

PARASITES

by

H. J. Hall

Department of Anthropology and Sociology  
University of Queensland  
St. Lucia, Queensland  
Australia



Two soil samples from Feature 8 and one from Feature 15 were sent to H. J. Hall, paleoscatologist at the University of Queensland in Australia. Hall's (personal communication 14 February 1980) findings are quoted below:

"While all three contained ample evidence of organic material (pollen, spores, phytoliths, etc.), I was able to recover no evidence whatsoever of intestinal parasites.

"After examining five microslides made up directly from the formalin solution the samples were sent in and getting negative results, I used the formalin-ether concentration technique for parasite ova--again with negative results.

"Thus, it would appear that the denizens of this part of Sacramento were quite free from parasites. Of course, negative evidence from such a small sample does not really indicate such a conclusion since a number of factors could be operating, separately or in concert, to produce such results. These range from the types of parasites present in the population to sanitation practices and personal hygiene, intensity of infections to post-depositional preservation variables and, finally, to choice and size of sample(s).

"The lack of parasite evidence would not therefore provide a solid argument in refutation of any interpretation of your features as privys (whereas positive evidence would provide a good argument in support of such). It would merely be negative parasite result. In this connection I thought these samples very much 'coprolite-looking' in texture, composition, color, etc., although I must say they were very 'gritty' which is unusual for coprolites but normal for privy deposits."

