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SAN NICOLAS ISLAND REVISITED

Archaeological investigations were conducted for two weeks during the early part of April on San Nicolas Island under the auspices of the Southwest Museum. Work was concentrated at site SNI-51 where two five-foot squares had been dug the year before, but not taken to base. An old bulldozer cut through the center of the site showed occupation to extend as deep as seven feet and at several levels woven sea grass was exposed. It was to get examples of the latter at various depths as well as to determine artifact associations that work was resumed.

Though four five-foot squares were dug, only two were taken down to sterile soil. Most cultural materials were found in the upper levels. More woven sea grass was collected, all of the same weave as found the year before. The deepest example was recovered at six feet below the surface. Shell fishhooks, pointed bone tools, manos and a metate were among the articles retrieved. Shell and charcoal samples were taken from the lower levels for eventual radiocarbon dating in order to get a maximum age for occupation. It is hoped that additional work can be done in the bottom stratum to get a better idea of the earlier artifact complex.

Some time was spent in surface surveys and in photographing collections made by Navy personnel. The latter contain, in addition to the more usual shell fishhooks and pendants, a surprising number of projectile points (over 400), a few carved stone pendants and other objects such as a pelican stone, spike-shaped stone, fish and animal figurine fragments. During the survey, a cremation and a reburial were uncovered, the former containing over 1300 shell and bone beads in the burial pit. Objects collected on the surface included a well made metate and a fairly complete example of a tar-coated water bottle. One site shows promise of a good yield as a large number of projectile points have been picked up from the surface, as well as many other artifacts; human bones were also noted. The deposit appears to be at least several feet in depth.

Charles Rozaire headed the field party and his chief assistant in carrying out the work was George Kritzman. Other A.R.A. members who participated in the digging were Robert Hammond and Keith Dixon.

Charles Rozaire