

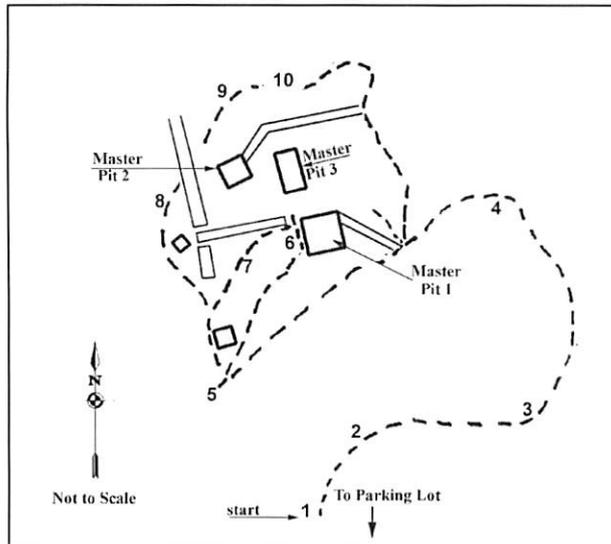
Self-guided Tour - Calico Mts. Site

Stop 1. Introduction

The self-guided tour travels along a primitive and steep desert trail. Please stay on the trail. Wear a hat, carry water, and closely supervise children.

Sturdy hiking footwear is recommended. No pets, weapons, and vehicles are allowed. Take frequent rest stops and all of the photos you wish. Please carry out anything you carry in.

Please do not pick up anything! Federal laws protect all artifacts, rocks, plants, and animals.



REMEMBER!

Take nothing but pictures.

Leave nothing but footprints.

Stop 2. Crew Steps

The “crew only” steps were built in 1963 by the first year dig crew. They were used by the crew, Dee Simpson, and Dr. Leakey until 1968 when the steps on top of the hill were bulldozed for mining operations. Behind you is the monument to Ruth DeEtte Simpson. The memorial was set in a stone from the Calico site.



Stop 3. Bentonite Mine

Look across the draw to an open pit mine dug by Glenn Gunn to extract bentonite. Bentonite is a sodium-rich clay formed about 17 millions years ago by thermal and chemical alteration of volcanic ash in a briny middle Miocene lake. Bentonite is used commercially as a lubricant and as a sealant for underneath ponds.

The white post to the right of the bentonite pit is where the first subsurface stone tools were found by John Kettl and Ruth DeEtte Simpson (“Dee”) in 1958. Look behind you at the top of the ridge. This is where Pit F is located. Pits A, D, and F were excavated to determine the extent of the site.

Stop 4. Rock Wren Pit

The Rock Wren biface is a large well-formed artifact. An artifact is anything that has been modified by human behavior. It was found about 17 inches below the surface in the side of a wash. Because the artifact was discovered during a hike to observe a rock wren nest, the tool was called the “Rock Wren biface.” The immediately adjacent excavation is called the “Rock Wren Pit.”

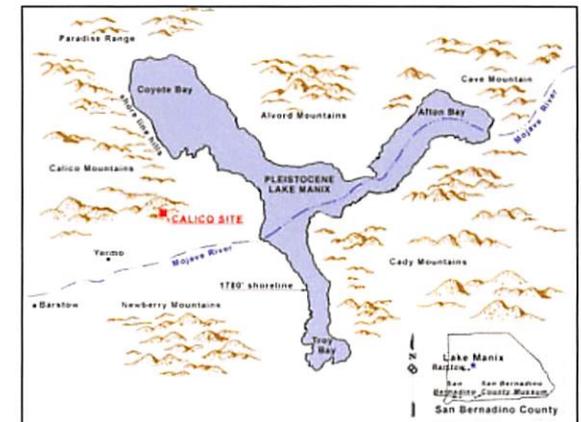


It is the only pit that remains open for excavations. Ask at the Visitor’s Center to learn how you can volunteer for excavations.



Stop 5. Lake Manix

In the distance you can see several Bay mountain ranges that define the Mojave River Valley. From left to right, they are the Cady Mountains, Rodman Mountains, Newberry Mountains and San Bernardino Mountains. During the Pleistocene Epoch, a fresh-water lake, Lake Manix, occupied the central area of the valley. Lake Manix was fed by the Mojave River, bringing water down from the San Bernardino Mountains. Lake Manix



drained about 20,000 years ago and now, the Mojave River flows underground across the valley, only surfacing in selected areas.

Stop 6. Master Pit 1

Dr. Louis Leakey selected this location to dig. He based his decision on his knowledge of early man sites in Africa. Dr. Leakey's first instructions were to excavate trenches along what would become the north and west walls of Master Pit 1. These trenches would expose the geological nature of the deposit. Then, excavators worked with hand tools to expose the artifacts. The location data of each artifact was measured and recorded. Then they were removed for cataloguing and analysis. The pit is a 25-foot square and has a depth of approximately 25 feet deep – all dug by hand.



Stop 7. Master Pits 2 and 3

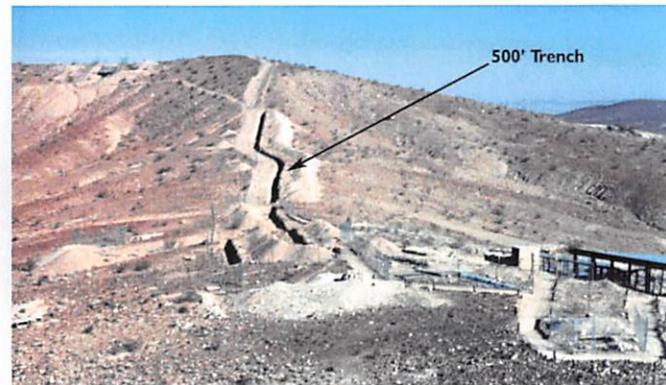
During his visit in 1967, Dr. Leakey requested a major pit be dug 40 feet northwest of Master Pit 1. This pit, known as Master Pit 2, is a 15-foot square, is 26 feet deep and has a 100-foot long entrance. Excavation of Master Pit 3 started in 1978. The artifact distribution in the corners of Master Pits 1 and 2 closest to each other

suggested that in between them would be a good place to look for more artifacts. Master Pit 3 is 10 feet by 25 feet and has a depth of approximately 7 feet. The excavations were dug by hand using chisels, punches, dental picks, and brushes.



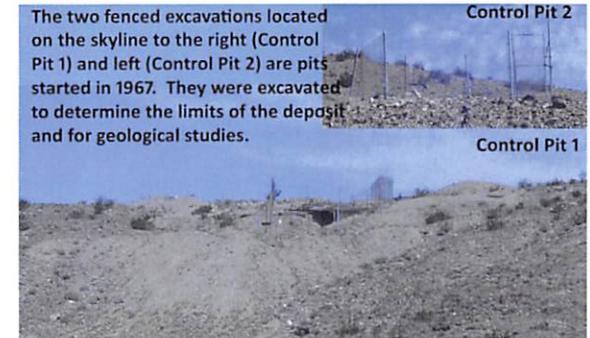
Stop 8. Trenches

The "T"-shaped trench and the 500-foot long trench were dug for geological studies. The geology of the site is important for understanding the deposition of the artifacts.



Stop 9. Skyline Control Pits

The two fenced excavations located on the skyline to the right (Control Pit 1) and left (Control Pit 2) of this location are control pits started in 1967. They were excavated to determine the limits of the archaeological deposit and for the geological studies.



Stop 10. Excavated Rocks

Visiting archaeologists and geologists often asked to see the total range of rocks from the excavation, not just the artifacts. For this reason, the unmodified rocks found in the pits were stockpiled in segregated rows.



The self-guided tour ends here. You can walk back the way you came, continue around Master Pits 2, 3 and 1 to the trail, or take the Nature Trail back to the parking lot.