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An Archaeological Assay on Dry Creek, Sonoma County, California. Martin A. Baumhoff and Robert I. Orlins. Berkeley: University of California Archaeological Research Facility *Contributions* No. 40, 1979, 244 pp., 30 figs., 30 maps, index, 3 appendices, \$8.00 (paper).¹

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Reported here is information on 62 sites in Sonoma County, northern California—results of an Environmental Impact Study done in 1974-75. Most of the work was survey; very limited test excavations were conducted in 1975, usually a single test pit at each site.

This volume is a good case study exemplifying the positive and negative aspects of environmental impact reports. On the positive side, very detailed work was done in a proposed reservoir area (the Warm Springs Dam project). It is unlikely that such a comprehensive surface survey would have been done here without the impetus of a construction project. The sites are described in seven "site groups"—geographic zones related to the various creeks draining into the reservoir basin. Individual sites are discussed in short passages, from as little as four lines up to a couple of pages of text. The site groups are discussed and analyzed in terms of activities represented, social organization, and changes through time. There is an interesting use of debitage ratios (pp. 185-191) applied to chronological problems. The authors suggest that the archaeological record shows a "progressive Penutianization of the Hokan peoples," a most interesting hypothesis which is fitted to the archaeological record of the North Coast Ranges. This brief discussion is not (and cannot be) convincingly demonstrated with the available archaeological evidence, but it raises a number of very inter-



esting problems and possibilities for further investigation, and it is imaginative and creative thinking of a kind not usually seen in environmental impact studies.

The negative aspects of EIR archaeology cannot be blamed on the authors of the report, who indeed explicitly recognize the difficulties of doing archaeology to meet the rather narrow needs of "compliance" and of the miscellaneous contractors involved. The difficulties are neatly summed up on p. x: "The result of this concatenation of agencies, Corps, Offices, Registers, Departments, and Campuses as well as laws, orders, policies, rules and programs, was to make it seem at times impossible to do archaeology at all. One spends full time dealing with these problems and no time doing archaeology or any other kind of scholarship." While the authors make these as "ethnographic" observations and not as a request for reform, this reviewer sees reform as long overdue, since the effect of all the agencies designed to improve research has become the exact opposite of the intended purpose and archaeologists have lost all intellectual and managerial control over their own area of expertise. Scholars who have a genuine interest in the past, and the skills to discover and interpret the past, should not be quite so compliant in accepting the way the interests of scholarship are pushed aside by bureaucrats and administrators whose goals are merely compliance with the rules, not intellectual advancement nor discovery of new information about the past.

In the present study, field archaeology was essentially thwarted since so little excavation was done that one cannot be sure of the suggestions made by the authors and the findings are minimal indeed. All illustrations are line drawings (largely maps); there are no photographs and the illustrated collection is composed of 77 projectile points and fragments (ranging from one to seven specimens per site). Rock art is mentioned as present but

not described or illustrated. There are no radiocarbon or obsidian dates (promised for later study). There is no analysis of faunal remains or the few seeds recovered by flotation. In sum, the archaeology for the 62 sites has barely been initiated, and the data recovery is far too small to justify much in the way of conclusions, and still less to justify destruction of the sites on the grounds that they have been studied.

A variety of economic, political, and bureaucratic forces have combined to require that as little excavation as possible be done in archaeological sites, and some archaeologists have seen this as a good result. The effects of such policy are seen here, however, in the paucity of collections (and hence information) available for analysis by the authors of the report. Some significant questions are raised by the authors—they deserve an excavation program of sufficient scope to address the issues and obtain the field collections necessary for answering the questions with tangible evidence.

EDITOR'S NOTE

1. Publication of this review was unavoidably delayed. Since 1979, additional archaeological work has been completed in the Warm Springs Dam vicinity and reviews of those reports are forthcoming.

