

*Aboriginal Occupation at Altitude:
Alpine Villages in the White Mountains
of Eastern California*

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Abstract. Villages with well-built dwellings and extensive chipped- and ground-stone assemblages found between 3,050 m (10,000 ft) and 3,850 m (12,640 ft) in the White Mountains, California, and Toquima Range, Nevada, indicate intensive seasonal use of both ranges by groups engaged in alpine plant and animal procurement. Lichenimetric measurements on 50 alpine village dwellings, 59 radiocarbon assays, and 2,339 time-sensitive projectile points permit the 12 excavated White Mountain alpine villages to be dated between A.D. 600 and historic times and chronologically distinguished from hunting blinds and sparse lithic scatters that document a less-intensive form of land-use centered on hunting in the White Mountains prior to A.D. 600. A similar, and roughly contemporaneous, adaptive succession from specialized hunting to more generalized plant and animal procurement accompanied by the appearance of alpine villages has been noted in the Toquima Range, Nevada. These changes probably reflect adaptive responses to population growth and may be connected with the spread of Numic-speaking peoples.

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