

Forward to McKellar Paper

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Among aficionados of behavioral archaeology, the "McKellar hypothesis" has come to describe a rather commonly observed regularity of cultural formation processes: the tendency of small artifacts to be discarded as primary refuse in activity areas. The first statement of this hypothesis, along with supporting evidence, appears in the accompanying article by Judith McKellar, an undergraduate student enrolled in "Archaeological Interpretation" at the University of Arizona in the spring of 1973. This brief exercise, one of several involving the use of modern material culture, required the student to observe and attempt to explain a distribution of artifacts. McKellar chose to investigate trash deposition on the campus of the University of Arizona.

I reported the results of McKellar's study in *Behavioral Archaeology*, and placed a copy of her paper in the Arizona State Museum

Library. In several publications, I have referred to the McKellar hypothesis and cited this paper. A number of scholars have borrowed the McKellar paper through interlibrary loan, and it has been cited several times in the archaeological literature (e.g., Rathje 1979; South 1979; DeBoer 1983).

During the past few years, ethnoarchaeologists working in diverse sociocultural settings have also accumulated evidence in support of this potential cultural law. In addition, other studies have implicated artifact size as an important determinant of certain cultural formation processes (e.g., DeBoer 1983). In view of the heightened interest in formation processes, it is fitting that McKellar's original paper be published so that she may get appropriate credit for this pioneering research.

McKellar's paper has been edited lightly for style, but no substantive changes have been made.

References

DeBoer, Warren D.

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