

SUMMARY PICTORIAL OF BONNEVILLE ESTATES ROCKSHELTER



BER sits in a transitional zone between the Bonneville Salt Flats located some 5 miles distant and the uplands of the Goshute Mountains. The flat terrace (red arrow) was carved by the highstand of Pleistocene Lake Bonneville some 17,500 calendar years ago. After Lake Bonneville receded from this elevation, terrestrial sediments began accumulating atop lake beach and gravels that lie at the base of the rockshelter.



The front portal of Bonneville Estates Rockshelter.



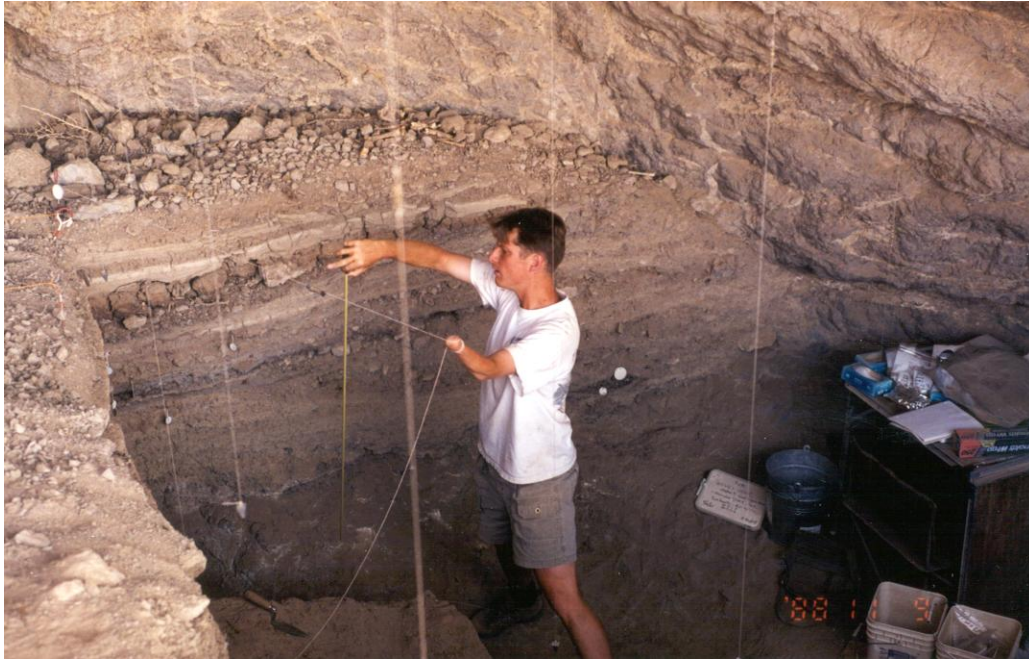
The inside of Bonneville Estates Rockshelter, taken in the mid-1990's prior to scientific excavations. The large pits in the rear of the shelter are looter's pits. Although large pits had been illegally dug at the site, BER was large enough to be able to sustain this damage and still preserve an amazing record of prehistoric use at a single locale over a 13,000 year period.



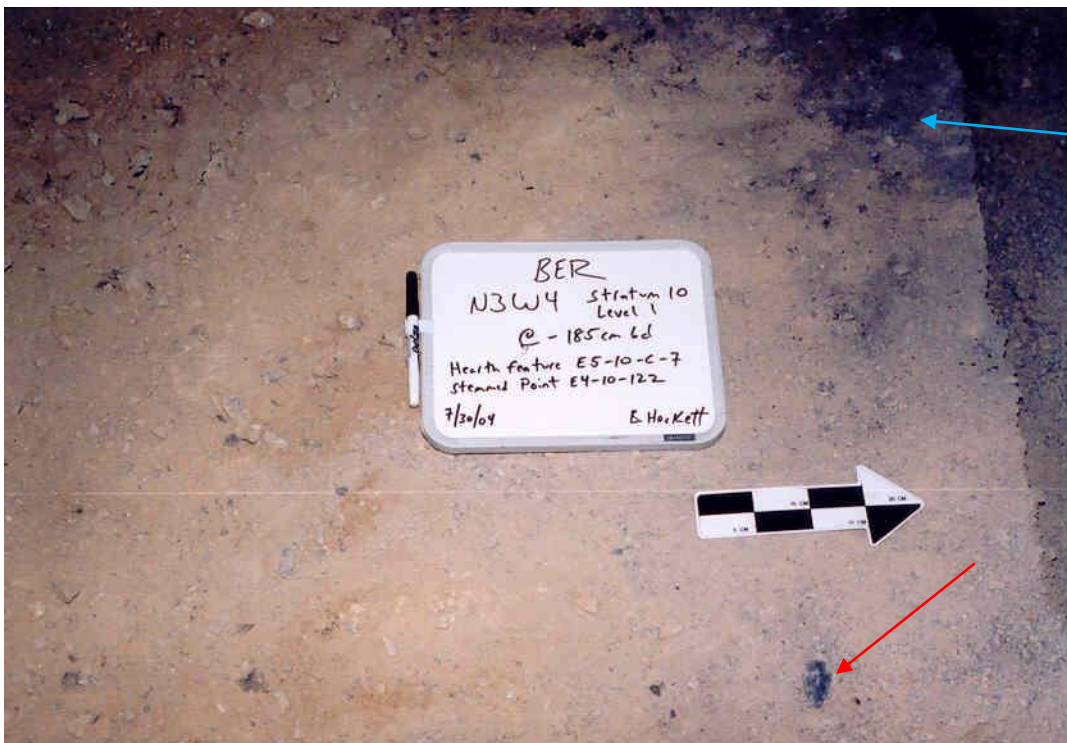
Early excavations at Bonneville Estates Rockshelter. These field school students are beginning a 2m x 2m excavation in the center of the shelter. This excavation area became known as the “Central Block”. Additional block excavations occurred in the western and eastern portions of the shelter, known as the “West Block” and “East Block”. These three areas were eventually tied together with a 1m wide trench so that the sediments could be properly viewed, mapped, and interpreted across the entire site.



Central Block after about 1m of excavation. The West Block lies to the left. The trench can also be seen, leading to the right hand side of the picture and the location of the East Block.



Jonathan Haws, Associate Professor (University of Louisville) during early excavations in the East Block.



A Paleoindian (or Paleoarchaic) stemmed projectile point (red arrow) found *in situ* lying next to a ca. 11,500 year old hearth (blue arrow), East Block.



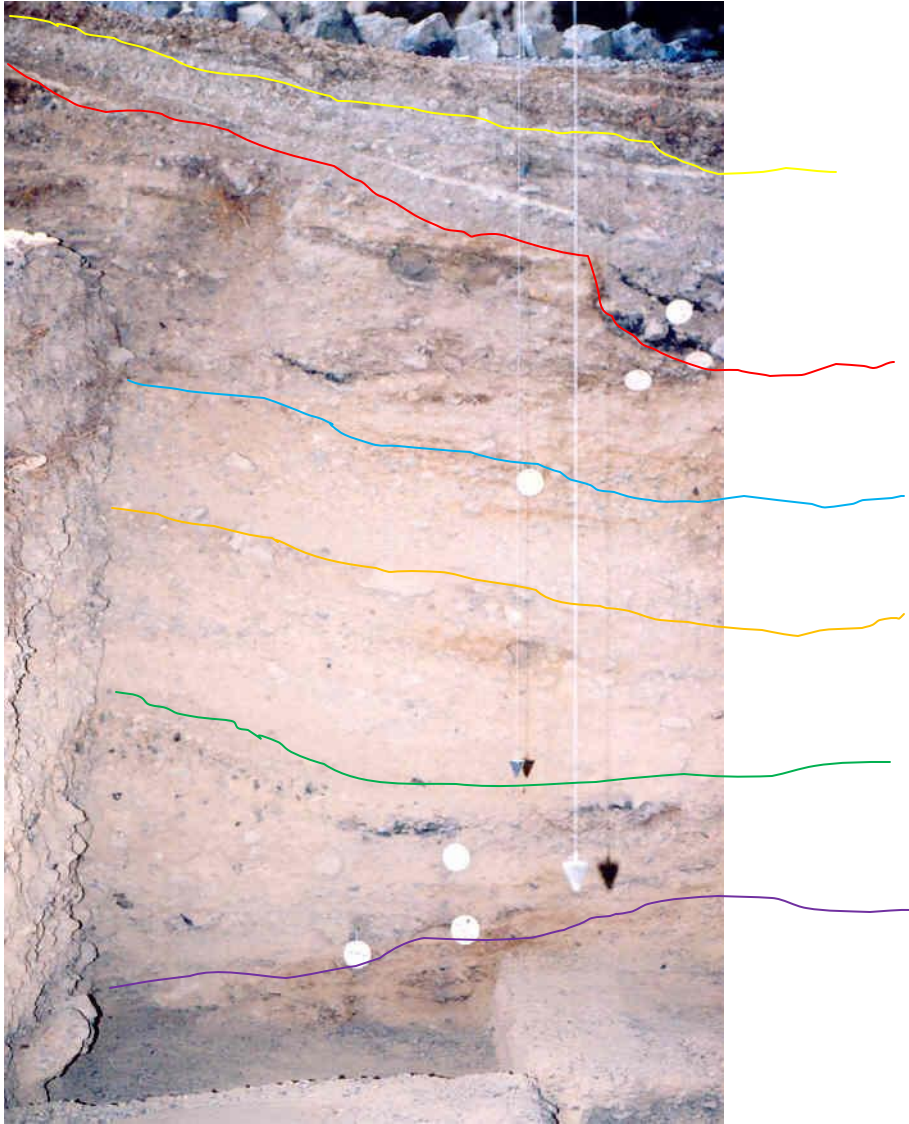
A typical Paleoindian-aged hearth as they were encountered within the tannish-colored gravels and silts in the lower layers of Bonneville Estates Rockshelter.



A Paleoindian-aged hearth from the West Block. Sage grouse bones (red arrows) were almost always found lying next to the oldest hearths (blue arrow) in BER. A later charcoal and ash filled pit (yellow arrow) dug by prehistoric peoples can be seen in the profile wall of the unit.



A very large pit (blue arrow) that was prehistorically excavated into older sediments (yellow arrow) in the East Block at BER. I named the pit "LSN Pit", for "Large Side-Notched Pit". The pit contained numerous broken Large Side-Notched projectile points. LSN points were manufactured after stemmed points, during the Middle Holocene drought that gripped the Great Basin for several thousand years. Occupation of BER diminished during the Middle Holocene during this dry climatic phase. This pit dates to the end of the Middle Holocene period. In addition to LSN points, charcoal, and ash, this pit was full of broken and burned pronghorn antelope bones, and lesser numbers of jackrabbit bones.



A profile wall in the East Block. The lines roughly reflect the following occupation periods at Bonneville Estates Rockshelter: (1) above the yellow line = historic sheep camping; (2) between the yellow and red lines = Fremont period occupation, roughly 2,000 – 1,000 years ago; (3) between the red and blue lines = late Middle Archaic occupation (Elko), roughly 4,000 – 2,000 years ago; (4) between the blue and orange lines = earlier Middle Archaic occupation (Gatecliff/Humboldt), roughly 6,500 to 4,000 years ago; (5) between the orange and green lines= Early Archaic (Large Side-Notched), roughly 9,500 to 6,500 years ago; (5) between the green and purple lines = Paleoindian or Paleoarchaic, prior to 9,500 years ago.



Two ca. 11,500 year old hearths in profile in the East Block (red arrows), and Pleistocene Lake Bonneville beach gravels (ca. 17,500 years ago) lying on the base of the excavation floor (blue arrow).



Bryan Hockett (left), Kelly Graf (center), and Ted Goebel (right) resting on a slab of bedrock in the East Block.



Kelly Graf (left, seated), Ted Goebel (center, seated), and Bryan Hockett (right, standing) working in the East Block at Bonneville Estates Rockshelter.