MULTIPLE WAYS OF SEEING ONE PLACE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL
AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF THE SUTTER BUTTES,
CALIFORNIA

A Thesis
Presented
to the Faculty of
California State University, Chico

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Anthropology

by
Melinda Button
Fall 2009
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thesis is multidisciplinary and required input from several different fields of interest. As such, this project would not have been possible without the help of many people. First and foremost, I would like to thank John Geno Lucich, Beverly Ogle, and Patsy Seek, for sharing their knowledge with me. The interviews greatly added to the study and provided insights that would not have been visible otherwise.

I would like to thank Leslie Stedil with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) for all her help organizing information, introducing me to people, and inviting me to Peace Valley with DPR staff. I would like to thank Mike Hubbarrt, a Sutter Butte resident, a Middle Mountain Foundation volunteer, and a DPR employee, for all his support and guidance, as well as providing me an opportunity to experience the Sutter Buttes first hand. I would also like to thank Dionne Gruver and Kathy Lindahl, also with DPR, for allowing me access to the survey report and site records from the 2005 survey of Peace Valley and for sharing their ideas and interpretations of the archaeological remains in the Sutter Buttes. Thanks to Eileen Conway for all her support and interest in the project. Thanks to Ira Heinrich for sharing his knowledge that stems from years of experience both studying and hiking through the Sutter Butts. Thank you to Amy Huberland of the Northeast Information Center at CSU Chico for the initial suggestion of the project and for all the help getting me started. And thank you to Daniel Barth from the
Yuba County Historical Society for allowing me to explore the Sutter Buttes and sharing some references with me.

And last, but certainly not least, thank you to my thesis committee members Dr. A. Martinez and Dr. G. Fox for all the guidance, encouragement, and support. Again, this project would not have been possible without the help of the abovementioned individuals who illuminated the true diversity of the Sutter Buttes.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Landscape Studies</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Landscape Perspective as a Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Regional Approach to Archaeological Landscapes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Landscapes</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Methodology</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological Landscape Data</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Landscape Data</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Visits</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. The Physical Landscape</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Study Area</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sacramento Valley</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geological Overview of the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Overview</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. The Cultural Landscape</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological Overview</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Chronology</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources and Resource Distribution</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patwin (Southern Wintu)</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maidu</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Archaeological Data</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological Surveys</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological Excavation</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological Site Descriptions</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Cultural Data</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Research and Ethnographic Sources</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Discussion</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Archaeological Landscape</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cultural Landscape</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring it Together: The Physical and the Intangible</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. Conclusion</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References Cited</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Human Subject Clearance Letter and Post Data Collection Form</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Description of Archaeological Sites in the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Central Valley Cultural Chronology As Outlined By Rosenthal et al. (2007)</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complete List of Survey Reports Reviewed</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Archaeological Sites By Type</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Summary of Artifacts Recovered From Excavation of CA-SUT-44</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Prehistoric Resources Recorded in the Sutter Buttes as of March 2009</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Summary of Sites With Associated Midden Deposits</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ground and Battered Stone Tools Recorded in the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sites Possibly Associated With Hunting Activities</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Debitage and Stone Tools Recorded in the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Themes Found in Stories, Oral Histories and Interviews About the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Native Names For the Sutter Buttes and Their Translations</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Location Map of the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Map of Survey Coverage from Previous Archaeological Investigations</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Geological and Topographic Map of the Central Valley</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Satellite Image of the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Seasonal Drainage in Peace Valley, February 2009</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Peace Valley with Cat Rock in the Background, February 2009</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Large Oak Tree, October 2008</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Vegetation Map</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Peace Valley</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Bedrock Milling Station in Peace Valley</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Council Rock</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Sutter Buttes As Seen from Bidwell Park Approximately 35 Miles to the North</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

MULTIPLE WAYS OF SEEING ONE PLACE: ARCHAEOREOLOGICAL
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by

Melinda Button

Master of Arts in Anthropology

California State University, Chico

Fall 2009

Application of a theoretical framework of landscape studies demonstrates
that archaeological data, as well as intangible data, such as stories, oral histories, and ethnological information are equally essential to understanding past uses of the Sutter Buttes in the Sacramento Valley of California. Currently the archaeological record does not reflect the ceremonial significance that the landform played in mythology, storytelling and the spiritual lives of many Native Americans. Likewise, interpretations based solely only on intangible data does not emphasize the Sutter Buttes as a place of hunting and gathering. The cultural landscape framework allows for the incorporation of both sources of data to contribute to a multi-faceted interpretation. From this approach it is evident that the Sutter Buttes were a significant place containing both natural and
spiritual resources. Activities associated with the procurement of these resources becomes apparent through the multidisciplinary approach provided by landscape theory.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Situated 55 miles north of Sacramento between the Sacramento and Feather Rivers in present-day Sutter County, California are the Sutter Buttes\(^1\) (Figure 1). Nearly two million years ago magma from far below the earth’s surface began to rise until eventually the small mountain range was created. Forming an almost perfect circle with a ten-mile diameter, the Buttes rise from the flatness of the valley floor (with an elevation of 60 feet) to an elevation of 2,132 feet. This significant height makes them the highest point in the Central Valley (Williams 1929; Hendrix 1980). Their unique size and topography have captivated the minds of humans throughout time. They have been used as a navigation tool, a source of power, and inspiration for stories, traditions, and dances.

Described as, “…an anomalous volcanic landform rising starkly from the flat plain of the Sacramento Valley” (Wood and Kienle 1990:225), the Buttes cannot go unnoticed in the viewshed of the Sacramento Valley. They have been continuously recorded in both verbal and written history by the many people who have occupied and explored the Sacramento Valley. Through these accounts it is apparent the ways of seeing, experiencing and understanding the landform are culturally specific and that these

\(^1\) The landform has several names, all of which have different origins and connotations (discussed in Chapter in Chapter VII and VIII). For this thesis, they will be referred to by their modern name, the Sutter Buttes.
Figure 1. Location map of the Sutter Buttes.
differences reflect a diversity of world views. Exploration of these perceptions demonstrates the plurality of both the physical and cultural landscape.

It has been well documented that landscapes are not static; rather they are in a continuous state of development, replacement, and termination (Fredrickson 1974; Moratto 1984; Fry et al. 2004; Riley and Harvey 2005). These processes change the way people see, use, and understand their surroundings. The natural, archaeological, and cultural landscapes of the Sutter Buttes are the result of thousands of years of environmental change and human interaction. Periods of climatic fluctuation have dramatically altered flora and fauna, as well as topography. The Buttes and the surrounding area have been intentionally modified by Native Americans through burning, selective gathering, and human occupation; European settlement brought mining, water reclamation, farming, ranching, construction, and introduced plants and animals; and modern ideologies has brought ideas of land ownership. These processes have changed both the physical appearance of the region and ways of seeing it. To understand land use of the past is to do so in relation to the beliefs and perceptions of those who occupied the region. Although it is virtually impossible to know what people were thinking and seeing thousands, even hundreds of years ago, pre-recorded stories and discussions with Native peoples provide some insight to this goal.

During the preliminarily research of this thesis, I was asked by a professor, “what is the difference between an old-fashioned settlement pattern study and a landscape study?” I had no answer. Both explore concepts such as land use, resource exploitation, and seasonal migration. Both utilize material remains of the past to understand these ideas. However, after an extensive literature review of landscape studies, it became clear
that the difference is simple. Unlike traditional settlement pattern studies, landscape studies incorporate cultural knowledge to understandings and interpretations of a place in both time and space. Drawing from existing cultural knowledge, new understandings of both the physical and cultural landscape are created. Non-physical aspects of a region which are archaeologically invisible are integrated with the archaeological record and a more complete view of the past is formed.

This approach has been placed under the umbrella of post-processual archaeology which emphasizes the importance of gender, cognitive thought, cultural diversity, and individual choice. This contrasts with the processual movement of the 1960s which favored scientific methods of inquiry. Demonstrating that Native American culture is far from static, processual archeologists often criticize post-processual studies as non-scientific and falling victim to the anthropological taboo of the “ethnographic present.” Accepting the premise that present views do not accurately portray those of the past, the Native American perspective is often deemed inferior to hard physical evidence. As such, archaeologists become experts on Native American prehistory while Native Americans become novice voices of a past which may or may not have existed.

Admittedly, culture is far from static and the present is very different from the past; however several scholars have demonstrated there is some cultural continuum between the two (Raharijaona 1989; Head 1993). The “non-expert voices” (Riley and Harvey 2005:280) of Native Americans provide ways of seeing, explaining and understanding their world; the world archaeology seeks to understand through the study of material remains. This is not to say either processualism or post-processualism is the most accurate way of practicing archaeology. Rather both can contribute to a single study
even if the two approaches provide contradicting data. For example, my thesis is heavily rooted in post-processualism. I use ethnographies, oral histories, and interviews conducted with modern Native Americans to understand the cultural landscape of the Sutter Buttes. However, I also use processual models such as those rooted in human behavioral ecology, to better understand the archaeological landscape. At times the two sets of data conflict with each other, but the overall conclusions demonstrate a multiplicity of activities simultaneously taking place in the Buttes. These final conclusions are only visible because both approaches are used.

Though frequently applied abroad (Raharijaona 1989; Head 1993; Riley and Harvey 2005), few scholars have used the landscape approach in California. This thesis marks one of the initial attempts to understand both the archaeological and cultural landscapes of a given area. To accomplish this, a multidisciplinary framework that draws from fields such as archaeology, ethnography, geology, geography, archaeobotany, paleoclimatology is applied to the Sutter Buttes. The study draws from both the archaeological record and from intangible data collected from various sources. Although individual sites are discussed, landscape studies move away from the archaeological tendency to see a place as a cluster of several sites and more towards examining the Sutter Buttes as a whole. This is in keeping with anthropology as a holistic field.

The organization of this thesis emphasizes the many landscapes that exist for one place and the importance each has to contribute to understanding the whole. Chapter II, “Landscape Studies,” goes into further detail on the landscape approach, providing examples of how it has been used elsewhere. This chapter discusses current perspectives and research from the past 20 years and highlights conclusions which are applicable to
the study. Chapter III, “Methodology,” outlines the methodology used in this research. Data sources and collection procedures are described and a brief discussion on the limitations of this study is included. Chapter IV “The Physical Landscape,” provides a description of the natural landscape of the Sacramento Valley and the Sutter Buttes. This includes the geology, hydrology, and flora and fauna. Chapter V, “The Cultural Landscape,” is an overview of the cultural landscape of the region. This chapter is based on previously collected information on Sacramento Valley cultures, with specific emphasis placed on the Patwin and Maidu. Chapter VI, “Archaeological Data,” is a review of the archaeological landscape. This includes summaries of survey reports, excavation and site descriptions for all sites in the Sutter Buttes, which have been recorded thus far. Chapter VII, “Cultural Data,” is a recordation of data that is used to create the cultural landscape of the Sutter Buttes. This includes stories, oral histories, and songs which are set in, or reference the Sutter Buttes. This chapter also includes the interviews I conducted. Chapter VIII, “Discussion,” is a discussion of the data recorded in Chapter VI and Chapter VII. This chapter discusses the archaeological and cultural landscapes separately as well as together. Final interpretations based on both types of landscapes conclude this chapter. The final chapter, Chapter IX, “Conclusion,” is an overview of the conclusions of the study. This chapter also includes a brief discussion on the importance of Native American consultation.
CHAPTER II

LANDSCAPE STUDIES

As argued by Christopher Tilley (1994), studies of prehistoric lifeways have tended to focus on resource exploitation, seasonality and scheduling, patch location, and settlement mobility. Although these subjects demonstrate the importance of scientific models and the application of new technologies to studies of the past, they tend to omit information that can be gathered from myths, cosmologies and symbolism (Tilley 1994). Though these latter subjects may not pass the rigor of the scientific method, they have the potential to contribute towards understanding the way people interact, think about, and create their environment (Memmott 1998). Landscape scholars criticize the emphasis that processual archaeology places on scientific approaches as one-dimensional explanations to a multi-faceted entity (Riley and Harvey 2005). Conversely, Tilley (1994) observes the post-processual literature as dedicated to understanding symbolism and cosmology, therefore overlooking view the physical environment as “a mere backdrop to the unobstructed ramifications of the human mind” (Tilley 1994:22). In a more processual plus approach, the merging of these two ways of studying provides a more holistic approach to studying human cultures (Head 1993; Gosden and Head 1994; Ferguson 1996; Taçon 1999; Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Riley and Harvey 2005). This approach brings together conceptual and physical views of a landscape to understand the past. It views the natural landscape as humanized and thus cultural perceptions are deemed
equally as relevant as scientific models. Through the combination of these different ways of seeing, a more complete picture of the past is created.

The Landscape Perspective as a Theoretical Framework

The literature discussed in this chapter exemplifies how the landscape approach can be used as a theoretical framework. These works have strong postmodern and post-processual undertones which move away from scientific models and singular conclusions towards viewing human behavior as variable with several different possible interpretations. Though not a traditional theory, the application and discussion of a landscape approach is proving to be a new paradigm, incorporating the physical environment and material culture with the cultural environment and symbolic meaning.

As such, landscape studies have been used both to understand settlement and land use on a regional scale as well as to recognize the significance of intangible cultural processes in the formation and understanding of an area. This is accomplished in two ways. First, much like an artifact is understood in the context (or provenience) in which it is excavated, a site, or place, is analyzed on a regional level. In doing so, it is viewed not for its individual importance, but rather for the part it plays in a larger system. That is, the significance of the place is understood in the way it contributes to the whole. As such, it is argued a place can never be fully understood unless its place in the physical or cultural landscape is understood.

Secondly, the landscape approach allows for the study of intangible objects which though not archeologically visible, still contribute to the study of the past. The early work of geographer Carl O. Sauer (1933) was seminal to the development of
landscape studies in archaeology. While geography is often linked with the physical form of land, Sauer describes it (and landscapes) as a combination of both physical and cultural structures such that “[g]eography is distinctly anthropocentric, in the sense of value or use of the earth to man” (Sauer 1933:29). As a result of this perceived value, humans tend to favor those aspects of a landscape which are beneficial while disregarding those which hold no value. Nassauer (1995) found similar trends amongst modern populations who maintain landscape preferences based upon aesthetic qualities, enduring beliefs and values. It may therefore be expected that some features which are symbolically important to one group are of no value to another and thus can go unnoticed. For example, several important landscape features in Australia may appear to be “only a rock” in the eyes of the Europeans despite their spiritual importance in the Aboriginal Dreamtime (Head 1993). It is these symbolic features which can go unnoticed by archaeologists who focus on human-modified features and material objects (Riley and Harvey 2005). However, without taking these into account, a portion of the landscape is being ignored and thus an incomplete interpretation of a place, region or culture results.

As noted, the landscape approach seeks to understand both modified (by both environmental and human processes) and unmodified features and objects. However, it is essential to recognize how the dominance of certain features may change through time as new features, both natural and man-made, replace, block, or otherwise detract from the presence of those in the past (Fry et al. 2004:98). Disturbances such as road construction, agricultural activities and changes in vegetation create new landscapes over past landscapes. To understand the archaeological landscape, one must attempt to find landuse patterns of the past which may or may not be reflected in the modern landscape.
Because of its’ broad nature, the landscape approach is a malleable framework which “both invites and defies definition” (Gosden and Head 1994:113). Emphasizing that “landscapes” are shaped by more than just physical means, Sauer (1925:27) defined landscape as “…an area made up of a distinct association of forms, both physical and cultural.” In 1994, the National Park Service (NPS 1994) stated that landscapes are, “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic value.” Five years later, Knapp and Ashmore (1999:10) define landscape as, “…the arena in which and through which memory, identity, social order and transformation are constructed, played out, re-invented, and changed.” Looking at the evolution of definitions for the term “landscape,” one can see a slow transition towards the recognition of culture as an integral part of the environment; towards viewing the landscape as one large system which both results and reflects cultures of the past and present; and finally towards a definition which unites identity, memory, power, and social structure with the landscape.

A Regional Approach to Archaeological Landscapes

The landscape approach is a means of exploring and understanding large regions. The foundation for this approach is often attributed to Gordon Willey and James Ford’s 1949 survey and analysis of the Virú Valley on the north coast of Peru (Ford and Willey 1949). The Virú Valley project has been used as a model of how to collect and use data taken from a large region that contains several archaeological sites. The project used a multidisciplinary approach to study 300 archaeological sites and 5,000 years of
prehistory in the Virú Valley. As expressed in this early work and reiterated through the study of settlement patterns, two types of changes can be expressed in such studies: temporal and spatial. Both foci are essential for a complete understanding of prehistoric and historic settlement patterns.

Using a regional level of scale as context is by no means a unique technique to landscape archaeology. Historian, H.P.R. Finberg (1967) discussed the concept of concentric circles. Quoting Professor Douglas he wrote: “the local historian…‘can only make his work of general value if he constantly remembers that it is part of a larger whole’” (Finberg 1967:39). As explained by Finberg, the image of concentric circles forces the historian to look at the place, event or person they are studying as the inner circle in a series of much larger circles. Using England as an example he argues the history of the country should be viewed both for its own content and as “a chapter in European history” (Finberg 1967:39). He states:

To recognize this, however, is not to admit that the history of England has no significance except as a chapter in the history of Europe. We may picture the family, the local community, the national state, and the supra-national society as a series of concentric circles. Each requires to be studied with constant reference to the one outside it; but the inner rings are not the less perfect circles for being wholly surrounded and enclosed by the outer. [Finberg 1967:39]

This concept can be applied to regional archaeological studies through exploration of the individual importance of a site or place as well as the importance of its role in the larger region. For example, as an individual place, the Sutter Buttes were and are of great importance to local people for many reasons. Understanding these reasons helps one understand how the Buttes may have been used in the past. However, to fully understand
their uniqueness, one must explore how the Buttes fit into the larger context of the Sacramento Valley.

Several scholars have argued for the need of regional studies over site-specific studies (Bettinger 1999; Crumley 1999; Clarke 2000; Fry et al. 2004). By not looking at the entirety of the landscape, valuable data is lost. The regional approach provides the context in which individual sites and the interactions between these sites are better understood. This reinforces the cultural landscape idea that landscapes can be viewed as processes (Ingold 1994; Tilley 1994; McGrath 1995; Head and Fullagar 1997; Clarke 2000; Frederick 2000). This level of analysis is more conducive than site-specific studies for understanding continuities and discontinuities in prehistoric land use (Zverlebil et al. 1992; Clarke 2000). Evidence in site-specific studies only reflects what happened in one place. Relationships and processes which may have led to, or resulted from, site-specific changes often occur between places and are therefore not seen in single-site analyses. Without exploring these correlations, significant data may be lost.

Robert L. Bettinger advocates for surveys and excavations which encompass a large region, thus covering “complete settlement systems” (Bettinger 1999:42). General landuse patterns are better understood on a regional level as even sedentary hunter-gatherers rarely confined their activities to single points on the landscape (Bettinger 1999; Machner 1999; Crumley 1999). Bettinger (1999:42) writes, “[t]hey draw their living from pieces of space that are invariably differentiated in a variety of important ways (especially in environment) that are intimately connected with the means by which hunter-gatherers make their living.” Bettinger’s work focuses on the unique shift to sedentism which occurred in the Owens Valley during the Late Period. He argues that to
fully understand why this shift occurred in the Owens Valley and not the adjacent areas, one must have an equal understanding of both regions. Likewise, Herbert D.G. Maschner (1999) argues that a traditionally site-specific focus has led to the lack of understanding of prehistoric settlement patterns on the lower Alaskan Peninsula.

The regional approach is not a new way of interpreting the archaeological record. Settlement pattern studies have long since used these methods. However, what differentiates a landscape study from a prehistoric settlement study is the inclusion of places or objects which have not necessarily been modified. Carole L. Crumley (1999) argues that methods focused on single sites tend to overemphasize particular site types (e.g., campsites), while ignoring other aspects of the land that were of equal importance to prehistoric peoples. She draws attention to natural features such as springs, caves, and mountains which were utilized in addition to where places people live, work, and bury their dead. Looking at sites in relation to each other and in relation to natural features, one can begin to see larger patterns that would otherwise be archaeologically invisible.

Fry et al.’s (2004) multidisciplinary approach supports Crumley’s (1999) argument. Using soil analysis, Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, visual observation and prerecorded sites, they created a predictive model for finding the locations of prehistoric grave fields in southeast Norway. The model seeks to understand both the symbolic meaning of place and space and the meaning of the relationships that exist between them. It accepts the premise that natural features on the landscape are of symbolic and cultural importance to people and must be understood on a regional level.

At the heart of their model is the idea that, “[u]nderstanding the visual relationship between sites can help infer their original cultural ‘environment’” (Fry et al.
They use both GIS and the concept of a “landscape room” to determine how earlier cultures would have used and interpreted space. The landscape room uses the structure of a room (ceiling, floor, and walls) as a metaphor for visually viewing and defining a place. In doing so, “the cultural structure of landscapes” and “how different cultures choose to furnish [that] landscape” is brought to light. Fry et al. (2004:98) then hypothesize that, “[i]f cultural perception and interpretation of the environment has led to spatial patterning of landscapes, then these patterns should be possible to measure and map.”

Cultural Landscapes

Essential to the landscape approach is acceptance of the premise that not all knowledge can be gained from material culture and not all people view the physical world in the same way Norman Wilson and Arlean Towne’s forward to Richard Burrill’s (1988), *River of Sorrow: Life History of the Maidu-Nisenan*, neatly summarizes the data loss when all that is left of a people is material remains.

In the study of archaeology, as old village sites are excavated and information is carefully recorded about the tools, house and material objects, it is always frustrating to the scientist to know that the story of these people has been lost. The few physical remains of a vibrant culture tell nothing of the family, religious beliefs or adventures and great speeches. [Wilson and Towne 1988:Forward]

It is the loss of this data which the landscape approach attempts to correct.

Paul S. Taçon’s (1999) work on ancient landscapes in the Northern Territory of Australia compares landscapes to beauty. He asserts that ways of seeing the land is based on the eye of the beholder and therefore varies from individual to individual or culture to culture. These different perceptions are based on history, experience,
relationships, circumstances, and individual choice. Through these different filters physical landscapes become personified, marked, mapped, deified, and defined in a diversity of ways. Each new pair of eyes renames, remaps, explains and draws attention to different aspects of the same physical setting. Through these processes land is humanized and becomes unique to particular cultural groups. Drawing on the work of Parcero Oubina et al. (1998), Ashmore and Knapp (1999:19) write “…the landscape has a plurality of coda by which it may be interpreted; inventing a tradition or re-writing a tradition is also re-writing the landscape.” Though a natural entity may be singular and static, the cultural interpretations of it are often plural and ever changing. To understand this plurality, one must have an approach which is capable of integrating several different sources of information.

These studies are often termed “cultural landscape” or “social landscape” studies. As explained by Richard Griggs (1986:269), “[w]hen many people evaluate a landscape the same way, it is a cultural trait. Put into action, those perceptions manifest in a cultural landscape.” Cultural and individual identities become linked with physical locales (Griggs 1986; Silko 1996). Boundaries between the physical and cultural realms merge and a single landscape is formed. In doing so, people are as much a part of the landscape as physical objects (Silko 1996). Silko (1996) observes that this differs from traditional definitions which describe people as “viewers,” who are separate or outside of the landscape in which they live. This is incorrect as humans are a fundamental part of natural interrelationships which must be harmoniously maintained to insure survival. Incorporating symbolic and cultural interpretations with archaeological interpretations create a more holistic means of examining past lifeways.
Naturally, a major critique of the cultural landscape approach is the application of existing knowledge to the study of the past. The world, both cultural and physical is in a constant state of change, thus making it difficult to accurately depict the past from the present. However, this has not discouraged scholars from trying. Archival research, historical photographs, archaeological investigations, oral histories, and ethnographies all contribute to modern interpretations of the past. While one could argue that the present can never be used to explain the past, one could conversely argue the present is the direct result of the past, and thus stands as evidence of its existence in a cultural continuum. History is preserved in more than monuments, structures, historical documents, and artifacts; collective memory, place names, and individuals retain valuable data of the past that should not be disregarded (Basso 1996; Tilley 1994). As noted by Basso (1996:7), “…places served humankind as durable symbols of distant events and as indispensable aids for remembering and imagining them,” well before the advent of writing. Though the appearance of these places change, the place remains fixed in space.

Although existing knowledge and stories may not always accurately reflect those believed or told throughout prehistory, aboriginal input should not be disregarded. Leslie Marmon Silko (1995:264) criticizes archaeological approaches in New Mexico, which focus on elaborate burials and rich middens and place little importance on the collapsed building materials above the burials. While this collapse may appear to be rubble, those rocks and mortar materials were carefully selected by the prehistoric peoples. These choices were just as much a part of the Pueblo burial practices as internment positions and grave goods. However, because the collapse appeared
unmodified, it was disregarded. A balance must be found wherein aboriginal input is considered and used in combination with other data to form interpretations.

Through the work reviewed on cultural landscapes, five main themes are apparent: landscape as a process; the dichotomy between space and place; the importance of place names; the use of narratives as a means of explaining and studying a landscape; and the strong connection between cultural identity and physical landscapes. Though these themes are discussed individually both here and in the landscape literature as a whole, they are often examined in accordance with each other. It is the recognition of the roles each plays in landscape studies which create a holistic interpretation of a given region. These themes are discussed in detail below and are revisited in Chapter VIII, the “Discussion,” where they are applied to the current study.

Landslapes as a Process

To understand a landscape is to understand the processes and relationships of the cultural encounters that create it, occur within it, and are affected by it (Head 1993; McGrath 1995; Nassauer 1995; Head and Fullagar 1997; Clarke 2000; Frederick 2000; Fry et al. 2004). Likewise, as asserted by Chris Gosden and Lesley Head (1994:114), to understand the distributions of materials over a landscape one must understand the changes that have occurred in the region. Landscapes are not static, but rather are in a continuous state of development, replacement, and termination (Sauer 1933; Fredrickson 1974; Moratto 1984; Fry et al. 2004; Riley and Harvey 2005). Several scholars have written that landscape studies are the study of processes (Ingold 1994; Tilley 1994; McGrath 1995; Nassauer 1995; Head and Fullagar 1997; Clarke 2000; Frederick 2000).
Because processes both create the landscape and create a means of reading it, the landscape approach places a heavy emphasis on understanding these occurrences.

Joan Iverson Nassauer (1995:230) wrote that landscape structures can be viewed as “…both an effect of culture and as an artifact that changes culture.” She writes of the constant reciprocal interactions that occur between humans and the natural environment, and how these interactions mutually affect both parties. Tim Ingold (1992:39) put forth similar assertions when he wrote humans “…are enmeshed within webs of environmental relations.” Rather than placing humans outside the processes of the natural world, the landscape approach places humans within these processes. Viewed in this way, humans are no different than the bees which pollinate flowers or mistletoe which strangles trees. To understand both human behavior and the natural landscape of a given region, one must understand the way in which the two interact.

The landscape approach is interested in more than the physical interactions between humans and nature; it is concerned with cultural, symbolic and ritualistic processes as well. Perceptions and cognition of an area (Nassauer 1995) can be just as enlightening as land modification practices. Because each piece of land is deeply embedded with culture-specific symbolism, understanding these meanings helps one understand nature-human processes and relationships. Leslie Head (1993) emphasizes the importance of understanding the connection between objects, social structures, and symbolic meaning. She argues that even the most ancient of landscapes is the outcome of social processes. Though many of these processes and their outcomes are archaeologically invisible, they are essential to understanding the land as it was understood and used by early people. To assist her in her quest, Head drew from
knowledge that exists among modern Australian Aboriginal hunter-gathers. While many may consider this “…non-academic readings of landscape…” Head argued they “…should be understood and appreciated for their own sake” (Head 1993:482). She, as well as others (Tilley 1994; Silko 1996; Memmott 1998; Taçon 1999; Riley and Harvey 2005), demonstrate the need for archaeologists to acknowledge the potential of intangible materials which may contribute evidence of how people lived.

**Space and the Transformation to Place**

Tim Ingold (1992) argued that if we accept the premise that all meaning is culturally constructed and if this meaning is stamped on the physical environment then prior to the mark of culture onto the external world, it is empty of any significance. When a location becomes significant it becomes a place that is recognized, understood and imbued with meaning. This leads to the dichotomy between *space* and *place* wherein culture instills meaning to physical locales (Ingold 1992; Tilley 1994; Cresswell 2004; Hoelscher and Alderman 2004). It is only after meaning is applied does a *space* become a *place*.

Tim Cresswell (2004) writes that space is abstract, often associated with the unknown and the unexplored. Space exists between places, but is not part of places. Cresswell (2004:10) draws attention to the idea that the landscape is something viewed from the outside while places “…are very much things to be inside of.” Through exploration and practices such as naming and mapping, a space becomes a place. As a place, it is transformed into an entity that helps people see, explain, understand and know their surroundings as well as themselves. Places are centers of human meaning (Tilley 1994). They provide power to stories by allowing the teller and the listener to visualize a
location (Bird 2002). Individual and cultural identity becomes bound to places (Tilley 1994) and their existence survives through memories, experiences, and stories, especially in the making and telling of creation myths.

**Place Names**

On a practical level, place names, or toponyms are used to identify and differentiate one place from another (Alderman 2008). They are a verbal or written way to situate a place or a narrative in the natural world. On a symbolic level, place names reflect the culture that created them, thus transforming space to place and embedding identity and meaning in the physical world (Alderman 2008; Bird 2002). The importance of place names was recognized by early anthropologists such as Alfred Kroeber, Clark Wissler and Robert Heizer who recorded Native American names for places and villages. The preservation of these names can be used to reconstruct Native American landscapes that no longer exist. Additionally, they often provide descriptions of how a place once was or viewed (Basso 1996).

While the purpose, use, or appearance of a place may change over time, place names often retain information about their past (Raharijaona 1989; Basso 1996). In Keith H. Basso’s (1996) much cited book, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*, an informant named Charles said his ancestors “…made a picture [of places] with words” (Charles, in Basso 1996:12). For western Apaches, place names are associated with the graphic impressions. They are “situating devices” (Basso 1996:47), which place narrative events within a physical setting. Though names may not accurately describe the current state of a place, they often represent what it once was. These names can help one picture the landscape of the past, even after significant
physical changes have occurred. For example, Basso is brought to a place called, Tliish Bi Tú’é (Snake’s Water). Though the name implies the location was once a spring, Basso and Charles saw nothing but a dry patch of sand without a snake or a drop of water in sight. Basso’s informant Charles takes this as evidence that the environment was greener and wetter than it is now indicating climatic change.

Victor Raharijaona (1989) applies this concept to archaeology, arguing that place names can be used to infer the utilitarian or symbolic function of a site. He argues that information gathered based on names can be applied to the analysis and interpretation of material culture. His work in the Betsileo region of Madagascar suggests that names can be used as alternate hypotheses regarding the past, which would not be visible from “simple inspection of archaeological remains” (Raharijaona 1989:193). Without taking these names into consideration the archaeology of the region may be misunderstood. In addition to providing further applicable information to the archaeological record, talking with the local people and taking their concerns, knowledge, and beliefs into consideration allowed for the collaboration between locals and archaeologists who both wish to understand and preserve the history of the region.

Raharijaona’s advice to collaborate with the locals stems from the concept that identity with the past is very strongly tied to the present. The modern era is marked by cultural diversity, the movement of people, and the struggle by many to demonstrate and retain physical ties to varying natural landscapes. Recent work by Derek H. Alderman (2008) argues that when applied to the landscape, toponyms are more than evidence of the past, they are a means of legitimizing historical meanings in the present. He writes (2008:195) that place naming “…is a powerful vehicle for promoting
identification with the past and locating oneself within wider networks of memory” while creating a “…platform for the construction of heritage and identity” (Alderman 2008:196). Names hold significant power which can be used to demonstrate ties with the past, claim physical and symbolic ownership, and create cultural identities.

Landscapes, The Transmission of History, Narratives, and Memory

T.J. Ferguson’s (1996) review of the history of how archeological work in relation to Native Americans has been conducted in the United States demonstrates a shift away from the incorporation of ethnology and Native Americans perceptions, towards a more processual approach which emphasizes scientific methodologies such as temporal sequences and the development of chronological techniques. Ferguson concludes that the latter history of American archaeological research is marked by a lack of communication and mutual respect between archeologists and Native Americans. She asserts that while the passing of legislation such as the Archaeological Resources and Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA) and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGRPA) has led to recommenced consultation between Native Americans and archaeologists, tensions still run high. The lack of effective communication between the two parties has led to debates between science-based approaches and Native American world-views (Ferguson 1996).

Two main criticisms of applying Native American world-views in academic or professional archaeological interpretations is the conundrum of the ethnographic present and the questionable reliability and authenticity of non-written sources. The use of oral narratives and ritual activities practiced in modern times as interpretations of the
past are often criticized by archaeologists who stress the past is not the same as the present and therefore these sources are an invalid depiction of the past. This opinion differs from many Native Americans who feel views of the past have survived and can be known in the present.

The second source of contention, the validity of oral rather than written sources is well recognized in landscape literature (Layton 1989; Silko 1996; Basso 1996; Santos-Granero 1998). Orally transmitted information is often criticized for being less scientific, academic or valid. These misnomers can lead to the stereotype that only literate cultures can accurately maintain their history. This is problematic as it infers that the majority of people in the world today are unable to accurately record their past. Of the 3,000 known spoken languages in the world, only 78 have produced written literature (Goytisolo 2001). The cultural branch of the United Nations (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) convention took the initiative to combat these stereotypes in 2001. The Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, seeks to preserve oral or intangible processes or resources which “…provide living communities with a sense of continuity with previous generations and are important to cultural identity…” (UNESCO 2001). This legislation supports those who struggle to provide physical evidence of their past and to protect intangible cultural heritage. It recognizes the importance and validity of songs, oral narratives, place names, and rituals which are often deemed intangible and therefore difficult to protect.

Robert Layton (1989) contrasts oral histories with written histories, asserting that the former is more personalized and specific to a given people. Oral narratives tend
to be less concerned with exact chronology and more concerned with memorable people and places. He writes that neither practice is necessarily more objective. Layton acknowledges that written works have the advantage of permanency, as discarded portions of oral narrative are often lost forever. Those wishing to revisit or use orally transmitted information will not have access to this information as they would if the story had been written. Riley and Harvey (2005), though campaigning for the need for oral history in landscape studies, acknowledge that oral histories are often reflexive, subjective, and ambiguous. Oral narratives are often criticized for being inconsistent and contradictory, although many place names have had multiple uses and do not have a fixed meaning. That infers that multiple interpretations are necessary to fully understand landuse through time (Riley and Harvey 2005). In defense of these criticisms, Layton (1989) notes that written works can be equally biased or revised to meet current social or political agendas and therefore contain their own set of problems which should not be downplayed.

Regardless of these controversies, many scholars have found narratives, both oral and written, to be useful and applicable to landscape studies (Silko 1996; Basso 1996; Santos-Granero 1998; Nas 2002). At the heart of the pro-narrative argument lies the idea that cultural knowledge is passed down through collective memory, stories, and experiences. As each of these permeates the physical landscape, meaning is provided to the natural world and the natural world can then be used to explain cultural values and regional history. The use of oral narratives (e.g., oral history, story telling, etc.) can therefore be used as a means of explaining, describing, and understanding a physical
landscape and the events associated with that landscape (Silko 1996; Basso 1996; Santos-Granero 1998); particularly in nonliterate cultures.

Whether mythological, personal, or historical, stories can be used to understand and help reconstruct past landscapes (Riley and Harvey 2005). Through these narratives, places are embedded with stories which live through a collective memory for as long as a place exists (Silko 1996). For example, in the Peruvian Amazon Santos-Granero (1998) found that the path of the solar divinity Yompor Ror followed the migration route of the protohistoric Yanesha as seen in the archaeological record. Areas highly marked in “mythicospatial terms” were those in which the Yanesha finally settled which provided more evidence for the “truth” behind the Yanesha myths (Santos-Granero 1998:135).

Silko (1996) demonstrates how oral narratives maintain Pueblo culture and transmit information essential to survival from generation to generation. Precise dates were not necessary to Pueblo stories; however, geographic locations were accurate and detailed during these accounts. Silko exemplifies her point through hunting narratives. Hunters provided thorough accounts of the natural environment they encountered during their trips. Particular trees, boulders or rock formations were highlighted and used as crucial parts of the story. Through these accounts migration and behavior of deer were explained and a “map” of the region was created and shared among the people (Silko 1996:888). Kroeber (1970) viewed petroglyphs as similar markers on the landscape, delineating territory. Silko (1996:890) asserts lost travelers used the knowledge gained from these stories to find their way despite the fact they had never been in a place before. Silko (1996:890) writes, “…the continuity and accuracy of the oral narratives are
reinforced by the landscape and the Pueblo interpretations of that landscape is maintained.” Thus, narratives are a means of understanding the land, and the land is a way of understanding the history of a people.

Fernando Santos-Granero (1998) came to similar conclusions regarding the transmission of history among the Yanesha of the Peruvian Amazon. His work highlights how history is written into the landscape through myths, oral traditions, ritual, and memory. During his fieldwork, he observed how roads and trails were littered with sites or natural features that linked the informants with the past. To express this connection, he created two terms: *topograms* and *topographic writing* (Santos-Granero 1998:140). Topograms are “…elements of the landscape that have acquired their present configuration as a result of the past transformative activities of human or superhuman beings.” Topographic writing is how the knowledge of places, and the historical, personal and mythical events that occurred within them, is written into the landscape. He observed that Yanesha (traditionally nonliterate) read the landscape as a Westerner might read a history textbook. He concludes that even after the advent of a true writing system, topographic reading and writing still exists. Santos-Granero explains the “…connection among landscape, memory, and historical consciousness… where landscape not only evokes memory but is written upon it, thus becoming memory” (Santos-Granero 1998:139). Through this process, local history is preserved and the events of the past are written onto the landscape for all to share and understand.

Similar to Santos-Granero’s (1998) topograms and topographic writing, Joanne Rappaport (1989:91) observed how the Páez’ of southwestern highland Colombia created “topographical referents which structure…local historical accounts.” Rappaport
(1989:85) found the Páez record and remember their history through narratives emphasizing sacred sites “…which serve both as mnemonic devices for remembering history and as clear-cut boundary markers for resguardos [indigenous communities with clear cut territorial boundaries backed by titles].” Though the narrations are often informal, Rappaport found them to be useful ways of studying pre-colonial times through the present. The Páez use these stories not only as means of remembering the past, but they have employed this knowledge in political strategies used to defend their territory from impending invaders.

Through these narratives, mental maps (Nassauer 1995; Silko 1996) or pictures (Basso 1996) are created. Drawing on the work of Kevin Lynch’s theory of legibility, Joan Iverson Nassauer (1995:232) wrote that people often develop cognitive maps of areas they are familiar with. Though not hard-copy maps, these images are shared by those residing in the same area and contain both major and small elements of the landscape. The more familiar an individual is with a region, the more detail they have in their cognitive map. Understanding the importance of these smaller elements can be crucial to understanding past events as well as the cultural reasons for choosing to use and remember certain places, which often go unnoticed by outsiders. Oral narratives bring life to places, which in turn, provide a shared sense of identity.

**Landscape and Identity**

At the heart of these themes is the strong connection between cultural identity and the physical landscape. The processes which both create and are reflected in landscapes are the direct result of the cultures that identify with them. This theme is prevalent in almost every piece of literature reviewed for this study. Because of this
strong relationship, it is essential to consider the knowledge of those who claim cultural
ties to a region when studying its past (Raharijaona 1989; Ferguson 1996). Though this
knowledge is often intangible, and thus archaeological invisible, it is crucial to the
development of a well-rounded synthesis. Because current archaeological work is often
used for political purposes, it is essential that those who may benefit or hinder from the
conclusions drawn by archaeologists are included in the final product (Ferguson 1996).

Identity is often formed with the creation of place. The process of forming a
place, naming a place and telling narratives about it creates links between people and
these locations. These practices connect people to the past, which in turn, gives them a
sense of belonging in the present. Alderman (2008) wrote that place names are
multifunctional as they combine history with geography they “…conflate place and group
identity because of the shared context of using and referring to toponyms” (Alderman
2008:196). This knowledge is shared and understood among a particular group and forms
a sense of community. Knowledge is then passed down through memory and narratives
which connect past identity with present identity.

Chapter Summary

The literature review in this chapter demonstrates how the several different
components of landscapes can be broken down into two basic categories: physical (or
natural) and cultural. The landscape approach accepts both categories as valid and crucial
to understanding the entirety of a landscape. In doing so, information that is often deemed
non-academic or intangible is considered in relation to material evidence, so that a more
holistic approach to the study of the past results.
The following chapter, Chapter III: Methodology, provides the details on the
data I gathered. This includes what sources were used and how they were gathered. The
chapter also includes the limitations of the study and how these limitations influence final
interpretations.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this thesis is to explore the archaeological and cultural landscapes of the Sutter Buttes, also referred to in this study as the Buttes. To accomplish this, data was collected from several sources, which have been divided into data from the archaeological landscape (recorded in Chapter VI) and data from the cultural landscape (recorded in Chapter VII). The sources of these data differed greatly, resulting in multiple ways of understanding the Sutter Buttes. Data was derived from four main sources: 1) records and reports from previous archaeological work in the area, 2) archival research and ethnographic sources, 3) interviews with Native Americans, and 4) field visits with various groups to the Sutter Buttes. Methods for gathering materials from each of the sources, as well as a brief discussion on the limitations of this study are described in this chapter.

Limitations of the Study

The archaeological data discussed in this study is limited to that which has been collected from the 10 surveys previously conducted in the Sutter Buttes, site records that are not formally associated with a survey report, and Jensen’s (1968) thesis work. Ideally, a complete survey of the study area would be conducted; however due to logistical restraints, this was not possible. These restraints were mainly access problems
due to the private ownership of the Sutter Buttes. Access to areas in and around Peace Valley was granted, but as discussed in this chapter, this area has been thoroughly surveyed, including a most recent survey conducted by the California State Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) in 2005. The surveys, which have been successfully completed, offer limited coverage and thus reflect land use patterns of only a small portion of the Buttes. Looking at Figure 2, one can see that Peace Valley in the northern portion has been well surveyed by both Jensen (1968) and DPR staff (Gruver n.d.), and the southern and southeastern periphery near the present-day town of Sutter has also been well surveyed (Storm 1974; Storm 1980; Garr and Bayham 1989; Derr 1990; Pastron 1992; Whiteman and Edwards 2005a, 2005b). The southwest (Storm 1981; Apple et al. 1986) and northwest (Ashkar 2000) peripheries have had limited survey coverage. While work has focused on the northern and southern halves, the eastern and western peripheries, as well as the majority of the interior (with the exception of Peace Valley area) have not been surveyed. This limited coverage creates biases that must be acknowledged. Future work that provides surveys of new areas will enable a further understanding of the role the Sutter Buttes. The majority of land in the Buttes is privately owned however, so access is difficult to obtain.

The second major limitation to this study is chronology. Very few datable artifacts and even fewer dates from techniques such as radiocarbon dating or obsidian hydration have been obtained. While it would be ideal to know when the Buttes were used and how this use changed through time, not enough data from any one source is available. One could assume that a large mountain range in the center of the Northern Sacramento Valley must have been visited since the beginning of human occupation,
Figure 2. Map of survey coverage from previous archaeological investigations. Shaded areas depict survey coverage.
however this is just speculation. Data collected in the 1800s through today indicate the
importance of the landform to native peoples leading up to, and continuing into
ethnographic times, however it is not clear how far these connections went back into
prehistory. Future work could focus on obtaining more dates either from provenienced
artifacts already collected or from new excavations.

Archaeological Landscape Data

A review of previous archeological work conducted in the area was collected
from two sources: the Northeast Information Center (NEIC) and the California
Department of State Parks and Recreation (DPR) office in Oroville, California. A record
search was completed at the NEIC, located at CSU Chico, California during the fall of
2008 and the early spring of 2009. The NEIC is one of 12 information centers in
California which house archeological and historical resource information. It is
responsible for 11 counties in northeastern California and has a total of 32,000 cultural
resource records and 10,000 investigation reports. The record search conducted for this
research included a review of all survey reports and site records at the NEIC that pertain
to the study area and Peter Jensen’s (1968) Master’s Thesis. In total, 10 survey reports
and 33 site records were reviewed. Information gathered from these records included site
type, survey/site location and artifacts and features descriptions.

Additional site records were obtained from the California Department of State
Parks and Recreation. These included records for 26 sites recorded during the 2005
survey of Peace Valley. These records are not yet available at the NEIC and were
graciously provided by DPR staff. New sites from this survey have not been given a formal state trinomial and are referred to by the name given to them in the field.

Additional information regarding archaeological interpretations of the area was taken from work conducted by Peter M. Jensen (1968, 1970). Jensen’s (1968) research involved both survey of Peace Valley and excavation of two prehistoric sites (CA-SUT-34 and CA-SUT-43). These are the only recorded excavations in the Sutter Buttes and offer the only data available on the vertical cultural deposition in the project area.

Cultural Landscape Data

Data on the cultural landscape were derived from four sources: ethnographic materials, oral histories, songs, and interviews. Ethnographic information used in this research includes published documents on the Maidu and Patwin, which were written by anthropologists, antiquarians, and early settlers. Data extracted from these sources included both information pertinent to the cultural overview in this chapter and several of the stories recorded in Chapter VII. These sources were obtained from a variety of places including, Special Collections in the Meriam Library at California State University, Chico (CSU Chico), the Community Memorial Museum, Yuba City, and the Department of Parks and Recreation, Oroville. The Butte County Library in Yuba City was also consulted; however, it failed to yield any new sources.

Additional stories which have not been formally published are also included in Chapter VII. These stories, and the one song, were collected from interviews with Native Americans by various sources. In particular, the Dorothy Hill Collection in the
Special Collections Department at CSU Chico provided stories from both Maidu (Azbill et al. 1968) and Patwin (Regaldo 1972) individuals. This collection is a rich assortment of information on Native American people in Northern California. It was compiled by Dorothy Morehead Hill and Robert Rathbun and includes field notes, research notes, photographs, and audio, and videotaped interviews. Stories, views, and perceptions of the Sutter Buttes are dispersed throughout the collection. Two stories (Green n.d.; Loeb 1933) and the single song (Why-le-pe 1967) were found at the Community Memorial Museum in Yuba City.

Oral histories were obtained from the Sutter Buttes Oral History Project, conducted by the Pacific Regional Humanities Center of the University of California, Davis (UC Davis). Project participants conducted interviews with Sutter Buttes landowners and other interested parties and can be accessed online at the eScholarship Repository, University of California. The one oral history from this collection used in this research was between Cynthia Guerrero (interviewer) and Diana Almanderez (interviewee; Almanderez 2006).

Interviews

Because Native American input is crucial to understanding the Sutter Buttes, attempts to contact and request interviews from representatives of local tribal groups were made. Unfortunately, very few of these requests received responses. Although more interviews are ideal, it is difficult to find individuals willing to share knowledge with those they do not know, particularly knowledge pertaining to sacred places. Additionally, some individuals who did respond would have been willing to share, but did not have any
stories or knowledge on the matter. This type of problem should be expected in future studies which seek knowledge about sacred places or knowledge about the past.

I sent email requests to the following groups in September 2008: Cache Creek Conservancy (Nisenan), Cortina Band of Indians (Wintun, Patwin), the Todd Valley Miwok-Maidu Cultural Foundation (Miwok, Maidu) and the Greenville Rancheria of Maidu Indians (Maidu). I received no response to any of these emails.

I sent written requests to the following groups in October 2008: Colusa Indian Community Council (Wintun, Patwin), Cortina Band of Indians (Wintun, Patwin), Grindstone Rancheria of Wintun-Wailaki (Nomelaki, Wintun, Wailaki, Muimok), KonKow Valley Band of Maidu (KonKow, Maidu), Mooretown Rancheria (Concow, Maidu), Rumsey Indian Rancheria of Wintun-Patwin (Patwin, Wintu) and the Tasman Koyom Indian Foundation (Maidu). The only response I received was from the Rumsey Indian Rancheria of Wintun-Patwin. Although the tribal representative knew of no stories or other pertinent information personally, he did offer me access to the archives housed at the office. Unfortunately, I did not make it to the Clear Lake region where the archives are located.

I contacted the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria on the telephone in September 2008 and sent a written request to the Tribal Council in May 2009. A representative of the Mechoopda was very responsive to my call, however, she did not know any stories or firsthand knowledge on the Sutter Buttes to share.

Despite, the difficulties discussed above, three interviews were successfully conducted and are recorded in Chapter VII. These include one phone interview with Beverly Ogle (Mountain Maidu), a one-on-one interview with Patsy Seek (Konkow,
Maidu) and one email interview with John Lucich (Maidu). The interview with Beverly Ogle was not a formal interview, but rather a conversation which was recorded by note taking. The interview with Patsy Seek was tape-recorded and then transcribed. John Lucich was given a list of questions and responded to them via email. These interviews greatly contributed to this project, providing insight that is not available elsewhere. These interviews demonstrate the importance of Native American consultation and what this process has to offer to studies of the past.

Field Visits

As mentioned previously, no archaeological fieldwork was conducted. Prerecorded data provided an adequate sample of what is archaeologically known in the Sutter Buttes. Though fieldwork would create a larger and more complete data set, survey or excavation was not in the scope of this project, nor was it a necessity to accomplish the goals of this research. While no formal surveys or excavation were undertaken, I did attend five guided hikes. These trips were led and arranged by various organizations for multiple reasons. During these tours, interviews were not conducted; rather I listened and gained information on what the various groups and individuals had to say about the landscape we were touring and what they were seeing. This data provided complementary information for the discussion in Chapter VIII. Though providing minimal input to the entire project, these trips emphasized the several ways of seeing and using the Buttes.

On October 19, 2008, I attended a walk with Mike Hubbartt, Joe Bouchard, and Kathy Larsen of the Middle Mountain Foundation. The Middle Mountain Foundation
is a nonprofit organization that formed in 1989 to promote educational awareness of the natural and cultural resources associated with the Sutter Buttes. They offer guided hikes of several different parts of the Buttes to both school classes and the public. The hike on October 19 took place in the northern section of the Buttes. Tour guides discussed such topics as acorns, Native American plant use, and Native American perceptions of the Buttes.

On October 25, 2008, the Yuba City Historical Society offered a trip to Peace Valley located on the western portion of the Buttes. The hike was led by Ira Heinrich and Daniel Barth. Native Americans were invited to join and a single representative from the Mechoopda attended. Ira Heinrich has spent over 50 years working in and around the Buttes. He has done extensive research on the importance of the mountains to Native Americans. Much of the day was spent discussing what he has learned.

On November 29, 2008, Stan Padilla of the Auburn Miwok Maidu Rancheria and Chuck Knitzon of the Maidu Cultural Interpretation Center offered a hike in the northern portion of the Buttes. This hike allowed participants to experience the Buttes on a personal level. Time was spent emphasizing the importance of place and understanding the Sutter Buttes as the “center flower of the surrounding cultures” (Stan Padilla, personal communication, November 29, 2008).

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) organized a guided walk/meeting in Peace Valley on February 21, 2009. Attendees included DPR staff such as Park archaeologist, Leslie Steidl, as well as representatives of the KonKow Valley Band of Maidu, the Enterprise Rancheria of Maidu Indians, and the Mechoopda Maidu Indians. The goal of the meeting was to form a collaborative effort between DPR and the
Native American community on the creation of six interpretative panels that will be placed in the Sutter Buttes State Park (the name of the park is still undecided at this time).

On March 29, 2009, I attended a guided hike with the Sacramento Archaeological Society (SAS) which was led by DPR staff, including Tim Davis, Zack Chambers, Dionne Gruver, and Kathy Lindahl. The hike was located on Parks land in Peace Valley and the adjacent land owned by Howard Hamman. This hike consisted of visiting several different archaeological sites, including both historic and prehistoric sites. I had discussions of the recent survey conducted by DPR staff Dionne Gruver and Kathy Lindahl.

Chapter Summary

This data listed above is discussed both individually and collectively. In doing so, it become apparent that the single location (the Sutter Buttes) has several different landscapes and is viewed and understood in several different ways. The next chapter provides an overview of the physical landscape of the Sacramento Valley and the Sutter Buttes. This includes topography, hydrology, climate, flora, and fauna.
CHAPTER IV

THE PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE

As specified in the previous chapters, the landscape approach does not focus solely on one particular area on the landscape, but rather attempts to place the study area in a regional context. The environmental and cultural overview that follows looks not only at the Sutter Buttes and the three cultures most commonly associated with the mountains, but also attempts to understand the role of the place and the people in relation to the prehistoric Sacramento Valley.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the physical landscape which includes the geological formation of the Sacramento Valley and the Sutter Buttes, as well as the flora and fauna of the region. The physical landscape is not a mere backdrop to human activity, nor is it immune to the impacts of occupation. Availability of resources and occurrences of climatic events such as floods and drought greatly affect human activity. Likewise, human activities greatly affect the environment changing both the physical appearance of a region as well as the quantity and diversity of plant and animal resources. The following chapter, Chapter V, “The Cultural Landscape,” provides a more in depth view of human occupation of the region and how it is related to the physical landscape.
The Study Area

The study area, the Sutter Buttes, is located in the northern portion of the Central Valley (Figure 3). The periphery, or foothills of the Buttes, extends south from the central core to West Butte Road and South Butte Road, while the northern edge is bordered by the town of Pennington. West Butte Road also defines the western boundary, with East Butte Road and the Snake River bordering the study area to the east. The town of Sutter is located directly adjacent to the southeast section. The study area is depicted on the following United States Geological Survey (USGS) Topographic Maps: Sutter Buttes, CA 7.5' (1954; Photo Revised 1973), Pennington, CA 7.5' (1954; Photo Revised 1973), Sutter, CA 7.5' (1952; Photo Revised 1973), Meridian, CA 7.5' (1952; Photo Revised 1973), Sanborn Slough, CA 7.5' (1952; Photo Revised 1973), Sutter Buttes, CA 15' (1954), Butte City, CA 15’ (1954), Gridley, CA 15' (1952) and Marysville, CA 15’ (1952). These maps were used to determine archaeological survey and site locations.

The Sacramento Valley

The Central Valley runs north-south for 400 miles in the central portion of California (Oakshott 1978:9). This large valley is subdivided three ways: the Sacramento Valley occupying the northern 150 miles; the Delta in the central portion; and the San Joaquin Valley in the south. It expands to a width of 50 miles and is defined by the western Sierra Nevada foothills and the southern Cascades to the east and the northern Coast Ranges to the west (Oakshott 1978). Prior to the late Pliocene, the valley was connected to the Pacific Ocean and thus completely submerged under the sea (Anderson 2004). Between ~23 and 1.8 million years ago, tectonic activity along the San Andres...
Figure 3. Geological and topographic map of the Central Valley (study area in red box).

Fault combined with the buildup of marine sediments (mudstone, sandstone and shale), led to the disconnection of the valley from the ocean.

The valley floor is littered with rivers channels, sloughs and seasonal drainages which run north and south, as well as east and west. Tributaries run from the Coast Ranges, the Klamath Mountains, the Cascade Range and the Sierra Nevada into the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers which drain south through the Suisun, San Pablo and San Francisco Bays. This run off, in combination with the climate and general shape of the valley makes the lower and central portions of the Sacramento Valley extremely prone to flooding and alluviation (Thompson 1960). Flooding most commonly occurs in the spring from snow melt in the mountains and combines with rainfalls from the winter (rainfall alone is seldom the cause of flooding). During this time the area receives 90 percent of its annual rainfall (Thompson 1960:353-354).

Unlike many valleys, the Sacramento Valley was initially created almost solely from tectonics. After this initial formation, water erosion began to play a large part in the modification that is observed today. As the surrounding mountains have been rising, the valley has been sinking, forming what can be viewed as a great depression (Thompson 1960:350). As the mountain ranges were uplifted, massive amounts of deposition were deposited throughout the valley via erosion. This deposition, coupled with sediment build up from floodwaters, has resulted in the relatively wide, flat Sacramento Valley, which can be viewed as one large flood plain. Kenneth Thompson observed (1960:352) that “the flood plain is disproportionately long and low in relation to the total length of the stream.” As a result, the velocity of the Sacramento River greatly decreases as it heads south and thus its capacity to carry water becomes restricted. The
first 56 miles of the Sacramento Valley decreases 5,913 feet in elevation at which point it is jointed by the Pit and McCloud Rivers. This decrease in elevation becomes less dramatic with distance, with the final 247 miles only losing 240 feet (Sullivan 1982). The low and relatively flat state of the valley, combined with the lack of a well-defined release outlet creates a situation where sudden increases in volume results in overflows and the inundation of a large area.

These floods are not rare, but rather are common and presumably have been since prehistoric times. Sullivan (1982) used x-ray radiography of core samples and analyzed organic content to study paleoflood frequencies in the Sacramento Valley. His study area at Little Packer Lake, an oxbow lake approximately 15 miles northwest of the Sutter Buttes, reflected 800 years of flood history in the region. Using C-14 dates, Sullivan concluded that in the 730 years prior to European contact, 36-40 notable floods had occurred, with large flooding episodes every 18 to 20 years. He determined that the five largest floods took place in A.D. 1360, 1410, 1615, 1770, and 1820. Although the number of floods were less in prehistoric times than those recorded after contact, Sullivan determined the severity of the floods were worse earlier in time. Basing severity on the thickness of the flood deposit in the core sample, the thickest deposit in historic times was only half the size of the 1615 deposit. This flood, being the largest recorded at Little Packer Lake is contemporaneous with a large flood recorded in the North Coast Ranges around the same time (Sullivan 1982:73).

Without these streams and rivers, the valley would only receive 5 to 20 inches of rain fall annually (Oakshott 1978). The combination of overflow of these waterways, marine sediments, and the deposition of gravel, clay, sand and silt from erosion of the
Sierra Nevada and the Coast Ranges has created more than 10 miles of fill on the Sacramento Valley floor (Oakshott 1978). These several episodes of erosion and deposition have had negative impacts on the archaeological record, burying or destroying many sites (Rosenthal et al. 2007). In particular, two major events have been recorded. The first major deposition occurred just before the end of the Pleistocene (~cal B.C. 9050), destroying large portions of the Pleistocene landscape and a second large depositional event occurred around cal B.C. 5500 burying many of the early Holocene sites. As a result, many of the earliest sites in the Valley are no longer visible.

Geological Overview of the Sutter Buttes

The Sutter Buttes were created by nearly half a million years of volcanic activity and remain somewhat of a geological mystery (Williams and Curtis 1977; Anderson 2004). Beginning about 1.59 million years ago, rising magmas uplifted sedimentary beds creating the volcanic formation now known as the Sutter Buttes (Hausback and Nilsen 1990:1646). This initial movement formed the circular outline that defines the landform today (see Figure 4; Wood and Kienle 1990). As observed by Howel Williams and G.H. Curtis (1977), no other volcanoes have resulted in such deformation of the surrounding sedimentary beds. A half a million years of explosive activity followed this initial uplift, leading to the formation of the andesitic Pelean Domes that constitute the central portion of the Buttes (Wood and Kienle 1990:225).

On a simpler level, the geology of the Buttes has been described as follows: “They are made up of a high, central core of andesite and tuff surrounded by a ring of sedimentary rocks, and in turn by an outer ring of andesite breccia and tuff, which merges
Figure 4. Satellite image of the Sutter Buttes.


into the older sediments of the valley floor” (Oakshott 1978:246). On a more metaphoric level, the Sutter Buttes can be viewed as a castle (Williams and Curtis 1977). Williams and Curtis (1977) use the castle analogy to divide the Buttes into four topographic and geologic units: the Rampart, the Moat, the Castellated Core and the Central Lake-Beds. The first unit, the “Rampart” acts as a biological barrier as several of the plants and animals present on the periphery of the Buttes do not extend beyond this boundary (Anderson 2004). This first unit is comprised of three levels: a basal component of
volcanic tuff; a middle component consisting primarily of andesite with smaller quantities of rhyolite and dacite; and an upper component of andesite blocks. These lower slopes are primarily covered in short grasses with thin woods occurring in the northern portion (Williams 1929).

The peripheral ring of the Rampart rises to a crest surrounding the second unit, forming what has been dubbed, “the Moat.” This unit consists of rounded hills and ridges made from Cretaceous and Tertiary sediments. Walt Anderson (2004) observes that, “You could not witness the eruption of a new volcanic range and predict that a moat would develop. The odds against the formation of the striking symmetry of the Buttes are overwhelmingly negative” (Anderson 2004:14). The Moat consists primarily of rhyolite and andesite and separates the lower slopes from the Castellated Core. In this second unit, a cross-section of the past 100 million years of geological activity of the valley is visible (Anderson 2004:15).

The third unit is the “Castellated Core,” which consists of a cluster of Pelean domes of andesite created during the half million years of explosive activity (Williams and Cutis 1977). Williams and Curtis (1977:5) cite the South Butte (2,117 feet), North Butte (1,863 feet) and West Butte (1,681 feet) as the most conspicuous of these domes while Anderson (2004) adds the Twin Peaks to the list. The fourth and final unit, the “Central Lake-Beds,” is located in the central interior. Williams and Curtis (1977:35) hypothesize that this oval region (1 mile by 0.7 miles) was formed when weak steam-blast eruptions washed volcanic debris into a subsiding lake-basin. Because the debris appears mostly waterlaid, they argue that even the larger blocks of sediments were
washed slowly into place rather than abruptly as would be expected if the basin had been filled from falling debris.

Environmental Overview

The natural environment of the Central Valley has changed dramatically through time. Figures 5, 6, and 7 illustrate what the interior of the Buttes look like today. Periods of drought, flooding and climatic fluctuations has created environmental diversity that is represented both in the past and present ecoregions. Prior to hydraulic mining and modern water reclamation projects, seasonal flooding of streams and rivers combined with tidal action in the Delta, created extensive wetlands with lush swamp vegetation such as tules, cattails and grasses (Moratto 1984:170). The riparian environment of the

Figure 5. Seasonal drainage in Peace Valley, February 2009. Photographed by Melinda Button.
rivers and streams were lined with sycamore, cottonwood, Oregon ash, willow, California grape and box elder trees with a thick undergrowth of native blackberry, wild rose, button bush and elderberry (Moratto 1984:169-170). However, the onset of twentieth century life has changed this landscape. Natural waterways have been rerouted and extensive farming and ranching activities have occurred throughout the valley, replacing or depleting native plant and animal populations.

Similar to the rest of the Central Valley, the environment of the Sutter Buttes has changed greatly over the past 150 years. Farming and ranching have led to the introduction of nonnative plant and animal species, creating a natural landscape different from that experienced by prehistoric peoples. Data collected from early explorers and settlers provide some data on what the Sutter Buttes and the Sacramento Valley may have
looked like; though many of these come nearly 100 years after initial exploration. In April of 1891, botanist Willis L. Jepson made a short visit to the Buttes and provided one of the earliest botanical studies. He acknowledged upfront the short visit prevented him from a thorough recordation; however, he still managed to record 110 different plant species, three of which were then unidentified. Jepson traveled to the Buttes from the south via the Sacramento River, observing how the vegetation between Yuba City and 60 miles south before the town varied little, “[b]ut the moment I reached the Buttes the flora to all appearance changed entirely” (Jepson 1891:317). Jepson further observes that

…the Buttes have at a distance a very barren appearance, and they are in fact but little wooded. The annual growth was, however, everywhere luxuriant, even to the summits of the highest rocky points. The sides of the little canyon which I entered were clothed with dwarfed oak trees, rhamnus and holly bushes and undershrubs.
Over the tops of the oaks and other trees clambered the clematis, lighting the whole canyon side with its wonderful profusion of blossoms. [Jepson 1891:318]

Although Jepson’s visit took place after the initial settling of the Buttes, it still provides an early view of the vegetation prior to such disturbances as water reclamation, livestock, air pollution, and the construction of roads and walls.

Though much has changed since westward immigrant settlement, vegetation in the Buttes remains unique, reflecting the insular environment of the landform. Described as an “ecological island” (Anderson 1983:55), the plant life of the Buttes differs, from the surrounding area offering a suite of plant resources not available on the valley floor or along the rivers edges (see Figure 8). The Buttes are depicted as a Blue Oak-Gray Pine forest surrounded by a mix of California prairie, riparian forest, and tule marsh (Küchler 1978). Blue Oak-Gray Pine forest is characterized by “medium tall, dense to open broad-leaved deciduous forest with an admixture of needle-leaved evergreen trees. Low broad-leaved evergreen trees and/or shrubs are common” (Küchler 1978:19). These forests are typically dominated by blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) and digger pine (*Pinus sabiniana*), however Gray pines do not grow in the Buttes, reflecting the uniqueness of life in the Buttes in comparison to other ecological patterns of California. Oak trees, on the other hand, are abundant. These include: Valley Oak, Interior Live Oak, Blue Oak, Scrub Oak, and Oracle Oak (Anderson 1983). The nearest oak environments to the Buttes are located approximately 15 to 20 miles to the east and the west. In contrast to the oak savanna of the Buttes, the surrounding California prairie is dominated with bunchgrass and forbs; the riparian forest is a deciduous forest with islands of tule marsh; and the tule marshes are marked by graminoid plant communities
including the common tule (*Scirpus acutus*) and cattail (*Typha latifolia*) (Küchler 1978:23).

Generally speaking, the natural diversity, both in the valley and in the Sutter Buttes, provided native peoples with a plethora of resources. Valley groups have often been linked with particular environments (e.g., foothill Maidu vs. valley Maidu), with the division based on a combination of natural habitats and cultural traits (Moratto 1984).
Similarly, major shifts in climate have often been used as distinguishing factors in divisions in cultural sequences in the Valley (Frederickson 1974; Rosenthal et al. 2007). As such, an understanding of the natural environment is crucial to understanding both the archaeological record and the way the land may have been viewed in the past, which are discussed in Chapter VI.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the physical landscape of the Sutter Buttes and the Sacramento Valley. The next chapter, Chapter V, “The Cultural Landscape,” provides an overview of the cultural landscape. This includes a brief overview of past archaeological investigations in the Sacramento Valley and a cultural chronology for the Sacramento Valley. The chapter also examines prehistoric settlement patterns and resource distribution in the valley. After these general discussions, a more in-depth discussion on the Patwin, the Konkow and the Nisenan is provided. The chapter concludes with a summary of initial Euroamerican exploration, the post-contact landscapes of the Sutter Buttes and the Sacramento Valley, and a brief description of the study area as it is today.
CHAPTER V

THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The preceding chapter, Chapter IV, “The Physical Landscape,” provided a summary of the topography, hydrology, and available plants and animals. This chapter discusses the human element of the landscape, outlining both prehistoric and historic occupations of the Sacramento Valley and the Sutter Buttes. It demonstrates the interconnectedness between the physical and the cultural landscapes, and highlights the great diversity in the region. This chapter summarizes past work and discusses some interpretations of prehistoric life in the Sacramento Valley. It further demonstrates how historic occupation has not only changed the physical landscape, but has changed how the landscape is perceived and experienced.

The prehistory of the Sacramento Valley is characterized by extreme cultural diversity. In 1842, Theodore Cordua owned a ranch near present-day Marysville and commented:

The Indians are of one race, but are divided into many tribes according to whether they dwell in the south or in the north or in the mountain range…It is fair to assume that there are thirty different tribes in the country and just as many languages. Practically every thirty miles one hears a different dialect…the tribes are related to each other and at the same time differ. [Theodor Cordua in Fontana 1956:39]

Ethnographic accounts support Cordua’s claim recording at least 30 different dialects in the Sacramento Valley including Wintu, Nomlaki, Patwin, Konkow, Nisenan, Plains Miwok, Saclan, and Yokuts (Moratto 1984:168). Early counts taken in the eighteenth
century estimated a population of nearly 105,000 people in the Central Valley with 53,500 of those residing in the Sacramento Valley (Moratto 1984:149). If these figures are accurate, the average population density of the region would have been nearly 20 times greater than that estimated for all of precontact America north of Mexico (Moratto 1984). Moratto (1984:1968) concluded that the region had a complex prehistory, which included both, “…population shifts and cultural replacement as well as the evolution of regionally distinctive social and economic patterns.” As a result, the area has been described as a “crossroads” (Moratto 1984:168), and the Sutter Buttes were no exception to this pattern as they are located at the interface of three different cultural groups: the Patwin (southern Wintu), the Konkow (northwest Maidu), and the Nisenan (southern Maidu).

Archaeological Overview

Despite the great potential for important data pertaining to the prehistory of Central California, many problems exist with the archaeology. Prior to modern water conveyance projects, the Central Valley was subject to heavy seasonal flooding which has destroyed or buried many of the sites. Additional site destruction has occurred from agriculture, grazing, and construction. Examples of these impacts were found in several of the site records reviewed for this project. Included in these impacts, have been the complete removal of large features, such as bedrock mortars from their original location (CA-SUT-53) (Whiteman and Edwards 2005a). The effects of these missing sites or features have obvious biases on archaeological site and regional interpretations.
Further biasing has occurred throughout the archaeological investigatory history of the area. As argued by Rosenthal et al. (2007:150), early collections were “…rife with sampling biases,” which centered on burials and artifacts with little focus paid to dietary remains or technological features. This recent synthesis contributes to others that are veering away from older approaches in methodology, and applying such models as prey choice (Broughton 1994a) and optimal foraging (Basgall 1987) to understand resource exploitation and intensification in the Central Valley.

Regardless of the broadening of research interests, biases still exist as little work has applied culture studies to the archaeological record. Admittedly, it is because in many ways the intricacies of culture are archaeological invisible. Though ethnographic materials collected in the 19th and 20th centuries are not an exact replica of the past, the use of these sources have proven useful in landscape studies around the world (Head 1993; Head and Fullagar 1997; Taçon 1999; Riley and Harvey 2005). What follows is a brief outline of aboriginal culture in the Sacramento Valley, with specific focus paid to the Patwin, the Konkow and the Nisenan. The overview is derived from both ethnographic and archaeological sources.

Cultural Chronology

Several chronologies have been created for the Central Valley (Heizer and Fenenga 1939; Beardsley 1954; Frederickson 1974; Rosenthal et al. 2007). Some encompass large portions of the valley, whereas others focus on much smaller subsections, exemplifying the diversity of the prehistoric cultures which have occupied the region through time. Rather than a thorough discussion of each of these, a summary
of the most current regional chronology put forth by Rosenthal et al. (2007) will be given (see Table 1). Rosenthal et al. (2007) combined newly calibrated radiocarbon dates with Frederickson (1974) to produce a five-stage chronology applicable to the entire Central Valley. Although local variations in this general framework exist, it provides a sufficient overview of the development of prehistoric life in the Central Valley.

**Table 1.** Central Valley cultural chronology as outlined by Rosenthal et al. (2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Settlement-Subsistence Strategy</th>
<th>Climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paleo-Indian</td>
<td>Cal B.C. 11,500-8,500</td>
<td>Nomadic big-game hunting</td>
<td>Large depositional event ~cal. B.C. 9050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Archaic</td>
<td>Cal B.C. 8500-5550</td>
<td>Seasonally structured settlement; big-game hunting with some reliance on plant foods</td>
<td>Large floodplain depositional event ~cal. B.C. 5550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Archaic</td>
<td>Cal B.C. 5550-550</td>
<td>Two distinct settlement-subsistence adaptations:</td>
<td>Warmer, drier conditions with rising sea levels and the formation of wetlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1) Foothill (highly mobile people reliant on plant foods)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2) Valley (increase in residential settlement with more intensive subsistence practices)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Archaic</td>
<td>Cal B.C. 550-A.D. 1100</td>
<td>Seasonal exploitation of resources and first signs of large mounded village sites</td>
<td>Cooler, wetter, and more stable climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent Occupation</td>
<td>Cal A.D. 1000-Historic</td>
<td>Increased importance in plant processing and rise in social complexity</td>
<td>Stable climate with several flood and drought events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Towards the end of the Pleistocene (~cal B.C. 9050), a significant climate change occurred and is characterized by large depositional events. While these events
provide a clear delineation between the Late Pleistocene and the Early Holocene, they destroyed the majority of the late Pleistocene landscape. As a result, the first period, the Paleo-Indian period (cal B.C. 11,500-8,550), is represented by very few sites and artifacts. The earliest evidence of human occupation is limited to four Clovis-like projectile points; three from the San Joaquin Valley and one possible fluted point from Tehama County in the Sacramento Valley (Rosenthal et al. 2007:151). Though these points are not associated with C-14 dates, the style is thought to date between 11,550 and 9550 cal B.C. (Rosenthal et al. 2007).

The depositional events at the end of the Pleistocene mark the beginning of the second period, the Lower Archaic (cal B.C. 8500-5550). Despite the general lack of milling equipment in these assemblages, evidence suggests some reliance on plant foods, particularly those associated with the expanding foothill woodlands. Large, reworked projectile points are thought to be representative of big game hunting (artiodactyls), indicating a mixed diet. Even in this early period, a seasonally structured settlement system with defined “regional interaction spheres” is inferred from frequently visited camp sites in the foothills and the presence of trade objects such as obsidian from the east side of the Sierra Nevada (Rosenthal et al. 2007:152).

The Middle Archaic (cal B.C. 5550-550) is marked by another change in climate, which resulted in warmer drier conditions, rising sea levels, and the formation of wetland habitats. During this period, two distinct “settlement-subsistence adaptations” were becoming apparent; one in the foothills and one in the valley (Rosenthal et al. 2007:153). Foothill assemblages indicate high mobility with a diet reliant on plant foods such as acorn and pine nut, whereas valley assemblages demonstrate an increase in
residential settlement along river corridors with a complete riverine adaptation around 6,600 years ago. The traditional Windmiller Pattern falls within the Middle Archaic and is marked by the presence of mortars and pestles in lowland sites, indicating a shift towards more intensive subsistence practices (Basgall 1987). Fauna such as tule elk, mule deer, pronghorn, rabbits, raptors, and rodents were also being exploited.

The Upper Archaic (cal B.C. 550- A.D. 1100) is again marked by a change in climate; this time to a cooler, wetter and more stable climate. Subsistence practices are characterized as seasonal exploitation of resources which could be harvested and processed in bulk (e.g., salmon, shellfish, and acorn) and large mounded villages sites begin to appear (Frederickson 1974). Commenting on an accumulation of data collected in the past, Rosenthal et al. (2007:156) state, “[c]ultural diversity was more pronounced and is clearly reflected in a geographically complex mosaic of distinct sociopolitical entities marked by contrasting burial posts, artifact styles, and other elements of material culture.”

The final period, the Emergent Occupation (cal A.D. 1000- Historic), is marked by a stable climate with several flood and drought events. The bow and arrow, Cosumnes brown ware, house pits, elaborate fishing equipment, and the increased quantities of baked clay effigies are found in collections from this time period. These new technologies support a rise in social complexity and a replacement of archaic technology and traditions with those recorded at the time of European contact. Sites from after 1,000 years ago are dominated by mortars and pestles, emphasizing the increased importance of plant processing in the lower Sacramento Valley.
It is unknown when the Sutter Buttes were first utilized by Native Americans. They may have been exploited for a variety of reasons, since the initial settlement of the Sacramento Valley; however, no concrete evidence exists to support this claim. The only excavations conducted in the Buttes did not produce large quantities of datable artifacts or material (Jensen 1968). Jensen (1968:110) conducted obsidian hydration analysis on one leaf-shaped projectile point found on a hillside south of Peace Valley, which suggests a date of manufacture between 1,500 and 2,500 years ago. Large quantities of milling equipment scattered throughout the Sutter Buttes are characteristic of sites dating after 1,000 years, however this should not be used to exclude the possibility of earlier use, which may not be as evident.

Settlement

Although prehistoric sites are found throughout the Sacramento Valley, permanent occupation sites (marked by deep midden deposits) tend to be located in areas above the flood plain (Kroeber 1970; Beardsley 1954; Jensen 1968; Wilson and Towne 1978; Heizer and Elsasser 1980). Supported from both archaeological investigations (Beardsley 1954) and accounts by early settlers (Fontana 1956; Heizer and Elsasser 1980), native people had been building on levees since at least the Middle Archaic (5,500-2,500 B.P.) (Beardsley 1954; Moratto 1984). Richard K. Beardsley (1954:64) noted permanent villages in the Valley are located on natural rises “…above the general level or on natural levees bordering the streams of the bottom lands” and that these rises “…provided refuge during seasonal floods.” This pattern has been supported by several
accounts from early explorers and settlers who observed that villages were on ground elevated above the spring flooding zone (Heizer and Elsasser 1980:71).

Though residential stability in riverine environments increased with time (Rosenthal et al. 2007), seasonal rounds of resource exploitation remained an integral part of prehistoric settlement patterns. This involved both personal and communal expeditions. Seasonal rounds were determined by annual ripening of plant resources, while hunting and fishing occurred year round. Ethnographic work collected on the Konkow noted that families would move to strategic locations at different times of the year, depending on what plants were available for harvest (McCarthy et al. n.d.).

Likewise, Moratto (1984:172) wrote that most Valley groups “…followed a yearly gathering cycle that led them away from the lowlands into the hill country each summer.” While much of the food was consumed immediately, plant and animal resources were dried and stored (Dreyer 1984; Moratto 1984; McCarthy et al. n.d.). This practice allowed for large quantities of food to be accessed for trade and communal feasts (Dreyer 1984; McCarthy et al. n.d.) while acting as a buffer against food shortages (Basgall 1987). Drawing from observations made in 1850, Dreyer (1984:52) wrote how acorns could be stored for up to two years “…thereby guarding against failure in future crops.”

Traditional anthropological studies have discussed the occurrence of well-defined territorial boundaries acknowledged by the community and the surrounding neighbors. Kroeber (1970:398) observed that it was not uncommon for borders to be “…more or less patrolled to guard against poaching.” He further explained that among valley cultures, an animal shot within one territory could become property of the people whose land it died in rather than those of the hunters. Accounts from the area between
present-day Oroville and Mooretown note the use of petroglyphs to establish territorial boundaries (Kroeber 1970).

These territories included major villages, satellite villages, and hunting and gathering grounds. Although large tracts of land were not necessarily inhabited, they were utilized for hunting and gathering. Within each of these territories were further divisions of landownership (discussed in more detail below). The details of these differed between groups and could include divisions based on community, family, or individual rights. For example, particular fishing spots or seed tracts were only accessible to certain individuals or families, and permission to fish or gather at these areas required permission from the appropriate party.

Many of these observations, however, conflict with Native American views which view these interpretations as biased by Euro-American land ownership beliefs (Beverly Ogle, personal communication). Attempts to understand property delineations and to assign ownership to land and resources may reflect an attempt by early anthropologists to understand native life in terms they were already familiar with; however they do not accurately reflect the way “property” is viewed by many Native Americans. As defined today, “ownership” was not practiced among native peoples. While territories existed, communal use (both inter- and intra-tribal) was not uncommon. This concept is poignant to the study of the Sutter Buttes as much work has focused on the lack of “ownership” of this valuable area (Johnson 1978; Jensen 1968; Griggs 1986). The Sutter Buttes sit at the interface of the ethnographic Konkow, Nisenan, and Patwin territorial boundaries and seem to have played an important role in all three cultures rather than just one. This conflicts with studies which view the Sacramento Valley as
divided and “owned” by individual culture groups. While the archaeological record indicates minimal occupation, the Sutter Buttes are similar to other places such as Eagle Lake which were used by several different cultural groups for resource extraction, but not as villages (Bayham 2006).

Regardless of exact ownership, or lack thereof, the Buttes played a crucial role in Native American cultures. The Patwin (southern Wintun), the Konkow (northwest Maidu) and the Nisenan (southern Maidu) all have recorded spiritual and mythological ties to the geological formation. These ties are documented through stories which are still told today, demonstrating the significance of the Buttes to local culture. Although the three named groups are the traditional cultures associated with the Buttes, it is likely that many others knew of this large landform in the center of the valley. Similarly, these boundaries are based on ethnographic work and are not reflective of the entirety of prehistory. The Buttes provided people with natural resources for food and the manufacture of utilitarian items, as well as standing as a symbol of creation, World Maker, and death, as discussed in Chapter VIII.

Resources and Resource Distribution

Native Americans in the Sacramento Valley subsisted on the hunting and gathering of local resources. The natural diversity provided access to a large array of both terrestrial and aquatic resources collected from freshwater marshes, grasslands, oak woodlands, riparian forests, and foothill woodlands (Moratto 1984; Broughton 1994a; Rosenthal et al. 2007). Rosenthal et al. (2007:149) observed that each region was accessible within a day’s walk from anywhere in the basin, resulting in one of the most
productive environmental zones in California. Similarly, Beardsley (1954:64) commented that the “[a]bundant bird and animal life contributed toward making the Sacramento Valley a food-rich habitat for non-agricultural peoples.” Those resources not available in the region, namely obsidian, were traded from outside the Valley. While differences in food preferences and hunting and gathering technology varied between groups, the Patwin, Konkow, and Nisenan had access to similar resources. A general overview of resource availability and exploitation follows with any differences among the three groups specified.

Like elsewhere in California, acorns played a major part of the diet in ethnographic times (Kroeber 1970). Based on the archaeological record, it is believed this heavy reliance on acorns increased with time beginning in the Middle Period (2,500 to 1,000 B.P.) and hit its’ apex during the Late Period (1,000 B.P. to contact). This pattern is traditionally characterized by the shift from mano and metate, associated with small seeds, dominated assemblages to those with large numbers of pestles and mortars, associated with acorns and other soft nuts. Intensification models posit that the increasing importance of acorns stemmed from population growth, resource imbalances, environmental change, and growing social demand (e.g., communal feasting) (Basgal 1987). Based on these assumptions, “…acorn-intensive economies arose in the Middle Period and Early Period broad spectrum strategies, while Late Period economies appear to have intensified use of additional plant foods, as well as acorns” (Wohlgemuth 1996:84).

Eric Wohlgemuth’s (1996) analysis of archaeobotanical remains from 11 prehistoric sites located in the Central Valley (all sites were within a 40-mile radius),
found that the correlation between milling technology and plant taxa is imperfect. Drawing from more direct evidence such as the plant remains themselves, he determined that Early Period sites (ca. 4,500 to 2,800 B.P.) had relatively few acorns with a diverse range of small seeds Middle Period sites (ca. 2,800 to 1,200 B.P.) on the other hand were dominated by acorns with far fewer small seeds. Late Period sites (ca. 1,200 to 100 B.P.) had a large quantity of acorns and an increase in the diversity and quantity of small seeds, indicating an expansion of exploited plant taxa.

Other edible vegetation in the region included California blackberry, elderberry, wild oats, Toyon berry, wild grape, Manzanita, buckeye, wild cucumber, various seeds (pinoles) and tule shoots (Hendrix 1980:130-140). Plants collected for medicinal purposes included watercress, Indian soap root, Camphor Weed, monkey flower, Juniper, the common sunflower, penstemon, mule’s ear, western mugwort, milkweed, and chia. Many of these plants were also used for utilitarian objects such as basketry, tools, cordage (wild hemp), clothing, housing, and musical instruments. Tobacco grew along the river and was collected, dried, and smoke through pipes (Kroeber 1932). Many of these plant foods including acorns and Toyon berry, were collected in the early fall and often stored in case of food shortage or for communal feasting (Hendrix 1980; Dreyer 1984; McCarthy et al. n.d.).

As summarized by Hendrix (1980), the habitat of the Buttes and the adjacent streams and rivers provide both food and cover for wildlife. The Sutter Buttes are known as a haven for birds, with large numbers present during the winter and spring (Hendrix 1980). Seasonal migration of waterfowl provided a reliable food source each winter. Ducks, geese, and cranes stop at the Buttes and Butte Sink as part of the Pacific flyway,
while robins, sparrows, and wablers are present during early fall. Flocks of quail, meadowlarks, crows, and magpies abound and could have been harvested year round. While birds of prey would also have been present in the Buttes, neither the Patwin nor the Maidu groups typically consumed birds of prey (e.g., vultures, condors); however, they did use the feathers for ceremonial regalia or bedding (Johnson 1978; Riddell 1978; Wilson and Towne 1978).

Tule elk, mink, weasel, river otter, raccoon, and beaver could be found on the valley floor, while coyote, skunks, badgers, squirrels, and lagomorphs were found in the surrounding foothills and the valley floor. Though present, coyotes were not usually eaten by either the Patwin or the Maidu, and badgers were not consumed by the Patwin. Large game such as tule elk and pronghorn favored grasslands and prairie-scrub such as those found throughout the valley, while deer favored oak woodlands (Broughton 1994).

Baumhoff (1963) observed that black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) were numerous in the surrounding foothills, but their numbers were only moderate in the Central Valley. Larger abundances could be found in chaparral and oak woodlands, which provided a reliable food source for the animals.

The rivers and streams provided a plethora of freshwater and anadromous fish including salmon, sturgeon, perch, chub, sucker fish, hardhead pikes, and trout (Kroeber 1932:277). Western pond turtles and mussels were also harvested from the riverine environment, and evidence of exploitation of these animals is found in several archaeological assemblages from throughout the Sacramento Valley (Broughton 1994a:503).
It has been recorded that predatory animals such as grizzly bears or birds of prey were not consumed by the Patwin or Konkow, however many of these animals were hunted for skins, feathers, and ceremonial paraphernalia. This contrasts with the Nisenan who were known to eat wild cats and the California mountain lion; however, they too did not consume condors. Unlike many of their neighbors, the Patwin ate grasshoppers, which served as major summer food source for the Maidu (Kroeber 1932; Nelson and Towne 1978).

Described below are short cultural overviews of the three cultures most commonly associated with the Sutter Buttes. More complete descriptions are available elsewhere (Kroeber 1970; Johnson 1978; Riddell 1978; Towne and Nelson 1978); it is beyond the scope of this project to go into greater detail.

Patwin (Southern Wintu)

Language

The Patwin (meaning “people”) are a member of the Wintuan linguistic family (Johnson 1978). Wintun is spoken by several different Native American groups in Northern and Central California and is part of the larger Penutian language family which includes the Maidu, Yokuts, Costanoan, and Miwok groups (Moratto 1984:538). Based on dialectal variation, the Wintuan family is further divided into three smaller groups: Nomlaki (Central Wintun), Wintu (Northern Wintun) and Patwin (Southern Wintun) (Johnson 1978:358). They are also respectively referred to as the Wintun, the Wintu and the Patwin (Kroeber 1932; Knudtson 1977). This latter nomenclature comes from the different pronunciation of the word for “people” wherein the northern groups use the
word Wintu, the central groups use Wintun and the southern groups use Patwin (Kroeber 1932:254). Kroeber (1932) noted that of the three groups, the Patwin are the most unique in both cultural traits and language noting that the while the Wintun and Wintu can understand each other, the Patwin language is only comprehensible to the Patwin. The cultural overview that follows will focus primarily on the Patwin, specifically the southeastern Wintun, also known as the River Patwin (Kroeber 1932) as they are the group most commonly associated with the Buttes.

The Penutian language stock is second only to the Hokan stock as the oldest in California (Moratto 1984:536). Though it is acknowledged that the language has significant time depth, the exact roots of Penutian speakers or their route of migration to California is unknown (Moratto 1984). Yet, this has not impeded the study of language dispersion as a means of tracking the movement of people in prehistoric California. Between 1 A.D. and 500 A.D., the early Wintuans had entered the Sacramento Valley, and by 700 A.D., the Patwin had expanded to the lower portions of the region (Moratto 1984). This Penutian expansion led to the displacement of Hokan speakers. Based on similarities of cultural traits with Algic speaking peoples, it is believed the Wintuans came from the north either from southwestern Oregon or from the Klamath River area and then expanded south (Moratto 1984).

**Territory**

The west side of the Sacramento Valley is usually denoted as Wintu territory (Kroeber 1970). As defined by Frank R. Lapena (1978:324), the northern boundary extends from the upper Trinity River, up the Sacramento River, to Black Butte and Mount Shasta, and ends just north of Black Fox Mountain. It continues south ending just
below Cottonwood Creek. The Sutter Buttes are located along the northeastern border of this boundary. The Patwin occupied a total of 90 miles north to south and 40 miles east to west (Knudston 1977; Johnson 1978). This included the area near the present-day towns of Princeton and Stonyford, extending as far south as the San Pablo and Suisun Bays (Kroeber 1932). This territory encompassed three distinct environmental regions: the riparian regions of the Sacramento Valley which included large tule groves; the lower hills of the eastern Coast Range; and flat open grassland plains (Johnson 1978). Despite the environmental diversity, the Patwin tended to favor the lowlands and remained at an elevation of 1,200 feet or less. Kroeber (1932) cites this as the reasoning behind the relative cultural similarity between the different Patwin tribelets.

The Patwin were further divided based on different dialects. Kroeber (1932) defined three main groups: the River Patwin, who resided along the banks of the Sacramento River; the Hill Patwin, who resided in the foothills; and those who resided in the inter-range valley between Stony Creek in Grindstone to the confluence of Bear Creek and Cache Creek. Based on dialectal variation, Kroeber (1932) divides the River Patwin into three tribelets: the Koru’ (Colusa), the Sāka (Grimes) and the Yo’doi (Knight’s Landing). At the time of his publication, “The Patwin and their Neighbors,” there were fewer than 200 members. These low numbers may have resulted from the widespread malaria epidemics, which had decimated river populations by 1833 (Knudston 1977).

The Patwin were organized by tribelets, which included one main village and several smaller satellite villages (Johnson 1978). Despite overlapping of dialects between the different tribelets, each one differed slightly in cultural traditions and stood as
individual political and social units. Several scholars have attempted to compile a complete list of Patwin villages. Kroeber (1932) determined there were 18 River Patwin tribelets with well-defined territorial boundaries, while Patti J. Johnson (1978) listed fifteen. Kathy Lindahl (2005) observed that many of the River Patwin lived within site of the Sutter Buttes, with several village centers located in close to the landform.

Ethnographies produced early in the twentieth century noted that within each Patwin tribelet, territorial areas or resources were “owned” (Kroeber 1932). The level of ownership differed depending on the resource or place. Some were owned by individuals, some by families and some were for communal use. For example, fishing spots were privately owned and permission to fish these areas from the owners were required (Kroeber 1932). Similar to the ownership of fishing spots, each village had specific gathering places. The headman designated which families within the tribelet could gather in a particular place. As a result of this system, certain seed tracts were owned by particular families and permission to gather from them was required (Kroeber 1932). Unlike seed tracts or fishing spots, oak grooves were not individually owned, but rather they were communally owned and were to be used by anyone in the tribelet (Johnson 1978).

World View

Very little is written in regard to the world views of the Patwin. Some information has been gathered for the northern Wintun; however, this will not be discussed here as the Patwin are culturally unique from these northern groups in several ways (Johnson 1978). Kroeber (1970) observed that similar to their Maidu neighbors, the Patwin believed spirits roamed the world and that these spirits posed a risk to those who
encountered them. Johnson’s (1978:358) review of Patwin mythology noted the common interactions between anthropomorphized animals such as elk, antelope, condors, grizzly bears, and rattlesnakes and humans in their myths. All five Patwin stories recorded in Chapter VII support this observation, indicating a division between animals and humans that differs from modern Euroamerican perceptions.

Death

The River Patwin buried their dead unless an individual died away from home, in which case, they were cremated at the place of death (Kroeber 1932:272). Burial grounds were located within close proximity to villages or dance houses to guard against grave robbing from powerful shamans who did not fear touching objects that had been in contact with the deceased. Property was buried with the deceased and occasionally burned near the grave (Kroeber 1970). As described by Kroeber (1970), the purpose of these customs was twofold. First, it was a means for the living to demonstrate a greater concern for the individual than inheritance of their property. Second, destruction of property ensured that a ghost would not return for his or her valuables. Although some Maidu groups buried property for the deceased to use in the afterlife, this belief was not shared by the Patwin (Kroeber 1970:360). The Patwin dead traveled west, not to the Sutter Buttes like the Maidu (Kroeber 1932).

The Hesi

Kroeber (1932) cites three initiating societies in Patwin culture; the Wai-saltu (or north spirits), the Hesi and the Kuksu. The wai-saltu emphasized the initiation of young boys, the Kuksu was more concerned with curing and shamanistic functions, and the Hesi elaborated on ceremonial dance (Johnson 1978:353). While all three societies
are known to have existed among various neighboring groups, the Patwin are unique because they practiced all three. The exact details and practices of each society differed slightly, even within the different Patwin tribelets; however, all involved a series of dances in special dance houses performed by spirit impersonators dressed in full regalia under the directorship of a ceremonial leader (Johnson 1978). The *Hesi* was the beginning ceremonial training for boys. The Patwin believed it came from *Onolai-toL*, the Sutter Buttes (Kroeber 1932). Kroeber (1932:329) noted that it was “gentle” and the least dangerous of Patwin ceremonies. Likewise, Knudston (1977) wrote that the *Hesi* was the least traumatic of the societies.

Adolescent boys (8-16 years of age) were put into the *Hesi* by relatives who were already involved with it. Many were taken and trained in preparation so that one day they would inherit the costumes and positions of their older relatives. The initiates’ job entailed helping their older relatives with maintenance and assembling and putting on the costume they would one day wear (Kroeber 1932:330). It contained the greatest amount of spirit performers and was performed in an oval rather than circular round house. Participants of the *Hesi* have been divided into two main groups (four grades of participants were noted; (Kroeber 1932). The initiates were a combination of those who were still learning the dances and the ceremony as well as adult males who were experienced dances and spirit enactors. The directors were much fewer in number and were thought to possess special knowledge. Within this upper grade were those who owned and directed particular spirit enactments and the very few, sometimes limited to an individual, who were in charge of the entirety of the *Hesi* (Kroeber 1932:330). For more information on the *Kuksu* and *Wai-saltu* see Kroeber (1932).
The Konkow Maidu and the Nisenan Maidu are also associated with the Sutter Buttes. While it is acknowledged the two were separate cultural entities, much of what has been written about the Maidu has been done so as a large generalized synthesis. Further problems arise with information on the Nisenan as it is estimated that nearly 75 percent of their population died in the 1833 malaria epidemic (Towne and Wilson 1978:396). As a result, much less ethnographic information was gathered in comparison to their neighbors who had higher numbers during the initial stages of European exploration and settlement of the region. The following section is generalized to incorporate both the Konkow and the Nisenan; culture-specific information is stated, where relevant.

It should be noted the term “Konkow” is used in this thesis as it is used elsewhere in the literature; however, this is a Euroamerican name. Many Konkow refer to themselves as *Kajon K’win Majdy*, *Koyong Kawi*, or *Koyuong Kawi* (Bruce Stedil, email to the author, October 23, 2009). These variations reflect the division of groups within the generic Konkow classification. Though not used in academic literature or anthropological reports, these words are more accurate names for the people living in northwest Maidu territory.

**Language**

Like the Wintu, the Maidu are a linguistic group that belongs to the Penutian language family. Based on dialectical differences, Shipley (1961) divided the Maidu into four subgroups: the Mountain Maidu in the northeast portion of the territory, the Mechoopda in the Chico area, the Konkow in the northwest, and the Nisenan in the south.
It is the latter two of these groups which are traditionally associated with the Sutter Buttes; however, data collected for this project indicate they all four groups were at least familiar with the mountains.

Similar to their Wintun neighbors, the Maidu most likely arrived relatively late into California. Though it has been commonly accepted the Penutian groups replaced Hokan speakers, recent DNA studies have determined that at least some Penutian speakers were already present in the region prior to the Maidu expansion (Johnson 2005:69). It is believed the Maidu began to occupy their northern Sierran territory by 1-200 A.D. (Moratto 1984) and expanded onto the valley floor by 1400 A.D. (Johnson 2005). Linguistic evidence favors a migration from northwestern Nevada (Moratto 1984), which may have been driven by droughts in the Great Basin (Moratto 1984).

**Territory**

As a whole, ethnographic Maidu territory was rectangular in shape, with the four corners being Mount Lassen, Honey Lake, Carson Pass, and the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers (Shipley 1961:46). Measuring roughly 150 miles by 74 miles, it included the drainages of the Yuba, Bear and American Rivers and the lower drainages of the Feather River. The land varied greatly in topography and climate, encompassing the plains of the Sacramento Valley and extending to the crest of the Sierra Nevada (Nelson and Towne 1978). As defined by Shipley (1961), the Konkow occupied the lower Feather River Canyon and the surrounding hills and the adjacent parts of the Sacramento Valley, and the Nisenan resided in the southern half of Maidu territory. The Sutter Buttes are located in the northwestern section of the Nisenan territory and just south of Konkow territory (Rosenthal et al. 2007).
As recorded by Kroeber (1970), several different tribelets representing the four groups existed. Land was communally owned by tribelets with well-known boundaries (Kroeber 1970). While villages may have been concentrated in particular regions, small strips of land between these were unoccupied. Within this communal territory, there were only minimal ownership restrictions. Fishing holes were occasionally owned, and fences for deer drives could only be placed in certain areas by certain families (Kroeber 1970). Other than these two restrictions, land was free to use by any members of the community.

World View

The Maidu viewed their land as the work of creation which not only left landforms “…as a reminder of [the Creators] presence to his people” (Forbes-Boyte 1998:22), but filled the landscape with spiritual power. The Maidu viewed the world as inhabited by both people and supernatural beings called, kákeni (Curtis 1924). This word is also applied to ancient spirits or being who are impersonated in the kuksu (Kroeber 1970). Each of these beings resided in certain geographical locations such as a rock, a peak, a lake, or a cave and these spirits became synonymous with the names of these locations. Similarly, animals were known to have spirit counterparts that were capable of giving powers to humans. As a result, the Maidu landscape is embedded with physical objects or places which are anything but inanimate.

The Konkow viewed the world as three-layered (Forbes-Boyte 1998). The upper layer is similar to heaven and is where World Maker resides. The lower layer is where malevolent beings reside. These beings are often associated with features such as springs, underground rives, lakes, and caves. The middle layer is earth and, is inhabited
by both humans and non-mortal beings. This middle layer is imbued with power left over from creation, and particular geographical locations are seen as concentrations of this power. The Nisenan had similar world views, seeing the world as one filled with supernatural beings and ghosts (Towne and Wilson 1978). Natural objects such as trees could have supernatural powers which could both hurt humans, as well as provide luck or certain medicines.

Forbes-Boyte (1998) divided sacred Konkow places into two types: those recognized by the community and those sought by individuals who wish to obtain individual powers. These sacred places have significant symbolic meaning as they bring together the three worlds and allow contact between them. Many of these places coincide with places which are also rich in resources (Forbes-Boyte 1998; McCarthy et al. n.d.). For example, McCarthy et al. (n.d.) divided the area around Oroville into different “zones” and then looked at the different site types present in each zone. They found that Zone 4 contained the highest quantity of sites with mythological value and the highest amount of and the most productive fishing locations. This is similar to Forbes-Boyte’s (1998) work, which demonstrated the importance of fishing spots not just as a resource, but as a place given to the people by the World Maker. Similarly, Bennyhoff and Fredrickson (1969) observed that places rich in fish resources have a more elaborate cultural development than those which do not. This correlation can be applied to the Sutter Buttes which was highly significant both as a part of creation and a place utilized for its resources.
The Hesi

Kroeber (1970) described the northwestern Maidu (Konkow) hesi as one of several Kuksu dances. He writes, “[t]he Hesi was performed substantially as it has been outlined for the Patwin. The two groups seem to have attended each other’s ceremonies rather frequently” (Kroeber 1970:435). While it is acknowledged that the hesi was practiced by both the Maidu and the Wintu, variations in the meaning and purpose differ slightly. This was explained during an interview with Henry Azbill, Charlie Johnson, and Craig Bates in November 1969 (Azbill et al. 1969). Azbill, Johnson, and Bates all of whom are Konkow, explained that while their ceremony was “to placate, in supplication to the gods themselves” (Azbill 1969:1), the Wintu equivalent was for the dead. Azbill described the Wintu hesi as, “prayers saying the dead are going to come back and this sort of thing. Sort of reincarnation—a Christian idea” (Azbill 1969:1). This conflicts with many Maidu who do not believe in reincarnation (Azbill 1969:1). Furthermore, Konkow women and children were not allowed to attend the hesi in the past. According to Azbill and Johnson, in the late 1880s or early 1890s, the Wintu from Grindstone came to join the Konkow for a hesi and “put up a fuss” that women and children were not allowed in the ceremony. In order to accommodate both groups the Konkow removed the dangerous parts of the ceremony and allowed women and children. It was also at this time when people were first charged a fee to participate. As a result of these changes, the Maidu of the twentieth century never saw a hesi the way it was traditionally done and anthropologists studying the dance in the beginning of the twentieth century would have seen this edited version. Additionally, Johnson and Azbill (1969:2) hypothesize that these changes may explain why some say the hesi came from the Wintu to the Maidu.
While the *hesi* was practiced by the Konkow, it was not preformed by the Nisenan (Kroeber 1929). Rather the Akit, a dance conducted by other Maidu groups but not the Patwin, was preformed. This dance was similar to the *hesi* in that it involved spirit impersonators; however, those impersonators which were most sacred in the Patwin and the Maidu *hesi’s* were not recognized by the Nisenan. Likewise, spirit impersonators of the Nisenan were not familiar to the Patwin or the Maidu. As described by Kroeber (1929), the Nisenan did have some elements and paraphernalia found in the traditional Kuksu cult (including the *hesi*), but these elements were not organized in a system like the Maidu or Patwin. The *kuksu* is not discussed here as it is not directly tied with the Sutter Buttes, which is discussed in Kroeber (1929) and Wilson and Towne (1978).

**Death**

Burial practices among the Maidu varied greatly. Kroeber (1970) stated that cremation was preferred in the south, while all others practiced internment. He observed that personal property was broken and sometimes burned and then buried with the individual. This is confirmed by Towne and Nelson (1978) who wrote that the Nisenan (southern Maidu) favored cremation, which was accompanied by the burning of the deceased’s property and destruction of their house. As discussed above, objects such as shell beads and ornaments as well as mortars and pestles which had been ceremonially killed have been found in burial contexts from the Late Emergent Period (cal A.D. 1,000 to Historic) (Rosenthal et al. 2007).

Regardless of burial practice, it was generally accepted among the Maidu that upon death an individual travels to the Sutter Buttes before leaving this world (Kroeber 1970; Azbill 1973; Chase 1973). The exact details of this process varies (see Chapter VII...
for more detailed accounts), but most say that after death an individual will remain in this world for a few days and walk the steps he/she walked in their life. The individual then goes to the Buttes, which is often depicted as the final dance house. Here they are often fed and sometimes washed for the journey to the next world. Accounts of this can be found among several of the Maidu subgroups, however it is not part of Patwin worldview.

Contact

European and Euroamerican exploration and subsequent settlement brought major changes to the cultural and natural landscapes of the Sacramento Valley. Disease, forced removal and relocation and exposure to outside social, political, and religious beliefs drastically reduced native populations. Those who did survive lived in a world very different from their ancestors. People were not alone in these changes. Water conveyance projects coupled with mining affected “the principal physiographic landmarks” of the valley (Beardsley 1954:63). Introduced plants and animals took over native habitats, changing vegetation patterns, animal populations, and overall terrain (e.g., effects from erosion). While it is not within the scope of this project to explore such topics in detail, a short summary is warranted, which demonstrates how and why these changes have occurred, and how they may affect the way one sees and experiences the landscape.

Early Exploration

Early contact between Native Americans, Europeans and Euroamericans began with minimal contact in the early 19th century. Spanish explorer, Gabriel Moraga
has been deemed the first European explorer to enter the Sacramento Valley. This 1806 exploratory expedition was designed to “find out the strength of the foothill Indians as well as to locate mission sites” (Hendrix 1980:33). On this first trip, Moraga observed the Sutter Buttes which he referred to as the “mountain range in the middle of the valley” (Hendrix 1980:33). He returned in 1808 with a team of 11 men and used the Sutter Buttes as a navigation tool as they attempted to expand the territory of the Spanish missions into Northern California (Fontana 1956). Nearly 10 years later in 1817, a second Spanish missionary, Luis Arguello, further explored the region by boat. From the Feather River (which he named “El Rio de las Plumas”), he referred to the Sutter Buttes as “los Picachos,” or “the peaks” (Hendrix 1980:34). Within another ten years (1828), Jedediah Smith, Michael La Framboise, and Hudson’s Bay Company fur trappers entered the Sacramento Valley and began searching for furs near the Buttes (Lindahl 2005). By 1833, contact with European diseases began to take their toll with native populations, resulting in a massive epidemic of malaria in 1833 and then smallpox in 1839. It is estimated that 75 percent of the native population was decimated from these outbreaks (Lindahl 2005:20).

In May of 1846, General John C. Freemont set up camp in the Sutter Buttes located at the base of South Butte. Rising fears among settlers of an Indian attack, led General Freemont to take “…precautionary measures—as to leave no enemy behind to destroy the strength of my position by cutting off my supply in cattle and bread communication with the incoming emigrants” (Freemont in Hendrix 1980:38). These precautionary measures entailed a surprise attack on a Rancheria located on the western bank of the Sacramento River, killing an unknown number of Native Americans.
Freemont declared, “[t]his was a rude but necessary measure to prevent injury to the whites” (Freemont in Hendrix 1980:38). Not long after this attack, General Freemont left the Buttes and engaged in the Bear Flag Revolt.

**Gold Rush**

Shortly after his final transitory visit, John A. Sutter established his fort in what is now the modern city of Sacramento and the California Gold Rush soon began. Not long after the commencement of the Gold Rush, gold was found in the Sutter Buttes in 1850 and 1851; however, gold mining in the Buttes did not last long due to a lack of water and precious metals (Ellen 2005). With the Gold Rush came a large influx of settlers seeking their wealth from the sediments of the several rivers present in the area. As the forty-niners entered the valley, traditional Native American lifeways became difficult if not impossible at times. Speaking of the Maidu, Bernard L. Fontana (1956:34) wrote, “Their lands were preempted, their source of food taken from them, and their people killed in outright slaughter.” As a result, the Native American population in California dropped from 275,000 in 1789 to 30,000 in 1870 and finally to 16,000 in 1900 (Hendrix 1980:1). According to the 2000 United States census, there are 333,511 Native Americans living in California (NAHC 2000). Of those, 1,263 live in Sutter County and 3860 live in Butte County (NAHC 2000).

**1850-1950**

Development continued through the late 1800s straight into the 1900s. As summarized by Ellen (2005), since 1850, the Buttes have been used to raise cattle and sheep, grow barley and wheat and for coal mining and exploration for natural gas. Wild boars have been introduced and continue to roam freely through the Buttes causing a
nuisance for landowners and naturalists alike. Fields have been cleared and rocks have been moved to create walls, fences, and corals. Small towns have grown along the peripheries and residential homes are scattered throughout the mountains.

Beginning in the 1920s, the Buttes began to be economically and politically important. In 1922, a new way of seeing the area was established; one which could offer one of the most valuable resources of the twentieth century; natural gas (Ellen 2005). By 1932, the Buttes Oilfields, Inc. had begun operations and by 1949 seven wells had been drilled. In the late 1950s, the Sutter Buttes were drawn into the Cold War, providing the location for one of three missile facilities in Northern California. This facility was phased out by 1965 (Anderson 2004; Lindahl 2005).

Present Day

Construction and land modification continue today in the Sutter Buttes and the surrounding area. Several introduced crops are grown in areas adjacent to the Sutter Buttes and modern pollutants from car exhaust and agricultural activities fill the Central Valley. Wild boars roam freely and the effects of their rooting can be seen in many parts of the region. All these activities continue to change the natural landscape of the study area. These changes affect the flora and the fauna, as well as the archaeological record. Prehistoric remains are easily trampled, deteriorated, destroyed from road and structure construction and picked-up by those that walk the hills.

Like the natural landscape, the cultural landscape continues to change as well. Today, the Sutter Buttes has been subdivided into several parcels with the majority of these owned privately. In 2003, 1,720 acres of land were in Peace Valley by the California State Parks (Lindhal 2005:30). The Sutter Buttes are the host to several
different guided hikes, each explaining and showing different sides of the Sutter Buttes. These hikes are often themed and/or reflect the feelings and experiences of those leading the hike. The diversity of topics, guides and people that attend emphasize the many ways of seeing the Sutter Buttes.

Chapter Summary

This chapter demonstrates the long history of human occupation in the Sacramento Valley. Though the exact thoughts of those that have past are unknown, this overview illustrates how the landscape was used, experienced, and perceived very differently. The Sutter Buttes have been recorded as a sacred place, a place of resources, a navigational tool, something that can be owned, something that cannot be owned and a place of political importance. To understand the Buttes is to understand this diversity of meaning that surrounds them. Interpretations of past use should incorporate these perceptions and seek to accept the multiplicity that surrounds the singular mountain range.

Having now discussed the physical landscape and the prehistory of the region as it is understood today, the remainder of my thesis will look specifically at the landscapes of the Sutter Buttes. I will do this by looking at previously collected archaeological data and intangible data to gain a more holistic understanding of the Sutter Buttes in the native California landscape. The following chapter, Chapter VI, “Archaeological Data,” provides a description of the archaeological surveys, sites, and excavations in the Sutter Buttes that will be used as the physical data for this task.
CHAPTER VI

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

The following data were primarily collected through a record search at the Northeast Information Center (NEIC) at California State University, Chico (CSU Chico). Those obtained from locations other than the NEIC are specified. Data has been divided into three categories: surveys, excavation, and individual site descriptions. Though much of what has been recorded in the Sutter Buttes is related to Euroamerican historic land use, it is not within the scope of this project to address such resources. These sites are discussed in relation to how they may have affected the archaeological record, the physical landscape, and perceptions of the Sutter Buttes. The survey reports provided information pertaining to what land was surveyed, the reason for the survey, any disturbances in the area, and which sites were relocated, not relocated, or discovered. The two excavations are the only investigations which explore the subsurface deposit of the Sutter Buttes. The site descriptions provide insight to what types of features and artifacts are present in a particular area.

Archaeological Surveys

In total, 10 survey reports were reviewed. Site records from the recent California Department of Parks and Recreation survey (2005) were reviewed; however, the survey report has not yet been completed. Therefore, it is listed in Table 2, but no
### Table 2. Complete list of survey reports reviewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Sites Relocated</th>
<th>Site not Relocated</th>
<th>New Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storm (1974)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>SUT-53, SUT-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storm (1980)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Historic sites only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storm (1981)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Historic sites only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garr and Bayham (1982)</td>
<td>1128.6</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>SUT-72, SUT-70, SUT-71 and 7 historic sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derr (1990)</td>
<td>~15</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>SUT-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastron (1992)</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>SUT-54</td>
<td>SUT-53</td>
<td>SB-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteman and Edwards (2005)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>SUT-54</td>
<td>SUT-53</td>
<td>SUT-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteman and Edwards (2005)</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>PL-03 and 3 historic sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bischoff (2007)-</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Historic Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Landscape Report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gruver (2007)</td>
<td>&gt;1500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary is given below. Surveys which only found historic sites are not discussed in the following summary. A complete list of surveys conducted in the Buttes regardless of
findings can be found in Table 2 and Figure 2 depicts the portion of the Sutter Buttes which have been surveyed.

1959 van Zant Survey

Five sites were recorded by Frank van Zant in 1959 (CA-SUT-26, 27, 28, 29, 30). No survey report was found at the NEIC for this fieldwork. The site records reference “U.C. Survey” as the publication reference; however, the exact reference is unknown and a review of the University of California Archaeological Survey reports for this time period failed to yield the report. Jensen (1968) attempted to relocate the sites, but he was only able to find one site (CA-SUT-29).

1968 Jensen Excavation and Survey

Peter Jensen (1968) conducted archaeological surveys and excavations in the Sutter Buttes between October 1968 and the fall of 1969. This fieldwork was the foundation of his Master’s Thesis at U.C. Davis, California, “Prehistoric Settlement Pattern of Peace Valley in the Sutter Buttes.” Jensen’s research aimed to, “…ascertain if, when, for what purposes, and by whom the Sutter Buttes were exploited prehistorically” (Jensen 1968:1). In total, the project recorded 12 prehistoric sites located in Peace Valley in the northern portion of the Buttes. Of these, two were excavated (CA-SUT-34 and CA-SUT-44). Jensen classified each site into one of five categories. The first site type, occupation sites (or open sites), refers to sites with evidence of long-term or intensive use that often resulted in a midden deposit (CA-SUT-43). The second site type, temporary camp sites, is arbitrarily differentiated from occupation sites based on the depth of deposit (CA-SUT-39 and CA-SUT-41). These temporary campsites have less than 10 cm of deposit and often have associated bedrock mortars (BRM). The third site type, quarry-
workshop sites, is represented by only one example (CA-SUT-29). The fourth site type is bedrock mortar sites, and is the most frequently encountered type in the Buttes (the exact number of BRMs recorded by Jensen is not specified). These sites have one or more bedrock mortar holes which are not associated with a midden deposit. Within this category one petroglyph site was recorded (CA-SUT-50). Jensen observed that the petroglyph was similar in style to rain rocks found elsewhere in California. The final site type is rock shelter and cave sites (CA-SUT-27, 33, 34, 35, 40, 44, 49). As of 1968, the only known rock shelters in the Sutter Buttes were formed from overhanging andesitic boulders and are small in comparison to rock shelters found elsewhere in the Sierra Nevada. The conclusions of this study are discussed in detail in this chapter.

1974 Storm Survey Report

In August of 1974, Donald J. Storm conducted a 60-acre survey of the southern position of the Buttes (T16N R1E Section 12). The survey recorded two sites: CA-SUT-53 and CA-SUT-54. Though both were BRM sites, Storm categorized CA-SUT-54 as a “bedrock mortar-petroglyph” site. He noted that the four “pits” were different than those usually found in association with the processing of plant resources, and interpreted them as a petroglyph rather than a traditional BRM.

1986 Dames and Moore Survey

Dames and Moore conducted a linear survey of three miles along the southwest slopes of the Sutter Buttes in December 1986 (Apple et al. 1987). The work was conducted as part of the upgrading process for the Western Area Power Authority Eastside Elverta Line that was necessitated by the proposed construction of the Geothermal Public Powerline. The survey found six historic sites, one prehistoric site,
and one small obsidian bifaces fragment recorded as an isolate. The prehistoric site, CA-SUT-59, consists of eight BRMs scattered over several boulders. No other resources were recorded during this survey.

1989 CSU, Chico Archaeological Field Class Survey

In the spring of 1989, the CSU Chico archaeological field class conducted a 1,128.6-acre survey along the southern ridge (T15N R2E Section 5, 6, 7 and 8; Garr and Bayham 1989). The class recorded three prehistoric sites: CA-SUT-70 (multi-component site with both BRMs and lithic scatters), CA-SUT-71 (a liner stack or rocks interpreted as a possible rock blind for hunting big game), and CA-SUT-72, or “The Biface Site” (light lithic scatter).

1990 Cultural Resources Unlimited Survey

In preparation for the community water system project, Eleanor H. Deer (1990) of Cultural Resources Unlimited conducted a survey of nearly 15 acres (T15N R2E Section 4, 5, 9, 10, 15 and 16). She recorded CA-SUT-78 as a major BRM complex. There was no evidence of a midden or associated artifacts.

1991 Archeo-Tech Survey

Archeo-Tech conducted a 165-acre survey that extended from the southern rampart to South Road (T15N R1E Section 12; Pastron 1992). The survey was conducted in anticipation of the proposed Sutter Ash landfill project. The report includes a good section on the cultural importance of the Buttes to the Native Americans that was gained through archival research. The survey crew was able to relocate CA-SUT-54 and wrote, “The two “cupule” boulders identified at CA-SUT-54 appear to represent a phenomenon
of California prehistoric variously described as ‘rain rocks,’ ‘baby rocks’ or ‘medicine rocks’ (Pastron 1992:18). These rocks are often associated with fertility and weather control and are discussed in further detail in Chapter VIII. He did not state whether he was able to relocate CA-SUT-53. In addition, one new site, SB-1, an andesite BRM, was recorded. Similar to Deer (1990), there was no evidence of a midden or subsurface deposit surrounding the BRM.

2005 Pacific Legacy Survey

In February 2005, Pacific Legacy conducted a 110-acre survey on the southern rampart (T15N R1E Section 11 and 12) (Whiteman and Edwards 2005a). The work was conducted by Erik Whiteman and Dr. Douglas Edwards and an accompanying field crew. The work was conducted as part of the licensing process for the proposed construction of settlement ponds. A survey of the same area conducted by Storm in 1974 recorded two bedrock mortar (BRM) sites, CA-SUT-53 and CA-Sut-54. The 2005 survey relocated CA-SUT-54, but failed to relocate CA-SUT-53, which has been recorded as having been removed from its original location. No mention of “rain rocks” could be found in the survey report. The survey also failed to relocate CA-SUT-86, which was originally recorded by Abell and Ruskin (1991) as an isolated bedrock mortar.

A second survey was conducted by Pacific Legacy on the southern rampart (T15N R1E Section 11 and 12; Whiteman and Edwards 2005b). This survey was also conducted in February 2005 and was part of a parcel reclamation permit renewal permit. It covered a total of 190 acres and recorded one BRM site and three historic sites.
Over a period of two field seasons, DPR archaeologists surveyed over 1,500 acres in Peace Valley (Figure 9) and the surrounding area (Dionne Gruver, personal communication, March 29, 2009). This survey covered the area purchased by DPR in 2003. This report has not yet been finalized. In total, 27 prehistoric, 14 historic, and four multi-component sites were recorded (Gruver n.d.). Included in these sites were updates for six of the sites originally recorded by Jensen (1968). These sites are: CA-SUT-37, 45, 46, 47, 48, and 49. Thirty-six isolates, including 24 related to prehistoric land-use were also recorded. Overall, site interpretations favor that the area was used seasonally for the procurement and processing of plant and animal resources.
Jensen used the distribution of material culture to explore past subsistence and settlement systems of the Sutter Buttes. Resource exploitation, processing, and storage were his main foci. Based on physical evidence such as the limited classes of artifacts, Jensen concluded “…no village, permanent, semi-permanent, and perhaps even seasonal occupation sites existed within the Sutter Buttes” (Jensen 1968:107). Rather he (1968:117) determined that, “…the Sutter Buttes have been utilized in a rather limited way for as long as man has occupied the Northern Sacramento Valley.”

Despite the lack of habitation, several lines of evidence support resource exploitation. Many of the sites Jensen recorded lend support to short-term hunting expeditions, (based on the presence of several projectile points and knives) and plant processing, primarily acorn. Jensen concluded that small groups utilized the area for short periods of time; thus there is a lack of appreciable depth at any of the sites except for a few rock shelters, which would have been more frequently visited (Jensen 1968:28). He further concluded that as vegetal foods became increasingly more important, so did the Buttes as they have considerable quantities of oak trees. The presence of several BRMs and portable mortars support this hypothesis. However, because most water sources in the Buttes are seasonal, permanent habitation of the region would not have been likely “during the ‘normal’ course of events” (Jensen 1968:29).

Based on the tribelet form of social organization of the Sacramento Valley, Jensen hypothesized that the Buttes would have been utilized by several different groups. He named the Northwest Maidu and the River Patwin as the most likely exploiters during
late prehistoric times. However, because the Maidu had a more variable land use pattern than the Patwin, Jensen concluded the Buttes were exploited by the former rather than by the latter. Early work in the area suggests the Patwin lived in large sedentary groups who continuously lived in riverine systems. This is reflected by little change in subsistence practices or technology. In contrast, the Maidu utilized several different ecological zones and thus occupied several different environments. Jensen cites linguistic boundaries as further evidence that the Patwin did not migrate far from the riverine environment, whereas the Maidu had a much more diverse settlement pattern. Although this exploitation may have implied some type of ownership, he found it unlikely that the Maidu had exclusive rights to the land.

One of Jensen’s main arguments focused on the periphery of the Sutter Buttes as a flood refuge during wet winters. Most permanent and large village sites are found on natural levees along the rivers, which would have offered some protection against high waters. He argued that BRMs were used during the wet season by people who had been forced from surrounding large villages because of flooding. Excavations of several surrounding village sites have revealed sterile lenses of water-borne clay and alluvium indicating that flooding did occur. In particular, he argued, people from the Gray Lodge area (two miles north of the Sutter Buttes) would have taken refuge at the Buttes. Resources such as acorns would have been gathered at the Buttes or stored ahead of time in preparation for flooding. Likewise, fauna such as elk, bear, deer, and birds would also have taken refuge in the mountains providing further resources for human exploitation.

While Jensen’s interpretations and conclusions were based on physical evidence, he acknowledged that material culture cannot be used as the sole understanding
of prehistoric use and settlement of the Sutter Buttes as, “…the culture of these peoples was far more complicated than was revealed by the artifacts alone” (Jensen 1968:107). He noted the importance of prominent natural places (e.g., Mount Diablo) in California which were of great spiritual importance to the surrounding cultures. With the exception of CA-SUT-34, Jensen did find direct physical evidence of this being the case with the Sutter Buttes, although he did not deny the possibility. For example, in his discussion of CA-SUT-44 he notes,

Certainly the culture of the Sut-44 people was far more complicated than is revealed by the artifacts recovered during our excavations. If these artifacts themselves were taken as the sole basis for construction of a cultural picture, they would portray something less than an under-developed and impoverished people possessing not even a single technical refinement. [Jensen 1968:78]

Archaeological Site Descriptions

Fifty-nine archaeological sites have been recorded in the vicinity of the Sutter Buttes. As noted, it is not in the scope of this project to discuss Euroamerican sites. Therefore, these sites are only mentioned below in reference to Native American sites. The following site descriptions are derived from a record search at the NEIC conducted between November 2008 and February 2009 and from site records provided to me by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Many of the records from DPR have not yet been assigned a state trinomial. Temporary site names have been used in lieu of trinomials. These sites are primarily Native American and were recorded in both feet and meters.

Sites have been placed under one of 11 categories (Table 3). These categories are: bedrock mortar (BRM), rock shelter, rock shelter with BRM, open habitation site,
Table 3. Archaeological sites by type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Total Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedrock Mortar</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Shelter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Shelter with Bedrock Mortars</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Habitation Site</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Camps</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Hunting Blinds</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Alignments</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithic Scatter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroglyph</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (both recorded by Van Zant (1959))</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

temporary camp, possible hunting blind, petroglyph, rock alignment, lithic scatter, quarry and other. These designations are based on the interpretations of the recorders. It should be noted that some sites contain two features that match two of these categories. The dominant feature was chosen for this chapter and a more detailed breakdown can be found in Chapter VIII.

Bedrock Mortars

CA-SUT-14. CA-SUT-14 was recorded in 1951 by B.L. Fontana and is described as BRMs in igneous outcrops. The site measures 100 yards in diameter and is at an elevation of 350-375 feet. The site is located near a seasonal stream which is dry in
the summer. Fontana (1951) hypothesized the site was used a flood refuge as “[t]he oak trees and game would have provided plenty of food.” No artifacts were found at the site.

**CA-SUT-36.** CA-SUT-36 is described as 14 BRMs spread across four andesitic outcrops. The site is located in the northern side of the Sutter Buttes. No artifacts were found. The site was recorded by Jensen and Jensen in February 1969. The site is at an elevation of 280 ft. with an intermittent drainage located 5m from the site.

**CA-SUT-37.** CA-SUT-37 is four BRMs on a single granitic outcrop. The site is at an elevation of 180 feet and is five meters from a drainage. Jensen and Johnson recorded the site in February 1969 and noted that road construction had moved the outcrops from their original position. No artifacts were found. This site was rerecorded by Gruver (n.d.). This latest recordation noted that while the site was in a similar location, the original description differed from what was observed. These differences may have occurred due to road construction. Gruver described the site as three bedrock milling stations with no associated artifacts. The site is located along a drainage with interior live oak and riparian vegetation.

**CA-SUT-38.** CA-SUT-38 is four BRMs on two andesitic outcrops. The site is at an elevation of 200 feet, five meters from a drainage. Jensen and Jensen recorded the site in February 1969 and noted that road construction had moved the outcrops from their original position. No artifacts were found.

**CA-SUT-43.** CA-SUT-43 was recorded in 1969 by Jensen and Ritter. They described the site as a midden with scattered BRM outcrops expanding across an area measuring 200 meters by 50 meters. The site was excavated and it was determined the site had a depth of 2.5 m. Artifacts included bowl mortars, manos, debitage, and
projectile points made of both obsidian and historic glass. Jensen and Ritter noted the importance of the site as one of the only sites to have any type of substantial midden. However, they also observed that it is most likely “fully historic.” This is supported by the presence of projectile points made from glass. The site is located on the north edge of a creek at an elevation of 360 feet.

CA-SUT-45. CA-SUT-45 consists of four BRMS. Jensen and Ritter recorded the site in 1969 and noted it may be a possible granary for CA-SUT-44 but that it must be considered a separate site. The site is located on the southern face of Peace Valley at an elevation of 740 feet.

CA-SUT-46. CA-SUT-46 consists of two BRMs on an andesitic outcrop located on the southern face of Peace Valley. No artifacts were found in association with the feature. A intermittent drainage is located within a meter of the outcrop. The site was recorded Jensen in 1969. The site is located at an elevation of 360 feet.

CA-SUT-47. CA-SUT-47 is one BRM on an andesitic outcrop. The outcrop is located at an elevation of 240 feet on the north face of Peace Valley where seasonal runoff leaves the valley via a steep sided gulley. The site was recorded in May 1969 by Jensen. No artifacts were found.

CA-SUT-48. CA-SUT-48 is four BRMs on a porphyritic andesite outcrop. The site is on the west wall of a gully formed by a seasonal stream. The site is at the point where the two streams leave Peace Valley and enter into a shallow canyon. It was recorded by Jensen in 1969. The site is on at an elevation of 280 feet. No artifacts were found.
CA-SUT-53. CA-SUT-53 was one BRM originally recorded by D. Storm of Environmental Research Associates in 1974. No artifacts were observed to be in association with the feature. The site was located at an elevation of 200 feet. No water sources were mentioned. Two attempts to relocate the site were made: one by Abell and Ruskin in 1991 and a second attempt by Pacific Legacy in 2005. Neither of the latter two survey parties were able to relocate and both noted extensive disturbance in the form of grading and gravel quarrying. Hilton (2005a) for Pacific Legacy wrote the BRM may have been removed as a result of quarrying or grading.

CA-SUT-59. CA-SUT-59 consists of eight scattered BRM stations on the west slope of a small ridge between two drainages. It was recorded by A. York and Gene Davis of Dames and Moore in 1986 as part of the Williams-Elverta Transmission Line upgrade. York and Davis noted the site may be more extensive; however, they were unable to investigate because of access restrictions. No artifacts were found in association with the features. The site is located at an elevation of 60 feet. Site disturbances were recorded as the presence of the transmission tower and two dirt roads. It was also noted that several boulders had been recently removed (Apple et al. 1987).

CA-SUT-70/H. CA-SUT-70/H is a multi-component site located on the lower flanks of South Butte. It was record by Garr and Bayham in 1989 and is located at an elevation of 120-180 feet. The prehistoric component consists of 13 BRM stations: 1) 11 located along an intermittent drainage, 2) one was located along a different drainage and one was located on the western saddle), and 3) two lithic concentrations and three formed tools, one core and two basalt projectile point fragments were noted. Debitage was described as cortical and interior reduction flakes. Material types were dominated by
chert and basalt with lesser quantities of obsidian and quartzite. They noted the prehistoric component had been disturbed from historic activity.

**CA-SUT-78.** CA-SUT-78 has nine BRMs with no associated artifacts or midden deposit. It was recorded by Eleanor H. Derr and Ken McIvers of Cultural Resources Unlimited in 1990. They noted that the property had been leveled in recent years for planting. The site is located at an elevation 200-220 feet.

**CA-SUT-86.** CA-SUT-86 is a single andesite outcropping with two mortar holes located on the western slope of an intermittent drainage. It was originally recorded by Archeo-Tec archaeologists, J. Abell and D. Ruskin in 1991 in preparation for the proposed Sutter Ash Landfill. No artifacts were found at the site. The site was at an elevation of 112 feet. In 2005, the Pacific Legacy survey attempted to relocate the site but could not. Pacific Legacy noted the area had extensive disturbances which may have lead to the destruction of the BRM.

**Linda’s BRM.** This bedrock milling station consists of one boulder with two mortars. No artifacts or middens were noted to be association with the feature. The BRM is located at an elevation of 480 feet with an ephemeral stream located 60 meters from the site.

**Lone BRM.** This BRM is located along side a perennial drainage and is one cupule on an andesite boulder. The site is located in an oak woodland. No artifacts or midden deposits were found in association with the BRM. It is located at an elevation of 560 feet.

**Meadow BRMs.** This site consists of two bedrock milling stations at the foot of Cat Rock just above an intermittent stream. Site vegetation is a mix of grassland
and mixed oaks. One andesite pestle was found in association with the features. The site sits at an elevation of 320 feet.

**NE Access Road BRM #1.** This station has one andesite boulder with two cups. The boulder is at an elevation of 155 feet and a perennial drainage is directly adjacent to it and forms the eastern boundary of the site. No artifacts or middens were found.

**NE Access Road BRM #2.** This BRM is one andesite boulder with three cupules. No artifacts or middens were observed. The site is at an elevation of 195 feet with a seasonal drainage located directly adjacent and forming the eastern site boundary. The site is located in an oak woodland.

**NE Access Road BRM #3.** This BRM is located in a flat meadow 10 meters from a perennial drainage. It is described as a low-lying andesite boulder with a single cupule. One possible was core was observed near the BRM. This site is near the location of CA-SUT-48 (described above), originally recorded by Jensen (1968), but the original description does not match what was observed at this site. The BRM is located at an elevation of 201 feet in an oak woodland.

**North Wall BRM.** The BRM is located above an intermittent drainage and is a single andesite boulder with one cup. No artifacts or middens were observed. Gruver (n.d.) noted the high concentrations of bedrock milling stations and hunting blinds are indicative of significant numbers of people gathering and processing floral and faunal resources. The site is at an elevation of 196 feet in an oak woodland.

**Ridge Top BRM.** This BRM consists of two cups on a single andesite boulder. The BRM is located on a flat overlooking Peace Valley. A core (material unknown, but
greenish in color and very dense material) fragment was found on a rock. The site is at an elevation of 374 feet with a perennial drainage located 160 meters down slope.

**WT 17-18-19-20.** This site is five bedrock milling stations situated above the south side of Peace Valley. Three of the stations have one mortar, one has a cup, and one has a hopper mortar. One sandstone pestle was found in dirt turned up by feral pigs. The site is located at an elevation of 278 feet and a seasonal drainage is located 250 meters from the site.

**WT 21.** This site is a single BRM on the eastside of a seasonal drainage (Gruver n.d.). The BRM is a single andesite boulder with three mortar cups and a hopper mortar saucer. No artifacts were observed. The site is at an elevation of 291 feet.

**DG 6.** DG-6 is a small site was recorded by Gruver (n.d.). The site is two bedrock milling stations situated on the side of a perennial drainage. One milling station has one mortar cup and one has four cups. No artifacts were found. No elevation was given.

**DG BRMs.** This site was recorded by Gruver (n.d.) and is described as a small site with six bedrock milling stations spread across 160 meters. The site has two small drainages and is located in a oak woodland. No artifacts were found. No elevation was given.

**Big Bedrock Mortar Site.** This large site was recorded by Gruver (n.d.) and is located near the base of North Butte in the eastern portion of Peace Valley. It is described as having “…over 50 prehistoric features dominated by bedrock milling stations and to a lesser count possible habitation locals and linear rock alignments.” Gruver has interpreted the site as an area used for seasonal procurement and processing of acorns. A spring with
year-round water is present at the site, and many of the milling features are located around this natural feature. No artifacts were found. No elevation was given.

**Cat Rock Shadow.** This is a multicomponent site and was recorded by Gruver (n.d.). The prehistoric component consists of 15 bedrock mortars and a light lithic scatter. The site is located northeast of the Cat Rock formation alongside a spring. The historic component of the site includes the lining of the spring with rhyolite quarried from CA-SUT-29. The water was piped down slope to the east to the homestead originally settled by James A. Martin in 1880.

**Homestead Site (Homestead James Martin).** This multicomponent site is the homestead of James A. Martin who originally settled in 1880. Historic features associated with the homestead include rock walls, foundations, an almond orchard, roads, and an artifact scatter. The prehistoric component is limited to four BRMs. The site is located in Peace Valley on the eastern side of a perennial drainage with several other springs running down from the east and southeast.

**Pugh Homestead (Homestead Aaron Pugh).** This is the site of the Pugh Homestead which was originally settled in 1877 by Aaron Pugh. Historic features include several cellars, rock walls, fences, enclosed areas for garden plots and livestock, water troughs, foundations and historic artifacts. Prehistoric features included 15 bedrock milling stations and a possible midden deposit. Prehistoric artifacts including obsidian and chert debitage, a core, an obsidian projectile point fragment (base missing), an obsidian projectile point fragment (collected by DPR), and a handstone with red pigment (collected by DPR). Five springs are at the site, one of which is lined with rhyolite quarried from CA-SUT-29. One of the foundations is also made from quarried rhyolite.
South BRM. This site consists of an andesite boulder with a single mortar cup in the center of the rock. North of this BRM is a prehistoric with at least 50 milling stations. A seasonal drainage is located 60 meters from the site and the elevation is 638 feet in an oak woodland. No artifacts were found to be associated with the milling station.

Rock Shelters

CA-SUT-40. CA-SUT-40 is a small rock shelter. Jensen (1968) grouped this site with CA-SUT-35 and CA-SUT-49, noting that each displays fire-smudged walls and contains small quantities of cores, core tools, and debitage. He hypothesizes they may have served as hunting blinds and/or hunting camps similar to that found at CA-SUT-34; however he emphasizes this statement is not backed by physical evidence. Jensen recorded the site in March 1969 and noted that the rock shelter marked the previous course of a stream. No artifacts were found, but the soil was described as a sandy midden. The site is at elevation of 320 feet, and water is located 100 meters from the site.

CA-SUT-44. CA-SUT-44 was recorded by Jensen and LaFranchi (1969) as a small cave with a good midden deposit. Jensen (1968:65) observed this is the only “true cave” recorded in the Buttes. The cave is located on the southern face of Peace Valley at an elevation of 1,100 feet. Fire smudging is not all the prominent, however the presence of debitage and artifacts lend support for Native American occupation. Although a stream is present, it only contains water during the wet season. The only water available year-round is three miles away.

Because of the well-contained midden deposit, Jensen (1968) excavated the site. In total 12 1m by 1m units were laid out. Of these, three were never completely excavated but were augured, two were excavated to a depth of 50cm, one was excavated
to a depth of 100 cm and six were not formally excavated but were augured to a depth of at least 50 centimeters. Excavation revealed the average depth of the midden was quite shallow, averaging only 5 cm in thickness. Following this layer was 35-40 cm of loose sandy-brown soil interspersed with rhyolitic roof-fall and then 50-65 cm of andesitic and rhyolitic boulders from roof fall. Below this last layer of roof-fall is a soft, light brown sandy soil (Jensen 1968:66). Twenty-seven artifacts were recovered from the excavation. These included: 1 granite mano, 1 granite pestle, 5 scrapers (4 basalt, 1 chert), 9 “flake scrapers” (4 porphyry, 4 basalt, 1 shale), 7 choppers (2 basalt, 4 sandstone, 1 porphyry), 3 hammerstones (2 sandstone, 1 porphyry), and 1 sandstone knife.

In addition to the formed artifacts, small obsidian retouch flakes were also collected (less than 1 gram in total). Jensen (1968:70) noted two fragmentary ground and pecked stone artifacts were brought to the site and then purposefully “…destroyed for the gratification of immediate needs.” With the exception of the obsidian, all materials were procured locally. Jensen (1968) argued that the majority of artifacts were made on site and those which were not were retouched or sharpened on site.

As discussed, Jensen’s (1968) interpretation of the site emphasizes how the material culture does not accurately portray the people who created the site. However, some information can be deduced from the material remains. Because of the limited diversity in tool types, it is probable that site was associated with hunting and occupied for only brief periods of time. The lack of large quantities of faunal remains infers that people did not stay long, nor did they intend on staying long after the hunt was complete. Thus, Jensen (1968) concluded that much of the resource exploitation of the Sutter Buttes
was done on a short-term basis, with small groups coming in for a day or shortly longer and then returning to permanent villages located on the valley floor.

One feature was recorded. The feature consisted of several basalt and granite flakes, one scraper plane, a partially decomposed shaft of a large feather, and two domestic sheep bones. Jensen (1968) attributed the feature to shepherders who used the stone artifacts to contain a fire that was used to stew the sheep bone. Two cartridge cases and one Boy Scout pocketknife was also recovered from the site.

CA-SUT-51. CA-SUT-51 is described as a small rock shelter formed from large blocks of rock fall. Recorded by Jensen and Ritter in February of 1969, the site sits on a cliff over looking Moore Canyon at an elevation of 600 feet. A creek is present 15 meters north of the site. Fire smudging may be present on the interior of the shelter. No artifacts or midden deposits were found within the rock shelter, and Jensen and Ritter noted the site may be questionable.

Knoll Top Rock Shelter. This site is described as a rock shelter with a possible rock alignment located in an oak woodland. The rock shelter was created by two overlapping andesite boulders and contains a small concentration of ash and charcoal with possible fire smudging on the ceiling. The rock alignment (1.4m x 1.2m) is located on the side of the shelter and “was constructed to form an enclosed area” (Brooke et al. 2005). Brooke et al. (2005) speculated the alignment may have been used for storage or additional shelter. The site is located at an elevation of 507 feet and an intermittent drainage is located 150 meters to the west.
Rock Shelters with Bedrock Mortars

CA-SUT-33/H. CA-SUT-33 (Brady Rock Shelter #1) is a small rock shelter with 29 associated BRMs located in the west center of Peace Valley. The site is located at an elevation of 340 ft. and the closest water is 30 meters away. Jensen (1968) wrote that CA-SUT-33 may be one of the most important sites in the Buttes that he studied. The site is unique as a shallow, ill-defined midden deposit. CA-SUT-43 and CA-SUT-33 are the only two sites which have more than 20 BRMs and a midden deposit. The difference between the two is that the midden at the former is probably the result of late, if not historic occupation, whereas the midden at the latter site is most likely related to a fully prehistoric occupation. The presence of a midden “...may be explained on the basis of use of the rocks shelter which tended to concentrate and limit the general living and activity areas, a situation which did not prevail at the other, open bedrock mortar sites” (Jensen 1968:62-63). Though the site has data potential, Jensen (1968) did not excavate the site because of the extreme erosion of the midden. One sandstone pestle was collected from the surface of the site. In addition, ten basalt percussion flakes were collected 10 meters from the shelter.

This site was relocated by Gruver (n.d.). This second recording acknowledged the presence of a historic component, which includes a stone foundation and cellar, a rock alignment, a water conveyance system, road grade, and a light scatter of associated historic materials. A building is depicted on the GLO survey map of 1880. Gruver (n.d.) noted that the prehistoric component has been disturbed by both historic and modern activities. Prehistoric features recorded in the second survey d include 28 BRMs, a rock shelter formed from naturally stacked andesite slabs, and an associated midden deposit.
with bone fragments. Prehistoric artifacts include debitage, cores, flake stone tools, fire affected rock metates and manos. Gruver (n.d.:13) observed that “[t]he prehistoric assemblage is associated with a myriad of activities indicative of flake stone tool production, hunting, food procurement and processing, and cooking.”

CA-SUT-34. CA-SUT-34 (Brady Rock Shelter 2a and 2b) is two small rock shelters located 30 meters apart from each other. The two shelters are separated by andesitic boulders and exist on the same rhyolitic mass as CA-SUT-33 and CA-SUT-44 (Jensen 1968:81). The site is located 15 meters above the floor of Peace Valley at an elevation of 320 feet. Jensen (1968) observed that no water source was available which would provide water during the summer or even during a dry winter. If water was not obtained from this source, the next closest source is “…a considerable distance to the north” (Jensen 1968:81). Shelter A has both a midden and four associated BRMs, while shelter B has a much shallower midden and two associated BRMs. The four mortar holes at the Shelter A were shallow. Jensen (1968) was not sure if they were incipient or representative of grinding techniques that differ from that usually performed in the Buttes. He hypothesized that the occupants of this site may have been processing a different type of food resource in comparison to other sites. Because of the well-defined midden deposit at Shelter A, Jensen (1968) chose the site for formal excavation. Shelter B was not excavated. Twenty-two 1 m by 1 m units were laid out. Of those, 16 were excavated. Six were excavated to a maximum depth of 100 centimeters. Units that were not excavated, or only partially excavated, were augured; however, several of the areas contained large amounts of roof fall which made auguring impossible.
Jensen’s (1968) interpretation of the stratigraphy suggests the presence of two slightly different occupations of the site. This division was based not on physical evidence (e.g., change in artifact types), but rather it was based on differing ratios of the weight proportions of unmodified and fire-fractured lithic debris compared to the total weight of midden. This division was made at 60 cm below surface. However, physical evidence was used to find similarities and differences between the occupants of the two layers. The difference between the two layers observed by Jensen (1968) was that the later occupants (those represented in the 0-60 cm deposit) visited the site more often and perhaps with a larger group; however their use of the site and the Buttes in general did not differ. Both groups were hunting and using grinding implements for plant processing. Both groups arrived with a good supply of molluscans collected from the riparian environments, indicating they did not intend on fully relying on the food resources of the Buttes.

Ninety-three artifacts (see Table 4), unmodified bone \( (n=116) \), charcoal, and molluscan \( \textit{Margaritifera margaritifera} \) shells \( (n=65) \) were recovered from the site. Unlike CA-SUT-44, no materials associated with Euroamericans were found. Similar to CA-SUT-44, the majority of artifacts were made from materials that were locally available. Projectile point types include 1 large square stemmed point, 1 large rounded base point, 1 lancelote point, 2 straight base points, 1 tanged extending stem, 1 tanged contracting stem, 1 shouldered expanding stem and 2 tip fragments. The pendants and quartz crystal were recovered below 60cm below surface.

The assemblage is far more diverse than any other recorded in the Buttes. In addition to stone and bone tools that would have been used for resources procurement
Table 4. Summary of artifacts recovered from excavation of CA-SUT-44.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slab Metate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>andesite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mano</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4 granite, 3 sandstone, 2 andesite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobble chopper</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4 basalt, 1 granite, 1 andesite, 1 shale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammerstone</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4 granite, 3 andesite, 1 basalt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scraper plane</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5 basalt, 1 sandstone, 4 chert, 4 porphyry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flake scappers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4 basalt, 4 quartzite, 1 chert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discoidal scraper</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 chert, 1 basalt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End scappers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 obsidian, 1 chert, 2 basalt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knives</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5 basalt, 2 granite, 1 slate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Picks”</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6 basalt, 2 chert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaped pendants</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 steatite, 1 mottled granitic material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmodified quartz crystal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>quartz crystal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abrading stones</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>sandstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palette</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>sandstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked bone</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projectile Points</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 obsidian, 2 slate, 7 basalt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and processing, three of the artifacts (the two pendants and the quartz crystal) were thought to be ritualistic or spiritual in nature. Jensen (1968) observed that the granite pendant may have been purposefully broken (or “killed”) because the material was extremely hard and the shape is not conducive to easy fracturing. He also observed that only one of the ten manos were complete. Jensen (1968) argued that though they were
complete when brought to the Buttes, they were of low value as they were used as hammerstones, crude choppers, and cooking stone (4 were fire scorched) after arrival. Alternately they have been purposefully broken or burned.

Three features were recorded. Feature 1 consisted of a purposeful accumulation of large pieces of roof-fall. Jensen (1968:101-102) hypothesized the pile may have originally resulted from the clearing of the overhang for living space, while later occupants “…inserted slabs vertically, thus giving some height to the crude wall.” In the site record, this wall is referred to as a wind deflector. Feature 2 and Feature 3 were both described as “…unusual clustering of unmodified lithic debris” (Jensen 1968:102). Feature 2 also contained two mano fragments. The clusters were circular and were interpreted as possible fire-hearth. Feature 2 was thought to be associated with the surface layer while Feature 3 was located 69-74 cm. below surface. Though no charcoal was present, all rocks from Feature 3 were fire-cracked or fire-scorched. No cultural remains were found to be associated with either feature.

CA-SUT-35. CA-SUT-35 is a rock shelter formed from larger basalt boulders. The rock shelter is surrounded by nine large boulders. Twenty-four BRMs are associated with the rock shelter. The site is located on the valley floor in the western portion of Peace Valley. The site was recorded by Dorothy Hill, Delmar, and Craig Travis in February 1966. One bifacial core tool was noted. The site is located at an elevation of 200 feet. and the nearest water is 50 feet to the west. Jensen (1968) grouped this site with CA-SUT-40 and CA-SUT-49, noting that each displays fire-smudged walls and contains small quantities of cores, core tools and debitage. He hypothesizes they may have served
as hunting blinds and/or hunting camps similar to that found at CA-SUT-34; however he emphasized this statement is not backed by physical evidence.

**CA-SUT-49.** CA-SUT-49 is a rock overhang formed by two large decomposing andesitic boulders. The site overlooks the confluences of several intermittent streams and is only 200 m west of a major drainage of Peace Valley. The site is at an elevation of 320 feet. Jensen (1968) grouped this site with CA-SUT-39 and CA-SUT-40, noting that each displays fire-smudged walls and contains small quantities of cores, core tools and debitage. He hypothesizes they may have served as hunting blinds and/or hunting camps similar to that found at CA-SUT-34; however he emphasized that this statement is not backed by physical evidence. This site differs from CA-SUT-39 and CA-SUT-40 as the midden is much darker and the some of the fire smudging appears more recent. These latter two traits may have resulted from later use by sheepherders, though earlier use by Native Americans is supported from the presence of stone tools.

Gruver (n.d.) relocated this site as part of the Department of Parks and Recreation survey. In addition to Jensen’s description, she recorded a bedrock milling station on a low-laying boulder. The midden and fire smudging was still visible, however only a few basalt flakes were observed. Gruver observed tilled soil near the rock shelter indicating feral pigs known to inhabit the Buttes are present in the area.

**Three Rock Shelters.** This site consists of six features; three bedrock milling features and three rock shelters. The site is located on an open ridge at an elevation of 560-635 feet with a small drainage acting as the eastern boundary. It was noted this drainage had water immediately after rain, but did not have much during the fall. The three rock shelters have associated rock alignments which have been interpreted as
supports for brush lean-tos (Gruver n.d.). The site is located between “Twin Creeks” site and “Big BRM” site. Basalt debitage and one basalt biface were observed in one of the rock shelters. The site has been interpreted as a place used by large groups of people and may have been associated with communal hunts.

**Open Habitation Sites**

**CA-SUT-28.** CA-SUT-28 was described by Van Zant in 1959 as an open site with several andesite BRMs. The site extends onto the valley floor. Artifacts included projectile points, manos, pestles, charmstones, fish net weights, and metates. Van Zant recorded the presence of six rock shelters north of the site in Dead Horse Canyon. He hypothesized the area was heavily populated by Native Americans as the rock shelters had large quantities of artifacts. Disturbances include Butte Pass Road, which bisected part of the site. A water source was noted on site. No elevation was given. Jensen (1968) attempted to relocate this site, but failed to find any evidence of it.

**CA-SUT-30.** CA-SUT-30 is described as an open site with one BRM and several cooking stones and was recorded by Van Zant in 1959. Debitage was also observed at the site. Van Zant (1959b) noted that several BRMs had recently been removed. He wrote that springs in the area have water in both the winter and the summer. He also observed that a large crystal formation is located to the south of the site. No elevation was given. Jensen (1968) attempted to relocate this site, but failed to find any evidence of it.

**CA-SUT-39.** CA-SUT-39 is an open habitation site with four associated BRMs in three andesitic outcrops. The site is situated on a “natural mound separating two intermittent streams which drain the west end of Peace Valley” at an elevation of 240 ft.
(Jensen 1968: 49). The site was not formally excavated; however, Jensen (1968) did auger to a depth of 50 cm at several points of the site where surface artifacts were collected. Based on this auguring, no discernible midden is present. Based on orientation of the site, Jensen (1968) argued it is unlikely it was used exclusively as a hunting site. This differs from his interpretation of CA-SUT-41, which he also classifies as a temporary campsite; however this latter site is situated on a ridge. Artifacts collected from the surface include: 1 basalt side-notched projectile point (missing a portion of the base and the tip), 1 bifacial cobble chopper, 2 unifacial cobble choppers, 1 bifacial chopper made from a core, at least 1 hammerstone, 2 granitic manos, 1 andesite millingstone (deep basin), 1 andesite millingstone rim fragment, which displays signs of reuse as a shallow-basin millingstone, and 1 andesite pestle. The choppers, hammerstone and manos were made from stream cobbles. Debitage described as secondary flakes was also present.

Sykes and Gruver (2005) relocated this site during the Department of Parks and Recreation 2005 survey. They expanded the boundary which now includes a total of four bedrock milling stations. Based on artifacts and features present, Sykes and Gruver (2005:1) argued that the site was used for a “diversity of economic interests” including hunting and processing vegetal resources. They concurred with Jensen that there is no discernable midden present at the site.

Temporary Camp Site

CA-SUT-41. CA-SUT-41 is described as a temporary camp site with a shallow midden. This site may have been augured by Jensen (1968), because he notes that the midden is no deeper than 10 cm, however it is not specified that he did. It was
inferred by Jensen and Ritter (1969) that the site may have been a hunting camp. This inference is based primarily on location as the site is situated on a prominent ridge overlooking the confluence of two intermittent streams. Additionally, the surrounding vegetation would have attracted deer and antelope making the site a useful hunting blind and camp. Six percussion flaked cobble choppers and 1 bifacially percussion flaked chopper made on a small core were collected from the surface of the site. Jensen (1968) hypothesized the site had a relatively late occupation as the artifacts show little signs of patination. The site has a diameter of 35 meters and is located at an elevation of 460 feet.

Possible Hunting Blinds

**CA-SUT-71.** CA-SUT-71 is located on a ridge between two saddles. The site is a linear stack of rocks 50 feet in length and 2.5 to 3 feet high. Though the exact function of the feature was not determined, Garr and Bayham (1989) hypothesized it may have been a rock blind for hunting big game. It is located between two saddles which could have acted as a natural pathway for animals that were traveling from the south into the interior of the Buttes.

**LF 24: Hunting Blind Facing Cat Rock.** This site is a linear rock feature that may be the remnants of a prehistoric hunting blind. The feature is 29m in length, 0.50m-2.5m in width and 0.10m-2.5m in height. It is orientated northwest/southeast and follows the contour of the ridgeline. Sykes and Pillado (2005) noted that “the site and the others located on this ridgeline are probably all part of the same complex, possibly associated with prehistoric hunting activities.” The site is situated on a ridgeline overlooking Peace Valley and is only 60 meters from a hunting blind facing North Butte. No artifacts were found. A
spring and intermittent drainage are 250 meters from the site which sits at an elevation of 693 feet.

**LF 25: Hunting Blind facing North Butte.** This site is a series of seven features thought to be prehistoric hunting blinds located on a contour overlooking Peace Valley and facing North Butte. Similar to the feature recorded as “Hunting Blind Cat Rock,” these features are aligned northwest/southeast. Features vary in height, width, and length. Gruver and Walton (2005:3) suggest the features were “used to ambush game heading to the spring in the basin.” The spring is located 360 meters from the site. No artifacts were found in association with any of the features and it is located at an elevation of 650 feet.

**LF 18-20 Hunting Blinds-House Hill Sutter Buttes.** This site is the third in a series of three possible hunting blinds located on a ridgeline overlooking Peace Valley. This site is differentiated from the other two as it is aligned northeast/southwest rather than northwest/southeast. It is situated on a rocky peak southeast of the Pugh homestead. In total there are four features spanning a length of 120 meters with height varying from 0.5 meters to 1.0 meter. This site consists of four features The site is located at an elevation of 720 feet and a perennial drainage is located in the Valley 330m east of Feature 2.

**South Blind.** This site is located on House Hill just south of Pug homestead. It is a stacked rock wall aligned east/west and runs intermittently for 78 meters. The recorders suggested the feature may be a prehistoric hunting blind though no artifacts were found in association with it. The feature varies in height from 0.80-1.0 meter. The
site is at an elevation of 680-705 feet. A seasonal drainage is located 120 meters down slope.

**Hunting Blind-Meadow’s Edge.** This feature is located on the western edge of the valley overlooking a seasonal drainage. It was recorded by Gruver (n.d.) and interpreted as a possible hunting blind. No artifacts were found and no elevation was given.

**Twin Creeks Site.** This site consists of a two BRM and six hunting blinds overlooking a small drainage. In total, the site measure 350m by 66 meters. The site is located between two parcels that had been homesteaded, however no farming or ranching modifications were noted. Both BRMs are described single andesite boulders with one cup each. Three of the hunting blinds have a southeast-northwest alignment and one has a north-south alignment. The alignment for the remaining two was not specified. The length and height of these features vary with the largest one measuring 12 meters long and four to six courses high (boulders ranged in size from 15 cm by 15 cm to 1.5 m by 1.5 m). The hunting blinds had been disturbed by cattle and feral pigs. No artifacts were found at the site. The site is at an elevation from 150 to 425 feet.

**Rock Alignments**

**Wind Break.** This site is a large boulder with a natural “L” shaped cutout located on a ridgeline. A small rock alignment measuring 60 cm wide, 130 cm long and 51 cm high protrudes out from the boulder. The entire site is interpreted as a possible windbreak or a hunting blind. It is located approximately 90 meters from “Steidls Rock Circle” and may be associated with it. No artifacts were found at the site. A spring and
intermittent drainage is located 200 meters from the site. The site is at an elevation of 693 feet.

**Rock Circle.** This site has three features thought to be associated with prehistoric land use: a cleared rock circle, a stacked stone wall, and a possible collapsed rock enclosure (Gruver n.d.). The rock circle consists of andesite boulders circling an ovoid shape depression. The entire feature measures 5 m by 5m by 1 meter. The rock wall is located on a contour break and is approximately 7 meters in length. The wall is roughly aligned north/south. The final feature, a three sided rock alignment, measures approximately 2 meters in length. It was noted this final feature was ambiguous. No artifacts were found in association with any of the features. The site is at an elevation of 676 feet and an intermittent spring and drainage are 200 meters from the site.

**Lithic Scatter**

**CA-SUT-72.** CA-SUT-72, or “The Biface Site” was a light lithic scatter (1 to 5 flakes per square meter) recorded by Garr and Bayham (1989). The debitage was described as chert and basalt cortical and interior reduction flakes. In addition, one unstemmed projectile point was noted. Based on flaking technology, Garr and Bayham hypothesized the site was a seasonal hunting camp rather than permanent occupation site. Discussion with the landowner, H.T. Frye led to the interesting discovery that the intermittent drainage northwest of the site remains constant throughout the year and has provided enough water for the Frye family and much of their ranching and farming activities. Frye said he never saw the springs dry up, not even in the driest of falls. Garr and Bayham observed, “This is notable in the Buttes, where surface water is accessible in only a limited number of locations” (Garr and Bayham 1989:17). Frye also noted that
several artifacts had been collected through the years. These included portable bowl mortars, pestles, and projectile points. Frye also said that several pieces of milling equipment were used in the construction of the surrounding rock walls.

**Quarry**

**CA-SUT-29.** CA-SUT-29 was described by Van Zant (1959:1) as, “[a’n old quarry located on steep slope of Eagles Peak…” The area had been used as quarry for the past 40 years and was in danger of destruction. Van Zant observed large projectile points, an 8-inch slate knife, cylindrical and well worked globular mortars, and fish net weights. He noted that several artifacts had already been reportedly removed from the site. No elevation was given, and an unnamed water source is located 150 feet from the site.

Jensen (1968) relocated this site and concurred with its designation as a quarry site. However, he did not find any of the artifacts originally noted by Van Zant. Jensen found it hard to believe that such a diversity of artifact types and materials would be present at a prehistoric quarry workshop. He noted that material from the site had been used in the construction of the DeWitt Ranch home and several other houses and chimneys in the city of Sutter. The material (rhyolite) was also used to line springs in the Buttes and in the foundation of at least one of the buildings at the Pugh Homestead (Dionne Gruver, Personal Communication, March 28, 2009). Like Van Zant, Jensen acknowledged that quarrying for these structures has destroyed any evidence of Native American use of the site.

**Petroglyphs**

**CA-SUT-50.** As of 1968, CA-SUT-50 had the highest concentration of BRMs than anywhere else in the Sutter Buttes. In total, there are 104 BRMs on 18 andesitic
outcrops. Based on the lack of midden, Jensen (1968) hypothesizes the site may have only be seasonal used. The site is located on the side of a drainage at an elevation of 140 feet. No artifacts were found.

One petroglyph has been recorded at the site. Jensen (1968:55) describes it as a pitted boulder with six holes occurring in a one meter radius. He places the petroglyph in “…an ancient and widespread petroglyph style whose over-all distribution cannot now be determined but which appears to be found over most of the western North America” (Jensen 1968:55). He references “rain rocks” used by the Shasta people and “baby rocks” used by the Pomo; however he finds it difficult to apply function as no such traditions are known to have been practiced among the Maidu. He does note that if the petroglyph did serve as a rain rock, it could lend further support for a wet season occupation by people attempting to control the flooding of the Sacramento Valley.

**CA-SUT-54.** CA-SUT-54 was originally described as a “BRM-Petroglyph site” by D. Storm in 1974. He described the location as “almost on the floor of the valley on the north side of an intermittent stream. The elevation is 85-95 feet. Storm described the petroglyph component as “…2 pitted boulder. One has 3 pits, the other has 2 pits.” The site was revisited by both Abel and Ruskin in 1991 and Pacific Legacy in 2005. Abel and Ruskin (1991b) noted the “petroglyph” was a “rain rock” used for shamanistic weather control. Pacific Legacy commented on the pitted boulder petroglyph, noting it was similar to those associated with rain or fertility, however they did assert that the, “…utility of these pitted boulders are speculative” (Whiteman and Edwards 2005:10).
CA-SUT-27. CA-SUT-27 was recorded by Van Zant in May 1959. Van Zant (1959a:1) describes the site as a “Rocky peak- numerous “holes” and rock shelters.” The site is also called “Bee Hive,” “Spirit Home,” and “Spirit Mountain.” He argued that it held ceremonial or spiritual importance to the Native Americans as the site was “reportedly” worshiped and found to be sacred by Native Americans during historic times. It was observed that wind through the holes created a moaning sound. Van Zant noted the presence of a Pomo disc, projectile points, and debitage. The site is located on Craggy Bluff with water 200 ft. from the base of the bluff. No elevation was given.

Jensen (1968) revisited the site and failed to relocate any rock shelters or any of the artifacts recorded by Van Zant. However, he did agree the site does produce a moaning sound that can be heard up to a distance of 1,000 meters away. The sound is produced when wind passes through the weathered rhyolite. Although Jensen concedes the entire canyon in which the site is located may have been of mythological importance, he found no evidence of human activity at the location.

CA-SUT-42. CA-SUT-42 is a questionable site that “needs further exploring.” Jensen and Ritter (1969) described it as large crevice split in a granite outcrop with possible fire smudging on the walls. The site is on the southern face of Peace Valley at an elevation of 600 feet. The nearest source of water is 100 meters away. No artifacts were found near the outcrop.
Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the physical remains used for interpretations of the Sutter Butte landscape. This included a description of past archaeological investigations and a description of the various findings they produced. The next chapter, Chapter VII: Cultural Data, provides the data used to interpret the cultural landscape of the Sutter Buttes.
CHAPTER VII

CULTURAL DATA

As demonstrated by the previous chapter, the Sutter Buttes were utilized by surrounding cultural groups for resource procurement and processing. Although there is some evidence for spiritual ties between the people and the mountain, the physical evidence is minimal. Conversely, ethnographic material suggests that the Buttes played a far larger role in the belief system of native peoples than what is reflected in the archaeology and material culture. Mythology and stories passed down from generation to generation indicate a cultural value beyond that of an area used for hunting and gathering.

This chapter fills in the gap left by the archaeological record by providing a diverse collection of sources recounting myths, stories, and songs of the Patwin and the Maidu that pertain to the Sutter Buttes. This collection is the result of my in-depth research at several different locations, as discussed in Chapter III. The stories are categorized by cultural group with the source of the material given before each one. Maidu stories have been subdivided into those with Konkow (Northern Maidu) origins, those from the northwestern Maidu and those whose origins are recorded as Maidu with no specific tribe mentioned.
Archival Research and Ethnographic Sources

Patwin, Wintu

Stories. The following three stories were found in Special Collections Department of the Meriam Library at California State University, Chico. They were taken from student recordings of interviews conducted during the spring semester of 1972, when students from the Anthropology 5 class went to the old Patwin Rancheria, Cahil Dehe, and conducted interviews with various Native Americans. Included in the interviewees was Jennie Regaldo, a Patwin Wintu. Listed below are three stories she shared with the students. This first story was collected by D. Annis.

Lots of things went up there [Sutter Buttes] and came out of there. It was a sacred mountain where certain people went to be doctors. The only way ordinary people could go over the mountain was on the middle road and they had to pay for crossing it with beads, pennies or nickels. They had to stay on the road. Women weren’t allowed on the mountain. The mountains sing all the time even in the night and if you go over my the mountain you can hear it. [Regaldo 1972:3]

This next story was collected by Melody L. Annis, also a student in the Anthropology 5 class.

An Indian was on his way home one night after hunting, but he was very tired, so he came to this field by the Buttes, and decided to sleep there overnight. He lay down next to this mound and fell asleep, and had this dream. He dreamed that he was in a round house and all the dancers and singers were doing their thing, and he had seen it all. When he awoke the next morning, he found himself outside on the ground. Well, he knew there were people around, for he had been with them the night before, yet when tried to get back in the round house, he found out that it was just a solid mound of dirt, with no opening. He left then, and went to his people and told them what had happened. But then he got sick and almost died. When he got well, he instituted the dance, and went to other tribes and showed it to them. Then the other tribes would want to buy this dance and he would sell it to them for beads or whatever they had. This is the way Grindstone got the dance. They bought it from this tribe.” [Regaldo 1972:3]
The final story is an explanation of how the Coastal Range and the Sutter Buttes were formed.

Everything was under water except a turtle, a coyote and a hawk. They were floating around on a raft. The turtle said we can’t live like this so he dove down trying to find land. He couldn’t find any. Finally the water went down a little and he went under the water again and touched a tiny bit of dirt and brought it back up and gave it to the hawk. He took it in his claws and flew up into the air and sprinkled it on the water, and this was the Coast Range. He had some left over, so he dropped it and that was the Sutter Buttes. [Regaldo 1972:2]

The following three stories were taken from Kroeber’s (1932) ethnographic accounts of the Patwin. The first story, “The Condors,” was collected from the River Patwin, Grimes Group.

It was at Kodoi. Nearly everybody had gone off, the women to gather seeds, the men to fish. Two old men had been in the sweat-house four days without water. They called for water. Some boys were playing outside, but brought none. The old men called and called. Then the boys saw them pick up and break twigs. Then they saw them stick the twigs into their arms, where they turned into feathers. The old men were turning into condors. They circled about in the house, mounting; and first one, and then the other, flew out at the smoke hole. There they sat a while, then rose, circled, and flew off to the Marysville Buttes. The boys told the people what they had seen. [Kroeber 1932:306]

The next story, “Married to a Grizzly,” enforces the role of women. As with the previous story, this story was collected from the River Patwin, Grimes groups.

A Colusa girl would not marry, though her parents wished her to. She went with a party of women to gather roots for basket coiling at Onolai, the Marysville Buttes. She was pulling roots when a grizzly came, looking like a man but with his canine teeth outside his lip. He talked to her, told her to sit and rest while he dug for her, and got her an enormous bunch, digging with his hands. “It is plenty, I must go,” she said. Then he took hold of her, played with her, and laid her down. “Don’t tell,” he said, “come again and I will get you more.” She agreed, and the women shouted for her to come home. “Oh, but you have many roots. Did someone help you?” the women said to her. She denied, but they cried: “Yes! See how many there are! Four or five people must have dug for you.” She became pregnant; her mother questioned her; she gave birth to a pair of cubs. All said: “I know her!” The cubs played about like pups, eating acorns. People began to strike them. Then their father took them away to Onolai.” [Kroeber 1932:307]
The next stories are three different versions of how the *hesi* originated from the Buttes. These stories were collected from two informants from Grimes and one from Colusa. Kroeber (1932:307) prefaces the story with, “It seems to be taken over from the Maidu or Nisenan whom one of the versions makes the actors.”

The *hesi* began in Onolai-toL, the Marysville Buttes, among the animals. They had sung the four sweating songs (of the *hesi*), and ran to plunge into the water. Then others (human beings) ambushed the swimmers and rushed into the house, and killed them all. The animals were deer. Hence there are no deer on the Buttes. Deer hunters on the east side of the Buttes once heard talk, dancing, a drum in the ground. Then they saw them come out of the dance house, and that they were deer. They killed them and took the meat home. But one of the hunters remembered the songs he heard and made the (*hesi*) dance. The Maidu say that the dead go to the Marysville Buttes.

The people of Yupul (Yuba City, Nisenan) were camped on Onolai, the Marysville Buttes. They saw a light and thought it must be Patwin. Then they realized it was light shining from a dance house floor. Two of them looked in. The elk and all the animals were dancing. A great sturgeon was standing like a post. The two told the others and they all listened. Toward the morning the animals all danced four times before (while) sweating, and then came out to bathe. The Yupul men were lying hidden about. Some of them shouted, and all the animals were ashamed and died. That is how they got the *hesi*. The place is called Lut, dance house, today it is a hillock. [Kroeber 1932:307]

**Maidu**

*Stories.* This story was recorded by Edward S. Curtis (1924) who collected it during his fieldwork conducted in 1915, 1916, 1922, and 1924.

The souls of the dead were believed to go to Ėstobisim-yámání (“in-the-center-mountain”), that is, Marysville Buttes, whence two roads led, one westward to the place where Sumuini-wewe (“nose talk”), the evil one of the two creators; the other eastward to the home of the good creator, Nem-yepani (“big chief”), or Yahasin-yepani (“in-the-sky chief”). The body of this Sky Chief was like gold; in fact, the old people used to say the he was the moon, and his sister the sun. The souls of the peaceful took the eastward road, and those who had killed and fought, the westward. The soul was called either breath or the heart. [Curtis 1924:117-118]
This story was found in the Sutter County Historic Society News Bulletin.

At the top of the North Butte is an interesting rock with an alter hollowed out. Toe and hand holes lead up the resting place which looks so much like an alter. Here, it is said Indians watched for smoke messages in the northern mountains. If the message told of a big flood coming down the river, before it reached this locality, he could warn the Indians and they could move their belongings and families to safety. [Jommen 1961:20]

This is a short section from a story told by Lizzie Enos and recorded by Richard Simpson (1977). The story is called “ooti,” and is the tale of the acorn. Though only briefly mentioned, the story demonstrates the place of the Buttes in the creation of humankind.

At last they stood upon the highest and sacred peak of Estawm Yan, the Middle Hills, where the valley wind that rose hot and fast moaned through the blackened stones. And as this wind whipped the flaming hair about his upturned head, World Maker spoke to forces and to spirits that only he could see:

Now I will finish that for which the world was made.
Now I shall give life to mankind, that he may use all that has been created.

On that afternoon World Maker returned to his hut beneath the acorn tree, and dug a large hole nearby. He filled the hole with dark red earth and mixed the earth with water drawn from the sea.

From this mixture World Maker fashioned two long figures, smooth and shiny; one of Man and one of Woman. [Simpson 1977:29-30]

This story was found in Sutter County Historical Society News Bulletin (Jommen 1961). It was taken from W.H. McPherrin’s, “Why Indians Never Crossed the Buttes.” I did not find a copy of the original work.

Another old legend gives a different version. It concerns the tale of an immense and beautiful tortoise who, in her decision to maintain peace in the land, raised the Buttes in the middle of the plain. By this means she hoped to separate contending tribes that were about to make war on one another. Her plan succeeded and bloodshed was prevented. No warrior dared attempt the crossing of the mountains, as the good spirit of the peace-loving tortoise dwelt on the summit and had power to strike down any who might disobey her command. [Jommen 1961:4]
The following two stories are housed at the Community Memorial Museum in Yuba City. The first was told by Tony Bill, a Yuba River Maidu and was recorded by E.M. Loeb (1933). The story is called “The Eastern Kuksu Cult.”

There was once a boy who did not wish to get married, in spite of the wishes of his parents. Therefore, not being liked very much at home, he strayed off and went to Butte Mountain (Estomian) near Marysville. When he got there, he saw an old woman entering a ceremonial house. The old woman said: ‘Grandchild, come in.’ He went in and found that a ghost dance (kakine salta) was being held inside. The old woman placed the boy behind her. The ghosts said, ‘We smell a human being, he stinks.’ The old women said: ‘No.’ She gave the boy some pinole and soup and kept him behind her. The boy heard some shouting outside. The old woman said: ‘Don’t be frightened, we are just like you people.’ The boy said nothing.

The boy first saw the saltu dance, the hesi. After the hesi, they did the toto, the women and everyone dancing.

The boy stayed in the ghost house all winter and then went home again in the spring. Before he departed, the old woman said: ‘You take this bread and this meat and when you go back, don’t eat any of the people’s food. When you get back, you tell your people to put up the dances you have seen here. But don’t eat the people’s food or you will die. Just eat the food which I gave you.’ The old woman gave the boy a piece of acorn bread and a little dried venison and salmon and said: ‘As long as you eat this, you will never eat it up. But if you eat any of your peoples’ food, you will die and come back here. When you get home, tell the yeponi what you saw here and they will dance it.’

When the boy arrived home, he told the yeponi, and they held a hesi. Presently the youth grew tired of his bread and dried fish and ate with the remainder of the people. Then he dreamed he would die. He held one final hesi, then returned to Butte Mountain, where his ghost still can be seen. [Loeb 1933]

The second story was collected by the editor of the Colusa newspaper in the mid-1850s and explains the creation of the Sutter Buttes. The exact source of the story is unknown.

. . . the Great Spirit ‘paused to smile upon the sentinel in white which he had placed in the far north.’ As he did this, a portion of the range he carried slipped between his fingers and lay unnoticed upon the plain. ‘After completing the Coast Range, he noticed the small mound of hills laying there in the middle of the valley and decided to leave it there as a sign to all of his children that the Great Spirit always has enough to spare. [Green n.d.]
Oral Histories. The following three interviews were conducted by Cynthia Guerrero (2006) with Diana Almanderez during the Pacific Regional Humanities Center (University of California, Davis) oral history project. Ms. Almanderez’s grandmother was half Nishinan, Maidu, and Wintun. The first segment is in regard to women and the Sutter Buttes.

In the old days women didn’t go up to the Sutter Buttes, not to the mountains, they didn’t go there. That was an off limits place for women, because you were not supposed to go up there on your period, and it was too dangerous, very dangerous... It was cultural, women don’t go up there, you don’t go up to the Buttes tops, to the mountains it visioning place for the men to go and probably do sweats and stuff. There is no water up there it is a very dry place, a dangerous place. That is one reason why and the rattlesnakes and everything. You didn’t want to put women in harms ways. So if anyone was to go up there it was going to be men. And that is pretty much the rules that I have always heard that woman don’t go up there. [Almanderez 2006:2-3]

The second account is of her great-grandfather using the Buttes for weather control.

My Great grandfather was a Medicine man in terms of many things and one of them was a doctor of the weather he was a weatherman. One way he controlled the weather was the Buttes. I am not sure how he did it, but he called the Buttes his weatherman. [Almanderez 2006:7]

The final subject is the image of the woman laying down. The interviewer asked, “What does the lady laying down mean?” and Almanderez answered:

It belongs to a story, storytelling. Something that she had heard about a long time ago about a women who would not follow the rules of the village and what I mean by that is, her period. When you have your period you are not suppose to touch anything. You go to the menstrual hut and you sit there and you are into deep prayer and you don’t touch your body. People would bring you food, people bring you water, you get fed. And if you were married and you had a husband he didn’t do anything either, while your body was cleansing itself. And so you need to let it cleanse its self, so this woman didn’t let it cleanse itself. And she ended up being told to leave her village. And making a long story short she laid down there in the center of the valley and died. Probably of loneliness, broken heart, and her creator
immortalized her and turned her to the beautiful mountain range, and you can still see her lying there. [Almanderez 2006:1-2]

Later in the interview, the topic was revisited under the question, “The Sutter Buttes seemed to be a symbol for the Native American can you go a little more in that?”

Yah, I was talking about the idea that a woman that broke tradition, laid down there and died and the creator immortalized her and made her the Sutter Buttes. Froze her in time like a rock, and that is her. After so many years she is kind of broken down you can still see her image there. That’s what she ended up being was this symbol that you could look over there and be reminded of what happens to you when you don’t follow tradition and taboos. Taboos being, you are given a set of rules and you break them it’s taboo and it’s not good. She kind of became like a symbol of that don’t break tradition don’t break taboos. So someday you can look up at it and see that. Also it was a symbol in a way too because it was also the place of, the spot of creation where the first man went up and disappeared, went up and left earth. The first man that was put here Ku'ksuu that was here, he had a wife with him things got so bad here that he went up to the spirit world. That he went to the Buttes and went up. There was a rope there. Again a magical place, a rope falls out of the sky over the Buttes and he climbs up it. So again it is another symbol of taboo because he reached a point where he doesn’t want to be on this earth any more. So he goes up there and climbs up this rope back to the spirit world. And everybody else was here and they managed to pull together and survive through it again by following traditions. It has always been this place of relevance to look up towards, kind of like Mount Siam, when you think about it. You look up at the Buttes that’s where creation happened, that’s where Ku'ksuu left, that where the woman that broke tradition lays. This capsule of important points of history of California Indian Central Valley, Maidu and Wintu culture. [Almanderez 2006:9-10]

**Songs.** This song is housed at the Community Memorial Museum in Yuba City. It was sung by an 80-year-old Maidu man named Why-le-pe in 1966 (translated by Michael Consiglio in 1967).

Butte mountain, Butte mountain
Peaks ridge, peaks ridge
South road, south road
North road, west road, east road
Esto Yamani is the home of the spirits.
Ta-la-yan is the mountain facing it in the east.
From Esto Yamani a road goes south,
Another goes north, another goes west
And another goes east.
The top of the Buttes is where all the roads meet.  
The Buttes are the center of everything.  
When you die you take one of the roads and  
Follow I singing the chant to make you happy.  
From the Buttes you go to the spirit world in the sky. [Why-le-pe 1967]

Konkow, Maidu

Stories. This story was narrated by Jack Franco (Otila), a northwestern Maidu born near Durham around 1845. The story was recorded by Edward Curtis (1924). The story begins with the creation of land by Sky Chief (Yáhásin-yěpānī) and Turtle. After creating the world, Sky Chief “…made the rule that when any food was gathered, the first should not be eaten” (Curtis 1924:174). Nose Talker (Sumuini-wewe) was in constant disagreement with Sky Chief and disagreed with this rule. He went against it and ate some of the first salmon. As a result, the river began to dry up and Sky Chief was unable to catch fish the next night. The story proceeds with Nose Talker constantly disobeying the instructions of the Sky Chief in regard to the quantity of food he should hunt or gather. One day the two disagree whether people should die. Sky Chief argues they should live forever, while Nose Talker proclaims they should die because “…they will have a burning of property. People will come from near and far to burn and gamble and feast and have a good time” (Curtis 1924:175). There is then a race between the young men which includes Nose Talker’s son. His son dies from a rattlesnake bite from a snake Sky Chief threw in the path. The story then continues:

One of the racers said, “That rattlesnake bit him, and he is dead.”
Then Nose Talker wept and wailed. He carried his son down to the lake that Sky Chief had made, and put the body in the water. But the moment Sky Chief had consented to have death, that water, which had always been constantly whirling about, became quite. After a time Nose Talker carried the body back and laid it on the ground.
Sky Chief asked: “Why do you not bury him? You said you wanted to have a good time.” He began to wail, and threw dust on his head. He got a basket and a digging-stick, and dug a hole. Nose Talker was wailing loudly. When the hole was finished, Sky Chief brought out all the dance costumes he possessed. He wrapped the corpse in a bear-skin, after hanging beads and feathers on it, and tied it with rope. Then he dropped the body into the hole.

That night Sky Chief went down into the ground at the foot of the central post of the house and came at the lake. He went away southward. Nobody saw him go. With his feet he made various mountains and hills, as he stepped. He made Marysville Buttes, and there he waited for the son of Nose Talker. The next day he made pehépi [a clown-like person…]. He told the clown to remain there and watch, while he himself sat inside the mountain. Soon Nose Talker’s son was seen approaching. He was carrying all the things that Sky Chief had buried with him. He was crying. He came to the door of the mountain, and Sky Chief said to the clown, “Tell him to throw everything down outside.”

…Now all the time Nose Talker had been looking for Sky Chief. “I do know where my chum has gone,” he kept saying to himself. He had a string of beads about his neck and his hair was burned off short. Others too looked for Sky Chief. Kálkálím-wênunam-yępání [“clam-shell-beads vomit chief”] went northward in his search, and remained at Mount Shasta. Yâlul-pêm-yępání, or Kásipim-pehepi, went westward. Kúksum-yępání [“far south chief”] went southward. Kolelnom-yępání [“subterranean chief”], or Sâmmon-káno [“fire old-man”], went beneath the ground. At the lake Nose Talker saw the footprints of Sky Chief. They were filled with water. He followed them.

The next day Sky Chief said to his watchman: “I think Nose Talker is coming. I think he is running.” Soon Nose Talker came to the door of the mountain. He stopped and peered through the doorway. Sky Chief said: “Well, here is you son. Come in. Do not be ashamed.” Nose Talker started to enter, but Sky Chief said: “Sit down there at the door. Well, here is you boy. Now are you satisfied?” The room was full of acorn mush and bread and dry salmo

Nose Talker said: “I’m hungry. I would like to eat.”

“Well, you are not dead. You cannot eat here. Go home. Tell the people that you have seen you boy here, and he is alive. And you will have your burning, your good time. When anyone dies, he will come to this place.” So Nose Talker went back home and held the first burning ceremony. [Curtis 1924:175-176]

This story, “The Sweathouse Set-in-the-Center,” was collected by Don M. Chase (1973) in his attempt to look backwards in time at the Konkow prior to European contact. The story describes the Sutter Buttes (or “The Sweathouse Set-in-the-Center”) as a sweathouse used by the creator.
The Creator went back to his house and went into a deep sleep. After a while he
told his family that he was going away, but that he would come back in a few days.
When it grew dark he left his home, taking with him the Coyote’s son’s body. The
next morning the Coyote went into the sweathouse to visit the Creator. Not seeing
him he asked the Creator’s family, “Where is my cousin?” The family told him that
they didn’t know, but that the Creator would be back in a few days. The Coyote
then began to think something bad of the Creator. He spent the rest of that day
smelling around. Also the second day. The third day the Creator sent a scent back,
that the Coyote might find him. The Coyote tracked him in a mountain named Set-
in-the-Center [the Sutter Buttes], where a sweathouse was built, the door of which
was left half open. It was evening when the Coyote reached the mountain
sweathouse. The sweathouse was inside. He saw his son and the Creator sitting on
the ground by the center post of the sweathouse eating their supper. He wanted to
go inside, but the keeper of the door told him he could not let him in. The Coyote
told him he was vey hungry. Still the keeper would not let him in, but said he would
give him something to eat. He gave him food, and then as it was getting darker and
the coyote lay down outside the door and slept.

The tale continues into the story, “The White Feather Road.”

While the Coyote slept the Creator made a rope of white feathers reaching from the
top of the mountain up to the sky. This was a road, and it was called the road of the
dead. After finishing the road the Creator prepared the Coyote’s son to travel the
road. The Creator then took the spirit out of the Coyote’s son, leaving his body, and
sent the spirit on the road to the sky, or heaven. The Creator woke the Coyote and
told him that he could not come into the house unless he dies. “And now you go
back to your house and tell all that you have seen. And that none of your people can
ever come into this sweathouse until they die.”

So the Coyote started for home. When within sight of his home he began
shouting, “I have seen the Creator and I have seen my son and they are in a good
place with plenty to eat.”

The next portion of the tale is told as “The Rockman to Guide Creator’s
Children Home,” and tells of a character which calls for the dead to come to the Buttes.

After all this the Creator thought it best that he should have someone to guard the
mountain sweathouse. So Rockman, also known as an Indian clown, was placed on
the very top of the sweathouse, so the dead may be guided by the voice of this
Indian clown. The Creator gave the clown power so as to know when there was
anyone dead, and even to know their names. In calling them he could say, “Come
this way?” “Don’t get lost!” “Don’t go that way!” “Be careful how you step.” The
Creator also left a man at the door of the mountain so that when the dead came he
was to undress them of the clothing that they were buried in, and prepare them for
the feather road that only the dead may travel. [Chase 1973:43-44]
This story was found in field notes housed in the Dorothy Hill collection. It was originally collected on October 26, 1968, during an interview with Henry Azbill, Joyce Plummer, and Craig Bates. This is how the story was told by Azbill and similar to the story recorded by Chase (1973), describes the Buttes as a dance house for the dead.

According to the Indian legend, the Sutter Buttes were called the “spirit dance house” or kahkini kumme. Kahkinni means spirit. The Indian version is when you die, your body is dead, but your spirit still remains in the area for awhile. It goes to this place that we call kahkinni kumme and that is the last dance house where all the spirits of the dead meet before they go into the beyond where they came from. So, the idea is that when you die, the spirit goes to this sweat house. After 4 days the spirit performs a dance and then goes to the beyond. That’s why a spirit dinner is given at the time of death. To placate the spirits at the end of 4 days you give a dinner. An invitation is given describing the man and his spirit that is dead. The public address, is as though you are talking to the person. For instance, it the one that died is a daughter you would say “I am giving this dinner for you so that your spirit will rest. You will be all set and you won’t have to starve. Here is the salmon, here is the deer, here is the acorn soup and the acorn bread for you spirit to partake of before you go.” At the time you say this, you put offerings of these foods on the fire and then you wail in memory of the person. Then everyone sits down and they eat this food. That is the dinner given for the spirit at the sweat house before it goes beyond. [Azbill 1968:4]

Northern Maidu

Stories. This was retold by Kroeber in 1970.

What we call the soul, the Maidu call heart…The northern [Maidu] valley people say that a dead person’s heart lingers near the body for several days. It then journeys to every spot which the living person had visited, retracing each of his steps and reenacting every deed performed in life. This accomplished, the spirit seeks a mysterious cavern in the Marysville Buttes, the great spirit mountain of the Maidu, where for the first time it eats spirit food and is washed. It experiences here a repetition of those of the first man of mythology. From the Marysville Buttes the spirit ascends to the sky land, flower land, or spirit land, as it is variously called.

The hill residents tell of the same journey traveled by their dead. But they reach the abounding sky land- “valley above” is an equivalent rendering- by going east along the path of the sun, instead of to the Marysville Buttes. The Milky Way is also pointed out as the road of the spirits. [Kroeber 1970:439]
This story was recorded by Ronald B. Dixon (1902):

Earth-Initiate and Coyote were at Marysville Buttes. Earth-Initiate said, “I am going to make people.” He took dark red earth, mixed it with water, and made two figures, - one a man, and one a woman. He laid the man on his right side, and the woman on his left, inside his house. Then he lay himself down, flat on his back, with his arms stretched out. He lay thus and sweated all the afternoon and night. Early in the morning the woman began to tickle him in the side. He kept very still, and did not laugh. By and by he got up, thrust a piece of pitch-wood into the ground, and fire burst out. The two people were very white. No one to-day is as white as they were. There eyes were pink, their hair was black, their teeth shone brightly, and they were very handsome. It is said that Earth-Initiate did not finish the hands of the people, as he did not know how it would be best to do it. Coyote saw the people, and suggested that they ought to have hands like his. Earth Initiate said, “No, their hands shall be like mine.” Then he finished them. When Coyote asked why their hands were to be like that, Earth-Initiate answered, “So that, if they are chased by bears, they can climb trees.” This first man was called Ku’ksu and the woman, Morning-Star Woman (La’idamlulum ku’le). [Dixon 1902:41-42]

Nisenan, Maidu

Stories. Richard Burrill’s (1988), “River of Sorrow,” is a published fictional narrative about the history of the Nisenan. Because the story is fictional, it is excluded from the discussion in Chapter VIII, however it is still a story about the Sutter Buttes and reflects at least one individuals views and ways of seeing the Buttes in native life. Of pertinence to this thesis is the chapter entitled, Journey to Esto-Yamani. The chapter outlines Tokiwa’s calling and subsequent journey to Esto-Yamani (the Sutter Buttes), which translates in this story to “the middle hills” or “mountains set-in-the-center.” The Buttes, particularly South Butte, are described as resembling a large Maidu assembly-house (or dance house) which though not settled or owned by any one particular group, was used for hunting and gathering by many different groups. The main character, Tokiwa is called to the mountains in a dream. When he tells his grandfather of the dream,
his grandfather informs him he must journey to the mountains to gain power and knowledge to become a doctor. It is explained that,

The Buttes marked a “stopping place” of the Creator. Therefore, they were forever rich in spiritual power called pe (pã). Gaining pe provided many benefits, so pilgrimages were frequently made. Pe provided good gambling medicine... Pe could also help ensure greater contact with the spirit world by conjuring up spirits and voices of the dead. [Burrill 1988:81]

Though great power could be gained, the journey was not without its dangers.

Throughout the chapter, the presence of ghosts is discussed in relation to Tokiwa’s journey as well as their general presence in the Buttes as believed in Nisenan culture.

At the same time, there were the ghosts which Tokiwa feared, where the dead lingered four days before departing to Heavenly Valley, the special place in the sky. “When you leave this earth,” the elders taught, “you leave through Esto-Yamani. Ghosts are always present, and blow about constantly crying.” [Burrill 1988:81]

Though many went to the Buttes for hunting and gathering many did not. “Still, some of the elders refused to travel this country or camp anywhere close to the hills because they respected the presence of ghosts” (Burrill 1988:81-82). Reports of mysterious lights and smoke coming from the Buttes provided support to their existence.

One such story passed down by an informant from ancient times was that the elders saw the lights from fires of spirit campers or ghosts on the Buttes. Hence, the people were afraid to go in there because of the Ka’Kinim spirits. [Burrill 1988:83]

When Tokiwa reached his destination, those assisting him with his mission described the Buttes as a sacred mountain shaped like a sweathouse.

In the morning, Owa, Hoo-du-sa, and the other doctors led Tokiwa to the mountain’s rampart and around to the “porch” on the west side where the sacred door was located. The entrance to the spirit house was still there along the steep terrace. Owa pointed to a great singular rock that lay on its side, weather-worn and covered with petroglyph markings left by the grandfathers.

“Tokiwa, see there is the entrance to the spirit house,” exclaimed Owa.

Here, at this sacred spot, Tokiwa and the others prostrated themselves in prayer. Tokiwa and the others prostrated themselves in prayer. Tokiwa began
repeating over and over the words from his earlier dream. “Kick the rock three times and say ‘Open,’!” This incantation Tokiwa continued reciting throughout the night. [Burrill 1988:97]

At this point in the story, Tokiwa is given sacred roots that “…contained spirits who could contact ghost spirits of the dead” (Burrill 1988:98). The medicine helped him communicate with the animal spirits from which he requested spiritual power; powers that were eventually granted to him.

Interviews

Beverly Ogle, Mountain Maidu

The following information was told to be by Beverly Ogle. Ms. Ogle is a Mountain Maidu who, as young girl, took many trips with Maria Potts to the Sutter Buttes. On these trips, she would help gather plants such as acorn and digger pine for the elders. Marie Potts (Northern Maidu) shared with her knowledge of the Buttes, and in turn Ms. Ogle shared with the author what she could remember. The conversation took place on January 26, 2008, over the phone. It was not a formal interview but rather a conversation regarding what she knew and could remember of what Ms. Potts taught her as a child. As a result, what follows is a summary of the knowledge she shared rather than a formal interview. Verbal permission was given to the author to use this knowledge as part of this research.

Ms. Ogle stressed two main points regarding the Sutter Buttes. First, she described the Buttes as a place of gathering where “many tribes went for many reasons.” Ms. Ogle discussed how the Sutter Buttes were a place where people would gather and camp for hunting, gathering, fasting, or as a meeting point to discuss with other tribes.
Ms. Potts explained to her that in addition to the Konkow, the Wintu and the Coastal Indians would also gather at the Buttes. Ms. Potts would point towards the Santa Rosa area when she said the “Coastal Indians,” and Ms. Ogle took this to mean the Pomo. She described the Buttes as a meeting place where people from the surroundings tribes would gather and share information by word of mouth, particularly about big events such as the Bear Dance. “Gamblers would meet and seek what to say and good luck. They would go to talk and converse with different tribes. That’s how they’d be aware of Big Times, by word of mouth.” Ms. Ogle stated that a string with knots may be passed between tribes so that people would know what day to come to such events.

Secondly, she described the Buttes as a place with several spirit power points. For example, she remembered being told the large flat rock located in Peace Valley was visited by “young people or medicine men-to-be [who] would put their hand on the rock and feel heat and that’s how they knew the power was there...That’s how our Indian people would believe…I tried it and felt heat in the palm of my hand…But you have to meditate… Many prayers were said over that rock.” Meditation is emphasized as a clear mind is needed for visions. She said that it was a place where hunting and gathering parties would fast and seek names and songs and where medicine men would go to get powers. This rock is at CA-SUT-33; however, it is not currently recorded as a feature.

When asked about the “ownership,” or the lack thereof, of the Buttes by any one particular group, she stated the Indian people never recognized “owning things.” She explained that ownership in the Euroamerican sense did not exist among the Indian people. There were certain territories that were respected, but the land, animals, or plants were not owned and could be used by many. As such, the Buttes were utilized by several
groups as a meeting place and a place of power and the fact that they did not belong to any one tribe made sense.

Ms. Ogle made two more additional points. First, she remembered Ms. Potts telling her how pure the water was in the Buttes and that there were several springs. Secondly, she said there was a small formation in the Buttes with three or four petroglyphs. She described two of them. One is a half-moon and one is some type of animal with a zigzag pattern. The record search for this project did not find any record of petroglyphs which match this description.

John Geno Lucich, Maidu

The following information was obtained via email from John Geno Lucich on February 5, 2009, and April 28, 2009. This first narrative was received by email on February 5, 2009:

A study of the Buttes or as we call them estomyamani, is really a study of the Maidu and their neighbors. As you know it is not an easy task to find informants and culture carriers whose stories and knowledge date's back to the last ice age, and that is exactly where your interpretations will lead to when we talk of the cultural interpretations of "those mountains". The Maidu and their neighbors are a people who "live along the river" and the Buttes are the island among the flood waters and tule marsh of ancient California. That mountain is a place of refuge and power, it is sacred and alive. The Buttes to the Maidu are a place of creation and fantasy. Several fantastic stories have come from those mountains, stories which are from a time when animals were as people and when people learned from animals. I was once told by a Maidu elder that "we people were not always on top and we learned from watching, we learned how to weave from the birds and we learned to build our houses this same way...everything we know came from watching."

The CSU Chico library, as you know has a wealth of information, but there are a few other places you can also dig. The Quincy College Library has an amazing collection of audio tapes by a man named Herb Young. When I was studying with William Shiply, we once made a trip up there and listened to songs and stories (all in the Maidu language) of the mountain Maidu. I do recall a few talking about the buttes, Mt Shasta and the north valley area or Koydum Yadawi (The spelling just offered is not in the Shiply format, which I do not currently have
before me). One of the songs, which is still sung today is a sort of "rock and roll" song about coyote or wepam maidum "pissing and scratching from the buttes to Chico" it is a funny song when you listen to it and reminds me of a modern folk rambler or renegade saga. Because that is what those old songs are, they are just as any songs we hear today on our radios or ipods. This song would be good for your story, I will see if I can find it and send you a copy with translation. If you are interested I can also provide you with some diverse informants who may be useful to your work. The project you are working on is very important to many people.

The following answers are a reply received via email on April 29, 2009:

- What are your ties to the Sutter Buttes?

I was born and raised in Yuba County and seeing the buttes off in the distance had always struck my imagination and curiosity of that place

- How did you first learn about them?

I remember hearing stories of how they were a “sacred” place to the Maidu and I remember hearing stories about the buttes from family members about their personal experiences out on those mountains.

- How were/are the Buttes used by Native peoples?

I have heard many answers to that question, especially when we talk of ancient times. I think that the answers you will hear from the various people will be valuable clues, and will depend upon which tribal affiliation they may be speaking from. Some will tell you that this is a “sacred place” or “only the important men went there, powerful doctors and such”. This may be but I am of the school of thought as you may be and I know that we need to dig deeper...(to say) we need more and we need to look at the climate and weather which California has seen prior to dams, prior to the near extinction of migratory birds in the region by the Pacific western Traders and we need to see the utility of such a place as the buttes. I believe we can then see the buttes as an ancient way point, as a reserve and as a protected place, a place perhaps even guarded from those without status (as it still is today to some ends). So the question returns, why would access be limited, why would one (or groups) in ancient times guard such a place? Dig deeper and be on those mountains as an “important man” or a “doctor” (medicine man).
Why do you think the Buttes are so significant in Native culture?

I think that the buttes are significant to the native culture because they draw a line to the setting sun and geese patterned sky, and they are an ancient island to navigate rest and perhaps portage ones travel within the valley. Those mountains may remind us of creation times and beings of myth and memory. The Buttes are the place of creation to the Maidu; this is the place which they believed they came from. It is the place that dry land was made by “Turtle” (Opanok Maidum) and “world maker” (Koydum’yapem). The buttes are a place of escape in a world mostly covered with water and flooded to the bluffs of the foothills. Those mountains are seen by travelers sitting between the jagged ranges of the coast and sierras, still afloat in the valley with peaks as if they were the silhouette of a woman dreaming while lying down to watch a summer sky. I believe that is how a native culture see’s such things.

What role do stories play in your culture?

For me stories come in many ways. One way is when a person talks of a place or time that they had seen, or a situation that they were in and the outcome of the events. Stories in my culture are often coupled with humor and romance.

How is the history of your people passed from generation to generation?

The history of my people is passed by mostly talking with elders, family and extended family. However my history often gets passed down through physical items of value, utility and remittance. These items come with a story and maybe it is one of that person and a time that they lived in. These items are stories in themselves and often take on the form of an iconic representation of that specific person. One example of this is a 2 inch by 2 inch side section of a bear grass basket which was given to me from my mother, got this from her auntie, but was damaged in one of the many floods which has happened in the Yuba-Butte area. This small piece of basket had came along way to get into my collection and with it is a story about a weaver. Another example is a 1911 22 caliber rifle that was pawned to my father sometime in the 1980s. It was traded for $100.00, by an extended family member with the agreement that he could get the gun back for the same amount anytime. Within this item many stories spring up of a specific time and place and of a culture and people which I was lucky enough to be a part of. It is not so much the physical item as it is the events, persons and meaning behind what it represents to those that know of it and with these stories creates a baseline for a way of life.
Is there anything you would like to add that has not already been stated?

*The Yuba Maidu are a people of the red dirt country and tall valley buttes. They are a people who live along the river; they are happy hunters and lucky fishermen.*

And finally, do I have permission to publish your responses in my Master’s thesis?

Yes.

**Patsy Seek, Mountain Maidu**

The following interview took place on March 23, 2009, with Patsy Seek:

*[inaudible] They lived up here, they lived all over. The Maidu lived [inaudible] up there and that’s the same thing. I can’t tell you what Indian people lived there I don’t know people from around there because I wasn’t around those people. This was the first time I ever went to the Buttes and see and looked around and see what’s there. So I really don’t know. Now my brother, he passed away now, but he knew about the Buttes. But we never talked about the Buttes much because not much because [we lived up here].*

Do you think people would have lived there [Sutter Buttes] on a semi-regular basis?

*Oh, they lived there all the time. Before all this other stuff came and the non-Indian people ran them off and you know, just they did my ancestors they run them off and put them over on Round Valley.*

**OK**

*So, they lived there all the time.*

**OK, that is really interesting because some people say no one lived there.**

*Well, that’s not true you can see that they lived there. There’s the grinding the rocks... you can tell where they lived that’s what’s there that you see. I don’t know if the anthropologists know what they’re doing or how even they determined no one lived there. But mainly because they don’t know what they’re looking for. That’s*
their problem. Nobody lived there because they don’t know what they’re looking
for.

- What would be some indications that people lived there?

You can see on the ground where they lived at, you see the grinding rocks, there are
some beautiful grinding rocks there. You can see where they made their circles and
you can see where there they put their bark houses. I mean they’re not there
anymore because they were torn down, but you can tell by the dirt sometimes that
they lived there. The dirt changes color because they lived there [inaudible] that’s
what they did. I mean. They would sit and make things you’ll find rocks, you’ll find
um stones. You can tell they were used for things; for fishing or for different things.
They used rocks for the jewelry, they used berries, the seeds they used for their
jewelry. You can look around and see—you’ve never been there?

- I have yes. I’ve walked around as well.

Well what did you see?

- Umm, I saw the rocks, the grinding rocks as you said. That’s pretty much all I
saw that would have been…

Well you have to know what you’re looking for. Most anthropologists they think
they know what they’re looking for and they mainly do know what they’re looking
for. But back then I don’t think they told their stories true like what they’re being
made today. I mean today we have anthropologists around the lake up here. We
have a person that will watch them to see what they’re doing. The people around
there know they lived there, the people that own those houses and own part of the
land know they lived there.

- Do you think they lived there year-round or seasonally such as when the
acorns were ready?

They lived there year-round. I mean, there are so many, you know, acorns, there
were just enormous bunches of trees. The oak trees that’s where the acorns come
from. So, they lived there for the food. There were deer, there were other things
they could live off. They really didn’t have to go anywhere to live because they were
going to find everything they needed through there. I mean if you living somewhere
and there are no houses built there’s not a lot of things around like we have
nowadays like the cities, there were many things for the Indians to eat. So I don’t
know how they can say no one lived there.
• I think I misconstrued that. What I meant is they think they were just there seasonally just for collecting but weren’t living there permanently. One of the reasons this is said is because like what you said with the soil changing color, there isn’t a lot of that and that is something that is always indicative of what you were saying....

*If you look at now, the soil, there all the pigs that are there. They’re digging up the ground, they’re rooting it, you know. If I was to take you some place up here you could see what the ground would look like if there’s something not destroying it. So, but there is places there are lots of places that show that they lived there all the time. They may take off and go hunting and fishing, or they may take off, but that was the men. The women pretty much stayed to take care of their children, to gather acorns, to gather the things that they need. In the spring time they gather things, the summertime they gather things. In the fall is the time the acorns are out. They gathered many things.*

• OK what other resources besides acorns would have been gathered in the Buttes?

*Well there’s probably blackberries and other types of berries. I mean before they cleaned out all the blackberry bushes. You can go to some other land and you can see blackberry bushes. Blackberry bushes will grow anywhere. I’m not sure, they’re might have been wild grape there, they may have cut them all out or not, grapes pretty much grow everywhere. It all depends, different places, different things that you find that you might not find somewhere else. So, you know, we have elder berries, we have goose berries. You have wild grapes, you have blackberries you have different types of berries with different types of trees you would want to look at. Umm, I didn’t really see any Manzanita bushes?*

• I don’t think I saw any.

*Yes, I don’t think I seen any Manzanita bushes there. But there were probably lots of things they were there for.*

• Alright, do you think the Buttes were also a place of spiritual importance?

*Yes.*
And that is alright to have lived there even though it was spiritually important?

_OK For what?

- For people.

_Well they’re definitely living there.

- Well that’s true.

_A lot of them know that’s a spiritual mountain.

- Oh, I’m sorry, back before the Europeans came in. It is common for your people to live in a place that is also very spiritually important?

_They made their spiritual things, they didn’t live right where they made their spiritual things. They lived [inaudible] They may have used the field out there for spiritual things, maybe for burials. They didn’t live on it, they didn’t go there, they went there for certain times, just like people today do. But they didn’t live on it. They lived to close it.

- OK, so parts of the Buttes could have had particular areas?

_There are still areas up there Indian people still walk up to see. There is a spiritual mountain.

- Do you mind if I ask is it a specific Butte?

_I’m not quite sure on what side it is. Well it’s not on the other side. The other side when you go into, from the town, Colusa? If you look around on that side of the mountain over there you know where it’s more town, if you look around there there’s not much on that side, but then there could have been back years ago. You know I can’t say. Well I been around the Buttes when I was a little girl because they took me there, you see things, but I didn’t go on the side I’ve been at now.

- Which is the Peace Valley side where we went the other day?

_Yes. So you know I’ve seen new things, but I also know what my brother said. He never did take me there, he was there but... I know he told me, he had some names of people he knew that lived there way back and well I can’t remember their names.
I went through his papers and stuff after we lost him and I haven’t seen anything really about the Buttes, but that wasn’t our territory.

- Do you think the Buttes were affiliated with anyone Native American group or do you think it was more, not owned, but well was it in one peoples territory?

Yes, I don’t know the name of the tribe, no.

- Do you know if it was Maidu or…

Oh it was Maidu because anywhere from Castle Rock to Redding to Susanville to Gridley and back around down through this valley was all Mountain Maidu, there were the northern Maidu, the southern Maidu, here to Sacramento is the Maidu. There are the Valley Maidu. More-or-less my ancestors were the Mountain Maidu because that’s where my ancestors were up in Yankee Hill, Konkow Lake, um and down through there, but I would say probably one tribe lived there and took it over. They didn’t own anything. Indian people didn’t believe in owning anything. They didn’t own the water, they didn’t own the land, they felt the great World Maker gave it to them to live on and to survive on. And that was their belief. They didn’t buy anything [inaudible] wherever they lived. Um, I don’t know what I can really tell you that you’re looking for other than telling you.

- No, this is great it is very helpful. Do you know any stories about the Buttes?

No, the only story I ever—they told stories the people did. I mean they told stories, but I don’t really know of any story. Other than the Buttes are; I always wondered how the mountain got there all by itself surrounded by the Valley and the mountains there but when we go riding that way you can look up on the mountain and we see an Indian laying there. And you can see him really plain.

- I’ve heard this. So what angle are you see this from?

Go out towards Marysville and go down like you’re going to go to Sacramento and before you get past the Buttes if you look up and you know what you’re looking for you can see him. His face and it comes down to the top and….

- And is he laying down?

Yes.
I have a couple questions that aren’t necessarily on the Buttes. What role do stories play in your culture?

What role does story telling?

Story telling yes.

Story telling is something you do if; if you don’t have a book and you don’t have all the things you have now and you were out in the wilderness you told stories because it was something we feel and the elderly people told their children who know that they would learn the stories and tell their children. And um, so they told stories because that was really the only thing they had to do, tell stories, sit around and sing or dance. So the stories were really important to the Indian people. Probably to all Indian people. Um, the elders told a lot of stories to the children. And that’s [inaudible] which people still do today. But hmmm that was [inaudible]. A story was a sacred thing that they told it for because that was something they would use to make conversation, to learn, to teach their children. So actually it was a kind of sacred thing to do because that was teaching them. Like if you have teachers that teach children today, what do they call it? Well not what we called it because it’s a sacred thing because children are learning. So a story is the same thing they are teaching today, the only thing is the stories told back then was teaching story, it was the meaning of something. It was the meaning of something. It was the meaning of love. It was the meaning of things you might see. It was a very sacred thing they told the stories for. My brother was a story teller, he had a story he would tell. My brother did a lot of things at the school teaching history. He did a lot of things for a lot of people. He did a lot of things for teachers over in Chico and here and everywhere else, Grass Valley, he’s been all over Grass Valley. He would tell the children what he wanted them to know. So, for him that was something very sacred to do. Because he wanted other people to learn what his heritage was. He wanted people to learn about it so people would stop thinking so bad about the Indian people. You know they weren’t the savages they say they were. I don’t want to sit here and tell you the white man- I always use non-Indian- you know, things they did to them. They made them angry. They made them because they were taking things away from them. So, my brother was always wanted [inaudible] told them things he wanted to teach them [inaudible] they were meant to be. So storytelling was a way to teach their children because this is the only way to learn this. They teach the boys to fish and hunt. Or they teach the girls to cook and do hides, to make the baskets, you know make the things they make. So, that was sacred too. Everything was sacred to them because they didn’t have a lot to go with. They didn’t have a lot to learn, to do, that’s what they did, they made baskets, and even the tribes that- that’s the things they did, that was to keep them busy. They did story telling at nighttime because that was what they wanted to do, to tell stories. And after the stories the children went to bed. Different stories from different men. Different stories older men would tell, different stories they would tell at get-
togethers. We didn’t call them pow-wows. At least I don’t, my brother did, he called them pow-wows, we called them get-togethers. People came from everywhere, you know from all the nearby tribes to have a big get-together. Have a big, special thing for them to do. That was their activity. Like people go dancing, people go hunting, they go camping, they go... You know, for them they were already camping so there big thing was they made music it was a great thing for them. The only thing I can tell you of all the things, even on the Buttes, it would be very sacred because it was something to do. They made it sacred because they had to. They didn’t have to, but that’s what they felt. They felt the land, they felt it was beautiful. They felt the earth was something that gave them food. They cherished the ground they lived on. When we go out like on the Salmon Ceremony we have a circle down at the river down here. And every year we have a circle and we smudge it so it will be sacred while we’re there for them. And so they did a lot of smudging. Smudging for sickness. Sickness was another thing they had to learn what types of plants to go get to heal. You know there’s lots of them out there. And there are some that will heal, I know like colds and different things. When you’re trying to learn all about it, it’s a very sacred thing that you’re asking an Indian person to tell you. So, World Maker or Grandfather, we use those words, we don’t use God, it’s not because we don’t believe in God. Their god is the Great World Maker, the Great Spirit. That’s the things they used, but they were still believing in the same thing.

• About the circle, I know you pointed one out in the Buttes by the grinding rock. Are they usually made of stone?

That one there when we looked at, it looked like they used rock because they didn’t want anyone to go over the rock so they used rock. They probably wanted people to stay out of there because even if [inaudible] you have to walk around not through. We have 13, we have certain reasons for the number. That’s what they wanted there. I can’t go way back and tell you what a lot things were but 13 is the number you use around a circle. But they had theirs differently they had rocks around theirs. And it looked like to me when I looked at it, they either played their gambling games in there, they probably did some dancing in there. Their gambling games were of great importance to them. So a circle is something they use to make that a sacred place for what they’re doing.

• This is related to the role of stories, but how is history transmitted from generation to generation?

Well because when I tell my kids a story and I ask them they have to remember this story. Or say if you tell you daughter or son, you know I’m just using this as an example, um you may tell you son or daughter a story about your grandparents, your great-grandparents that’s a way of keeping it going, to let them know what was there. When they told them stories they wanted them to know about their
ancestors, their great-grandmother, their great-great-grandparents, their heritage of what their people did. So it is something you are learning just as if you were to tell you children about your mother or father, your grandma, your grandpa it’s the same thing, they’re teaching them about their own family. If that makes sense?

- Yes, that makes sense. I think that is all I have, is there anything you would like to add?

What I’m saying is that it was a beautiful thing for us, it was um the land is beautiful, that land is, you know the land is beautiful. When Indians did things they didn’t do it to go and destroy things. They didn’t um, they would burn their land in the winter time so that when it there would be more things growing in the spring [inaudible]. That’s what fires do. We don’t like them but, well now we don’t but the Indian people would burn a piece of property but they kept it clean, they didn’t let it get all brushy underneath. They were going to live there. They burn so more tea coming there, so there would be more plentiful for what was going to be there that they were going to be eating. So, it was just a great thing and when I did presentation at schools because I do the same thing. It’s what he wanted me to learn and I have done them. So what I teach in class about my heritage, I also tell them about you have a heritage, you have a heritage. Don’t people tell you about your heritage? You would be surprised by how many children don’t know about their back heritage. They’re not sat and told like Indians tell their children about their heritage. So I would tell them you need to ask your mom and dad about your heritage that means your grandma your grandpa your great-grandma, your great-grandparents. I have some kids come back and say, even in fifth or sixth grade, little ones don’t understand, you know they come back and say, wow you know you were right, because they still see me but that was a great spiritual thing for me to go the school and do that for them. That was a spiritual thing for me because I could tell them, I could talk to them. And the kids just loved it, I mean. A lot of kids do come back and say, you know I really learned about my heritage. And what I tell them, I tell them if you learn a little about your heritage and you might think about it before you’re going to go out and do something bad maybe you won’t take that road. You know, so there are many stories about the eagles we have, different birds we have. There are different Indian stories are about the Coyote, the trickster, he was a trickster. They told them these stories because the turtle to them the turtle went down and go the dirt that created that made the land. And God he created something similar but it’s not told the same way the Indians told it. I could sit here all day and tell you. What is great in peoples lives? People forget those things. They don’t think about those things. Children don’t get to think about things anymore; if you notice. They don’t get to think about- I just don’t see them thinking about anything really other than what they want to do. So, that’s about all I really have to say.
Chapter Summary

The sources recorded above, were used for the interpretations of the cultural landscape discussed in Chapter VIII, “Discussion.” These data come from a variety of sources, providing current and past perceptions of the Sutter Buttes. These data represent insight into ways of seeing and experiencing the project area that are not available in the archaeological record. Though not physically visible, these sources are crucial to understanding the role of the Buttes in Native American life. The next chapter will use both sources of data to form a holistic interpretation of the Sutter Buttes landscape.
CHAPTER VIII

DISCUSSION

While the words and work of others are used to exemplify the arguments discussed in this chapter, the overall arguments are my words and by no means should be interpreted as the views of any of the participants or those of the Native American community. Likewise, it should be noted that through this research it has become abundantly clear the Sutter Buttes had several purposes and meanings for many people. Surely not all of these purposes or people are represented in this discussion. I believe that such a synthesis would be near impossible to create, particularly since these meanings and uses fluctuated through time. Yet, referring back to Chapter II, combining processual with post-processual approaches, and archaeological data with intangible data, a broad, holistic synthesis of the landscape can be created.

Ethnographies collected during the 19th century and the archaeological record; are neither complete nor representative of all parties that have identified with the Sutter Buttes. The following discussion is an attempt to synthesize the existing literature from several different fields of interest including, cultural anthropology, archaeology, geology, geography, botany and the opinions of several interested parties. It is hoped that the close examination of the ethnographies, regional overviews, past studies, site records and survey reports will provide a more holistic picture of the Sutter Buttes as a landscape of utility, survival, tradition, and memory.
The following discussion is two-fold. First, the archaeological data from Chapter VI, “Archaeological Data,” is complied together to look at how the study area may have been used as a whole. Based on material remains, this first section is divided into three main topics: settlement, resource exploration and ceremonial use. These topics are further divided into subtopics which include: 1) settlement as habitation, feasting and gathering, and use as a flood refuge; 2) resource exploitation, which is divided into plant procurement and processing, hunting and stone tool assemblage; and 3) ceremonial use. After these three main topics are discussed using physical data, the cultural landscape is explored using the same three main topics. However, because the nature and content of the data is different, different subtopics are used. The main topics in the cultural landscape discussion are as follows: 1) settlement is divided into habitation, use as a flood refuge, ownership and taboos; 2) resource exploitation is divided into plant and animal resources, spiritual resources and taboos; and 3) ceremonial use as related to place names, creation, and origins of ceremony. A short, final discussion of the archaeological landscape in relation to the cultural landscape concludes the chapter.

The Archaeological Landscape

Archaeological studies in the Sutter Buttes have been conducted by both academic and contract archaeologists. These investigations have consisted primarily of pedestrian surveys with the excavation of only two sites (SUT-34 and SUT-44). The interpretation that follows is based on this limited work and acknowledges the biases that come with the lack of complete survey or substantial excavation of the study area. Of the data available, biases still exist within the archaeological record. First, much of human
culture is archaeologically invisible. Artifacts made of organic materials often do not survive; therefore, many aspects of culture are simply not expressed by material remains.

Secondly, modern settlement and construction has greatly impacted the archaeological record of the area. The Sutter Buttes have been farmed, grazed by livestock, eroded from natural causes, built upon and walked over several times over. Hydraulic mining and water conveyance projects have changed the physical environment of the Sacramento Valley. Artifacts that may have once been present have deteriorated (e.g., strings with knots used to count days) or been removed (e.g., CA-SUT-53) or destroyed. Regardless of these conditions, a synthesis of the available data contributes to a better understanding of how the Sutter Buttes were used. Similarly, comparing this data to the archaeological record of the Sacramento Valley, one is able to view the Buttes as one part of a larger cultural system, not only as functional place, but one imbued with meaning.

For this discussion, a site will be defined as a given location which contains physical evidence of past human occupation or activity. Site designations have been assigned by the various recorders of the site. A single site may contain one or more resources or attributes which imply function (e.g., BRM, hunting blind). Due to the functional nature implied by certain site types, some site types are also referred to as a resource. These include: temporary camps, open occupation sites, and rock shelters. An isolate is defined as one to three artifacts that are not associated with a site or resource.

Fifty-nine archaeological sites and at least 24 isolates associated with prehistoric landuse of the Sutter Buttes have been recorded. From the 59 sites, 82 resources are recorded including 38 bedrock mortars (BRM), 16 rock shelters, ten
possible hunting blinds, five rock alignments, two open occupation sites, two temporary camps, two petroglyphs (possible rain rocks), one place of spiritual importance, four lithic scatters, and one quarry, which may not be associated with prehistoric activity (see Table 5). These resources combined with the general lack of midden deposits indicate

Table 5. Prehistoric resources recorded in the Sutter Buttes as of March 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Bedrock Mortar</th>
<th>Rock Shelter</th>
<th>Open Occupation</th>
<th>Temporary Camp</th>
<th>Quarry</th>
<th>Petroglyph</th>
<th>Possible Hunting Blind</th>
<th>Lithic Scatter</th>
<th>Rock Alignment</th>
<th>Place of Spiritual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that while the Buttes played an important role in subsistence activities there is little indication of long-term occupation or ceremonial or religious use. As discussed in Chapter VI, Jensen (1968) came to similar conclusions, proposing that small groups visited the area for seasonal exploitation of resources or as a flood refuge during times of severe flooding.

The archaeological record provides a plethora of data indicating that the Sutter Buttes were a productive resource patch utilized by native peoples. Of the 82 resources recorded, 38 are bedrock mortars (BRM) and are thus directly related to subsistence activities. In addition, ten rock alignments interpreted as possible hunting blinds are also recorded. If the alignments are hunting blinds, they too would be directly tied with resource exploitation. The two sites categorized as temporary camps and the 16 rock shelters could be indirectly tied with hunting and gathering forays as they would have
provided temporary shelter for short periods of occupation. The two open occupation sites and five rock alignments may be related to subsistence activities; however, it would be difficult to provide solid evidence. This leaves the lithic scatters and the quarry. Lithic scatters are usually associated with the production of stone tools which could have been used for the processing of either plant or animal resources, therefore linking the site with resource exploitation. The quarry may not be associated with prehistoric activity and thus it is excluded from the following discussion. The only three resources related to ceremonial or religious activity are the two petroglyphs and the large rock at CA-SUT-33 (this feature is not included in the formal recordation of the site). In summary, 45 percent of the resources are BRMs and are directly related to resource procurement, 23 percent of the resources are related to short term occupation, 12 percent are possible hunting blinds, 4 percent have ceremonial or spiritual connotations and 3 percent are open occupation sites associated with habitation. The remaining 13 percent do not have an exact function (lithic scatters and rock alignments) and may not be associated with any Native American use (quarry).

Settlement

Habitation. Of the fifty-nine archaeological sites, 12 have associated midden deposits. From these 12, four were recorded by Van Zant (1959) and were not relocated by Jensen (1968). Midden deposits were recorded at a variety of sites including both rock shelters and open sites. Three were recorded by Van Zant (1959) and not relocated by subsequent investigations. Department of Parks and Recreation archaeologist, Kathy Lindahl (personal communication with author, December 9, 2008) observed that although ground disturbance related to farming and ranching have occurred throughout the Buttes,
these activities would not have completely obliterated all signs of a midden. As such, midden deposits, especially those with appreciable depth, should still be visible even if they are no longer intact.

Descriptions of the midden deposits vary from ashy to sandy and light to dark (see Table 6). Many of these descriptions echo early cultural overviews of the Central

Table 6. Summary of sites with associated midden deposits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Site Type</th>
<th>Description of Midden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-28</td>
<td>BRM (“many BRMs”)</td>
<td>Midden and alluvium (not relocated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-43</td>
<td>BRM (at least 63 mortars)</td>
<td>Brown-black midden; Depth=2.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pugh Homestead</td>
<td>BRM (15 mortars)</td>
<td>Possible midden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-30</td>
<td>Open habitation site with BRM (“several BRMs”)</td>
<td>Midden (not relocated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-39</td>
<td>Open habitation site with BRM (4 mortars)</td>
<td>Light brown midden; midden not mentioned by Gruver (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-26</td>
<td>Open habitation site</td>
<td>Midden (not relocated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-27</td>
<td>Rock Shelter</td>
<td>Rock and ashy midden (not relocated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-34</td>
<td>Rock Shelter with BRM</td>
<td>Light ashy midden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Brady 2)</td>
<td>(5 mortars)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-49</td>
<td>Possible rock shelter with BRM (3 mortars)</td>
<td>Dark midden (Jensen 1968); “slight midden deposit throughout” (Gruver 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-33/H</td>
<td>Rock Shelter (Brady 1)</td>
<td>Dark midden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(29 mortars)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-40</td>
<td>Rock Shelter</td>
<td>Sandy midden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-44</td>
<td>Possible Rock Shelter</td>
<td>Midden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Valley, which describe Late Period middens as light, ashy mound deposit (Heizer and Fenenga 1939, Beardsley 1948). The depth of mounds in the valley varied from very thin to more than 12 feet in depth (Beardsley 1948:16). The exact depth of the midden deposits at the two excavated rock shelters (CA-SUT-34 and 44) in the Buttes was not specified, but excavation halted at 100 cm at both sites (Jensen 1968). Of the other descriptions, it was commented that such deposits are shallow, slight, or only possible midden. These descriptions indicate, that while present, the middens are not the result of intense occupation. Rather, the general pattern of midden is indicative of short-term occupation and favors a settlement pattern characteristic of seasonal visitations rather than year-round habitation. Seasonal occupation is further supported by accounts from the early 1900s documenting the presence of Native Americans who would come to the Buttes each fall and camp for a few weeks while they collected acorns (Hamman, Personal Communication, October 25, 2008).

As indicated by many scholars (Kroeber 1970; Moratto 1984; Rosenthal et al. 2007), this pattern is typical for the Sacramento Valley and thus it is not surprising the Buttes were used for seasonal rounds of resource exploitation while not serving as a location of any major villages. Dreyer (1984:93) concluded that due to the “dispersed nature of the foothill game and plant resources, the use of small dispersed procurement groups may have been the most efficient method of resource procurement in this zone.”

Although the Buttes are not in the foothill zone, they would have provided a similar regime of seasonally available resources, thus creating the conditions for similar procurement groups. The archaeobotanical assemblage from CA-SUT-17 (900-150 B.P.) located just south of Marysville supports seasonal rounds of plant exploitation by local
populations. The remains included “…a superabundance of acorn, a relatively even seasonal distribution of summer…and spring…small seeds, and house floors indicative of winter occupation” (Wohlgemuth 1996:98). The groups that would have returned year after year, would have been small in number and only have stayed for short periods of times from a few days to a few weeks. As a result, they did not leave behind highly visible evidence of their stay such as large middens or large concentrations of material culture that would normally be associated with longer occupation.

Over half of the sites with midden deposits are rock shelters (n=6), which would have provided a continuous and reliable source of temporary shelter for procurement groups. While resource patches may have varied through the year and over time, the rock shelters remained static and therefore it could be predicted that some sort of deposit should be present. Though caves in the Coast Range and the Sierra Nevada were usually too small to facilitate a village site (Heizer 1952), the use of small caves and rock shelters were often used by those on hunting and gathering forays away from main villages (Dreyer 1984). Dreyer (1984:93) describes rock shelters as a type of “base camp” utilized by small traveling groups who required shelter in the foothills. Similarly, Jensen (1968) concluded physical evidence from the rock shelters in the Peace Valley as indicative of short-term occupancy by small groups utilizing rock shelters or natural overhangs as temporary shelter for short hunting and gathering trips. No midden is recorded at “Three Rock Shelters”; however, short rock alignments run perpendicular with the large boulders and form a sheltered area that has been interpreted as supports for brush lean-tos (Gruver n.d.). Though the ratio of rock shelters with midden in comparison to other resources is high, over half of the rock shelters recorded are without midden
deposits \((n=10)\). If rock shelters were being used on a continuous basis resulting in midden accumulation, why is this true for less than half of the rock shelters?

In total, seven sites with midden deposits also have BRMs. This represents over half the midden deposits. Included in these seven sites are two sites recorded by Van Zant (1959) which could not be relocated by Jensen (1968; CA-SUT-28 and 30). An open habitation site with a BRM (CA-SUT-39) was originally recorded by Jensen (1968) as having a midden, however the subsequent visit by Gruver (2004) relocated the site but did not record the presence of a midden. While midden may have, or still exit at any of the above sites, they will be excluded as the most recent recordation will be taken as the representation of what is now present and physically marked on the landscape. The final midden site was described as an one open habitation site (without BRMs) by Van Zant, but was not relocated by Jensen (1968).

Excluding CA-SUT-28, 30, and 39 for discrepancies discussed above, three midden sites are all associated with BRMs (one being with a rock shelter). In comparison to the average number of BRMs per site, these three sites have high quantities of BRMs. CA-SUT-43 has 63 mortars, CA-SUT-33/H has 29 mortars and the Pugh Homestead has 15 mortars. The deposits associated with these high numbers supports the notion that these sites were used by large groups of people perhaps during gatherings and sites with lesser mortars may have only been utilized by individuals or small groups.

**Feasting and Gathering.** It has been suggested that though the Buttes were not used for permanent occupancy, they may have been used as place of gathering (Ogle 2009). These activities, even if only occasional, should be documented in the archaeological record in the form of well developed midden deposits, sites with high
concentrations of faunal remains or sites with large quantities of features such as BRMs. As discussed, midden deposits in the Buttes are shallow and few in number and there have not been recorded sites with large quantities of faunal remains. Though artifacts such as groundstone and projectile points are popular objects to collect, there would be little reason to collect large quantities of animal bone (with the exception of skulls and horns). It is possible that certain ceremonies required fasting and thus groups of people may have left only minimal remains. To this day, some individuals retain food taboos in the Buttes and do not eat when visiting (discussed later as part of the cultural landscape).

Drawing from work conducted in the southern Sierra Nevada region, BRM sites had an average of six to eight mortars (see Figure 10 as an example). Those with

![Figure 10. Bedrock milling station in Peace Valley. Photographed by Melinda Button.](image-url)
over 60 mortars are rare and may reflect places where large amounts of people gathered for special occasions (Jackson 2004). While there is a large quantity of BRMs scattered throughout the Sutter Buttes, individual sites have a relatively small quantity of mortars. Of the 38 sites with BRMs, 20 have five mortars or less, six have between six and ten mortars, four have between ten and 20 mortars, two have between 20 and 30 and only two have over 50. (Information for four sites with BRMs do not have mortar counts).

While the latter two sites are indicative of large groups processing large amounts of seed, the overall pattern does not support this type of use. Rather the small amount of mortars at individual locations may indicate one of two patterns.

First, while plant processing was occurring in the Buttes, these activities were limited to small groups. There would be no need for large quantities of mortars in one location if they are only being utilized by a few individuals at a time. Small group size would also provide further explanation of the lack of midden at these sites as waste deposition would be minimal. Secondly, the small amount of mortars per location may indicate use by individual women. If mortars belonged to particular women and were not used after the death of an individual, than one could predict there would be several small clusters of mortars scattered throughout the Buttes. Likewise, Kroeber’s (1932:275) work with the Patwin observed that “stone mortars were found in the Buttes, but left because they had belonged to the people who were dead.” Thus, the large quantity of mortars may reflect generations of women coming to the Buttes rather than large amounts of people at one time. With each new woman a new mortar was created, thus there are several BRMs on the landscape but only a limited number of mortars on any given outcrop.
A Flood Refuge. Because the issue of flooding is so pertinent in settlement and landscape studies of the Sacramento Valley, and in particular to ideas regarding native use of the Sutter Buttes, a discussion of the topic is warranted. It has been hypothesized by some that the Sutter Buttes were used as a flood refuge (Fontana Site Record for CA-SUT-14, Jensen 1968, 1970). This theory has been continuously cited and used as an explanation for native settlement of the mountains, but not everyone agrees with this interpretation (e.g., Griggs 1986).

As discussed in Chapter V, Jensen (1968:27) argued that due to the “limited number of unflooded spots close to necessary economic resources” there would have been little escape from the frequently occurring winter flooding. As such, the Buttes provided a refuge, particularly to those from the Gray Lodge area two miles to the north. Jensen (1968) cites two sources of physical evidence in support of his argument. First, a single antelope skull (from CA-SUT-34) suggests a death between November and March. Secondly, stratigraphy from surrounding large village sites which reveal several thin sterile lenses of water-borne clay and alluvium indicating multiple flood episodes. In addition to this evidence, he suggests that the high amount of BRMs are indicative of large amounts of people during the wet season who were forced out of their villages. He further speculates the petroglyph at CA-SUT-50 could be and a rain rock and thus was used to control rainfall and flooding; again supporting a wet season occupation.

First, a single antelope skull is not enough data to suggest continuous winter occupation of any location. The skull may represent a winter death, but it also represents a single case of winter hunting which may or may not be representative of annual settlement. Secondly, the exact function of the petroglyph is unknown. While it certainly
may have been a rain rock, it may also have served as a fertility rock. Jensen (1968) asserted this type of rock art was not recorded among native groups associated with the Buttes; however, he does cite two sites in Maidu (CA-BUT-8 and 74) as having rocks of similar form. Recent conversations with Konkow Maidus indicate that these are at least present in the Oroville region and are used as fertility rocks rather than rain rocks. Again, the exact function is unknown and thus it can offer nothing more than speculation.

Next, the lack of unflooded spots and the stratigraphic evidence for flooding of large villages could create the need for a flood refuge. It must be recognized that as discussed in Chapter IV and by Jensen (1968), permanent villages in the Sacramento Valley were located on natural levees that provided some protection against high waters. As demonstrated through site stratigraphy of surrounding villages (Jensen 1968) and the study in Little Packer Lake (Sullivan 1982), large flooding episodes which would have breached these levees did occur and situations where a flood refuge was required most likely arose; whether, the Sutter Buttes were the refuge of choice is another matter.

Looking on a regional scale, the Sutter Buttes are located between the Sacramento and the Feather Rivers with the Sierra Nevada foothills 20 miles to the east and the Coast Ranges 15 miles to the west. Any people fleeing from villages located on the west side of the Sacramento River or on the east side of the Feather River would have had to cross the flooding body of water to get to the Buttes. Depending on village location, the foothills of either mountain range may have provided a more suitable area to flee. Both sets of foothills would have provided a suite of plant and animal resources, as well as the possibility of relatives with an already established camp or village. However, for villages located closer to the Buttes (and thus farther from the foothills), and for those
located on the east side of the Sacramento River and the west side of the Feather River, the Buttes may have been more preferable. Although the Buttes would provide resources, including the animals which also sought high ground, once there, the rising waters form an island situation wherein people would have been trapped within the mountains. In either scenario, the escape would have had to been preplanned before the waters got too high. Fifteen miles of basin lay between the levees, and the Buttes and would have flooded before either of the high grounds did (Griggs 1986).

The assertion that the large quantity of BRMs represents winter use by large village populations is also speculation. The quantity and spatial distribution of BRMs in relation to native use in the Buttes is more thoroughly discussed elsewhere and will only be briefly mentioned. In sum, while several sites have BRMs, the amount of cups per site is relatively low indicating seasonal use by small groups or the continuous processing of plants by several generations of women. Of the sites with BRMs, only five have associated middens and material remains are minimal at all of the sites. Any site occupied by large village populations, even if only during the winter, should better reflect the impact of these events.

If the Buttes were used as a continuous winter refuge by large village populations, signs of more substantial housing should be visible. Village populations varied from small (15-20 people) to large (over 500 people; Kroeber 1970). Continued winter occupation of any population at the higher end of this number would be evident in the form of housepits or well-developed midden deposits. As discussed above, midden deposits are only reported at 12 of the 59 sites, and many of these accounts indicate that the deposits are shallow and not well developed. It has been observed that while people
resided outside or in flimsy shelters during the warmer seasons (Kroeber 1970, Wohlgemuth 1996), winter settlements in Central California are marked by more permanent structures that offered protection against the elements, particularly in places with anticipated heavy rains. Although the 16 rock shelters would have provided this type of protection, and midden in six of these indicate some type of continued use, these shelters are small and would have been occupied by small groups or single family units rather than by entire villages. Relying on the Buttes as a refuge, particularly during floods caused by heavy rains should result in the construction of winter housing such as that observed at CA-SUT-17 (Wohlgemuth 1996).

Overall, the Sutter Buttes may have served as an occasional flood refuge for small groups or individuals, but it seems unlikely that large villages would have congregated there on a semi-regular seasonal basis. The physical evidence does not support this hypothesis, nor do the stories, ethnographies, written histories, or interviews.

**Resource Exploitation**

**Plant Procurement and Processing.** Acknowledging disturbances such as collecting, construction, ranching and animal activity, the following discussion assumes that the milling equipment (including BRMs) recorded by various archaeologists is only a portion of what existed in the past, and that which is still visible may not be in its original location. The shape and size of these objects make them good building materials for rock fences and walls, and their portable nature makes them attractive to collectors and looters. Discussions with residents of the Buttes exemplify these points (see also Jensen 1968:112 and Anderson 1983). Garr and Bayham (1989) were informed by a landowner that several artifacts, including portable bowl mortars and pestles, have been collected
throughout the years. The landowner also commented that several pieces of milling equipment were used in the construction of the surrounding rock walls. Similarly, as demonstrated at CA-SUT-53, entire boulders with BRMs have been removed or destroyed.

As discussed, local native peoples practiced seasonal rounds of resource exploitation (Moratto 1984; McCarthy et al. n.d.), traveling from permanent villages to different patches depending on annual ripening and the availability of resources. The central location of the Buttes would have provided hunting and gathering grounds which were easily accessible from villages located on the valley floor. As inferred from the abundance of both oak trees and BRMs in the Buttes, intense acorn gathering and processing occurred. Oak trees were present in other parts of the Valley; however their counts were fewer than most other areas in California and were primarily located in the riparian environments (Basgall 1987:23). The high quantities of trees in the Buttes would have been an exception to this growth pattern and offered a large patch with a variety of oaks including Valley Oak, Interior Live Oak, Blue Oak, Scrub Oak, and Oracle Oak (Anderson 1983).

Drawing from data collected by Baumhoff (1963:164), the Buttes provided the “preferred” oak tree of the River Patwin (Valley Oak and Blue Oak), the Hill Patwin (Blue Oak) and the Southern Maidu (Interior Live Oak). The Buttes also contain oak trees commonly used by the Hill Patwin (Valley Oak), the Southern Maidu (Blue Oak). Drawing from ethnographic data, acorns seem to have been free from such restrictions as tribal, family, or individual ownership amongst both the Wintun and the Maidu groups. For the Patwin, oak tracks were free to use by anyone in the tribelet (Kroeber 1932), and
Maidu restrictions were limited to certain fishing spots and deer drives (Kroeber 1970). As such, utilization of this resource in the Buttes would have been open to all.

Bedrock mortars are by far the most frequent occurring resource in the Sutter Buttes (45 percent). In addition to the BRMs, at least five pestles (van Zant did not specify the exact quantity he found at his sites) and one portable bowl mortar have been recorded. All but one of these artifacts were found in association with BRMs. Traditional interpretations of such milling equipment are expressed by Basgall (1987). He outlines three assumptions regarding milling equipment: 1) mortars and pestles are primarily used for the processing of acorns, 2) “…an abundance of mortars and pestles within an archaeological assemblage reflects a major concern with acorns,” and 3) the proportion of pestles and mortars can be used to determine the relative reliance on acorns (Basgall 1987:30).

Despite the small quantity of portable mortars and pestles, the large quantity of BRMs, concur with Basgall’s three assumptions and can be used to indicate a strong reliance on acorn collection and processing. Several chronologies of the region concur that this pattern is common in site assemblages dating to after ~1,000 years ago and are interpreted as reflecting the importance of plant processing in the lower Sacramento Valley, though the intensification of acorn use and the presence of mortars and pestles do appear earlier (Beardsley 1954; Rosenthal et al. 2007).

Just as mortars and pestles are traditionally linked with acorns and other soft foods, metates (millstones) and manos (handstones) are associated with hard seed processing. The transition from assemblages dominated by mortar and pestles to those dominated by metates and manos, have thus then been interpreted as a shift to acorn
intensification. However, archaeobotanical data suggests otherwise. Using charred plant macrofossils from eleven archaeological sites in Central California, Wohlgemuth (1996) demonstrates how analysis of prehistoric food remains can contradict these explanations. His study reflects a shift from seed assemblages with a diversity of small seed and no acorns in the Early Period, to Middle Period assemblages which are dominated by acorns and contain very few small seeds, and finally ending with Late Period assemblages marked by large quantities of acorn and a large, diverse quantity of small seeds. This infers traditional associations between Late Period milling equipment and acorn dominated economies are not completely accurate. As such, it is possible such milling equipment was used for the processing of plants other than, or in addition to, acorns. While the collection and processing of acorns in the Buttes during the early 1900s is documented through both in the archeological record and the accounts from a landowner (Hamman, personal communication with author, October 25, 2008), it must be recognized that this just one of many resources being procured in the Sutter Buttes.

The mortars in the Buttes are relatively large in size. Mortar size is usually determined during the original construction of the mortar rather than from use (Jackson 2004). Large widths and depths would be conducive to the processing of grass seeds, which are typically processed in deeper, wider mortars which contain the seeds better than shallow mortars (Chuck Knitzon, personal communication, March 28, 2009). Large depths are also recorded for the processing of small hard seeds amongst the Western Mono (McCarthy in Jackson:174). It must therefore be considered that the mortars at the Buttes were not solely for acorns, but rather could have been used for the processing of several plant taxa. Stork’s Bill (Erodium cicutanum) is an intrusive species, but it
predates Spanish settlement. This type of grass is abundant in the Buttes (or at least Peace Valley) and was utilized during special occasions by both the Maidu and the Spaniards rather than on a daily basis due to the long preparation time (Chuck Knitzon, personal communication, March 28, 2009).

In addition to BRMs, other types of groundstone artifacts have been found throughout the Buttes. These include manos (handstones), metates (milling stones or slabs), pestles, portable mortars and palettes. Ground and battered stone are recorded at nine sites, and an additional six pieces are recorded as isolates (see Table 7 for site distribution). Again, this small number should be taken only a small sample of what was once present. These objects provide even further evidence of plant processing other than acorns. These objects can also be used for the processing of small animals and insects such as grasshoppers.

**Hunting.** In addition to plant resources, some physical evidence indicates the Buttes were utilized as a hunting ground. Ten rock features which are interpreted as possible hunting blinds and three temporary camps thought to be associated with prehistoric hunting activity have been recorded (see Table 8). (One additional linear rock alignment at “Windbreak Site” may also be a possible hunting blind, though alternatively, it may have been a windbreak and therefore will be excluded from the hunting blind discussion (Gruver et al. 2005). The three camps (CA-SUT-41, 44 and 72) indicate short-term use and contain artifacts such as debitage, projectile points, choppers and scrapers which are commonly associated with hunting. Two of these sites have midden deposits indicating some continued use, even if only for short periods of time. While these features may be associated with hunting, it should be noted that very few faunal remains
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Mano (hamsonte)</th>
<th>Metate (Milling Slab)</th>
<th>Pestle</th>
<th>Portable Mortar</th>
<th>Hammersont</th>
<th>Palette</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-28*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>--</td>
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<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-29**</td>
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<td>--</td>
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<td>CA-SUT-34</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-43</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WT-17-18-19-20</td>
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<td>Isolates</td>
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<td>&gt;4</td>
<td>&gt;2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: X - Present, but quantity not specified; * Not relocated in subsequent investigations; ** Site relocated, but not artifacts

have been recorded. Those specimens that have been recorded are small and fragmentary and predominately unidentifiable.

Of the ten rock alignments, three (CA-SUT-35, 40 and 49) were recorded by Jensen (1968) as possible hunting blinds or hunting camps, but he specified that there is no physical evidence to back these hypotheses. All three are rock shelters located at
### Table 8. Sites possibly associated with hunting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Physical Description</th>
<th>Elev.</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
<th>Midden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hunting blinds (7 sites, 21 segments)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-71</td>
<td>HB; L=50ft. H=2’6”-3’</td>
<td>“Saddles on either side of the ridge act as natural funnels or pathways for any animal migration from the area south of the Buttes to the interior valley” (Garr and Bayham 1989)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF 24</td>
<td>HB; L=29m H=0.1m-2.5m W=0.5m-2.5m</td>
<td>Follows the contour of the ridgeline</td>
<td>693 ft.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF 25</td>
<td>HB (7 features); L= &lt;1m-4.8m H=0.55m-1.35m W= &lt;1m-3.9m</td>
<td>On a contour over looking Peace Valley</td>
<td>650 ft.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF 18-20</td>
<td>HB; (4 features); L=120m H= 0.5m-1m</td>
<td>On a rocky peak</td>
<td>720 ft.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Blind</td>
<td>HB; L=78m H=0.80m-1m</td>
<td>House Hill</td>
<td>680-705 ft.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadow’s Edge</td>
<td>HB</td>
<td>Western edge of Peace Valley overlooking a seasonal drainage</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin Creeks Site</td>
<td>HB (6 features); L ≤ 12m</td>
<td>Overlooking a small drainage</td>
<td>150-425 ft.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hunting Camps (3)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-41</td>
<td>HC with vegetation that would have been a useful blind</td>
<td>Temporary camp on ridge overlooking the confluence of two streams</td>
<td>460 ft.</td>
<td>Choppers</td>
<td>Shallow (&lt;10cm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-44</td>
<td>Associated with hunting and occupied for short periods of time</td>
<td>Small cave; southern face of Peace Valley</td>
<td>1,100 ft.</td>
<td>Groundstone, scrapers, choppers, retouch flakes</td>
<td>Good midden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-72</td>
<td>HC and light lithic scatter</td>
<td>On ridge top</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Projectile point, debitage</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hunting Blinds or hunting camps (3)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-35</td>
<td>Possible HB or HC, “not backed by physical evidence”</td>
<td>Rock shelter; on valley floor</td>
<td>200 ft.</td>
<td>Cores, core tools, debitage</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-40</td>
<td>HB or HC, but “not backed by physical evidence”</td>
<td>Rock shelter</td>
<td>320 ft.</td>
<td>Cores, core tools, debitage</td>
<td>Sandy midden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-49</td>
<td>HB or HC, but “not backed by physical evidence”</td>
<td>Rock overhang; overlooks the confluence of several streams</td>
<td>320 ft.</td>
<td>Debitage</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rock Alignment (1)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: HB=Hunting Blind; RB= Rock Blind; HC=Hunting Camp; WB=Windbreak; L= Length  H= Height  W=Width
elevations between 200 and 320 feet and contain artifacts associated with stone tool production (e.g., debitage, cores, core tools) and two have midden deposits. An alternative explanation for these could be rock alignments added to the rock shelter for further protection from the elements. Descriptions of similar alignments at Three Rock Shelters suggest they may have served as supports for brush lean-tos (Gruver 2005).

The remaining seven sites with possible hunting blinds were recorded by both Garr and Bayham (1989) and Gruver (2005) and consist of rock alignments largely located at high elevations (650-705 ft. amsl). The alignments vary in size with some sites having multiple segments. Although the lengths of these resources vary greatly (>1m to 120m), those with recorded heights all fall between 0.10 m to 2.5 m high. No artifacts or midden are recorded at any of these seven sites. They are predominantly located in places which would have been conducive to hunting activities such as on ridge contours overlooking drainages. These alignments differ in construction and location from the historic rock walls and fences and thus have been categorized as possible prehistoric (Dionne Gruver and Kathleen Lindahl, personal communication with author, December 9, 2008 and March 28, 2009). Lindahl (personal communication with the author, December 9, 2008) described their construction as smaller stones stacked on larger stones; a style that differs from the numerous historic rock walls and fences in the Sutter Buttes.

Although difficult to interpret, prehistoric rock alignments can be used to explore strategic hunting and gathering activities (Pendleton and Thomas 1983). Pendleton and Thomas (1983) suggest that in areas with high density and highly predictable resources (such as the Sacramento Valley), “it makes good cost/benefit sense
to construct relatively permanent-and archaeologically visible-facilities for residence, maintenance, extraction and storage” (Pendleton and Thomas 1983:30). Costs refer to the energy and time needed in the gathering and transport of materials used to build facilities, as well as those expended in the actual construction of features. The benefits refer to the return that results from use of the constructions. Assuming a relationship exists between the cost of the construction and the long-term beneficial output of such a facility, than high-cost facilities are only built and used “at established, commonly reused locales,” where game is relatively abundant, predictable and relatively easy to ambush (Pendleton and Hurst Thomas 1983:25).

The rock alignments in the Sutter Buttes can be considered high-cost facilities meaning large quantities of energy, time, and materials were expended in their construction. If used as hunting blinds, it may be predicted that the return would have been predictable, reliable, and high bulk in order to counter the high costs. Large game such as tule elk and prong-horn have been observed favoring grasslands and prairie-scrub such as those found throughout the valley, whereas deer favored oak woodlands (Broughton 1994). Baumhoff (1963) states that black-tailed deer (Odocoileus hemionus) were numerous in the surrounding foothills, but their numbers were only moderate in the Central Valley. Larger abundances could be found in chaparral and oak woodlands which provided a reliable food source for the animals. As shown in Figure 8, the Sutter Buttes would have provided a high concentration of oaks in the center of the valley, thus creating an insular environment for black-tail to congregate. Furthermore, artiodactyls (black-tailed deer) often flee from the valley to the Buttes to escape the rising waters in the winter resulting in large quantities of game that could be trapped within the landform
(Anderson 1983). This situation would provide a predictable and reliable source of high bulk return and thus encourage the construction of high cost facilities which would have remained in situ for long periods of time. However, as discussed above, if deer were pursued in the Buttes during rising waters, the hunters themselves would have found themselves trapped in the mountains as well. The features would have served as permanent markers on the landscape that could have been utilized by hunting parties on seasonal rounds or people coming to the Buttes for gatherings.

Despite the presence of these high cost facilities, there is a general lack of faunal remains. The application of foraging theory, specifically Central Place Foraging, can help explain this contradicting data. Looking just south of the Buttes in the San Francisco Bay region, game became increasingly scarce near large village sites later in time. This resulted in the need to exploit patches at further distances (Broughton 1999). Because of the costs associated with these long pursuits, high-ranking game was favored. As shown by many lines of evidence, large permanent villages were not present in the Buttes. As population increased in the Sacramento Valley, villages grew and settlements became more permanent, game in the surrounding area would have decreased this creating the need to exploit patches farther from the village centers; as in the Sutter Buttes. Game collected in the Buttes would then have been transported back to the villages in the valley, thus accounting for the general lack of faunal remains at the Buttes.

**Stone Tool Assemblage.** Stone tools can be used for a variety of activities including the procurement and processing of both plant and animal resources. Although some items can be associated with particular activities (e.g., projectile points with hunting), others have multiple uses which can not be determined from simple visual
examination, such as a scraper can be used to process plants or animals. Though the exact function of many of these items is unknown, a general discussion of the tools and associated lithic debris (debitage) related to the production and maintenance of stone tools will provide a further understanding of native practices in the Sutter Buttes.

Of the 59 sites, only twelve are recorded as having debitage and fifteen have stone tools (See Table 9 for debitage and stone tool distribution). Additionally, at least 11 pieces of debitage and eight stone tools have been recorded as isolates. The only quarry formally recorded (CA-SUT-29) thus far, is one which provides rhyolite. This material has been historically used in the Buttes as spring liners and foundation material, but not for the production of prehistoric tools. Toolstone is primarily recorded as basalt, chert, and obsidian. Very few chipped stone tools or waste products are recorded as andesite or rhyolite, which are two dominant naturally occurring materials in the Sutter Buttes indicating the possibility that much of the tool material was brought to the Buttes and that local material was used in the production of groundstone. However, the presence of several quarries containing workable toolstone have been observed (Ira Heinrich, email to author, June 4, 2009). Ira Heinrich has over 50 years experience in studying and exploring the Sutter Buttes. He has been to several areas that have not been recorded by professional archaeologists, including the interior sections. Mr. Heinrich has noted that several areas in the interior and the western portion of the mountains contain evidence of quarry sites that provided suitable materials for the production of tools. He argues that many of the tools were made locally rather than being brought in.

Lithic analysis has been minimal and limited to that which was conducted in the field. Most site records and reports only specify the presence of debitage rather than a
Table 9. Debitage and stone tools recorded in the Sutter Buttes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Debitage</th>
<th>Projectile Point</th>
<th>Biface</th>
<th>Core</th>
<th>Core Tool</th>
<th>Chopper</th>
<th>&quot;Pick&quot;</th>
<th>Scraper</th>
<th>Knife</th>
<th>Flake Stone tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-27*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>--</td>
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<td>--</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-28*</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-29**</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA-SUT-33</td>
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<td>--</td>
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<td>--</td>
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</tr>
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<td>CA-SUT-49</td>
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<tr>
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<td>47</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: X - Present, but quantity not specified; * Site not relocated in subsequent investigations; ** Artifacts not relocated in subsequent investigations
description of technology; a review of the descriptions available is provided. Assuming the Buttes were used as a place of procurement rather than habitation it would be expected that stone tools and waste associated with tool production would be minimal. Debitage should therefore reflect a higher emphasis on secondary reduction and retouch than initial production. Debitage technology has been described as percussion flakes (CA-SUT-33), cortical and interior reduction flakes (CA-SUT-70/H and 72), tool production (CA-SUT-39), and small retouch flakes (CA-SUT-44). Though many of these descriptions are vague and represent only a small sample of the debitage present, they do indicate some core reduction, biface manufacture, and tool maintenance. This pattern would be expected for materials that were easily transported by mobile individuals, who were creating tools when needed or retouching the limited tools brought to the procurement area.

Stone tool assemblages are dominated by scrapers, choppers, and projectile points with lesser quantities of cores, core tools, bifaces, knifes, flake stone tools, and “picks.” Cores would have provided a source of portable material that could have been used for the production of expedient tools or replacement tools. Scrapers, knifes, bifaces, and flake stone tools could have been easily transported and used for a variety of activities associated with processing of both plant and animal resources.

Artifacts categorized as scrapers \((n=48)\) and choppers \((n=47)\) comprise the largest groups of artifacts represented in Table 9. The majority of the choppers are described as cobble choppers, which may have been made from the several cobbles found in the drainages scattered throughout the Buttes. The exact function of the both scrapers and choppers varies, and both can be used for the processing of plants or animals.
Although present, stone tools and debitage in the Sutter Buttes are sparse and representative of a variety of activities. The distribution, quantity, and type of artifacts present are indicative of generalized procurement areas where objects were deposited by mobile groups or individuals over a series of several different episodes (White 1984). These locations are marked by the presence of cutting tools, choppers, and broken projectile points. Looking at the various assemblages, the most frequent tool types are associated with cutting (scrapers, knives, and flake stone tools), the second most frequent are choppers, and the third are projectile points. Thus, as a whole, the stone tools and debitage reflect use of the Sutter Buttes by small mobile groups exploiting a variety of resources.

Ceremonial Use

Very little physical evidence is available to support the use of the Sutter Buttes as place of ceremonial importance, however, the Buttes are not only rich in food resources, but are equally rich in spiritual resources. These resources include medicine (both physical and non-physical in form), power, luck, and songs. The exploitation of these resources is better recorded through words than physical evidence; however, a very small amount of material data does exist to support ceremonial activity. Three resources interpreted as having ceremonial, religious, or spiritual importance have been located and recognized thus far. These include the petroglyph at CA-SUT-50, the petroglyph at CA-SUT-54, and the large flat rock in Peace Valley, sometimes referred to as “Council Rock” (Figure 11). This feature is located at CA-SUT-33, but is not formally documented in the site record. (The exact origins of the name “Council Rock” are unknown. This name is
EUROAMERICAN RATHER THAN NATIVE AMERICAN. I DID NOT RUN ACROSS A NATIVE AMERICAN NAME FOR THE ROCK DURING MY RESEARCH).

BEVERLY OGLE EXPLAINED HOW IT WAS A PLACE WHERE HUNTING AND GATHERING PARTIES WOULD FAST AND SEEK NAMES AND SONGS AND WHERE MEDICINE MEN WOULD GO TO OBTAIN POWER. WHILE ON HIKES AT THE BUTTES, OTHER PARTIES HAVE ALSO COMMENTED TO ME THAT THE ROCK IS OF GREAT POWER AND UTILIZED AS A PLACE OF STRENGTH. IT MUST BE EMPHASIZED THAT WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF ITS IMPORTANCE, IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE AN UNMODIFIED ROCK. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE KNOWLEDGE SHARED BY MS. OGLE AND OTHERS, IT IS ONE OF THREE PHYSICAL RESOURCES LINKED WITH SPIRITUAL USE OF THE BUTTES.

PETROGLYPHS. WHILE BEDROCK MORTARS USED FOR THE PROCESSING OF ACORNS AND OTHER FLORA ARE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE BUTTES, THE CUPULES RECORDED AS PETROGLYPHS ARE DIFFERENT IN STYLE INDICATING A USE OTHER THAN PLANT PROCESSING. THESE CUPULES ARE SMALLER IN BOTH DIAMETER AND WIDTH. THESE FEATURES ARE RECORDED AT CA-SUT-50 LOCATED IN THE
northern periphery of the Buttes (Jensen 1968) and CA-SUT-54 located in the southern periphery (Storm 1974; Pastron 1992). CA-SUT-50 was recorded by Jensen in 1968 and consists of 104 BRMs on 18 andesitic formations. This is the highest amount of BRMs at any single site in the Buttes. In his thesis, Jensen (1968) describes the petroglyph associated with the BRMs as a pitted boulder which “…conforms to an ancient and widespread petroglyph style” (Jensen 1968:55). This is in reference to those discussed by Heizer (1953).

In Donald Storm’s original recordation of CA-SUT-54, he described the site as a bedrock mortar-petroglyph site, the petroglyph being described as a pitted boulder (Storm 1974). Pastron (1992:18) revisited the latter site and noted that the cupules in one of the boulders are characteristic of “rain rocks,” “baby rocks” or “medicine rocks.” Again, in 2005, a survey team from Pacific Legacy relocated the site (Whiteman et al. 2005a). This group did not classify the feature as “rain rocks,” but rather described it as an incipient cupule which was probably a solution cup.

Though not singled out by the recorders as such (Garr and Bayham 1989), one additional feature has been recorded at CA-SUT-70, which may also be considered a petroglyph of similar style. This would make for a total of four features associated with ceremonial use. The site record indicates the presence of 15 outcrops with varying amounts of mortars. Included in these outcrops is the site datum, which has 18 recorded cupules. Looking at the recorded dimensions it is clear this outcrop is not like the others, nor are the dimensions of the holes similar to any BRM recorded in the Buttes. Of the eighteen holes, the largest measures 8 cm by 8 cm by 3.5 cm and this appears to be an isolated case. The average depth is 1.8 cm and the average horizontal measurement is 4.4
cm x 4.8 centimeters. These small and shallow cupules are therefore more similar to the petroglyph rather than utilitarian mortars. The site has a similar location as CA-SUT-50 and 54 as it is located alongside a stream and is at a relatively low elevation.

Though limited, literature exists indicating the use of certain rocks for ceremonial, magical, or shamanistic purposes throughout California (Heizer 1953; Davis 1961; Heizer and Elsasser 1980). The purpose or use of these rocks differ among cultures; some were used to control weather (Heizer 1953) where others seem to be linked to girls’ initiation ceremonies and childbirth (Davis 1961) and still others with fertility (Heizer 1953). The rocks are characterized with petroglyph markings usually in the form of lines, small incipient couples, or horseshoe shapes. The use of these rocks has been recorded for various native groups including the Pomo, Tolowa, Karok, and Hupa (Heizer 1953). Though not formally recorded in the literature, conversations with local Native Americans indicate that fertility rocks such as those described, are part of Konkow culture and are sparsely scattered throughout the Oroville area.

It is often difficult to interpret rock art. It is even more difficult to provide evidence that particular rocks and particular sets of marks have magical and ceremonial association. Of the horseshoe petroglyphs in Mono Craters thought to be associated with girl’s initiation rites, Davis (1961:238) stated that the “…proof was there and yet there was not proof. This must happen frequently, and some method of demonstrating such obvious resemblances [to vulvas] is a pressing problem in petroglyph studies.” Davis (1968:238-239) cites five reasons why the horseshoes are in fact depictions of vulvas and are associated with magic and initiation ceremonies. Her five reasons are: 1) the “more naturalistic” symbols “obviously resemble vulvas,” 2) the variety of less naturalistic
symbols “make it clear that the abstract specimens are similar representations [to the naturalistic ones],” 3) they occur on top a volcano and thus are in a non-utilitarian setting, 4) archaeological evidence indicates that the motif is widespread in desert cultures in Southern California, and 5) and ethnographic evidence supports that the symbols were used during the initiations of young girls. Although the first two points are not relevant to the petroglyphs at the Buttes, the other three can be applied. The ethnographic record and interviews conducted for this thesis indicate that the Buttes are a sacred place and it would be an apt location for rocks endowed with animistic powers. Second, the petroglyphs at CA-SUT-50 and CA-SUT-54 are similar in style to those found in surrounding areas, and that rocks of similar styles were utilized throughout Northern California for non-utilitarian purposes.

Heizer’s (1953) review of rain rocks in Northern California indicates that rocks were used to control rain, frost, and snow. For example, it has been noted that individuals, in imitative magic, would sprinkle water and incense root on the rock to chase away the frost and bring on the rain. Likewise, incense root was sprinkled onto the rock dry in order to stop the rains (Heizer 1953:33). Similarly, sets of parallel lines were grooved into a rock to bring on a snowstorm, and a second line was grooved across the first lines to end the snowstorm.

Jensen (1968) concluded that the Buttes were primarily utilized by the Maidu during the wet season. If he could have confidently linked the rocks with the Maidu, it would have strengthened this conclusion. Likewise, Jensen (1968:56) notes if the feature at CA-SUT-50 is a rain rock used for weather control, his conclusion regarding the Buttes as a flood refuge primarily occupied in the winter would also have been strengthened,
assuming they were used to ward away flooding. This conclusion is interesting in comparison to comments made by Almanderez (2006), who spoke of her grandfather as a weatherman. She remarked that, “[o]ne way he controlled the weather was the Buttes. I am not sure how he did it, but he called the Buttes his weatherman” (Almanderez 2006:7). Although she did not know how he went about this, it is the only reference found in my research which tied the Buttes to weather control.

Though it is difficult to link artifact type with function, particularly in regard to objects associated with ceremonialism, some generalizations can be made. Objects often associated with “shaman’s kits” include quartz crystals, charmstones, and bone whistles (Bennyhoff and Fredrickson 1969). Of the artifacts recorded in the Buttes, very few fit this description. Van Zant (1959) recorded charmstones at CA-SUT-28; however, Jensen (1968) was unable to relocate the site or the associated artifacts. In his later publication, Jensen (1970:48) stated the two stone pendants, the quartz crystal, minute quantities of hematite, glass trade beads, and the petroglyphs at CA-SUT-50 were the only objects representing the magico-religious life of the valley groups at the Sutter Buttes. The pendants and quartz crystal were found in the lower levels of CA-SUT-34. Of the two pendants, one is more similar in shape to a plummet-shaped charmstone than a pendant and is referred to as a charmstone rather than a pendant in the later summary (Jensen 1970). A second object that appears to be a charmstone is also depicted in Jensen’s (1968, 1970) drawings, however, the provenience or a discussion of the object cannot be found in either of his publications making it difficult to discuss. It is possible that other objects of ceremonial importance are present in the Buttes but have not been identified. Some objects may not be modified and thus not recorded as artifacts and some
may have a use unknown in modern times. In either case, these objects would not be documented and would remain absent from the archeological record.

These features and objects are minimal in comparison to the wealth of stories and ethnographic data that indicate the Sutter Buttes are a place of significant ceremonial and spiritual importance. Without the aid of ethnographic literature, oral histories and interviews with Native Americans, this aspect of the Buttes would be underemphasized.

The Cultural Landscape

As asserted by numerous landscape scholars, there is more to learn about a region than what is archaeologically visible. The Sutter Buttes are no exception to this rule; they stand as an example of why intangible evidence is needed to understand the religious, spiritual or otherwise culturally significant aspects of a place. Ethnographic materials, oral histories, and interviews indicate that the Sutter Buttes played a crucial role in the spiritual and religious beliefs of Native Americans; a view very different from that which is depicted in the archaeological record.

It is valid to argue that data collected in this century does not fully reflect the thoughts, beliefs, and stories held by those living prior to contact; however it is still valuable. These data recorded in Chapter VII, offer insight into Native American ways of seeing, describing, and understanding the world they live in. Patsy Seek described that oral tradition is the way in which Indian knowledge about family, history and daily activities is taught. Though ideas and cultural views change with time, they reflect away of perceiving the world that is not emphasized in science-based studies. Discarding data
extracted from these views create studies which are biased towards modern ways of thinking and seeing.

Although caution should be taken in interpreting intangible heritage, continuous avocations against such sources will not contribute to the betterment of the study of the past. Of course the data is biased, stories change through time with different tellers and different listeners, and meanings of words and phrases are lost, but similar issues exist for written documents and the archaeological record. Yet, somehow these latter two sources are still considered more valid, scientific and academic because they are rooted in material remains. Despite their physical form, written histories are biased by those who document them, those who publish them and those who censor them. Readings of these stand just as much of a chance as being incorrect as those based on orally transmitted information. Archaeological interpretations are biased by those who analyze objects or features hundreds, if not thousands of years after they were created and interpretations are limited to modern understandings of past uses of material culture.

The following discussion retains the organization of the archaeology discussion using the same three general topics (occupation, resource processing and procurement and ceremonial use), but uses different subtopics and draws from sources not visible in the physical evidence. The data recorded in Chapter VII, are explored using the five themes of landscape studies as discussed in Chapter II. These are: 1) place names; 2) space and the transformation to place; 3) landscapes as a process; 4) landscapes, the transmission of history, narratives and memory; and 5) identity as a means of producing alternate ways of seeing and comprehending the Sutter Buttes. A list of themes found in the stories, oral histories, and interviews can be found in Table 10.
Table 10. Themes found in stories, oral histories and interviews about the Sutter Buttes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Patwin</th>
<th>Konkow</th>
<th>Maidu</th>
<th>No. Maidu</th>
<th>&quot;Sierra Tribe&quot;</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The dead travel to/reside in the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Described as a dance house/round house/sweat house</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentioned in the creation story</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropogenic animals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place to gather medicine, power and visions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origins of the Hesi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place where women gathering plants/acorns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mention of hunting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sutter Buttes are an image of a person laying down</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First people created from the dirt of the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origins of the Sutter Buttes (in the Creation story)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Taboo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food taboo</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood imagery</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origins of the first Burning Ceremony</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A reminder not to break tradition</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wintu story saying Maidu dead go to the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to use as a flood warning</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of the Sutter Buttes for weather control</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place to gather with other tribes</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to the mountains singing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People get sick when they go the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No deer are at the Sutter Buttes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place of peace</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A dangerous place</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The story written about the Nisenan by Burrill (1988) is excluded from this table as the story is fictional.
These themes are used to explore the larger topics and subtopics of the cultural landscape.

**Settlement**

**Habitation.** Based on the minimal amount of midden deposits and artifacts, the archaeological record of the Sutter Buttes reflects short-term occupations characteristic of seasonal visitations by small groups of people. This is not to say that the Buttes were never inhabited, nor should this be interpreted as evidence that the Buttes played an insignificant role in the prehistoric settlement of the Sacramento Valley. Large tracts of land, though not inhabited, were used as hunting and gathering grounds (Towne and Nelson 1978:4). For example, a zone between the Sacramento River and the Sierra Nevada foothills lacks evidence of occupation such as major village sites, yet was utilized as a major hunting and gathering ground for the Valley Maidu (Nelson and Towne 1978). Material culture in these locations is often minimal and limited to artifacts associated with the procurement and processing of plant and animals. The Sutter Buttes is very much one of these places. Looking at the map in Rosenthal et al. (2007:148), major villages existed within ten miles to the west of the study area, but not directly in the Buttes or on their periphery. However, the 59 archaeological sites recorded within the landform document the utilization of the area for resource procurement.

Although these areas are not rich in archaeological remains, they are far from unimportant open spaces. The lack of housepits, deep middens, or substantial quantities of artifacts should not be interpreted as a *space* that played a minor role in comparison to elaborate village or burial sites. Rather these were *places* deeply imbued with meaning and life. Several scholars have noted that places rich in resources are also of great
ceremonial importance (Bennyhoff and Fredrickson 1969; Forbes-Boyte 1998; McCarthy et al. n.d.). Forbes-Boyte (1998) observed how some fishing places were important not just as a source of food, but as a place given to the people by World Maker. Though not a fishing spot, the Sutter Buttes are very resource rich and looking at several of the stories, they either played a role in the creation story (Dixon 1902; Kroeber 1932; Simpson 1972) or were themselves made by World Maker from dirt left over from the creation of land (Regaldo 1972).

A Flood Refuge. Similar to the archaeological evidence, ethnographic and historical sources do not support the Sutter Buttes as a flood refuge. It has been recorded that Hudson’s Bay Company explorers used the Buttes as refuge from a flood (Heizer and Elsasser 1980). The explorers wrote that because the Buttes were an island during this time of the year, abundant game could be found as terrestrial animals had no where to flee. The explorers took careful notes on the game, but there was no mention of Native American presence.

If the Buttes were used as flood refuge on a semi-regular basis, or even every ten years or so during a large flood, it should have figured in the Native stories about the Buttes. Of the 19 stories, oral histories and interviews recorded in Chapter VII, only one mentions flooding during times when humans would have lived in the valley (Jommen 1961). In this story, North Butte is depicted as place where smoke signals could be sent to warn people on the valley floor of a pending flood. However, it does not specify where “they could move their belongings and families to safety” (Jommen 1961:4). Only one of the three interviewees commented on the Buttes in relation to flooding. Luchich described the Buttes as “the island among the flood waters and tule marshes of ancient
California.” He further added “The Buttes are a place of escape in a world mostly covered with water and flooded to the bluffs of the foothills.”

Although these two sources indicate the Buttes were used as a flood refuge, the data is minimal; the Buttes certainly may have provided some protection and were to some extent utilized for such a purpose, but a flood refuge does not appear to be a major function of the mountains. Certainly, if as asserted by Jensen (1968), they were used by large village populations on a semi-regular basis, this activity would be better documented both archaeologically and orally.

Ownership. Studies of the Buttes, including this one, often focus on their ownership or lack of ownership (Jensen 1968; Griggs 1986). The question is: why is no one single cultural group associated with the Buttes? This question is based on Eurocentric views of land and property rights; rights not recognized by native peoples. The Buttes are now subdivided and owned by several different parties, but this concept of landownership is new. According to many Native Americans, the land was not viewed as something that could be subdivided and owned, rather it was created for all to use. Both Ms. Ogle and Ms. Seek emphasized this point stating that while territories did exist the land, animals or plants were not owned in the Euroamerican sense of the word. To understand why the Buttes were not a place possessed by any one single group is to view them through native eyes which did not see the land objectified and owned. These types of insights are only possible through the incorporation of native input to studies of the past. This input helps to create a more holistic view of places such as the Sutter Buttes which have several meanings and functions that are culture-specific.
To understand a landscape is to understand the processes and relationships of the cultural encounters that create and occur shape it over time (Head 1993; McGrath 1995; Frederick 2000; Fry et al. 2004). These processes are dynamic, changing through time with population movements and replacements. The Sacramento Valley was one of the most densely populated areas in prehistoric California, reflecting thousands of years of migration, warfare, and habitation (Moratto 1984). In the center of this active landscape are the Sutter Buttes; a landform that would have been in the viewscape of all who lived in, or traveled throughout the Sacramento Valley. The mountains stand in stark contrast to the flatness of the valley, and are high enough so that they can be viewed from several vantage points, both close and far (Figure 12).

**Figure 12.** Sutter Buttes as seen from Bidwell Park approximately 35 miles to the north. Photographed by Melinda Button.
Looking at the map of Native American territories created by Kroeber, as well as the maps published today (Rosenthal et al. 2007), the Buttes lie within close proximity to the interface of the ethnographic boundaries of the Konkow, the Nisenan and the Patwin. This has led to the attraction of these three groups to the landform. Some have argued the Buttes were primarily used by the Maidu (Jensen 1968), whereas while others advocate that the “170 square mile tract [of land] with the Sutter Buttes at its core was probably unclaimed because it was too important socially and economically to be dominated by any one tribe” (Griggs 1986:86).

Although ethnographic boundaries place these three groups within the closest proximity to the Sutter Buttes, they are far from static and do not represent territorial affiliations of the past. Territories have shifted, land-use patterns have changed, and cosmological views of the world have surely differed through time. Through these processes, different ways of seeing and understanding the Sutter Buttes have come and gone. Though many are inaccessible, non-traditional views open the doors to new research questions. In turn, these questions provide new ways of understanding the Buttes not just as a place of importance to the Konkow, the Nisenan and the Patwin, but rather as a place of importance to the groups who encountered the Buttes. Looking at the stories recorded in Chapter VII, the Buttes maintained a place in the culture of not just the Patwin, the Nisenan, and the Konkow, but also the northern Maidu (Dixon 1902, Kroeber 1970) and “Sierra Indians” (Fontana 1980) as well.

Additionally, as described by Ms. Ogle, “coastal Indians” (most likely Pomo) would gather at the Buttes in addition to valley groups. Ms. Ogle explained that the Buttes were a meeting place where people would gather and share information by word-
of-mouth, particularly about big events. She stated that a string with knots may have been passed between tribes so that people would know what day to come to such events; a practice recorded among the southern Maidu and Miwok (Gifford 1927). As such, the Buttes probably served as an important place on a regional level as well as a local level.

Though not formally recorded in Chapter VII, Bruce Stedil shared a portion of a story with me that was told to him from a Kon Kow elder. Mr. Stedil did not remember the entire story and thus it is excluded from the previous chapter. However, the portion he did remember is interesting in reference to Ms. Ogle’s reference to the coastal Indians. The story goes: “The giant snake/serpent dove into the ground in the Sutter Buttes and came up somewhere in the Clear Lake area, possibly in Mud Lake or Blue Lake. I don’t know if the snake formed the lake, however” (Bruce Stedil, email to author, October 23, 2009). Some Pomo groups reside in the Clear Lake area indicating another possible connection between this group and the Sutter Buttes.

Drawing from two Maidu stories recorded in Chapter VII, one gets the sense the Buttes stood as marker of peace among the valley people. The story, “Why the Indians Never Crossed the Buttes” is “the tale of an immense and beautiful tortoise who, in her decision to maintain peace in the land, raised the Buttes…” (Jommen 1961:4). The tortoise placed the Buttes in the center so that war among the people would stop; a goal that was met by the end of the story. The second story describes the Buttes “… as a sign to all of his children that the Great Spirit always has enough to spare” (Green n.d.). In both instances, the Buttes are depicted as something for all people, not just one group, emphasizing the lack of “ownership” that is often questioned by researchers.
Taboos. In the interviews and conversations I had with various parties, the topic of the mountains and related cultural taboos were discussed, especially regarding who should and should not go to the Sutter Buttes. The most common taboo these concerned the presence of females in the mountains. This taboo is acknowledged in two sources in Chapter VII. Regaldo (1972) stated, “Women weren’t allowed on the mountain,” and that the men who did go were primarily people who wanted to be doctors. Similarly, Almanderez (2006) stated, “In the old days women didn’t go up to the Sutter Buttes, not to the mountains…women don’t go up there, you don’t go up to the Buttes tops” explaining how it was dangerous for women and used only by men wishing to gain visions or to sweat. These accounts have two things in common. First, both that specify women cannot go to the tops of the Buttes. Secondly, both say that men seeking spiritual strength or guidance went to the Sutter Buttes, with Almanderez stating specifically that men went to the top for these activities. Though it does not mention males or females, the song sung by Why-pe-le (1967) indicates that “the top of the Buttes is where all the roads meet.” These are the roads which the Maidu dead used to travel to the Buttes before the final departure to the “world in the sky.” As such, the upper reaches of the landform may have held more significant power, and thus was considered more dangerous than the lower areas.

The large quantity of BRMs testify that at some point women did go to the area; however most of these are located at lower elevations and do not infer that women commonly traveled to the upper reaches of the Buttes. Drawing from the words of Ms. Seek, it may be possible that certain areas of the Buttes were restricted for spiritual activities while other areas were not. She explained that it was not uncommon to live near
sacred places such as burial grounds or places with spiritual connotations. These places, or parts of places, were used for spiritual activities but not habitation. People only went to these locations “for certain times” to do “spiritual things,” however they did not necessarily exist at extreme distances from other places. It is possible that while sections of the Buttes, specifically the upper elevations, had strong powers which were dangerous to women, the lower elevations may have not been viewed in the same manner. This is not to say the entire study area was not sacred, nor is it to say that some felt that all of the Buttes were off-limits to women; rather it demonstrates the possibility that some areas may have been more powerful than others and by default more dangerous.

**Resource Exploitation**

The archaeological remains recorded in the Sutter Buttes reflect a heavy emphasis on resource procurement and processing. Over 50 percent of the resources are related to such activities, with only 4 percent being related to ceremonial or ritualistic use. The following discussion will use data recorded in Chapter VII to further examine the role of such activities in the Buttes and how these activities may have been viewed from a Native American perspective. Furthermore, it will be argued that in addition to plant and animal resources used for food or utilitarian purposes, spiritual resources were being harvested as well.

It is known that certain plants or objects have medicinal or magico-religious properties, but many of these latter types of resources are not physical in nature. Because they are archaeologically invisible, they are often deemed unfit for scientific inquiry and thus they are not recorded or used in interpretations of the past. However, discarding this type of data set does not provide an unbiased analysis. Rather, these interpretations
become biased towards scientific or modern ways of thinking in which food gathering and reproductive success are emphasized over spiritual well-being. While maintaining healthy individuals capable of reproduction is essential to the evolutionary success of a population, maintaining a healthy spiritual existence was also essential to Native American life. Strength, power and communication with other realms of existence were needed to assure that the food was available for harvest and that individuals were healthy enough to live from childhood to reproductive age. Eurocentric philosophies have different world views which become embedded in the formation of scientific models and modes of inquiry that discard the importance, or at least down play the importance of the more ideational and spiritual aspects of life.

James W. Loewen’s (1995) review of high school textbooks does an exemplary job at describing the American treatment of Native American religious views. He writes,

Consider how textbooks treat Native religions as a unitary whole. *The American Way* [Loewen 1995:114, emphasis added] describes Native American religion in these words:

These Native Americans [in the Southeast] believed that nature was filled with spirits. Each form of life, such as plants and animals, had a spirit. Earth and air held spirits too. People were never alone. They shared their lives with the spirits of nature.

*Way* [Loewen 1995:115, emphasis added] is trying to show respect for Native American religion, but it doesn’t work. Stated flatly like this, the beliefs seem like make-believe, not the sophisticated theology of a higher civilization. Let us try a similarly succinct summary of the beliefs of many Christians today.

These Americans believed that one great male god ruled the world. Sometimes they divided him into three parts, which they called father, son and holy ghost. They ate crackers and wine or grape juice, believing that they were eating the son’s body and drinking his blood. If they believed strongly enough, they would live on forever after they died.

Textbooks *never* [Loewen 1995:114, emphasis added] describe Christianity this way. It’s offensive. Believers would immediately argue that such depiction fails
to convey the symbolic meaning or the spiritual satisfaction of communion. [Loewen 1995:114]

In comparing these two descriptions, Loewen (1995) demonstrates how the etic Euroamerican view downplays the intricacies and importance of Native American religious values. Scientific models and discussions create similar stereotypes whereby the need to please spirits or gods to insure rain are depicted as silly or superstitious. However, it should not be the place of anthropology to determine what is a valid or invalid means of ensuring plentiful food and healthy populations. Rather incorporation of these views in landscape studies is essential to understanding how land was understood and used in the past.

**Plant and Animal Resources.** In total, one story, two interviews (Ogle and Seek) and one conversation with a landowner discussed the Sutter Buttes as a place to gather non-spiritual resources. Much of Ms. Ogle’s experience with the Sutter Buttes took place during her childhood, when she would go to gather plants such as acorns. The seasonal gathering of acorns was further mentioned by one of the landowners who stated that groups of native women would come during the early part of the century and stay for a few weeks (Hamman, personal communication with author, October 25, 2008). Likewise, Ms. Seek discussed the abundance of resources such as acorns and various berries that could have been gathered at different times of the year. Of the 19 sources, only one discusses plant gathering in the Buttes (Kroeber 1932). The Patwin story, “Married to a Grizzly,” tells of a Colusa girl who went with a party of women to Onolai (Sutter Buttes) to gather roots for basketry. As testified to by the archaeological remains
and previously discussed, plant processing at some level occurred, providing complementary evidence to stories such as this.

The story began as a story about a gathering party, but this was not at the heart of the account. Rather, it was a story about a young girl who went against her parents wishes for her to marry, she then lied about the help she had received gathering roots and focused the consequences of these two acts. As discussed by Almanderez (2006:9), the Buttes can be seen as the image of a lady lying down. She lays there as a, “symbol that you could look over there and be reminded of what happens to you when you don’t follow tradition and taboos.” “Married to a Grizzly,” reiterates this point, teaching people what will happen if tradition is not followed. The point of the story was not that the Buttes were used to gather basketry, but rather it exemplified what will happen to young girls if they do not follow their parents’ wishes.

Hunting is discussed in the data in Chapter VII even less than plant processing. In total, two Patwin stories (Kroeber 1932, Regaldo 1972) and one interview (Seek 2009) mention hunting. The interview with Ms. Seek noted the presence of deer in the Buttes which would have been hunted. Of the two stories, one states that the hunter was on “his way home after hunting, but he was very tired so he came to this field by the Buttes” (Regaldo 1972), which may or may not imply he was hunting in the Buttes. The second account tells of a hunting party on the east side of the Buttes. Similar to, “Married to a Grizzly,” this second story only uses the image of a hunting party in the Buttes as an introduction. The story continues, explaining how the Maidu learned the hesi.

These examples demonstrate that hunting and gathering in stories about the Buttes are utilized as a precursor rather than as a main point. Stories that follow tend to
involve encounters with anthropomorphic animals. This theme in Patwin mythology was also recognized by Johnson (1978). This is interesting because it can be used to infer that although resource procurement occurred within the Buttes, it was not this aspect of the mountains which made them recognizable or memorable to native peoples. Similarly, deer and other game in the Buttes are depicted as anthropomorphic creatures rather than animals on the landscape that could be used as food. This sharply contrasts with the archaeological ways of seeing the Buttes, which emphasize resource procurement and short-term occupation, while only briefly mentioning their spiritual or ceremonial importance. These differing perspectives are based on history, experience, relationships, circumstances, and individual choice (Taçon 1999). Through these different ways of seeing, physical landscapes become personified, marked, mapped, deified, and defined in a diversity of ways.

As such, what is deemed archaeologically important is not always what is important to Native Americans and vice-a-versa. This was echoed by Ms. Seek, who discussed how anthropologists must know what to look for. She explained how the assistance of a Native American monitor can often help in more complete interpretations by offering ways of viewing the landscape that are different from those who were trained in a university. While impossible to record all perceptions of the Sutter Buttes, it is important not to underemphasize those which do not fit into the archaeological models. Likewise, data generated from archaeological studies must not be discarded because they are conducted by non-Native Americans, as they provide evidence of past use that can compliment stories and oral histories. Through a collaboration of interested parties, a more thorough understanding of the landscape is created.
**Spiritual Resources.** As described above, spiritual resources include medicine, power, visions, luck, and song. These resources are obtained from both tangible and intangible sources, many of which are only recognizable to those who use them. Because these resources do not follow suit with traditional archaeological materials or features, they are often excluded from recordation. In doing so, native world views, landscape use, and cultural traditions are not included in final recordation of a site or region. For example, “council rock” in the Sutter Buttes has not been recorded as a feature because it is an unmodified rock. However, despite the lack of modification or associated material culture, the rock stands as a landmark of power to several individuals. It has been described as such by one interviewee for this project (Ms. Ogle), as well as by several others who have mentioned its importance during passing conservation with the author. This feature is part of both the physical landscape and the cultural landscape of the Sutter Buttes and should be recognized as such, just as Ayres Rock is in Australia.

Forbes-Boyte (1998:21) recognized that among the Foothill Konkow, “landforms become sacred places because they anchor the mythical world to reality and the people to their homeland” (Forbes-Boyte 1998:21). In his work with the Northern Maidu, Dixon (1905) wrote that the world was viewed as one filled with mysterious powers or spirits known as *ku’kini*. He wrote that these spirits were commonly associated with “prominent rocky peaks, crags or cliffs…” noting that these “…beings are regarded as residing in definite spots…” (Dixon 1905:265).

Knowledge of these places is culturally specific, making them recognizable only to those who know their stories and history. Through the incorporation of ethnography and Native American collaboration to regional studies, the landscape
becomes filled with more than just resource patches, village sites and burials. Knowing the location of these places and understanding their purpose helps to create a more holistic view of how an area was perceived, and therefore used in the past. People of the past sought more than just eating, living and reproducing; these other aspects of life should be acknowledged even if they cannot fit into science-based objectivity or models.

Because of connections to spiritual realms, specific geographical locations are strongly tied with power, which can be collected and used as a source of strength or medicine (Dixon 1905). The Sutter Buttes are very much one of these places. Deeply embedded with power, they serve as a place of natural resources and spiritual resources, which are not available elsewhere. Accounts from both Patwin (Regaldo 1972) and Maidu (Almanderez 2006; Luchich 2009; Ogle 2009) Indians discuss the Buttes as a place used by those who wish to become medicine men or those seeking visions. For example, Beverly Ogle described the Buttes as a “spirit power point,” which allows human access to power or strength only available in particular locales; Almanderez (2006) explained how her grandfather would use the Buttes as weather control; and Luchich (2009), Ogle (2009) and Regaldo (1972) cite the Buttes as place medicine men would go to become doctors. These accounts emphasize a side of the Buttes not recognized in the archaeological record yet are very much a part of what makes them a significant cultural resource.

Taboos. Similar to the female taboo discussed earlier, a taboo against eating in the Sutter Buttes was brought up during a few conversations had in the process of this research. One Konkow story specifically states that food should not be eaten by the living while at the Sutter Buttes (Curtis 1924). In this story, Sky Chief tells Nose Talker, “Well,
you are not dead. You cannot eat here.” Conversely, in a similar Konkow story the clown who guarded the door of the sweathouse (the Sutter Buttes) gave Coyote food before sending him on his way (Chase 1973). Only one additional story mentions eating. A northern Maidu story describes the events a soul goes through when it reaches the Buttes (Kroeber 1970). As stated in Kroeber (1970:439), “[T]he spirit seeks a mysterious cavern in the Marysville Buttes, the great spirit mountain of the Maidu, where for the first time it eats spirit food and is washed.” This topic was not addressed by any of the individuals formally interviewed, however as speculated by Ira Heinrich, this restriction may have only been for certain individuals, or during certain times (Ira Heinrich, email to author, May 21, 2009). Fasting before ceremonies and dances is common and it may be that restrictions on food was practiced by those who were seeking medicine or visions rather than others collecting acorns or passing through.

Intangible Evidence for Ceremonial Use

As discussed previously, the archaeological record reveals little about the spiritual or ceremonial importance of the Sutter Buttes. The physical evidence is limited to less than ten artifacts and three features, one of which is unmodified and only recognizable to those who find it significant. However, as demonstrated in this thesis, the Sutter Buttes were extremely important for reasons other than providing a productive resource patch or a landmark used in navigation. The translations of the many names for the mountains, the several stories set in the Buttes which describe the creation of land and the first people, and the initial inspiration for important ceremonies emphasize this point.

Place Names. While the study of place-names in California is imperfect and often filled with misunderstandings (Kroeber 1916), it offers a unique set of data to
recreate physical and cultural landscapes of the past (Basso 1996; Raharijaona 1998; Alderman 2008). The Sutter Buttes are referred to by several different names, each reflecting some type of physical or symbolic attribute (see Table 11 for a complete list of native names found during this research). These names provide both geographic and spiritual connotations as they emphasize the importance of the location of the landform in the center of the valley and its place in the mythological and spiritual worlds of those

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Cultural Affiliation</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Histum Yani</td>
<td>middle mountains</td>
<td>Maidu</td>
<td>Hendrix 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nusooiana</td>
<td>spirit mountain</td>
<td>Maidu</td>
<td>Biscoff 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estawn Yan</td>
<td>middle hills</td>
<td>Maidu</td>
<td>Simpson 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ėstobisim-yámání</td>
<td>in-the-center-mountain</td>
<td>Maidu</td>
<td>Curtis 1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esto-Mian</td>
<td>Butte Mountain</td>
<td>Yuba River</td>
<td>Loeb 1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kahkini kumme</td>
<td>spirit dance house</td>
<td>Konkow</td>
<td>Azbill 1968</td>
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<td>sweathouse set-in-the-center</td>
<td>Konkow</td>
<td>Chase 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esto-Yamani</td>
<td>middle hills or mountains</td>
<td>Nisenan</td>
<td>Burrill 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esto-Yamani</td>
<td>set-in-center</td>
<td>Nisenan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>None given</td>
<td>Middle mountains</td>
<td>Mechoopda</td>
<td>A. Ward, Personal Communication, 10/16/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onolai-toL</td>
<td>middle mountains</td>
<td>Patwin</td>
<td>Kroeber 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None given</td>
<td>mountain of the breathing spirit</td>
<td>“Sierra Indian”</td>
<td>Fontana 1980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
who lived beside them. As asserted by Raharijaona (1998:193), place names can be used to infer the utilitarian or symbolic function of a site, which may not be visible from “simple inspection of archaeological remains.” While one could easily conclude the Sutter Buttes are the “middle mountains” of the Sacramento Valley, the material culture recorded thus far does not necessarily reflect the symbolic and spiritual importance of this place.

Alderman (2008) discusses the use of place names as toponyms, verbal or written ways to situate a place or a narrative in the natural world. Looking at the physical environment of the region, the Buttes are the “middle mountains.” To the west are the Coast Ranges, to the east are the Sierra Nevada and in the center are the Sutter Buttes. If the Buttes were used as a meeting place (Ogle 2009) or as an ancient way point (Luchich 2009), “the middle mountains” or “in-the-center-mountain” would describe the location perfectly, providing an easily recognizable place even to those who were unfamiliar with the lower Sacramento Valley.

The purpose, use, or appearance of a place may change over time, yet place names often retain information about their past (Raharijaona 1989; Basso 1996). These names can be used to recreate the environmental landscape even after significant physical changes have occurred. Bernard Fontana (1980:19) writes of a “Sierra Indian tribal legend” which referred to the Buttes as “The Mountain of the Breathing Spirit.” According to the legend, the smoking mountains are located “in the waters of the setting sun” (Fontana 1980:19). He concludes, the smoke, or “mountain spirit” could have resulted from the rich sources of natural gas present in the Buttes. If sparked by lightening or bush fires, the gas may give off an appearance of a “blazing breath”
Fontana further suggests the name and accompanying story could be used as evidence that the early ancestors of the storytellers were in the valley when the “historic sea” was present. However, this would have meant the Sacramento Valley was occupied by modern humans at least 1.8 million years ago (Anderson 2004).

Alternatively, as described by John Geno Lucich, “…the Buttes are the island among the flood waters and tule marsh of ancient California.” Prior to mining and modern water reclamation projects, the valley would have looked very different. Though it was not part of the sea, the Buttes may have appeared as an island, or at least described as such, especially during the winter and spring seasons.

Despite the logistics of interpreting the meaning of this place name, it is interesting to note it was taken from a “Sierra Indian tribal legend” (Fontana 1980:19). Though the exact tribe is not given, it indicates the importance of the Sutter Buttes to those living in areas not directly adjacent to them. The Buttes were not a landmark for just the Patwin, the Konkow, or the Nisenan. They were in the view of many, and as the “middle mountains” rising from the flatness of the valley, they surely played a part in the way of seeing and describing the physical landscape.

It is not just their physical location which makes the Sutter Buttes significant or central; their location in the spiritual beliefs of both the Patwin and Maidu are acknowledged through the various names. In total, seven stories describe the mountains as a roundhouse or a dance house (Kroeber 1932; Curtis 1924; Regaldo 1972; Chase 1973; Azbill 1973). The dance house was a central structure utilized in prehistoric California. It not only stood as a physical place for socializing, meetings, and ceremonies, but it often represented a place that connected the earth to different planes of existence.
Forbes-Boyte (1998:24) describes the foothill Konkow’s roundhouse as representation of the sky (the roof) and the earth (the floor) with a center post connecting the two. A roof hole is viewed as a break-through from one plane of existence to another. Dixon’s (1905:286) description of dance houses among the northwestern Maidu describes a leader who presides over the ceremonies and an individual who is both “clown and speaker for the chief or leader.” This individual remains at the foot of the front post and serves as the spokesman for the leader. In addition to being almost perfectly round, imagery in many of the stories describe the Buttes as having a door, a clown speaking for World Maker and “…a rope of white feathers reaching from the top of the mountain up to the sky” (Chase 1973:43).

Just as shamans were known to ascend the center poles to achieve spiritual power (Forbes-Boyte 1998), the dead went to the Buttes and ascended through the top of the mountains to the road of the dead (Kroeber 1970; Chase 1973). These descriptions match both the physical and spiritual conations of a dance house. In doing so, power is provided to the stories by allowing the teller and the listener to visualize the location not just as a mountain, but as a dance house utilized by the dead (Bird 2002).

As described by Henry Azbill (Konkow), kahkini kumme was “the last dance house where all the spirits of the dead meet before they go into the beyond where they come from” (Azbill et al. 1968). Looking at a story narrated by Jack Franco (Otíla), a northwestern Maidu born near Durham around 1845, the Buttes were not just a place where the dead went, but it was the place where the first person to die went (Curtis 1924). Nose Talker (Sumuini-wewe) and Sky Chief (Yáhásin-yępání) disagreed if people should die. Sky Chief said people should live forever, whereas Nose Talker felt death would be
advantageous and lead to the burning of property and a good time. Nose Talker’s son then dies from a rattlesnake bite and travels to the Buttes. He approached “the door” of the mountain and met Sky Chief who told him to enter. When Nose Talker arrived, he showed him his dead son and then sent him on his way with the message, “[w]hen anyone dies, he will come to this place.” A similar version involves Coyote and the Creator. Creator brings Coyote’s son to a sweathouse built in a mountain named “Set-in-the-center” before traveling the road of the dead (Chase 1973). It should be noted, however, that while the Patwin stories use the imagery of a roundhouse, they did not regard the Sutter Buttes as a place where their dead traveled to; however, they did acknowledge the Buttes as a place where the Maidu dead went (Kroeber 1932).

The connotation between the dead and the Sutter Buttes in the Maidu belief system is an important aspect of the landform to recognize. In the many conversations I had through this research, several parties have noted that the Buttes were not heavily visited. Reasons varied, but most were centered on the danger or cultural taboos that surround the mountains including the presence of the dead. Seven of the themes recorded in the Maidu data cite the mountains as a spirit dance house or as the final place a spirit visits before leaving this world (see Table 10). Kroeber’s (1970:440) overview of the Maidu noted that the “glance of a ghost, or sight of it, is fatal.”

Taken at face value, one may infer that the living were not apt to reside where they may catch sight of a ghost and thus become one. This is an interesting dichotomy with the archaeological data. Just as information is lost through the examination of material remains, one may be misled by the several stories which describe the Buttes as inhabited by the dead and discouragement towards the living to visit. However, as
demonstrated by the cultural remains, the Buttes were not void of human interaction. Though not a place of permanent occupancy, substantial physical evidence demonstrates continued use of the area even if only on a seasonal basis by small groups of people.

**Creation.** The Konkow story “The Creator Departs,” describes how the Creator left behind “things” for people to use and to remember him by.

Then the people started. But a very old man and a very old woman and also a virgin were asked by the Creator to stay. He told the people that after they had gone he would scatter to different places on the earth all the things that they had left. This would be done as he was leaving the earth. So as the people were gone and as the Creator started out he did as he said he would, and today we may see along the Sacramento Valley where he left the different things his people had used and left. The Creator was seen no more by his people, but he has always been remembered and spoken of for his goodness to his Indian people.

And of the things that were made by the Creator for his people that he left on earth. Then comes the end of this story. [Chase 1973:46]

Similarly, in the story retold by Green (n.d.), the Buttes are depicted as a place left “…laying there in the middle of the valley. . . as a sign to all of his children that the Great Spirit always has enough to spare.” As discussed above, at least among the Konkow, places associated with creation and the formation actions of World Maker, are deeply imbued with power as those observed at the Buttes. As such, they stand tall in the middle of the valley, as a constant reminder of all that the Creator has given to the people and as evidence of his strength of creation.

Looking at the data collected for this research, six sources refer to the Sutter Buttes in relation to the creation (Kroeber 1932; Simpson 1972; Dixon 1902; Curtis 1924; Almanderez 2006; Lucich 2009), and two additional sources cite the creation of the Buttes as an event which took place during the creation of land (Regaldo 1972, Green n.d.). This connection with creation is prevalent among the Patwin, the Maidu, the
Northern Maidu, and the Konkow; it is the only theme which is found in all of the groups represented in Table 10 (with the exception with the unnamed Sierra Tribal group). In two of the Maidu stories and the oral history collected from Almanderez (2006), the Buttes is where World Maker made the first people from red dirt. This imagery is reiterated in the interview with John Lucich, who described the Yuba Maidu as “people of the red dirt country and tall valley buttes.” The Sutter Buttes are an important spiritual place that existed since the beginning. The soil from the mountains was used as the material to create the first people and the mountains themselves are often depicted as a house of World Maker. These connotations and imagery reiterate the point how the Buttes can be viewed as a reminder of past times and the creation the world.

**Origins of Ceremony.** Four stories tell of the origins of certain ceremonies or dances which were first witnessed in the Sutter Buttes amongst anthropomorphic characters or the deceased. These include three Wintu stories (Kroeber 1932) and one Yuba River Maidu story (Loeb 1933) regarding the origins of the *hesi*, and one Konkow story telling of the origins of the first burning ceremony (Curtis 1924). This latter story tells of the first death which was followed by first burning ceremony. Although the story is Konkow, the burning of personal property after an individual dies has been recorded among the Patwin (McIkern 1922) and the Maidu (Dixon 1905). Though the relationship between the *hesi* and the Sutter is commonly discussed, this is the only reference I found that cites the origins of the burning ceremony as the Buttes.

The details and objectives of the *hesi* differed between cultural groups, but equally it held an important place in the ceremonial life of both the Wintu and Maidu (see Chapter IV). Similar to the differences in practice, the stories regarding its origins in the
Sutter Buttes also differ. The Wintu stories collected from Patwin individuals living in Grimes and Colusa tell how the hesi began among the animals who danced in the Buttes (Kroeber 1932). Two of these tell of how humans came across the animals performing the hesi, saw their dance, heard their songs, killed the animals and then remembered what they had seen and initiated the dance with humans. The third story has an interesting addition. Kroeber (1932:307) recorded the story from a Patwin informant who began the story, “The people of Yupul (Yuba City, Nisenan) were camped on Onolai, the Marysville Buttes” and ends “that is how they got the hesi.”

The story proceeds similarly to those given by the other Patwin, however this final rendition is a story of how the Nisenan got the hesi, not how the Patwin got the hesi. The fourth story was told by a Yuba River Maidu man named Tony Bill (recorded by Loeb 1933). In this story, a young boy learned the dance from the spirits of the deceased who live in the Buttes. After wintering in the mountains, he returned to his village and taught the people the dance. This story both explains the beginning of the hesi among humans and reinforces the Maidu belief that the Buttes are inhabited by the ghosts of the dead.

A short discussion on how these stories can be applied to the study of the hesi is warranted. It has been hypothesized that the dance began with the Wintu then spread to the Maidu (Dixon 1905; Azbill et al. 1969). The third Patwin story obviously conflicts with this as it states the Nisenan brought the dance to the people. However, in an interview with Henry Azbill, Charlie Johnson, and Craig Bates it was explained that in late 1880s or early 1890s the Wintu from Grindstone came to join the Konkow for a hesi and “put up a fuss” that women and children were not allowed in the ceremony. To
accommodate both groups the Konkow removed the dangerous parts of the ceremony and, for the first, this time charged a fee to participate in the event. Azbill then further theorized, “…that’s the reason why Loeb says that the Hesi came from there to here [from the Wintu to the Maidu]. Cause really what we see, and what we did see after this particular argument is exactly what they’re doing now. We as Maidu people who are now living have never seen the Hesi as it was done by our people—never” (Azbill et al. 1969:2). It may then be inferred that both groups had their own version of the hesi. As such, the hesi may have developed independently with the different groups, and as they began to join together for the ceremony, certain portions were kept, while others were discarded creating a hesi that was a conglomerate of different traditional versions. Drawing from Azbill, the dance observed now and in the early part of the twentieth century, is more similar to the Wintu version, leading to the idea that they were the first to practice it.

These stories reiterate the point that the Sutter Butters were a place of many resources. Not only did they provide food and materials for utilitarian objects, and medicine and visions for men, but they provided the people with important ceremonies and dances. The Sutter Buttes were a place that connected the “mythical” with the “real,” giving people knowledge not normally accessible. Both the hesi and the burning ceremony were essential to the spiritual wellbeing of the people, as well as their subsistence.
Bring it Together: The Physical and the Intangible

Just as the physical evidence is limited in supporting the ceremonial or religious use of the Buttes, the cultural evidence regarding resource procurement or habitation is minimal. This contrast clearly demonstrates the need for multiple ways of seeing and interpreting the landscape both in the past and as a cultural continuum. Looking solely at the material culture, one would be unaware of the significance the landform played in mythology, story telling and “shamanistic” practices. Likewise, basing interpretations exclusively on ethnographic materials, one may be mislead to underestimate the importance of the Buttes as a place of hunting and gathering. The cultural landscape framework allows for the incorporation of both sources creating a multi-faceted interpretation. These conclusions support the work of landscape scholars who have realized that human and natural landscapes are often plural and ever-changing (Gosden and Head 1994; Knapp and Ashmore 1999; Taçon 1999).

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth discussion of the Sutter Buttes landscape. It integrated several different types of sources to provide a diversity of ways of seeing the region. The following chapter is the conclusion to my thesis. It briefly outlines the findings of my work and explains its’ place in the body of landscape studies literature.
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

My research incorporated several different types of data offering a variety of insight and ways of seeing the Sutter Buttes. The cultural landscape framework drew from all sources equally, creating multi-faceted interpretations and demonstrating the need for both material culture and intangible data. Like studies conducted elsewhere, this thesis demonstrates that the landscape is more than what is visible to the eye. A landscape is both what is seen and what is understood. Stories, histories, and individual perceptions are as much a part of the landscape as trees, rivers, and rock shelters.

While this thesis has incorporated large quantities of data, much more is still to be collected. Future surveys and excavations will provide a more complete understanding of the archaeological record of the Sutter Buttes. Obsidian hydration analysis and radiocarbon dating would better our understanding of the role of the Buttes through time. Linguistic studies have the potential to look at the many place names as a means of better understanding both Native languages and the cultural role of the Sutter Buttes. And finally, any additional stories, oral histories or interviews will add perceptions not yet available. Data collected from any of these studies would greatly increase current archaeological and cultural interpretations of the study area.

Based on the data that was collected, it is obvious that there are multiple ways of seeing the Sutter Buttes. Looking solely at the archaeological record of the Sutter
Buttes, one may overlook the ceremonial significance that the landform played in mythology, story telling and the spiritual lives of many Native Americans. The general lack of artifacts and features typically associated with religious or ceremonial use are almost completely absent from the study area. Rather, the archaeological record is dominated by features and artifacts associated with the procurement and processing of plant and animal resources. As such, archaeological interpretations view the Buttes as an important place in the seasonal rounds of hunter and gathers of the Central Valley.

Interestingly, basing an interpretation solely on intangible data, a very different picture is created. Stories and oral histories underemphasize the importance of the Buttes as a place of hunting and gathering. Rather these sources focus on it as a place of spiritual importance imbedded with great powers. Created by World Maker, the Buttes stand as a reminder of the beginning of time, and for the Maidu a symbol of the end. Based on the data collected, one would be led to believe only individuals wishing to collect or use such powers would go to the Buttes. It is only through the examination of both sources does it become clear the Sutter Buttes were an important place for both natural resources and spiritual resources.

Each source offers a different point of view. While these views often contradict or conflict with each other, it is not a matter of right or wrong interpretations. Rather each offers something unique which is the result of personal or communal knowledge, experience, and world views. Archaeology tends to look at physical remains and scientific models to explain the past; stories reflect cultural ways of explaining the world; and interview answers reflect individual ideas of what is important and what should be remembered. There is no hierarchy to the data produced as each is a valid and
true representation of the Sutter Buttes. Instead of creating divisions which are often enforced by negative stereotypes from all sides, researchers should strive to create methodologies capable of synthesizing several different types of data. Archaeologists should listen to the Native American voice and incorporate it into final interpretations; likewise Native Americans are encouraged to share the knowledge they retain. This is not to say archaeologists must accept all explanations offered, nor is it to say Native Americans must share all of they know. Some knowledge is lost, and some is sacred and not for the public. However, only through cooperative relationships can interpretations of the past which represent both the material objects and those that produced the objects be created.
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APPENDIX A
November 7, 2008

Melinde Button
950 Salorn #1
Chico, CA 95928

Dear Melinde Button,

As the Chair of the Campus Institutional Review Board, I have determined that your research proposal entitled "MULTIPLE WAYS OF SEEING ONE PLACE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE SUTTER BUTTES" is exempt from full committee review. This clearance allows you to proceed with your study.

I do ask that you notify our office should there be any further modifications to, or complications arising from, the study. In addition, should this project continue longer than the authorized date, you will need to apply for an extension from our office. When your data collection is complete, you will need to turn in the attached Post Data Collection Report for final approval. Students should be aware that failure to comply with any HSREC requirements will delay graduation. If you should have any questions regarding this clearance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John Mahoney, Ph.D., Chair
Human Subjects in Research Committee

Attachment: Post Data Collection Report

cc: Antoninette Martinez (400)
HUMAN SUBJECTS IN REVIEW COMMITTEE
Post Data Collection Questionnaire

Under Federal law relating to the protection of Human Subjects, this report is to be completed by each Principal Investigator at the end of data collection.

Please return to: Diane Smith, HSRC Assistant
Graduate and International Programs
Tehama Hall Room 211
CSU, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0875

Or Fax to: Diane Smith, 530-898-6889

Name: Melinda Button       Chico State Portal ID# 004289910

Phone(s) (530) 592-7110       Email: melinda-button@hotmail.com

Faculty Advisor name (if student): Annewicz       Phone (530) 898-6192

College/Department: Social Science/Anth

Title of Project: MULTIPLE WAYS OF SEEING ONE PLACE:
Archaeological and Cultural Landscapes of the Sutter Buttes

Date application was approved (mo/yr.): 11/09               Date collection complete (mo/yr.): 06/09

How many subjects were recruited? 3               How many subjects actually completed the project? 3

*HARM--Did subjects have severe reactions or extreme emotional response? NO

If yes, please attach a detailed explanation:

Your signature: M. Button       Date: 10/16/09

*Final clearance will not be granted without a complete answer to this question.

Approved By: John Mahoney, Chair

Very Important: If you will or have used this research in your project or thesis you are required to provide a copy of this form (with John Mahoney’s signature in place) to your graduate committee.

Do you want a photo copy of this form mailed to you? YES

If yes, provide address: 950 Salem #1
Chico CA 95925
APPENDIX B
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Site Type Resources</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
<th>Nearest Water</th>
<th>Initial Recording</th>
<th>Site Update</th>
<th>Elev. (ft.)</th>
<th>Quad Map</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sut-14</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Near annual stream</td>
<td>Fontana (1951)</td>
<td></td>
<td>350-375</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>“ Likely used as flood refuge”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-26</td>
<td>OHS, MID</td>
<td>MOR</td>
<td>Spring on site</td>
<td>Van Zant (1959)</td>
<td>Jensen 1968</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>“3 separate mounds around spring” (Van Zant); not relocated by Jensen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-27</td>
<td>RS, MID</td>
<td>PPT, DEB, “Pomo disc”</td>
<td>200 ft. from the base of the bluff</td>
<td>Van Zant (1959)</td>
<td>Jensen 1968</td>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Rocky peak worshiped by Indians; not relocated by Jensen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-28</td>
<td>BRM, MID</td>
<td>PPT, DEB, MAN, PES, CHS, FNW, MET</td>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>Van Zant (1959)</td>
<td>Jensen 1968</td>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>“Entire area apparently heavily populated with rock shelters denuded of artifacts”; not relocated by Jensen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-29</td>
<td>QUR</td>
<td>DEB, FNW, KNI, globular mortars</td>
<td>150 ft. is a drainage</td>
<td>Van Zant (1959)</td>
<td>Jensen 1968</td>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Old quarry on steep slope; “great possibility of destruction”; site relocated, but not artifacts observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-30</td>
<td>OHS, BRM, MID</td>
<td>DEB, COS</td>
<td>Several summer/winter springs in the area</td>
<td>Van Zant (1959)</td>
<td>Jensen 1968</td>
<td>U/K</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Large crystal formation; several BRMs have been removed; not relocated by Jensen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-33/ H^</td>
<td>RS, BRM, MID</td>
<td>PES, DEB, COR, FST, FAR, MET, MAN</td>
<td>2 springs with year-round water supply (Gruver 2005)</td>
<td>Jensen (1965)</td>
<td>Gruver 2005</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Brady Rock Shelter #1; considerable erosion of midden; year-round water; multicomponent site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-34*</td>
<td>RS, BRM, MID?</td>
<td>MET, QC, MAN, CBC, SCR, PEN, PPT,</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Jensen and Ritter (1969)</td>
<td></td>
<td>320</td>
<td>Penn</td>
<td>“Brady Rock Shelter #2a and b”; 2 small overhangs each with BRM (a=3, b=2); light ashy midden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Quad Map</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sut-35</td>
<td>RS, BRM</td>
<td>CTL</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Hill, Delmar, Travis</td>
<td>200 Penn.</td>
<td>Rock shelter of great basalt boulders on valley floor, surrounded by 9 large boulders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-36</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>5m from site</td>
<td>Jensen and Jensen (1969)</td>
<td>280 Penn.</td>
<td>14 BRMs on 4 andesite outcrops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-37</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>3m from site</td>
<td>Jensen and Johnson (1969)</td>
<td>180 Penn.</td>
<td>4 BRMs on single granitic outcrop; road has moved outcrop from original place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-38</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>5m from site</td>
<td>Jensen and Jensen (1969)</td>
<td>300 Penn.</td>
<td>4 BRMs on 2 outcrops; original position of outcrop has been disturbed by road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-39+^</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>MET, PES, BIF, DEB</td>
<td>Between 2 streams</td>
<td>Jensen (1969)</td>
<td>Gruver (2005)</td>
<td>240 Penn.</td>
<td>&quot;Open habitation site” on ridge; the assemblage “suggests a myriad of tasks were being conducted at the site including tool production and procurement and processing of food” (Gruver 2005)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-40</td>
<td>FS, MID</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>100m</td>
<td>Jensen (1969)</td>
<td>320 Penn.</td>
<td>Fire smudged ceiling, marking previous course of stream; sandy midden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-41</td>
<td>MID, THC</td>
<td>COR, CTL</td>
<td>Between 2 branches of intermittent stream</td>
<td>Jensen &amp; Rigger (1969)</td>
<td>460 SB</td>
<td>Shallow midden but depth unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-42</td>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>100m from site</td>
<td>Jensen &amp; Ritter (1969)</td>
<td>600 SB</td>
<td>Granite outcrop with possible fire smudging;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-43</td>
<td>MID, BRM</td>
<td>BM, PPT, DEB, MAN</td>
<td>On north edge of creek</td>
<td>Jensen &amp; Ritter (1969)</td>
<td>360 SB</td>
<td>Midden 2.5 meters; may be related to SUT-24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIF-Biface BM- Bowl Mortar CBC-Cobble Chopper CHS- Charmstone COR-Core CTL- Core tool COS-Cooking stone DEB- Debitage FNW-Fish net weight HST-Hammerstone KNI-Knife MAN-Mano MET- Metate PEN-Pendant PES- Pestle PPT- Projectile Point SCR- Scrapper QC-Quartz Crystal  
FAR-Fire affected rock; Quad Map- USGS Topographic Map SB- Sutter Buttes, CA 7.5’ (1954 (Photo Revised 1973)) Penn.- Pennington, CA 7.5’ (1954 (Photo Revised 1973))  
*Excavated by Jensen (1968); +Augured by Jensen (1968); ^ surface collected by Jensen (1968)
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sut-44*</td>
<td>RS, MID</td>
<td>PES, MAN, SCR, KNI, DEB, HST</td>
<td>100m from site</td>
<td>Jensen &amp; LaFranchi (1969)</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Small cave with good midden deposit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-45</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>50m from site</td>
<td>Jensen &amp; Ritter (1969)</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>“Possible granary for Sut-44”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-46</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>On drainage</td>
<td>Jensen (1969)</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-47</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Near seasonal runoff</td>
<td>Jensen (1969)</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
<td>1 BRM on andesite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-48</td>
<td>BRM, possible MID</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>West side of seasonal drainage</td>
<td>Jensen (1969)</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
<td>Possible Midden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-49</td>
<td>RS, MID, BRM</td>
<td>DEB, CBC</td>
<td>15m from site; 200m from major stream drainage in Peace Valley</td>
<td>Jensen and Jensen (1969)</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
<td>Dark midden; overlooks confluence of several streams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-50</td>
<td>BRM, PET, possible MID</td>
<td>U/K</td>
<td>1m from site</td>
<td>Jensen, Ritter, Ransom (1969)</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
<td>“cupped petroglyph”; Rain rock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-51</td>
<td>RS</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Creek 15m north</td>
<td>Jensen &amp; Ritter (1969)</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Fire smudged interior; site is questionable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-53</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None mentioned</td>
<td>Storm (1974)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>No site found in either updates; extensive grading and quarrying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-54</td>
<td>BRM, PET</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>North side of intermittent stream</td>
<td>Storm (1974)</td>
<td>85-95</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Rain rock; almost on valley floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-59</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Between two drainages</td>
<td>York &amp; Davis (1986)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>May be more extensive than what was recorded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIF-Biface BM- Bowl Mortar CBC-Cobble Chopper CHS- Charmstone COR-Core CTL- Core tool COS-Cooking stone DEB- Debitage FNW-Fish net weight HST-Hammerstone KNI-Knife MAN-Mano MET- Metate PEN-Pendant PES- Pestle PPT- Projectile Point SCR- Scrapper QC-Quartz Crystal
FAR-Fire affected rock;
Quad Map- USGS Topographic Map SB- Sutter Buttes, CA 7.5’ (1954 (Photo Revised 1973)) Penn.- Pennington, CA 7.5’ (1954 (Photo Revised 1973))
*Excavated by Jensen (1968); +Augured by Jensen (1968); ^ surface collected by Jensen (1968)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Site Update</th>
<th>Elev. (ft.)</th>
<th>Quad Map</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sut-70/H</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Intermittent drainage on west edge of site</td>
<td>Garr and Bayham (1989)</td>
<td>120-180</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prehistoric component disturbed by historic activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-71</td>
<td>HB</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Garr and Bayham (1989)</td>
<td>U/K</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Possible hunting blind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-72</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>DEB, PPT</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Garr and Bayham (1989)</td>
<td>U/K</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year-round spring; milling equipment previously removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-78</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>40 ft. to the east is a small drainage</td>
<td>Derr &amp; McIvers (1990)</td>
<td>200-220</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Property has been leveled in recent years for planting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sut-86</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Site is on the western slope of an intermittent drainage</td>
<td>Abell &amp; Ruskin (1991)</td>
<td>112 SB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Update notes no sign of site, but extensive disturbances are present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF 24</td>
<td>HB</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Spring and intermittent drainage 250m from site</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Possible hunting blind</td>
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<tr>
<td>LF 25</td>
<td>HB</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Spring and intermittent spring 360m from site</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>Sutter</td>
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<td>Possible hunting blind</td>
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<tr>
<td>LF 18</td>
<td>HB</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Intermittent 330m to the east</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<td>Possible hunting blind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knoll Top</td>
<td>RS, RA</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Intermittent stream 150m west</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
<td>Charcoal and ash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda’s BRM</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Ephemeral 60m from the site</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lone BRM</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Perennial drainage on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meadow BRM</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>PES</td>
<td>Intermittent drainage on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<tr>
<td>NE BRM 1</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Perennial drainage on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NE BRM 2</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Seasonal drainage on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NE BRM 3</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>Possible COR</td>
<td>Perennial drainage 10m from site</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>North wall BRM</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Just above intermittent drainage</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ridge Top</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>COR</td>
<td>Perennial drainage 160m</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock Circle</td>
<td>RA, RC</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Intermittent spring and drainage 200m</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Blind</td>
<td>HB</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Seasonal drainage 120m</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>680-705</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
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<td>South BRM</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Seasonal drainage 60m</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three Rock shelters</td>
<td>RS, BRM</td>
<td>DEB, BIF</td>
<td>Small drainage on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>560-535</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twin Creeks</td>
<td>BRM, HB</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Drainage on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>150-425</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Windbreak</td>
<td>RA</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Intermittent spring 200m</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>Penn.</td>
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<td>WT 17-20</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>PES</td>
<td>Seasonal drainage 250m</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<td>WT-21</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Seasonal drainage on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al. (2005)</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big BRM Site</td>
<td>BRM, RA</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Year round spring</td>
<td>Gruver et al.</td>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>U/K</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG 6</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Perennial drainage on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al.</td>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>U/K</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DG BRMS</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Two drainages on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al.</td>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>U/K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunting Blind-Meadows edge</td>
<td>HB</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Overlooking a seasonal drainage</td>
<td>Gruver et al.</td>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>U/K</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cat Rock Shadow</td>
<td>BRM, LS</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Spring on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al.</td>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>U/K</td>
<td>Multicomponent site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestead Site (James Martin)</td>
<td>BRM</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Spring on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al.</td>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>U/K</td>
<td>Multicomponent site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pugh Homestead (Aaron Pugh)</td>
<td>BRM, Possible MID</td>
<td>DEB, PPT, COR, HAN</td>
<td>5 springs on site</td>
<td>Gruver et al.</td>
<td>Not given</td>
<td>U/K</td>
<td>Multicomponent site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>