HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS
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ARTIFACTS AS TIME MARKERS
Chronologies reflect technological changes
- Glass bottles (maker's marks, bottle seals, lips, finish, and color)
- Ceramics (maker's marks, glaze, etc.)
- Cans (labels, seams, opening & closures, type of tops)
- Nails (round vs. square)
- Barbed Wire
- Ammunition
- Patented tools/equipment
- Bricks

8 DECADES OF CANNED BEER
A TIMELINE OF NOTABLE EVENTS
ARTIFACTS AS CULTURAL MARKERS

• Historical artifacts are oftentimes diagnostic of various cultural groups
  • Chinese miners/fishermen/railroad
  • Native American miners
  • Japanese fishermen
  • Spanish explorers
  • Chilean miners
  • Russian fur trappers

IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT (both in time and in space)
TYPES OF HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS: THEMES IN CALIFORNIA HISTORY

- Discovery and Exploitation
- Mexican/Mission Period
- Early American Period (Fur trapping/homesteading)
- California Gold Rush/Mining
- Logging History
- Development of Agriculture and Horticulture
- Recreational History

DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION

- Overlap between “prehistoric” and “historical” archaeology (protohistoric period)
- Trade items
  - Raw materials (glass, metals)
  - Glass beads
  - Weapons and metal tools
  - European artifacts
  - Ship wrecks
Archaeological remains dating to this period include:

- Mix of Native American and Euroamerican artifacts
- Exchange items
- Farm/ranch-related items
- Craft-related items (brickmaking, ceramic-tile manufacture, metal tools)

Archeologica...
EARLY AMERICAN PERIOD

- Influx of Americans associated with land grants
- Fur-trapping
- Domestic items
- Industry-specific items
- Homesteading
- Domestic items
- Structural remains
- Orchards
- Emigrant trails/roads
- Wagon parts, ox shoes

GOLD RUSH/MINING-RELATED ARTIFACTS

- Artifacts normally found in association with features
- Artifacts examples:
  - Mills, processing tanks, stairways, machinery
  - Tools (buckets, axes, shovels, pans)
  - Domestic/camp-related items (cans, bottles, cutlery, tobacco cans, cooking utensils)
LOGGING-RELATED ARTIFACTS

- Associated with features
- Artifacts: axe heads, log dogs, saws, wedges, undercutters, etc.
- Camp-related items (similar to mining camps)
AGRICULTURE-RELATED ARTIFACTS

- Ranches and farms
- Livestock/agriculture-related
- Tools, equipment, horse shoes
- Domestic features and items
- Houses, cellars, privies, wells, trash dumps, etc.
- Cans, bottles, buttons, etc.

Old Borges Ranch, Walnut Creek, California. Built 1899.
RECREATION-RELATED ARTIFACTS

- Early tourism
- Gambling
- Sports
- Theme parks
- Outdoor recreation
  - Camping, hiking
  - Hunting, fishing
  - Skiing

HOW TO DATE A BOTTLE FRAGMENT: COLOR

You can date some bottles based on color alone, but normally need to look at other characteristics.
HOW TO DATE A BOTTLE FRAGMENT: BODY AND SEAMS

Air/gas Bubbles
3-Piece Mold Seam (1900-1910)

HOW TO DATE A BOTTLE FRAGMENT: MAKER’S MARKS

Iowa-Illinois Glass Company
American Bottle Company: 1906-1909

HOW TO DATE A BOTTLE FRAGMENT: FINISHES AND CLOSURES

Applied finish on brandy bottle (~1830-1885)
Improved tool finish with external screw thread on flask (~1905-1915)
Note the side mold seam, air bubbles, plate mold, and suction scar on base
HOW TO DATE A TIN CAN: LID/CLOSURE

- Key-wind: 1866-present
- Cone-top: 1935-1960s

HOW TO DATE A TIN CAN: SEAM TYPE

- Hand-soldered
- Machine-soldered

HOW TO DATE A TIN CAN: SPECIAL TYPES

- Condensed Milk Can
- Prince Albert Tobacco Tin
- Oil Can