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Overlooked Petroglyph Comes to Light

Editor's Note: The author, Christine Diane Garst of Webber, is a member of the Kansas Anthropological Association, a senior at Kansas State University, and a recent intern at the Pawnee Indian Village State Historic Site.

Few archeologists, much less archeology students, have the opportunity to view a rock art site free from modern graffiti. In April 1998 I had the privilege of visiting such a site, recording it for the Kansas State Historical Society, and using the petroglyphs as a resource for my Independent Reading and Research class at Kansas State University. Unlike pictographs, which are drawn or painted forms of rock art, petroglyphs are pictures or symbols scratched, incised, pecked, or abraded into rock surfaces. The Clear Creek site, 14EW1446, is located in Ellsworth County on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The USACE kindly allowed me access to the site for my research.

Jim Gray of Ellsworth led me to this new petroglyph site. Personnel at the Kanopolis USACE Office had suggested that Gray was "the man to talk to about Ellsworth County history" and a good starting point for the petroglyph recording project. After visiting with him for some time, I was thinking of leaving when Gray uttered the words that sent shivers up this future archeologist's spine: "I can tell you where there's a site no one has ever reported." Amid the boots, saddles, and turquoise jewelry of his store, he related a story of a fisherman who had teased him with clues to the location of a petroglyph site that "no one had ever seen before." Gray was able to put together enough clues to locate the site without the mischievous fisherman's help.



The split petroglyph boulder rests at the base of a steep bluff. Photograph provided by Christine Diane Garst.

Getting there was no easy feat. It involved a descent down a steep bluff face and a hike over, under, and around fallen limbs and trees. Perhaps the difficult access is a factor that has kept the site from harm for so long. In addition, the two sandstone boulders upon which the ten glyphs are carved are somewhat inconspicuous. At some point the two boulders were one — one of the glyphs on the left boulder appears to carry over onto the right boulder — but now they are separated by a gap varying from twenty to thirty centimeters. Perhaps they broke apart when the rock rolled down the bluff.

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State's National Register Property Roster Grows

The addition of two Kansas properties to the National Register of Historic Places in recent months has raised the state's total to 681. The entries with their locations and dates of entry are:

- ♦ Peabody Downtown Historic District, Walnut Street from Division to First, Peabody, Marion County; 5-29-98
- ♦ Banner Hereford Farm, 19355 S. Berryton Road, Scranton vicinity, Osage County, 6-12-98

Cultural Resources Division Customer Satisfaction Checkup

This fall you will see a survey in your mailbox that will ask how we in the Cultural Resources Division are doing in the customer service category. While the division balances both regulatory and educational activities, it is important to us to see how we assist and interact with the public and other state and federal agencies.

The survey results will help us evaluate and improve how we help applicants interested in the state or national registers, state and federal law review processes, Heritage Trust Fund management, Certified Local Government assistance, ordinances and planning tasks, and archeological site supervision. The division provides many educational workshops, programs and training opportunities so we will be interested in knowing how effective you believe we are.

When the survey arrives, please fill it out and drop it in the mail. We want to know how we are doing.

New SOS! Grants Available

In Kansas as across the nation, nature and vandals have taken their toll on outdoor sculpture. Fortunately, relief may be in sight due to a variety of new grants available from the national Save Outdoor Sculpture! (SOS!) project. With funding provided by Target Stores and the National Endowment for the Arts, SOS! has set a goal of helping to preserve at least one sculpture in each state with "SOS!2000" Conservation Treatment Awards. Money provided in such awards must be matched by funding from local communities, and the sculptures must have first received a professional condition assessment by a qualified conservator. (Assessment awards also are available to fund condition assessments; application forms may be obtained by calling Daria Gasparini at 888-767-7285.)

Applicants for the Conservation Treatment Awards are limited to local governments and nonprofit organizations; museums are not eligible applicants for conserving sculptures in their collections but are encouraged to participate in local restoration efforts. The application process is expected to take about three months from the time of submission. Awards will be based on the sculpture's excellence, artistic and historical significance, the urgency of need for conservation, qualifications of participating conservation professionals, the plan for treatment and ongoing care, the applicant's

ability to accomplish the project, plans for increasing public awareness, and involvement of appropriate community groups. The deadline for Kansas applicants is July 30, 1999. To obtain an application form, call SOS! at 1-888-767-7285 or write to them at 1730 K Street NW, Suite 566, Washington DC 20006.

SOS! also is being asked by corporations and other possible funders for help in locating public sculptures in need of conservation. Names of needy artworks and estimates of treatment and maintenance costs are needed so that sculpture preservation projects can be matched with potential donors. To be listed on the "SOS!2000 Catalogue Raisonne" and possibly receive such funding, a nomination form must be submitted for each sculpture (a maximum of five nominations from each applicant) along with color photographs and a copy of the condition assessment report. For more information about this program, contact SOS! at the address listed above or call 1-800-422-4612. SOS! is a joint project of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, and Heritage Preservation (formerly the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property). Kansas State Historical Society Cultural Resources Specialist Randy Thies is state coordinator for the Kansas SOS! project and can be contacted at 785-272-8681, ext. 267.

Overlooked Petroglyph

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Glyph 1, a rectilinear (characterized by straight lines) form, is the only one found on the north-northeast facing rock face. It is possible that it is an anthropomorphic (displaying human attributes) representation, but not enough details are present to confirm this.

All other glyphs are found facing northwest on the two separate boulders. Glyph 2 shows an anthropomorphic figure inside a square, topped by a triangle. The square-and-triangle combination resembles a house, which caused me to question the age of the glyph. However, it may be that the creator's houselike shape represented something that modern viewers are unable to recognize.

The anthropomorphic figure inside has a triangular head, which is unusual in Kansas, according to Brian O'Neill in his book, *Kansas Rock Art* (Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, 1981). Its X-style body and legs are common, however. P. S. Barry notes in *Mystical Themes in Milk River Rock Art* (University of Alberta Press, Alberta, Canada, 1991) that these seem to be some of the oldest forms used in Plains rock art. Stylistic conventions shown by the glyphs, such as illustrating

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The glyphs are carved into the surface of the relatively

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figures frontally, are also quite common in Kansas rock art. Additionally, Society archeologist Martin Stein points out that the condition of the inside of the incised lines matches the surrounding rock face and that patination (alteration of the stone surface by natural chemical processes) continues from the rock face, through the glyph lines, and back onto the rock face without differentiation. While this does not preclude the petroglyphs having been faked, the evidence, taken as a whole, lends credibility to the site's age.

Glyphs 3 and 5 are both rectilinear representations that resemble arrows or portions of arrows. They are located above and to the right of a round human or anthropomorphic head and neck (Glyph 4). The round shape of the head can also be seen in the anthropomorphic glyphs found at 14EW1, 14EW14, and 14RC11, lacking only the hair or horns that these glyphs portray.

Directly to the left are Glyphs 6 and 8, two full-figured anthropomorphic glyphs, with a small rectilinear glyph (7) between them. Glyph 6 is also an X-shaped figure with a triangular head. It has short lines, descending from the bottom of both arms, and a large X across the chest area. J. R. Mead states in *Hunting and Trading on the Great Plains* (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1986) that the war bonnets of the

Cheyenne consisted of the large tail feathers of eagles and turkeys at right angles over the head, down each arm, and along the back. Perhaps this is depicted here, although we can not know the creator's original intention.

Glyph 8 has a rectangular body with a large X across the chest. It, too, has a triangular head, though the point extends downward, unlike the anthropomorphic Glyphs 2 and 6. What appear to be horns extend from the top of its head, and it may possibly be wearing a sash and cape.

J. D. Keyser in *Rock Art of the Western Canyons* (Johnson Publishing Co., Boulder, 1980) asserts that a sash trailing from the waist or shoulder is used in ledger book art to portray the characteristic ethnic dress of the Cheyenne and Lakota Sioux. The figure has an upraised arm on the viewer's left, but in place of the right arm a line extends down and to the right, past the legs, to the broken edge of the rock face. It is connected by a horizontal line to a triangle on the left. The lines match up to a partial triangle found on the second boulder. This partial triangle and two rectilinear scratches (Glyphs 9 and 10) are the only glyphs on the second boulder.

Immediately next to the boulders is a large tree, nearly rotten and threatening to harm the boulders when it eventually falls. Its presence reinforces the need to monitor petroglyph sites and note vegetation

growth. In *Documenting Rock Art in Dinosaur National Monument* (National Park Service, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1993) the authors (Ralph J. Hartley, A. W. Vawser, A. R. Smith, and Mary A. Johnson) emphasize how the scraping of a single small branch can provide substantial impact on a site, causing marks as deep as 1.2 cm.

The Clear Creek site provides an opportunity to increase public understanding and appreciation by comparison with sites, such as 14EW7, that have extensive historic graffiti. Interpretive signs placed at a site would not only educate the public to its history, but also potentially slow the accumulation of graffiti. Recently Hartley noted that visual communication in the form of an educational film, focusing on the rock art, its vulnerability, and its potential significance, is a means of sharing knowledge and values that are highly effective.

Perhaps the vulnerability of this new site kept the fisherman hesitant about sharing its location. However, the Clear Creek site is located on land owned and managed by the USACE and, while it may not be desirable to locate a heritage trail nearby, as is the case at 14EW7, the site should be accessible to those wishing to study the petroglyphs. Keeping the location a secret might protect it from vandalism but offers no protection from the ravages of nature.
— Christine Diane Garst.



ely soft sandstone boulder. Photograph provided by Christine Diane Garst.