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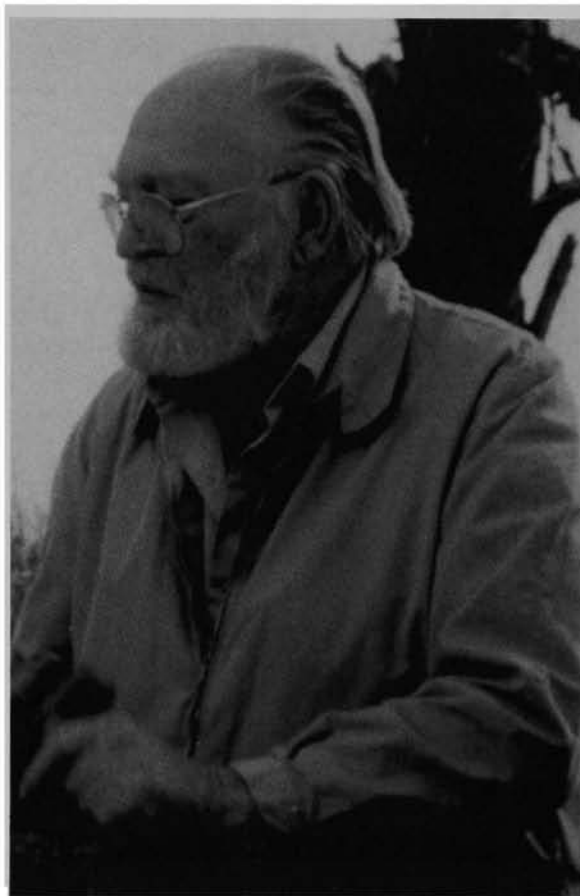
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Franklin Fenenga and California Archaeology

(1917 - 1994)



Franklin Fenenga, photograph taken ca. 1992.

FRANKLIN FENENGA died suddenly on April 7, 1994, of pneumonia. Shortly before, he had learned that he had inoperable lung cancer and only a relatively short time to live. His death ended a long and noteworthy career of research into California's archaeological past.

Fenenga's involvement in archaeology began early in life. Initially interested in relic hunting, he had a couple of years' experience in field work in the Midwest while still a high school student. As one of a group of high school students assembled to talk about potential careers, he spoke on archaeology before a meeting of the National Educational Association in St. Louis.

Present in the audience was Jeremiah B. Lillard, president of Sacramento Junior College. Anxious to build an archaeological program at the college, Lillard began a correspondence with Fenenga, urging him to come to Sacramento, which Fenenga eventually did.

During his stay at Sacramento Junior College, Fenenga helped to direct archaeological crews in excavating Indian mounds in the Sacramento Valley on weekends. It was here that he began a long and close friendship with Robert F. Heizer, who also had been recruited by Lillard. The end result of the archaeological work was the publication in 1939 of *An Introduction to the Archaeology of Central California*, by Lillard, Heizer, and Fenenga, and published by the College's Department of Anthropology. This volume outlined the first clear-cut cultural sequence for the Sacramento Valley. In the same year, a summary article entitled *Archaeological Horizons in Central California*, coauthored by Heizer and Fenenga, appeared in *American Anthropologist*. Following several years at the junior college, Fenenga enrolled as an anthropology major at the University of California, Berkeley, where he renewed his association with Heizer, who was now a member of the faculty.

When the Smithsonian Institution extended its program of River Basin Surveys to the Far West, Fenenga was hired to survey four proposed reservoir areas—Pine Flat, Isabella, and Success in the San Joaquin Valley, and Coyote in Mendocino County. Brief preliminary reports on each of the investigations were prepared.

With the founding of the University of California Archaeological Survey (UCAS), Fenenga was enlisted as the first archaeologist, a post he held for two years, from 1948 to 1950. This was a busy and productive period for him. In addition to conducting surveys and excavations in central and northern California, he prepared two useful guides—*Methods of Recording and*

Present Status of Knowledge Concerning Petroglyphs in California and *Methods for Archaeological Survey in California*—both published in 1949 as University of California Archaeological Survey Reports. During his tenure as the first archaeologist at UCAS, Fenenga was involved in excavations at Pine Flat, Tommy Tucker Cave, and Slick Rock Village. His crew of graduate students—the first post-World War II archaeology graduate student cohort at Berkeley—included people such as James Bennyhoff, Clement Meighan, Fritz Riddell, David Fredrickson, and others. He was highly respected by this group, exerting a strong positive influence with respect to commitment and other professional values.

Fenenga's research was not confined to prehistoric archaeological sites. Over the years, he participated in or supervised several investigations of historical sites. In 1947, Fenenga collaborated with Aubrey Neasham of the National Park Service and Robert Heizer in a study of the gold discovery site at Coloma and described the artifacts obtained from excavation of the Sutter Sawmill site. Shortly thereafter, he and Heizer conducted a survey of buildings in the Mother Lode district. Other historical archaeological studies were later undertaken at postcontact sites on the Fresno and Chowchilla rivers, at Fort Tejon, and at the Avila Adobe in Los Angeles.

After a long absence from the state, during which time he served as Archaeologist for the Missouri River Basin Survey, Research Associate at the University of Nebraska, and Director of Museums for the State of Georgia, Fenenga returned to California in 1965 to teach in the Department of Anthropology at California State University, Long Beach. Here he developed an active archaeological program and won the respect and admiration of students, not only as a teacher but as a friend and confidant. One of his major research activities, carried out between 1969 and 1975, included five profitable field sessions at Hidden Reservoir in Madera County.

In 1985, in recognition of his numerous con-

tributions to the profession, Franklin Fenenga received the Society for California Archaeology's Lifetime Achievement Award. Following his retirement from teaching in 1987, Fenenga remained active in the field of California archaeology as consultant, advisor, and participant in various projects. Finding it hard to give up contacts with former students, he kept in close touch with many of them.

Fenenga exerted a profound effect upon California archaeology through his early Sacramento Valley work and his relations with students during his post-World War II period at Berkeley, many of whom later pursued their own careers in California archaeology.

William J. Wallace
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