



LAS March 2016 Headlines:

HIKER FINDS ANCIENT POT IN AREA MOUNTAINS

By: James Gilbert, @YSJamesGilbert Saturday, March 12, 2016

Yuman Steve Embry was hiking in the Cargo Muchacho Mountains many years ago when he happened to look up the side of a cliff and see something didn't look natural. What he found was a small cave opening that had been sealed closed by a stack of rocks.

"I went up there and took one of the rocks off, looked inside, and saw a pot sitting there in the dark," Embry said. "I have never seen anything like it before. It was like a phantom emerging from the darkness."

The pot, which is about 14-inches tall and white in color, is almost completely intact. Embry said at the time he thought the long-hidden pot was possibly pre-Columbian, and made several hundred years ago by Native American people who once inhabited the area.

Not wanting to disturb the site any further, Embry stacked the rocks back up to hide the cave opening again and continued with his hike. He said he looked for the cave on his way back down, but couldn't find it again.

"At the very least I hoped it would hold some historical or cultural significance to Cocopah or Quechan Tribes," Embry said.

Embry said he looked for the small cave many times over the years, but was never able to find it, until stumbling across it again about a month ago. This time he took pictures of the pot with his cell phone and later showed them to an archaeologist from the Bureau of Land Management in Yuma, who referred him to the agency's Imperial County Field Office.

"I actually lost track of where it was," Embry said. "I never forgot about it. I knew it was there. Every time I went hiking I looked for it, but couldn't find it again."

Embry explained that he first made the unusual find about 10 years ago, when he began hiking in the mountains for exercise, but never told anyone about it until recently.

"I was walking along a route and looked down into one of the rivulets in the cliff and noticed something," Embry said. "I did a double take. It looked like a pottery shard so I reached down and picked one up and sure enough it was. I'm out in the middle of nowhere and wonder what a pot shard is doing here."

Based on the number of pottery shards he found near the site, Embry said he thinks that other pots may have been stored in the cave over the years.

Recently, Embry took Bureau of Land Management Archaeologist Tom James to the site where he found the pot. While James identified the pot as an Olla - a jar for storing water - he could not determine when it was made.

"It is a really great object, and having it there will provide archaeologists an opportunity to learn more about the lifestyle of the ancient peoples who lived in the area," James said.



The rocks removed from the opening to a small cave in the Cargo Muchacho Mountains northwest of Yuma, a pot thought to be hundreds of years old sits inside. Yuma's Steve Embry discovered the pot while on a hike in the mountains 10 years ago.



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As to its origin, James said he thinks the Olla was made by ancient people who predate the modern Quechan Tribe, but he would need to study the pot further. He estimated it could be between 700 and 1,000 years old. The cave where the Olla was found is also located on the Quechan Reservation.

The following day James sent emails to cultural representatives and leaders from both tribes, informing them of the discovery. A day later, Embry guided Quechan Tribal members to the cave containing the Olla, so they could see it first-hand for themselves.

Quechan Tribal President Mike Jackson said he is unable to comment about the Olla at this time because the tribe's Cultural Committee still needs time to examine the site further. He added once that happens, the Tribe will be able to talk more about the significance of the find.

While not much is known about the Cargo Muchacho Mountains from an archaeology perspective, James said the mountain range is the site of the first European gold mines in California, which date back to the mid-1600s, shortly after the Spaniards arrived in the area.

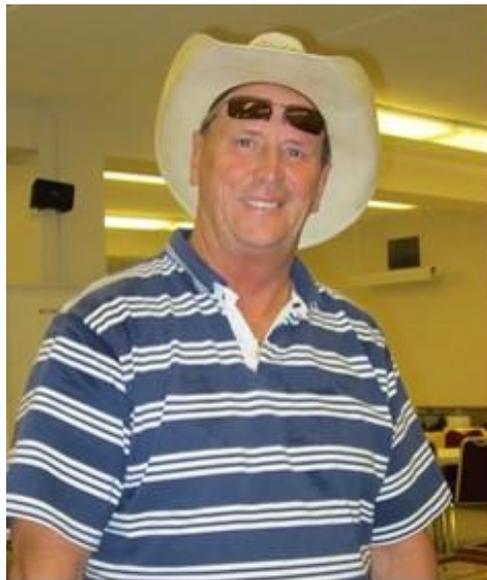
The Cargo Muchacho Mountains, James said, got its name "Loaded Boy" after two Spanish boys came down from the mountains carrying gold in their shirts.

With hundreds of miles of trails going through the area and the mountain range, James said there is no way to know if the Olla was left there as a cache of water or for ceremonial purposes.

Both James and Jackson spoke about the importance not removing any artifacts that happen to be found.

In Memorium: Mike Oliver

Longtime LAS member, contributor, and Stone Age Fair exhibitor Mike Oliver passed away Sunday, March 13, 2016. Most of us knew Mike as "Papaw" to his granddaughter, McKella Walsh. He and McKella were an annual fixture at the Loveland Stone Age Fair, and Mike funded the George Stewart Memorial Award for many years. Mike took great pleasure in immersing McKella in artifacts and archaeology, and made sure she was around people who enjoyed the hobby as much as she did. A generous man, we'll miss Mike's presence, his wit, and constant smile.



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LAS Find of the Month, March 2016:

Members can bring an artifact to be entered into the competition at the monthly meeting, which will be judged based on the following rules:

1. Must be a member of LAS in good standing.
2. The artifact must be a personal find.
3. It must have been found within the specified time frame, i.e., within the month prior to the meeting.
4. The artifact doesn't have to be a Colorado find—all that matters is that it was found in the last month.

The Find of the Month for March 2016 was made by Lary Pachner.

Type: Mummy Cave
Material: Agate
Location: South Platte River, Nebraska



LAS News and Upcoming Events:

- Ongoing: Univ of Colorado Museum of Natural History. "Unearthed: Ancient Life in the Boulder Valley" exhibit featuring the Clovis artifacts from the Mahaffy Cache found in Boulder, Colorado in 2008. The exhibit will run through September 2016. Cost is free.
- April 1-3, 2016 Fort Collins Rockhounds Club annual Gem and Mineral Show at the Ranch (McKee 4-H, Youth and Community Bldg) in Loveland, Colorado. See the website for more information: www.fortcollinsrockhounds.org.
- April 2, 2016 2016 Spring Into Archaeology Fair. We will be joining with the Fort Collins Rockhounds Club and having our 2016 Spring Into Archaeology Fair at the McKee 4-H, Youth and Community Building at the Ranch in Loveland on April 2, 2016. If you plan to exhibit please call Andy Coca at (303) 286-7711 for table space. A map with directions to the McKee Building is attached. Parking is free. See you there!
- April 5, 2016 April meeting. Program: Rich Savino will give a presentation on "Rock Art of the Bighorns, Wyoming."
- April 9, 2016 19th Annual Kansas Archaeological Society Indian Artifact Show at 12200 214th Road, Holton, Kansas. For more information or for table reservations call Dave Schock, (785) 364-3238.
- May 3, 2015 May meeting. Program: Tom Westfall will give a presentation on Lithic Casting of artifacts and how casts help students and collectors learn about point types and lithic technology. Tom will also demonstrate how a point is cast once the mold is made.

