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DEC. 11, EVENING. IN MY CAMPER, PANAMINT VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

GREETINGS, DEAR FRIENDS;

NOW, WHILE DISHWATER HEATS AND THE TWO DOGS SNORE, IT SEEMS A GOOD TIME TO GET OFF A LETTER BRIEFING YOU ON MY 1964. AT THIS MOMENT, THE SPLENDID STARS OF THE DESERT WHEEL OVERHEAD, WIND FROM THE SIERRA PICKS UP A LITTLE, AND I'M HAPPIER THAN I'VE BEEN SINCE AGE TEN...IN THE FIELD ON A PROJECT OF MY OWN DESIGNING, WHICH IS GOING WELL.

IN JUNE, MY PH D WAS GRANTED AFTER FIVE YEARS IN THE UCLA SALT MINE, MADE ENDURABLE ONLY BY A PART-TIME JOB EACH YEAR ON THE WETHERILL MESA PROJECT, A BIG, INTER-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ENTERPRISE SPONSORED BY THE U.S. PARK SERVICE. SCHOOL RATHER DISGUSTED ME: THE KOW-TOWING, PRETENSE, INTELLECTUAL FADDISM AND EMPTY STATUS JOSTLING. I WENT THROUGH IT LIKE A COW THROUGH A CHINA SHOP AND IT SEEMED THAT EVERY TIME I SWITCHED MY TAIL, ACADEMIC CHINOISERIE WENT FLYING. ONLY THREE THINGS SAVED ME FROM GETTING CANNED: MY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, CLEM, A HABIT OF GETTING AS...AND THE WETHERILL JOB AS AN ANECDOTE.

THIS RESEARCH ALSO PROVIDED MY DISSERTATION...A SHOT-GUN DRAFT, WRITTEN IN FRANTIC HASTE IN THREE MONTHS. LOOKS IT TOO. HOWEVER, OUR EDITOR, BERNIE, AND A NIT-PICKING TYPIST, AND SEVERAL MONTHS OF CAREFUL REVISION HAVE CONSIDERABLY IMPROVED THE TEXT, AS HAS THE ADDITION OF 198 PLATES AND LINE DRAWINGS. THE FINISHED PRODUCT, AT BOOK LENGTH, WILL APPEAR AS CONTRIBUTION NO. 9 IN THE WETHERILL MESA MONOGRAPH SERIES, TITLE..."POPULATION PRESSURES, MESA VERDEAN MIGRATIONS AND CULTURE CHANGE". WOW!

HINT THAT SOMETHIN'? (WATER'S BOILIN, BETTERE WASH THE DISHES..).

SPRING WAS A WILD SCRAMBLE TO FINISH THE BLURB. THEN CAME THAT GREAT GETTIN UP DAY IN JUNE WHEN THREE OF US WHO HAD WEATHERED THE STORM SAT TOGETHER UNDER CHANCELLOR MURPHY'S PODIUM, LISTENING TO POOR MUSIC, SHRILLY BROADCAST, AND SWEATING IN OUR VELVET TRIMMED REGALIA. A SOLEMN MOMENT, WITH CORN.

JULY WAS A MONTH OF RELAXATION...WORKING WITH OUR EDITOR, MEETING NEW PEOPLE LIKE THE CRABTREES AND BOB BUTLER, AND GOING UP TO GUERNSEY WYOMING TO AGOGINO AND IRWIN'S HELL GAP DIG IN COMPANY WITH WONDERFUL OLD RUTH UNDERHILL, MELLOW AT 80 BUT WITH A BRAIN LIKE A STEEL TRAP..."HE HAD THE RUSSET APPLE MIND, THAT BETTERS AS THE WEATHER WORSEN"...THEN A LOT OF VISITING WITH OLD FRIENDS IN CANYON CITY, SANTA FE, ALBUQUERQUE, LOS LUNAS, DENVER.

THEN HOME, TO LABOR FOR THREE WEEKS OVER AN APPLICATION FOR A GRANT OF \$21,500 TO SUPPORT THIS PROJECT ON WHICH I'M WORKING RIGHT NOW...THE WAY OF LIFE AND TOOL-MAKING ACTIVITY OF PANAMINT VALLEY BIRD HUNTERS OF LONG AGO...JUST HOW LONG, THE CHARCOAL SHOULD TELL US, IF WE CAN EXTRACT ENOUGH OF THE SCARCE STUFF. ANYWAY, WE HAVE AN EARLY-ISH CAMP, WITH MIDDEN MATERIAL (GARBAGE TO YOU!) FORTUNATELY SEALED IN UNDER A LAYER OF CEMENTED MUD. I HEAR FROM NSF NEXT MONTH, YEA OR NAY, SO REPEAT SLOWLY AFTER ME...KICK IN UNCLE!

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER WERE SPENT IN HIGH GEAR ON MS. REVISIONS AND ALL THOSE ILLUSTRATIONS. MUST SAY THEY LOOK PRETTY GOOD. THE TEXT IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS: A BACKGROUND AND GENERAL ACCOUNT FOR THE AVERAGE, INTERESTED READER, AND A HUGE MASS OF SUPPORTING DATA FOR THE SPECIALIST TO USE HIS LITTLE BUCKET AND SHOVEL ON.

THE DAY AFTER ALL THIS WAS SHIPPED OFF TO BERNIE, I GOT GOING ON PANAMINT.

MY NEW HOUSE (NOW TWO YEARS OLD) CONTINUES TO BE AN ENDLESS JOY. WITH ITS TWO FIREPLACES, COZY STUDY AND BEAUTIFULLY ORGANIZED SPACE, IT IS SO PERFECT, NO WASTE. THE NEIGHBORHOOD IS ALSO DELIGHTFUL...AN INTIMATE, LITTLE COMMUNITY ON THE FRINGE OF HUGE SMOGOPOLIS. WHERE ELSE BUT ON BLUEGRASS LANE COULD YOU GET YOUR PSYCHIATRIST NEIGHBOR TO MAKE A HOUSE CALL ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN ORDER TO REMOVE A BURR FROM YOUR PUPPY'S EAR?

LOVE,

Darcy

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