Two Ancient Archeological Sites in the Great Basin

During the years 1936 to 1942 my late husband William H. Campbell and I spent considerable time studying two ancient archeological sites in the Great Basin: one on ancient Lake Tonopah in Big Smoky Valley, Nevada, the other on the long abandoned shores of Owens Lake, California and along the old river channel which drained it southward. In 1936 and 1939 Dr. Ernst Antevs took part in the field work with us.

At both places Folsom, Pinto, and Mohave artifacts were found segregated from each other. These types of artifacts are described in the following papers: Frank H. H. Roberts, "A Folsom Complex: Preliminary Report on Investigations at the Lindenmeier Site in Northern Colorado," *Smithsonian misc. Coll.*, 1935, **94**; *idem*, "Additional Information on the Folsom Complex," *ibid.*, 1936, **95**; Elizabeth and William H. Campbell, David Scharf and Charles Amsden, "The Pinto Basin Site," *Southwest Museum Papers* No. 9, 1935; Elizabeth and W. H. Campbell, Ernst Antevs, Charles Amsden, J. A. Barbieri and F. D. Bode, "The Archeology of Pleistocene Lake Mohave," *ibid.*, No. 11, 1937.

The Lake Tonopah Site is located west of the city of Tonopah on and just north of pluvial Lake Tonopah, mapped and described by E. O. Meinzer (*U. S. Geol. Survey*, Water-Supply Pap. 423, 1917). Here the artifacts were found on the surfaces of the beaches in the following descending order, or from older to younger: First, Mohave, second Folsom, third Mohave, fourth Pinto. Hence Mohave artifacts occur on both higher and lower beaches than the Folsom objects. Of Folsom implements there were hundreds gathered, mostly on a sandy ridge bordering Peavine Creek, which flows into the basin in wet years and on the adjoining gravel shores of the ancient lake. Typical specimens are pictured in "A Folsom Complex in the Great Basin, the Master Key," by Elizabeth and William H. Campbell, January 1940, pp. 7–11. Barring the deeply grooved Folsom points, everything found at Dr. Roberts' Lindenmeier Site was represented, and all other Folsom artifacts, including slightly fluted points, resembled in detail the tools from Lindenmeier. In Dr. Roberts' present view the assembly is not true Folsom, since it lacks the deeply fluted point, which he regards as the crucial criterion ("Evidence for a Paleo-Indian in the New World," *Acta Americana*, 1943, **1**, 171–201; see p. 173).

While the Folsom here could be associated with Peavine Creek, it seems more reasonable to associate it with the old lake features no later than the last great pluvial period, and the fact that there is no change in work tools precludes any great passage of time in its spread from the Great Plains to southern Nevada.

The site is of value for two reasons: first because of the presence and the relative distribution of Folsom, and second because post-Pinto cultures occurring in the deeper parts of the basin show what followed the old complexes here, down to the recent Indian occupation.

At Owens Lake we have a series of beaches descending from the crest of a bar at 3,675 elevation, or 128 feet above the playa flat, to the lowest shore lines merging into the surface of the present bare playa. The crest stands some 85 feet below the old overflow channel at about 3,760 feet (H. S. Gale, in *U. S. Geol. Survey Bull.* 1915, **580**, 256).

On the crest we found Mohave artifacts extending for some miles across the north shore of the lake, while to the north and farther back from the lake, and possibly at a few feet lower level, were Pinto artifacts.

On the lake side of the crest the next lower and thus younger second beach was barren of artifacts. The third beach contained Folsom artifacts and although there was no such concentration of artifacts as occurred on the Nevada site, there was nothing found on this beach except Folsom. Thus the three types of artifacts were fully segregated, nowhere mixed.

Below the fourth beach there is a zone of sandhills which, occurring at this level nearly all the way around the lake, could have been blown up during the very arid period following the end of the last glacio-pluvial period. Above the sand dunes the beaches are tremendous in sweep and width, while below they are small and narrow. It is on these latter beaches that modern Indian arrowpoints and artifacts are found.

We followed the ancient continuation of the Owens River southward past Haiwee reservoirs, through the old gorge into Rose Valley, and below and through Rose Valley to Little Lake and China Basin beyond. We found good sites a mile or two north of Little Lake near the extinct volcano and around a dry waterfall worn by the old river.

Accordingly, with the exception of the deeply grooved Folsom points, the entire assemblage of artifacts found at the foremost Folsom site—the Lindenmeier in Colorado—have also been found on the pluvial Lakes Tonopah and Owens; and they occur on beaches at slightly different levels than do the Mohave and Pinto implements, which also are segregated.

ELIZABETH W. CROZER CAMPBELL

Green Pastures Ranch,
Carson City, Nevada