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PRELIMINARY REPORT ON FISH REMAINS
FROM THE FALCON HILL SITES, WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA

by

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Through the kindness of Dr. Richard Shutler, Jr., I have had the privilege of examining the fish remains that he and his associates found at several archaeological sites in the vicinity of Falcon Hill, near the northwest end of Winnemucca Lake, Washoe County, Nevada.

The identification of the fish remains from these sites (excepting Kramer Cave) is about two-thirds completed. The species represented and the number of skeletal elements of each (not including one salmon vertebra discussed below) are as follows:

Lahontan cutthroat trout, Salmo clarkii henshawi Gill & Jordan: 156

Kuyui, Chasmistes cuius Cope:75

Lahontan sucker, Catostomus tahoensis Gill & Jordan: 55

Tui-chub, Siphateles bicolor (Girard): 27

The vertebrae recovered far outnumber all other skeletal elements combined. The number of vertebrae of each species in the collection, evaluated in proportion to the number of vertebrae in an individual fish of each of those species, suggests that trout constituted about 40% of the Falcon Hill fish catch; kuyui, about 30%; suckers, about 20%, and tui-chubs, about 10%. It is highly probably that these were the only sizable fishes that inhabited Winnemucca Lake before the advent of the white man.

The occurrence of remains of kuyui of about one foot in length, and perhaps one pound in weight, in the Falcon Hill material is noteworthy. It is difficult to hypothesize the manner in which the Falcon Hill people captured these half-grown (nonspawning) individuals. Adult examples of the kuyui, more than two feet in length and from five to seven pounds or more in weight, are readily captured during their spawning migration at the mouth of the Truckee River. However, to my knowledge, young or half-grown individuals of this species are seldom, if ever, observed. Presumably, the kuyui, except when spawning, inhabit intermediate depths of Pyramid Lake (and, formerly, Winnemucca Lake), where they subsist on the minute organisms of the plankton. It is conceivable

that the half-grown individuals were captured during an early stage of one of the periods of desiccation of Winnemucca Lake. Radiocarbon age-determinations of material from the levels at which the remains of half-grown kuyui were found in the Falcon Hill sites will therefore be of interest.

Surprisingly, a vertebra found at a depth of 126 to 132 inches **is** that of a fish which would not have occurred in Winnemucca Lake. Although not yet **identified** as to species, this vertebra is clearly referable to a Pacific salmon (Oncorhynchus). The presence of this vertebra at FalconHill must be ascribed to an aboriginal transport from either the Columbia, the **Klamath**, or the Sacramento river system. The only other salmon remains from an archaeological site in Nevada that have come to my attention were obtained by Dr. Shutler at Deer Creek Cave (in extreme northern Elko County), on the **Jarbidge** River, a high tributary of the Columbia River system.