

1984: 2-3, John L. Fagan, personal communication 1984).

Although the point is too sandblasted to yield a reliable obsidian hydration measurement, Clovis points are generally associated with cultural deposits dating to about 11,000 radiocarbon years before the present. The specimen was, however, sourced by X-ray fluorescence to the obsidian deposits near Coso Hot Springs (the Coso, or Sugarloaf source; Ericson, Hagan, and Chesterman 1976) in southwestern Inyo County, about 150 km. northwest of the site where the point was found. This suggests that use of the obsidian deposits near Coso Hot Springs began perhaps as early as 11,000 years ago.

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A Basket Fragment from the Lava Mountains, San Bernardino County, California

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During an archaeological survey conducted by the junior author for the Randsburg - Spangler Hills - South Searles Lake Geothermal Area of western San Bernardino County, California (United States Department of the Interior [USDI] 1976), a small cave (SBR-1206) containing a basket fragment was recorded. Since basketry is so infrequently recovered in archaeological contexts in the region and because attributes of basketry may be helpful in delineating group boundaries as well as regional activities, a brief analysis is in order.

The site, one of a dozen rockshelters and caves recorded in the immediate vicinity, is a small endogenic cave located along the northwest face of a rocky ridge at the west end of the Lava Mountains (Fig. 1). The cave is a narrow fissure formed beneath a large boulder and measures approximately five meters wide, two meters deep, and one-half meter high. A large woodrat nest is present in the cave.

Recovered near the mouth of the cave, the basket fragment is "C" shaped and measures 9.0 x 8.6 x 0.7 cm. (Fig. 2). The piece

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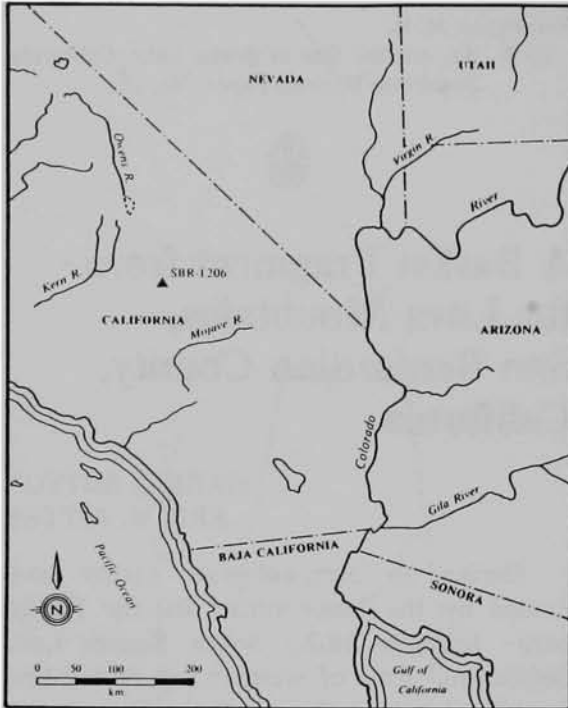


Fig. 1. Location of the SBR-1206 site.

was covered, to a great extent, with packrat excrement. No other artifactual material was observed on the surface of the site and it is possible that the piece was brought into the cave by rodents.

The fragment was examined and analyzed by Lawrence E. Dawson of the Lowie Museum of the University of California, Berkeley. Dawson identified it as a probable mend from near the start of a large coiled basket. The sewing strands were identified as rush (*Juncus acutus*), while the foundation consists of an unidentified grass. The two rows toward the center have a leftward work direction while the two outer rows have a rightward work direction. Dawson suspected that the inner rows were stitched to fill a hole. He further noted that the basket manufacture was very rough.

There are no chronometric data from the site, although nearby sites contain predominantly late prehistoric materials (USDI 1976).



Fig. 2. The SBR-1206 basket fragment.

One could probably assume that the basket fragment dates from late prehistoric or protohistoric times (cf. Adovasio 1971).

The site is located in an area ethnographically ascribed to the Panamint (Kroeber 1925) although Kawaiisu and Chemehuevi "borders" are nearby (see also Hall and Barker 1975: Fig. 6). The Vanyume (Serrano) presumably occupied the area immediately south of the site. It should be pointed out that these "borders" are idealized and probably do not reflect hard-and-fast boundaries.

In his analysis, Dawson described the basket fragment as being the kind generally made by the Serrano, Cahuilla, and Luiseño; not the Panamint, Kawaiisu, or Chemehuevi. This conclusion was based on the use of *Juncus acutus* as sewing strands, a material not used in Panamint basketry until circa 1930, nor used in Kawaiisu basketry at all except for practice or temporary vessels (Zigmond 1978). The use of a grass bundle foundation also is very uncommon in Panamint basketry. The presence of what would appear to be a southern California basket style in the presumed Panamint area may suggest trade (cf. Baumhoff and Heizer 1958)

or utilization of the area by southern groups. The ethnographic boundary of the Vanyume is fairly close to the site and, therefore, the occurrence of this piece may not be unusual. Unfortunately, so little basketry is known for the area, and that which is known has generally been so poorly analyzed, that comparisons are difficult.

There is only one site in the area from which a large basketry collection has been recovered. Chapman Cave One (Hillebrand 1972), located some 35 mi. (50 km.) north of the Lava Mountains near the center of the China Lake Naval Weapons Center, contained 120 basket fragments (two coiled, 118 twined). The specimens are poorly described and it is quite difficult to extrapolate any data from the report. Eight types of basketry are listed, two coiled and six twined. A basket was apparently recovered with the burial of an adult male, although the basket type is not clearly described. Some of the twined pieces apparently were made from willow (*Salix* sp.).

Two twined conical burden baskets were found at nearby Ray Cave, one of which was tentatively identified as being made from willow (Panlaqui 1974: Fig. 8). An almost complete twined water jug was also recovered (Panlaqui 1974: Fig. 9) and was probably pitched with pine sap (probably *Pinus monophylla*; Panlaqui 1974: 20). In addition, a virtually complete twined seed beater (Panlaqui 1974: Fig. 10) was removed. While there are no chronometric data from Ray Cave, the presence of Desert Side-notched and Cottonwood series projectile points indicates a late occupation.

Several basket fragments were recovered at Seep Spring (Peck and Smith 1957), located some 20 mi. (35 km.) east of the Lava Mountains. Basket fragments were found at two of the three caves investigated. Cave One contained "... several basket fragments displaying coiled and sewn weave" (Peck and Smith 1957: 250). A fragment of a possible

winning tray was also found. One small fragment of a twined basket was removed from Cave Three. No further description of the materials is currently available. Numerous other perishables were also recovered from the Seep Spring area.

Four basket fragments were recovered from Cave One in Black Canyon (Howe 1980), located some 30 mi. (45 km.) southeast of the Lava Mountains. The pieces from the site are well described (Rozaire 1980). All the pieces are two element, S-twined. The warp in each of the specimens was identified as arrowweed (*Pluchea sericea*), while the weft in two of the specimens was identified as squaw bush (*Rhus trilobata* var. *anisophylla*), the third as bulrush (*Scirpus* sp.), while the fourth was unidentified. Arrowweed does not appear to have been used by either the Cahuilla (Bean and Saubel 1972) or the Kawaiisu (Zigmond 1978) in basket construction. Three of the pieces are illustrated in Howe (1980: Fig. 46).

Three fragments of coiled basketry were recovered from Ord Shelter (Echlin et al. 1981), about 75 mi. (110 km.) southeast of the Lava Mountains. Each of the pieces exhibits a rightward work direction. The pieces were described as representing the coiled basketry of southwest California and are illustrated in Echlin et al. (1981: Figs. 12-14).

Nine basket fragments were recovered from Teddy Bear Cave in the Tehachapi Mountains (Sutton 1982) and, presumably, represent archaeological examples of Kawaiisu basketry. Teddy Bear Cave is located some 50 mi. (75 km.) southwest of the Lava Mountains. Two of the fragments remain undescribed while the other seven are twined and represent pieces of at least one large burden basket and a water bottle.

Given the available data on basketry in the general region, the Lava Mountain fragment exhibits some possibly unique character-

istics, especially in regard to its provenience and composition. The Lava Mountains area was apparently rich in seed food products and this vessel, in its functional state, no doubt served as a storage container, perhaps employed by groups either from the south, or with southern connections, who were utilizing the area seasonally (cf. USDI 1976).

It should be clear from the above review that the quality of regional basketry data is uneven and ambiguous, thus difficult to integrate. Hopefully, the description of this basket fragment from the Lava Mountains will add meaningfully to the data base.

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