

The Napa District and Wappo Prehistory

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AS THE SOUTHERN OUTLIERS of the Yukian stock, the Wappo of Napa Valley have posed intriguing interpretive problems ever since Powers (1877:197) suggested a Russian River Valley homeland for the Yuki-Wappo, with later displacement by intruding Pomo. It has long been recognized that archaeology could contribute crucial insight on the prehistory of this most ancient (?) of surviving linguistic stocks in California, but the published results to date have been so deficient that we are faced with more questions than answers. In this paper, after a brief review of the problems, I will summarize the available archaeological sequence and suggest certain marker types which serve to distinguish the Napa District from neighboring districts. Despite inadequate data, I will conclude with a series of hypotheses for future testing as to when the Wappo first entered Napa Valley.

Unresolved Problems

The major problem facing the prehistorian who seeks to link the ethnographic Wappo with the archaeological Napa District is the lack of established ethnic boundaries as of A.D. 1770. The "standard" maps (Barrett 1908; Kroeber 1925; Heizer 1966:map 4) are not in agreement and clearly reflect post-1830 changes. As documented by McClellan (1953:map 2)

and Gifford (1967), the Lile'ek of Clear Lake and the Alexander Valley Wappo represent post-Contact movements. Mission documents and archaeology indicate that Southern Patwin (Pooewin) claims to Sonoma Valley and Suscol (Nap-15) reflect post-Secularization shifts. While Powers's (1877:196) restriction of the Wappo to the Geysers-Calistoga locality is too extreme, I suggest that Merriam (Heizer 1966:map 5) was correct in placing the southern Wappo boundary near Yountville, with an expanded Napato-Nanutawe group (Hill dialect of Southern Patwin) occupying the mouth of the Napa Valley and the Soda Creek drainage. In addition to the fact that the Valley was named after the Napato Patwin, the burials and primary cremation found at Nap-14 provide links with Sol-2 in Patwin territory. Moreover, preliminary analysis of female personal names support Merriam's dialect separation of the Napato. Finally, I suggest that the Wilikos Wappo did not occupy the headwaters of Sonoma Creek aboriginally; Sonoma Valley was deserted when Mission Solano was founded in 1823, and the late baptismal dates for Guiluc (first contacted by Mission San Rafael) indicate a more distant location in 1822-23. Thus, in addition to more archaeology in border localities, more intensive analysis of mission records, place names, and linguistics is needed to define aboriginal Wappo boundaries. For

present purposes, my definition of the Napa District includes only the watershed of the Napa River north of Yountville.

With minor exceptions, our ethnographic view of Wappo culture is derived from Alexander Valley informants; no Culture Element Distribution list was attempted. The archaeological record at present does not support the universal opinion of ethnographers that Wappo culture was indistinguishable from that of Pomo. Rather, it would appear that the remnant Western Wappo group was forced to acculturate to the more integrated Russian River and Clear Lake Pomo tribelets as pressure from white settlement in the Napa Valley increased.

The deficient archaeological record is well known. Such major sites as Nap-1 and Nap-32 were excavated by shovel in foot levels without screening; and no adequate horizontal or vertical samples from either site were obtained. Few recorded grave lots are available to establish contemporaneity of types found scattered in multicomponent middens and in the large undocumented collections obtained by amateurs. The major work (Heizer 1953) was written by beginning students in 1949 who failed to incorporate crucial information. My recent reanalysis of this material revealed numerous errors (e.g., the location of Nap-37; confusion of Burials 1 and 7 in table 3; "clam disc beads" reported in table C, app. IV, Bur. 3), omissions (e.g., three burials were omitted in the Nap-32 analysis; points with cremations were omitted in table 3; no tabulation of the artifacts with cremations was provided; no depth analysis was provided for the bone tools), inadequate typologies (e.g., stemmed and corner-notched points both lumped in Type 25; serrated and non-serrated forms were not separated; willow-leaf points mixed with drills at Nap-131), and meaningless tables (e.g., table 4 [shell beads]; table A, app. III [lumped arrangement of traits from Nap-129, -131]; tables A, B, app. IV [the Late occupation at Nap-32 is largely confined to the northeast edge, but Middle and Late horizon traits are a mixed jumble in this single depth table]). Hence, significant details of a skeletal framework remain concealed to this day, and a complete and repetitious reanalysis will have to be done. I will merely attempt to indicate major gaps in the available data on the basis of an extremely preliminary and

incomplete survey. While the existing collection in the Lowie [now Phoebe A. Hearst] Museum of Anthropology should be large enough to be representative of the later periods, most specimens lack provenience. Hence, many problems of phasing and function can only be resolved by new, carefully controlled excavations in addition to rigorous typological and laboratory analyses. The full significance of most types will remain quite uncertain until more grave lots become available. Both radiocarbon and obsidian hydration dating pose problems too numerous to mention herein. The cultural sequence, as currently conceived, appears in figure 4.1; site locations appear in Heizer (1953:map 1).

Cultural Phases

Heizer and Elsasser (1953:23, note 6) suggested that a basalt-using culture might have occupied the Napa Valley prior to the shift to the use of obsidian. If correct, a Merriam phase (type component Nap-129D), characterized by the use of basalt core tools, might be defined as the oldest remains yet recognized in the Napa District. However, Fredrickson (1973) found that the occasional use of basalt is typical of the later Borax Lake Pattern, and handstones/milling slabs were associated with the abundant basalt tools that characterize the Oakshores assemblage (Berryessa I:True, Baumhoff and Helen 1979). The scattered distribution of artifacts and near-absence of projectile points associated with the Oakshores assemblage suggest that specialized procurement activities, rather than temporal factors, account for the basalt emphasis. Hence, until stratigraphic evidence demonstrates the priority of basalt core tools over milling equipment, the Merriam/Oakshores assemblage (6000-3000 B.C.) will be assigned to the early phase of the Borax Lake Pattern.

The Hultman phase (type component Nap-131A) appears established as a late component of the Borax Lake Pattern (Fredrickson 1973). The unpublished 1960 excavations presumably strengthened the small number of reported handstones (and milling stones?), but Borax Lake wide-stem points have yet to be reported.

The next two phases (Bale and Rutherford) must remain tentative until a detailed analysis has been

FIGURE 4.1

Napa District Cultural Sequence

<i>DATING SCHEMES</i>					Napa District Phase	PATTERN	PERIOD	Phase (Beardsley 1948)	HORIZON
C	A2	B1	Obsidian Clark (1964)	Hydration Origer (1987)					
A.D. 1800	A.D. 1800	A.D. 1800	.5	1.0	Historic WAPPO			3	
1700	1700	1700	.7	1.3	Late LYMAN	AUGUSTINE EMERGENT		2b	LATE
1500	1500	1500	1.15	1.75	Early LYMAN			2a	
	1100	1300	1.35	2.1	DAVIS			1c	
		1100	1.65	2.4	OAKVILLE			1b	
		900	1.95	2.65	BRIDGE			1a	
A.D. 500		700	2.25	2.9	YOUNT			M/LT	
		500	2.45	3.1	RIVER GLEN	BERKELEY		Terminal	MIDDLE
		300	2.75	3.3				Late	
	A.D.100		2.95	3.5				Inter- mediate	
	B.C. 200		3.3	3.8	GODDARD			Early	
		500	3.65	4.0	KOLB			E/MT	EARLY
		1000	4.13	4.4	RUTHERFORD				
		1500	4.7	4.8	BALE				
		B.C. 3000	6.1	5.7	HULTMAN	BORAX LAKE			

Dating schemes C, A2, and B1 are from Bennyhoff and Hughes (1987:147, fig. 10); obsidian hydration rim thickness expressed in microns (μ).

completed. Both phases are represented by stratigraphic layers below Kolb phase burials at Nap-32. Since the Kolb phase can be firmly placed in the Early/Middle Horizon Transition, both Bale and Rutherford must be contemporaneous with the Windmill Pattern of the Delta region. However, both phases feature exclusive use of the mortar and pestle, so they represent early phases of the Berkeley Pattern. Movement from the south is inferred, where older relatives are known (SMa-77, Ala-307, Mm-152, Mm-138, Mm-266). Assignment to the Houx aspect must remain quite tentative until more analysis of the Marin material has been completed.

The Bale phase (type component Nap-32G) is represented by artifacts from the basal yellow loam layer (ca. 3 feet thick) at Nap-32 (Heizer 1953:figs. 2, 3; app. IV). Traits include mortars and pestles, bipointed spears, "Type 17" points, and ulna awls and flakers. Whether steatite and Olivella split drilled beads are intrusive remains to be determined. It can be proposed that dependence on an acorn staple is established in this phase and persists, along with an emphasis on ulna tools, to historic times in the Napa District.

The Rutherford phase (type component Nap-32F) is represented by artifacts from the brown midden layer and the grave associations of Burials 2, 6, and 7. In addition to flexed burial, new traits include leaf-shaped points, Excelsior points, one concave-base point, cannon bone awls, a gorge hook, and painted slabs (not to be confused with the shaped tablets of protohistoric and historic times). Mortars, pestles, ulna awls and flakers, and exclusive use of obsidian for points continue from the Bale phase. The brown midden suggests seasonal occupation. Heizer and Squire (1953:319) suggest that two slab mortars were used with a basketry hopper, but I have not yet found these specimens in the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum collection.

The Kolb phase (type component Nap-32E) is defined on the basis of six flexed burials (nos. 1, 3-5, 8, 9), the graves for which were dug from the upper black midden. In association were Olivella bevelled beads and oval saddles, marker types for the Early/Middle Horizon Transition as established by occurrence with Windmill types at SJo-142 and SJo-91; bevelled beads occurred with Macoma clam discs

(another marker type) at Lak-261. Additional traits include Olivella ring beads (typically early Middle Horizon), unique abalone ornaments (Heizer 1953:app. IV, pl. Bp, q), triangular abalone ornaments (all *H. rufescens*), bone spatula, incised bone, a bird-bone whistle, ulna tools, Excelsior and leaf-shaped points, and small mortars. Only one of thirty-eight ornaments was made from *H. cracherodii*, but the punctuation on the three wide triangulate ornaments should be related to the similar decorative technique found on abalone ornaments in the terminal Windmill components at SJo-112 and Cal-237 as well as similar decoration on bone in the early Middle Horizon at Ala-309. Sedentary occupation is inferred at Nap-32 on the basis of the black midden.

The Goddard phase (type component Nap-1H) can be defined from the burials at Nap-1 and the deeper midden. Olivella saucers and rings place the burials in the early Middle Horizon. Excelsior points and ulna tools continue from the Kolb phase. The brown midden may indicate seasonal occupation.

A major problem in the Napa District concerns the definition of later Middle Horizon phases. Despite the large Lillard and Davis collections, only two square saddle beads from mixed deposit are known at present; no fish spears, rectangular ornaments, or other later Middle Horizon diagnostics have been reported. Grave lots will be needed to clarify what appears to be a very stable point sequence. The Yount phase (Nap-1G) is based on four earspools without provenience and may represent the terminal Middle Horizon, rather than the Middle/Late Horizon Transition.

Most of our evidence for Phase 1 of the Late Horizon (Augustine Pattern) is based on point types obscured by faulty typology and badly mixed midden deposit. The Bridge phase (Nap-1F) is defined on the basis of one scored abalone ornament and one infant burial with Olivella thin rectangles from Nap-1, and three thin rectangles from Nap-32 (all might represent the early Oakville phase). Since no later burials occur, one may hypothesize that cremation had become normal, but the earliest datable cremation represents Late Phase 1.

The widespread Oakville phase (Middle Phase 1, Nap-1E) is defined by the occurrence of straight-stemmed arrow points with many square serrations