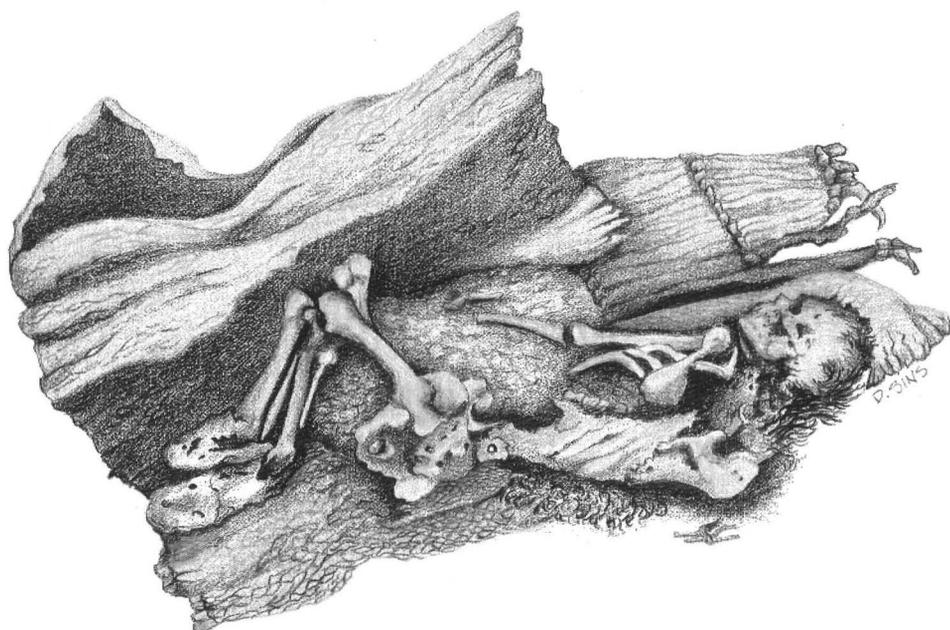


# Nevada

Historical Society Quarterly



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# NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Prospective authors should send their work to The Editor, *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, 1650 N. Virginia St., Reno, Nevada 89503. Papers should be typed double-spaced and sent in duplicate. All manuscripts, whether articles, edited documents, or essays, should conform to the most recent edition of the University of Chicago Press *Manual of Style*. Footnotes should be typed double-spaced on separate pages and numbered consecutively.

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**PAPERS ON HOLOCENE BURIAL  
LOCALITIES PRESENTED AT THE  
TWENTY-FIFTH GREAT BASIN  
ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONFERENCE,  
October 10-12, 1996**

Donald R. Tuohy and Amy Dansie

The majority of the following papers were delivered at the Twenty-fifth Great Basin Anthropological Conference at Symposium 15, which was chaired and organized by Amy Dansie and Donald R. Tuohy of the Nevada State Museum. The symposium abstract stated the following:

The Accelerator Mass Spectrometry radiocarbon dates recently obtained on burials housed in the Nevada State Museum revealed two burial assemblages over 9,000 years old. The Spirit Cave mummy has received wide attention, but the other burials in the cave are also significant. A skeleton from Wizards Beach, Pyramid Lake, Nevada was also dated between 9,225 and 9,515 years B.P. Research on these two assemblages will be presented in the context of Great Basin prehistory and the issues relating to the peopling of the New World. The session will be concluded with open discussions on the issues of tribal affiliation and repatriation under "NAGPRA," an abbreviation that stands for the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990.

This was not the first time an aboriginal burial in the Great Basin dated in excess of 9,000 years ago. L. S. Cressman's radiocarbon-dated sagebrush fiber sandals from Fort Rock Cave in the northern Great Basin in Oregon (Cressman 1977:frontispiece) dated just over 9,000 years ago at  $9,053 \pm 350$ . But in our case, we had a mummy with hair on his head. At about 9,415 years old, the mummy turned out to be the oldest in North America. He was excavated in the Grimes Point foothills near Fallon, Nevada, in 1940 by Sydney M. and Georgia Wheeler.

Interest in Sydney Wheeler was revived recently in a paper by Alvin McLane entitled "S. M. Wheeler, Nevada Test Site's First Archaeologist," presented at the

Donald R. Tuohy is the Curator of Anthropology at the Nevada State Museum in Carson City, where Spirit Cave Man has been housed since 1940. Amy Dansie is the Anthropologist at the Museum.

Twenty-first Great Basin Anthropological Conference in Park City, Utah. The Southern Branch of the Desert Research Institute (DRI), having taken over nearly all of the archaeological research in southern Nevada, became interested in Sydney Wheeler and his wife, Georgia. Sydney did not live very long; he died in 1959 when he was only fifty-seven years old. The Nevada State Museum at first assumed that Georgia was dead too, but after the radiocarbon dating of the Wheelers' mummy had been announced, we found out that Georgia (Wheeler) Felts was still alive and living with her husband in Nashville, Tennessee. The DRI chose her biographer, Diane L. Winslow, for a trip east to interview Georgia Felts, who was ninety-three in 1996.

In choosing articles for this publication, we added three studies not presented at the GBAC symposium, including one by Sydney M. Wheeler titled "Cave Burials Near Fallon, Nevada." Published in 1944 by the Nevada State Park Commission, it was written four years after the excavation of the male mummy from Spirit Cave and was based on two short papers written by Wheeler in 1940. We also chose to add "Georgia Wheeler Is Still Alive (And We Have Her Voice on Tape)," by Diane L. Winslow and Jeffrey R. Wedding. A preliminary report on investigations of the Spirit Cave mummy by Richard Jantz and Douglas Owsley and his team from the Smithsonian Institution is included to provide an update on analysis conducted since the conference.

Of the twelve papers scheduled for the Great Basin Anthropological Conference, two, those by Rebecca Lemon and Fred L. Nials, were not delivered, and a third, by Robson Bonnichsen, was a repeat of an earlier paper given elsewhere. The first paper, by Amy Dansie, sets the stage for the following eight studies of Early Holocene burials in Nevada, i.e., papers by S.M. Wheeler, Donald R. Tuohy, D. L. Kirner (*et al.*), Heather B. Edgar, Richard Jantz and Douglas Owsley, Frederika Kaestle, L. Kyle Napton, Peter E. Wigand, Sunday Eiselt, and Diane Winslow, and her partner, Jeffrey R. Wedding. Gentry Steele was not able to submit his paper for this publication.

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