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Wilke and Lawton, eds.: *The Expedition of Capt. J. W. Davidson from Fort Tejon to the Owens Valley in 1859*

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Prehistory of the Far West: Homes of Vanished Peoples. L.S. Cressman. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1977. 248 pp., 40 figs., 6 maps, 11 tables. \$15.00.

Reviewed by R.F. HEIZER
University of California, Berkeley

Luther Cressman comes as near to being the grand-daddy of far western archaeology as any living man. He and his students have been actively involved with Oregon prehistory for the last 45 years, and their contribution is an impressively substantial one. Now, from this experienced and objective scholar we have a synthesis of the prehistory of western North America which begins by summarizing the complexities of environmental changes over time back into the Pleistocene and proceeds to the chronologies of these alterations in the several natural areas involved, a review of the proposals for very ancient human presence (most of them bearing a burden of doubt), a summary of the anthropometry and linguistics of the area, a stimulating discussion of subsistence means and related activities, and a historical sketch of archaeological studies (pp. 129 ff). On the whole, I think this is an unusually sound and thorough work and that it will be an important guide, especially for younger scholars who come into archaeology and are confronted face-to-face with the mountains of literature of variable quality. An authoritative and balanced survey of this sort can be at the same time innovative, corrective, informative, and directive.

Having said that, I list a few matters which bothered me. The chapters are only titled, and numbers would be useful. The chapter "The Wanderers" includes a discussion of ancient human occupation at Texas Street and Santa Rosa Island which the book's author is inclined to accept. I disagree with him on the grounds that the evidence available is very poor. Valsequillo he calls "valid and firmly

dated," but the main issue of artifact planting raised by José Lorenzo is not mentioned. Calico Hills is not discussed, though it scarcely deserves it.

The treatment of the atlatl-bow succession is over-brief (pp. 106-107), and since Cressman can speak with knowledge on this matter its omission is a disappointment.

The book must have been in its final writing stage about 1969 since this is the terminal date for all but a few references. It is a pity that a postscript chapter, however brief, was not added to bring the reader up to date on publication of important work reported in the interim. I would include here such items as L.K. Napton's archaeology and coprolite analysis from Lovelock Cave, Baumhoff's and my examination of the evidence for "big game hunters" in the Great Basin, T.R. Hester's review of Great Basin culture chronology, the numerous articles on projectile point sequences in the Great Basin, and the publications of the Nevada State Museum and University of Nevada's Desert Research Institute. I hope that Cressman, or one of his Oregon colleagues will do this if the book is reprinted—a probability, I think.



The Expedition of Capt. J.W. Davidson from Fort Tejon to Owens Valley in 1859. Philip J. Wilke and Harry W. Lawton, eds. Socorro, New Mexico: Ballena Press Publications in Archaeology, Ethnology, and History No. 8. 1976. 55 pp., 11 illustrations. \$4.95 (paper).

Reviewed by JAMES F. O'CONNELL
Australian National University

In the summer of 1859, a reinforced company of U.S. Dragoons under the command of Black Jack Davidson rode northeast

from Ft. Tejon into the Owens Valley in search of livestock stolen earlier in the year from *rancherías* in the San Fernando and Santa Clara valleys. They failed to recover the missing stock, but succeeded in bringing back the first good account of Native American life in this remote area of eastern California. Wilke and Lawton's splendid little volume makes this important, but previously unpublished document, available for the first time. It includes Davidson's short report on his original investigation of the thefts in May, 1859, his much longer statement on the subsequent reconnaissance of the valleys of the upper Kern and the Owens, and an anonymous account of the expedition which appeared under the byline 'Quis' in the Los Angeles *Star* on 27 August of the same year. To these the editors have added a brief introduction, 14 pages of comprehensive footnotes, and several photographs.

Davidson's report and that of the *Star* correspondent are of particular interest in that both document the practice of large-scale root crop irrigation in the northern Owens Valley prior to the time of European settlement. Their comments on the size of the irrigated plots, the kinds of plants being cultivated, and their economic importance, corroborate earlier observations by members of the von Schmidt and MacKenzie parties; and together with later statements by A.S. Taylor, support the argument made by Steward and his Paiute informants that the system was an indigenous development (cf. Lawton et al. 1976). Davidson also describes other aspects of the traditional economy (notably the capture and consumption of *kutsavi* [*Ephydra* sp. larvae]), offers estimates of the size of the native populations in the upper Kern and Owens valleys, and comments on various features of the terrain crossed on the route of march.

The editors' introduction and annotation add greatly to the value of the publication. They provide useful information on earlier exploration in the Owens Valley, on the

circumstances behind Davidson's expedition, and on the identity and background of the principal parties involved. They identify most of the plants and animals discussed in Davidson's report, and even retraced his route in order to pinpoint the various locations mentioned. They also cite an exhaustive list of pertinent historical, ethnographic, and archaeological references. The exercise is one for which the reader cannot help but be grateful.

I find fault with the report on only two points. First, it suffers from the lack of an adequate map of Owens Valley. Had one been included, it would have been easier to understand the connection between text and terrain, particularly as discussed in the footnotes. The other problem is that several of the otherwise excellent photographs did not reproduce well.

Apart from these points, I can only compliment the editors for their very professional effort. The volume is an important addition to the ethnography of eastern California.

REFERENCE

- Lawton, H.W., P.J. Wilke,
M. DeDecker, and W.M. Mason
1976 Agriculture Among the Paiute of Owens Valley. *Journal of California Anthropology* 3(1):13-50.



The Wappo: A Report. Yolande S. Beard. St. Helena, Calif.: Yolande S. Beard, P.O. Box 16, 84574. 1977. 80 pp., illustrations. \$5.25 (paper).

Reviewed by VERA-MAE FREDRICKSON
Berkeley, California

"A Report," the sub-title of this modest paperback, accurately conveys the intent of the author who is also the illustrator and publisher. It is a summarizing report, written