

A SHORT HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INQUIRY AT CHINA LAKE NAVAL AIR WEAPONS STATION BETWEEN ABOUT 1930 AND THE EARLY 1950s

RUSSELL L. KALDENBERG

This paper reviews the undocumented archaeological research which was conducted within the boundaries of the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) about the time the Base was founded. It also touches on some of the more significant research on the borders of NAWS. Much of the early work is significant but remains unpublished. Significant amounts of the early data might be lost and unrecoverable.

China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station is situated in the southwestern reach of the Great Basin and the northwestern terminus of the Mojave Desert (Figure 1). It straddles a transitional zone from dry playas at between 1600 and 2400 feet above mean sea level to verdant pinyon covered forests at over 8500 feet elevation. The Base is divided into two management units called the North Range and the South and/or Echo Ranges. Most of the land was administered by the General Land Office before it was withdrawn for military use. Fee simple land was purchased and added to the Base.

The North Range contains physiographic relief noted by dark rugged volcanic hills and mountains which have been sharply bisected by east/west trending canyons. The southern portion of the North Range contains spectacular granitic boulders and flat alluvial relief, including Lake China, several shallow playa basins and the drainage into Searles Lake. The South Range contains ruggedly spectacular welded tuft, highly eroded sandstones and some volcanic relief also dominated by basalt-strewn hills. The eastern and southern shores of Searles Lake are contained within the South Range, which, on its east side abuts Fort Irwin and Death Valley National Park.

Over 1200 cultural resources have been recorded and 800

purported sites have been documented. Close to 11% of the 1.1 million-acre station has been systematically inventoried. This is broken down to about 8 % of the North Range and about 3% of the South Range. One site has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places; several more have been forwarded to Headquarters for listing. The Coso National Historic Landmark, also listed in the National Register has been expanded from 360 acres to 36,450 acres. It contains several hundred sites, features and loci.

Malcolm J. Rogers, San Diego Museum of Man

Archaeological work in the Great Basin and southern California was in its developmental stages in the early part of the twentieth century. As early as 1929

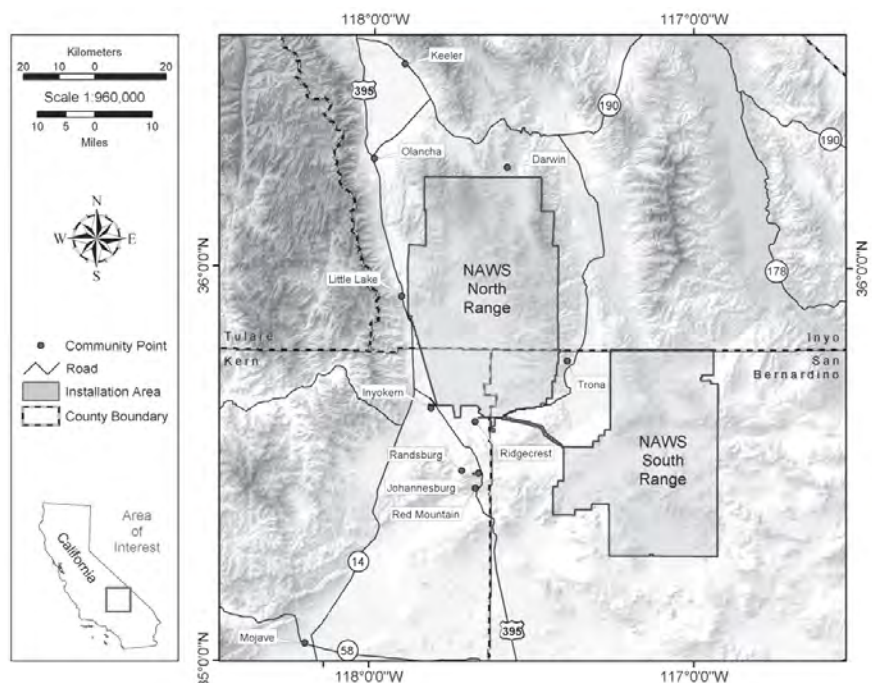


Figure 1: China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station.

Malcolm Rogers (Figure 2) obtained a permit from the Smithsonian Institute to conduct studies on the Mojave Desert (Hanna 1982; Hedges 2004; Rogers 1930). As we will see later, his was the only formal permit granted under the American Antiquities Act of 1906; so he had the only reporting requirement of any of the early researchers on the Base. Much of his focus under that permit was on the Cronise Basin where he suspected that he had found evidence of a Puebloan outlier.

In 1929 the Independence Museum invited Rogers to look at sites in the Owens Valley area. He apparently used the invitation to examine several sites on the Upper Mojave Desert, possibly as part of his Smithsonian permit. These sites included some now on both China Lake and Ft. Irwin. Rogers documented sites M72-74 at Drinkwater Springs and M-97 at Leach Springs, which he called the "Mohave Trail to the Owens Valley." He noted that at Leach Springs there were practically no artifacts left probably due to relic hunting as a result of a published water supply report saying that there were many arrowheads here. Thomson (1922:196) states that:

Leach Springs is one of the best-known springs in the Mohave Desert region and has been used as a watering place since the earliest days of white men in the country. Many fragments of flint are found around the spring, and probably the place was an old Indian camp.

Rogers also recorded M-98 at Leach Lake indicating an older culture was represented there.

The first site he recorded on what is now the Base appears to have been Indian Spring which he recorded as site M-99. His description of the site follows:

...it comes out of a great lava boulder fan and is well hidden. Queer locations- ground is so rocky only a few attempts to clean space for house sites seen. A strong trail comes up from the East Superior Lake to the south and bends to the northwest where it passes by a cliff with caves in it. The big shelter is partitioned with rooms... there appears to be late Shoshonean shelters ¼ mile east of a spring is another low shelter in a cliff. On a hill above the cave are a few lava blocks covered with broad type Mohave glyphs. There is also some indefinite ceremony work on a hilltop. It takes form of an east west alignment [Rogers's notes].

Rogers goes on for the next two pages whereby he tells about house sites 10 feet in diameter, additional ceremonial alignments and a petroglyph cave with rooms. He obviously excavated a trench at the site as he calls surface artifacts M-99A, (the Piate Level 0-12") M-99B, and at 12-30" the Amargosa(?) Level as M-99C.



Figure 2: Malcolm Rogers (r).

The site also has two walled rooms which he documented and drew a stratigraphic profile.

He then appears to have explored several other sites on Ft. Irwin before coming back to China Lake where he recorded Myrick Spring as M-107, stating that it represented Malpais, Amargosa and Shoshonean and pre-Gypsum industries.

From there he documented Seep Springs (M-108). At Seep Springs he emphasized again the presence of the rock walled rooms. He documented very little at the Pilot Knob Valley sites, which are also known as (M-110-and M-111) but collected materials from them (Table 1).

Moving on to the Spar Mine Quarries, located about six miles south of Myrick Springs (M-112), he highlighted these sites as containing 4 acres on a "Malpais terrace." Another site, recorded as M-113 was located above the quarries on Malpais Terrace on what he called a Pleistocene lakebed. This would be the terraces of the Superior Lakes which are presently administratively divided among the Bureau of Land Management, Ft. Irwin and China Lake.

At M-157, Mesquite Springs in the Eagle Crags he found quarry materials as he did at Lead Pipe Springs. He was found Shoshonean sites but could find no Playa (older) sites and no reported (University of California, Los Angeles) in 1947.

Rogers collected shell and flaked stone from Lead Pipe Springs (M-158) but was unsuccessful in finding petroglyphs he had been told about.

Rogers continued his trip and recorded Coso Hot Springs. He identified it as M-151. He also noted the

presence of a nearby a petroglyph canyon containing "...old broad type of petroglyphs and scratches as pecked on like the Chemehuevi types of the Mojave Desert. He notes in his records "...many obsidian quarries and workshops in the vicinity," including site M-152, which is reported as an obsidian quarry and as an open camp in the West Pass coming into Coso Hot Springs. This is undoubtedly the Sugarloaf Obsidian quarry.

He also reported on a site at Little Lake, dubbing it M-153. He noted that it contained "...petroglyphs and pictographs as well as an obsidian factory on over 15 acres covering sand and gravel benches." A note appears to have been added to the site record later on discussing the presence of heavy relic collecting.

Continuing up the Owens Valley, he also visited the Rose Springs site and had a notation on the Rose Valley site record (M-164) as being at the 3400-foot contour.

The last site he seems to have looked at on his trip is M-165 also called the South Little Lake Site. This is where the Owens River dropped approximately 40 over a volcanic plateau causing a waterfall to cascade into the drainage that, during wet cycles, eventually found its way to Lake China. He referred to the site as the McCowan Caves. The sites contain petroglyphs, rock shelters, trails, rock cairns, bedrock milling stations with both mortars and metates and open air middens.

Rogers collected specimens from each of the sites he visited except M-165. The artifacts are stored at the San Diego Museum of Man. Artifacts collected from M-

165 were reported to be as Southwest Museum but cannot be located. See Table 1.

A problem with all of Rogers' site records is that he did not date them and revisited some of the sites during his long career, updating them. It is probable, based upon accessible records, that Rogers' are the first accounts of archaeology conducted on the Base (Rogers 1930). His site records are clear and concise and due to the restrictive nature of access to the base, many sites he noted are in a similar condition to when he recorded them.

The Baldwin Expedition

The Baldwin Expedition (Figure 3) was a joint project sponsored by the Southwest Museum and the Independence Museum led by Clifford Paul Baldwin. It was also referred to as expedition number 9. The project began October 28, and ended November 10, 1931. The objective of the trip was to photograph and collect historical site information for their museums. The trip began in Saline Valley and continued through Hunter Canyon, Upper and Lower Warm Springs, Emigrant Canyon, Kelly (Little Petroglyph Canyon) Canyon and then into the Coso Hot Springs Area. They collected at every site they visited. They took photographs but they "did no digging." Much of the information they used was given to them by local residents including Seldom Seen Slim Spurge of Keeler, (not be confused with Seldom Seen Slim Ferge of Ballarat fame). Petroglyphs were of great interest to them. As they were camped near Skidoo they met Pete Augerberry (sic), the self-proclaimed founder of the ghost town of Harrisburg. Augerberry told them that building blocks for the Bank of Skidoo had been blasted from a chalky cliff which had contained some of the area's finest petroglyphs (Baldwin 1931:4).

At Coral Caves they photographed the site and philosophized that, "It was their sincere hope that something will be added to the seemingly endless search for knowledge of primitive races" (Baldwin 1931:4). At Darwin they were entertained by Mr. C. C. King. He informed them of a canyon that had not yet been named but King was interested in promoting it as it contained many

Figure 3: Baldwin Expedition.



petroglyphs. He intended to obtain funds from the county supervisors to build a road to them. He wanted to call the canyon King Canyon, which the Baldwin expedition obliged him. Wanting to see the rock art they drove around to Olanche (sic.) where they found their way to Coso Hot Springs. Another local resident told them to head towards Cold Springs where they would find a box canyon with a lot of rock art. They drove 2.5 miles and walked the rest of the way.

They felt that they were on foot “in likely Indian territory, for they found obsidian chips”...they walked into a canyon and “before long a Piate water bottle was found that was 11 inches high by 10 inches wide and had a 1 ½ inch neck.” They postulated that they needed to move back further into the mountains for artifacts because they found several places where items had obviously been removed. Not to be deterred though, they rooted through a pack rat midden and found a bit of basketry, some sticks of the same material and some modified wooden sticks that were part of a rabbit snare.

They photographed the rock art and returned through Coso Hot Springs—they felt it was too late to hike to King Canyon, but they found the ground littered with obsidian at Little Lake and found additional petroglyphs and spear points. They called this spot Obsidian Canyon because of the huge obsidian boulders which were 6-8 feet in diameter. This last entry stated that “There is no limit to the specimens the museum may secure here” (Baldwin 1931:5).

Their text figures 19, 20, 21 and Photographs 81-93 and 102-104 document their efforts on the Base. In an endnote they say, “We sincerely hope that those who

follow us in the excavation work will receive more than their share of good luck and thrills that will attend” (Baldwin 1931:5).

E. T. Ross

I was stumped for months trying to find out anything about this fellow (Figure 4). He copied rock art exceedingly well and was an outstanding recorder of the elements. His written notations were very vague. Sometime in the 1930s he developed a program to discover and record sites in southern California and Nevada. His report on Painted Cave (Ross 1938) is outstanding. He reference a paper entitled “A Preliminary Survey of the Petroglyphs of southern California 1938.” I have tried to locate the paper but to no avail. In his seminal work on Painted Cave (CA Iny 428) he describes the lithology of the cave, the pictographs, the floor of the cava and appeals to F.W. Hodge to fund a major excavation at Ross Cave (Figure 5). Disappointingly to Ross, Hodge uses the Antiquities Act 1906 to send Ross to the Secretary of the Interior to apply for a permit and at the same time to tell Ross that the Southwest Museum has no money to pursue another major excavation (Ross 1938: *ibid*).

Copies of Ross’ notes and drawings were donated to the San Bernardino County Museum by Arda Haensel. Any report which he might have authored is missing. In Volume 1 of his site records he refers to Site 6 as Sand Trap Canyon and in Volume II he refers to site 6 as the continuation of Sand Trap Canyon. In Volume VI he spends many pages documenting West Sand Trap Canyon. This is Little Petroglyph Canyon, also known as Kelly Canyon or Renegade Canyon. Sometimes his notes are quite revealing such as the instance where, in 1938, he postulated that an element had been faked because it looked too fresh.

Ross also recorded Indian Springs (Rogers M-99) as his site 38. On the site record he is very clear about the physical attributes of the site, mimicking Rogers except, surprisingly, he reported no rock art. He also did no excavation.

In what may have been an attempt to save an archaeological site, Ross and his brother, Charles Ross, filed a mining claim on Painted Cave. He called the site “Paint Cave” and filed the lode

Figure 4: E.T. Ross (r).



claim notice on June 19, 1938. The notice indicated that the cave was 50 feet deep. A note appended to the mining claim with a paper clip states "Rate myself a friend of Mr. Edwin Walker of the SW Museum. We are enroute to Sand Trap Canyon, also spent 15 minutes in the cave." Signed R.F. Hawley, 313 Sycamore Place, Sierra Madre, May 26, 1940.

On March 3, 1942 Albert Mohr added that he found stacked rocks piled at the mouth of the cave and a metate (Inyo 101 Site Record). The site is referred to by Mohr as Ross Cave. So, Paint Cave, Painted Cave, Ross Cave, Inyo 101 and CA Iny 428 are all the same property.

This cave site was later visited by Albert Mohr who wrote, "When visited by Mr. Ross some years ago, the site had not been disturbed. Since that time several trenches have been made...Mr. Ross recorded several projectile points from the surface of the place prior to that time. The following specimens were recorded in and around the trenches on April 5, 1944: 1 cut stick, 2 fragments of human (?) bones, small animal bone, unworked fragments of arrow cane; mass of yucca fibre, fragment of small polished bone, fragment of a sandal. All were catalogued." Mohr was 19 years old.

Using Ross' notes Bierman and Mohr, in an undated note in possession of the author, state that they are using Ross's notes and map. "Information available so far indicates that the obsidian deposits near Coso Hot Springs drew people from all directions and that most of the sites are camping, working, or high spots along the various trails to the obsidian."

They continue "There are no pecked signs west of Coso, all the work has been done in color. The eastern trail goes through Darwin Wash or through Water Canyon, Wingate Pass, Saratoga Springs, Shoshone and along the Amargosa River...about a dozen new sites should be found in the natural topographic path between Daggett and Rock Springs...about four should be found between Copper city and the El Paso Mountains and probably 2 or 3 between there and Little Lake."



Figure 5: Ross Cave.

So from the evidence so far we have seen that several early accounts focused on obsidian, a little on the rock art, but also on early sites and ground figures and lithic quarries and on collecting specimens for collections. These efforts, except Rogers,' were informal inquiries into the archaeological record.

Malcolm F. Farmer, Southwest Museum

The first published reference to sites on the base was by Malcolm F. Farmer from the Southwest Museum. In 1937 he published "An Obsidian Quarry Near Coso Hot Springs, Ca." in The Masterkey Volume 11. He made the trip to the area with the Campbells of the SW Museum Laboratory (29 Palms). He described the quarry at Sugarloaf Mountain but it remained for Harrington to excavate several test excavation units between 1948 and 1951 when Harrington was conducting his research at the Stahl Site. Harrington followed Farmer and published on the quarry and sites on the western area of the base in 1951 and 1953, including mention of an ethnographic landscape called the Rattlesnake which he learned from Buster (Hansen) a local native American who stopped by his campsite.

Stuart Peck and Gerald S. Smith,
San Bernardino County Museum

In February 1939 Stuart Peck dug and collected materials from Seep Springs. Gerald Smith also collected materials from here at an unknown date but jointly published the Archaeology of Seep Springs in 1957 (Peck and Smith 1957). The collection was recently located, it has been catalogued and partially

analyzed by Jill Gardner (CSU Bakersfield). The site contained very diverse rock art including petroglyphs, pictographs and cupules, bedrock mortars, walled rooms (see Rogers) with lots of perishables including acorn and pinyon nuts, *olivella sp.*, green slate and glass beads, as well as black on gray pottery (Peck and Smith 1957:18, 19, 23, 29). Gardner catalogues and discusses the pottery (Gardner 1997:5 and 7) but it is not currently in the collection.

Seep Springs is one of the most interesting sites in the South Range and has been studied by nearly every early researcher interested in this part of the Mojave Desert. Interestingly, there is no complete site record. This may be because of the complexity and vastness of the site. Along with the Seep Springs collection is a full archival box of artifacts from a cave at Granite Wells. It is unprovenanced and unattributed.

Albert Mohr and Agnes Bierman (1939?-1950)

Albert Mohr (Figure 6) was born in 1925. If his notes are correct he was recording archaeological sites as early as 1939 at the age of 15. Based upon hand written notes I believe that he was befriended by this chemical engineer E. T. Ross since Mohr references his notes and sites regularly. At least by 1944 at the age of 19, Mohr was on the Base excavating and documenting archaeological resources. After a two year stint in the Army he entered Berkeley as an undergraduate and then advanced to graduate school where, under Robert Heizer he facilitated site recordation throughout California for the California Archaeological Site Survey (CAS).

Agnes Bierman (Figure 7) was born in 1923 in the Netherlands. Her family immigrated to Canada during World War II where she attended college and joined the Canada Coast Guard, serving as a coast ship watcher. Her family then immigrated to Los Angeles where Agnes received her BA in 1947 and entered the graduate program under Brainerd. She joined the UC Berkeley California Archaeological Survey in Fall 1947 to record sites in southern California.

Some of the first clues as to Mohr's work on the base come from the Inyo County CAS Site records which he completed. Many were not dated, but the ones with dates are

treasures. In addition to his notes on the Ross Cave Site previously mentioned, he also noted "several pictographs were identified on ceiling and wall near mouth of the cave. Rocks were piled on the mouth of the cave. Found metate." 3/13/42 (?).

Also the following site records are annotated by Mohr:

Inyo 102 – collected and catalogued 2,3,4 April 1944

Inyo 108 – note saying present tenant is NOTS

Inyo 109- Rock Circle Cave collected and catalogued

Inyo 110-Big Petroglyph Canyon

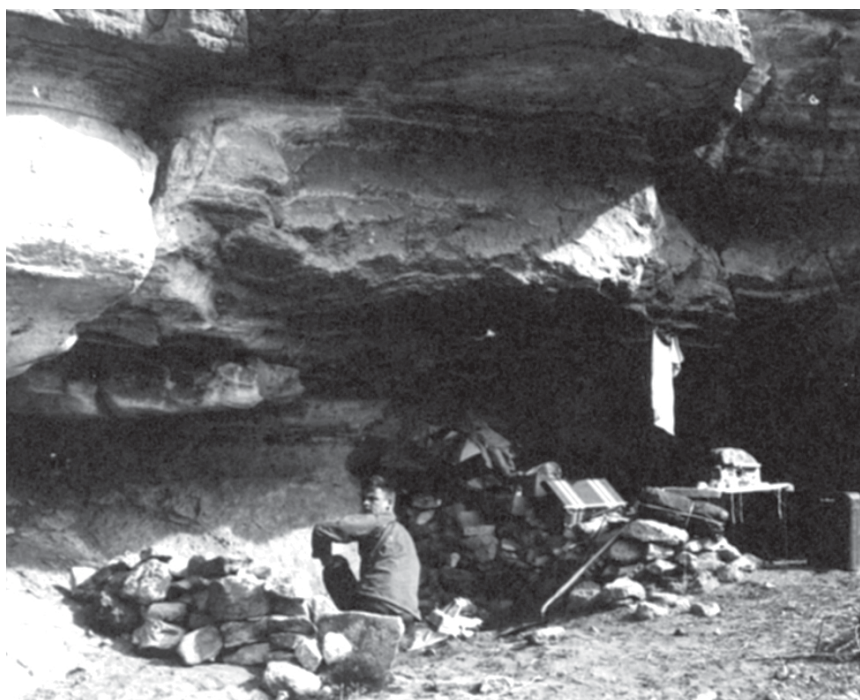
Inyo 115-118-Sand Trap or Black Canyon (Little Petroglyph). April 3, 4, 1944 counted 3,500 petroglyphs, suggests that paint might be present if one looked carefully in the grooves

Inyo 119-excavated cave, catalogued, projectile points, obsidian, shell bead, 2 plain potsherds

Inyo 120-cave 2

Inyo 121- site is 4/10 mile south of Coso Hot Springs. The area is now used as a dump, but

Figure 6: Albert Mohr.



chips are easily found all over the immediate vicinity. No photos taken November 28, 1943 and April 7, 1944.

Haiwee Springs Site Record -December 27, 1939 and November 28, 1943 1.2 miles northeast of Coso Springs, Ca is all obsidian. 18 specimens were collected, all obsidian, no photograph (Ross' site number 8).

Site Ballarat 7:3 Site 391.52a-four mile long site at Coso Springs, Collected 7 obsidian artifacts. Examining some of the older more faded site records, most have a name such as this in the upper right hand corner which has been scratched through and replaced by a CAS trinomial. This may be Mohr's original records as the handwriting is sometimes very juvenile in form. One site record refers to Dad. Agnes Bierman has indicated that Mohr's father was a mechanical engineer. It was he who designed the rotary shaker screen seen in this photograph of Agnes excavating at SBr-100 (Figure 8).

Obviously after WWII Mohr returned to China Lake, this time representing Heizer. The first indication of any work done here by him again was on September 21, 1947 when he and Agnes Bierman excavated at SBr 100.

Mohr's ability to enter the Base was predicated upon negotiations between he and the Commanding Officer. He wrote a series of letters beginning November 14, 1947, which stated "Shortly before the war I initiated an archaeological investigation of the Louisiana Butte area, however I had been unable to continue with it until late last summer (summer 1946). At that time I attempted to enter the region but found that it is now within the boundaries of the Naval Ordnance Test Station." He further states that "Since then the chance discovery of the fact that the Navy had allowed some archaeological work in the area....by Virginia E. Hitchcock Subj.: 'Report of Petroglyphic Studies Made Within the Naval Ordnance Test Station' encouraged me to believe that a permit might again be granted for a limited visit into the area for four to five days between February 6 and February 15, 1948. (Mohr letter of November 14, 1947 to Command Officer, NOTS).



Figure 7: Agnes Bierman.



Figure 8: Bierman and the rotary screen at work, SBr-100.

Name	Year(s)	Site(s)	Artifacts Collected	Repository	Comments
Malcolm J. Rogers	1929/30	M-99, Indian Springs	flaked stone, pottery	San Diego Museum of Man	Surface collection; petroglyph, rock alignments, stone circles and house rooms noted; Noted in 1966 publication.
		M-99A	pottery, bone, flaked stone, groundstone, slate, manos		0-12 inches collection
		M-99B	pottery, bone, shell, flaked stone, wood, charcoal		12-24 inches
		M-99C	bone, and flaked stone		24 inches to sterile
		M-107, Myrick Spring	flaked stone		
		M-108, Pilot Knob Camps	flaked stone, groundstone, manos		
		M-112, Spar Mines	flaked stone		
		M-113, Myrick Lake Beds	flaked stone, scrapers		
		M-151, Coso Hot Springs	flaked stones		Petroglyphs noted in vicinity
		M-152, Sugarloaf Quarry	flaked stone, groundstone, flaked obsidian		
		M-157, Mesquite Springs	flaked stone		Eagle Crags vicinity
		M-158, Leadpipe Springs	shell, flaked stone		purported petroglyphs
		M-159, Myrick Basin	flaked stone		
		M-160, Pothunter Springs	pottery, flaked stone		walled rooms
Malcolm F. Farmer	1937	Sugarloaf Quarry	Obsidian flakes	Southwest Museum	Trip with Elizabeth Campbell; published in The Masterkey.
E.T. Ross	@1938	Inyo 101, Ross Cave	aboriginal materials	unknown	Ross rough notes on file at NAWS
Albert Mohr	1944	Inyo 101, Ross Cave	perishables, bones, polished bone, projectile points	unknown	Mohr notes on file at NAWS
Albert Mohr	1944	Inyo 102, Sand Trap Parking Lot	turquoise, projectile points, blade fragments, metate fragments, worked obsidian, 3 fragments of reject slate, choppers, manos, point tip, piece of metal	unknown	Mohr's on file at NAWS
	1949	Inyo 109	Rock circles; blades, scraper	unknown	ditto
	1949	Inyo 114, Sand Trap Canyon	blade fragments; scrapers	unknown	
	1944/49	Inyo 119; Sand Trap Canyon	6 projectile points, shell beads, ground stone, sheet iron fragment, bone fragments, small mammal bones, plain potsherds	unknown	
	1944	Inyo 121	drill awl	unknown	
	1944	Inyo 122, South of Coso Hot Springs	Obsidian hammerstone, rejects side scrapers, concave base, blade fragments	unknown	
Mark R. Harrington	1948/50	Obsidian Quarry	flakes	Southwest Museum	1951 The Masterkey article
Agnes Bierman (UCLA) and Albert Mohr (UCB)	05/1949	SB-2, Leadpipe Springs	Major excavation, significant amount of perishables	NAWS	Donated by Karl Mohr, April 2002
	1948	SB-3	Obsidian Point, chalcedony blade fragment, sidescraper	NAWS	
	1948	SB-5	pumice mano, quartzite hammer	NAWS	
	1949	SB-7	Meatless, blade fragments, metate fragments	NAWS	
	04-08 1949	SB-10	47 artifacts, choppers, pushplanes, hammerstones, scrapers, drill, all rhyolites, chalcedony blades and blade fragments, flakes	NAWS	Two episodes of collection-in April and August 1948
	04/1949	SB-11	hammerstones, choppers, plane scrapers, mostly rhyolite	NAWS	About 200 artifacts, catalogue says 1948-1949
	03/1948	SB-12	mano and pushplane	NAWS	Site record says Mohr
	03/1948	SB-13	Mano and push plane	NAWS	
	03/1948	SB-14	pushplane, choppers and chalcedony blade reject	NAWS	
	03/1948	SB-16	2 sidescrapers, chalcedony and jasper	NAWS	Mohr
Mohr	03/1948	SB-18	jasper sidescraper	NAWS	Mohr
	03/1948	SB-19	rhyolite pushplane	NAWS	Mohr
	03/1948	SB-20	2 pieces of same jasper knife	NAWS	
	02/1948	SB-51 Seep Springs	25 potsherds; fairly large collection	some at NAWS, other parts of collection are missing	dug two trenches; same place Peck excavated in 1938
	1/14/1948	SB-54 and SB-55	willow leaf point, sidescrapers, point base, scrapers, arrow cane, pottery, sidescrapers, slab metates, etc	some at NAWS, others are missing	02/49 Notation, by Bierman that cave completely cleared out by Peck 1948 (must mean 1938)
	1/14/1948	SB-57	Cave excavation completed; 10 flakes, metate fragments, 5 sidescrapers, ovoid sidescraper	?	
	04/1949	SB-94, Myrick Spring	8 flakes, 4 blade fragments	?	
	04/1949	SB-95, Leadpipe Springs	Choppers and hammerstones	?	excavation recommended
	04/1949	SB-96, Leadpipe Springs	metates	?	*Only tenant is a rattlesnake*
	04/1949	SB-97, Leadpipe Springs	collected metates, manos, 5 choppers,		recommended excavations
	04/1949	SB-98	1 pushplane, 1 hammerstone	?	
Stuart Peck and Gerald Smith	1938-1939	SB-51, Seep Springs	2 catalogue boxes containing perishables, slate, etc	San Bernardino County Museum; NAWS	Jill Gardner catalogued

Table 1: China Lake site records, artifacts, and collections, through 1950.

On November 28, 1947 Mohr received a concurring letter addressed to him at Berkeley, Department of Anthropology, stating to meet at the main gate and staff would assist him with the trip and point out other areas in the vicinity which might interest him. The letter was signed by Rear Admiral W. G. Switzer.

On January 14, he wrote a letter confirming the dates of February 8-12, 1948. On January 26 he received another confirmation about where to meet but he replies on February 2, 1948 that he has not been able to contact his co-worker from UCLA (most likely Agnes Bierman). This seems the case because in a personal interview with Agnes on September 11, 2003 she had indicated that she had never been to the rock art sites on north Base but had only worked on the southern part of the base, then throughout the eastern Mojave Desert.

The next correspondence which I have is a letter from Hardy Glenn, Lieutenant, US Navy and Public Information Officer dated 29 July 1949, which says that he is confirming arrangements for August 5-7 and August 19-29, 1949. The Lieutenant reiterates that "I'll outline the procedure again, just to be sure there is no slip-up"....also reminding them that it is imperative that they maintain daily contact with the guard station—the guard's name is Mr. Lofinck. On a note at the bottom of the page is "Call Agnes at Spurgen, Santa Monica 47067."

In a hand-written letter from Heizer to Mohr dated Sunday 7/11/49 Heizer starts out with:

Dear Mohr: Enclosed are three copies of letters which concern your application to work in Inyokern NOTS during August 1949. From the contents of these, you will see that is a matter of some importance that you see, personally, the C.O. of the Inyokern Station work out with him details of location and time of your proposed work....The CAS is glad to interest itself in such matters, but the exact arrangements concerning excavation will have to be worked out with you on the ground. I also realize that a trip to Inyokern by you at this time may be inconvenient, but the affair is now in the mill and must be settled. It is possible that you could delay your visit for a week providing you wrote the CO at Inyokern and told him you were anxious to settle the problem, but that your time was committed until then. Show the CO (Don't mail them) the enclosed letters as your authorization. I will write Nusbaum that you will take the situation by the horns and clean it up. Hope you and Benny and your crew are having a good time and good luck. As Ever, Heizer.

The last letter that I have is dated October 3, 1951 and it is from Mohr to Mr. Lofinck asking for copies of books back "especially the one on petroglyphs."

In an undated note appended to the letter of July 29, 1949 someone has typed:

When it was learned that Ross Cave (Iny 101) and the surrounding region are within the jurisdiction of the Navy Department, arrangements were made to carry on limited research there during August 1949. Unfortunately it was soon found that in addition to known pothunting, earlier vandals had also been at work in the cave leaving the site nearly worthless for archaeological purposes. For this reason excavation was suspended after five days and the remainder of the time was devoted to archaeological survey. A number of known sites were revisited and new ones located and recorded." Lastly, the author contends that "In general the region was found to have considerable archaeological promise; in several instances excavation would be profitable.

Agnes Bierman joined Albert Mohr representing UCLA in the fall of 1947 and continued her work on base and throughout the Mojave at least through 1950 and perhaps 1951. Together they excavated or tested over a dozen sites on the south range including major efforts at the Lead Pipe Springs Complex in the Robbers Mountain Range. (Actually the sites are miles from Lead Pipe Springs and are a series of caves containing pictographs—which I have named the Agnes Bierman Caves, not to be confused with the Lead Pipe Spring archaeological site.)

They also excavated Seep Spring but not Pothunter Springs. They tested Indian Springs and a whole series of sites throughout the desert, recording sites SBR-1 through Sbr 139 before their names vanish from the site record. Robin Laska at the San Bernardino County Museum developed a concordance of their sites. Some of the sites were not photographed by the team. Others were documented very well. The Base has the known collections from the Bierman and Mohr surveys as well as the photographs, which have been copied. I am presently working with Agnes to try and sort out some of the questions we have about some of the early work. Over the past two years I have been in contact with Al Mohr and his wife Trish Sample's only child in Arizona attempting to put some of the pieces of the puzzle together.

Mark R. Harrington

Harrington (Figure 9) frequently had permits from the Smithsonian to excavate on public lands. Since the Base was withdrawn it is unknown how or if he receive permission to place units at the Sugarloaf Mountain Quarry. His short discussion in *The Masterkey* is the only formal publication except for Farmers' note in a previous *Masterkey* volume. Harrington's statement regarding the resource is eloquent.

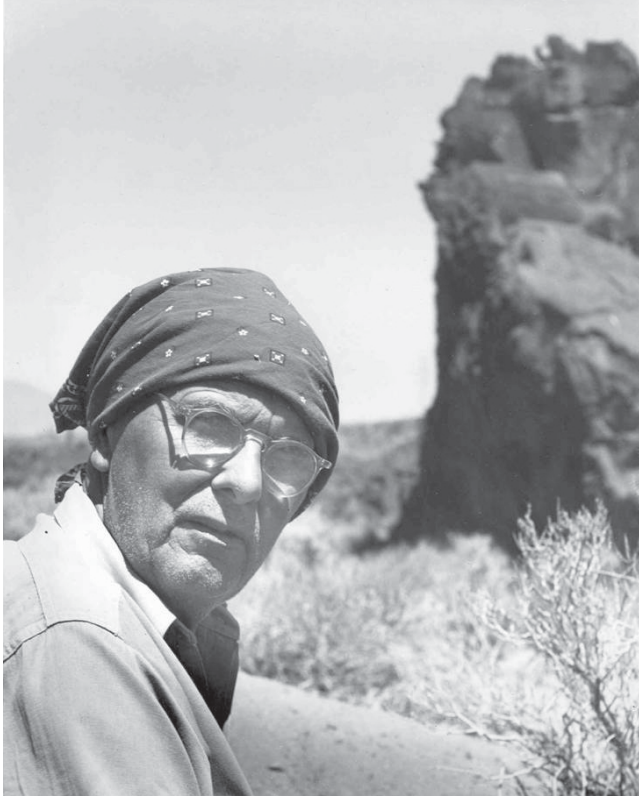


Figure 9: Mark Raymond Harrington.

More than two miles of ancient diggings, plainly visible along the edges of the bluff! A hillside covered with hundreds of tons of obsidian quarry refuse left by prehistoric workers! It did not seem possible, yet there it was, on the old Coso Road northeast of Little Lake, the gateway to Owens Valley. We stood there in amazement that day early last November, thinking of the innumerable human hands, the countless generations that must have been required to produce such a result

The old quarry pits extend along the obsidian ledge just below the rim of a tableland some 200 to 300 feet above the valley floor. On the slope below are traces of other pits and artificial terraces, and tumbled boulders of obsidian; in some places the steep hillside is actually composed of obsidian chips, most of them man-made; you cannot step without crunching them [Harrington 1951:15].

Artifacts collected by Harrington are curated at the Southwest Museum.

SUMMARY

I have developed a long series of questions to which I have yet no answers. The nine boxes of artifacts contain perishables. Mohr and Bierman were meticulous in their collection methods and like Rogers

and Peck, the sites were in very good shape when they first saw them. I will continue to learn from the first generation of archaeologists now it is time to turn to the more recent projects on the base, those which occurred during the last 40 years.

Some of the greatest names in Far Western archaeology spent time on the Base photographing, excavating and recording sites. Most of the work was not written and little was published. Those with some types of permit, such as Rogers wrote summary reports to satisfy the permitting agency (Rogers 1930). Some of the others have written summary reports or published short articles in their own newsletters. Most of these archaeologists are long gone, but a few are still with us and it is very important to capture their stories before the sun sets on that entire chapter of the history of the archaeology. It is too important not to.

REFERENCES CITED

- Baldwin, Clifford Park
1931 Archaeological Exploration and Survey in Inyo County, California. Unpublished paper filed at the Eastern California Museum, Independence, California and Southwest Museum, Los Angeles, California. Photographer and assistant Carl D. Hegner.
- Farmer, Malcolm F.
1937 An Obsidian Quarry Near Coso Hot Springs. *The Masterkey*. Volume 7:9.
- Gardner, Jill
1996 Archaeology of Seep Springs. Paper presented at the 1996 Annual Meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, Bakersfield, California.
- Finlayson, William D.
2001 The Archaeological and Ethnographic Research and Collections of Albert D. Mohr (A.B., Ph.D.) and L. Laetitia Sample (A. B., Ph.D.) 1946-1995, prepared for Karl Mohr. Unpublished paper on file with the author.
- Hanna, David C., Jr.
1982 Malcolm J. Rogers: The Biography of a Paradigm. MA Thesis, San Diego State University.
- Harrington, Mark R.
1948 America's Oldest Dwelling. *The Masterkey*. Volume 22:5:148-152.

- 1948 Shoshone Visitors. *The Masterkey*. Volume 22:5:160
- 1951 A Colossal Quarry. *The Masterkey*. Volume 25:1:15-18.
- 1952 The Fossil Falls Site. *The Masterkey*. Volume 26:191-195.
- 1953 A Cave Near Little Lake. *The Masterkey*. Volume 1:3: May-June.
- Hedges, Kenneth
2004 Personal Communication.
- Mohr, Albert
1939-1946 Inyo County Sites. Records from Inyo 101-125, miscellaneous site records from Death Valley and vicinity. Notes in possession of the author.
1946-1951 Miscellaneous Correspondence between the author and others. Correspondence in possession of the author.
- Mohr, Albert, and Agnes Bierman
1951 San Bernardino County Sites. Site records from SBr1-SBr139 (lead Spring to Henry Springs). Unedited notes in possession of the author.
1951 Field Notes in possession of the author:
Rock Circle Cave (SBr-8)
Field Book # 1
Field Book # 4
Rock Circle Cave Catalogue
The Archaeology of Lead Springs Cave (Rough handwritten and typewritten drafts).
- Peck, Stuart L. and Gerald A. Smith
1957 *The Archaeology of Seep Springs*. San Bernardino County Museum Scientific Series, No. 2. Bloomington, California.
- Pinnell, Beth
2004 Personal Communication.
- Rogers, Malcolm J.
n.d. Site Records from the San Diego Museum of Man. Records SDM-99 through SDM 165.
1930 Report (to the Smithsonian Institute) of the Archaeological Investigations of the Mohave Desert Region During 1930.
1966 *Ancient Hunters*. Richard Pourade, editor. Copley Press Books: San Diego, California.
- Ross, E. T.
1938 Report On Preliminary Investigation of Painted Cave, Inyo County, California (*sic Ca Iny 428*). Unpublished paper on file at China Lake NAWS library.
- Thompson, David G.
1921 *Routes to Desert Watering Places in the Mohave Desert Region, California*. USGS Water Supply Paper 490B, General Printing Office, Washington, D. C.
1929 The Mohave Desert Region, California USGS Water Supply Paper #578, General Printing Office, Washington, D.C.