

# More on Arthur Sanger's Skullduggeries

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## Abstract

Pursuing his research on malintend trauma, noted neuropathologist Cyril B. Courville, M.D., accessed eight Native American skulls and a single frontal bone, all with purported coastal southern California provenance and alleged evidence of wounding by a pointed object (Courville 1944, 1948, 1952). Seven skulls featured an embedded stone projectile point, a supposed wound to one skull retained a bone implement, but the pierced frontal bone lacked any penetrating object. Courville's examinations and documentations inadvertently provide information which, considered *in toto*, informs less on regional Indian behavior and more on a long-hidden behavioral domain of the infamous Arthur Sanger, whose mendacious approach to archaeology included doctoring artifacts for the antiquities market. A circumstantial case is offered to reasonably indict Sanger on charges of manipulating crania to enhance their salability.

This essay also provides a profile of Sanger that exceeds previous acknowledgments of the man's unrestrained pothunting and marketing of bogus relics. Ever needy of attention, Arthur Sanger assiduously crafted a public persona steeped in adventurousness and erudition, thus collaterally abetting his deceit-driven treatment of experts and so-called experts. If, as it seems, his inner personality drew pleasure from successful deceptions, then Cyril Courville might be counted one of Sanger's most relished victims.

## Introduction

By the 1890s faux southern California Native artifacts were being manufactured and traded in the local antiquities market. Indeed, *The American Archaeologist* carried an early alert about such bogus manufactures:

The very desirable soapstone cooking vessels, and other stone relics, found about Santa Barbara, California, are so perfectly counterfeited that sometimes experienced archaeologists are deceived by imitations. The soapstone from which they are made is taken from Santa Catalina Island, and the

serpentine from Point Piedras Blancos [sic]. By smearing them with grease, then burning them and smoking them they are made to look like the prehistoric specimens. And Santa Barbara does a flourishing business in these frauds [Horatio Rust 1898a:79].<sup>1</sup>

It is unclear whether embellishment to enhance marketability of authentic regional Indian artifacts began quite so early. At some unrecorded point in time, antiquities skullduggery<sup>2</sup> extended to doctoring Indian crania, usually by inserting pointed objects, mostly stone projectiles, into either the neurocranium or the upper facial skeleton. Kroeber (1951:7) supposed that a majority of California Indian bones embedded with projectile points were inauthentic. Cyril Courville, a medical doctor and past editor of the *Bulletin of the Los Angeles Neurological Society*, who researched malintend trauma suffered by ancient Native Americans, echoed Kroeber's caution with regard to bones pierced by sharp objects, writing, "there is something dramatic about a skull with an arrowhead in it, so much so, in fact, that such specimens have actually been made to order in the past" (1952:160).

Unwelcome irony follows from Courville's quote with the realization that some of the doctor's published research on southern California, aboriginal weapon-pierced skulls (1944, 1948, 1955) featured specimens that had either passed or probably passed through the hands of Arthur Sanger, grifter extraordinaire, an individual whom knowledgeable southland prehistorians associate with egregious artifact fraudulence. The centerpiece of Sanger's dishonesty

occurred toward the end of the Great Depression (e.g., Koerper and Chace 1995; Gamble 2002; Koerper and Desautels-Wiley 2012:73–83, 99; see also Hoover 1974; Lee 1993) when he and partner-in-crime, Orville T. Littleton, sold to George Heye, founder of the Museum of the American Indian, New York (see Mason 1958; Duncan 2001:85–92; Hayworth 2016), the mostly phony artifacts illustrated in Burnett's (1944) *Inlaid Stone and Bone Artifacts from Southern California* (see also Curtis 1959).

Sanger also sold bogus specimens to well-heeled private collectors. Among the more popularly recognized pieces are certain smiley-face whales (see e.g., Koerper and Desautels-Wiley 2012:73–78), several of which were bought by Clarence Ruth, one of the better known victimized private collectors.<sup>3</sup> Eva Slater, well recognized for her Native basketry research (see e.g., Slater 1985a, 1985b, 2000), was similarly cheated. Mrs. Slater gifted the author catalog cards that documented three blatantly inauthentic steatite effigies<sup>4</sup> purchased at Sanger's home on June 29, 1970, evidence establishing Sanger, born in 1880, as a bona fide, nonagenarian con artist.<sup>5</sup> Sanger passed away at age 91 (Los Angeles Times (LAT), 5 October 1971:Part 2, 4; Los Angeles Herald Examiner, 6 October 1971).

Sanger's ability to fool purchasers of his fraudulent wares or otherwise mislead the overly trusting, and particularly persons supposed as authorities on at least some domain of anthropological inquiry, is testament to an uncanny ability to present a generally favorable public persona. In the section to follow, Sanger's impression management skills are discussed in a profile more thorough than any previous treatment of the man. His sister, Agnes, is also implicated in the deceptions.

This expanded acquaintance with Arthur Sanger is then followed by the central purpose of the present article—persuasion that in addition to the man's

unrestrained pothunting and marketing of Indian relics and his trafficking in spurious artifacts, he fraudulently doctored crania using stone projectiles and other pointed objects, thus distorting the regional record of malintent trauma (Figure 1). Most prominent among those misled by this particular brand of chicanery was Cyril Courville (Figure 2). The “Summary and Concluding Remarks” section of this essay includes considerations of motivations beyond avarice that might have guided Sanger in his cavalier and duplicitous approach to regional archaeology. Also, there is mention of a person of interest in the manufacture of some of the inauthentic steatite and other artifacts marketed by Sanger.

### Sanger's Public Persona

As a committed but unevenly studied practitioner of impression management, Arthur Sanger endeavored to project a persona steeped in adventurousness and learnedness, a strategy to impress potential customers but also to garner the attentions of persons not in the market for Indian relics. He occasionally alleged derring-do on the Colorado River in 1903, claiming participation at age 23 (Figure 3) in what may have been the fifth-ever Colorado River traverse of the Grand Canyon.<sup>6</sup> Sanger maintained that he accompanied cousin John Aaron King and Elias Benjamin Woolley through countless rapids in an 18-foot rowboat (beam—4 ft, 2 in) (Reilly 1962; Marston 2014:192–196). Forty-eight years passed before any serious student of Colorado River history was even aware of Sanger's account of the purported voyage.<sup>7</sup>

In the combined adventure-learnedness department, Sanger frequently shared his narratives of skipping a gasoline-motorized sailboat (*Aloha*, but renamed *Dreamer*) (Figure 4) to access the Channel Islands and a broad sweep of the mainland on so-called “scientific expeditions” to collect and sometimes sell genuine artifacts, a stratagem that abetted more nefarious dealings in bogus specimens. The 76-foot conveyance



Figure 1. Arthur Sanger kneeling beside a skull, pointing to a projectile embedded in the right parietal. Photograph taken in 1939 on San Miguel Island. A hand-drawn skull replaces the skull's photographic image in accordance with Native American sensibilities about showing actual bone. Image from Dowling (1939:65).



Figure 2. Portrait of Cyril Courville, M.D. Courtesy of the Neuropathology Museum, Loma Linda University Science Museum.



Figure 3. 1904 Image of Arthur Randall Sanger at about age 23. Photograph courtesy of Huntington Library, Photo Archives. Otis R. Marston Collection, 55172, Box 407, Ahmanson Reading Room.



Figure 4. The *Dreamer* anchored off Santa Rosa Island, 1937. Courtesy, Cory Smith.

was also his ticket into the yachting set and elevated social status.<sup>8</sup>

He resorted to vague explanation and outright prevarication regarding acquisition of the schooner, derring-do stuff to be sure, but of a larcenous nature. The *Dreamer* acquisition story played out in the context of complex entanglements that included extortion, assault, alleged attempted murder, and the shooting death of Sanger's sister's divorce lawyer by her ex-husband, Frank Bell (*Aloha* owner), who, remarkably, ended up serving no prison time (e.g., Los Angeles Herald [LAH], 23 June 1908; Bell 1910:18; LAH 24 July 1910; LAT 24 July 1910; LAH 29 July 1910; LAT 25 January 1911; Ken McCracken, personal communication 2010).

In social settings and through the media, Sanger presented himself as an expert on regional Indian cultures, burnishing his credentials particularly by touting

associations with respected institutions (e.g., Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation; Los Angeles Museum of History, Science, and Art<sup>9</sup>; Southwest Museum; British Museum; Sutter Museum, Sacramento) all of which held objects he had once owned. He described himself as an archaeologist.

Dual messages attached to institutional name dropping, both apparent in an interview Sanger granted to *Westways* about his "research" (Clark 1944). First, Sanger related to the magazine writer that such organizations as named above refuse to purchase artifacts from "irresponsible pot hunters," defined as "persons who dig up archaeological specimens for the sole purpose of selling them" (Clark 1944:11). Second, since the institutions listed did purchase from the yachtsman, Sanger was, ipso facto, a "responsible" and "sincere amateur." Such a person "always turns to the professionals for assistance if he discovers material he believes of great value."

Other nuggets from the 1944 magazine copy, "The Thrills of Relic Hunting," include that in 1911 Sanger heard that relics on San Clemente Island were quickly deteriorating due to natural forces, and furthermore, wind and rain had exposed artifacts for easy pickings by presumably "irresponsible pot-hunters." Sailing the *Dreamer* to the island, he observed the dire circumstances and resolved to do what he could to save as much as possible of what was left—this in order to document any findings for posterity (see e.g., San Diego Evening Times, 21 September 1931; Springfield Sunday Union and Republican [SSUR], 11 October 1935:E5). Following quickly upon this self-serving drivel, there is mention of Mark Harrington, Southwest Museum curator, who touted Sanger's "contribution to the science of archaeology," specifically, saving by the thousands Indian artifacts that otherwise would have fallen victim to nature.

The magazine article also characterized Sanger's private collection as the world's second finest

southwestern California Indian relic collection after “the exhibit in the Heye Indian Foundation in New York which he supplied” (Clark 1944:10).

Unusual and remarkable artifacts readily piqued public interest, and so the Sanger saga incorporated just such attention-grabbers. Most egregious in the “unusual and remarkable” category were Arroyo Sequit non-finds featured in the aforementioned Burnett book (1944).

One particularly remarkable Sanger “Channel Islands discovery” was a “fetish” representing a walrus, “plainly depicted in hard stone from its curving tusks to flippers ... truly a rarity” (Woodward 1927:65). The overly generous application of ochre should have red-flagged the piece, so to speak, yet the then duped Arthur Woodward waxed on about a primitive artist contorting the figurine’s body so as “to give the impression that the intention was to represent the beast in its death throes.” Beyond any aesthetic appeal, the carving could have communicated the sort of romance and mystery that attends long-distance connections. The phony walrus ended up with the Heye Foundation. Woodward later regretted having had anything to do with “Captain Sanger.”<sup>10</sup>

A 1929 newspaper story tapped into the fascination many people have with arrow-pierced skulls. In “Skulls Hint at Ferocity” (LAT, 10 April 1929:A1), “scientist” A. R. Sanger suggested that constant warfare likely occurred between tribes, thus playing to a common negative stereotype.<sup>11</sup> He also injected some long-distance content into that same interview, stating that a bone whistle he recovered on San Nicolas Island exhibited incised decorations similar to certain designs painted on Puebloan pottery. This *Times* piece was yet another article that did not let his institutional associations pass unnoticed.

One article in a Massachusetts newspaper focused first on steatite effigies and then name-dropped both the Heye Foundation and the Los Angeles Museum;

it also mentioned Sanger’s “largest private assortment of Channel Island remains extant” (SSUR, 11 October 1931:E5). Sanger was born in the Bay State 51 years prior; the why and how surrounding this distantly placed puff piece can only be guessed at.

A 1939 letter to the editor of *Natural History* reported the discovery of an “ancient [San Miguel Island] battleground scattered with hundreds of human bones” (Dowling 1939). Supposed proof that wholesale death was not the result of disease turned on a single skull, its right parietal with a projectile “tightly embedded.” The accompanying photograph (Figure 1) showed a kneeling Arthur Sanger, his right index finger pointing to the stone point. The conspicuous placement of the arrowhead or atlatl dart is reminiscent of what is seen on other skulls handled by Sanger.

Among his holdings, Sanger reported a mummified child (Eva Slater, personal communication 2005; Ernie Hovard, personal communication 2008; see also Hillinger 1958:123–124). Maybe he did possess a desiccated body, but what to make of his claim to Slater, Hovard, and others that the remains represented a missing person well celebrated in various narratives—the young offspring of Juana Maria, a.k.a. the Lone Woman of San Nicolas Island? Only Ralph Glidden’s Catalina Island race of giants nonsense might top this mummy business (see e.g., Overholt 1930).

Another missing person was an object of Sanger’s Channel Islands explorations; however, the remains of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo forever eluded the yachtsman. One hunt for the explorer’s grave occurred in 1923 (Santa Barbara Morning Press, 23 August 1923, see also 19 October 1928). At least some members of the search party headed to San Miguel Island believed that the Spaniard had been placed in a lead-lined coffin that also held a substantial amount of gold. A treasure map was hinted at. Parenthetically, sister Agnes and parents Herbert and Rubie were in attendance.

Sanger claimed to have begun his searches for Cabrillo ca. 1910 (see Bryan 1930a:153).

Additional Sanger prevarications included that he kept good records of his discoveries (e.g., Clark 1944:100; Daily News, 2 April 1954:40). In the *Daily News* article, Sanger is pictured holding forth on responsibility to archaeological science while showing off one of his excessively long (> 45 cm), phony steatite smoking pipes.

Ever needy of attention, even in his advanced years, the dealer in real and bogus antiquities readily accommodated audiences keen on learning about regional archaeology. In 1963 the PCAS was arguably a beneficiary of this willingness when Helen Smith and Jack Maddock made arrangements for the society's members and guests to attend a special program at the Orange Coast College Forum, where the then 82-year-old "veteran yachtsman" spoke on Channel Islands bygone cultures. The talk was illustrated with color movies, and several "rare" objects inlaid with shell beads were produced for attendees to admire (Anonymous 1963).

Like other collectors, Sanger welcomed classes of school children and other groups to his Los Angeles home to see and handle specimens and to listen to his interpretations, some honestly held, others formed of whole cloth. Even individuals might be warmly received at his residence.

It is fortunate that one such visitor, Lenore Ross, a UCLA master's candidate in art history, interviewed the newly minted septuagenarian (Ross 1951; see also Lee 1993:210–211). The 1951 tête-à-tête precipitated a candid admission from Sanger that some artifacts had been enhanced to make them more salable. Ochre might be so generously applied to an object that even casual handling left fingers red-stained. Sanger was similarly open with Eva Slater about "repairing" artifacts, specifically, using asphaltum to glue beads into

places where beads had purportedly fallen off (Eva Slater, personal communication 2005).

A pelvic bone and some skulls, each embedded with a projectile point, made an indelible impression on the UCLA student. If reading between the lines is permitted, Lenore Ross must have experienced something between dismay and bemusement when shown a tarantula-shaped bowl, supposedly found full of trade beads, and a large whale figurine "ingeniously made so you could blow water through one end and have it spout out the other end" (Ross 1951). In surveying the collection at Sanger's home, 2910 Budlong Avenue, Los Angeles, Ross saw objects that looked just "too perfect." She also wrote that "the prize object is a pelvic bone with an arrowhead stuck into it, to say nothing of skulls pierced by arrowheads." Two days later Ross examined certain oddly crafted objects held at the nearby Los Angeles Museum, their chains of ownership tracing back no further than Sanger, and she was unconvinced of the authenticity of any piece. A somewhat guarded characterization of her host as "basically very shrewd ... [a] Yankee Trader" indicates she was not fooled.

Ross' notes reveal that sister Agnes Mondon was on board in the fraudulent dealings. Interestingly, a letter from Mrs. Agnes Sanger Mondon to Helen Smith further implicates the sister in crass dishonesty since Arthur's sister placed herself at Arroyo Sequit in 1940–1941. Also, in that letter Agnes wrote, "We found most of our whales on San Nicolas Isl." (A. [Sanger] Mondon to H. Smith, letter, 1 April 1966, PCAS Library).

### **Questionable Coastal Southern California Skulls Accessed by Cyril Courville**

#### *Figure 5 Specimen*

Cyril Courville, M.D., examined and sketched the complete or nearly complete frontal bone shown

in Figure 5 (Courville 1952:153, Figure 3c, 154). According to the doctor, it belonged to either a young woman or an adolescent male. The specimen remained with the Sanger Collection.

There is an oval perforation just medial to the left temporal ridge and above the outer aspect of the supra-orbital ridge. The arrow symbol in the doctor's drawing indicates his proposed trajectory of a "blunt-tipped missile." He observed that the greater destruction of the oval "wound" appeared at the outer table.

Sanger reported that the bone was associated with glass beads and other post-contact material, and thus Courville rejected the hypothesis that the hole was caused by a .22 caliber bullet; he thought it way too small to have been caused by an early firearm. The surface of the frontal bone near the hole "was stained a dark color as though by blood."

Courville left unanswered the question of what accounted for the so-called wound. Had he possessed better background information on Sanger, he might have suspected that a .22 caliber bullet had in fact penetrated from the inner table and that a mix of dark red ochre and a binder was subsequently applied at the outer table to mimic blood.

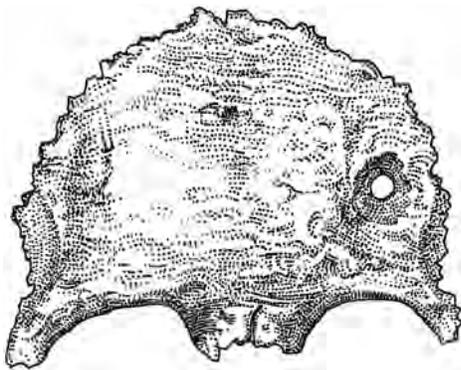


Figure 5. Frontal bone pierced on left side. Illustration by Joe Cramer. After Courville (1952:Figure 3c).

### *Figure 6 Specimen*

The skull seen in Figure 6 is extremely unusual because the bone object penetrated into the left eye socket. The skull was unearthed by Sanger at the Chumash village of Mishopshno, Carpinteria, Santa Barbara County, when assisting Bruce Bryan in salvage operations undertaken during very difficult circumstances (Bryan 1931). The site had an earlier history of repeated depredations by relic collectors (see Gamble 2008:97–100). The area drew renewed interest from pothunters, hoards of them, when roadbuilding cut through a burial area. The scene became near chaotic.

Sanger took possession of the skull and at some point in time turned it over to the Los Angeles Museum. Exactly when Bryan first saw the find is unclear; his description of the wound as being in the right orbit is puzzling (1931:182).<sup>12</sup> It is unclear when Sanger took back the specimen or when W. Parker Lyon purchased it for his Pony Express Museum, Arcadia, California (Courville 1948:215, Figure 8D, 216; 1952:153, Figure 3d, 155). Lyon donated it to the museum associated with the Department of Nervous Diseases, College of Medical Evangelists, Loma Linda University, where Courville was a professor (see Anonymous 1968:161). Lyon's generosity was motivated by his belief that the specimen held medical interest.

The weapon residing within the left orbit, piercing its roof and then penetrating into the floor of the left anterior fossa, was according to Courville either a harpoon or spear point. The doctor was uncertain whether the trauma was immediately fatal. It was not possible for him to determine how far the tar-stained bone object might have extended into the brain because the cranial cavity contained oil-soaked sand, that matrix being an impediment to roentgen (x-ray) examination.

Partial flattening of the skull may have resulted from a "severe crushing injury." Alternatively, Courville supposed the crushed area might have been a postmortem

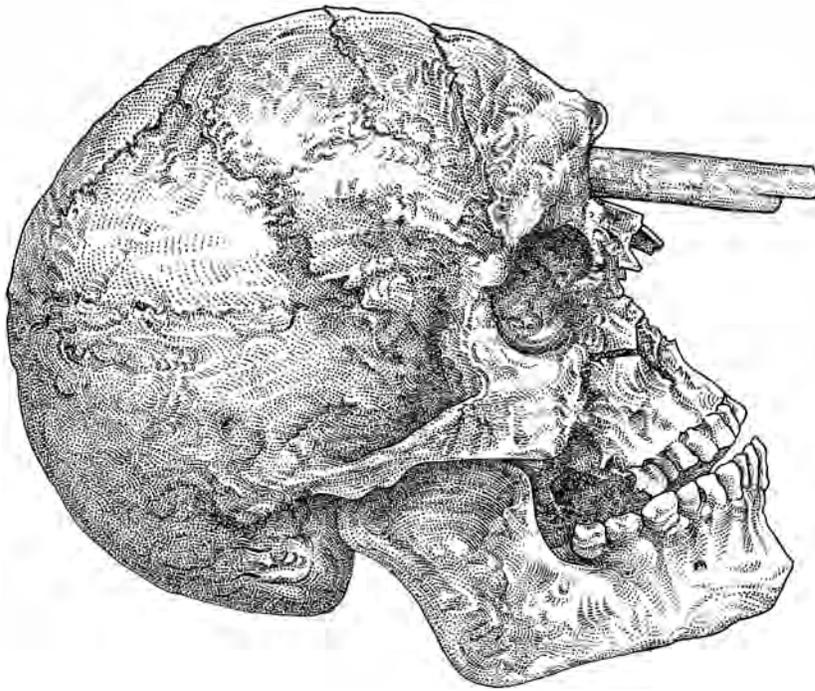


Figure 6. Skull pierced in left orbit by bone object. Illustration by Joe Cramer. After Courville (1948:Figure 8D).

phenomenon, perhaps on the occasion of a large stone being set over the head when this adult male Chumash was laid to rest (Courville 1948:216).

Elsewhere, Courville was more imaginative:

It is very probable that this serious cranial injury and its lethal aftermath were the result of a personal quarrel rather than of organized conflict. The Indians used the bone harpoon as an implement to hunt seals ... rather than as a weapon [of warfare]. The thrust with the implement very likely followed some acute outburst, and the final act of the drama, the crushing of the victim's head with a rock, was done to put the injured man out of his misery [Courville 1952:155].

*Figure 7 Specimen*

No less suspicion attaches to another weapon-penetrated skull that was displayed at the Parker Lyon

Pony Express Museum (Figure 7). It can be seen in a photograph published in Martin (1987:111), residing at the middle of the top shelf of a glass cabinet, along with other skulls purchased by Mr. Lyon.

Given that W. Parker Lyon was a known customer of Sanger and given the sensational look of the relic (over-sized projectile and its odd positioning), Sanger is the suspected source of the piece. Its present whereabouts are unknown.

The biface has the look of a spear point rather than an atlatl dart point. Positioned in the left parietal, it penetrates well into the neurocranium. Courville (1948:215, Figure 8B, 216) wrote that the "wound" was not necessarily mortal unless "the middle meningeal on the middle cerebral vessels or their branches were cut resulting in fatal hemorrhage." In his later study, Courville (1952:152) did not again feature this specimen since he thought it of questionable California origin. He did not supply details, but perhaps the style of the projectile raised some doubts. If this large

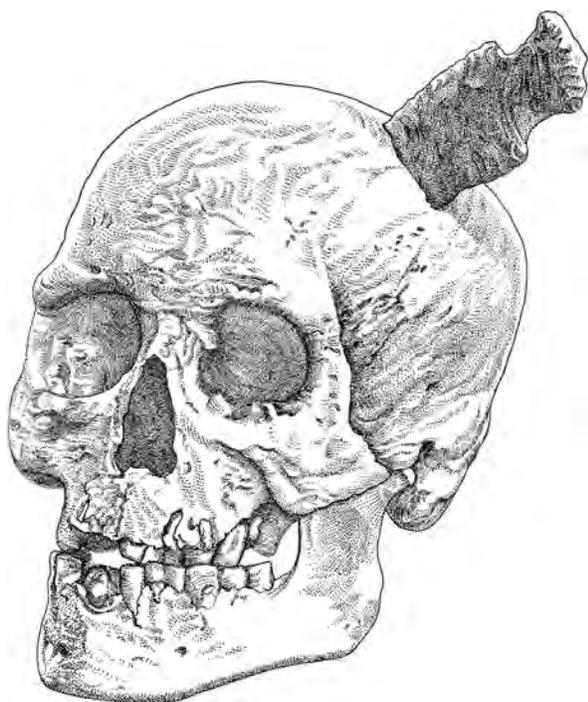


Figure 7. Large spear point or spear point mimic embedded in the left parietal. Illustration by Joe Cramer. After Courville (1948:Figure 8B).

point, which does not look legitimate, actually impacted the skull, it is unlikely that it would have survived intact. The biface should have broken either where it met the bone or at the haft.

*Figure 8 Specimen*

Courville (1952:153, Figure 3b) pictured and discussed a specimen (Figure 8) that was then in Sanger's personal collection; the doctor later purchased it. It is supposedly the skull of a San Nicolas Island adult female. An "elongated leaf-shaped arrowhead" protruded about 16 mm out of the outer table of the frontal bone at the left supraorbital region. The distal end of the projectile extends about 25 mm into the intracranial space. Courville believed that the wound was not immediately mortal and supposed the arrowhead had missed any small frontal sinus.

Courville (1952:152, 154) mentioned additional purported San Nicolas Island skulls retrieved by Sanger that were embedded with stone projectiles. They included a second skull sold to Courville (Figure 9). Another he sold to the Sutter Museum in Sacramento, and at least two ended up in New York at the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. Two others went into the Aldrich Collection and eventually the Bowers Museum, Santa Ana (Figures 10 and 11).

It is uncertain which of these several skulls were the specimens pierced with arrowheads that Sanger said he recovered during a private 1929 "expedition" not affiliated with any institution. He told a reporter that those two were dug from "the famous Cannibal Hole" investigated during the Los Angeles Museum 1926 excavations (LAT, 10 April 1929:A1)<sup>10</sup>. Sanger must have reveled in the limelight cast by the *LAT* piece that identified him as a scientist, and given this

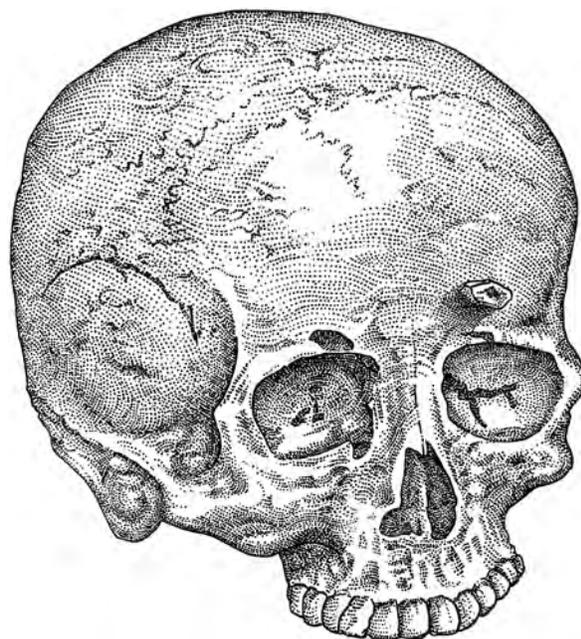


Figure 8. Leaf-shaped object penetrating left side of frontal bone of a female skull. Illustration by Joe Cramer. After Courville (1952:Figure 3b).

propensity to embrace sensational discoveries, he might have been especially pleased with the newspaper's title for the story, "Skulls Hint at Ferocity," and the article's reference to cannibal behavior via the name Sanger had himself chosen for what may have been only a recently invented feature. Parenthetically, the *LAT* article ended with the revelation that in 1928 George Heye paid \$2,500 for a portion of Sanger's collection and that E. A. Hasseman, a representative of the Heye Foundation, was communicating further interest in acquiring more Sanger finds.

*Figure 9 Specimen*

The Figure 9 skull with an arrowhead penetrating the frontal bone was, as noted above, possibly retrieved by Sanger from San Nicolas Island and eventually sold to Cyril Courville. Courville (1952:153, Figure 3a, 154) produced a pencil sketch of the specimen which he believed to be male, but that sex determination is incorrect. A view from the foramen magnum and the evidence of an anteroposterior roentgenogram (x-ray) indicated that the projectile extended ca. 3.8 cm into the intracranial space.

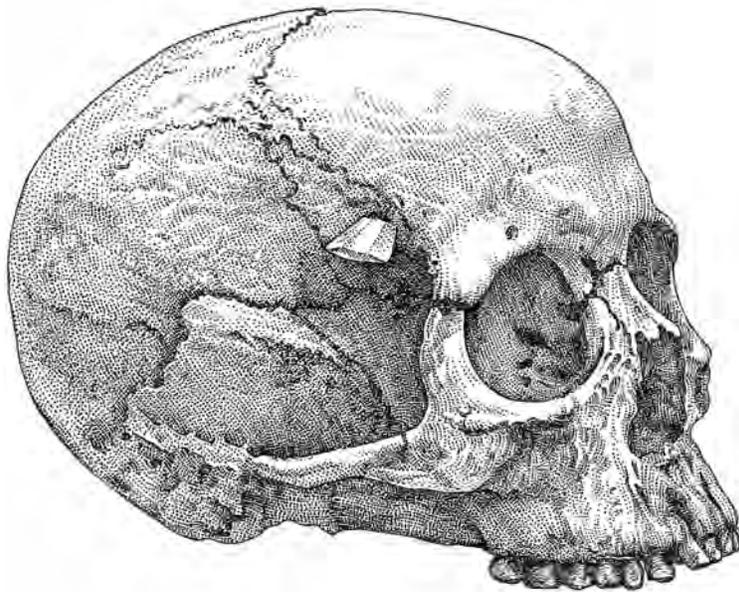


Figure 9. Arrowhead penetrates the right side of frontal bone of a female skull. Illustration by Joe Cramer.

The author observed the skull in a display case at the Museum of Neuropathology, Loma Linda Medical School. The brow ridges are less pronounced than what is seen in Courville's rendering. The mastoid process in Courville's drawing is shown as more robust than it actually is. The author saw that the frontal bone is somewhat bulbous and that the orbits are actually roundish rather than squarish. The overall look is that of a female rather than that of a male as Courville believed. The sutures are quite distinct, indicating that the individual was an older teenager or a young adult. The most noteworthy observation is that there is a small space in the bone just superior to the upper surface of the projectile; one reasonably suspects that the small gap signals a postmortem hole made to facilitate insertion of the Cottonwood point. An x-ray image shows that the arrowhead is intact. One might anticipate impact damage had the point penetrated from an arrow shot.

*Figure 10 Specimen*

Yet another large projectile, its base fully intact, penetrated the left side of the neurocranium seen in Figure 10, but in the frontal rather than the parietal bone.

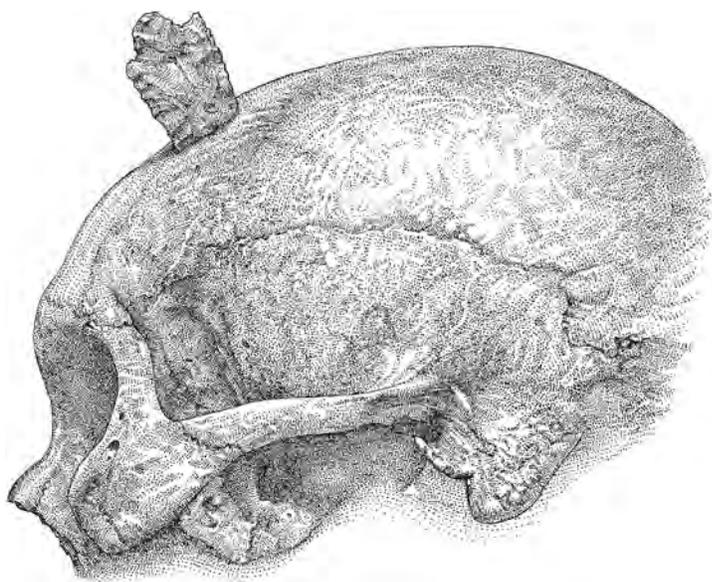


Figure 10. Large projectile penetrates the left side of frontal bone. Illustration by Joe Cramer.

This young adult male skull was allegedly found in a grave on San Nicolas Island, and at some unknown time it was purchased by Fred R. Aldrich. Courville (1952:153, Figure 3h, 158–159) gave free rein to speculation about the individual's wounding:

The obvious direction of the flight of the arrow ... indicates that it struck the head ... [at] the end of the elevated flight. This in turn suggests that the missile was not aimed at the victim, but was rather a part of a barrage of arrows fired at random at the attacking party. This presumed trajectory accounts for the relatively slight degree of penetration of the arrowhead [Courville 1952:159].

Arthur Sanger had almost certainly discovered the skull. Aldrich himself never dug on the island (Chace 1965:19). Over a dozen skulls appear in a photograph of a display case in Aldrich's private museum at Bay Island, Newport Bay, Orange County (Chace 1965:21, Figure 1). It is not possible to identify among the jumble any one skull that might be the one presently under discussion, but interestingly a skull placed on the middle row, which does not quite fit the description,

appears to have a projectile point embedded near the summit of the neurocranium, close to the saggital suture, and set at an angle not unlike the projectile seen the Figure 10.

Aldrich died in 1953, and his archaeological collection, geological specimens, and sea shells were sold and subsequently displayed at the Balboa Pavilion. Eventually the shells and most of the Indian related items were donated to the Bowers Museum, Santa Ana (Koerper 2009:101–102, 111; Koerper and Cramer 2009:117).

Bowers Museum personnel allowed the author to inspect the Aldrich item shown in Figure 10. The "wound" is 19.3 mm long, and its maximum width is 5.7 mm. The corner-notched, contracting stem atlatl dart rises about 31.5 mm above the surface of the frontal bone at the area of penetration. The projectile is cemented in place; glue was detected around the inner margin of the so-called wound, indicating possible latter-day mischief.

#### *Figure 11 Specimen*

Another Bowers Museum skull once owned by Aldrich and with an embedded piece of obsidian (Figure 11) is

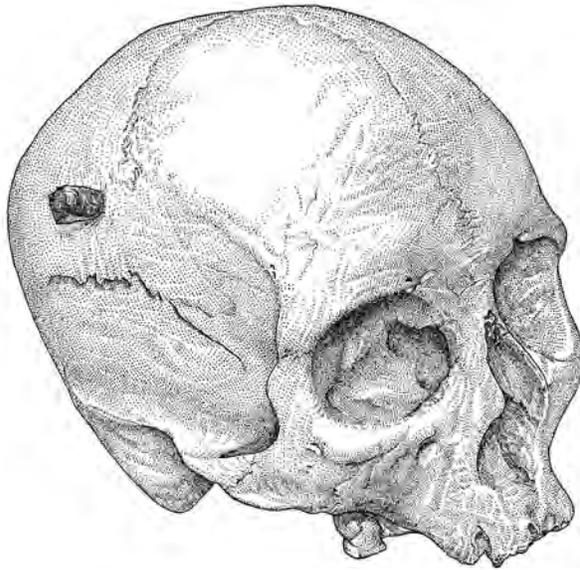


Figure 11. Obsidian object penetrating the right parietal bone. Illustration by Joe Cramer.

pictured in Courville (1952:153, Figure 3g, 158). The skull was described as being from a Russian who was dispatched during an invasion of San Nicolas Island. Courville was perhaps repeating what Aldrich told him and perhaps what had been told to Aldrich by the person who collected the skull. Then again, Courville perhaps heard the Russian interpretation directly from Sanger who, as we are now familiar, embraced the exotic and/or sensational for many of his narratives.

The broken piece of obsidian sticks out from the lower anterior region of the right parietal, just back of the coronal suture. Courville doubted that the “wound” was fatal and supposed that other trauma might have accounted for the victim’s death.

The author’s assessment of the penetrated 12.6 mm wide obsidian object, which rises 15.9 mm above the parietal surface, is at odds with Courville’s artifact identification, “broken arrowhead.” Rather, it looks like a piece of debitage or the remnant of a drill. Certain residue around the intersection of the volcanic glass sherd and bone might indicate that the odd

penetrating object had been glued into place. This is the skull of a Native American, certainly not a “white man,” to use Courville’s designation. This is immediately obvious first from the kind of wear on the occlusal surfaces of the mandibular teeth. The upper jaw shows antemortem tooth loss, and the remaining teeth (both third molars and a left first premolar) are well worn. In his illustration of the so-called “Russian,” Courville took the huge liberty of resupplying this supposed “white man” with a full set of right side mandibular teeth! Did he find it disconcerting that what was purported to be a non-Nicoleño skull had the look of an upper jaw familiar to scholars conversant with the osteology of regional Native people?

Another quick clue to Native American attribution is the external auditory exostosis exhibited within both ear canals, likely the result of deep diving in cold water, perhaps to procure abalones. Parenthetically, a very pronounced metopic suture was observed.

#### *Figure 12 Specimen*

The skull with an arrow point stuck at the right frontal bone seen in Figure 12 is pictured in Bruce Bryan’s book (1970:5) covering both the 1926 Los Angeles Museum archaeological expedition to San Nicolas Island and the 1958–1960 Southwest Museum expeditions to the island. Bryan’s figure caption for the skull identifies the artifact’s position as embedded into the “right temporal region.” The term “temporal” can refer specifically to the temporal bone, or it can refer to the larger flattened regions to the sides of the forehead (in humans); either way, his usage of “temporal region” is incorrect.

Bryan (1970:97–98) explained that both prior to and after the 1926 excavations Sanger found “ample, and sometimes gruesome, proof of the warlike capabilities of the ancient islanders.” Bryan (1970:98) made reference to two skulls with arrowheads “firmly fixed,” supposedly “found by Sanger in a later investigation

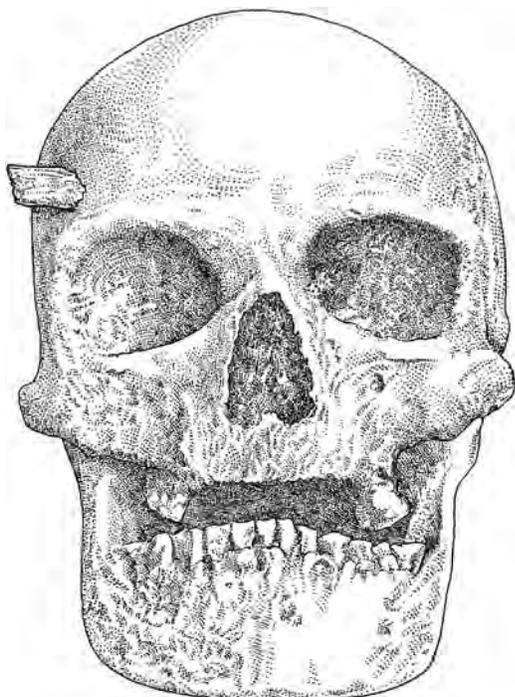


Figure 12. Arrow point penetrating right side of the frontal bone. Illustration by Joe Cramer. After Bryan (1970:5).

[1929] of the area about the Cannibal Hole” (see Bryan 1970:32, 94, 95). It is unknown whether the Figure 12 skull relates to the just noted supposed 1929 finds or to a pre-1926 venture.

The arrowhead offers an appearance of having traveled a more or less horizontal trajectory. Its sides are nearly parallel to one another, and the basal border is fairly straight; perhaps it is assignable to the Cottonwood Triangular series. The object could not be located. It was part of the Sanger Collection, but it was likely sold.

#### *Figure 13 Specimen*

Cyril Courville published two photographs of the adult male skull illustrated here in Figure 13. The photos were different views; one appeared in his 1944 publication (p. 6, Figure 2) and the other in his 1948

publication (p. 215, Figure 8A). The earlier article attributed the specimen to the Western plains, a somewhat tenuous assumption since it was then housed with the Los Angeles Museum.<sup>9</sup> He soon amended his take on provenance, labeling it a California Indian skull (Courville 1948:215–216), and later he wrote that it was an impression of the museum staff that the skull was of local origin, donated by a now-forgotten person (1952:152). The object with its embedded projectile at the left fronto-parietal region is no longer retained by the museum (Chris Coleman, personal communication 2009).

The neuropathologist reported that no reaction of the bone to the obliquely set projectile was evident through direct inspection or by roentgenogram (x-ray). Absence of bony reaction suggested early death from the wound or from some other injury, perhaps associated damage to soft tissues (see Courville 1944:6, 1948:216, 1952:152). Interestingly, the doctor commented that the wound was in “almost exactly the same location” as the wound inflicted by the huge spear point stuck into the skull seen in this article’s Figure 7. Was he beginning to wonder about issues of authenticity? Parenthetically, in a photograph showing nearly the entire collection of 1926 San Nicolas Island finds brought back to the Los Angeles Museum (Bryan 1930a:155), a skull at the far right, table level, has a projectile penetrating at an oblique angle, also high up on the left parietal. It is not assignable to any skull illustrated herein.

#### *Pattern Recognition*

Of the seven skulls illustrated in Figures 7–13, all with an embedded stone object, it is either the frontal ( $n = 4$ ) or a parietal ( $n = 3$ ) that is impacted. Two other skulls with embedded stone objects, the one mentioned immediately above and the one that was drawn by Joe Cramer for the photo image of Figure 1, appear in photographic images too small for rendering with any acceptable degree of precision; their projectiles

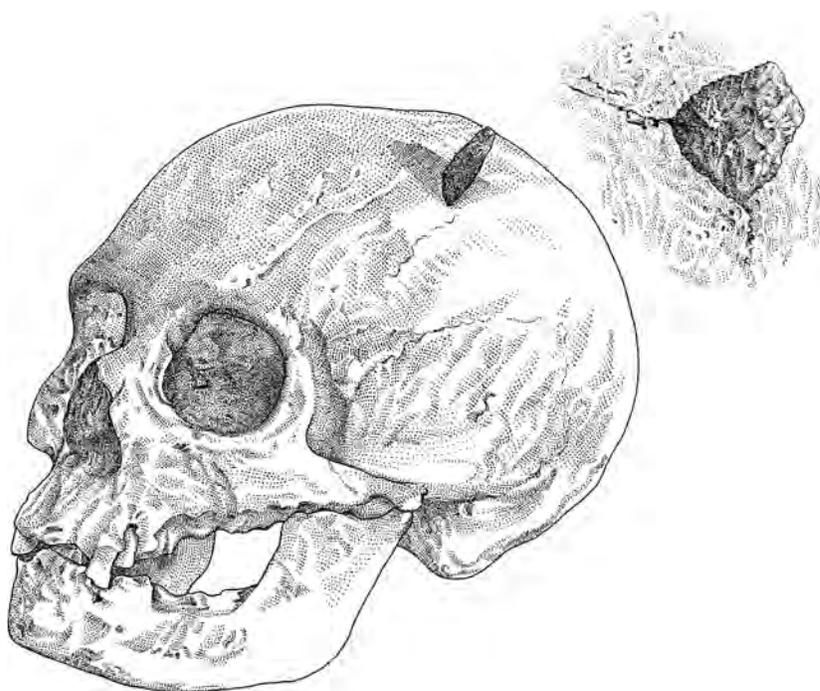


Figure 13. Adult male skull with projectile protruding from left fronto-parietal region. Illustration by Joe Cramer. After Courville (1944:Figure 2B, 1948:Figure 8A).

were stuck in parietals, left and right respectively, in high positions. Of the 11 skulls, five parietals had stone weapons, four located at high positions, that is, very conspicuously. The two specimens lacking embedded stone projectile points (Figures 5 and 6) have penetration to their frontal bones. All frontal wounds, stone or otherwise, are obviously conspicuous. In the sample of 11, there is no piercing of occipital, temporal, maxillary, or mandibular bones. Nearly all trauma or concocted trauma seems extremely well placed for purposes of display.

### Summary and Concluding Remarks

The manufacture and marketing of inauthentic artifacts with alleged coastal southern California provenance stretches back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Some counterfeiting resulted in replications credible enough to deceive even seasoned relic collectors and museum curators. Another kind of forgery involved creation of fantasy pieces, mostly steatite carvings, egregiously inconsistent with Native

artistic expression. Other fraudulence included the doctoring of genuine Indian objects by, for instance, applications of colorants or additions of shell beads.

“Arthur Sanger” is the name above all others that comes up in discussions of regional phony artifacts, followed distantly by his sometime co-conspirator, O. T. Littleton (e.g., Lee 1993; Koerper and Chace 1995; Gamble 2002; Koerper and Desautels-Wiley 2012).<sup>13</sup> One contribution of the present article is recognition that Agnes Mondon (née Sanger) was aligned with the conspirators just named.

The central contribution of this study is the indictment of Arthur Sanger on charges of a “doctoring” type of forgery—planting false evidence of malintent trauma on osteological specimens. Of the skeletal material illustrated and discussed in some detail above, seven skulls received chipped stone implants (Figures 7–13). A frontal bone (Figure 5) lacking any embedded object is holed, very likely the result of penetration by a .22 caliber bullet. Incredibly, the exit “wound” is at

the outside surface, and dark staining appears around it. The Mishopshno (Carpinteria) skull (Figure 6) with a long bone object well planted in the left orbit is questionably authentic, and it, like most if not all of the other skulls, passed through Sanger's hands.

This essay presents a portrait of Sanger that is far more detailed than any previous treatment of the man. It appears that his public personality was designed to achieve more than just financial gain, reveling as he did in attentions drawn as a yachtsman, adventurer, "archaeologist," and person well connected to prestigious institutions.

Reasonable speculation offers that his closely held inner personality drew self-congratulatory pleasure with each successful deceit of, particularly, a reputed or established expert; if this is a correct read, then after George Heye, Sanger's next biggest victim would have been Cyril Brian Courville—graduate of what is now the Loma Linda University School of Medicine, who in his senior year earned the highest score in the United States on the examination of the National Board of Medical Examiners, Professor of Nervous Diseases at Loma Linda, recipient of many awards and honors, Editor Emeritus of the *Bulletin of the Los Angeles Neurological Societies*, and author of an extended list of publications, etc. (see Anonymous 1968a, 1968b).

Parenthetically, it is uncertain whether additional notable victims should include Otis Marston and Pat Reilly, two bona fide experts on Colorado River history, who enshrined Sanger among the pantheon of earliest river runners through the Grand Canyon.<sup>7</sup>

Certainly, other motivations drove Sanger's unprincipled behavior, perhaps a desire to leave an enduring imprint on museums and on regional archaeological science, particularly through respected publications—a dubious sort of immortality. With regard to the highly fanciful Arroyo Sequit objects, it is noteworthy

that they were offered to the Heye Foundation for a price that surprised E. K. Burnett (see Burnett 1944), well below their estimated value; Burnett naively explained to Charles Rozaire that this circumstance signaled genuineness (Rozaire, personal communication 2013; see also Lee 1993:214).<sup>14</sup> Sanger took good measure of his victims. Did he strategize that the price tag would greatly enable a sale, followed by eventual attention to the objects through display and publications, collaterally drawing recognition for the claimants to discovery?

Pleasure derived from the fakery could have been especially delicious for persons with an active hand in the actual creation of faux artifacts. It takes no special talent to doctor genuine artifacts or skulls, an area in which Sanger was clearly a guilty party. Left uncertain, however, is who crafted the unique soapstone figurines, strange smoking pipes, etc.

Did Sanger himself produce artifacts? When Dr. Charles Rozaire made his first visit to Sanger's home, several blocks from Rozaire's employer, the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, he was well attuned to the controversy surrounding the man. Colleague Arthur Woodward was by then a disbeliever, and he personally disliked Sanger. Rozaire saw nothing in the house that looked like a "craft-making situation." Sanger denied any role in fakery, saying, "I don't know how to carve" (Rozaire, personal communication 2013).

On another visit, but accompanying Freddie Curtis in 1957, Rozaire photographed alleged Arroyo Sequit specimens. Curtis published pictures taken by Rozaire that show nine egregious fakes (1959:Plates 7 and 8).

Sanger provided Curtis detailed information on the alleged Arroyo Sequit items, but judicious perusal of her notes covering this material and two other collections (Curtis 1959:103–111), one private and another donated in 1946 by Dr. and Mrs. Maitland to the Los

Angeles County Museum of Natural History, makes it obvious that she believed little of what Sanger had to say. The Maitlands had purchased artifacts falsely attributed to Arroyo Sequit, but not directly from Sanger. Rather, they dealt with Earl Stendahl, an antiquities dealer (Stendahl Galleries, Hollywood) (see, e.g., Long Beach Museum of Art 1958:31–32) who purchased them from Sanger. One wonders to what degree Stendahl might have been complicit in the dishonesty.

Another teller of tall tales, Fred Morgan, may have supplied Sanger and/or Littleton with phony steatite effigies. Like Sanger, Morgan presented himself both as a man steeped in adventure and as an expert in archaeology.<sup>15</sup> Other similarities include both men being needy of attention. While Sanger grabbed listeners with his either real or imagined wild ride through the Grand Canyon, for instance, Morgan related an equally exciting but undoubtedly apocryphal adventure—abduction in 1876 at age 12 or 13 by Oklahoma Indians holding up a westward-bound wagon train, the beginning of Morgan’s purported 10-year captivity.

When Keith Murray of the *Pasadena Star-News* interviewed Morgan in 1971, the relic collector claimed to be celebrating the 108th anniversary of his birth. The self-proclaimed centenarian told the staff writer that he had opened up a gem cutting business in Altadena at age 102, turning a 35-year-old hobby into a profession. This information is especially relevant because it presents Morgan as a worker of stone as far back as at least ca. 1930.

Yet other information identifies Morgan as an artisan. Writer Russ Leadabrand (ca. 1972) accurately described Fred Morgan as an accomplished flint knapper, but also as a “bamboozler.” Speculatively, some of the projectile points Morgan claimed to have retrieved from the site of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, Montana Territory, and occasionally gifted to people,

were actually his creations. Leadabrand also related that Morgan bragged that a variety of archaeologists sought his guidance on matters pertaining to Indians and prehistory.

An acquaintance of Morgan, Ernie Hovard, labeled him “a great craftsman,” some of whose work was in steatite. Hovard witnessed him turning out large soapstone beads on a lathe (personal communication 2008). Hovard also told the author that Morgan “could carve” and had “made some of the whales” and other bogus artifacts. Morgan also worked in shell, shaping pieces of abalone into fishhooks. There were those who suspected he was not above planting artifacts at sites.

Morgan claimed to have gone to all the Channel Islands (Leadabrand ca.1972:50). If there is any degree of truth regarding island visitations, it is conceivable he was Sanger’s guest aboard the *Dreamer*. Clearly he knew O. T. Littleton. At a 1934 meeting of the Archaeological Society of Southern California, when members were appointed to various positions, the three individuals designated as “Field Scouts” were Morgan, Herman Strandt, and O. T. Littleton (Anonymous 1934)—tantalizing information, but the mystery endures.

## Endnotes

1. While Horatio Rust was privy to accurate information about counterfeit steatite vessels produced in Santa Barbara County, he was ill-informed about a genuine chipped stone type eventually designated the “Stockton curve.” Operating from carelessness and conceit, Rust (1898b) accused the Reverend Henry Clarkson Meredith of creating and selling “curves,” supposed by Rust to be fantasy pieces. In effect, Rust was arguing that if he and Dr. Frank Palmer were not familiar with the form, the curved artifacts must be contemporary inventions.

Meredith (1898a) countered with documentation leaving no doubt about the authenticity of the type. He also submitted a letter to *The American Archaeologist* that covered correspondence between himself and Rust, whom he exposed, at least in this matter, as disingenuous if not mean-spirited. The letter mocked Rust's pretensions to authority about a region for which Rust lacked first-hand experience.

Support for Meredith included a letter to the editor of *The American Archaeologist* from none other than William Henry Holmes of the U.S. National Museum, who examined the artifacts in question and stated that he had "no hesitation in declaring them genuine" (1898:326). When Meredith (1899) published another article illustrating five Stockton curves and numerous projectile points, Charles Lummis (1899:257) supplied his own footnote to that submission, rebuking Rust, but without actually naming him: "Mr. Meredith's 'curves' have made considerable trouble among unread or untraveled collectors ... There is no doubt in my mind of the authenticity of ... the specimens ..."

Parenthetically, Rust had harbored a long-standing concern about phony Indian specimens, beginning at least by the early 1880s (see e.g., Mallery 1886:251).

2. "Skullduggery" is a better enabler of the pun than alternate spellings: "skulduggery," "scullduggery," "sculduggery." The origin of the word is Scottish Gaelic, and the original meaning was fornication. A somewhat similar word, "sculduddery," presently means obscene behavior, or lewdness.

3. Clarence Ruth was an amateur archaeologist who both dug and purchased artifacts. He built a private museum next to his residence to house his collection, much of it relating to Chumash culture. He donated the collection to the City of Lompoc where it is displayed in the Clarence Ruth Gallery in the Lompoc

Museum, Lompoc, California (Lisa Renden, personal communication 2005).

4. Eva Slater paid \$100 for each of the three fake carvings, which she designated as items 2, 12, and 13. Her "Item No. 2" is a steatite canoe charm amply decorated with 56 shell disk beads. It is 4.25 in long, 1.9 in wide, and 1.8 in high. Sanger claimed to have discovered it inside an abalone shell that also held a blister pearl and some glass trade beads. The shell, he added, had lain at the head of a child. "Item No. 12" is a turtle effigy steatite bowl that contained red ochre. It is inlaid with 73 shell disk beads. It is 4.8 in long, 2.5 in wide, and 1.5 in high. A quartz crystal protrudes from its mouth. Sanger claimed it came from Arroyo Sequit. "Item No. 13" is a 5.4 in tall, 3.25 in long, 2.5 in wide steatite birdstone that sports a quartz crystal on top of its "head." The "beak" is decked out in seven shell disk beads, and a pearl is set into its front base.

5. Slater's notes reveal others who obtained material directly or indirectly from Sanger and then sold or traded to her. One of these persons was Dr. Russell W. Ludwick, with whom Eva is shown in a newspaper article. They are crouched next to a basket, cogged stones, and a steatite whale effigy, all artifacts scheduled for display at the California State College, Fullerton Library (News Tribune, 23 October 1969). The whale then belonged to the doctor, but Mrs. Slater purchased it soon after for \$200. Untangling the various chains of ownership of Eva Slater's faux artifacts benefited from a copy of a set of drawings by Jan Timbrook who had visited the Slater home.

6. Eva Slater (personal communication 2005) recalled that Sanger was "very proud of his achievement of going down the Colorado River."

7. In late 1951 Pat Reilly, Grand Canyon River runner and avid student of Colorado River history, was introduced to Arthur Sanger at a meeting of the Los

Angeles Adventurers' Club. Reilly was greatly surprised to hear of a 1903 traverse of the canyon; a few days passed before Sanger produced what he alleged was his diary from the trip, the opening for a detailed recounting of the journey.

Reilly contacted Otis Marston, a more knowledgeable student of Colorado River history. The two men first got together at Sanger's home in 1952; there were subsequent visits (Reilly 1962). Eventually, Marston and Reilly became convinced that Sanger had participated in a 456 mile run from Lee's Ferry through Marble Canyon, and on to Needles, and finally over 106 miles of calm waters to Ehrenberg (Reilly 1961; Marston 2014:192–196).

The author closely scrutinized certain papers and ephemera in the Marston Collection (Huntington Library, San Marino) relating to the supposed 1903 rowboat adventure. There was telling information in the collection (Box 203, Files 16, 17, and 18; Box 277, File 36). In a May 22, 1952, letter sent to a Mr. Bliss along with a January 31, 1952, typed copy of the traverse content in Sanger's diary, Marston accepted that the trip actually took place. Marston also related that in 1949 he recorded the memory of one Jerry Johnson who related that very many years before three miners constructed a boat at Lee's Ferry and set off down the Colorado. Sanger had indicated that Woolley, the party leader, intended to prospect for gold, silver, and copper along the way.

In a January 29, 1952, letter Reilly and his wife Suzie revealed to Marston their sleuthing in order to appraise Sanger's "Island research," learning he was "an extensive gatherer of material but not an intensive student or too accurate observer." Other Reilly letters contain unflattering material that also impugns Sanger. The couple's July 15, 1961, missive to Marston expresses a strong suspicion that Sanger peddled phony mining stock. Other Marston-directed correspondence (August 6, 1961) labels Sanger a "legend builder."

Some letters offer that perhaps there had been no actual log of the river run, the document produced being merely a "memory job." There was the suspicion that some diary entries were supplied as late as 1951. Reilly did finally get Sanger to admit that some of the log was not written in 1903 (letters – August 27, 1961; October 29, 1961; December 3, 1961).

Reilly did not spare Agnes, applying "legend building" when considering her role-playing (August 27, 1961-to Marston). In Marston's analysis, she appeared the leader vis-à-vis her brother, but he gave no indication of suspecting a charade was taking place.

Marston and Reilly were incautious in downplaying several of Sanger's narrative inconsistencies, counting them as merely reflections of "low I.Q." (Marston Collection, Box 203, File 17), a stunning mismeasurement of a man accomplished at fabrication and, when required, a clever faux-naïf. In their defense, the river historians were not apprised of how Sanger came by his captaincy of the *Dreamer*, nor were they aware of his dealings involving fraudulent artifacts. Such information would certainly have given Marston and Reilly much needed pause, perhaps enough to withhold formal enshrinement of Sanger among the early adventurers who negotiated the Grand Canyon via boat. In further defense of the researchers, understand that Sanger's supposed co-travelers could no longer be questioned, leader Elias Benjamin Woolley having died in 1906 and cousin John Aaron King deceased ten years after. According to Sanger, a prospector, Charles Boster, joined the party at the Grand Wash Cliff area, but after Boster returned to Los Angeles, this miner drifts out of the picture. The question of whether Sanger's participation in a 1903 river run is fiction or not may remain insoluble. Perhaps a 1903 traverse did occur, but not actually attended by the future yachtsman.

8. Sanger founded the Catalina Island Yacht Club in 1919–1920. In 1924 Sanger and James Jump restarted

the Catalina Island Yacht Club. Early members included such luminaries as James Cagney, Tom Mix, Rudolph Valentino, and Jack Warner (Catalina Island Yacht Club 2011). He was also a member of the South Coast Yacht Club, the Los Angeles Yacht Club, the California Yacht Club, the Terminal Island Yacht Club, and the Los Angeles Motorboat Club (clipping from an unidentified newspaper in the Marston Collection; Box 201, File 17, Huntington Library). Among fellow sailors, he would retell the Colorado River adventure and hold forth on his island and coastal mainland discoveries of past material culture and human remains.

The *Dreamer* was sold in 1946 (Reilly 1962:36). It was purchased by Burr Durfee and John Ingram, friends of Helen Smith, first editor of the *PCAS Quarterly* (Cory Smith, 2011 personal communication). Sanger maintained his yachting profile partly through short magazine articles (e.g., Sanger 1951a, 1951b, 1952a, 1952b, 1958).

9. Full name at the time: Los Angeles Museum of History, Science, and Art (for short, Los Angeles Museum). It is now the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

10. Malcolm Rogers also had an association with Sanger, albeit only fleeting (Schwartz 1993), his regret at having met the man at least as intense as that felt by Arthur Woodward. To explain, on July 7, 1930, Rogers and an archaeological crew left Wilmington for San Nicolas Island aboard a chartered boat, the *Dreamer* (Rogers 1930, 1993:18). Rogers (1930 [July 8 field note entries]) was not impressed with Sanger as a schooner captain and was not happy when he realized that Sanger, his sister, and his parents were rapacious looters of the island's prehistoric sites. Rogers wrote, "Made a mistake ever coming here with them, although our government is badly at fault for not protecting the archaeology of the island." Rogers' disgust with Sanger only increased (see 1930 [July 10 field note entries]).

One might reasonably suppose that Sanger was pleased to have yet another archaeologically prominent name to be bandied about in conversations of self-promotion.

11. The 1929 *LAT* article linked two arrow-pierced skulls to an alleged archaeological feature, "Cannibal Hole," that name playing to the stereotype of Indian as savage. Cannibal Hole was the centerpiece of an earlier 1926 Los Angeles Museum, three-man archaeological expedition to San Nicolas Island that lasted two months.

Cannibal Hole was "excavated" at a sand dune near Corral Harbor. Laboring alone at first, Sanger "discovered" several feet below a stratigraphic sequence a semicircular arrangement of five skulls with three additional skulls set atop the five. Abalone shell dishes supposedly covered the crania, with whale bone disks allegedly resting against some of the facial bones. Incredibly, a steatite pipe lay just beneath each of three mandibles. Four interlocking whale scapulae set on their sides provided covering for this "conglomeration," or so reported Sanger (Bryan 1927:147, 149–150; 1930b:215–217, 219, 222; 1970:32–34, 46, 52, 69, 75), who proposed that the arrangement reflected a cannibal feast occasioned by food shortages. Bryan (1970:46) offered quick commentary: "I am not sure how they disposed of the ever-present supply of seafood in arriving at this theory." Photographs of the "feature" (Bryan 1927:147; 1930b:215, 217, 219; 1970:32) suggest an effort of overburden removal and a level of content exposure and definition that seems much at variance with the time frame indicated from notes in Bryan's field journal. Also casting suspicions are the three steatite effigies purportedly found by Sanger very close to Cannibal Hole. One represents a shark, but of a design never witnessed before or since. It is especially noteworthy that a "touch of red pigment" graced the "partially open mouth" (Bryan 1950:75). Sanger was notorious for adding ochre to many of the objects he sold. One of the other odd

effigies may represent a reptile (Bryan 1970:52, 81). The third effigy is bison-like (Bryan 1930b:222; see also Oxnard Courier 9 April 1928; Gamble 2002:6, Figure 3, 8). Sanger claimed to have found this “buffalo” carving on a revisit to San Nicolas Island (Bryan 1970:82). A more complete discussion of probable fraud involving first the shark and later the buffalo appears in Koerper and Desautels-Wiley (2012:81–83), where the reader will understand that the small buffalo sculpture enabled Sanger’s penchant to embed local prehistory with attention-grabbing, long-distance cultural connections (see also Bryan 1930b:222).

Most likely, the “feature” had been concocted on a pre-1926 visit to San Nicolas Island. Parenthetically, the lone excavator seen in the Cannibal Hole photograph in Bryan (1927:147) incorrectly identifies the man as Bruce Bryan when actually it is Arthur Sanger.

Bryan’s doubts in 1926 about Sanger’s credibility are somewhat muted. For instance, at “The Place of Skulls,” San Nicolas Island, Bryan (1972:38–39) noted that Sanger “claims” to have found certain bones on a former trip, but because they were deemed not worth salvaging, he left them in place. One of the skulls was filled with human finger and toe bones, and Sanger remarked that on a previous visit to the island, he had found the same exact skull with those very contents. Bryan’s comment was, “I cannot imagine why he left it.” Elsewhere, Bryan (1970:27) offered a quick anecdote that telegraphed skepticism regarding an event that occurred on October 24. The yachtsman signaled Bryan from some distance that he needed assistance in transporting a huge sandstone mortar. Together the two men carried the artifact an unspecified distance. Bryan estimated its weight at “well over a hundred pounds and remarked that it “almost broke our backs.” The museum field archaeologist added a commentary: “[Sanger] *claimed* [emphasis, the author’s] to have carried it half a mile to the spot where I met him.”

It is important to note that the skulls discussed herein that were embedded with projectiles were not encountered on the 1926 expedition, but rather, allegedly in either 1928 or 1929, absent the company of Bruce Bryan or credible witnesses.

12. Other things are puzzling about his article. For instance, while Bryan’s 1931 article was about Mishopsnow (his spelling), he included a figure rendered in black silhouette that stood for a shark effigy carved in soapstone. Its provenance was given as “Artist’s Mound,” an alleged feature on San Nicolas Island, supposedly “discovered” by Sanger (see Bryan 1931:178). There is no explanation given for why an island artifact even belongs in this 1931 article. The authenticity of this shark representation has been challenged (Koerper and Desautels-Wiley 2012:81). Indeed, Artist’s Mound may have been a bogus feature.

13. Information on O. T. Littleton during his residency in Los Angeles is sparse, but fortunately, from after his relocation to Grass Valley, Nevada County, in the fall of 1947, there is voluminous correspondence available between him and George Heye, Museum of the American Indian (MAI), New York, and some correspondence with E. K. Burnett, when Burnett was director of the museum. These and one other letter dating between 1949 and 1958 were digitized and sent to the author as a PDF by Rachel Menyuk of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) Archive Center. Within this material (NMAI Archives, Series [S]1, Box [B]2, Folder [F]24; S6, B 260, F10; S6, B260, F11, Washington, D.C.) there were also two documents dating to 1940 and 1941, each relating to southern California. Much content of the 1949–1958 letters connect with Littleton’s excavations at Grimes Mound in Grimes, Colusa County, just to the west side of the Sacramento River, a site for which he had obtained permission to dig from landowner Arthur Andreotti (e.g., G. G. Heye to A. Andreotti, letter, 3 January 1951, NMAI Archives, S1, B2, F24, Washington, D.C.).

Numerous missives between Littleton and Heye carry burial-related content. There is much information bearing on the prices of items shipped to the MAI (e.g., O. T. Littleton to G. G. Heye, letter and ledger page, 28 April 1951, NMAI Archives, S6, B260, F10, Washington, D.C.). Littleton photographed some burials in situ, and in two images there are (steatite?) carvings bearing little resemblance to scientifically recovered specimens from any area near the Sacramento River whether in Colusa, Sutter, or Yolo Counties. To the point, Littleton appears to have been up to his old tricks, salting burials with bogus artifacts. Parenthetically, after Littleton had moved to northern California, he continued to supply Heye with effigies found earlier in southern California (G. G. Heye to O. T. Littleton, letter, 27 December 1949, NMAI Archives, S6, B260, F10, Washington, D. C.).

Interestingly, Sanger and Strandt appear to have assisted Littleton at Grimes Mound on at least one occasion (O. T. Littleton to G. G. Heye, letter, 21 May 1949, NMAI Archives, S6, B260, F10, Washington, D.C.). On a gossipy note, Littleton wrote, "Herman Strandt of Anaheim, Calif. has a museum. Don't fail to go thru it. Ha! Ha!" Heye offered a snarky response, "I have been through Strandt's 'Museum.' Enough said" (letters, 4 November 1950 and 9 November 1950, NMAI Archives, S6, B260, F10, Washington, D.C.).

14. A September 1941 listing of objects shipped by Littleton to the MAI made its serendipitous appearance amongst letters in an NMAI folder dedicated to correspondence covering 1952–1958 (S6, B20, F11). This misfiling is particularly welcome here; not only were all the items priced, but soon after receiving the bill of sale, a museum employee handwrote catalog numbers adjacent to each specimen enumerated, thus making it possible to match each of seven pieces illustrated in Burnett's book (1944) to a particular purchase price. (*Inlaid Stone and Bone Artifacts from Southern California* was reprinted and is still available from Coyote Press).

The costs of the seven faux artifacts could reasonably be characterized as in the range of moderate to low, at least when considering the naïve acceptance of the objects as genuine Native American manufactures. Item 20-4648, a fish effigy pipe (Burnett 1944:Plate 19) sold for \$20. Item 20-4647, a "fantastic" fish effigy pipe (Burnett 1944:Plate 20), went for \$50. The price of 20-4666, a beaded knife (Burnett 1944:Plate 44), was \$10, and 20-4654, a beaded hairpin (Burnett 1944:Plate 55) was a mere \$3. The tag for item 20-4664, a seal effigy "drum stick" (Burnett 1944:Plate 59), reads \$20; 20-4652, a small beaded bowl (Burnett 1944:Plate 63), went for \$10. Item 20-4653, a beaded "torch" (Burnett 1944:Plate 71), sold for \$35.

15. Fred Morgan actually had some legitimate field experience; at times he shoveled and/or screened alongside persons with recognizable names—Mark Harrington, Ruth DeEtte Simpson, Ralph Beals, and Willy Stahl (Walker 1951:70, 81, 102).

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