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MUSEUM TALK



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CAVE OF THE KILLER WHALES

One of the most interesting petroglyphs ever discovered in the Santa Barbara region was found recently in a sea cave on San Nicolas Island by Mr. Al Allanson of La Jolla.

Here the sea has eroded into the sandstone base of the island cutting a cave, which in turn has collapsed on the seaward side so that it must be entered through a crevice. Inside, the figures of at least nine killer whales have been carved into the sandstone by the prehistoric Indians. Three are in a conventional or horizontal position and the others are vertical, with heads up.

Mr. Allanson's discovery is of special interest, for while petroglyphs are common on the mainland, they are exceedingly rare on the islands.

Furthermore this is the only example known on either islands or mainland where the killer whale is used as a petroglyph design.

The stone pipes and effigies found in the form of killer whales occasionally on San Nicolas are believed to have had some ceremonial significance and these petroglyphs may have some relationship to them.

Gradually our knowledge of the ancient peoples increases by just such discoveries as this which Mr. Allanson photographed and reported to the writer. P.C.O.

FOURTH SANTA ROSA ISLAND EXPEDITION

Since we have been following the progress of Museum expeditions on Santa Rosa Island (*Museum Leaflet*, November 1947 and *Museum Talk*, Winter 1949-50), Mr. Orr's recent mimeographed report on the Fourth Santa Rosa Island Expedition, 1950-51, sent to a limited number of active friends of the expedition, is included here. This last expedition was devoted entirely to archeology and the six large photos accompanying the report show a village site and cemetery at Skull Gulch, field methods and equipment, the effects of wind during excavation of "Dune Dwellers," and two pictures of Jolla Vieja taken fifty years apart showing change by erosion.

Introduction

The Fourth Santa Rosa Island Expedition of the Departments of Anthropology and Geology of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History was made possible by the generous contributions of Miss Katherine Harvey, Mr. Harold S. Chase, Mr. Charles A. Ott, and Mr. David Gray and enabled the Museum to increase the expedition staff by the addition of one man for the field season.

Work was carried on in the Skull Gulch area where the Third Expedition had left off last year. (See *Report from Santa Rosa Island 1947-50*). Much was accomplished in recovering artifacts, skeletal material and information on the life of the prehistoric inhabitants of the Island.

Acknowledgements

The Santa Rosa Island Expeditions have been fortunate in having many friends who have aided in the work. Some of these have helped year after year; others for short times when needed. While it is impossible to acknowledge fully in this report all the assistance given, we wish to express our appreciation to all, and especially to Miss Katherine Harvey, Mr. Harold S. Chase, Mr. Charles A. Ott, of the Museum Board of Trustees, who have contributed funds toward the Fourth Expedition, and to Mrs. M. Russell Perkins and Mr. Fred H. Schauer who in the past have contributed equipment still in use.

To Mr. David Gray, Jr., many thanks for his constant interest in the expeditions. Mr. Gray has not only supplied aerial transportation for four years, but has also contributed funds to the Fourth Expedition.

To Captain Tom Allin and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Gaitzell, operators of Civil Air Patrol radio stations, thanks for the use of portable radio equipment and constant efforts to maintain radio contact with the Island camp.

To Professor E. W. Gifford of the Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, who has been helpful in furnishing notes and photographs from the 1901 Jones Expedition to the Island; and to Mr. Louis Scott, of the Scott Drilling Company of Chino, for many favors during the last two years.

To Mr. Ed Vail and Mr. Al Vail, of the Vail-Vickers Company, owners of Santa Rosa Island, whose interest and cooperation have made the exploration possible; and to Mr. Hayden Hunt, foreman of the Island ranch, and his men who are always willing to lend a hand, we say that it has been a pleasure to deal with the "Islanders."

Lastly to the staff: Richard S. Finley, assistant, and Ralph Colcord, field man, who have worked in the field in good weather and in bad up to seventeen hours a day and seven days a week, and to Waldo Abbott and Howard Cunningham who have acted as supply agents on the mainland, and to Dr. A. S. Coggshall, director of the Museum, whose interest and advice have kept the expeditions going.

Accomplishments of the Fourth Expedition

The expedition was late in starting due to transportation difficulties, so that in October, 1950, Walter Miller's *Seal* was hired to haul supplies and personnel to the Island.

The problem of hauling four hundred pound drums of gasoline from the boat to the dock worried us, for the boat's boom was not high enough to handle it, but Mr. Louis Scott solved the difficulty with his mobile crane.

Our two-man expedition had now increased to three, with the addition of Ralph Colcord, so that several days were spent gathering driftwood and tacking it together with tar paper to increase the size of our camp. Butane gas heat and cooking was also installed—a big improvement over our old gasoline stove which was constantly out of order.

The two-way Civil Air Patrol radio, lent by Captain Allin, was set up and Radio Station KDCY Mobile 17, Santa Rosa Island, was on the air, operated by Sergeant Finley.

Throughout our stay on the Island we were in almost daily contact with either Captain Allin or Mr. and Mrs. Tom Gaitzell, which was a far cry from the First Expedition, when Ed Rice and the writer had been set down afoot with a week's supply of food and water and wondering if weather would permit replenishments before the supply ran out.

As always, perishable foods were our problem, but the radio helped solve that. Captain Allin would tell us when he could fly out some supplies, and we then drove the hour and a half's distance to the landing field in time to pick them up.

Excavation

Excavations were started at the Skull Gulch Locality where a huge 'Late' Indian site was found. Here the old house pits are in plain evidence and the excavation of 'Whale House' was finished, exposing more of the floor with the ancient post holes and fire place and recovering many beads and fish hooks. (See *Museum Talk*, Winter, 1949-50, page 110).

Excavations were then begun in the cemetery, which is exposed on the side of steep Skull Gulch and is gradually washing away. Here some twenty-eight skeletons with their artifacts were removed and the entire earth of the diggings screened and washed to recover the thousands of beads scattered through the earth.

It was necessary to truck our 'concentrates' three miles to water, where they were run through a riffle box and screen to remove the excess dust and dirt.

Plans of the United States Army to build a station at Johnsons' Lee on the south coast of the Island forced us to abandon our diggings at Skull Gulch so that we could attempt to salvage material from Johnson's Lee before construction began. Here on the very rugged coast cut with steep canyons, we could not drive the jeep, so that our digging had to be the old fashioned method of shovels and strong backs but, in the week's time before the bulldozers landed, we recovered a number of very interesting skeletons wrapped in sea grass shrouds, which were partly preserved. This is the first instance of the preservation of such shrouds in the Santa Barbara area.

With our salvage work finished, we moved back to the north coast planning to continue with the Skull Gulch sites, but a wind storm exposed some burials at Tecolote Point where we had found our "Dune Dwellers" last year and, as these would have been completely destroyed by another day of wind, we started another

salvage job. This turned into the biggest excavation made on the Island. Here we excavated 302 cubic yards of earth and discovered skeletons to a depth of ten feet.

Some forty-seven burials of the "Dune Dwellers", in sitting-up position with brilliant red dye on their heads, were removed from this site before a period of strong winds made work not only very disagreeable, but threatened to cut into an unexcavated portion of the site and we were forced to abandon work here until less windy weather next year.

In 1901 a University of California expedition took a photograph of an inland village site. We had failed to find the site so, armed with a photograph, David Gray and the writer flew over the Island until it was located. Then we visited the place afoot and re-photographed the site from the same position. The result is very interesting for it gives photographic evidence of the erosion which has taken place in a fifty-year period.

At the end of the Third Santa Rosa Island Expedition, 142 Indian villages were known and located on our records, but the Fourth Expedition discovered and mapped twelve more—making a total of 154 now recorded.

As a result of the work of the past three years, a paper, "Ancient Population Centers of Santa Rosa Island" by the writer was published in *American Antiquity* (Vol. 16, No. 3, pages 221-226). Another paper, "Caves of the Channel Islands", has been accepted for publication by the National Speleological Society.

Conclusions

The Fourth Santa Rosa Island Expedition has been successful, especially in securing supplementary information which, for the most part, substantiates discoveries of the past. This is particularly true in the case of the "Dune Dwellers" which we now feel certain to be a new and previously unknown culture.

We have learned a great deal more about our old friends, the Canalinos, who are the late people not only on the Island but on the mainland, especially in their house construction and village layout.

Previously we had discovered the Arlington Caves, with the only cave burials known in the Santa Barbara area but, while on the San Miguel Island Expedition last spring, another cave burial was found and this season a number of caves were found which may yet produce burials.

Do we have still another people represented here?

Plans for the Future

Time and tide wait for no man. The march of "civilization" or the eroding winds and rain do not wait for the archeologists. Since last year another burial ground has been destroyed by wind and priceless information lost. Another village has been to all intents and purposes destroyed by a government water well and several damaged by road construction. Next year will see 300 soldiers on the Island, some of whom are bound to be pot-hunters.

The search for oil has not been abandoned. Last year two burial grounds were completely destroyed by oil development, without oil having been discovered. If oil is found, it is evident what will happen to the important sites by a visit to the mainland Tecolote site, now an oil field, or the tank farm at Carpinteria which occupies an old burial ground.

Civilization marches on, but it seems that archeology only crawls along in the wake of its destruction.

Santa Rosa offers the best opportunity to study the past before its destruction, but the Museum's two or three man expeditions have tough competition from Mother Nature and seventeen ton bulldozers. We should make every effort, not only to secure the evidence of the past, but to interpret it and make the interpretations known by exhibit and publication. To do this economically and efficiently a crew of at least five is needed.

BIRDS OF SANTA ROSA AND DALL'S PORPOISES

Santa Rosa Island had not been represented in the island collection of birds and mammals at the Museum until this spring when Mr. Rett and Mr. Abbott spent two weeks there from March 15-28.

As a base of operations they were granted the use of a cabin near the wharf. From there they hiked a total of some 70 pedometer miles to various parts of the east end of the island between Skunk Point and Carrington Point, investigating the main canyons and different types of habitats. On the Torrey pine slopes they found surprisingly little of interest.

Many birds took refuge from the island foxes by staying or nesting in the *Opuntia* cactus patches where they were likewise impossible to collect. Mocking birds and towhees were resident and horned larks were nesting there.

Mr. Rett took colored movies of Bewick wrens building a nest in the cactus. The female did all the real work; when the male did carry nest material, the wind usually swept it away when he would start to sing.