

Soil and Landscape History in the Vicinity of Archaeological Sites at Glen Davis, New South Wales

By P. H. WALKER

Division of Soils, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra, Australia

Plates 25-27 Figs. 1-10

Manuscript received 22-1-63

I LOCATION

(i) Physiography

The archaeological sites are located on the lower slopes of the Capertee River Valley, approximately four miles downstream and to the east of the township of Glen Davis (see figure 1). The Capertee River flows east through a narrow gorge at Glen Davis which is bounded by precipitous scarps of Triassic, Hawkesbury and Narrabeen sandstones over 1,000 feet high (see Plate 25), while at the base the Lithgow coal measures of Permian age are occasionally exposed (see Dept. Nat. Devel. 1957).

The location in which the archaeological sites occur is separated from the main scarp by a minor scarp below which a talus slope, pediment, steep slope and lower slope occur (figure 2). The sites are in rock shelters on the lower slopes and are formed from erratic sandstone boulders which vary from 40 to 150 feet in diameter. The shelters, which are shown in relation to the river in figure 3, are shallow caverns near ground level and the richest finds of implements and other occupational materials are within the cavern or directly at the mouth.

Of the three cave sites which were excavated, only caves 1 and 3 contained deep cave floor deposits; site 2 was very shallow and is not considered in this discussion.

(ii) Unconsolidated deposits and country rock

The Capertee valley is characterized by several hundred feet of very coarse, bouldery sandstone talus which occurs at the base of the main scarp. It is very intensively weathered, as evidenced by its clayiness and deep, reticulate white and red mottles. The present course of the river is incised into the talus deposits with narrow river terraces above the river bed. The remaining talus deposits above the present level of influence of the main river have been modified by superficial mantle movement and by slight incision of ephemeral streams.

The superficial hillside deposits which cover most of the thick talus vary from shallow sandy sediments with abundant rock fragments randomly scattered through the deposit to sandy, less stony sediments 6 to 8 feet deep on milder slopes about the cave sites. Evidence of past movement of these materials can be seen in the superficial debris piled on the upslope side of sandstone boulders (see figure 4). Under the present environment, however, these deposits are stable and there is little evidence of present day erosion and deposition on hillsides.