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Moratto, Riley, and Wilson, eds.: *Shelter Hill: Archaeological Investigations of Mrn-14, Mill Valley, California*

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## REVIEWS

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*Shelter Hill: Archaeological Investigations at Mrn-14, Mill Valley, California.* Michael J. Moratto, Lynn M. Riley, and Steven C. Wilson, eds. San Francisco and Marin: Treganza Anthropological Museum Papers, No. 15 and Miwok Archaeological Preserve of Marin Papers, No. 2, 1974. x + 166 pp., 2 maps (site locations map provided free of charge upon request by professional archaeologists only), 22 illustrations (9 plates, 11 figures, 2 logs). \$5.00 (paper).

*Reviewed by* BERT A. GEROW  
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Mrn-14 has been known to archaeologists since 1907 when it was briefly described by N. C. Nelson in his field notes. The site is located near the former western water and marsh arm of Richardson's Bay, which in turn is a small northern arm of San Francisco Bay, separating Marin and Tiburon peninsulas. Mrn-20 (McGeein and Mueller 1955) lies about 1½ miles to the southwest on Strawberry Point and Mrn-27 (T. King 1970) lies about a mile to the northeast. Present areal dimensions of the site agree closely with those given by Nelson. The possibility exists that some of the upper levels have been graded off since Nelson's time. He suggested a maximum depth of about 13 feet, and the present report concludes "the cultural deposits were not less than 200 cm in many places, and it seems likely the depth could approach 300 cm on the eastern periphery . . ." (p. 67).

As the result of an agreement reached with the City of Mill Valley, a program of archaeo-

logical investigation was undertaken during an unspecified period in April, 1974. Financial support came from the Interfaith Housing Foundation and the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin. A sample estimated by the reviewer to have been less than 80 cubic meters, in the form of twenty 2 x 2 m. and one 1 x 2 m. units, was excavated by some 28 students enrolled in a field course at San Francisco State University under the direction of Moratto and by an additional 80 or more volunteers from various nearby institutions.

Three burials (one with associations), 12 additional features, and a total of 232 catalogued artifactual items and 133 fish and other mammal and molluscan diet remains were encountered. Two C-14 dates on charcoal of  $1230 \pm 80$  radiocarbon years B.P.: A.D. 720 (I-7935) and  $1345 \pm 80$  radiocarbon years B.P.: A.D. 605 (I-7936) are referable to Feature VIII between the +27-40 cm. and Feature V between the 149-160 cm. in units 0-99 and I-103, respectively. Only the latter unit seems to have been excavated below the 1-meter level. A geological core sample, taken by Kenneth LaJoie (U.S. Geological Survey, Menlo Park) in Unit I-103, revealed that midden extended to a depth of 1.9 meters. The two C-14 dates and a few clam disk beads suggest that Mrn-14 was occupied from around the time of Christ until after A.D. 1400. A rarity of birdbone and a relative abundance of bat ray bones in the midden may indicate a seasonal occupation from late spring to fall.

In the judgement of the reviewer, the core of the report lies in chapters V-VII and some of the appendices, a total of only 67 pages, which includes virtually all figures, plates, maps, and

even several pages of bibliographical items associated with W. I. Follett's careful analysis of the fish remains. Despite ample financial and personnel support and a considerable amount of effort devoted to establishing an effective strategy and methodology, only the upper levels of Mrn-14 were adequately sampled. The inferred relationship between specific typological evidence from burial 2 and a C-14 date of A.D. 720 is open to question. The drilled *Olivella* shell beads, referred to as type M1 or M1a, are not adequately described or illustrated. On the other hand, according to the data given, the prenatal burial 2 was 0-20 cm. below the NW corner of unit 0-99 and 160 cm. east of that corner. Feature VIII, from which the dated charcoal came, was +27-40 cm. deep and extended east 0-140 cm. from the same datum.

This report may satisfy any legal requirements posed by the Shelter Hill housing development, but for the professional archaeologist, it may best be considered as a series of student reports, marred by internal inconsistencies, omissions, factual errors, and insufficient data analysis and comparison with nearby sites. Parenthetically, buried in Chapter IV (p. 31) is the first published note on the fact that the BART (San Francisco Bay Area subway) skeleton, dated at  $4900 \pm 250$  radiocarbon years B.P., represents the partial remains of a male rather than a female as previously supposed.

As a final note, I wish to take this occasion to object to the frequent use of unpublished manuscript data and typologies and personal communications, especially when the latter fail to make sense. Chapter IV, which is essentially a cut-and-paste job from earlier publications in this series, purports to summarize much of San Francisco Bay archaeology. I do not accept responsibility for the personal communication on p. 32 attributed to me. Also, I would like to call attention to the continued incorrect citation of my 1968 monograph with Roland W.

Force. Finally, prior to Sonia Ragir (cf. p. 25) I argued on the basis of then existing typological evidence and radiocarbon and obsidian hydration dates that the Blossom site (SJo-68) was probably the oldest and not the most recent of the Windmillier facies settlements (Gerow with Force 1968:7, 111-121).

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Reviewed by ALBERT B. ELSASSER  
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This volume emphasizes the substantial literature which recounts California Indian history rather than that of whites, from about 1770 to the present. The distinction lies in the observation that many histories of post-contact California often seem to have included