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Preliminary description and interpretation of

cores and radiographs from Clear Lake, Lake County, California: Core 7

by

John D. Sims and Michael J. Rymer

1975

This report is preliminary and has not been edited or reviewed for conformity with Geological Survey standards

Report No. 75-144

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INTRODUCTION

Clear Lake, California is located in the California Coast Ranges about 120 km north of San Francisco and is the largest freshwater lake wholly within California. The lake basin is tectonically controlled (Anderson, 1936; Brice, 1953, Sims and Rymer, 1974) and the area seismically active (Coffman and von Hake, 1973).

Interest in this lake was stimulated by hypotheses developed from a study of sediments in Van Norman Reservoir after the 1971 San Fernando earthquake (Sims, 1973). During this study three zones of deformational structures were found in the 1 m-thick sequence of sediments exposed over about 2 km² of the reservoir bottom. These zones were correlated with moderate earthquakes that shook the San Fernando area in 1930, 1952, and 1971. Results of this study, coupled with the experimental formation of deformational structures similar to those from Van Norman Reservoir, led to a search for similar structures in Pleistocene and Holocene lakes and lake sediments in other seismically active areas. Clear Lake, California was chosen specifically because of its location near the San Andreas fault and the San Francisco-Oakland urban complex, and the probability of obtaining an uninterrupted sediment record from the present into Pleistocene time. Eight 12 to 15 cm diameter continuous cores were taken from the lake sediments (fig. 1) as part of a study of earthquake induced structures in sediments and the tectonic framework of the Clear Lake basin. The eight cores range in length from 13.87 m to 133.09 m (Table 1).

SUMMARY OF DATA

Core 7 is from the part of Clear Lake known as the Highlands Arm, and was taken on 2-4 Nov. 1973. Depth of water at the site is 12.8 m. The core is





Table 1.

Core	Length (m)	Recovery (%)
1	52.58	35.0
2 .	13.87	88.0
3	69.04	96.0
4	113.09	92.0
5	23.47	94.0
6	23.47	99.0
7	41.45	94.9
8	22.10	99.6

27.43 m long and consists of 674 cm of fine, very dark greyish brown to very dark brown (10YR3/2 to 10YR2/2) sapropelic mud (gyttja) overlying a complexly interbedded sequence of peat, mud, clay, and volcanic ash (fig. 2). Peat and peat-rich mud comprise about 45 percent of Core 7. Fibrous, brown peat; the type most commonly found near the shallow edges of bays and open marshes (Rigg and Gould, 1957; and Cohen, 1973). The sedimentary environment represented by the peat-dominated sequence is one of open marsh having < 2 m water depth (David Adam, personal communication, 1974). Clear Lake, including the arm from which this core was taken is fault bounded (Sims and Rymer, 1973). Sediments below Slug 9 were deposite in an open marsh and are overlain by sediments deposited in an open lake environment. This strongly suggests rapid tectonic movement after about 10,000 to 11,000 yr. B.P. (fig. 2). Prior to about 11,000 yr. B.P. more gradual subsidence of the Highlands Arm of Clear Lake occurred, probably as a consequence of volcanic eruptions in the Clear Lake Volcanic Field. Radiocarbon age determinations (table 2, fig. 2) were made on 14 samples to determine approximate timing of sedimentologic and volcanic events.

Six zones of deformed sediments were found between 890 cm and 1860 cm in the core (fig. 2 and part 2). The age of these sediments ranges from approximately 12,300 yr. B.P. to 26,000 yr. B.P. However, bioturbation of the sediments is extensive throughout, and may have completely obscured or rendered uninterpretable some sedimentologic features.

Of equally great importance is the preserved record of volcanic eruptions in this core. Twenty-nine ash beds or probable ash beds are preserved in this core (fig. 2). Most of the beds interpreted as ashes are clay units that have a mottled texture and are interpreted as altered basaltic, and andesitic or dacitic pyroclastic material which is common in

4





Table 2.	Radiocarbon	dates	from	sediments	in	Core	7,	
----------	-------------	-------	------	-----------	----	------	----	--

Clear Lake, California

Sample 1/ Number	Sample depth (cm)	Material ² /	Conventional radiocarbon date (radiocarbon years B.P.)		
1-77193/	763-771	peat	11,330 <u>+</u> 330		
W-3071	820-830	peaty mud	$11,700 \pm 250$		
W-3072	870-880	peat	$12,280 \pm 250$		
W-3073	980-1010	silty peat	13,160 <u>+</u> 300		
W-3063	1120-1130	clayey peat	14,900 <u>+</u> 300		
I-77563/	1225-1229	peaty mud	17,660 <u>+</u> 340		
W- 3064	1276-1280	peaty mud	17,470 <u>+</u> 300		
W-3066	1320-1330	• peat	18,340 <u>+</u> 300		
W-3068	1410-1420	peaty mud	19,110 <u>+</u> 300		
W-3069	1530-1540	peat	21,210 <u>+</u> 400		
W-3070	1670-1676	peat	26,150 <u>+</u> 600		
I-20583	1715-1720	carbonaceous mud	23,900 <u>+</u> 640		
I-7932 ³ /	1727-1733	carbonaceous mud	23,300 <u>+</u> 600		
I-77183/	2731-2737	peat	> 40,000		

Sample numbers with "I" prefix designate ¹⁴C age determinations by James Buckley, Teledyne, Isotopes. Sample numbers with "W" prefix designate ¹⁴C age determinations by Meyer Rubin, U.S. Geological Survey.

2/ All samples were pretreated for removal of carbonates but not for the removal of humic acids.

3/ Humic acids not removed from samples. Humic acids removed prior to ¹⁴C-age determinations in all other samples.

in the Clear Lake Volcanic field (Carter Hearn, personal communication). The Clear Lake pyroclastic deposits are in part Late Pleistocene in age (Julie Donnally, personal communication). One of the ashes is easily identifiable as such because little alteration has occurred and the shards are still well preserved (fig. 2, core segment 17). The presence of another altered basic ash is inferred from ¹⁴C-age determinations (fig. 2, core segment 23). ¹⁴C-age determinations above and below this ash (23,900+640 and 23,300+600 respectively) give essentially the same date (Table 2); thus suggesting a geologically instantaneous deposition. Although younger than W-3070 (26,150+600) the dates are considered significant for the purpose for which they are used. The ¹⁴C-age dates in Table 2 are from two different laboratories and contain discrepencies when placed in stratigraphic order. This is due primarily to the methods used in forming the determinations. The determinations performed in laboratories of the U.S. Geological Survey include pre-treatment of the samples to remove both carbonates and humic acids (Meyer Rubin, written communication, 1975) and those from the laboratories of Isotopes Inc. include a pretreatment to remove carbonates only (James Buckley, written communication, 1974). Thus the inclusion of small amounts of humic acids or the growth of new organisms after the samples were obtained can result in a younger date. Because the samples were wet or water saturated and not refrigerated, there is a strong possibility that the lack of pre-treatment of the samples submitted to Isotopes Inc. include humic acids or newly grown organisms. However, there are no time reversals in the stratigraphically ordered samples from each laboratory. This suggests that the data are individually internally consistent but that the lack of removal of humic acids produced the time reversals in the combined data.

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Table 3. Calculated Sedimentation Rates for Core 7 1/

From	To	Thickness (cm)	Years	<u>Rate (mm yr⁻¹)</u>
Тор	I-7719	765	11,330	.68
Тор	W-3071	825	11,700	.71
W-3071	₩-3072	50	. 580	.86
W-3072	W-3073	120	880	1.36
W-3073	W-3063	130	1,740	.75
W-3063	1-7756	102	2,760	.37
W-3063	W-3064	153	2,570	.60
I-7756	W-3064	51	21	
W-3064	W-3066	47	870	.54
W-3066	W-3068	90	770	1.17
W-3068	W-3069	120	2,100	.57
W-3069	W-3070	138	4,940	.28
W-3069	I-7928 and I-7932 ³ /	186	2,390	.79
₩-3070	I-7928 and I-7932 3/	48	2/	
I-7928 and I-7932 3/	I-7718 ⁴ /	1,020	1,6400	.62
W-3070	I-77184/	1,064	1,3850	.79

- 1 Data derived from Table 2.
- 2/ Stratigraphic reversal of dates. Subtraction of stratigraphically higher date from the stratigraphically lower one would yield a negative number.
- 3/ Samples I-7928 and I-7932 which are 13 cm apart are combined here as a single date.

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4/ Sample I-7718 here assumed at 40,000 (see fig. 3).

A plot of ¹⁴C-age versus depth (fig. 3) shows the consistency of the age dates from hole 7. These data are fitted with a straight line by linear regression. The equation of this line is 7 = 14.77x - 184.48and has a correlation coefficient of r = 0.992. In figure 3, all ¹⁴C-age dates from Core 7 are used and the minor variations due to sampling and analyatical errors are minimized. The line fit to the data now allows a prediction of sediment ages at given depths. These individual events may be approximately dated.

A tentative chronology of seismic and volcanic events is derived from the data in figures 2 and 3 (fig. 4). The positive identification of volcanic ashes and their approximate ages shown in figures 2 and 3 awaits more complete mineralogical and chemical data as well as the correlation with similar units in the other cores from Clear Lake. Deformational structures identified in Core 7 are also shown in figure 4. These structures are tentatively identified as being induced by earthquake events (Sims, 1973, 1974).

1



Figure 3. Plot of ¹⁴C-age determinations and depth in Clear Lake Core 7. The line y = 14.79x - 984.48 is fitted to the data by linear regression. The correlation coefficient (r) is 0.992. Error limits on each ¹⁴C-age shown by vertical bars:



Figure 4. Plot of tentative chronology of ash beds and earthquake induced deformational structures in Clear Lake Core 7. See figure 3 for the data used to derive the age-thickness regression line shown above.

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METHOD OF STUDY

Core 7 was obtained using an Ostenberg sampler with a barge mounted drill rig. The samples were retrieved and extruded into rigid plastic tubes which were sealed with plastic endcaps, and waxed to prevent moisture loss. For examination the plastic containers were cut open and the core cut in half lengthwise using a "cheese cutter" type instrument. Lithologic and other sedimentologic data were then recorded (see Part II for detailed descriptions). One-half of each core segment was photographed on color and black and white film. Then a one cm thick slice was taken from the center of the core segment and an x-ray radiograph made to study the internal structures and fine details of the visible structures.

The original x-ray radiographs were taken on 30 x 43 cm sheets of industrial x-ray film at 1:1 scale. Exposures to x-radiation ranged from 6 to 9 minutes at 45 to 55 KV and 3.5 ma. The prints from the radiographs in Part II of this paper are photographically reduced 3.7x from the originals.

After lengthwise splitting, samples were taken from one-half of the core for other sedimentologic and paleontologic studies as follows:

- a) bulk mineralogy
- b) cladocerae
- c) diatoms
- d) fine grain size analysis (<125 m diameter)
- e) macro fossils
- f) pollen

g) water content/organic carbon content

The remaining core half, resting in a rigid plastic half-round, was sealed in a polyethelane bag and retained for future use and reference. These samples and the original radiographs may be examined by contacting:

John D. Sims U.S. Geological Survey Earthquake Tectonics Branch 345 Middlefield Road Menlo Park, California 94025

GRAPHIC NOTATIONS USED IN STRATIGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS

The stratigraphic descriptions of each core segment (slug) are contained on individual sheets in the format shown in fig. 5. The graphical notations used in the core descriptions and radiograph interpretations in Part II are modified from the methods of Bouma (1962). The conventions and symbols used follow: Those symbols marked* are also used in the column entitled Radiographic.

Lithology



D

	clayey silt
	silty clay
	clayey sand
	sandy mud
	sandy silt
	sandy gravel
* x	clayey peat
	silty peat

material from sides of hole as a contaminant, generally at the top of a sample (debris).

vivianite, an iron phosphate present in the sediments.

interlaminated strata; dominant lithology on left (in this example peat and mud)

HOLE__SLUG__DEPTH___cm. to___cm.

LITH.	B.P. TYPE	STRUCT,	LAYER PROPS.	COLOR	FOSS.	РНОТО #	RADIO- GRAPHIC	SAMPLE #
		and file						
- 10								
-30								
-40								
- 50							•	
60								
70	-			-				
80								
J L ₉₀								

Figure 5. Form for stratigraphic descriptions of core segments (slugs) Column headings from left to right are Lithology, Bedding plane type, Bedding plane structures, Layer properties, Munsel Color designation, Fossil content, Photograph numbers, Radiographic interpretation, and Sample numbers. Bedding Plane Type*

Sharp flat contact distinct flat contact transition (range of transition < 0.5 cm) gradual transition (range of transition 0.5-1.0 cm) transition gradual and hardly visible (range of transition > 1.0 cm) undulating contact; gradations as above irregular contact; gradations as above

21

2

12

₽ #

Structure

graded bedding		<u></u>
load cast		$\overline{\mathbf{v}}$
earthquake induc	ed structure*	Ω
f lt*		<i>III</i> .
	*	

Interval in which structure occurs	،
indistinct structure*	(
structure barely visible*	

Layer Properties

parallel lamination (< 0.5 cm thick)*:

coarse laminae predominate

fine laminae predominate

parallel lamination* < slightly disturbed strongly disturbed

* Also used in column entitled Radiographic

parallel wavy lamination*

(predominating thickness and degree of disturbance as noted above)

lenticular wavy lamination*

2

()

(predominating thickness and degree of disturbance as noted above)

interval in which property occurs*

indistinct property*

Color

Color designations are taken from the Munsell Soil Color Chart (Munsell, 1973). Conventions used are as follows:

10Y 5/4 5YR 5/4

10Y 5/4/5YR 5/4

10Y 5/4 5YR 5/4

10Y 5/4 (5YR 5/4)

distinct color break between between two units.

two colors present throughout the interval noted. First color is most prevalent and the right hand color is present as clots, belbs, or patches.

distinct interlamination throughout the interval noted.

oxidized color (unoxidized color) this notation is used only where partial oxidization of the sediments has occurred and the unoxidized color is readily apparent.

0

Fessils

fish scale*

fish bone*

* Also used in column entitled Radiographic

16

gastropod*

· clam*

root

root level

wood oriented parallel to bedding plane wood not parallel to bedding plane plant fragment parallel to bedding plane plant fragment not parallel to bedding plane

Photograph Number

Numbers refer to the index number of both the color and black and white photos taken of the cut surface of the core segment.

0

.0

0

0

Self.

Example: 7-1-1 refers to Core 7, Core segment 1, Photo 1.

There are 5 photos for each core segment in Core 7. Each photo covers approximately 20 cm of core segment length with overlap with adjacent photos.

These photos may be examined and copies made at the requestors expense by contacting:

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John D. Sims U.S. Geological Survey Earthquake Tectonics Branch 345 Middlefield Road Menlo Park, California 94025

* Also used in column entitled Radiographic

ERRATA

p. 18 - There is no page 18. An error in pagination occurred.

Radiographic

This column contains supplementary information derived from an analysis of information taken from x-ray radiographs. The notations used in this column are a combination of those marked by * under the headings Bedding Plane Type, Bedding Plane Properties, Layer Properties, and Fossils, plus some additional special symbols not previously used (list below):

granule - an x-ray opaque small body < 1 mm in diameter.

granule cluster - a regular to irregular shaped mass of granules.

pebble - a large (> 3 mm diameter) x-ray opaque body.

mottling - areas of low x-ray transparency of irregular shape and unknown origin.

bioturbation - animal burrows. The degree of sediment disturbance generally accompanies this note such as: heavy, slight, etc.

- a difference in x-ray transparency between stratigraphic subunits due to compositional, grain size or other physiochemical differences.
- fractured physical breaking of the indicated part of the sediment slice that usually occurred during sample preparation prior to x-ray inspection.

Sample Number

Three types of sample numbers are present and identify samples taken for specific tests or supplementary data. The specific use of the sample is identified, at the bottom of the page on which the number occurs.

 Four digit numbers are reserved for bulk mineralogy, fine grain size analysis (fraction < 125 m diameter), fossil cladocerac, palynological examination, weight loss on drying, fossil diatoms and macrofossil content.

- 2) Four digits prefixed by "I" (example: I-7030). A radiocarbon date performed by Mr. James Buckley in the laboratories of Isotopes, Inc., Westwood, N.J. The absolute date and all pertinent data are listed at the bottom of the page on which the sample number occurs.
- 3) Four digits prefixed by "W" (example: W-3030). A radiocarbon date performed by Mr. Meyer Rubin in the laboratories of the U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, VA. The absolute date and all pertinent data are listed at the bottom of the page on which the sample numbers occur.

Acknowledgements;

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Appendix A

Graphical Logs

١.

HOLE ⁷ SLUG ¹ DEPTH ⁰ cm. to ⁷⁶ cm.

LITH.	a t	STRUCT.	LAYER PROPS.	COLOR	FOSS.	РНОТО #	RADIO- GRAPHIC	SPL. #
	- 0					7-1-1		102
	- 10						granules	- 103
	- 20					7-1-2	Δ8	- 104
	-30					7-1-3	δ.	-105
	-40			5¥4/2				- 106
بالبيابا	- 50					7-1-4	8 8	_107
							. 04	
سلسبين	- 60					7-1-5	δ	- 108
	- 70							
	- 80							
tit	-90							
E.	L100	b	loturbat	ion throu	ighout	L.	L	I .

•

HOLE 7 SLUG 2 DEPTH 76 cm. to 152 cm.



HOLE 7 SLUG 3 DEPTH 152 cm. to 228 cm.



÷.,

scattered fish bones, scales and teeth throughout

3

HOLE 7 SLUG 4 DEPTH 228 cm. to 305 cm.



scattered fish bones, scales and bioturbation throughout

•

HOLE 7 SLUG 5 DEPTH 305 cm. to 381 cm.



scattered granules, fish bones and scales throughout bioturbation throughout

HOLE 7 SLUG 6 DEPTH 381 cm. to 457 cm.

LITH.		TYPE TYPE	STRUCT.	LAYER PROPS.	COLOR	FOSS.	РНОТО #	RADIO- GRAPHIC	SPL. #
-	- 0 -	T			5Y3/2		7-6-1	debris?	
	- 10						7-6-2	diffuse granules	- 139
	- 20								- 140
	-30						7-6-3	*	- 141
	-40					• •	7-6-4	*	- 142
	- 50							*	- 143
	- 60						7-6-5	*	- 144
	- 70							*	- 145
	-80								
hereler	-90								
- 1	-100	1	1	,			•	 A state of the sta	1

* granule horizons at cms noted under Radiographic Scattered fish bones, scales and bioturbation throughout HOLE 7 SLUG 7 DEPTH 457 cm. to 533 cm.



*shown by more x-ray opaque granules

HOLE 7 SLUG_8 DEPTH_533_cm. to 610_cm.

LITH.		B.P. TYPE	STRUCT.	LAYER PROPS.	COLOR	FOSS.	РНОТО #	RADIO- GRAPHIC	SPL. #
	- 0 -				10YR2/2		7-8-1		
	- 10								- 154
							7-8-2		
	- 20							δ	
	- 30						7-8-3		- 156
								0	- 157
	-40							Ī	
	- 50		5				7-8-4		- 158
	- 60						7-8-5		- 159
	- 70	•							- 160
	- 80								
	-90								
	L ₁₀₀				·	•			through and



÷.,.

0-40 dissem. granules and fish bones, teeth and scales

HOLE 7 SLUG 10 DEPTH 686 cm. to 762 cm.



The debris above is in 1/2 of the core only. The 1/2 that D. Adam spld. was not so disturbed.

I-7719: 11,350 ± 350 yr. B.P.

Sedimentation rate for first 750 cm of core is 0.67 mm per year

HOLE 7_ SLUG 11_ DEPTH 762 cm. to 838 cm.



HOLE_7_SLUG_12_DEPTH_838_cm. to_914 cm.



HOLE 7 SLUG 13 DEPTH 914 cm. to 991 cm.



HOLE $\frac{7}{1000}$ SLUG $\frac{14}{100}$ DEPTH $\frac{991}{1000}$ cm. to $\frac{1067}{1000}$ cm.



HOLE 7 SLUG 15 DEPTH 1069 cm. to 1143 cm.



HOLE <u>7</u> SLUG <u>16</u> DEPTH <u>1143</u> cm. to <u>1219</u> cm.



2.

bioturbation throughout

HOLE ⁷ SLUG ¹⁷ DEPTH ¹²¹⁹ cm. to ¹²⁹⁵ cm.



bioturbation throughout

HOLE ⁷ SLUG ¹⁸ DEPTH ¹²⁹⁵ cm. to ¹³⁶⁹ cm.



HOLE 7 SLUG 20 DEPTH 1447 cm. to 1524 cm.



bioturbation throughout





W-3069: 21,210 ± 400 bioturbation throughout



W-3070: 26,150 ± 600 bioturbation throughout

HOLE $\frac{7}{2}$ SLUG $\frac{22}{2}$ DEPTH $\frac{1600}{20}$ cm. to $\frac{1676}{20}$ cm.

HOLE 7 SLUG 23 DEPTH 1676 cm. to 1752 cm.



HOLE 7 SLUG 24 DEPTH 1752 cm. to 1828 cm.



. ..

slight elongation (~ 2 1/2 cm) due to cracking in sample and displacement of the pieces has been taken into consideration in the information described under RADIOGRAPHIC. Gradual increase in density down the core slug.

bioturbation throughout

HOLE 7 SLUG 25 DEPTH 1828 cm. to 1905 cm.



* this structure occurs between 24 and 26.5 cm, and is associated with abundant disseminated vivianite (?).

bioturbation throughout

HOLE 7 SLUG 26 DEPTH 1905 cm. to 1981 cm.



18 cm. white paste (unox. vivienite) altered to blue past in time (1 day) bioturbation throughout

HOLE 7 SLUG 27 DEPTH 1981 cm. to 2057 cm.



bioturbation throughout

HOLE 7 SLUG 28 DEPTH 2057 cm. to 2133 cm.



bioturbation throughout

dissem. viv. throughout





T The second sec

1.1.1



bioturbation throughout

HOLE 7 SLUG 30 DEPTH 2210 cm. to 2286 cm.

HOLE 7 SLUG 31 DEPTH 2286 cm. to 2362 cm.







bioturbation throughout

HOLE $\frac{7}{2438}$ SLUG $\frac{32}{2}$ DEPTH $\frac{2362}{2362}$ cm. to $\frac{2438}{2438}$ cm.





bioturbation throughout

HOLE $\frac{7}{2515}$ SLUG $\frac{34}{2515}$ DEPTH $\frac{2515}{2591}$ cm. to $\frac{2591}{2591}$ cm.



-,2

HOLE 7 SLUG 36 DEPTH 2667 cm. to 2743 cm.



LÖ

Appendix B

X-ray radiographs

















