ment of methods and results.

Pithouses are a common feature of Early Plains Archaic components in southcentral and southwestern Wyoming (see also McGuire et al. 1984; Eakin 1987). The distribution of these features is from the Green River on the west to the North Platte River on the east and from the Sweetwater River on the north to the southern Wyoming border. These structures are solidly dated between 4,500 and 6,000 B.P. The pithouses are typically between 3 and 4 meters in diameter and approximately 0.5 meters deep, although larger ones are known. The structures from the Maxon Ranch Site and the Sweetwater Creek Site appear to be quite typical in age and in size and configuration.

Pithouses are common on the Western Snake River Plain in Idaho and, of course, in the Columbia Plateau. They have also been found in Surprise Valley, California. The Wyoming pithouses are typically older than the Northwest counterparts. Pithouses of comparable age are found in the Northwest, but they are rare, and it is not until after 4,500 B.P. that they become common. The Wyoming pithouses tend to be smaller than the Northwest varieties, which are generally 6 to 10 meters. However, small ones are found in the northwest and one larger one (6 meters) has been found in Wyoming (McGuire et al. 1984). The Wyoming pithouses have more internal features in the form of storage and roasting pits than the Northwest varieties. Undoubtedly a detailed comparison of pithouses in the two regions would provide interesting information concerning their use.

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As archaeology in California and the Great Basin has been carried out increasingly

under the mandates of governmental legislation, there has been exponential growth in the amount of research conducted in these regions. Notwithstanding the fact that much of this work falls somewhat short of the best contemporary standards, there has emerged an extensive literature available only in the form of unpublished manuscripts on file with various governmental agencies or private firms. To be sure, certain agencies have made legitimate attempts to bring this so-called "gray literature" into wider circulation by reproducing and distributing, at minimal or no cost, copies of significant reports. Far too many important reports, however, continue to languish in files or have been only incompletely summarized in short journal articles.

Accompanying this rapid growth in information has been a concomitant decrease in the number of potential publishing outlets, particularly for monograph-length manuscripts. The series sponsored for many years by the University of California (e.g., UCPAAE,[1] UCAR, UCPA, UCARF-R, USASAR, UCARF-C) are variously discontinued, dormant, or have been operating at reduced levels for some time. Although several new publications have been initiated in an attempt to fill this void (e.g., MCGBA, PINCA, ARUM), they have been slow to develop due to funding and staffing limitations. Given this rather bleak situation, the "Archives of California Prehistory" series produced by Coyote Press has been a welcome addition to the publishing world. Sutton's brief report on salvage-related investigations at an open-air deposit in the north-central Mojave Desert comprises Number 9 in the series. The primary text is authored by Sutton, with appendices on vertebrate faunal remains by P. E. Langenwalter, II; on biotic associations by P. Roush; and on flaked stone debitage by L. Spencer.

Located in the Mud Hills, SBR-3801 sits atop a small sandy ridge surrounded by steep slopes that drop into Owl Canyon. Two loci were identified at the site, a larger concentration on the southern end of the ridge and a much smaller one to the north. Only the former, containing discontinuous patches of burnt soil, ash, and fire-affected rock, was examined as part of the salvage program. Cultural materials were essentially surficial though hummocks around creosote bushes indicated that subsurface deposit may once have been present. Twenty 5 x 5-m. grids in the southern locus were surface collected, the uppermost soils in the three being screened through 3-mm. mesh to obtain a representative micro-constituent sample. The artifactual assemblage was quite limited but diverse, containing portable milling equipment, battered cobbles, projectile points, bifaces, cores, flake tools, and almost 5,500 pieces of unmodified debitage. Flakes were primarily cryptocrystalline (96.6%), though some obsidian (0.2%), basalt (0.8%), and quartzite (2.2%) debris also was recovered. Non-utilitarian artifacts included one *Olivella* barrel bead and two pendant fragments.

For the most part artifact descriptions provided in the report are useful, the small size of the collection permitting treatment of individual items. There are, however, a couple of problems with the presentation: certain tool categories are incompletely described and overall distributions are not presented. For example, only eight diagnostic points are discussed in detail, but the text (p. 17) indicates that 53 unclassifiable fragments were also collected. This is the only place these pieces are mentioned and it would have been valuable to note something about their morphology (dart or arrow size, distal versus proximal pieces, etc.) and distributions. With regard to the latter, one inclusive summary tabulation of materials by

grid would have been useful in tracking intra-site patterning.

The vertebrate faunal analysis by Langenwalter (Appendix 1) presents element counts and minimum number of individual estimates for all bone from SBR-3801. With a few exceptions his observations regarding animal use are balanced, and he rightly underscores the importance of materials from smaller "limited activity sites" in understanding the full range of regional subsistence behavior. Although Langenwalter suggests that the assemblage reflects a focus on small animals (i.e., woodrats), it seems likely that many of these remains are non-cultural in origin. Skeletal completeness relationships are consistent with the latter inference: for jackrabbits 5 MNI were derived from 114 elements (1:23), while woodrats show 24 MNI from 108 elements (1:4). Processes of introduction must, of course, be identified prior to positing behavioral interpretations.

The debitage treatment by Spencer (Appendix 3) constitutes the most intensive analysis performed at the site. He segregates all diagnostic flakes by material group, technological (morphological) type, and grid unit. The debitage profile, which is abundant in biface thinning debris but poor in both cortical and pressure retouch flakes, suggests that raw materials arrived at the site in partially reduced form. Tool finishing and/or resharpening activities are represented, but the emphasis lay in the production of thinned bifaces (i.e., preforms).

Dating of the SBR-3801 occupation is predicated on one radiocarbon assay, the presence of time-sensitive artifact forms, and several obsidian hydration measurements. The points included two Rose Spring, one Humboldt Basal-notched, one Elko series and three so-called Saratoga Springs forms. Although the typological affinity of several specimens is subject to debate (see Figs. 8-9), together they seem to indicate use spanning the Newberry and Haiwee periods (Bettinger and Taylor 1974). Such temporal placement seems consistent with other chronometric data from the site: a radiocarbon determination of 3,190±695 B.P.; Pyramid Grey Ware pottery provisionally dated between 650-450 B.P. (King and Casebier 1976); and Coso hydration readings ranging from 4.8-10.1 microns (Ericson 1981; Gilreath et al. 1987; Meighan 1978). In sum, available data suggest that cultural debris was being deposited between 3,300 B.P. and 500 B.P., a span of nearly 3,000 years.

In summarizing behavioral implications of the site, Sutton characterizes it as a "base camp, occupied seasonally (winter?) for perhaps several months at a time and having served as a base to exploit . . . resources in the Mud Hills area" (p. 34). He further argues that the locality "represents one facet in a seasonal round that undoubtedly included numerous other sites" perhaps with broader affiliations to villages along the Mojave River, and suggests that "the settlement pattern (with the political and subsistence systems?) may have been fairly stable" during the several thousand years of site deposition (p. 34).

While these inferences are in some ways reasonable, in failing to consider the dynamics of site formation among hunter-gatherers they are open to serious question. On the basis of available data there is no reliable way to segregate non-diagnostic materials deposited during one occupation or general temporal interval from those produced during another. To consider just a single example, it is crucial to know whether milling equipment was used at the site during all occupational episodes or restricted to just a portion of the sequence. This would have clear ramifications for the site representing a "base camp" during the whole of its history, such an ascription clearly influ-

enced by the presence of vegetal processing tools, as well as all other behavioral characterizations (e.g., the technological trajectories, faunal procurement strategies, etc.). If it is a palimpsest assemblage represented at SBR-3801, occupations may have involved quite different activities--hard seed processing during one episode, animal procurement during another, and biface production during a third. Inasmuch as site use may span several millennia, such factors must at least contribute to the configuration of the deposit; the only real question is to what extent.

Finally, one comment on the role of "exotic" materials at SBR-3801. The presence of one marine shell bead and 15 obsidian flakes implies to Sutton that "the occupants of the site were involved in a trade network" (p. 35), perhaps affiliated with villages on the Mojave River. In view of the marginal amounts of both materials present at the site such an inference seems unwarranted, and "exotics" were as likely obtained through ad hoc means. Indeed, if populations visiting SBR-3801 were at all mobile, as data from throughout the southwestern Great Basin suggest they were, obsidian acquisition was likely "embedded" (Binford 1979) within the inclusive subsistence-settlement adaptation.

In closing this review a couple of points should be emphasized. In the first place, studies such as the present one make valuable contributions to the study of regional prehistory. The assemblage from SBR-3801 was relatively small, the work was limited, and depositional circumstances were less than ideal. Nonetheless, the material provides rich fodder for comparison to more extensive research programs in surrounding areas. At the same time, certain methodological underpinnings of the study are problematic. By virtue of ignoring settlement dynamics and their effect on archaeological site formation, inferences offered regarding the role of Owl Canyon through time and vis-a-vis other settlements find little support. This observation is not so much a criticism of the present study--which was a limited evaluation conducted over five years ago in response to emergency threats to the deposit--but a commentary on archaeology as it has commonly been practiced in California and the Great Basin. So long as archaeologists employ uncritically such concepts as base camp, seasonal round, or trade without substantiation, we will make little progress in unraveling the intricacies of past hunter-gatherer adaptations. The present study, therefore, serves two purposes; it succeeds in disseminating valuable data on yet another important Mojave Desert site and offers an opportunity to evaluate approaches to research in the region as of 1981. Both the author and Coyote Press are to be commended for making this information more widely available.

NOTE

1. Abbreviations for publication series are as follows: UCPAAE, University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology; UCAR, University of California Anthropological Records; UCPA, University of California Publications in Anthropology; UCARF-R, University of California Archaeological Research Facility, Reports; UCARF-C, University of California Archaeological Research Facility, Contributions; UCASAR, University of California Archaeological Survey Annual Reports: MCGBA, Monographs in California and Great Basin Anthropology; PINCA, Publications in Northern California Archaeology; ARUM, Archaeological Research Unit Monographs.

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Toward the end of a long and distinguished career as California's State Archeologist, Francis A. Riddell organized a symposium to examine how recent research has affected our understanding of some of the state's classic archaeological sites. Twelve papers were presented, of which ten have been gathered and revised for publication.

Symposium collections are typically a varied lot, suffering as they usually do from different authorship of papers and varying intellectual cohesiveness among the contributors. This volume is no exception, but archaeologists will find more of interest here than in many symposium volumes because the subject matter involves the key sites on which much of California's sequences of culture history have been reconstructed. Such classics of California prehistory as the Emeryville Shellmound, Mescalitan Island, Borax Lake, the Tank site, and Gunther Island are represented here, often in more detail than has been seen since the original site report. In addition, the authors include some of the most important figures in California archaeology, who draw on years of research experience to reevaluate landmark excavations.

Coyote Press has done a nice job with the volume, offering a clean and readable collection at an extremely modest price. The Press should be commended more generally for making available many important papers at affordable prices. This is especially so because of the fact that many institutions have ceased to publish archaeological contributions while some of the commercially published volumes now cost almost as much as it cost to fund an excavation in Kroeber's early days.

The volume includes 10 papers; two others given at the original symposium were not submitted for publication. The papers are divided into two groups: five on south-