies some miles to the east:

> The *Agua Dulce Village* site(s), near present-day Vasquez Rocks County

> Park...if perhaps the longest and most completely studied of the three [Late Prehistoric Villages known from the Sierra Pelona], remain nevertheless the most controversial in interpretation...A series of sites in the Vasquez Rocks have been partially investigated and incompletely described by...field researchers between the 1930's and mid-1970's: no site report yet has appeared…[17]

A fourth village almost certainly lies undiscovered and unrecorded in the San Francisquito Creek drainage, possibly at or near the modern-day hamlet of Green Valley.

Dozens of other kinds of prehistoric sites, none of them villages, can be identified within the Sierra Pelona. Some are sex-specific, some even age-specific, but all are small and were used or occupied temporarily, not year-round. Steatite quarries and workshops are where men extracted and worked this valuable natural resource. Chipping stations are where chipped-stone tools were made, identifiable by the discarded by-products (debitage) of stone tool manufacture, tools broken while in the process of manufacture, stone cores, core-struck flakes, hammerstones, and other indicators, again associated with men. Bedrock milling slicks and bedrock mortars, conversely, are associated with women: when found singly, these are features, but in combination and concentration they become archaeological sites. And rock shelters and rock art sites, at least within the Sierra Pelona, cannot be positively associated with one sex to the exclusion of the the other, or with adults to the exclusion of children. Cemeteries typically represent both sexes and all ages, while temporary camps may have hosted entire families, or only the adult male members of individual families while out hunting, and so forth and so on.

Cultural Affiliations: Atapili'ish, Alliklik, Tataviam, Or...?

On the southern margin of the Sierra Pelona lived the Shoshonean-speaking Indians that came to be called the *Fernandeño*, quite simply the "people of [Mission] San Fernando," after they were concentrated there by Catholic missionaries at the end of the 18th Century. Today, many refer to this group as the *Tongva*, after the name of only a single one of their villages. To the east, in the San Gabriel Mountains, lived the so-called *Serrano*, not a specific ethnic group, simply the Spanish name for "mountain people," probably different groups speaking different languages, certainly including Shoshonean tongues. To the west lived the people who have come to be called the "Inland" Chumash, with links to the larger coastal group living from what are now Ventura up through San Luis Obispo Counties. To the north lived the *Castac* people, at the top of Tejón Pass, said by some to be Chumash-speaking, but by others to be of a different tongue.

The very small Sierra Pelona population was represented as different from all of these neighbors by some accounts, and similar if not identical to one or more of them, by others. At first called the *Atapili'ish*, a name given them by their Chumash neighbors downstream, at the mouth of the Santa Clara River in what is now Ventura County, meaning "grunters and stammerers" (speakers of a different language, most likely a Shoshonean tongue) then, later, *Alliklik*.[18] More recently this same group was given yet another name, *Tataviam*.[19] Again, this is not what they called themselves, but another name bequeathed upon them by neighbors, this time the *Kitanemuk* of the Tehachapis: this third name meant "people of where the morning sun hits."

I discovered a tenuous and tantalizing dead-end clue to the ethnic identity of the Sierra Pelona Indians while doing research on the old Cordova ranch in upper Castaic Canyon more than twenty years ago. The Cordova family was established in the Castaic drainage as early as 1834, and possibly earlier: all of its male members worked on local *ranchos* as *vaqueros*, and some of them married local Indian women. The Cordovas still graze cattle around what is now Castaic reservoir: Rudy Cordova, aged 68 when I interviewed him in 1996, and the youngest of 18 children, told me that his great-grandmother was a California

Figure 8: *Small green schist rock art boulder with cupules and geometric lines in the upper Mint Canyon drainage. Rock art consists of pictographs, where something is added to the rock surface, and petroglyphs, where something is taken away from it. Both are well-represented in the Sierra Pelona. Originally Figure 12 in B. Dillon 1988.*

Indian woman from the Tejón pass country (from near tiny lake *Castac*, presently visible on the Tejón Ranch just to the east of the I-5 freeway). She had eleven children herself, but, unfortunately, to this day none of her descendants know what her native language was, nor her tribal affiliation.[20]

Rock Art Redux

Rock art is not "writing" as all modern literate people define it. California petroglyphs and pictographs are completely different from Maya hieroglyphs and from Aztec rebus writing. Rock art symbols are a form of communication, but their meaning is inextricably embedded in the culture of their creators. Such meaning will always be unknowable to members of other cultures, unless it is explained to them by the artists themselves, in a language that both artist and observer have in common. This actually happened three or at most only four times in California, in every case around a century or more ago, when curious whites asked local Indians why they were making rock art, or brought knowledgeable Indians to look at recently-made rock art.[21]

In one Southern California case, the rock art (pictographs) was made only by teenage girls as part of a puberty initiation, coupled with fasting, solitary running, and meditation. In another, Northwestern California case, rock art (petroglyphs) was made only by adult women as part of fertility magic, at boulders specific to each woman's lineage. In a third, Northeastern California case, rock art (petroglyphs) was made only by male Shamans for weather control and fishing magic, where "rain rocks," boulders with cupules and grooves ground into them, were buried to "bring the rain:" raising water levels in creeks and rivers and enabling the annual salmon and steelhead runs that provided an important food source for local Indians.

More speculative, yet plausible, interpretations of California rock art in other places no great distance from the Sierra Pelona suggest that it was made as a component of hunting magic, to influence success in taking specific species such as bighorn sheep. Or, alternatively, as genealogical record-keeping, where mothers, daughters, and grand-daughters ground "their own" cupule on the "family boulder" to commemorate births. Or, as a kind of family or tribal "boundary marker" laying claim to

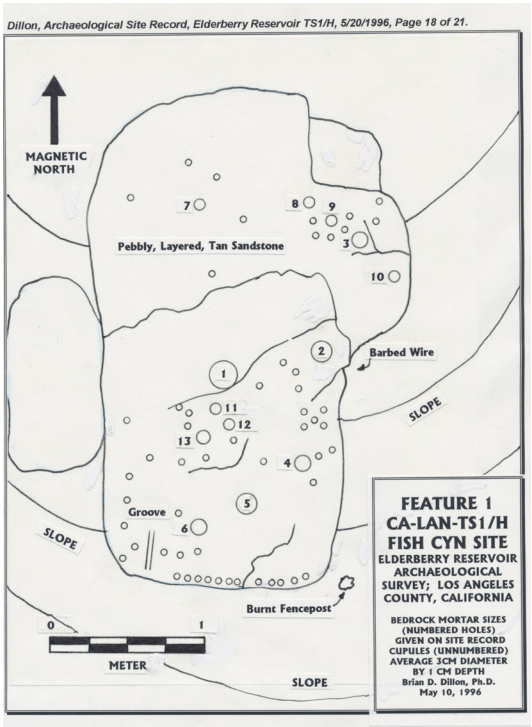

Figure 12: Map of Feature 1, the bedrock mortar/cupule boulder at the Fish Canyon Archaeological Site (CA-LAN-TS1/H). Drawing by B. D. Dillon, 1996.

Figure 9: *Plan view of a very large bedrock mortar/cupule boulder in the Castaic Creek drainage, where deep mortar holes and small, shallow, cupules arranged in patterns are found in combination on the same surface. Originally page 18 of my 21-page site record form, attached as an appendix to B. Dillon 1996.*

a particular stretch of fish-bearing stream, grove of acorn-bearing oaks, or favored hunting area. Particularly apropos to the "crossroads" nature of the Sierra Pelona is yet another common interpretation of rock art as trail markers, the equivalent of ancient "road signs." Significant is that in every situation where we have a specific explanation of what rock art meant to the California Indian making it, each explanation is *different* from every other one.

Unfortunately no ethnographic interviewing was ever done in the Sierra Pelona, so the meaning of its abundant rock art will forever be unknown. And, if by some miracle, we were ever able to unlock the meaning of even a *single example* of Sierra Pelona rock art, the odds are very good that this meaning would be completely *different* from all previous interpretations advanced for California rock art. By this line of reasoning, any guess made about rock art "meaning" unsupported by ethnographic evidence is 99% likely to be wrong.

The casual identification of one Sierra Pelona rock art boulder (Figure 1) as a "rain rock" by an archaeology student over forty years ago was unwarranted then, and remains so today. Ascribing any specific function to rock art without proof denies the possibility of other, equally plausible, functions. Unfortunately, "typecasting" rock art is a common practice, not just within the Sierra Pelona. For example, a great many cupule boulders in the Sierra Nevada and Coast Range have been called "baby rocks" without any proof of their association with fertility magic. No single explanation need exclude any other, even on the same boulder, for at many California rock art sites, including more than a few in the Sierra Pelona, different people came back to the same rock face, and made different kinds of rock art, probably for different purposes, over time. One interpretation invariably rejected by some self-proclaimed "experts" is the possibility (in my own opinion, the *probability*), that some rock art has no meaning at all, but is the functional equivalent of doodling.

A much more profitable avenue of rock art research than simple-minded subjective guesswork lies in characterizing the different forms or styles represented, then plotting their geographic distribution. Doing so will doubtless show that some styles are shared with surrounding areas, and, perhaps, with ancient neighboring people, while others are confined to the Sierra Pelona. It may even be possible to identify the work of individual ancient artists. Superpositioning different styles on the same rock face can give their relative dating, and perhaps provide clues to the sequence of cultural occupation in the Sierra Pelona. Even without one form of rock art directly atop another, necessarily earlier one, expressions are so distinctive and varied that it is unlikely that one single group made them all.

Fine line incision tends to be on vertical surfaces, while broad grooving is more common on ground-level boulders. Both were

used to make recognizable geometric shapes, as well as unrecognizable ones. Cupules can be found on flat and on vertical surfaces, singly, in lines, in parallel lines, and in precise geometric shapes and patterns. Pictographs can be black or red monochrome, bichrome, and in rare occasions trichrome, not quite true polychrome. It is likely that different rock art expressions are years, decades, human generations, or even centuries apart. All rock art means something, but, unfortunately, the discovery of such meaning lies beyond the limits of scientific enquiry. Rock art meaning is not just *culturally* specific, but also *chronologically* specific. The meaning any given symbol may have had at the time of its creation was probably different a century later.

There is a general impression that archaeologists are at the *fringe* of American society, at least in economic and intellectual terms: most of us live at the poverty line, and many of us prefer the company of people long dead to that of the living. But within archaeology there is yet another fringe within a fringe, perhaps even a *lunatic fringe*, specific to rock art interpretation. For almost 30 years while teaching University-level archaeology, I took classes to rock art sites in Northern, Central and Southern California. While staring at pictographs or petroglyphs, I asked my students if they had ever met anybody claiming to be able to "read rock art just like reading a book," and in every class at least one student had. Then would come, inevitably, the student question: "what kind of drugs were they on?"[22] For no modern, urban, descendant of Europeans, Asians, or Africans looking at rock art made by a California Indian a thousand years earlier could ever hope to "read it like a book." Nor can any acculturated modern urban Indian, regardless of how strong his or her blood ties are to *unacculturated* ancestors of completely different language, thought, and belief.[23]

Conclusion: What we Know, and What we Never Will

In rock art terms, we need not swim in interpretive waters that have been muddied by those confusing fantasy with fact. Instead, it is more profitable to simply note that there are different styles of rock art throughout the Sierra Pelona, some of them obviously older than others. Each also has its own geographic distribution, still poorly documented, which might, just might, be relatable to different prehistoric ethnic groups, as a kind of pictographic and petroglyphic "signature."[24] Perhaps the comparatively rare pictographic rock art is an expression of people more closely related to the Inland Chumash to west, while the petroglyphic rock art is more closely related to the Shoshonean peoples of the eastern California desert and Great Basin. If so, an interesting situation is that the relative ages of both seem to be reversed, for where the two kinds of rock art are found together, the painted art seems to overlap the engraved art, making the latter earlier than the former.

Interpreting the evidence of archaeological site distribution, artifacts, and features, especially rock art, what I wrote twenty-one years ago still seems appropriate:

> Instead of being the archaeological backwater that some students have suggested, the Sierra Pelona may in Late Prehistoric times have been important both as a resource area and as a. . .corridor between coastal and interior people.[25]

I thought then, and still do today, that an:

> Ebb and flow of different cultural groups through the [Sierra Pelona]... would have been more characteristic than a situation in which different neighboring tribes jealously guarded precisely-delimited territorial borders.[26]

But, who knows how long the above conclusions might stand? Perhaps all of those unpublished sites will, in fact, someday be written up, and future archaeologists will do better, or, at least, more consistent research in the Sierra Pelona than the past three generations of prehistorians have. If so, another fifty years hence, we may know much more about the place than we do now.

Notes

1: Sierra Pelona Archaeological Research: I have completed many archaeological surveys of thousands of acres throughout the Sierra Pelona and immediately adjacent regions over a 35+ year period: B.D. Dillon 1981, 1988, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1996, 2007a, 2007b, to note only a few. During such work I discovered and recorded archaeological sites in previously unexplored regions, but also re-surveyed areas previously covered by supposedly competent archaeologists, and discovered and recorded archaeological sites, some of them with spectacular rock art, that earlier surveyors walked right past. I seem to be one of the few archaeologists working in the Sierra Pelona to have written up and submitted a report on every fieldwork effort completed therein.

2: 1842 Gold Discovery in the Sierra Pelona: R.H. Dillon 1966. Francisco López' much younger nephew, also named Francisco, worked as a teenaged vaquero all through the Sierra Pelona in the 1830's and '40's, twenty-five to thirty years after its last independent Indians had been removed to San Buenaventura and to San Fernando Missions. He knew the area so well, that it was called the *Sierra de Chico López*. His nickname (Chico = "kid") distinguished him from his identically-named uncle. Similarly, today's Lake Elizabeth was also called *La Laguna de Chico López* (B. Dillon 1996: 50-51).

3: Archaeological Evidence vs Interpretation: I was taught this essential Kroeberian distinction at U.C. Berkeley, and later spread this gospel to students at UCLA and UCLA Extension from 1979 through 2007. Unfortunately, however, most of the lay public routinely confuses evidence with interpretation. Nowhere is this more egregious than in T.V. programs about archaeology, inevitably with the word "mystery" in their titles: the exact reverse of our "95 vs 5%" rule. To any competent archaeologist, there are no mysteries, only ignorance. Our job is to diminish ignorance through field archaeology, and our primary goal is the discovery of evidence, not the "newest theory."

4: The California Archaeological Survey: was begun at UC Berkeley in 1948, by my old professor R. F. Heizer (1915-1979). Site recording responsibility was divided in 1958: Southern California records were moved to UCLA by my old boss and mentor C. W. Meighan (1925-1997). As a student I haunted the Berkeley facility, and later ran the UCLA one as a research archaeologist.

5: Archaeological Fact vs Fiction: B. Dillon, 1994a. A more vernacular expression of Note 3, above.

6: One of the Worst Records of Archaeological Report Completion: B.D. Dillon 1996: 17.

7: Los Angeles County Archaeological Overview: Elsewhere (Dillon and Boxt, 1989b) I attempted a general overview of Los Angeles County archaeology, including a listing of every radiocarbon age determination and obsidian hydration evaluation reported within the County's modern political boundaries. The Sierra Pelona comes up woefully short in comparison with better-studied areas like the Santa Monica Mountains and Malibu Coastal strip. While a reference in passing to a single radiocarbon date appears in one Sierra Pelona report (King Smith and King 1974), nowhere can this date, nor what it correlates to in 14C years, be found. The most useful culture-historic review yet to appear for the Sierra Pelona remains that by Linda King (1981: 22-24).

8: PalaeoIndian California: B.D. Dillon 2002.

9: Late Pleistocene L.A. County Elephants: While running the UCLA Archaeological Survey I responded to many "false alarms" ("I found a Chumash princess while digging in my back yard," etc). But one worthwhile call came from a Val Verde land owner. He proudly showed me a fabulous megafauna fossil, a football-sized mammoth molar, just eroded out of a sand cliff. Unfortunately, I could find no human component associated with the ancient pachyderm.

10: Earliest Diagnostic Projectile Point from the Sierra Pelona: B.D. Dillon 1993b.

11: Earliest Diagnositc Shell Bead from the Sierra Pelona: King, Smith and King 1974: 14.

12: Longevity of the "Millingstone Horizon:" B.D. Dillon 1996: 25-27.

13: Obsidian Hydration Dating: B.D. Dillon 1988: 9; 1996: 18-19.

14: So Many Sites, So Few Indians: Dillon 1994b. I taught this concept to thousands of students over nearly thirty years of college-level instruction. Unfortunately, too many "social scientists," especially historians writing about early California, once again, never "got the memo."

15: Late Prehistoric Chaguaya-bit Village: B.D. Dillon 1996: 17. In 1769 Father Costanso identified this place as the *Rancheria del Corral* after the temporary brush enclosure there. Later still, in 1804, an *asistencia* or "outpost" of Mission San Fernando was established, and the place was again re-named, as *San Francisco*. An adobe structure was built there, and the place became the focus of stockraising and agriculture. This site may have been excavated by Arthur Woodward of the Los Angeles County Museum in the 1930's. Unfortunately, like most of Woodward's archaeological work in Southern California, such research, if in fact ever completed, was never published.

16: Late Prehistoric Elderberry Canyon Village Site: B.D. Dillon 1996: 18. This site was excavated

by UCLA and Cal State Northridge students as a salvage project prior to the filling of Castaic and Elderberry Reservoirs. While a few student papers (Chartkoff and Hanks, 1971; Ericson, 1972) were generated from the work, no final report or publication was ever completed. Three 14C dates resulted from the excavations (B. Dillon 1988: 8; 1996: 78) equating with 90 B.C., A.D. 230, and A.D. 1630, placing it firmly in the Late Prehistoric Period, but also at the end of the preceding intermediate period. Interestingly enough, its excavators never referred to it as a "village" but as a "seasonal base camp." Only later did others (cf. King, Smith and King, 1974) begin to refer to it as a "village."

17: The Agua Dulce Village Site(s): B. Dillon 1996: 17-18. Archaeology in the Agua Dulce drainage in the early 1970's was done as a general survey with selected test excavations to mitigate potential impacts from the proposed creation of Vasquez Rocks County Park (Hanks, 1971; King, Smith and King 1974). Unfortunately, some of the sites recorded were so poorly mapped that they have subsequently been found to be multiple sites, or much more complex than originally thought. Similarly, the "Agua Dulce Village Site" is represented by some as a single archaeological site, by others as multiple sites. Worse yet, archaeological sites, particularly rock art sites, continue to be found within the area supposedly investigated, indicating very incomplete coverage by the original surveyors. Prior to that survey, in the late 1960's, a prehistoric cemetery site, CA-LAN-361, in the vicinity of the Agua Dulce Village(s) was excavated. It contained numerous laterally flexed burials and late-appearing projectile points, but, like all other excavations of important Sierra Pelona archaeological sites, it remains unpublished. This cemetery served the Agua Dulce Village Site(s) for a very long time.

18: Alliklik: Kroeber, 1915; 1925: 556, 577, 613-14, 883. Bright (1975) believes the Alliklik were of Chumash speech, the Tataviam of Shoshonean. If so, then the later-arriving Shoshoneans probably either displaced, or absorbed, the earlier Alliklik, fully or partially (B. Dillon 1996: 41-43).

19: Tataviam: J.P Harrington, 1934; King and Blackburn, 1978. Caruso (1988) characterized "Tataviam trade" without benefit of any archaeological evidence. Warmed-over Marxist-Leninist economic theory was offered instead, an exercise in unproductive retroactive wishful thinking for the prehistoric Sierra Pelona (see Notes 3, 5).

20: Modern Descendants of Sierra Pelona Indians: Cordova, 1996; B. Dillon 1996: 50; 2006.

21: Rock Art Ethnography: Heizer & Clewlow, 1973; Clewlow, 1978; Whitley, 1996, 2011.

22: What Kind of Drugs Were they On?: A very real, if now discredited, offshoot of my chosen discipline was created at UCLA in the 1960's, a decade before my own arrival there. "Furst" out of the gate was Peter T. Furst (1922-2015). Given his Ph.D. at UCLA in 1966, his research focus was American Indian drug use. His popular books (Furst 1972, 1976), the earlier based upon a series of UCLA lectures, cemented his position as the foremost American "psychedelic anthropologist." The second, even more famous psychedelic messiah at UCLA was Carlos Castenada (1925-1998), who wrote no dissertation for his doctoral committee, instead simply submitting a copy of his book *Journey to Ixtlan*. These two UCLA anthropologists legitimized drug use as a "field of study" within academia. Soon, students began "experimental replication" of presumed drug use by prehistoric California Indians, justifying it as a means of "better understanding" vanished cultures. Not surprisingly, the most fertile field for this Southern California lunatic fringe was prehistoric rock art interpretation. "Let's drop acid and go look at rock art" sounds like a bad joke, but in fact is a pernicious legacy from the 60's still lingering today in a few dark corners, despite debunking by critics like Jay Courtney Fikes (1993).

23: No, You Can't Read Rock Art "Like a Book:" To prove this point, at every rock art site I have taken students to during the past 27 years, I have passed around a few World War II U.S. Army divisional shoulder patches, and then asked my archaeology students what they are, and what they mean. Most younger kids guessed that they were "soldier stuff" but had no more precise interpretation. The older generation invariably identified my samples as specific to different American infantry divisions, but few could tell me which any of them stood for. Only WWII veterans could link the graphic symbols to specific divisions. My point always came across crystal clear: if, within our own culture, important visual symbols whose meaning and significance were common knowledge just one or two generations earlier are now unknown to their creators' grandchildren, then how can any of these same people claim to understand the precise meaning of symbols made by members of a completely different culture, hundreds, if not thousands, of years ago?

24: Rock Art as Cultural "Signatures:" This idea is generally accepted amongst California archaeologists and responsible rock art scholars (cf: Garfinkle, 1982; Lee and Hyder, 1991; Whitley, 1996). Linda King (1981) the most knowledgeable student of Sierra Pelona rock art, believes it can be used to indicate a kind of "frontier" or "borderland" between two prehistoric groups of funda-

mentally different nature. To this I would add that if so, then this "frontier" probably moved back and forth over time, as different waves of people entered the Sierra Pelona, and interacted with their neighbors and predecessors.

25: Sierra Pelona "No Archaeological Backwater:" B. Dillon 1996: 32.

26: "Ebb and Flow of Prehistoric Cultures" in the Sierra Pelona: B. Dillon 1996: 32.

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Rebel Gilletts, Arizona's Old Hat Mining District, and the Southern Belle Mine

Robert Chandler

Mr. and Mrs. C.G. Gillett were rebellious, and Arizona's 1880s *Old Hat Mining District*, north of Tucson and southeast of Oracle in Pinal County's Santa Catalina Mountains, benefitted. Covil G. Gillett entered this world in New York State in 1827, but by the time of the *Great Unpleasantness* in 1862, had donned Rebel Gray for service as a bugler in Company E, 36th Texas Cavalry. Gillett guarded the border, smuggled cotton to Mexico, and fought hard through the Red River Campaign. After the Civil War he drifted to the small California cowtown of Los Angeles, where he married a lively lady 25 years younger than he and soon fathered a daughter. In 1879, the Gillett family left for Tucson, where they became well respected. In 1880, they began searching the *Old Hat Mining District* (Figure 1) for riches.

No mere woman's sphere for Sarah M. Gillett! Newspapers credited her for discovering the *Imperial Mine*, which fired imaginations quickly. In fall 1880 a writer in the Tucson Star remarked that Mrs. Gillett was "as good a prospector as her husband."[1] But Sarah Gillett's real fame came later, with the *Southern Belle Mine*, south of the old *Imperial*. That mine actually produced enough to put it on the map. Mail contractor and stage owner Mariano Samaniego carried letters and the curious to both places (Figure 2).

An observant scribbler for the Tucson *Citizen* stepped into Pierson & Co's Congress Street saloon in July 1880 a few days after the Gilletts and John T. Young filed their first, *Imperial*, claim. Of course, nothing like a drink on a hot day tempted him, for he wrote:

> We noticed a very fine specimen of gold rock from the Imperial mine in Old Hat District. The gold seems to be in clusters from the size of a pinhead up to a pennyweight. [He added wistfully], A few tons of such rock would satisfy our desires for some time to come.[2]

Figure 1: *Allegorical depiction of a typical Old Hat Mining District inhabitant, Arizona Territory. Original image from J.H. Phillips & Co. standing advertisement; reused in Tucson Daily* Star, *May 20-Aug 3, 1886.*

On October 2, 1880 Dr. Herman H. Lyons, an Oakland, California homeopathic physician, paid the three partners $13,000 for the *Imperial Mine*. Early next year the *Citizen* reported that the new Catalina Post Office was at the site, with discoverer John T. Young as postmaster, while "two hundred tons of free-milling gold ore lies on the dump, waiting completion of the mill."[3]

In late April, 1881, the Tucson *Star* noted that the *Imperial Mine* mill processed 13 tons of $23 assayed gold (1.1 ounces) every 24 hours. Its reporter enthused:

> The result of the first "clean up" will be awaited with considerable interest, for if the results are anything like what is anticipated, [the] Old Hat [Mining] District will have a bonanza of the first magnitude.[4]

Unfortunately, no further stories appeared. John Young closed the Catalina post office on May 24, 1881 after only five months.

Figure 2: *In the fall of 1886, M. G. Samaniego favored the Tucson* Citizen *with an advertisement noting stage transportation to the Southern Belle Mine. Standing advertisement, July 10-September 11, 1886.*

Meanwhile, Sarah Gillett was developing real riches to the south. On July 1, 1880, Sarah M. Gillett, Covil G. Gillett, and John T. Young filed the location of the *Southern Belle Mine*, its name of course reflecting a Texan's pride in his wife. On September 4, 1880, a representative of the *Citizen* found Gillett in town and transcribed their story:

> We had to sell the Imperial to get money enough to prospect our other claims, [since] a prospector's life is hard enough and if he hasn't any money he might almost as well give up.[5]

How did the discovery of the *Southern Belle* come about? Through Mrs. Gillett's shrewdness and intelligence. Everyone had seen the site, but had earlier dismissed it:

> The ledge stands out bold and high and [runs] for 1400 feet, but finding nothing in the cap rock, the hunters invariably 'gave it the shake' as being barren.[6]

However, Sarah Gillett had education and savvy lacking in her male prospector peers. According to her husband, she "had made the subject of minerals and mining scientifically considered the study of many leisure hours," then "added her practical experience in a mining camp."[7] In fact, none of Covil's own Old Hat mines could match his wife's in productivity. Sarah Gillett, undaunted by the naysayers, had cut through the limestone caprock to find specimens claimed to assay from $5000 to as high as $20,000 per ton, doubtless exaggerated to excite Eastern investors ignorant of the realities of mining. One sample chunk dispatched eastward was described by Gillett as having:

> Wire gold interlaced through the quartz in such a way as to render it exceedingly beautiful...[and that] Rock carrying native gold plainly visible can be found the whole length of the croppings by merely penetrating the cap rock for the depth of a foot or eighteen inches.[8]

Not surprisingly, in late November the two Gilletts and Young sold a half interest in the *Southern Belle* to mine speculator General Elliot W. Rice and Isaac Laurin of American Flag mine for $25,000. In May 1881, Laurin picked up another three-eighths from Young and Rice. None of the Gillett's other claims panned out, but with money in hand, Gillett joined the next local rush, spending two years locating claims in Sonora, Mexico. Then, at age 60, Covil Gillett and his family returned to Southern California.

The mills of mines worked very slowly in the hot hills of the Santa Catalina Mountains, under their *Old Hat*. A report in January 1882 carried quite a reduced assay from what Gillett had claimed two years earlier: The *Southern Belle* had "a four-foot vein of gold ore, yielding form $20 to $40 per ton in gold," that is, one to two ounces. Significantly, the *Citizen* added, "Developments on this claim are not far advanced."[9] No wonder post offices on the eastern side of the Santa Catalinas came and went!

Development came the next year. In March 1883, Isaac Laurin bonded the mine to an eastern company, which quickly made a mill test. By late August it was claimed that:

> The Southern Belle five stamp mill at American Flag is running every day to its full capacity, and has enough ore on hand for several months to come.[10]

One of those Easterners was a strange bird, and, unfortunately, in charge. William Earle Dodge Scott (1852-1910) graduated from Harvard in 1873, became curator of Princeton University's Museum of Biology, and devoted his life to studying birds. He published ornithological articles in the Tucson newspapers and elsewhere in 1885 and 1886, gaining the title of "a second Audubon." Late in life, he wrote the well-received book *The Story of a Bird Lover*.[11] By December 1882, Scott was in Arizona, supervising the Princeton Mining Company. Through his father-in-law's purchase of Laurin's interest, in 1883 he moved over to supervise the *Southern Belle*. In his bird book Scott noted that "The nearest neighbors were ranchmen, some three miles distant, and mail was brought twice a week to a place known as American Flag."[12]

More than a quarter-century later, the Tucson *Star* revealed all. Scott had come:

> Primarily for the purpose of making a million dollars with which to erect a museum for the Princeton university. He invested large sums of his own and other people's money in the exploration and development of the Southern Belle group.[13]

Although a world-acclaimed ornithologist, W.E.B. Scott could not run a mine. The end came within a year. On June 30, 1884, Scott's Tucson bank sold 68,000 shares Scott had put up for security to cover his overdrafts of $22,500. In January 1885, Henry Bateman put together a group of New York investors, took charge, and once again the *Southern Belle* began to produce—modestly. In 1885, the *Southern Belle Mine* received a 10-stamp mill to work the flat, four-foot ledge of free-milling ore. On the last day of the year, pumps brought in 25,000 gallons of water from two miles away, while "the stamps are dropping lively and the bullion will now begin to appear."[14] In mid-February 1886, the *Southern Belle* shipped $7,000 (340 ounces), and a month later, after ten days work dispatched a $9,000, 30-pound bar. Just over a year later the Tucson *Star* commented most positively on two Old Hat mines. The first was the large *Mammoth* mine nine miles northeast of Oracle near the San Pedro River. The second needs no identification: "The Mammoth and Southern Belle gold mines are the most active gold producing mines in the Territory."[15]

Until it closed in 1888, the *Southern Belle Mine* produced 9,000 ounces of gold from about 19,000 tons of ore, or about a half ounce per ton. $10 per ton in reality certainly did not match $20 to $40 per ton in fiction, or $5,000 to $20,000 in sheer fantasy. Converted to dollars at $20.67 per troy ounce, that is $186,000, or, say $62,000 for each of three years. In 2017, at the present value of $1200 per ounce, these sums translate into $10.8 million or $3.6 million annual gross to divide among investors. Respectable, not fabulous, but still the most from any mine in the Santa Catalina Mountains of Arizona. The moral of this story is that a little book learning by a smart woman reading by candlelight goes a long way.

END NOTES with SOURCES

1: Daily Tucson *Star*, September 2, 1880.
2: Weekly Tucson *Citizen*, July 24, 1880.
3: Weekly Tucson *Citizen*, January 22, 1881.
4: Daily Tucson *Star*, April 21, 1881.
5: "Old Hat District," Weekly Tucson *Citizen*, September 4, 1880.
6: ibid.
7: ibid.
8: ibid.
9: Weekly Tucson *Citizen*, January 22, 1882.
10: Weekly Tuscon *Citizen*, August 25, 1883.
11: Scott, William Earl Dodge, 1903, *The Story of a Bird Lover*, The Outlook Company, New York.
12: Scott, 1903: 213-215.
13: Daily Tucson *Star*, November 30, 1909.
14: Weekly Tuscon *Citizen*, January 2, 1886.
15: Daily Tucson *Star*, May 12, 1887.

Fandango, June 2017 . . .

The Los Angeles Westerners' annual Fandango for June 2017 was held at *El Molino Viejo*, also known as The Old Mill, in San Marino California. The mill was built in 1816 by Father José María de Zalvidea as a grist mill for Mission San Gabriel, grinding corn and wheat. The mill is small, two structures on about an acre of land, with surrounding gardens. The walls were built thick, using oven baked bricks and volcanic tuff. The mill only operated for a short period before passing hands many times during Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. rule. In the early 20th century, the mill was used as a club house for the Huntington Hotel golf course, owned by the Huntington family. In 1927 Howard Huntington's widow Mrs. James Brehm decided to have the mill restored and preserved. Ownership fell to the City of San Marino upon her death in 1962. The Old Mill Foundation currently operates, maintains and preserves El Molino Viejo. The Old Mill is a designated California Historical Landmark and is also on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Fandango started off with exploring the property and social conversation. Luckily the weather was not too hot. Sheriff Brian D. Dillon recognized member Dave Gillies for his donation to the Corral of a fine work of art he had created. Dave had burned the Corral logo into a wooden plaque and gave it to the Corral to be used at our meetings. Eric Nelson hosted an exhilarating small auction of mostly Brand Books. Dinner was a Mexican buffet, accompanied by live music. Overall it was a great event, and we all look forward to the next Westerners Fandango.

~ Patrick Mulvey

All photos by Patrick Mulvey.

Monthly Roundup . . .

July 2017

Hadley Jensen

At the July meeting our speaker was Hadley Jensen. Her talk focused on the practice of anthropologists photographing Navajo women in front of the blankets that the Navajo traditionally made. These photos were made to be sold with little to no care for the subjects or their culture.

As a counterpoint to this, Jensen presented the case of George H. Pepper, a turn-of-the-century ethnologist and archaeologist who specialized in Native American cultures of the Southwest. He studied under Frederic Ward Putnam, the head of the Anthropology Department at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). Putnam was trying to start a Southwestern artifact collection at the AMNH, but he didn't want to spend a lot of money. To accomplish this goal, he met with the Hyde brothers, heirs to the Babbitt soap company fortune. The Hydes had a vast collection of artifacts from the Southwest and Putnam convinced them to donate it to AMNH. They agreed and also suggested they fund an expedition to the Southwest that would be sponsored by AMNH. And

so, the Hyde Exploring Expedition (HEE) was born. Putnam placed Pepper in charge of the HEE and they were off to Pueblo Bonito. The Expedition discovered many interesting artifacts including bits of wood that would allow future archaeologists to begin dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) at Pueblo Bonito. At the time of the Expedition it was common practice to sell the artifacts you found and the market was very competitive. The HEE lasted from 1896-1901 when it was banned from returning to the Southwest after charges of plundering antiquities.

Pepper himself was not banned, however, and he returned to the region in 1901 and 1903 to continue studying the Native tribes there. Pepper was so enamored with Navajo weavings that he commissioned and photographed the making of an authentic blanket. Pepper felt that the old techniques used by the Navajo to make blankets should have been kept free from any modern influence. He planned on using the photos in a book he wrote, but never published, about Navajo blanket weaving.

~ Aaron Tate

August 2017

Paul Spitzzeri

The guest lecturer for the August meeting of the Los Angeles Western Corral was Paul Spitzzeri, former corral sheriff and current museum director of the Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum, located in the City of Industry. Spitzzeri's presentation was called "Get Square with the Rebs: The Civil War Diary of Charles M. Jenkins." This presentation focused on not only the life and diary of Charles M. Jenkins, the only known Los Angeles resident to have fought for the Union during the Civil War, but it also focused on the remarkable acquisition of his diary, untouched and neglected after its donation for sixty-one years until its rediscovery in 2015.

Despite the poor storage conditions, the diary was, surprisingly, in fair condition; the entries themselves remained intact, allowing for easy reading. The major highlights of Jenkins' diary included when he was imprisoned in the notorious Andersonville Prison in Georgia and when he returned home to Los Angeles. He survived the prison thanks to a fellow California soldier and Andersonville inmate who was also a doctor. The entries ran for a period of eight months—January to September 1865. Over the course of the diary, notable entries included Lee's surrender and Lincoln's assassination.

Spitzzeri's presentation on Charles M. Jenkins emphasized the humanity of Civil War soldiers. Several passages revealed that Jenkins, like any young man, enjoyed rendezvous with various women. On a more serious note, Spitzzeri also highlighted racial tensions in Jenkins' diary. Even as the Union Army freed slaves and recruited black soldiers, Jenkins spared them no sympathy—in racially-charged language, he wrote frankly of stealing a black man's horse. Thus, Jenkins' diary gives historians not only a brief glance of Jenkins' war time experiences but also of the racial animosities that existed even amongst Union forces.

~ Sarah Ouhida

Down the Western Book Trail . . .

UNREAL CITY: Las Vegas, Black Mesa, and the Fate of the West, by Judith Nies. NY: Nation Books, 2014. 320 pages. $25.99. Reviewed by Mark Hall-Patton.

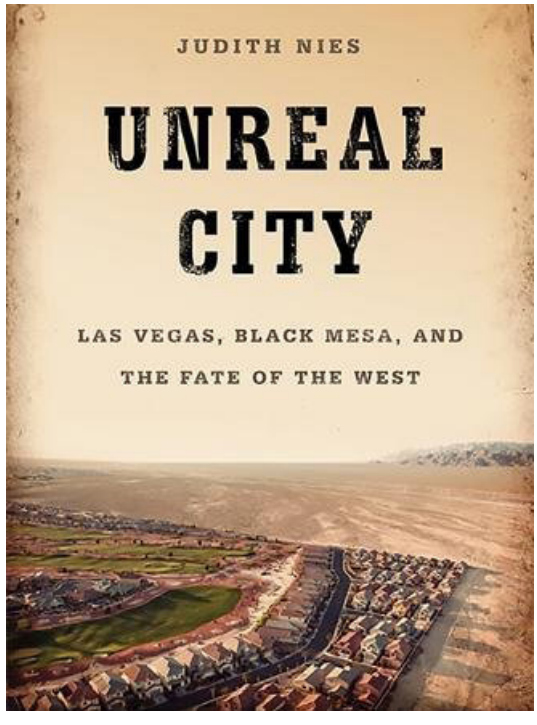

Image courtesy of amazon.com.

When Abe Hoffman passed this book along to me to review, I thought the subject an important one, an opinion I still hold. Unfortunately, I cannot say that this is the book to use to deal with this subject.

Water and its role in the west is at the core of most discussions of future viability in locations like Las Vegas. As a resident and historian of the region, I use water as the basis for understanding the why of Las Vegas and its existence. The earliest settlers came to what is today the Vegas valley because of the water. When Antonio Armijo changed the route of the Old Spanish Trail to bring it through the valley, it was because of the water he found here. Flowing artesian wells and an active creek made this a near oasis on a trail which was noted for changing routes every time a well was found to have dried up.

So when I began reading Nies' account of use and misuse of water in the southwest, I was looking forward to a book on an important subject which would add to my understanding of the region and its water history. Unfortunately, I am not sure that is what I found. Rather than present a balanced history of the region, perhaps a foolish wish for a book written by a journalist, the book's apparent goal is to indict the use of coal for power from the Black Mesa coal mines, and the use of water to move that coal in a slurry pipeline to power plants in southern Nevada. The requirement for accuracy is in many places subsumed in the need to make the overall point, often unnecessarily.

The overall point of the book appears to be that, through a group of Mormon-influenced Hopi Indians, and the machinations of big coal and big power, political deals were cut to divide the Hopi and Navajo nations into separate reservations to allow access to the Black Mountain coal deposits and then use the coal to power generating plants through a misuse of the aquifer in the Black Mountain area to move coal through slurry pipelines to the power plants many miles away. The interesting thing about this is that part of it may very well have some accuracy, but it is hard to tell for sure with the historical inaccuracies throughout the book.

Many of the errors appear to be sloppy use of history. In the first paragraph of the Learning From Las Vegas chapter, Nies has William Andrews Clark attending the land auction which created Las Vegas, which he did not. She later describes Octavius Decatur Gass, the owner of the Los Vegas Rancho before Archibald and Helen Stewart as losing the land because he borrowed money to go to the Comstock. In fact, Gass borrowed money for a number of reasons, including a series of expenses starting with three years of back taxes owed to the state of Nevada when they annexed the area that is Clark County today in 1867, and did not tell local residents until 1870, and the fact that he bought out his two partners in the ranch. He was chronically in

debt and borrowed money he was unable to repay. Nies' comment about him being a successful rancher is also belied by the facts, as he held on for twenty years, but was never able to be truly successful.

Similar mistakes occur throughout the history as presented in this volume. While some accuracy issues are minor, incorrect names being used, Elmore for Elwood Mead, Joe for William Nellis, the Atomic History Museum for the National Atomic Testing Museum (which is then named correctly a few pages later), might be put down to sloppy editing, other errors of fact cannot. Referring to the City of Henderson as a "section of Las Vegas" is ludicrously wrong, akin to saying Tustin is a section of Los Angeles.

A passing reference to Las Vegas having the "highest per-capita use of water in the country" is also problematic. This is a major part of her ongoing thesis about the evil of Las Vegas, constantly mixing up the Vegas valley and the city, but that's a minor issue. The later comment is one of many which bolsters the thesis that the problems of energy and water in Las Vegas are represented by the use of water on the strip, which actually uses only 3% of the valley's water usage, or the flagrant use of water elsewhere, which does not take into account the fact that the Vegas valley has dropped its water usage by 29 billion gallons between 2002 and 2012 while growing in population by 400,000, thanks to conservation efforts. This does not mean that the annual average usage of 219 gallons is not among the higher in the nation. It is, and water in the desert is always an issue.

Beyond these issues, Nies presents the ongoing Hopi-Navajo land dispute as a non-entity before evil whites and their need for extractive industries got involved. The long and intensely convoluted history of this controversy certainly includes the federal government and coal companies, but Nies' pastoral view of Hopi-Navajo life, "the two tribes intermarried, went to school together, attended each other's social dances, and traded goods," as noted on page 27, present a utopian "noble savage" history. She then takes historians to task for not including native voices and history, a valid criticism, but a hard one to accept coming from an author for whom historic accuracy appears to be only as important as it helps her thesis.

The difficulty of a book like this is not that there are a few issues with the history. It is that there are many issues, and most of them show a disregard for history over thesis. For me, if you are going to be lazy with historical accuracy and factual errors that I know, how can I trust those you are presenting which I do not? If you chose to read this, I recommend that it be done with a salt lick nearby. A grain might not be sufficient.

LOS ANGELES'S BUNKER HILL: Pulp Fiction's Mean Streets and Film Noir's Ground Zero! by Jim Dawson. Charleston SC: The History Press, 2012. 160 pp. Map, Illustrations, Bibliography. Paper, $19.99. Reviewed by Abraham Hoffman.

Anyone picking up this book under the impression that it's a guide to the attractions of Bunker Hill will be in for a big surprise. Jim Dawson's book is about a place that no longer exists, a ghost story that in some ways still haunts Los Angeles. The city has the dubious reputation of erasing its history, often under allegedly nefarious circumstances—Chavez Ravine eradicated to make a place for Dodger Stadium, Boyle Heights carved up by five freeways—and the story of Bunker Hill is one of urban removal in the name of modernizing downtown Los Angeles. Bunker Hill, however, still exists in its original incarnation, though not in the way its destroyers planned.

Dawson traces the history of Bunker Hill from its creation as a fashionable neighborhood in the 1880s through its decline into cheap apartments and rooming houses. As the houses and buildings aged, Bunker Hill became home to retirees, poor families, and transients. Rent was cheap, and the neighborhood had enough groceries, liquor stores, and movie houses to make a viable if run-down neighborhood. What set it apart from other areas of the city were the funicular railway—Angel's Flight—the tunnels under the hill, and the distinctive architecture of the mansions that endured long after their wealthy owners left them for more upscale neighborhoods.

Dawson describes in great detail the major attraction of Bunker Hill—its serving as a movie location from the silent film era to the 1960s. Movie producers, for the most part making low-budget pictures, found the narrow streets, the tunnels, the old buildings, and its overlook to downtown, ideal for setting scenes of crime and murder. Raymond Chandler's novels, as well as the work of lesser known writers, had protagonists living in or coming and going on Bunker Hill. The low-budget pictures made in the post-

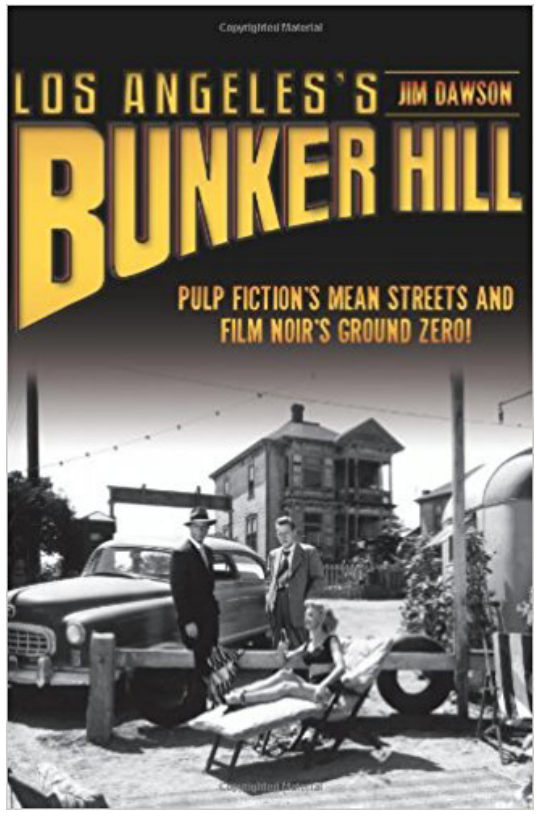

Image courtesy of amazon.com.

World War II era, saving money by using studio lots, actually offered a sense of reality as opposed to the obvious artificiality of movie sets. Ironically, the film noir genre also gave the impression that Bunker Hill really was a pace of seediness, crimes of passion, and mean streets. Dawson does have a chapter on Bunker Hill as a neighborhood where working-class people lived. "Perhaps I've overstated Bunker Hill's slide into dereliction and decrepitude," he admits (p 86). Children attended local schools, there were lawns and gardens, and residents who called Bunker Hill their home for decades.

In the end community redevelopment ended the existence of Bunker Hill. Dawson doesn't call it a conspiracy, but he faults the Chandler family and the Los Angeles Times, certain prominent businessmen, and ambitious developers who didn't want a poor neighborhood so close to City Hall. The Community Redevelopment Agency condemned properties under eminent domain,

and one by one the old buildings were bulldozed. By 1969 the Hill's homes were gone, and Angel's Flight was put into storage, not to be resurrected—and then only briefly—until some four decades later. The Hill was effectively erased, leveled, replaced by high-rise office buildings, the Music Center, and a Civic Center plaza with fountains. Whether the revitalization of downtown will fulfill the plans of the developers remains problematic, though there has been a surge in renovating old buildings into pricy rentals.

Dawson devotes much of his book to citing the exact locations, down to the street addresses, of buildings used as part of the scenery in numerous motion pictures and television shows. He notes that Jack Webb, creator and star of Dragnet, grew up on Bunker Hill. Dawson's final chapter provides an alphabetical list of capsule summaries of films with locations in Bunker Hill from Harold Lloyd's silent film comedies to Glenn Ford in The Money Trap and Judy Garland in A Star is Born. You can't visit Bunker Hill (a few mansions were moved to Heritage Square next to the Pasadena Freeway), but Dawson makes it possible for you to see the neighborhood through the films shot there. Bunker Hill is also seen in a number of films, documentary and fiction, on Youtube, where Jim Dawson appears in the "Lost Realm of Bunker Hill," a presentation he gave at Book Soup on the publication of his book (which is in its third printing).

Dawson does make some factual errors—the St. Francis Dam didn't take "nearly four hundred Mexican lives," nor did Harry Chandler get sole credit (or blame) for transforming the Old Plaza barrio into a tourist trap (pp. 105-106). Such generalizations oversimplify complex and controversial issues and stand in contrast to Dawson's meticulous documentation and research on Bunker Hill's neighborhood geography.

FROM OUR FILES

50 Years Ago
#84 – September 1967

The Summer 1967 edition of *The Branding Iron* revealed that not much has changed in Los Angeles in the last fifty years, as far as transportation is concerned. Spencer Crump delivered a hit presentation on L.A.'s Pacific Electric *Red Car*, once the world's largest mass transit system. Then, as now, this fact continues to confound generations of *Angeleños* marooned on traffic-choked freeways.

Homer H. Boelter commemorated the life of Alonzo "Lonnie" Hull (1893-1967), the talented photographer of the early Los Angeles Westerners. Among his many accomplishments, Hull captured portraits of the entire Corral in the "Gallery of Rogues," and produced a photo album of the Charlie Russel sculptures for "The West in Bronze," part of the prized 1949 Brand Book.

Also announced this issue, a small part of the Old West sailed east with the sale of a pair of 400 pound, one year-old American Bison (scientific name *Bison bison bison*) to a theme park in France. They were the only American buffalo in Europe at the time.