

SURVEY OF HISTORIC AND PREHISTORIC RESOURCES
IN THE JOHN DAY FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Final Report
to the
National Park Service
Contract No. CX-9000-6-0058

by
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Corvallis, Oregon
May 1977

ABSTRACT

A pictograph site, and a small campsite and historic cemetery, both on private land, were recorded in the Clarno Unit. A probable housepit was found in the Painted Hills Unit. A possible rock shelter and an historic sod house were located in addition to the pictograph localities in the Picture Gorge Unit.

INTRODUCTION

Historical Notes

The Oregon Provisional Government was established by the Oregon pioneers July 5, 1843. The Oregon Country was divided into 4 districts: Twality/Tualatin/, Yamhill, Clackamas and Champooick/Champoeg/(Lundell 1970:6-7). Clackamas and Champoeg districts included all of the Oregon Country east of the Willamette River to the crest of the Rocky Mountains and from the boundary of California, 42° N latitude, north to the undetermined northern boundary of the United States. The common boundary of the 2 districts was a line that originated at the mouth of the Anchiyoke River, now called Pudding River, and ran due east to the crest of the Rockies. The line was at about the latitude of the present town of Condon in Gilliam County.

The Oregon Territory was created by act of Congress August 14, 1848. The Territorial Legislature created Wasco County, January 11, 1854, with The Dalles as the county seat. This huge county's southern and northern boundaries were the present state boundaries, extended eastward. The western boundary was the crest of the Cascade Range and the eastern boundary the crest of the Rocky Mountains (Frontispiece). The county was reduced to the state boundaries east of the Cascades after Oregon was admitted to the Union.

Seventeen counties have been formed from Wasco County. County formation was stimulated by the discovery of gold, the growth of livestock and lumbering industries, and the considerable inconvenience residents of remote areas found in doing necessary business at the

county seats. Gold was discovered in Canyon Creek in 1861. The influx of people brought about the creation of Grant County in 1864, with Canyon City as the county seat. Crook County was formed in 1882, and Gilliam County created in 1885. Wheeler County, in which the Clarno and Painted Hills units are located, was created from Crook, Gilliam and Grant counties in 1899. The county was named for Henry H. Wheeler, who established the first stage coach line from The Dalles to Canyon City.

The Dalles-Canyon City Military Road Company was incorporated in 1862. An Act of Congress, February 26, 1867, granted lands in aid of the construction of a military wagon road from The Dalles to Fort Boisie on the Snake River. The grant specified alternate sections of lands designated by odd numbers 3 sections in width on each side of the road. The Company surveyed, mapped and improved 330 1/2 miles (Preston 1972) of existing roads from The Dalles to Fort Boisie by June, 1869. For their work, the Company eventually received over 63,000 acres, nearly 50,000 of which lay in Wheeler County (Fussner 1975:17).

Joseph Clarno homesteaded on Pine Creek in 1866. Joseph Huntley homesteaded on Pine Creek at The Pallisades in 1870, where he operated Huntley Stage Station. The pioneer cemetery (Fig. 12) was established by the Huntley family. The Ed Lee residence now occupies the site.

The land for Clarno State Park, comprising 22 acres, was purchased from the Lee family in 1964; 2 smaller parcels were added in 1965 (Ted Long, State Parks Archaeologist, personal communication).

Settlement of the Mitchel-Dayville area began in the 1860s. The first recorded settler was a Mr. Biffel, who settled at Big Bottom near

the present town of Twickenham. The Painted Hills area was settled by the Samuel Carrol family in 1868. The Carrol family cemetery is about 3/4 mile southeast of the Painted Hills State Park (Fig. 4).

The Painted Hills State Park, 13.2 acres,

was purchased on June 23, 1947, from L. T. and Golda Howard, title holders, and R. R. and Dorothy Every, contract purchasers, at a cost of \$66.

In connection with the park land transfer, the grantors who owned approximately 2,800 acres of land surrounding the park, granted and vested in the general public a right and privilege to go upon, visit, examine and enjoy the Painted Hills and the area surrounding the same and the privilege to explore the fossil deposits and other geological formations, but no fossils or other objects of interest, scientific or otherwise, may be removed for commercial purposes (Armstrong 1965:170-1).

The Thomas Condon-John Day Fossil Beds State Park is named after the Reverend Thomas Condon, a missionary and distinguished geologist who moved to The Dalles in 1862. The fossil beds were discovered by a detachment of soldiers under the command of Captain John M. Drake, who communicated the find to Condon in a letter dated June 19, 1864. Condon publicized the scientific value of the fossil beds.

The first land obtained was a gift of 1.5 acres in Picture Gorge from the Eastern Oregon Land Company, successor of The Dalles-Canyon City Military Road Company. Purchases of a total of 3,539.76 acres of federally-owned land were made from 1931 to 1963. A gift of 3.8 acres was made by W. R. Mascall in 1935. This gift provided an overlook, parking area and access road to a viewpoint overlooking the John Day River valley, and the Mascall geologic formation, and the entrance to Picture Gorge (Fig. 7).

Dr. Stephen Dow Beckham, Linfield College, McMinnville, Oregon, did a survey of historical resources in the John Day area which included the John Day unit for the Bureau of Land Management (personal communication). Perhaps a copy of Dr. Beckham's report can be obtained from BLM.

Ethnographic Notes

The ethnographic data are confusing and contradictory. These notes summarize the early historic period.

The Clarno and Painted Hills Units appear to have been within the Tenino cultural sphere (Berreman 1937; Ray 1939; Ray et. al. 1938). The four tribal subunits of the Tenino practiced a fishing, hunting and gathering economy based on a permanent winter village focus modified by residence at an impermanent river village during the summer fishing season. The Tenino were vigorously expanding their territory to the south prior to their placement on the Warm Springs Reservation in 1855 (Berreman 1937:63).

The Clarno area appears to have also been utilized by the Umatilla, who had adopted the horse complex and Plains-oriented tribal organization by the mid-18th century (Ray 1939:10-14). The territorial boundary between the Tenino and Umatilla is said to be vague: the two tribes enjoyed free movement in the John Day-Willow Creek area (Ray et. al. 1938:385-6). The north flowing section of the John Day River from Spray south to Picture Gorge is said to have been the Tenino-Umatilla boundary during the 19th century (Ray et. al. 1938:386). The Tenino were west of the river, and the Umatilla east, with

the river from Picture Gorge east to Canyon Creek being their southern boundary. These southern territorial divisions are contradicted by Northern Paiute data.

The Hunipui band of the Northern Paiute were the latest claimants of the Picture Gorge area. They wintered in Canyon Creek and the John Day valley to the west (Ray et. al. 1938:403). The extended family was the basic economic unit, practicing a seasonal hunting, fishing and gathering economy and a shifting residence pattern. The families were apparently autonomous, coming together in larger groups for cooperative rabbit and antelope hunts and socioceremonial functions (Steward 1938: 237 ff.).

Previous Archaeology

Cressman (1950) excavated Butte Creek Cave, housepits on Snable Ranch, and a rock shelter on the John Day River south of Clarno. Cressman was testing the hypothesis that Early Man may have used the rivers draining into the Columbia from the south as migration routes into the northern Great Basin province. His investigations were inconclusive, other than demonstrating by basketry found in Butte Cave a prehistoric Desert culture relationship of indeterminate age.

Archaeological research in the Pine Creek drainage was initiated in 1966 by James Riggs, then a student at Oregon State University, later with the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI). Riggs was succeeded by Brian Gannon, who has continued archaeological studies in the Clarno basin under OMSI auspices (Gannon 1970, 1972; Smith and Gannon 1973). Occupations associated with housepits have an antiquity

of around 400 years (Smith and Gannon 1973:470). Associated projectile points compare closely with types of the Protohistoric phase of The Dalles (Gannon 1972:26). A cache of 15 atlatl darts found in the face of a cliff yielded a date of 2380 \pm 100 yrs BP (GaK-2177, Smith and Gannon 1973:470). It is hoped further work will discover an occupation of comparable antiquity.

The data suggest a probable prehistoric Desert culture relationship which was succeeded by Columbia-Plateau relationships about AD 1500. Of even more importance for future research is the distribution of more than 40 sites recorded to date by Gannon (personal communication). The majority of the sites occur between 2500' and 3500' elevation and cross-cut regional drainage patterns. The distribution suggests cultural adaptation to ecological factors not necessarily related to the drainage systems.

FIELD SURVEY

The results of field surveys of designated areas within the various Monument units are reported. Fieldwork, continuously hampered by bad weather, was begun March 29 and terminated April 24, 1976. Fifteen man-days were spent on field surveys, and 4 man-days in interviews and searching county records.

The designated areas were surveyed on foot. The ground was covered by a series of parallel traverses roughly 20 paces apart (1 pace = 1.53 M). Possible archaeological localities were examined more intensely. Erosional features were searched for buried site exposures. The

proposed Painted Hills and Turtle Cove tourist trails were traversed twice, once in each direction, and potential localities, i.e., benches, coves, flats, etc., visible and reasonably accessible from the routes were examined. The talus slopes in Picture Gorge were searched for rock cairns and burial depressions. The ledges were traversed as far as it was safe to do so, since the series of rain and snow storms kept the thawed ground wet, loose and treacherous; the canyon walls were also visually scanned with binoculars from vantage points along the upper reaches.

The Pallisades Unit

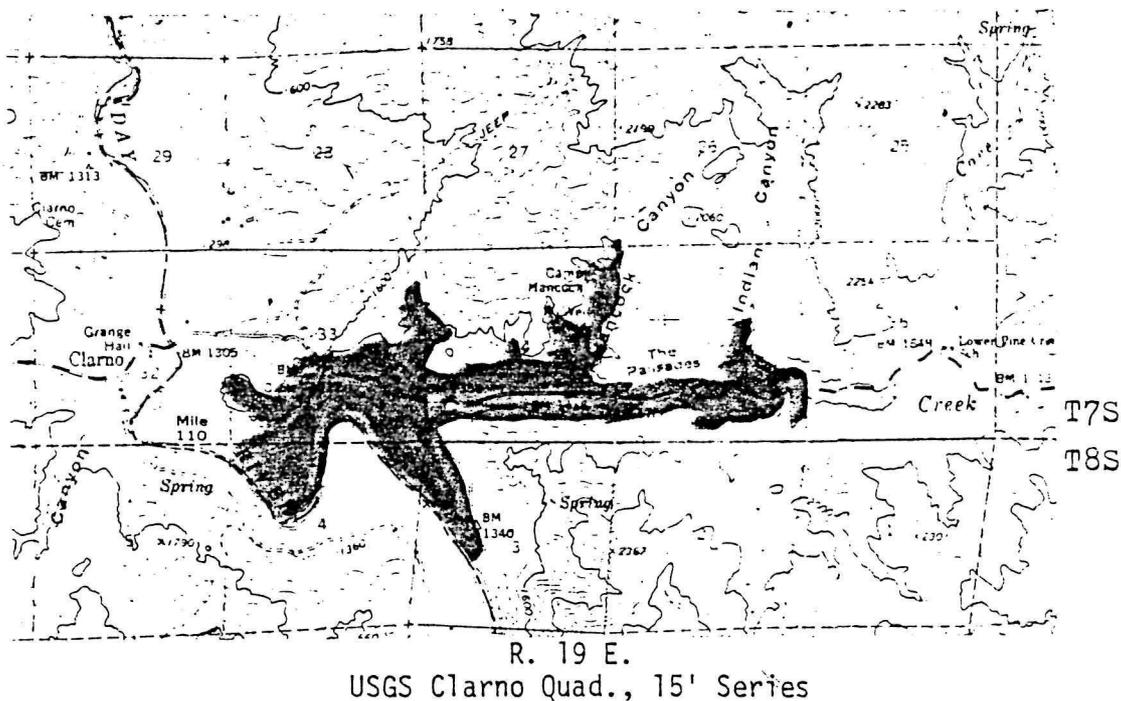


Figure 1. Area surveyed, Pallisades Unit

The colored area in Figure 1 and succeeding figures of areas surveyed depict the lands covered on foot. Note that both sides of Pine creek were surveyed. The survey was made before Superintendent

Ladd told me the south side of Pine Creek had been deleted from the proposed unit. Only one site, 35WH41, of the three reported actually lies within the unit boundaries.

Site 35WH41 Pictographs occur on a large rock which is one of two at the edge of the north highway berm east of the parking strip opposite the access road to the Lee residence. Brain Gannon has plotted 26 pictographs which include both zoomorphic and geomorphic figures (personal communication). No other cultural material was found. Cressman (1937) did not report this site.

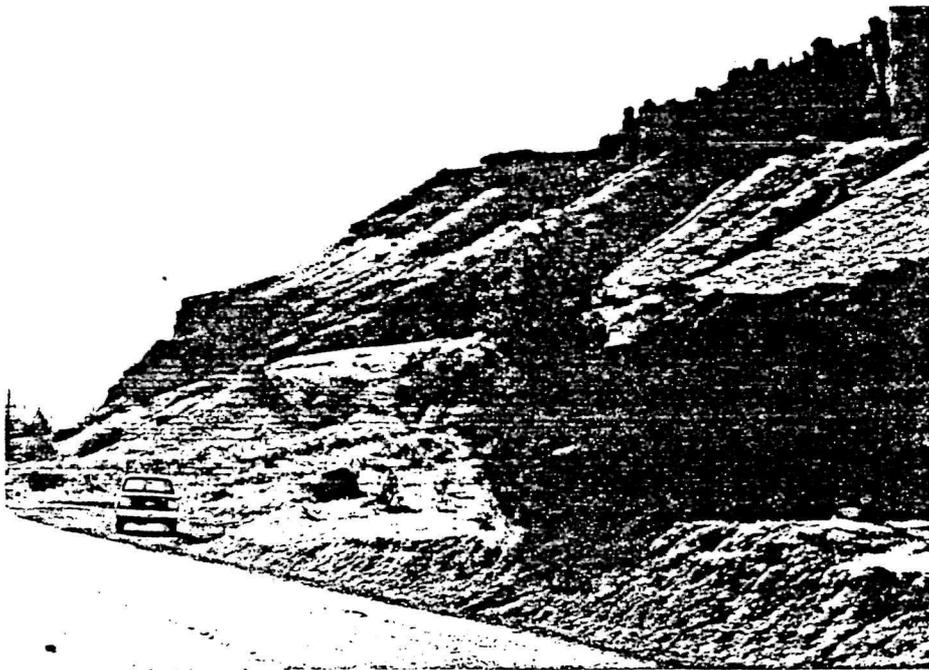
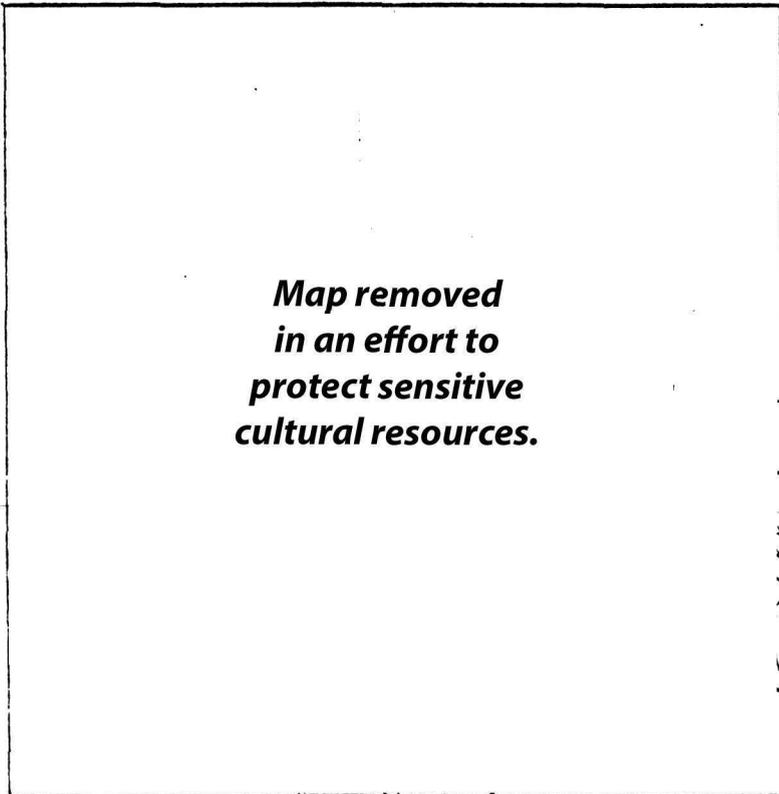


Figure 2. Site 35WH41 The pictographs are on the overhung surface of the boulder facing the camera.

Oregon Archeological Survey
University of Oregon, Museum of Natural History

Site No. 35WH41 County Wheeler Cultural Area Plateau
Type of Site Pictograph
Property Location NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 35, T7s, R19E, USGS Clarno
Quadrangle, 15' Series
Site Location On east face of large rock on highway berm at east end
the parking strip opposite the access road to the Ed Lee
residence.
Site Description Zoomorphic and geomorphic figures in red pigment; 26
figures counted by Brian Gannon. Painted on two large rocks
situated on the slope immediately above the highway.
Area of occupation
Depth and character of fill No other evidence of occupation.
Vegetation cover
Present condition Faint and weathered.
Material collected or observed None
Recommendations for future work Preservation
Owner and address John Day Fossil Beds Attitude toward excavation
Present use National Monument

N.



Photograph Nos.

T7S



Recorded by W. A. Davis

Date Mar. 31, 1976

Scale 1" = $\frac{1}{4}$ mi.
(when square represents a section 1" = $\frac{1}{4}$ mi. (402 m))

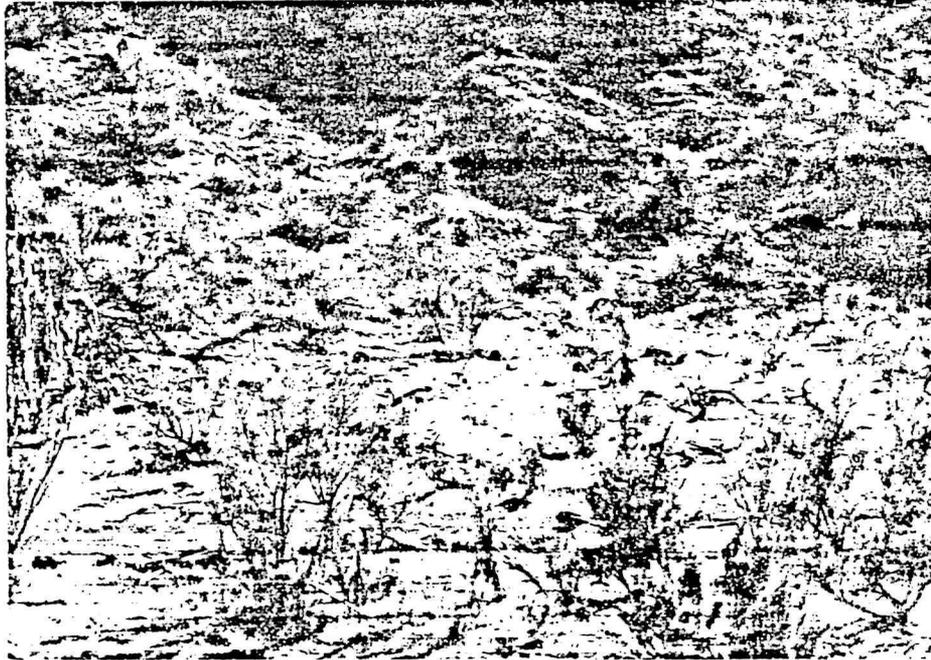


Figure 3. View of Site 35WH44, looking southeast. Netherstone is in clear area in center of picture.

Site 35WH44 A possible small campsite in a cove on the south bank of Pine Creek on land belonging to Ed Lee. The cultural evidence consists of a nearly buried netherstone, possibly a hopper mortar in a small area of earth slightly darker than the normal yellow-tan soil (Fig. 3). The Stone was left in situ. No other cultural evidence was found. The exposed rock is streaked with veins of white cryptocrystalline quartz. This may be a local source for the white quartzite which dominates regional lithic assemblages. No evidence of quarrying was seen.

Oregon Archaeological Survey
University of Oregon, Museum of Natural History

Site No. 35WH44 County Wheeler Cultural Area Columbia Plateau
Type of Site Possible campsite
Property Location NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 35, T7S, R19E, USGS Clarno
Quadrangle, 15' Series.
Site Location On south bank of Pine Creek in a small cove.

Site Description Partially buried metate or hopper mortar; soil is
slightly darker in the vicinity of the stone.

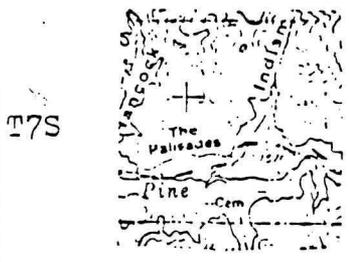
Area of occupation 3 x 4 meters
Depth and character of fill Silt and clay stream sediment, depth unknown.
Vegetation cover Grass and sagebrush.
Present condition undisturbed.
Material collected or observed none.

Recommendations for future work none, on private property.
Owner and address Ed Lee, Fossil, Oregon Attitude toward excavation reserved
Present use range land

N.

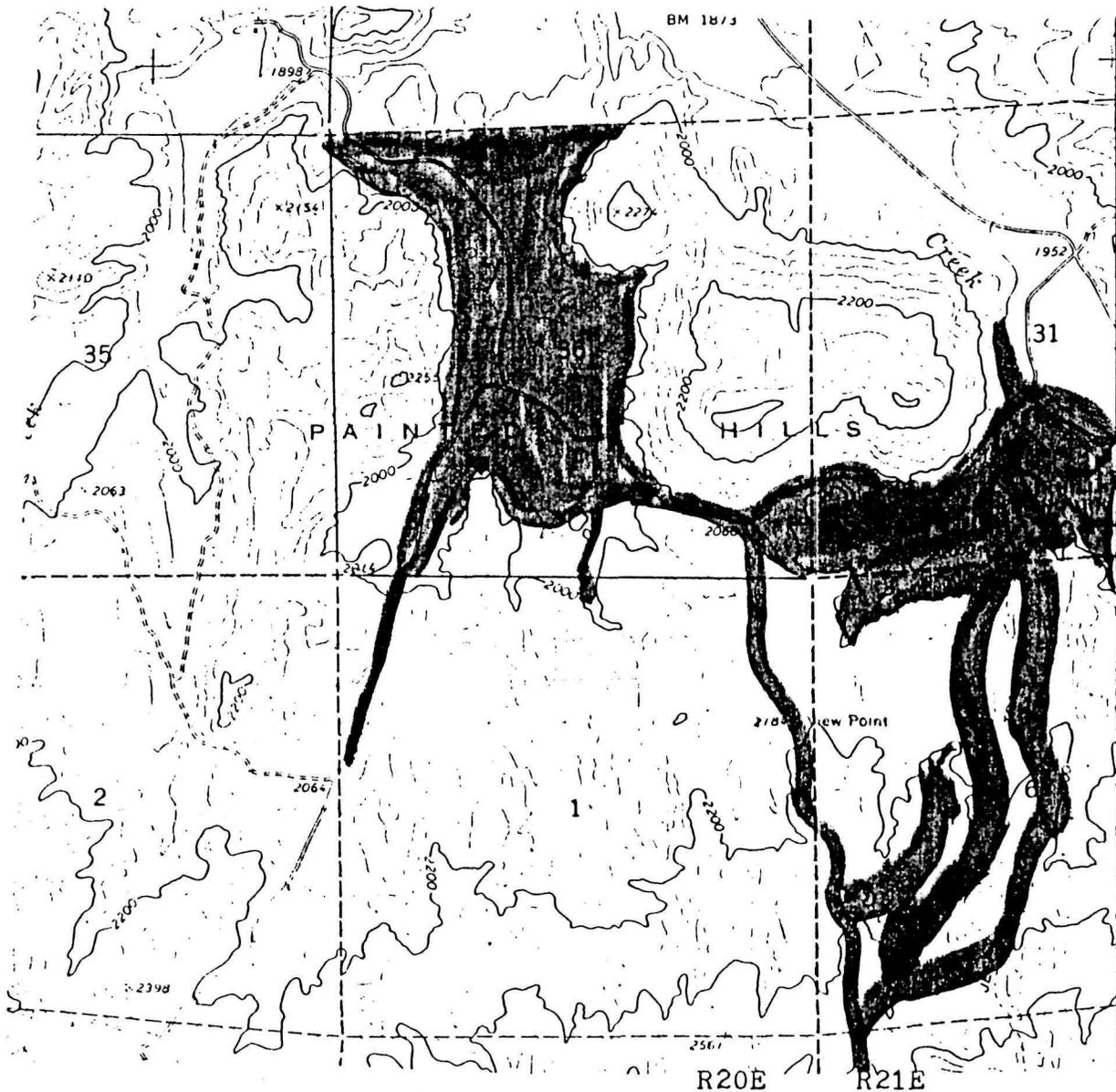


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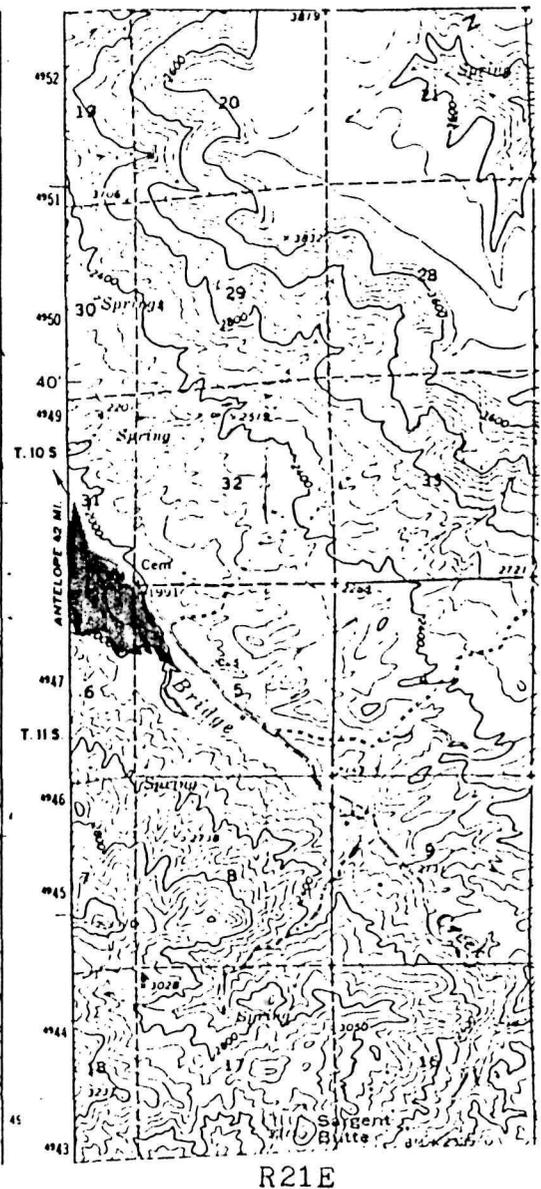


Scale 1" = $\frac{1}{4}$ mi.
(when square represents a section 1" = $\frac{1}{4}$ mi. (402 m))

Recorded by W. A. Davis
Date April 1, 1976



USGS Painted Hills Quad. 7.5' Series



USGS Mitchell Quad. 15' Series

Figure 4. Area surveyed, Painted Hills Unit.

Painted Hills Unit

Site 35WH45 A possible housepit located in the center of the wash bordering the eastern exposure of the John Day formation (Figs. 5,6). It lays between 2240' and 2280' elevation, about 1.7 kilometers south of the park road and about 250 meters downstream from the proposed scenic trail crossing. The oval depression is 4.8 meters long, 3.4 meters wide, .20 meters deep, and is outline by rocks. A rectangular 1.2 x 1.6 M pit was dug in the center of the depression. A small test hole was dug and the backdirt from the pit was troweled. No additional cultural material was found. The size, configuration and location on the stabilized alluvial fan are the major indicators that the depression may be man-made.

The depression can be found by going up the center of the wash until, looking east, the lowest band of red clay is in line with the shale knob. Figure 5 was taken from the top of the knob.



Figure 5. View looking west to the wash. The housepit is in the sagebrush in the center of the picture.

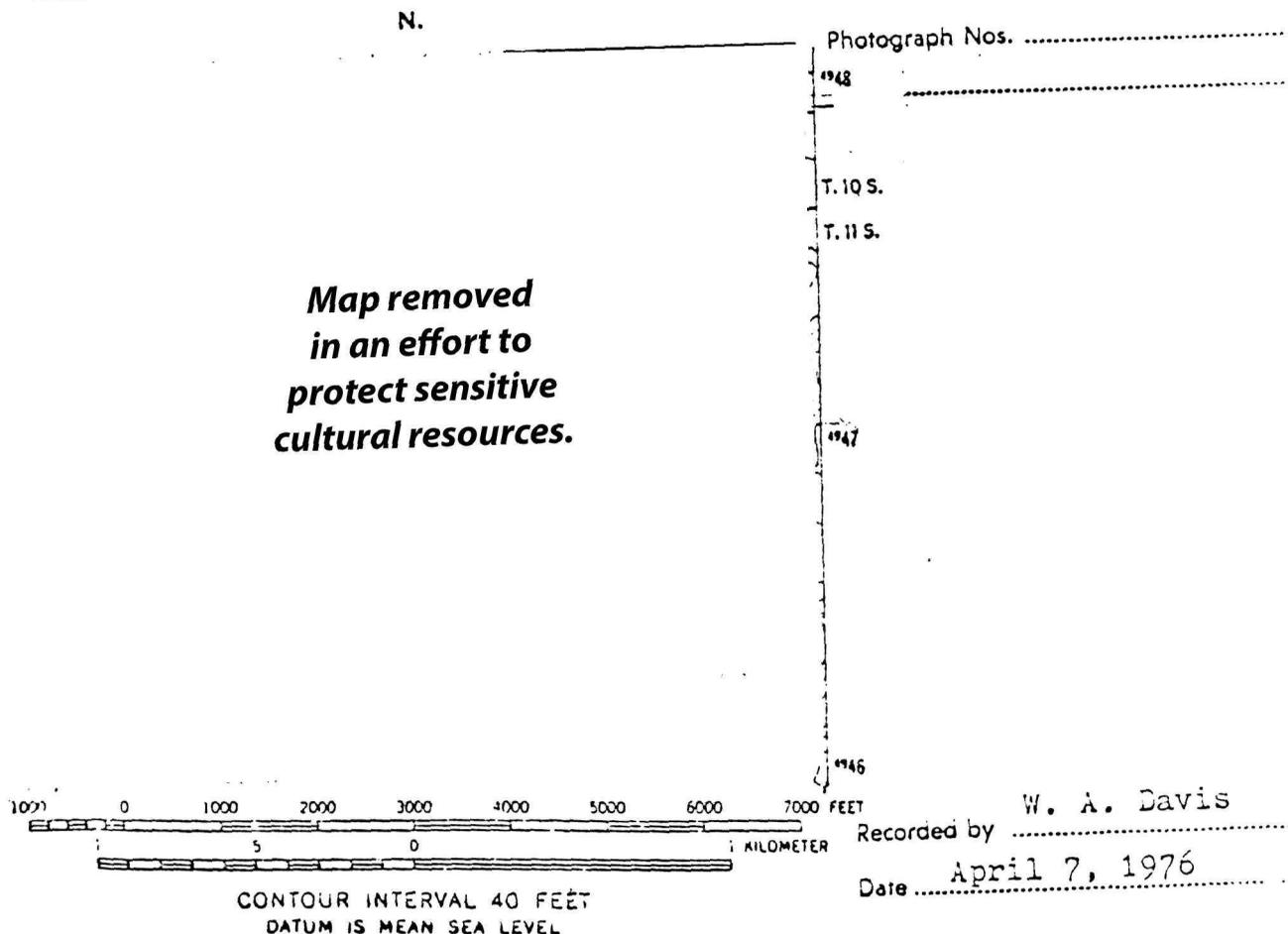


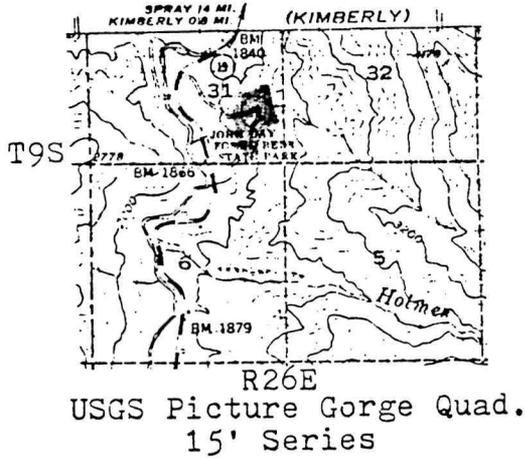
Figure 6. Closeup of the depression showing the pit dug into the center.

Region Archaeological Survey
University of Oregon, Museum of Natural History

Site No. 35WH45 County Wheeler Cultural Area Columbia Plateau
Type of Site Possible housepit
Property Location SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 6, T11S, R21E, Painted Hills Quadrangle, USGS 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' Series.
Site location In the center of the wash bordering the eastern exposure of the John Day formation, about 1.7 kilometer south of the park road; elevation between 2240' and 2280'.
Site Description Oval depression 3.4 meters wide, 4.8 meters long outlined by rocks, no rocks on depression surface. Size, configuration and location only indicators it may be man-made.
Area of occupation 3.4 x 4.8 M.
Depth and character of fill Sand and gravel, depth unknown.
Vegetation cover Juniper, sagebrush and grass.
Present condition 1.2 x 2.6 M pothole in center.
Material collected or observed none

Recommendations for future work preserve as tourist exhibit. (?)
Owner and address John Day Fossil Beds National Monument Attitude toward excavation
Present use State Park





T11S
T12S

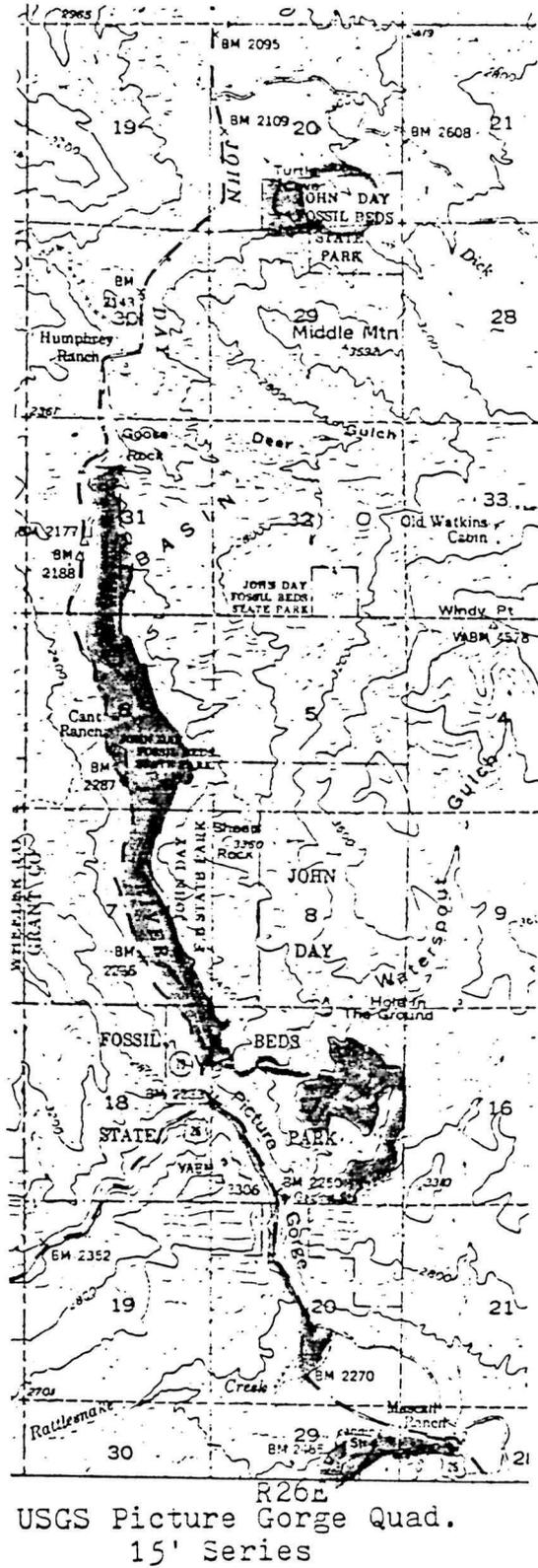
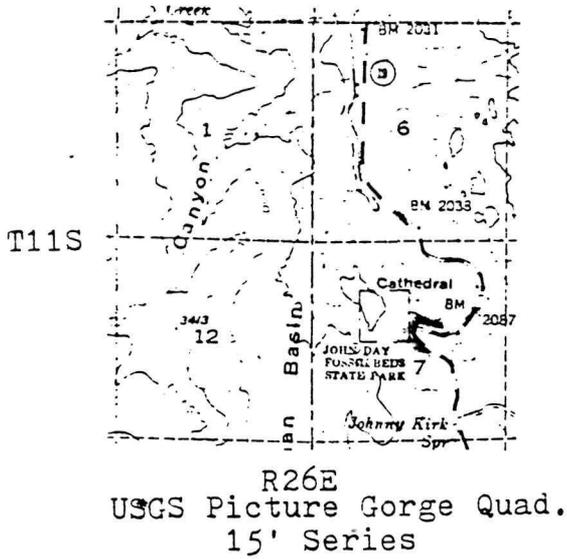


Figure 7. Area surveyed, John Day Fossil Beds Unit.

John Day Fossil Beds Unit



Figure 8. Site 35GR9. Picture Gorge rockshelter.

Site 35GR9 The rockshelter is located in a steep-walled gulch on the east side of Picture Gorge. It has eroded out of the base of a weathered basalt cliff, about 4 meters above the present stream bed. It is situated about 650 meters east of the mouth of the gulch which is about 150 meters north (downstream) of the gaging station. It is an easy walk from the gaging station up the gulch to the shelter. It can also be reached via a jeep trail that ends in the hollow at the head of the gulch, thence it is an easy walk down the gulch.

The shelter appears to be an erosional feature, though at first glance it resembles a lava tube. The mouth is about 4 meters wide by 5 meters high. The cavity is about 7 meters long, rising steeply to the rear to a fairly level, semi-circular area about 1 1/2 meters deep, 2

meters wide and 1 1/2 meters high. The floor is covered with large rocks fallen from the roof. A loose duff of dried plant material containing bone fragments, rat dung and bat guano fills the rock interstices. Rodent activity may account for the bone fragments. The loose vegetation layer covers a hard, compact, dark brown deposit of silts, clays and guano; fallen rock comprises at least 75% of the deposit.

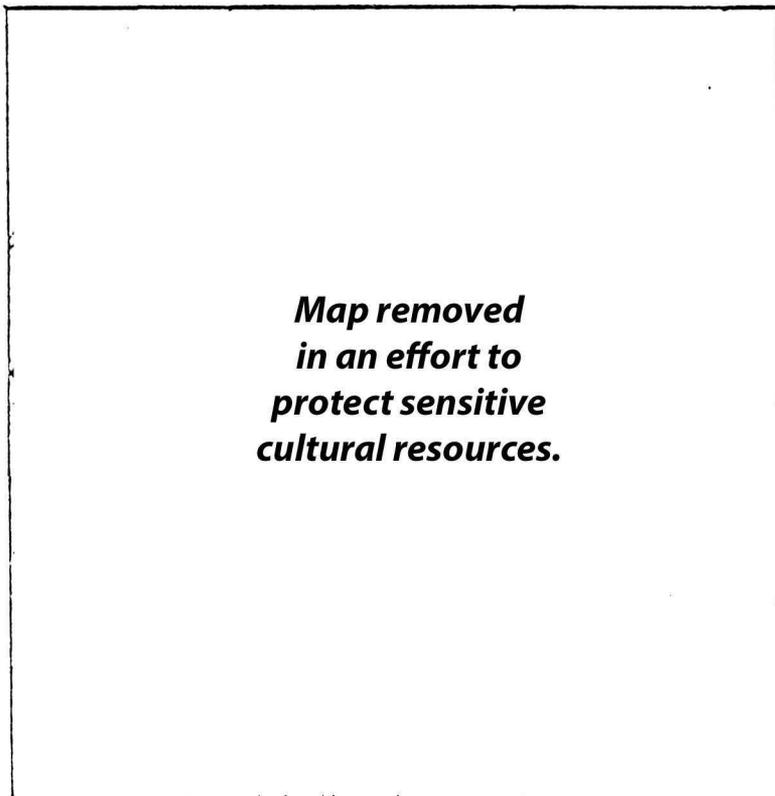
A small, dry fractured, gnawed, partially burned fragment of a mammalian long bone was found in the loose duff. It may have been carried into the cave by a rodent. The level area at the rear of the shelter may have been constructed. That is, a course of rock appears to have been laid across the floor to form the foredge of the platform. No additional evidence of occupation was found.

The shelter was not tested because I was traveling light: talus slopes are too treacherous to climb burdened with digging tools. Also, at least a ton of rock will have to be moved and the roof scaled of dangerously loose rock before a test pit can be dug.

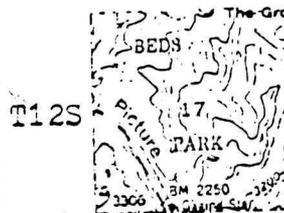
Oregon Archaeological Survey
University of Oregon, Museum of Natural History

Site No. 35GR9 County Grant Cultural Area Columbia Plateau
Type of Site Rock shelter
Property Location NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 17, T12S, R26E, Picture
Gorge Quadrangle, USGS 15' Series.
Site Location In basalt cliff about 5 meters above present gully bed,
and about 650 meters east of the river in the gully north
(downstream) of the gaging station.
Site Description Shelter opening 4 meters wide by 3 M high, floor slopes
up steeply, length 7 meters, 2 x 1.5 meter platform at rear.
Area of occupation 4 x 7 M.
Depth and character of fill Aeolian sediment, vegetable debris, rat dung, bat
guano and about 80% rocks from the roof
Vegetation cover none
Present condition Undisturbed
Material collected or observed Small (ca. 2 x 7 cm), dry fractured, rodent
chewed, partially burned, mammalian long bone fragment.
Recommendations for future work Should be tested before area opened to tourism.
John Day Fossil Beds
Owner and address National Monument Attitude toward excavation
Present use

N.



Photograph Nos. _____



Scale 1" = $\frac{1}{4}$ mi.

(when square represents a section 1" = $\frac{1}{4}$ mi. [402 m])

Recorded by W. A. Davis

Date April 24, 1976

Site 35GR10 Picture Gorge pictographs. Pictographs occur at four localities in the gorge. Locality 1 (Figs. 9,10) is at the southern entrance to the gorge, on the west side on the cliff rising out of the water. The figures are faint, but clear. They are barely discernable in the photograph. This is Cressman's site 20 (1937:22).



Figure 9. View of Site 35GR10, Locality 1, looking south.



Figure 10. View of Site 35GR10, Locality 1, looking north. Pictographs are just visible on smooth rock surface at mid-center.

Locality 2 is about 20 meters further into the gorge, diagonally across the highway from locality 1, on the smooth, sheer rock wall at the top of the scree truncated by the road cut. Cressman (1937:22 site 21) describes and illustrates several designs, but no count is given, he notes that they range from badly weathered to fresher, legible designs. I could discern only one figure, a lizard-like form. It did not photograph.



Figure 11. View of 35GR10, Locality 3, looking southwest. The triangular rock projection is at left center.

Locality 3 pictographs are on the north face of a triangular rock projecting from the cliff and on the cliff face north of the projection. It is on the edge of the parking strip north of milepost 125. The site is disfigured by graffiti, and most of it is obliterated by brown paint (Fig. 11).

Locality 4 is a single pictograph on the cliff across the river from locality 3. It is faint but legible. Cressman did not list localities 3 and 4.

Oregon Archaeological Survey
University of Oregon, Museum of Natural History

Site No. 35GR10 County Grant Cultural Area Columbia Plateau

Type of Site Pictograph

Property Location NE 1/4 of NW 1/4 and SE 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Section 20, R12S, R26E, USGS Picture Gorge Quadrangle, 15' Series.

Site Location Pictographs on protected vertical rock faces of cliffs along the river. 1: at river edge at the southern entrance

to the gorge on cliff remnant between highway and river. 2: diagonally northwest across highway from 1. 3: on north face

Site Description of triangular projection and on cliff face, ca. 25 meters north of milepost 125. 4: on rock face across the river from 3. Figures of faded red pigment.

Area of occupation

Depth and character of fill

Vegetation cover

Present condition 1, 2 & 4 faint but visible, 3 covered with graffiti and painted over.

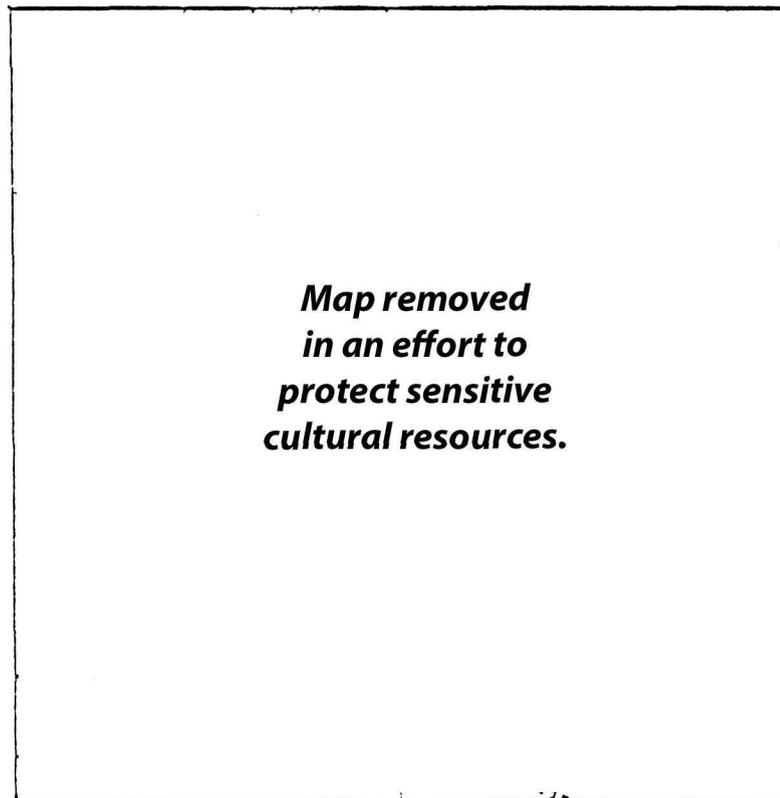
Material collected or observed none

Recommendations for future work restoration (?) and preservation John Day Fossil Beds

Owner and address National Monument Attitude toward excavation

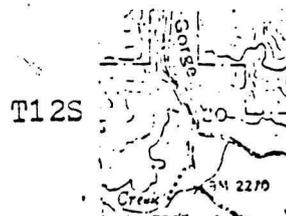
Present use

N.



Photograph Nos.

x Pictographs



W. A. Davis

Recorded by

Date April 12, 1976

Scale 1" = 1/4 mi.

(when square represents a section 1" = 1/4 mi. 1/402 m.)

Historic Sites

A pioneer cemetery is located on the slope about 200 meters south of the Ed Lee residence at about 1520' elevation. Two weathered posts of the enclosure are still standing (Fig. 12). There are no grave markers. The land was homesteaded by Joseph Huntley in the 1870s. It was on the Shaniko state route and was known as Huntley Station; the cemetery probably dates from this period (L. Rheinhart, personal communication).

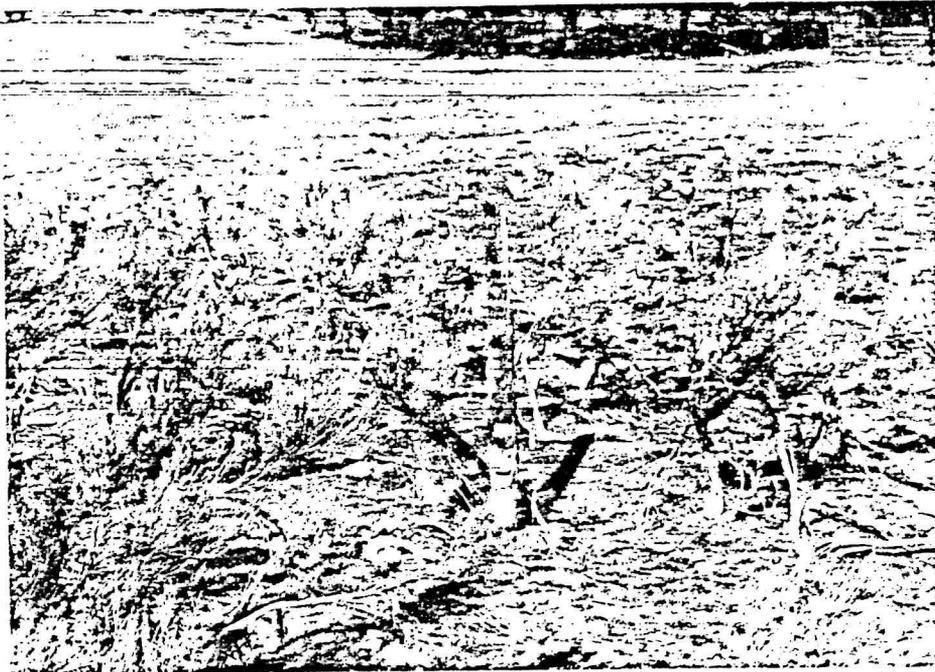


Figure 12. View of Huntley (?) cemetery, looking north, and showing the 2 standing fence posts.

Oregon Archaeological Survey
University of Oregon, Museum of Natural History

Site No. _____ County Wheeler Cultural Area Historic

Type of Site Cemetery

Property Location SE 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Section 35, T7S, R19E, Clarno Quadrangle
USGS 15' Series.

Site Location On the slope south of the Ed Lee residence about 200 meters
at about 1520' elevation.

Site Description Two weathered posts still standing, two others lying on
the ground from a probable fence. No headstones or markers.

Area of occupation unknown

Depth and character of fill Clay soil, depth unknown

Vegetation cover Sagebrush and grass

Present condition Poor

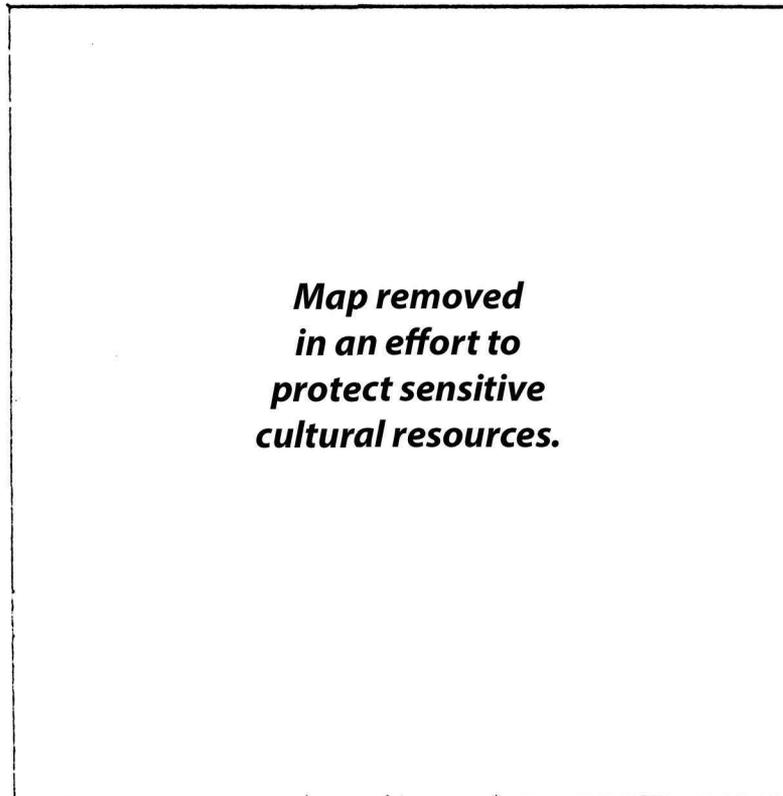
Material collected or observed none

Recommendations for future work none, on private land

Owner and address Ed Lee, Fossil, Oregon Attitude toward excavation _____

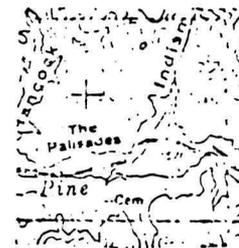
Present use range land

N.



Photograph Nos. _____

T7S



Scale 1" = 1/4 mi.

(when square represents a section 1" = 1/4 mi. (402 mi))

Recorded by W. A. Davis

Date April 1, 1976

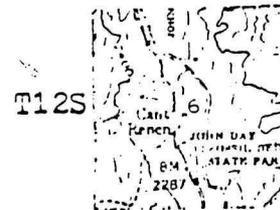
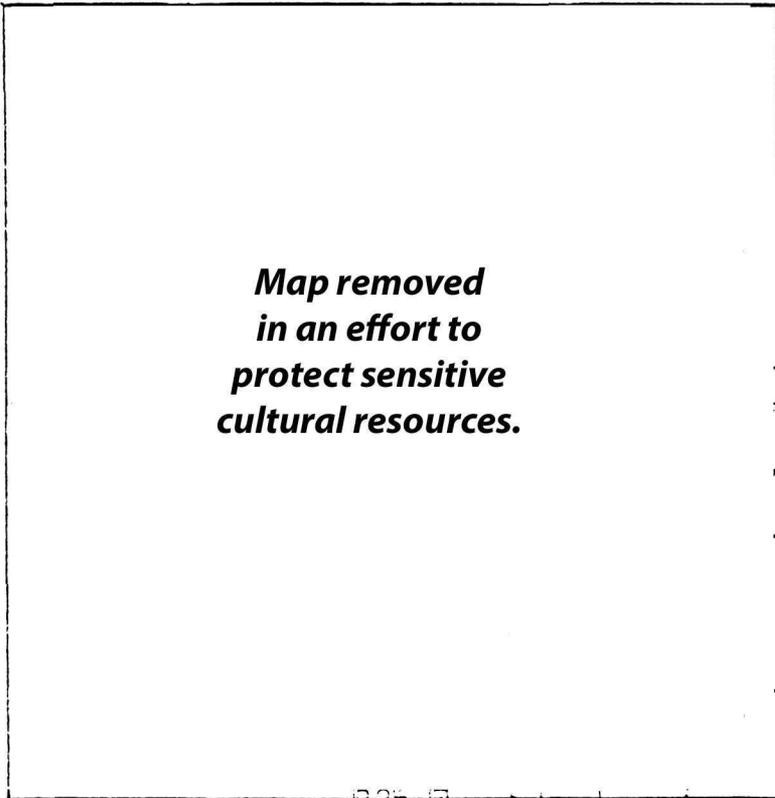
The Cant Ranch sod house is located on the alluvial fan north of the pasture on the east side of the river opposite the ranch buildings. The house is in poor condition, the roof has fallen in. The ground presently supports a heavy growth of sagebrush. Mr. James Cant said the sod house was one of three on the east bank of the river when the land was purchased by his father. The other two houses were bulldozed when the land was cleared and leveled.

Oregon Archeological Survey
University of Oregon, Museum of Natural History

Site No. _____ County Grant Cultural Area Historic
Type of Site Pioneer residence
Property Location NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 6, T12S, R26E, USGS Picture Gorge
Quadrangle, 15' Series.
Site Location On the east bank of the John Day River on the foreedge of
the alluvial fan north of the cultivated field.
Site Description Sod house
Area of occupation _____
Depth and character of fill _____
Vegetation cover Sagebrush
Present condition Poor, roof has fallen in.
Material collected or observed none
Recommendations for future work restoration
Owner and address John Day Fossil Beds
National Monument Attitude toward excavation _____
Present use range land

N.

Photograph Nos. none



Scale 1" = $\frac{1}{4}$ mi.
(when square represents a section 1" = $\frac{1}{4}$ mi. (402 m))

Recorded by W. A. Davis
Date April 23, 1976

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Picture Gorge rockshelter should be tested. There is no immediate danger since it is well hidden, so impacts should be negligible until the east side of the gorge is opened to heavy tourist traffic, unless this report comes into the wrong hands.

Estimated costs for 5-7 days, crew of 4.....ca. \$2,000.

An historical archaeologist should study the Cant Ranch sod house.

An expert on art restoration should be consulted on preserving or restoring the pictographs.

Two areas outside the objectives of this survey should be investigated by future surveys. James Cant reported that when the Indians still visited the area the men used the ridge above Goose Rock (Section 31, T11S, R26E) as a lookout and lithic workshop. He said he often visited their camp in the foothills east of the ranch headquarters, probably in Section 1, T12S, R26E, and that they came by trail over the ridge from Rock Creek because the gorge was impassable. Mrs. Lillian Mascall reported that "many arrowheads" had been found on the top of the mesa northwest of Rattlesnake Creek in Section 19, T12S, R25E.

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Appendix I

INDIANS OF EASTERN OREGON

by

Kathryn Lee

CHINOOKAN

Wasco-Wishram and Watlala

The speakers of the Chinookan linguistic stock stretched from the mouth of the Columbia River to around the region of Celilo Falls near The Dalles, Oregon. The Upper Chinook lived on most Chinook territory and were the only Chinook east of The Cascades. The Wasco on the Oregon side of the Columbia and the closely related Wishram on the Washington side were the easternmost of the Upper Chinook. They lived east to Celilo Falls and the Five Mile Rapids area. More anthropological study has been done on the Wishram than the Wasco, and much information about the latter is inferred from the former (French 1961:339). Below the Wasco, from Hood River to The Cascades, was the Watlala (Barry 1927:53) or Hood River of which little is written.

The Wasco-Wishram were intermediate between the Plateau and Northwest Coast cultural areas. They maintained trading partnerships with both Northwest Coast groups and those of the Plateau. From the Klamath they obtained slaves that were raided from northern California, from the east they received skins and Plains traits, from the west seafood and shells, and they traded with peoples from the north. As middlemen in a vast trade network they were extremely important. Salmon was the staple item of trade and their main food source. Perhaps the

most excellent spot on the Columbia River for these anadromous fish was at Celilo Falls in the midst of the Wasco-Wishram.

The Wasco-Wishram kept slaves, who were the lowest "caste" in a three or four caste system. One big notch above the slaves were the commoners, and above them were the rich and/or chiefly classes. This class system and the common practice of keeping slaves were typical of the Northwest Coast.

Chieftainship was hereditary, being passed from father to son if the son was worthy. The same system held for subchiefs as well as for heads of wealthy families. Duties of the chief were advisory and judicial. They often served as intermediaries in village disputes, as there appears to have been no council.

In Eastern Oregon, as for the whole Northwest, there was really no such thing as a tribe in the terms of political networks that stretched beyond the individual villages. Except under extreme conditions a chief was only a leader of a local group, and the culture, or aggregate of villages speaking the same dialect, was held together by cultural and social bonds rather than political bonds. The above was true of the Wasco-Wishram (French 1961:361) who lived in villages each with its own leaders. The winter village was near the river and permanent or semipermanent in nature, with the houses constructed of cedar planks (Curtis 1907:8:91; French 1961:358). In the summer they moved from camp to camp fishing, hunting, berrying, and diffing roots. This temporary abandonment of winter villages has led many anthropologists astray, since to the early explorers it appeared that the Indians

of the Columbia River had fled from the area (Ray 1938:394).

SAHAPTIAN

Of the Sahaptian there are agreed, by most linguists, to be two divisions of concern here. The Northern Sahaptians of the northern part of the state, and the Lutuamian of southern Oregon which contains the Modoc and Klamath. First to be dealt with will be the Northern Sahaptian.

Northern Sahaptian

Tenino

Along the south bank of the Columbia from the Wasco on the west to the Umatilla on the east, and on the lower reaches of the Deschutes and John Day Rivers, were the Tenino. There were four subdivisions each with a pair of villages - one for summer and one for winter. The summertime village was a rather flimsy one along a river. The wintertime villages were more permanent and several miles away from the rivers.

The four subdivisions of the Tenino were the Tenino Proper who spent their summers four miles east of The Dalles and their winters six miles inland, the Wyam or Deschutes who summered at Celilo and wintered on the best bank of the Deschutes near its confluence with the Columbia, the John Day who had both their summer and winter villages on the John Day River not far from the Columbia, and the Tyghwho were an offshoot from the Tenino Proper and whose winter village was at Tygh Valley and summer village was at Sherar's Bridge on the Deschutes (Murdock 1938:

395-396).

The Tenino had no social stratification, and chieftainship was not inherited. It helped to be wealthy to attain chieftainship, but it was not a prerequisite. The power of a chief depended on the respect and influence he could muster. The Tenino villages were autonomous politically, but not culturally. The Tenino traveled throughout the year in order to exploit various resources, such as fish, roots, berries, and game (Suphan 1974b:27).

Molala

The Molala were at one time immediately west of the Tenino. They were linguistically different, but cultural similar, to the Tenino. They did not have slaves, however. Before an offshoot of the Tenino Proper, the Tygh, ran them out they inhabited only one summer village at Tygh Valley and a winter village at Sherar's Bridge on the Deschutes (Murdock 1938:397). Joel Berreman (1937:44-45) believes it was the Northern Paiute who pushed them west. They apparently were moved, by whatever group (probably the Tenino), west of the Cascade Mountains.

Umatilla

East of the Tenino, along the lower Umatilla River and adjacent to the south bank of the Columbia River, lived the Umatilla (Berreman 1927:61). They also lived on the north bank of the Columbia (Ray 1938:385). According to Verne Ray (1939:11) they tended to lean comparatively close to a tribal structure, but many argue that this was only true in the historic times (Suphan 1974a:107). One criteria Ray uses for his statement is that virtually all the Umatilla met in one village at the

mouth of the Umatilla at a time in the winter (1939:12). Most authors say they had no tribal chiefs and villages were autonomous politically. Their chiefs were picked on the basis of achievement (Ray 1939:18). There was no class stratification based on wealth, but they did rank according to war honors with the counting of coup being important (Ray 1939:43). The Plains influence was quite strong among the Umatilla. Like most Plateau groups they had permanent villages for winter and travelled the rest of the year to obtain various resources. Most Plateau groups lived in mat covered lodges or semisubterranean houses and, in later times, the tipi in the winter, and in temporary mat or brush shelters in the summer.

Cayuse

Around the headwaters of streams that flowed into the Columbia, the Walla Walla, Umatilla and Grande Ronde Rivers, roughly east of the Umatilla are the Cayuse. With this tribe, as well as with the Umatilla and Wallawalla, Verne Ray says that they had a tribal structure (1939:11). Robert J. Suphan disagrees (1974a:107). Ray says the name "Cayuse" applies to an ethnic group rather than a tribe, however (Ray 1939:12). The Cayuse are quite close to the Nez Perce structure of social organization which will be discussed below. According to many historians the Cayuse were somewhat more violent and warlike than the Nez Perce, and they cite the Whitman Massacre as an example. Much of this can be attributed to the fact that in the historical period they were right on the Oregon Trail. The Cayuse place emphasis on ranking

war honors and resemble the Plains complex. There were no castes or classes. They were typical Plateau in that most of the time they had autonomous villages with their own chiefs, and traveled out of permanent winter villages in the warmer months to exploit upland resources. They lived in typical Plateau dwellings.

Nez Perce

The Nez Perce to the North and east of the Cayuse, were a large and important group. Though they lived mainly in Idaho, a large portion of northeastern Oregon was occupied by them. In fact, a band living in Oregon's Wallowa Valley were the most famous of the Nez Perce. At least five bands had winter villages in Oregon: 1) the Imnama on the Imnaha River, 2) the Walwama on the Wallowa River, 3) the Inantoinu that lived on Joseph Creek, 4) the Koiknimapu who resided above Joseph Creek on the Grande Ronde River, and 5) the Isawisnemepu who were near present Zindels on the Grande Ronde River (Spinden 1908:174-175). The Nez Perce as a whole called themselves the Numipu, but that name was never used by outsiders. The name "Nez Perce" is of French origin translated from a Siouan term meaning "pierced nose" (Spinden 1908:171-172).

The Nez Perce lived in typical Plateau semisubterranean and mat dwellings. They travelled in the spring, summer, and fall months for fish, game, roots, and berries in the higher elevations where it was cool. They lived in the lower river valleys in the winter. The camas root was a principle staple and they also relied heavily on river resources such as fish and mussels.

As with most of the Northern Sahaptian, warfare was important. The Nez Perce, though not excessively warlike, stood guard against the Shoshonian speakers in the east and south. Each village had its own chief, but villages would meet in times of war or to collect a certain resource such as buffalo. Chieftainship was based on achievement. There were peace chiefs in each village and, in times of war, war chiefs would become effective. These war chiefs could command a group of villages or, on rare occasions, the whole Nez Perce stock. Such war command was relinquished in times of peace. The power of a war chief was only honorary during peace. There were both tribal and village councils. Personal matters such as murder and adultery were left up to the families to handle. As with most Plateau cultures the individual owned tools and implements, while sites and territory were "owned" by the village or stock.

Klicitat and Wallawalla

Writers such as Berreman (1937) feel that Sahaptians such as the Klicitat to the north lived in Oregon at one time and were pushed north into Washington by Shoshonean speakers. Ray (1938), on the other hand, feels that this was not true. The Wallawalla, who were closely related to the Cayuse and Umatilla, reside mainly in Washington, but some sources feel that they may have lived partially in Oregon, also.

For the most part the Northern Sahaptians coexisted peacefully with each other and with the Interior Salish to the north, but were enemies with Shoshonean speakers to the south. The groups to the east

of the state were more Plains-like. The influence of the horse and Plains culture in the 18th century, modified all Plateau peoples by giving greater mobility and new traits.

Lutuamian

The Klamath and the Modoc belonged to the Lutuamian division of the Sahaptian stock. They occupied the south-central part of Oregon near and across the California border.

Klamath

The Klamath were the larger of the two divisions of the Lutuamian. They occupied the territory west to the Cascade Mountains, north to about the 44th parallel, east to the drainage of Sycan Marsh and a portion of the drainage of Goose Lake, and south to about the present California-Oregon border (Curtis 1907:13:161). In the winter they lived in semisubterranean houses. They also traveled throughout the warmer months to gather various resources. The seed of the Yellow Water Lilly (Wokas) was a good staple. They also exploited berries, other seeds, roots, fish, waterfowl, and game.

There were several subdivisions, each with its own chief or headman (Curtis, 1907:13:175; Ray 1939:6). Among these were: 1) the Klamath-Marsh-Williamson River group on the southern margin of the Klamath Marsh and lower Williamson and Sprague Rivers (43 villages), 2) the Agency Lake group on Agency Lake and the northern arm of Klamath Lake (one village), 3) the Lower Williamson River group close

to the mouth of the Williamson River (5 villages), 4) the Pelican Bay group in the Pelican Bay district on the west side of Klamath Lake, Four Mile Creek, and the marsh north of the Lake (9 villages), and 5) the Klamath Falls group along Klamath Lake south of Modoc Point (18 villages) (Berreman 1937:43). Though not linked politically, these bands were linked culturally. Chieftainship was achieved and most chiefs were rich though wealth was not the basis by which they were chosen. The family was the basic unit of society (Curtis 1907:13:175). According to Ray (1963:134) the Modoc and Klamath were often allies in raiding people to the south and did not fight each other. Curtis (1907:13:162) implies they did fight each other, but this statement is probably based on conflict caused when the government placed both on the same reservation in an unnatural situation for the two tribes.

The Klamath traded slaves with tribes to the north such as the Wasco. They kept slaves themselves, but these prisoners were merely adopted into families and could marry Klamath.

Modoc

The Modoc were the other and the smaller of the Lutuamian division. Though they had some conflict with the Klamath before the Modoc War of the 1870s, they were generally allies and had similar cultures. They lived chiefly in California to the south and east of the Klamath. Two bands in Oregon were on the Upper Lost River above Olene, and the Lower Lost River (Berreman 1937:44). Tribal organization in the political sense was lacking in the Modoc, with each band or village having its own chief. There were three types of leadership in Modoc society as with many other Plateau-type groups (e.g. Nez Perce). These were leadership in warfare, religion, and domestic

affairs (Ray 1963:3). Achievement was the basis on which these were usually chosen. The highest legal authority was the village assembly (Ray 1963:9). Homicide and personal matters were a concern to the chief but were to be handled for the most part by the families involved.

The Modoc traveled in warm months on their annual food quest. They dismantled their winter homes in villages, only leaving the main poles standing, and upon their return they usually rebuilt the house over the wind cleaned pit (Ray 1963:180).

SHOSHONEAN (UTO-AZTECAN)

The Northern Paiute were the main Shoshonean speaking culture in Oregon. The Bannock also spent some time in the area which is now Oregon. There is much confusion when studying these groups, especially the Northern Paiute, because many of the early explorers and anthropologists were not clear in their use of terms such as Shoshoni, Bannock, Snake, (Steward 1938:271) and, the less than complimentary term, "digger." Those usually called the Shoshoni were Bannock and other Shoshonean groups to the east. Snake probably refers to the Walpapi, a division of the Northern Paiute (Berreman 1927:47; Swanton 1952:475). Digger was probably a descriptive term applied to Indians of the general area.

Northern Paiute

When looking at the Northern Paiute one encounters two separate systems of classing them into bands or villages. It is extremely

difficult to talk of separate bands or villages since they moved very much and tended not to inhabit permanent sites on the scale the Plateau peoples did. One system used more recently are those names supposedly given groups by the Northern Paiute based on what resource they exploited at a certain time of the year. This system has difficulty because membership was fluid in these bands from season to season, and year to year. Not every area of the Northern Paiute territory was occupied either. Beatrice Blyth (1938:396, 403-404) has mapped these resource exploiting groups. South of the Tenino were the Juniper Deer Eaters (Wadikishitika), on the Upper John Day were the Hunibitika (Hunibui - a root), to the northeast of them were the Elk Eaters (Agaitika), south of them were the Tagu Root Eaters (Tagutika), south of the Hunibui Eaters were the Wada Root Eaters (Wadatika), around Lake Albert and Summer Lake were the Epos Eaters (Yapatika), at Warner Lake were the Groundhog Eaters (Gidutikad), and to the east and south of them were the Gwinidiba (meaning unknown). These names do not represent political units, since they split into smaller family and friendship groups when not exploiting their particular resource.

The Northern Paiute groups generally divided up into smaller kin and friendship units. These units consisted of two or three families not necessarily related. Kinship was bilateral since one married and chose residence usually on the basis of what was most feasible (Fowler 1966:59). This was because resources were scarcer in the Great Basin than elsewhere in Eastern Oregon. The people traveled about on foot in these small units most of the time and only came together into larger groups for short periods where some resource was especially

abundant (the band name). Perhaps these groups traveled only in their particular drainage system and there was no appreciable band movement over time, since there was no reason to cross barren wasteland (Davis 1966:151). The family or small group was the basic political unit, and nearly the only social or cultural unit.

Their houses were of brush and usually very temporary in design. They commonly ate seeds, roots, insects, and small animals, but they prized game animals and fish eating them when they were able to obtain them.

The Sahaptian speaking people to the north were their traditional enemies. According to Berreman (1937) they raided these people, but it is more likely that the Plateau peoples raided them (Ray 1938).

Lohim

The existence of a group of Shoshonean speakers on Willow Creek in the middle of a group of Sahaptians, the Umatilla, is questioned. Berreman (1937:61) states that the group in question, the Lohim, were Northern Paiute, while Steward (1938:407) says they a band of Lemhi, from the Bannock, who arrived from Idaho after 1856. The second theory seems more plausible. The U.S. government never recognized them and some scholars doubt their existence.

Bannock

The Bannock Indians are also a group of Shoshoneans of which part of them occupied Oregon for a time according to some anthropologists. They hunted large game animals on a larger scale than the Northern Paiute

and are generally considered with the Indians of Idaho.

SALISHAN

Nekutameux and Moses Columbia

George P. Murdock (1938:400) and Verne Ray (1938:393) are in agreement with most scholars in their conclusion that there were never any Salishan speakers south of the Columbia River in numbers to constitute an ethnic grouping. They strongly contradict Berreman (1937:41) by stating there was never a Salishan group known as the Nekutameux east of the Wasco on the Columbia River. Another Salishan group Berreman mentioned was the Moses Columbia (1937:41) which is not cited widely in the literature. Joel Berreman believes that the Northern Paiute pushed these groups north of the Columbia. Other scholars (Ray et. al. 1938) feel just the opposite happened - Sahaptian speakers pushed the Shoshonean groups the opposite direction.

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