

Register to the Records of the
Tulamniu C.W.A. Project

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Introduction

More than 4000 artifacts and hundreds of Indian burials were excavated at the site of the Yokut Indian village near Taft, California in 1933-34. Dr. William Duncan Strong, of the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE), headed the Tulamniu C.W.A. Project SLF-73 with Winslow Walker, also of the BAE, as assistant director. The excavations were one of a number of archaeological projects organized and financed by the Civil Works Administration as a means of reducing unemployment. Artifacts and skeletal materials were shipped to the United States National Museum for study after completion of the field work.

This collection of material was in storage in the Department of Anthropology until donated to the National Anthropological Archives on May 22, 1973.

Literary property rights to unpublished material in the collection are in the public domain.

This collection occupies three linear feet of shelf space.

Background

This collection is the result of the vast Civil Works Administration program under the supervision of the Smithsonian Institution. During the winter of 1933-34, the Tulamniu CWA Project SLF-76 excavated a group of large shell mounds near Taft, California, in the upper San Joaquin valley. The site had previously been located and tentatively identified as the village site of Tulamniu, "the place of the Tulamni, or Tule dwellers." The Tulamni were one of the lake tribes of Yokuts first visited in 1772 by Spaniards. Because the excavation would require the labor of a large force of men for a considerable period of time, it was a desirable location for the archaeological project allotted to the BAE in California, according to Winslow Walker's report.

Work began December 20, 1933 under the direction of Dr. William Duncan Strong, assisted by Winslow M. Walker. Two trained California archaeologists, W.R. Wedel, from the University of California and E.F. Walker of the Southwest Museum, assisted. The staff was augmented by technicians and graduate students: Engineer-Surveyor Lew Suverkrop; Supervising Foremen P.L. Stanley and H.I. McGrath; Photographer F.M. Boyd; Accountant-Timekeeper N.E. Taussig; Technicians Phillip Drucker, G.H. Denkel, H.E. Driver, Hans Fischel, H.G. Barnett, Paul McGrew, Milton O'Rourke and M.P. Smith. Employment as laborers was given to about 175 unemployed men from the Taft region of Kern County. Large scale operations made possible the examination of two shell mounds on the slope of the hills at the western side of Buena Vista Lake and the uncovering of two large burial places on the hilltops just back of the mounds.

By combining the methods of trenching, screening and clearing large areas horizontally, a good idea of the internal structure and contents of the mounds was obtained. They had been used not only as places on which to build huts, but also as middens and burial spots. The mounds, more than 1000 feet long, 150 wide, and about 10 feet thick, were the result of accumulations of large amounts of shell, sand loam, ash and camp debris over long periods of occupation, perhaps conditioned by the rise and fall of the lake waters.

The burial hilltops yielded a large number of mortuary objects, including finely chipped flint points, knives, bone awls, shell beads and pendants. The bodies in these cemeteries had been buried in the flexed position, wrapped in soft woven fiber, and in some instances also encased in tule mats.

The picture in general is that of a primitive hunting and fishing people who had presumably followed up the course of the San Joaquin from the San Francisco Bay region and settled many hundreds of years ago around Buena Vista Lake.

Scope and Content Note

Included in this collection are the field notes of Winslow Walker, E.F. Walker and other technicians, records, specimen catalogues, correspondence, scrapbook of newspaper clippings, reference articles, maps, charts and tables generated by the expedition. Cartographic materials comprise more than half of this collection in which dates of materials range from a 1905 U.S. Geological Survey Map to correspondence dated 1837. Since almost all of the items were completed during 1933-34, dates are not included in the series descriptions.

There are no official reports of the project in this collection. These may be found in the *Explorations and Field-Work of the Smithsonian Institution in 1934* (1935) where there is an article by Winslow Walker, "Excavating Ancient Yokuts Shellmounds in California." BAE Bulletin 130 (1941) contains "Archaeological Investigations at Buena Vista Lake, Kern County, California," by T.Dale Stewart.

The collection is incomplete since there is material mentioned in the Wedel report, notable text and several tables, which is not on deposit. Also missing are administrative records.

The William Duncan Strong papers, also located in the National Anthropological Archives, does not contain material concerning this expedition.

Series Descriptions and Container List

Series I: Winslow Walker's Field Notes

Walker's field book contains the daily plans and progress of Tulamni C.W.A. Project; lists federal and local C.W.A. officials, gives organization hierarchy for project; and lists technicians, salaries, and personnel changes. The field book also gives accounts of exploratory trips to other California locales. This series also contains a folder of Walker's notes, lists and memos – undated and unarranged.

Box 1

Field Book – December 14, 1933 – March 12, 1934
Notes, lists, memos – undated and unarranged

Series II: Notebooks of Field Notes, Burial and House Records

This series contains 13 notebooks with assorted information such as burial and house records, diagrams, fireplaces, camp levels, etc. Materials in this series are as originally arranged. A highlight is E.F. Walker's T2 notebook containing summary of the project, conclusions, reconstruction of life of prehistoric people and a report of an interview with Thomas Jefferson Mayfield, who as a boy lived with the Yokuts for ten years from 1850.

Box 1 (continued)

T1 Burials , profiles, house records
T2 Burials and diagrams
T2 Field notes, house floors, camp levels, E.F. Walker
T2 Profiles and fireplaces
T3 Burial records and notes

Box 2

T4 and T5 field report, Maurice Smith and E.F. Walker
T1 and T3 stenographer's notebooks of burials (seven notebooks)

Series III: Catalogs of Specimens

Contains original catalog of specimens (approx. 200 pages) listing items from all excavation sites – T1, T2, T3, T4, Cuyama Ranch Cemetery #1, Matthews site, Caliente site, Apache Creek site, Buena Vista Shore Line, Pelican Island, Death Valley, Tufa Cave, Lokern Mound and Mohave Desert. Series also includes duplicate information on

3"x 5" index cards. Cataloging was apparently done by Milton O'Rourke and assistants. All artifacts and skeletal material were shipped to the U.S. National Museum for study after completion of field work.

Box 2 (continued)

T1 (101 pages)

T2 (67 pages)

T3 (11 pages)

T4 (7 pages)

Cuyama, Ranch Cemetery, Matthews, Caliente, Apache Creek, Buena Vista Shore Line, Pelican Island, Death Valley, Tufa Cave, Lokern sites (14 pages)

Boxes 5-7

Index cards of specimens in card boxes, 5-7

Series IV: Notes About Artifacts

This series is composed of seven folders of Tulamniui notes on artifacts categorized by type of artifact and listed by tray number and in some cases by site number. Bone, shell, chipped flints, textiles, asphaltum, clay and steatite artifacts are mentioned and divided into trays 1-59.

Box 2 (continued)

Bone	Trays	1-6
Shell	"	7-10
Shell	"	11-13
Chipped Flints	"	14-23
Textiles	"	23-32
Asphaltum, Clay	"	33-36

Box 3

Steatite	"	37-43
Misc.	"	44-59

Series V: Scrapbook of Newspaper Clippings

The only item in this series is a scrapbook of newspaper accounts of the Tulamniui project, Buena Vista Lake, Kern County, California, 1933-34. Includes press releases, apparently submitted by Winslow Walker, and background stories by area historians.

Area newspapers represented are the *Daily Midway Driller* (Taft, CA), *Porterville* (CA) *Recorder*, *Taft Dispatch*, *Fresno Bee*, *Los Angeles Examiner* and the *Los Angeles Herald*.

Box 3 (continued)

Scrapbook

Series VI: Correspondence

Very small amount of correspondence relating to Tulamniu project. Incoming letters arranged chronologically include mail from Carl V. Bloom, Division of Oil & Gas, State of California; John D. Henderson, Kern County Library; Horace G. Byers, Bureau of Chemistry & Soils, U.S. Department of Agriculture; A. Wetmore, U.S. National Museum; and J.D. James. Outgoing correspondence includes letters to W.D. Clarke, Director C.W.A. for Kern County; A. Wetmore and Horace Byers.

Box 3 (continued)

Correspondence

Series VII: Reference Material

This series brings together all background information found in the collection. It contains published magazine articles from *Touring Tropics* and *Oil Bulletin*; several typewritten reports by H.I. Priestly, A.L. Kroeber, Robert Heizer, Franklin Fenega and F.F. Latta as well as handwritten notes about historical connections, etc. John D. Henderson from the Kern County Library supplied some of the articles.

Box 3 (continued)

Bibliography of Buena Vista Lake, California Indians

Bibliography of related subjects on index cards

“Geologist Discovers Prehistoric City,” *Oil Bulletin*, July 1926

Harrington, M.R. “Alexander Godey, Hero or Villain,” *Touring Tropics*, June 1933

Heizer, R.F. and Fenega, Franklin, “Archaeological Horizons in Central California”

Kroeber, A.L. “The Bedrock of History”

Kroeber, A.L. *Handbook of Indians of California* (notes from)

Latta, F.F. “Yokuts Indians”

McGrew, Paul “Mammalian Fauna from the Tulamniu Shell Mounds”

Priestly, H.L. “Franciscan Exploration of California”

“Relationships with other localities, historical connections, summary of cultural development, literature cited” (handwritten notes)

de Zalvides, P. Jose Maria “Diary of an Inland Expedition, 1806” translate by H.I. Priestly

Series VIII: Photographic Records

Red scrapbook of photographs of Tulamniu Project includes pictures of staff, T1 and T2 sites and artifacts identified by date and negative number. Accompanying sheets list negative number, titles of photograph, prints and date. They also indicate whether the photos are in the red or blue album. (The blue album is not in this collection).

Box 3 (continued)

Index to prints

Box 4

Prints

Box 8

Red scrapbook of Tulamniu Project

Series IX: Miscellaneous

This series contains handwritten notes, sketches and diagrams of reconnaissance trips to various location including Caliente site, Apache Creek, Cuyama Ranch site, Lokern Mound, Matthews Site, Quital Canyon, and Santa Barbara Forest. Series also includes skeleton plots for tree-ring studies by Waldo Wedel.

Box 3

Miscellaneous

Series X: Maps

Includes various cartographic material such as U.S. Geological Survey maps of California, preliminary sketches and contour blue prints done by engineer-surveyor Lew Suverkrop. The maps are intellectually divided into three subseries, but are physically intermixed.

Map drawers

Surrounding Area or more than one site

 Kern County, 1930

 Kern County, Lokern Quadrangle, U.S.G.S., 1927

Kern County, Mouth of Kern Quadrangle, U.S.G.S., 1927
Santa Inez Quadrangle, annotated key for reconnaissance work west of Buena
Vista, U.S.G.S., 1905
Buena Vista Lake, Kern Lake, Bakersfield
T1, T2, T3, T4 contour map
Original map and tracings
Honolulu Oil Co. Water Pumping Sta. area
Tulamni Excavations contour key map

Tulamni Mound 1

Elevations
Preliminary Sketch, scale 1" = 100', Lew Suverkrop, Dec. 24, 1933
Contour Map, scale 1" = 40', Lew Suverkrop, 1933
Contour Map, scale 1" = 40', Lew Suverkrop and I.L. Geissel, 1933
Preliminary Work Map, scale 1" = 50', Lew Suverkrop, 1934
Contour Map Lab. Copy, scale 1" = 50', Lew Suverkrop, 1934
Key Map showing location of house sites, scale 1" = 10', W.R. Wedel, Feb.
26, 1934
Key Map showing locations of burials, scale 1" = 30'

Tulamni Mound 2

Contour Map, portion of T2
Contour Map, I. Geissel, H.L. Hill and Lew Suverkrop, 1934
Portion of T2 blue print, scale 1" = 40', Lew Suverkrop and I.L. Geissel, 1934
Portion of T2 blue print, scale 1" = 40'

Series XI: Charts and Tables

Material includes charts and tables of artifacts, awls, bones, shell, stone, burial locations, campsite depths, animal specimens, etc. Almost all are hand drawn and undated. Compilers are unidentified unless otherwise indicated. Materials in this series are intellectually divided into four subseries, but are physically intermixed.

Map drawer

Items pertaining to more than one area

Artifacts
Artifacts, size and provenience illustrated
Artifacts, outline for study of Signal Butte
Artifacts, lists for all sites
Artifacts, vertical distribution by one foot levels
Awls, classification of
Bones, various records of
Bones at site number, cremations, burials
Bone, report from BAE, #130576

Bone, report from BAE #130576 (supplement)
Buena Vista Lake, correlation of sites 1-4
Buena Vista, summary of traits at sites 1 and 2
Chipped points, distribution of
Illustrations and tables – plates
Projectile points and knives, classification and enumeration of
Shell at site number, cremations, burials
Stone at site number, cremations, burials

Tulamni Mound 1

Specimen charts of animals
Specimens, stratigraphic area of

Tulamni Mound 2

Burial locations (9 diagrams)
Campsite depths from 9” to 36” by E.F. Walker, 1934 (9 charts)
Campsite showing extent and depth of area of occupation
Horizontal Plans, scale 1” = 10’, E.F. Walker, march 1934
Trench #1 showing burials and large artifacts, scale 1” = 5’, E.F. Walker, Jan. 1934
Trench #1 showing burials only, E.F. Walker, 1934
Trench #2, scale 1” = 10’, E.F. Walker, Jan. 1934
Specimen chart of animals

Tulamni Mounds 3 and 4

Burial locations for Hilltop Cemetery I (T3)
Burial numbers 1-348, frequency occurrences (T3)
Burial numbers 2-59, frequency occurrences (T4)

Series XII: Cross Sections, Profiles, Stratigraphs

This series includes all project cross sections, profiles and stratigraphs. They have been unrolled, separated and placed in order as individual sections. All are undated and often unidentified except for square number.

Map drawer

Standard convention for profiles

T1 Profiles 67-41 – 99-41 (8 sections)
T1 Stratigraph 62-37 – 68-41 (4 sections)
T1 Stratigraph 78-31 – 90-42 (15 sections)
T1 Cross section 90-37 – 90-41 (3 sections)
T1 Crosstrench #1 89-22 – 89-43 (16 sections)
T1 Crosstrench #2 63-37 – 89-37 (25 sections)
T1 Crosstrench #3 68-30 – 68-38 (7 sections)
T2 Crosstrench #1, South Wall, 100-33 – 135-33 (31 sections)

T2 Crosstrench #1, North Wall, 101-32 – 116-32 (14 sections)
T2 Crosstrench #2, South Wall, 136-86 – 145-86 (10 sections)
T2 Crosstrench #2, North Wall, 136-85 – 143-85 (7 sections)