

Handbook of North American Indians

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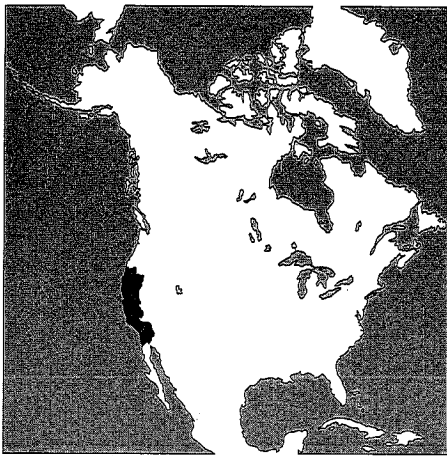
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Development of Regional Prehistoric Cultures

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By 1916 there was considerable agreement that 2000 B.C. was probably the beginning date for the prehistoric Indian occupation of Northern California, at least in the San Francisco Bay region (Nelson 1909; Gifford 1916). In 1930 results of excavations in the Santa Barbara area (Rogers 1929; Olson 1930) presented ample evidence for development or change through time even in the comparatively simple cultural remains of nonagricultural coastal populations.

A cultural sequence for the lower Sacramento Valley and in part for the San Francisco Bay area was later established (Lillard, Heizer, and Fenenga 1939), with the estimated 2000 B.C. still playing an important role as an archeological marker. These earlier estimates, based upon geological or climatological principles as well as intuition, were all approximately confirmed by carbon-14 dating after 1950.

This chapter is directed toward relating the various archeological regions of California to one another wherever possible with concrete evidence, during a span of about 3,500 years. The necessarily telescoped delineations can conveniently begin with Central California, the largest area considered, which includes all of the Great Central Valley, the San Francisco Bay region, and part of the Pacific Coast north and south of the bay.

Central California

Alameda, Diablo, and Cosumnes Districts

Beardsley (1948, 1954) in expanding earlier work on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region to San Francisco Bay area, adopted the designations Early, Middle, and Late Horizons as a chronological framework. He subdivided the entire region into *zones* and *provinces*, which contained *facies*, defined as a group of intimately related *components*. Components are defined as an archeological record of human occupation at a single locality at a specific time. Beardsley's Horizon sequence and his term *facies* are used here, but for his zones and provinces the expression *district* has been substituted. Significant *facies* for Alameda, Diablo, and Cosumnes Districts are summarized graphically in figures 2-6, with sites giving names to the *facies* located in fig. 1.

Heizer (1949:39) estimated 1500 B.C. as the termination date of the Early Horizon in the Delta; there was not sufficient evidence at this time firmly to indicate an

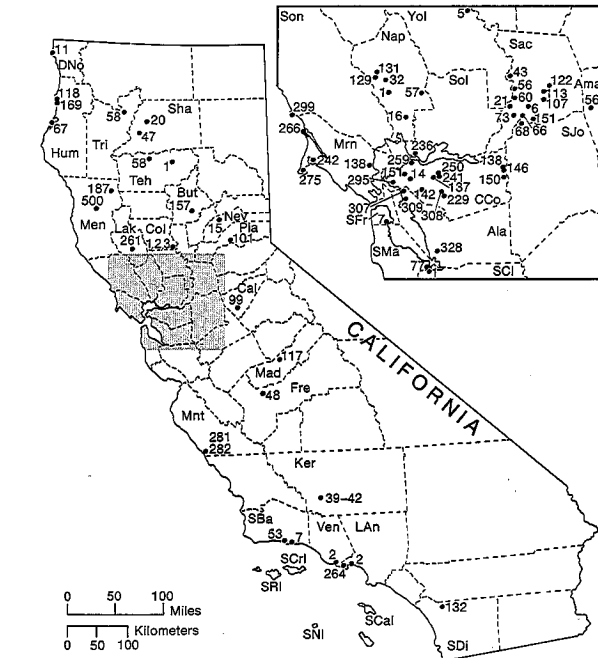
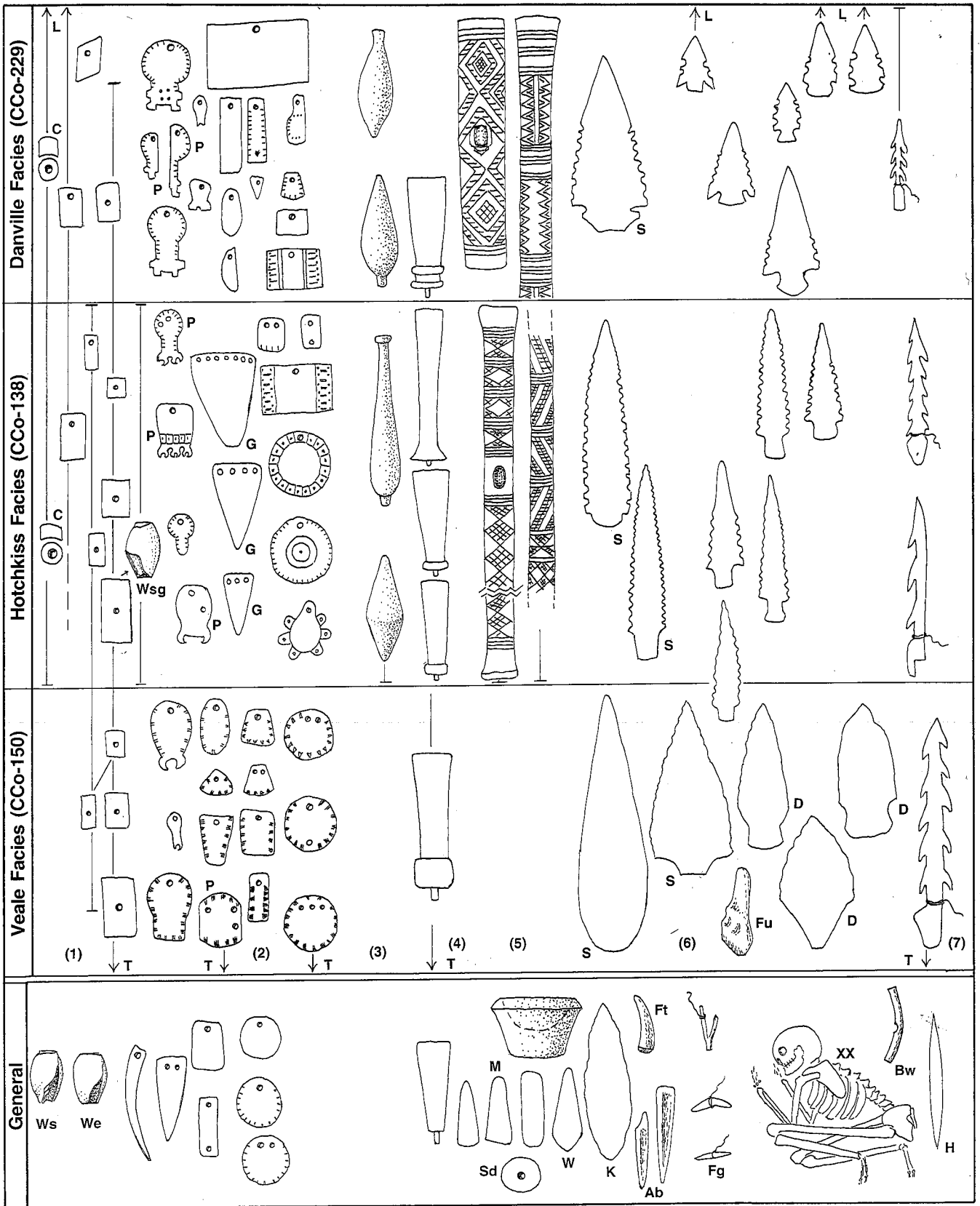


Fig. 1. Some archeological sites and locations. Designations for sites follow system of abbreviation for present county names.

Early Horizon expression on San Francisco Bay. However, Middle Horizon peoples were then thought to have appeared on the bay at some time between 1500 B.C. and 1000 B.C. Later, 2000 B.C. was suggested as the time when the Early Horizon in the Delta either began to develop into, or was replaced by, the Middle Horizon culture (Heizer 1958:7).

Since 1958 additional excavations and carbon-14 dates from the bay region have given substance to the idea of the existence of an Early Bay culture (Gerow and Force 1968:12). This is proposed as the Berkeley facies herein (fig. 2) and linked with the Windmill facies (Early Horizon-Lower Sacramento Valley) on the basis of resemblances in olivella bead types; haliotis ornaments; perforated charmstones; stone projectile points; bone fishhooks of a rare, specific type; and comparatively little use of obsidian as an implement material.

Correspondences between coast and interior (Delta)



planation for this seems to be that these coastal peoples, in whose living sites many species of mollusks, including *haliotis*, are found in abundance, were simply not so much interested in fashioning ornaments as were the inland people who had to import the shell from the coast.

The Mendoza facies, the Late Horizon, Phase 1 representative of Marin District, presents certain enigmas as far as association with any specific facies of the Bay or Delta regions is concerned, especially since olivella shell beads, which serve as definite time markers for the Bay-Delta facies, are lacking.

Cremations in Mendoza facies are complete (in contrast to "partial," which may be a variant of preinterment burning already described for Delta region) but, as in many Late Horizon sites, more often include grave goods than do primary burials. Unexpectedly, cremations also contain perforated phallic charmstones, usually considered an Early or early Middle Horizon trait in Central California. Light, stemmed, chipped obsidian points; diminished numbers of notched or grooved stone sinkers; shaped flat-bottomed mortars; biconically drilled, tubular, flanged stone pipes; "killing" of grave artifacts—all these elements correspond with Late Horizon, Phase 1 facies elsewhere. Apparent impoverishments in the Mendoza facies suggest phenomena in Marin District similar to those already mentioned for Alameda District toward the end of Phase 1, Late Horizon.

Colusa District

Judging from the number of sites and the richness of artifactual remains found in them, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region must have been an innovative center of cultural development. Thus the Colusa District to the north, mainly along the Sacramento River, seemed to be chiefly on the receiving end of influences exchanged back and forth between it and the Cosumnes District. In Sandhill facies (for example, site Col-3, equated in time with Diablo District, Veale facies—see fig. 6), Late Horizon Phase 1 links with the south are seen in the presence of rectangular and split-punched olivella beads, Types 2a1 and 3a2 (fig. 5), *haliotis* ornaments of the modified "banjo" type, dorsally extended

burial position, tubular stone pipes with flanges, and small side-notched obsidian points.

Several traits from Cosumnes District such as flat-bottomed, shaped mortars and complete cremations did not penetrate to the north. Use of shaped baked clay objects from Cosumnes entered Colusa District but seemingly never achieved much importance. Moreover, a number of practices common to the Delta during Phase 1, such as preinterment grave-pit burning, deep angular serration of obsidian points, and incising of bird-bone tubes, did not appear in Colusa District until Phase 2. This has given rise to the supposition that there was a migration at some time from the south to the comparatively poor region of the north.

People of the Sandhill facies seemingly were subjected to influences probably from the north, and Olsen and Riddell (1962) have recorded there probably the earliest appearance in California of a type of projectile point called Gunther-barbed after similar specimens found in quantity in Northwestern California around Humboldt Bay.

Napa District

It is evident that the prehistoric populations of the Napa Valley and environs had close ties with both San Francisco Bay and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta regions (Heizer 1953).

At least two sites (Nap-129 and Nap-131, fig. 1) have been suggested, on the basis of artifacts like manos, basalt core tools, and concave-based, fluted points like those from Borax Lake, as equatable with Early Horizon in Central California.

Investigations at several stratified sites (for example, Nap-1, Nap-32—see fig. 1) have indicated that Middle Horizon is represented in the lower levels, principally by: flexed burials; "saucer" and "saddle" olivella beads, Types 3c and 3b1; probably nonserrated, nonstemmed obsidian points, of which the sequential picture of the specimens is not altogether clear, since they do not have burial association data; circular ear plugs (?) of stone, of a type found in Middle Horizon contexts in San Francisco Bay sites (but in both Middle and Late in Sacramento Valley as well); reworked obsidian prisms—"ban-

Chart by J. A. Bennyhoff, 1972.

Fig. 6. Late Horizon, Phase 1, Diablo District: Significant artifact types and temporal changes. Olivella beads shown approximately actual size; relative scale shown for projectile points; other classes of artifacts not to scale. Position of specimens within subphases has no significance except for projectile points. Approximate order of artifacts represented, from left to right: 1. Olivella beads; 2. *Haliotis* ornaments (note that first appearance of heavy incision on many ornaments is in Middle-Late Horizon Transition); 3. Charmstones; 4. Stone pipes; 5. Decorated bone ear tubes and whistles; 6. Stone projectile points; 7. Bone harpoons. Legend: Ab, bone awls; Bw, bone whistles; C, "cupped" olivella beads; D, dart point (undesigned points are presumed arrow points); Fg, Fishhook or gorges of wood (top), shell, and bone (bottom); Ft, antler tine flaker; Fu, bone (ulna) flaker; G, ornaments worn as girdle; H, bone hairpin; K, stone knife; L, trait carries over to Phase 2, Late Horizon; M, stone mortar and pestles; P, ornaments usually found paired in mirror image; S, spear point; Sd, stone discoidal, perforated; T, trait appears for first time in Transition phase, between Middle and Late Horizons; W, stone pestle for use in wooden mortars; We, whole end-ground olivella bead; Ws, whole spire-ground olivella bead; Wsg, whole side-ground olivella bead; XX, flexed burial position (27% grave pit burning; 32% have northwest orientation).