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White, Mikkelsen, Hildebrandt, and Basgall (eds.): There Grows a Green Tree: Papers in Honor of David A. Fredrickson

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Anyone who has attended annual meetings of the Society for California Archaeology in the past five years or so must very soon have become aware of the great number of presentations by students from Sonoma State University. The present volume reflects in good measure the continuation of the work of these students of Dave Fredrickson and has, in addition, a fair sprinkling of papers by several of his many friends and colleagues, contemporaries during a long career at Berkeley, Davis, and Rohnert Park. In an admirable biographical memoir on Fredrickson, Greg White names all the students and associates at Sonoma who undoubtedly came under his influence and always friendly guidance.

The Introduction, by Mark Basgall, contains an excellent summary and commentary on all the essays, and the present reviewer has frankly and constantly referred to it. What follows here are comments on papers somewhat arbitrarily chosen as field or laboratory research material in which Fredrickson, in my view, probably was interested most deeply before and at the time of his retirement; neglect of some papers is purely a matter of space limitations. Names and authors of papers not addressed here are included at the end of the review.

The volume is divided into seven sections (with the number of papers in each section in brackets): (1) Ethnography and History [4]; (2) Site Structures [4]; (3) Taxonomy and Culture Change [3]; (4) Archaeology and Environment [3]; (5) Obsidian Hydration [4]; (6) Artifacts and Features [5]; and (7) Graves and Associations [3]. Eleven papers refer to the North Coast, eleven to other parts of northern California, and two to southern California; two are general in scope.

Probably Fredrickson’s most important contributions to California archaeology have been his writings on culture change and his encouragement and participation in studies involving obsidian as an analytical tool. His followers or co-workers in the present volume, M. Basgall, T. L. Jones and J. F. Hayes, J. Parker, K. Tremaine, S. Waechter and T. M. Origer, G. White and R. King, and C. Roper-Wickstrom have all presented works in which Fredrickson’s hand almost always can be recognized in support or active cooperation. The venue of all the papers, except that by Roper-Wickstrom, is the central or southern part of the North Coast Ranges in Sonoma, Napa, Lake, or Colusa counties.

Basgall, in the “Taxonomy and Culture Change” section, reviews a large series of chronological data from the Warm Springs region in Sonoma County, which collectively support a local sequence which “finds much agreement with regional patterns.” In the same section, Jones and Hayes’ contribution “contrasts [the] time-predicated approach employed at Warm Springs with the culture-integrative scheme developed by Fredrickson,” thus offering new concepts “that might bridge the gap between the two perspectives.”

Tremaine’s methodological experimental work on obsidian points to a high level of consistency in relative hydration rates from four different source localities in and surrounding the Clear Lake region. Parker, using obsidian hydration profiles, presents original data regarding diachronic and settlement patterns in the Clear Lake Basin.

Waechter and Origer open up the matter of obsidian scavenging and its effect on hydration profiles at one site with an unusually high
frequency of multi-faceted specimens, and offer alternatives as to why this anomaly occurred. Also working with a single site near Clear Lake, White and King set forth an array of data from radiometry, obsidian hydration, and artifact cross-dating, which apparently should settle some previous misconceptions regarding the age of the ancient Mostin site.

Roper-Wickstrom’s study of high elevation land use patterns, mostly in the Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks region, notes some interesting obsidian occurrences there. Although this work is outside Fredrickson’s main area, it is important also in presenting, for the first time, survey reports of many previously unreported sites in this alpine region.

For regions in or beyond the northern reaches of the North Coast Ranges, W. R. Hildebrandt and J. F. Hayes, working in montane northwestern California, present data which indicate correlations between settlement organization and differing habitats following shifts in environmental (climatic) changes. Their results can be correlated with West’s data, included in the present volume, on paleoenvironmental changes reflected in a large series of pollen profiles. G. J. Gmoser’s essay on coevolution of adaptation and linguistic boundaries is another approach to the issue of environmental changes, in this case, their relationship to regional food productivity, occupational history, and ethnolinguistic distributions in northwestern California.

Parkman’s paper, while not closely related to Fredrickson’s main interests, is included here because it represents a special aspect of current work in the North Coast Ranges. The essay is the definitive study so far of the “PCN” (pecked curvilinear nucleated) petroglyph style in northern California. The glyphs came to attention less than twenty years ago, and have the potential to become another tool in the interpretation of culture history in the North Coast Ranges.

In the final section of the volume, Milliken and Bennyhoff’s article is based on an elaborate burial in Alameda County. The discussion demonstrates an encyclopedic knowledge of shell beads and their place in outlining culture change in central California archaeology.

Gerow’s essay reviews evidence which would show the value of anthropometric research in determining population movements in early prehistoric central California. He further suggests that the origins of the Windmiller Culture might be found in the lower Mississippi Valley, for example, in a culture such as that at Poverty Point, Louisiana. Despite some startling parallels (e.g., charmstones and baked clay objects) between the latter and Windmiller, it seems that this proposal would be almost overwhelmingly difficult to defend in processual terms. Perhaps, as Basgall submits in his Introduction, refinements in “genetic (cf. DNA) analysis will provide an opportunity to test these and other now controversial hypotheses.”

Names of other contributors to the volume, with paraphrased titles in parentheses, are as follows: Brooks and Brooks (Mortality and Frequencies of Nonmetric Traits in Skeletal Series); Johnson (Manos and Metates); Keter (Relationships of Southern Athabascans); Kowta (Cultural Diversity in Early Central California); McCarthy (Chukchansi Settlement); Meighan (Children’s Slides as Features); Mikkelsen (Milling Tool Analysis); Praetzellis and Praetzellis (Changes in California’s Mining Frontier); Praetzellis and Praetzellis (Historical Archaeology); Raab (Study at Malibu Beach); Riddell (Interise Spatial Considerations); Wallace (“Indian Bathtub” Mystery); and Weigel (Prehistoric Burning).

It can be seen from the full range of titles in the volume that, in keeping with Fredrickson’s chief interests and efforts, practically every aspect of California prehistory has been covered. In addition, a good representation of ethnographic, historic, and physical anthropological studies, all related in a positive way to Fredrick-

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Before the Wilderness is a collection of 15 papers on environmental management by Native Americans in California (including two papers on Great Basin groups). Seven of these papers have previously been published. Of the remainder, the first is an introduction, six are revised and expanded versions of papers first presented at the California Indian Conference in 1991, and the final paper is a retrospective on the study of native burning and environmental management studies. Although I am not a fan of volumes of reprints, those reprinted here, including Lewis’ seminal paper “Patterns of Indian Burning . . .,” are relevant to the theme of the book and add depth to the subject (but are not reviewed herein). The technical aspects of the printing and binding of the book are quite good. I especially appreciate the retypesetting of the reprinted papers, eliminating the quality problems when reprinting old copies of pages and illustrations. The index is most useful.

The Introduction (by Blackburn and Anderson) discusses the increasing “appreciation for the diversity and potential complexity of non-agricultural economies” (p. 15) and the research being conducted on the subject. They point out that California contained the largest hunter-gatherer population in North America, that California researchers have long recognized the importance of environmental management in the state, and that the rest of the discipline has ignored California. The purpose of this volume is to redress these problems, to illustrate some of the initial research on the subject, and to make the current scope of California environmental management research available under one cover.

The use of the term domestication to refer to control over the environment, rather than the more traditional definition applied to plants and animals of agricultural societies, may open some new ways of looking at the relationships between all peoples and the environment. Control is the key issue: whether that control is reproductive (the traditional definition of domestication), managerial (e.g., of communities rather than individuals), or through less tangible means (e.g., classificatory or ritual systems), it is control nonetheless, and understanding its systems is a prerequisite to understanding the cultures involved. The Introduction concludes by suggesting a number of research avenues that needs to be explored to further our understanding of native environmental management: (1) habitat reconstruction; (2) experimental data; (3) the development of quantitative models; and (4) the study of floristic anomalies. Good advice.

The first original contribution is “Native Californians as Ancient and Contemporary Cultivators” by Kat Anderson, who describes and discusses some native approaches and impacts to resources, including gathering, cultivation (not to be confused with agricultural domestication), burning, tillage, and conservation. The thrust of the paper is that native systems of resource management were and are complex and sophisticated, that we still have a great deal to learn...