

Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History
 Repatriation Office Case Report Summaries
 Great Basin Region
 Revised 2020

Great Basin	Bannock, Paiute, Shoshone, Washoe	1992	<p>INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF NATIVE AMERICAN HUMAN REMAINS FROM THE WESTERN GREAT BASIN, NEVADA SECTOR, IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY</p> <p>This is the first of two reports that will document the human remains in the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) from the Great Basin region. This report focuses on the western half of the Great Basin, providing an inventory and assessment of the skeletal remains in the museum from the region circumscribed by the modern political boundaries of the state of Nevada. Documentation of the human remains from the western Great Basin was initiated in November 1991 in response to an earlier request from the Pyramid Lake Paiute of northwestern Nevada for the return of any historic Paiute skeletal remains and associated artifacts from their territory. In addition to the Pyramid Lake Paiute, other native peoples potentially affected by the findings of this report include other sub-groups of the Northern Paiute, the Shoshone, the Bannock, and the Southern Paiute.</p> <p>A total of 56 sets of remains in the Physical Anthropology division of the NMNH were identified as having come from the western half of the Great Basin, which is defined for purposes of this report as the state of Nevada. Forty of these skeletal lots were determined to date to the historic period, while 16 sets of remains are prehistoric in origin. In compliance with Public Law 101-185, these remains were evaluated in terms of their probable cultural affiliation.</p> <p>Accession No. 64504 is believed to include the remains of a Shoshone Indian family that was tracked down and killed by a sheriff's posse in 1911 in north central Nevada. This museum accession lot contains 37 individually catalogued sets of remains. The skeletal elements represent a minimum of ten separate individuals. They include the partial remains of three adult males, two adult females, two adolescent males, and three children. Evidence of copper staining, associated metal fragments, and bits of adhered cotton fabric leave no doubt that these remains date to the historic period.</p>
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		<p>Several lines of evidence support the assumption that this set of remains represents Shoshone Mike and his family as stated in the original accession records: 1) the demographic composition of the group in the museum corresponds closely, though not precisely, to historic accounts of Shoshone Mike's family; 2) the proveniences of remains are to the approximate locality of the massacre and were believed by the donor, a local rancher, to represent the victims of this incident; and 3) one of the women in the collection has lead fragments embedded in her mandible, suggesting gunfire as the likely cause of death.</p> <p>Historic information indicates that Shoshone Mike was originally affiliated with the Fort Hall Indian tribe in southwestern Idaho. In compliance with Public Law 101-185, it was recommended that this tribal group be notified that the NMNH has in its possession the remains of Shoshone Mike and his family and that they be consulted about the disposition of these remains.</p> <p>Accession No. 33553 was acquired from the Army Medical Museum in 1907. This accession includes ten separate skulls identified as having come from the state of Nevada. Three of these crania are accompanied by detailed provenience information and area securely identified as Paiute in the museum records. It was recommended that the tribal councils at the Ft. McDermitt, Duck Valley, and Walker River Reservations be notified of their presence in the museum and consulted about their wishes regarding the disposition of these remains.</p> <p>The remaining seven individuals in Accession No. 33553 have neither secure provenience information nor cultural identities. Based on the travel itinerary of the collector, Stephen Powers, and the original bills of lading, it is fairly certain that these remains were collected in the state of Nevada, though they could potentially be affiliated with either Paiute or Washoe Indians. Following statutory procedures outlined in P.L. 101-601 (Section 5.d.2.C), it was recommended that all of the tribal councils of reservations in western Nevada be informed that the NMNH has a set of remains of unknown origin that may potentially be culturally affiliated with their group.</p> <p>Accession Nos. 122648 and 129607 constitute archaeological collections that were donated to the museum in the 1930s by Robert Heizer. The first lot contains one mandible that was surface collected by Heizer in the Humboldt Sink area of Nevada. The second lot includes five sets of skeletal remains excavated from the Pitt Mound site near Lovelock, Nevada and one set of commingled remains that were surface collected from the Humboldt Sink area. Based on the condition of the</p>
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Great Basin	Shoshone, Bannock	2005	<p>INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN REMAINS POTENTIALLY AFFILIATED WITH THE NORTHWESTERN BAND OF SHOSHONE IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION</p> <p>This report provides an inventory and assessment of the human remains potentially affiliated with the Northwestern Band of Shoshone. The report documents the remains of four individuals in the collections of the NMNH.</p> <p>The remains of two individuals present in the NMNH collections are from the Bear River massacre site in southeastern Idaho. These individuals were killed by the U.S. Army on January 29, 1863. They were removed from the site by an unknown medical officer soon after the incident and were cleaned by hospital steward Arthur Fleming. In November 1868, they were sent to the Army Medical Museum by Dr. Franklin Meacham, U.S. Army Assistant Surgeon. They were transferred to the National Museum of Natural History in 1898.</p> <p>At the time that Dr. Meacham sent the remains to the Army Medical Museum, he noted that the remains were those of chiefs Bear Hunter and Lehi who were killed in the incident. Meacham originally had doubts about the identity of the remains, but he apparently received "satisfactory evidence" supporting their identification before forwarding them to Washington. However, the remains present are inconsistent with those of the chiefs. Both of the individuals are probably too young to have been the named chiefs, who were mature men, and the remains previously thought to have belonged to Lehi actually belonged to a female. The condition of the remains that had been attributed to Bear Hunter exhibit none of the evidence of trauma that would be expected given the accounts of his death.</p> <p>Although the remains are not the skeletal remains of the chiefs Bear Hunter and Lehi, the preponderance of the evidence does suggest they are remains of individuals removed from the site of the Bear River massacre. The victims of the massacre were all Shoshone and the descendants of the massacre survivors are represented today by the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation. Therefore, the preponderance of the evidence indicates that these remains are culturally affiliated to the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation. It is recommended that the remains of these two individuals be offered for return to the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation.</p>
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Great Basin	Goshute, Shoshone	2006	<p>INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN REMAINS POTENTIALLY AFFILIATED WITH THE GOSHUTE IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION</p> <p>This report provides an inventory and assessment of the human remains potentially affiliated with the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians. The report documents the remains of seven individuals in the collections of the NMNH.</p> <p>The remains of three individuals present in the NMNH collections originated from a cave in southern Skull Valley near Choke Cherry Spring, Rydalch Ranch, of Tooele County, Utah. These individuals were removed from the cave by Acting Assistant Surgeon H. C. Yarrow in August of 1884. In October of 1884, they were sent to the Army Medical Museum (AMM) by Dr. Yarrow. They were transferred to the National Museum of Natural History in 1898. Yarrow identified the remains as Goshute in his annual report and they have been listed as Goshute in museum records ever since. The Goshute historically inhabited this region and burial in small caves was a common practice among them. Given the identification of cultural affiliation of these remains as Goshute based on collector attribution, the preponderance of the available evidence indicates that these remains are culturally affiliated with the Goshute tribes. It is recommended that they be offered for return to both the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians and the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation, Nevada and Utah.</p> <p>Human remains representing two additional individuals present in the NMNH collections originated from graves near Willow Springs, Juab County, Utah. They were collected by Acting Assistant Surgeon H. C. Yarrow in August of 1884. In October of 1884, they were sent to the Army Medical Museum by Dr. Yarrow and they were later transferred to the National Museum of Natural History in 1898. Dr. Yarrow reported that both of these individuals were Goshute and they were both known locally. One individual, known as "Willow Creek Bill," had been killed by the Goshute as punishment for committing adultery; a penalty consistent with ethno-historically documented Goshute practice. The second individual was known locally as "Lucky." Because names were identified for these two men, efforts were made to identify potential lineal descendants. These efforts, however, proved unsuccessful. Given the identification of cultural affiliation of these remains as Goshute based on collector attribution, and the evidence that they were locally known individuals who had been buried relatively recently, the</p>
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