

Timeline

Calico Mountains Archaeological Site History

- 1939 Dr. Malcolm Rogers, director of the San Diego Museum of Man, wrote an article which was printed in the museum's journal stating that a "quarry site exists three miles west of the Manix Station on the Union Pacific which is of great magnitude."
- 1940 Avocational archaeologist Ritner Sayles found large, crude, primarily bifacial flaked tool on hill surfaces of the Eastern Calico and reported them to Ruth DeEtte Simpson (Dee Simpson), who was working on her BA from University of Southern California.
- 1942 Dr. Gerald Smith, Stuart Peck, and Dee Simpson visited the Lake Manix area with Ritner Sayles.
- 1953-54 The Lake Manix survey was undertaken. Archaeological Survey Association, an avocational group of archaeologist, under the direction of Dee Simpson, surveyed Lake Manix, a Pleistocene dry lake. Dee Simpson was an archaeologist at the Southwest Museum, under the direction of Dr. Mark Harrington.
- 1956 Dee Simpson attended the Fifth Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Several specimens from Manix Lake were taken along. She was urged take specimens to Europe for examination by Paleolithic specialists.
- 1957- 58 Discovery and documentation of the first major sites of the Lake Manix Lithic Industry was completed by Dee Simpson.. This led to the recognition of the industry as a distinct technological and temporal element in the sequence of desert prehistory.
- 1958 Dee Simpson took samples of Lake Manix Industry artifacts to Europe, meeting with archaeologists and stone tool experts, including Dr. Louis S. B. Leakey.
- 1958 Discovery of Calico Site (SBCM-1500) by John Kettl took place.
- 1963 May. This was Dr. Leakey's first visit to the Calico Mountains. At this time he selected the location of the first pit, later known as Master Pit I.
- 1964 November 1st marked the opening day of the Calico Mountains Expedition under the sponsorship of the National Geographic Society. The excavations started with 17 crew members. The first definitive tool was found in the first month.
- 1965 January. This was the first official acceptance of a stone tool by an outside archaeologist, Dr. Alex Krieger, University of Washington, Seattle.
November. Second field season began. The camp was officially named "Camp Leakey."

- 1966 November. Third field Season opened. Dr. Leakey described acceptance of Calico artifacts in Europe and Africa. Work began on Control Pit I. Statistical studies by lab crew started. Geology field work by Dr. Thomas Clements began.
- 1967 January. Excavation at Control Pit II began.
February. First possible mastodon tusk fragments were found in Master Pit I.
March. Mary Leakey accompanied Louis for her first visit.
April. The National Geographic Society team held a major inspection visit to the site. Yermo had a snow storm while they were reviewing the site.
May. Dr. Leakey selected the area for Master Pit II
October. Fourth Season began. This was the last season funded by the National Geographic Society. Master Pit II excavation started. French lithic expert, Francois Bordes, visited and approved some specimens.
- 1968 March. Dr. Clark Howell, UC Berkeley, and Dr. Karl Butzer, University of Texas, visited the site.
Spring. Problems with bentonite miner, Glenn Gunn, who held mining rights to the land the site was located on, began and continued into the summer.
Master Pit I roofed.
October. Fifth Season began. There was a high yield of stone tool artifacts.
December. Hearth-like feature was uncovered by Rosemary Ritter in Master Pit II.
- 1969 Spring. Guided tours began.
May. United States government voided mining claim held by Glenn Gunn in the immediate vicinity of the excavations.
Summer. Plans for an International Conference on the Calico Site are begun. The Leakey Foundation was funded the conference.
September. Francois Bordes again visited the site.
- 1970 October 22-25. International Conference on the Calico Site was held at San Bernardino Valley College. Over 100 scientists were in attendance.
- 1971 June. Calico Mountains Archaeological Site was approved for National Register of Historic Places.
Fall. *Pleistocene Man at Calico* (First Edition), edited by Walter Schuiling, was published.
- 1972 October. Dr. Louis S. B. Leakey passed away in London.
- 1973 Summer. Dee Simpson presented a paper about Calico at the IX International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Chicago, Illinois.

- 1974 Summer. Site was put under operational control of the San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department. The site was visited by Dr. Phillip Tobias, University of Witwaterstrand, Johannesburg, South Africa and Dr. Alex Krieger.
Winter. SBCM and the Calico collection are moved from Bloomington to their new facility in the city of Redlands.
- 1978 December. Dr. Phillip Leakey visited the site and the lab.
- 1979 January. Control and support by County Regional Parks ended because of the passage of Prop 13. Bureau of Land Management takes over the support for the site.
February. This marked the first visit by Dr. James Bischoff, USGS, Menlo Park and Dr. Richard Ku, USC, to determine if uranium-thorium dating was a viable dating technique for the Calico Site.
April. Dr. Morlin Childers, early man expert from Imperial Valley, visited.
Summer. *Pleistocene Man at Calico* was revised and a second edition was published.
August. Site was visited by Dr. Roy Shlemon, consulting geomorphologist, Emma Lou Davis, Great Basin Foundation archaeologist, and Jaqueline Nichols, archaeologist.
October. Excavations in Master Pit III started.
November. Dr. Knut Fladmark, Simon Frazier University, Vancouver, Canada, visited the site.
- 1980 January. Friends of Calico Early Man Site, Inc. (FOC) was incorporated as a non-profit support entity for the site.
Spring. Dr. Tom Lee, Canadian archaeologist, and Dr. Henry Stewart, American archaeologist working in Japan, visited the site.
August. Priscilla Leakey Davis visited the lab at SBCM where she remarked that her father always referred to Calico as “Olduvai West.”
Fall. Dr. Lee Patterson, Texas lithics expert, first examined the Calico collection. Site was visited by Dr. Brian Reeves, University of Calgary, Canada.
- 1981 February. Dr. Peter Jones, archaeologist and lithics expert working with Mary Leakey at Olduvai, was brought to the site by Joan Travis of the Leakey Foundation.
April. Dr. Robson Bonnicson, University of Maine, Orono and Dr. Alan Bryan, University of Alberta, Canada, visited the site.
August. Dee Simpson delivered a major paper at the X International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Mexico City. CBS TV’s “2 on the Town” filmed a half-hour segment at the site.
December. *Geology Magazine* published “Uranium Series and Soil Geomorphic Dating of the Calico Archaeological Site, CA” by James Bischoff, Roy Shelmon, Richard Ku, et al.
- 1982 July. Ritner Sayles, the man who first brought Dee Simpson’s attention to the Lake Manix Lithic Industry tools, died.

- November. National Geographic photographer Baron Hugo Van Lawick, and David O'Dell, National Geographic filmmaker, spent the day both at the museum looking at the collections and at the site.
- 1983 February. TV show “Ripley’s Believe it or Not” filmed an episode at Calico.
April. Dr. Ran Gerson, Institute of Earth Science, University of Jerusalem, Israel, and Dr. William Bull, University of Arizona, Tucson, visited.
August. XI International Conference of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences was held in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Fred Budinger presented a paper. Dee Simpson was unable to attend, so her paper was read by Dottie Kasper.
November. Pollen analysis report by Sallie Horn, Ken Orvis and Marjorie Reed of UC, Berkeley, CA was received.
- 1984 Summer. Dr. Nicholas Toth, UC Berkeley lithics expert, visited the site and lab, as did Dr. Esmee Webb, British pre-historian.
November. Twentieth Anniversary observation. Panel Discussion participants included Lee Patterson, George Carter, Clay Singer, John Alszszatal-Petheo, Alan Bryan, Ruth Gruhn, George Jefferson and Ted Oberlander. *American Antiquities* published a “TL/ESR Study of the Hearth Feature at the Calico Archaeological Site, California” by James Bischoff, Motoji Ikeya and Fred Budinger.
- 1985 March. Dr. S. A. Shumm, fluvial geomorphologist, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, who was interested in conducting flume experiments to determine if nature breaks rock with man-made attributes, visited the site and the lab.
May. Society of American Archaeology meeting was in Denver, Colorado. Marie Wormington, Emil Haury, and others, acknowledged Calico specimens as man-made. They then questioned the dating.
November. BLM requested surface survey to support need to increase the size of the area protected by National Register status. Survey began.
 December. Dee Simpson retired as San Bernardino County Archaeologist. She continues directing the Calico Project in the field and at the SBCM as Curator of Archaeology Emeritus.
- 1986 June. Dr. Donald Grayson, University of Washington, and Dr. Dennis Stanford from the Smithsonian visited the site.
August. Excavation of a backhoe trench for geological study took place. It ran down from below Control Pit I towards the Master Pits.
- 1987 April. Backhoe trench was extended another 250 feet. Janet Boley, geologist, Cal Tech, gave a preliminary report indicating her raw data showed the possibility of x-ray florescence “fingerprinting” of chert. Identifying the source of lithic raw materials would be of value to Calico and all other archaeological sites.
Spring. *Journal of Field Archaeology* published “Analysis of Flakes at Calico Site, California”, by Lee Patterson, Louis Hoffman, Rose Marie Higginbotham and Dee Simpson.

- November. Dr. Roy Shlemon and Dr Paul Davis began investigation of geologic strata exposed in the backhoe trenches.
- 1988 Spring. *Current Research in the Pleistocene*, University of Maine, Orono, published “Lithic Flakes Attributes, Calico Lithic Specimens and Experimental Knapping” by Patterson, Hoffman, Higginbotham and Simpson.
- 1989 On-site research library was established by Site Interpreter Jeff Stark.
- 1989 July. Herbert Minshall’s new book *Buchanan Canyon, Ancient Human Presence in the Americas*, was published by Avant Books. Minshall detailed his study of ancient tools around the Pacific Rim, demonstrating the similarities of San Diego tools and Calico’s with those found elsewhere in the world.
August. Calico specimens were shown to scholars at Circum-Pacific Prehistory Conference (also called International Rim of the Pacific Symposium) held in Seattle, WA. Scholars from Russia, China and other countries saw at least some of the tools as clearly man-made.
October. SBCM Association Quarterly published *An Introduction to Calico Lithic Assemblage* by Dee Simpson.
- 1990s Margaret Anthony retired as the first (and to this point, only) crew chief and dig instructor for the site’s volunteer diggers.
Frank Spingola became crew chief in Master Pit III. Within the year, he was diagnosed with lung cancer and did not return to Calico.

Frank’s assistant, Dee Johnson (Suchil), became crew chief of Master Pit III. Doris Bowers Nature Trail opens.
- 2000 January. Dee Simpson passed away in Redlands, California.
Fred Budinger, Jr. becomes Calico’s 3rd project director
Spring. BLM installs a fee box (Iron Ranger), on the Calico property and for the first time a charge of \$5 per car is required to visit the site.
May. Calico Project Director Fred Budinger, Jr., presented a paper at the 2000 Millennium Conference in Barstow, CA.
- 2001 Fall. A memorial placard to Dee Simpson was placed along the Master Pit Trail.
- 2003 July. Calico’s Bylaws received a major overhaul, and approval of the membership.
Fall. Project Director Fred Budinger, Jr., announced the completion of the “foot work” portion of the site survey volunteers have been working on since 2000. He was to compile the information and submit it to the BLM and National Park Service.
- 2004 Chris Vedborg became crew chief of Master Pit III.
May. Fred Budinger, Jr., gave a presentation on “40 Years at Calico” during the SCA Annual Meeting held in Riverside, CA. FOC members also sponsored a table during the event.

2005 The suggestion of a “Science First Protocol” was presented to the board by Alan Griesemer. It was “ a 2-3 year research plan to settle the age of the site, and the authenticity of the artifacts associated with it.” Fred Budinger was asked to head this research as the site’s current project director. At the conclusion of the project, he would be expected to complete his final report within a year.

??? Ask Maggie or Chris Vedberg. The updated cataloging of Calico artifacts at the SBCM began with two new FOC employees, Chris Vedborg and Chris Hardaker.

2007 Spring. Redo of the Uranium-Thorium test done in 1981 by Dr. Bischoff. Results were the same.

2007? Master Pits closed by the BLM.

Prior to 2008? Lidar Mapping

Beryllium -10 testing done by University of Cincinnati

2008 **Research paper from Cincinnati received. ????**

June. Fred Budinger resigns as project director.

September. Adella Schroth becomes the site’s 4th project director.

October. Dee Suchil returned to the site as Crew Chief, but moved out of state a few months later. The crew chief job went to Katie Boyd and then the job passed to JK Mueller. Finally, Claude Short took over as Crew Chief.

2009 Spring. Solar power was established in the Visitor’s Center and a 19” TV was added to show DVDs for visitor’s not able to walk up the trail. After just a few months, a dust devil landed directly on top of the solar panel tower and destroyed it. Students from Victor Valley College and volunteers, under the supervision of Professor Richard Cerrito (current FOC President), complete a site survey of the entire 941 acre ACEC, finding 10 prehistoric sites and one historic site. Chris Vedborg found two points in the bentonite piles by the Visitor’s Center. One was hafted and appeared to be a Pinto atlatl point. The other may have been a Lake Mojave Stem Point.

October. The projectile point with haft found in the bentonite piles received a radiocarbon date of 1550 – 1630 AD.

2010 November. Cataloging of artifacts at SBCM was completed. Re-evaluation and analysis began.

2011 The revamping of the site’s old lab building into a schoolhouse, complete with a large covered patio area for tables, was completed.

Rock Wren pit was extended by Claude Short, Crew Manager. Dave Moreno became Crew Chief for Rock Wren.

February. Site was visited by 45 seventh and eighth grade students from the SBCM Youth Club.

Spring. A mock pit, located next to the schoolhouse, was opened for kids, ages 4-7, to dig at the site. It was built by Chris Christensen, Chris Vedborg and Maggie Foss. The pit contained three sections with different soils. Each was salted with “artifacts” the students must dig out and analyze.

2012 March. The new Henry Pit, just above MPII, opened for adult diggers under the direction of Sandy Karhu. The following summer, a heavy rain storm washed out the trail around the master pits and cut off access to the Henry pit. Work stopped until the trail could be repaired.

Barbara Stanculescu became Crew Chief for Rock Wren with Michelle Nagy serving as her assistant.

December. Long time Calico flintknapper, Dave LeCocq, passed away.

2013 The name of the site was returned to the official name, “Calico Mountains Archaeological Site”. The words “Early Man” were removed. The name of the Friends of Calico Early Man Site, Inc., did not change.

Fall. Testing in the trench behind the commissary and the school house began under the direction of Sandy Karhu. The purpose of the trench will be to aid in controlling water run-off from torrential rains.

The testing of the area for the ethnobotany garden was started by the Boy Scouts.

*Originally prepared by Ruth D Simpson, Fred Budinger,
and Walter Schuiling*

Revised and updated by Dottie Kasper

Revised and Updated by Dee Suchil 2014