

*Indian
file*

ANASAZI

Ancient ones



Southern Paiute, Anasazi, or both

The Archaeology of the Lincoln County Land Act Parcel, Mesquite, Nevada

A recent survey in the vicinity of the Mesquite Landfill, just north of the Clark/Lincoln County line, has discovered dozens of prehistoric archaeological sites. On May 23, 2002 from 7:00-8:00 pm in the Mesquite City Hall Council Chambers, archaeologist Mark A. Giambastiani will discuss the findings of this project and present a brief slide show.

Contemporary archaeological theories suggest that Anasazi groups expanded their territory out of northern Arizona and into southeastern Nevada along the Virgin River around AD 1000, but abandoned their new settlements very soon thereafter. Subsequently, populations of Southern Paiute moved into the area from the north and west. Because both groups occupied the same areas along the Virgin River, and often camped at exactly the same places, in some cases it has been difficult to tell Anasazi camps from Paiute camps, as the artifacts both groups left were eventually

mixed together on and in the ground.

The inventory of 13,000 acres north of Mesquite involved the identification and testing of more than 30 prehistoric archaeological sites, including isolate stone hearths, stone quarrying deposits, residential and short-term camps. These sites are spread throughout a harsh, desert area where plants and animals live on ancient lakebed sediments and steep mesa formations. Depending on what they intended to accomplish (getting food or water, making tools) and where they were coming from, prehistoric groups camped in different parts of the Land Act parcel and left very different artifacts behind. The repeated use of certain areas by native people has left clusters of sites that pattern out across the landscape in predictable ways.

Sites on the Lincoln County Land Act parcel have brought archaeologists closer to understanding its early prehistoric settlements. Radiocarbon dates from hearth features suggest that many sites pre-date the Anasazi incursion, some being as old as 4000 years. If most of these camps were occupied by South-

ern Paiute, it may be possible to find patterns in the artifacts they left that can be used to decipher the origins of more recent camps along the Virgin

River that were occupied by the Anasazi, Southern Paiute, or both.

The lecture is no cost. For more information contact: Sarah

Rogers at (831) 469- 1777 or srogers@albionenvironmental.com or Mark Giambastiani at (831) 469-1772 or mgiambastiani@albionenvironmental.com.

92 Spectrum Mysterious neighbors

Humans are social creatures. With a few exceptions we gather together in cities and towns, create neighborhoods and make friends. We have a keen interest in the activities of others which is why we buy newspapers and watch TV.

Most of us even enjoy some clandestine snooping on neighbors and acquaintances. The more puzzling people are the more interested we become.

Well, there are some very unusual people in Southern Utah. They are big on graffiti and making houses out of rocks but that is about all we know of them.

Archaeologists say they lived in our neighborhood for almost 1000 years and then mysteriously disappeared.

Where did they come from and why would an agrarian society choose to live in such desolate country?

These puzzling people lived throughout the Southwest, an unforgiving land of bare rock and sand with very little water. Crops could be grown if water was available and so they farmed around creeks and rivers. There is even some evidence of irrigation canals. But how did they dig such ditches in hard rocky soil using only wooden tools?

These pre-historic people understood desert flash-floods because they built their houses on higher ground away from the water. The practice also made sure every bit of fertile land was used for growing food.

or hunting they chipped or scratched pictures in the desert varnish that coated the rocks around where they lived. The lighter color underneath contrasted with the dark iron and manganese oxides and made a picture which could easily be seen. Many of the representations are done with great skill, but no one knows if a select group of people made the pictures or if just anyone with extra time created the images.

Since the St. George area had an abundant supply of rocks with desert varnish and the Santa Clara and Virgin rivers provided the needed water source, these fascinating people created an impressive gallery of art we can still see today. Much of it is easily accessible.

Bloomington Petroglyph Park is located in the middle of a subdivision on Bloomington Dr. and Geronimo. It is a huge boulder covered with petroglyphs. Geometric designs, figures and what appears to be grapes on a vine are etched into the desert patina.

There are many rocks with petroglyphs along Indian Hills Drive. These are a little harder to pick out and it is almost impossible to see them speeding along in the car. One must walk along the road searching the rocks above to find the ancient carvings.

One can find a wide variety of petroglyphs in different styles on a walk along the Santa Clara River.

The petroglyphs are fascinating and one begins to ask the questions that puzzle all who see them. Who were these people? Why did they spend so much effort to carve pictures in the rock? Where did they go?

These people are one of the great puzzles of the Southwest. They are so mysterious they may just tantalize you to snoop further.

Special thanks go to La-Deane Cobabe for her generous curiosity.

Desert Echo
5/5/96

Archeological looting coming under state attack

In a terse message, Nevada BLM has said it wants to send a strong message that archaeological looting will not be tolerated, according to State Director Ann Morgan.

The action came about because of a looting of a Black Rock Desert cave. The penalty for looting a cave in Nevada is more than \$2.5 million says the BLM.

Jack Harelson was found guilty of looting the cave in 1996, and was sentenced to 18 months in jail, \$20,000 in fines and restitution, and two years supervised probation. He is appealing the conviction.

Nevada BLM wasn't able to pursue Harelson in Federal court because the statute of limitations ran out between

the time the artifacts were taken and the time Harelson was apprehended. However, Harelson's acts are a violation of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and it is permissible to assess a civil penalty. The civil penalty amount is based damage assessments figuring the cost of restoration and repair and the archaeological value of the artifacts taken from the cave. The penalty letter was issued by the BLM's Winnemucca District.

Harelson has the option to ask no penalty be assessed, or that it be reduced, by filing a petition with the Nevada State Director. He may also ask for informal discussion

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9/3/96 concerning the proposed penalty, or accept and pay the proposed penalty. If he takes no action, a Notice of Assessment will be filed and he will have a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Hearings and Appeals. *Desert Echo*