

EVIDENCE OF RECENT VANDALISM AT THE HOPI CLAN SYMBOL SITE NEAR WILLOW SPRINGS, ARIZONA

BY

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In northern Arizona, about three-quarters of a mile east of U.S. Highway 89 and six miles northeast of its junction with U.S. 160, is a Navajo home. It is situated in a stand of lombardy poplars and cottonwoods, on an intermediate level above the lower escarpment and talus of the Echo Cliffs. This is the location of Willow Springs. A small trickle of water runs over the lower rimrock, down a short canyon, and into Hamblin Wash. Nearby are scattered petroglyphs, the ruins of an old stage stop and trading post, and the names of many Mormon pioneers carved into the rocks.

About one mile south of Willow Springs at the foot of the talus is the Clan Symbol Site, a place important in both the prehistory and the history of Northern Arizona.

The Hopi trail to the sacred sipapu and their salt-collecting location near the junction of the Colorado and Little Colorado rivers passed by here. Here the Hopis would stop on the journey and record their participation by carving their clan symbols into the large sandstone boulders.

The Dominguez-Escalante Expedition of 1776 failed to ford the Colorado River at the Ute Crossing, later known as Lee's Ferry, thus they did not go by here. Instead, they went up the Paria River to a spot where they could climb the rimrock to the east, journeyed north to an Indian ford where they carved steps for the animals, and crossed at the place thereafter called Los Vados de Las Padres (The Crossing of the Fathers), now under Lake Powell.

In 1847 the Mormons under the leadership of Brigham Young arrived in Utah. Soon they began to explore and colonize the surrounding country. In 1858 Jacob Hamblin led a linguistic expedition to the Hopi mesas. He brought with him Mormon men conversant in Welsh, and with a knowledge of Indian dialects. It had been reported that the Hopi spoke a language that sounded Welsh. They followed a trail leading past the Clan Symbol Site, and probably were the first Europeans to see it.

In 1859, following the same trail, Hamblin took a second party to the Hopi mesas. On this trip he left six men to spend the winter proselytizing to the Hopi, endeavoring to make conversions to the LDS faith.

In 1860 Hamblin led still another party down past the west face of the Echo Cliffs and past the Hopi Clan Symbol Site. It was on this trip that George Albert Smith, Jr., son of an LDS apostle, was killed by the Navajos. Because of hostilities, the body was wrapped in a blanket and left in a hollow near the trail. That winter Hamblin returned and recovered the remains.

In 1870 Major John Wesley Powell stopped at Ute Crossing on his trip down the Colorado River. Powell's party explored the nearby area.

In December of 1871 John D. Lee arrived at Ute Crossing and started the ferry service across the river. Lee's wife Emma named the isolated place Lonely Dell, however, it became known to the world as Lee's Ferry. In 1873 Lee farmed near Moenave, just southeast of Willow Springs.

With the establishment of the ferry service, exploration of northern Arizona became intense. In 1873 Brigham Young announced his intention to colonize the area along the Little Colorado River. The first attempt met with failure, recorded by Joseph Adams who, on their retreat, wrote on the cliff at House Rock Springs west of Lee's Ferry, "Joseph Adams from Kaysville to Arizona and busted on June 6, A.D. 1873". Two men associated with this 1873 effort at colonization were the first vandals at Willow Springs. H.K. Perkins and J.L. Thayne carved their names and the date into the rock at the Clan Symbol site.

Further efforts to colonize were made in 1875. However, it was under Lot Smith on March 23, 1876, that the first permanent colonizers entered the area.

In 1879 a party under Silas Smith followed the now well-marked trail as they searched for a route to colonize the San Juan River area. As this southern route was determined to be dangerous, the group constructed the famous Hole-in-the-Rock route instead.

As colonization continued, the well-worn trail past the Hopi Clan Symbols became known as the Honeymoon Trail. Devout Mormons believe they should be married for eternity and not just "till death do us part." This eternal sealing must be done in a temple by one with authority. Therefore, a man and woman would be married by the local bishop, load up their buckboard and travel together - respectably as man and wife - for several days and nights to the nearest temple in St. George, Utah, where they were sealed for eternity; hence the name Honeymoon Trail.

The first time I saw the Hopi Clan Symbols at this site was in early 1959 while with my father on a trip to camp and hike on the south rim of the Grand Canyon. I've visited the site innumerable times since, and pass by it six or seven times a year traveling between Utah and Arizona. But for the past few years I left it off my itinerary, and therefore was unaware of the recent vandalism.

On the way to Utah to participate in one of our Utah Rock Art Research Association river trips last spring, Jack and Betty Atwater of Frazier Park, California, visited the site and reported to us the damage occurring there. As a result of their report, I made it a point to visit the site again and check out their observations. I discovered that many of the glyphs had been vandalized recently.

Helen Michaelis reported on some vandalism at the site in 1981. She also stated that rocks with glyphs on them been assigned numbers. However, Michealis' report showed only some of the rocks, and the captions under those photos gave the only clue as to their number. The numbering was probably done by the Museum of Northern Arizona. Not having the numbering system, I cannot refer to a vandalized rock by its assigned number for this report.

I had photographs taken in 1982 after Michealis' report. I compared these to new pictures, and by on-site inspection also recorded the damage done to this important site.

Vandalism at this site seems to fall into three categories:

- 1.Thoughtless non-Indian visitors who either ignorantly or wantonly damage the glyphs by carving, spray-painting, or both.
- 2.Similar vandalism by Indians.
- 3.Ritual or ceremonial obliteration of symbols of certain clans or individuals of a clan.

Of the three types of vandalism, number three seems to be the most serious problem at this site (see figures). One possibility might be that this obliteration is a result of friction between various Hopi clans or villages, or between families of a clan. Another possibility is hostility due to the recent court decision regarding the Navajo-Hopi Joint Use Land Area. This has resulted in the uprooting and relocation of families that have lived in the area for generations.

Since the site is on the Navajo Reservation, I do not know how much protection is afforded by the Antiquities Act of 1906, or by the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979. Because Indians believe these glyphs have a spirit, represent beings or people, and can exert good or evil influence over them, it would be an interesting test case for the courts to prosecute vandalism of such a glyph on the charge of attempted murder, or assault.

On my return home to Arizona after giving this paper at the symposium, I stopped at the site and found two new occurrences of vandalism, done in the two weeks since I visited on the way to Salt Lake: "The Victor 10-20-85" and "Mr. Pops 10-26-85". The latter one was carved on the same day this paper was presented.

That vandalism is a problem and that rock art needs better protection in this whole area is poignantly illustrated by the attitude of the Bureau of Land Management, the agency responsible for the management and protection of the Paria Canyon-Vermillion Cliffs Wilderness Area in Utah and Arizona. According to the draft management plan for this area, they planned to complete by 1986 an assessment study of Paria Canyon rock art easily accessible to hikers. They listed as "Limits of Acceptable Change" to rock art panels in Paria Canyon "the occurrence of no more than one new defacement per panel every two seasons." I have to ask is this really an acceptable limit of change?

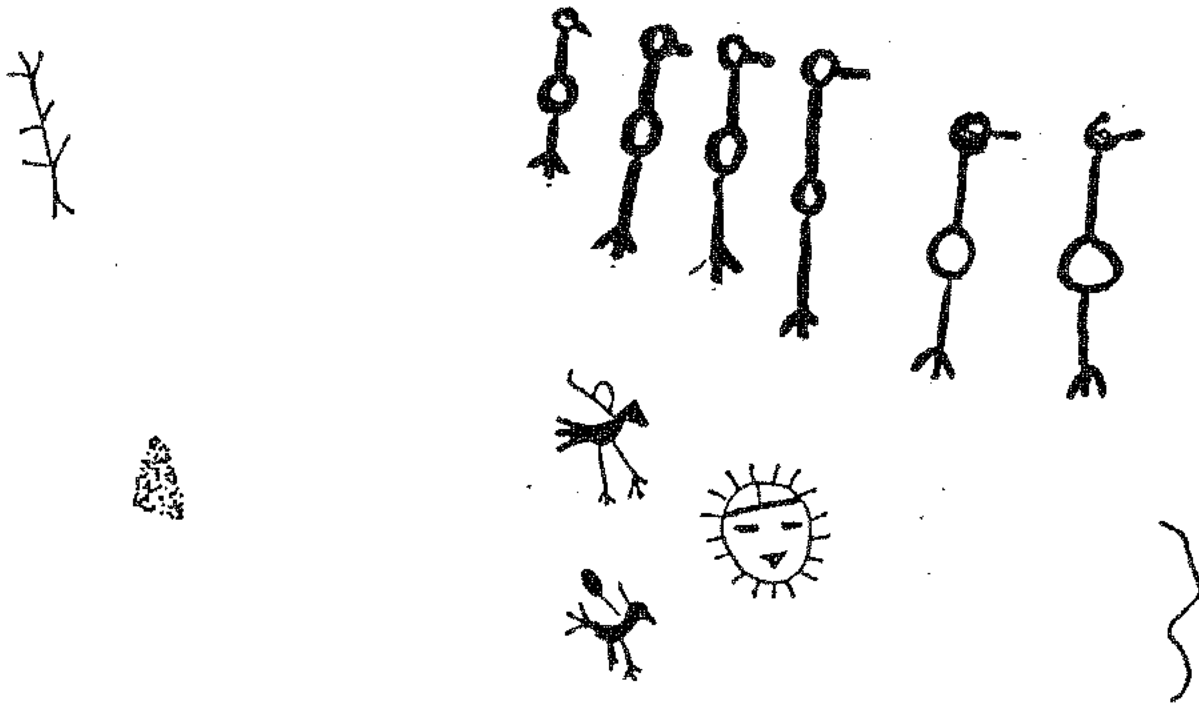


Figure 1a: Before Vandalism

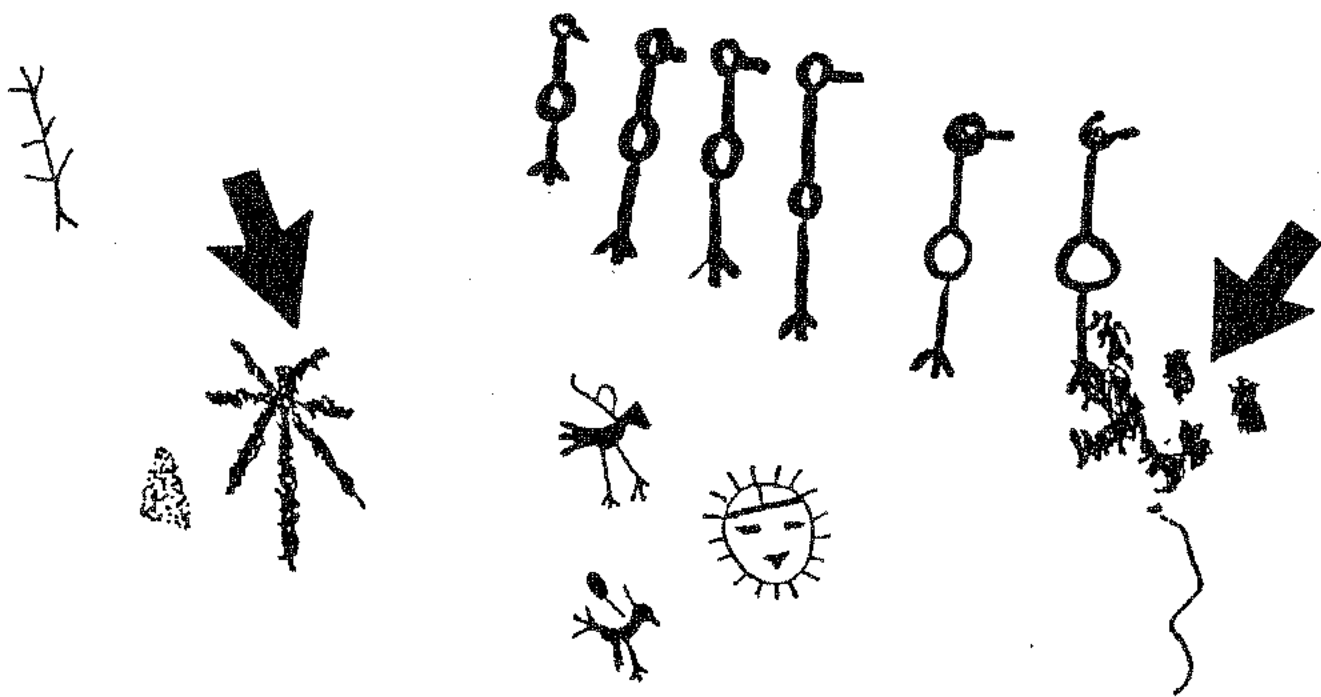


Figure 1b: After Vandalism

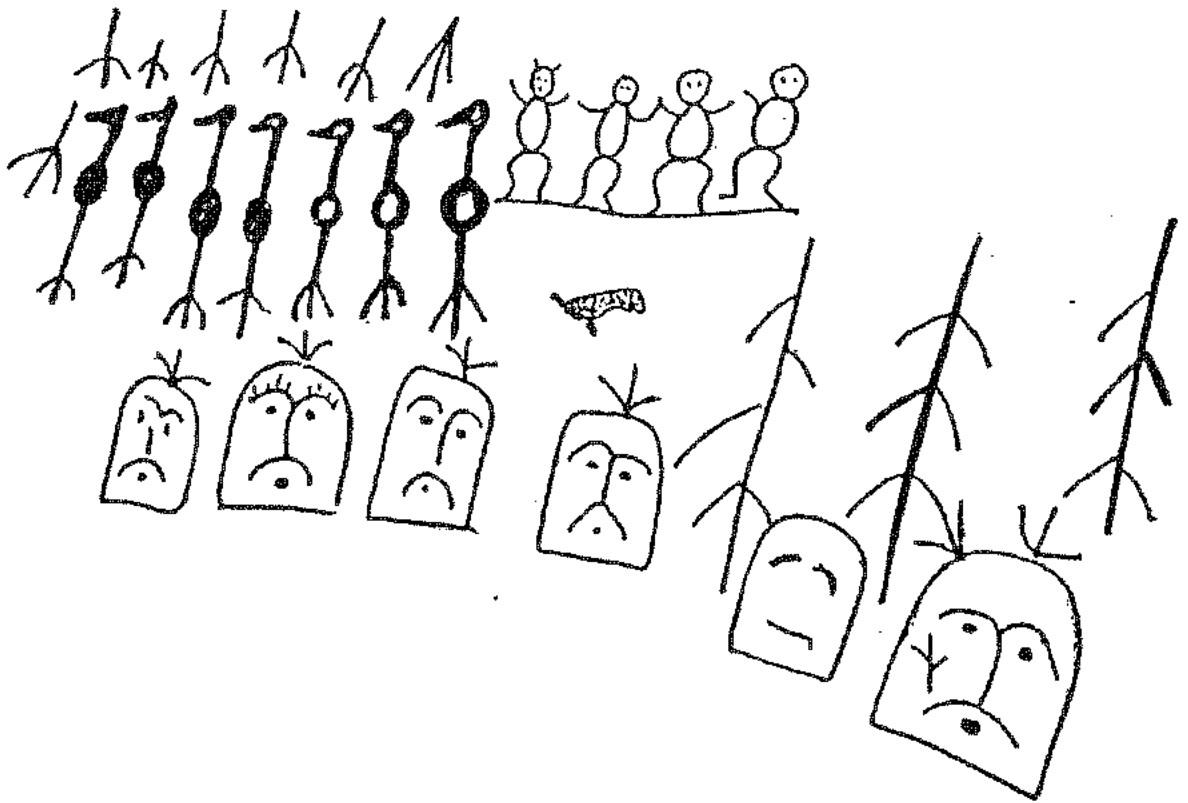


Figure 2a: Before Vandalism

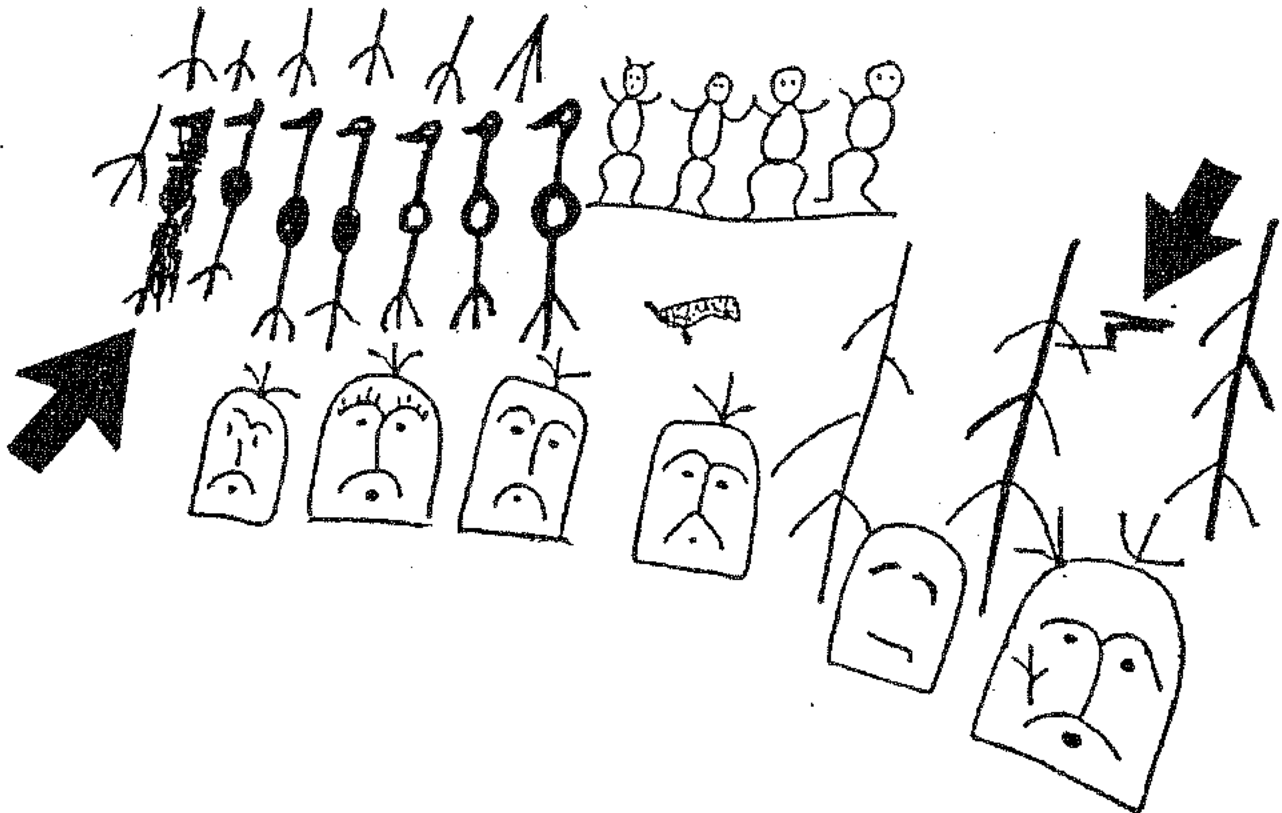


Figure 2b: After Vandalism

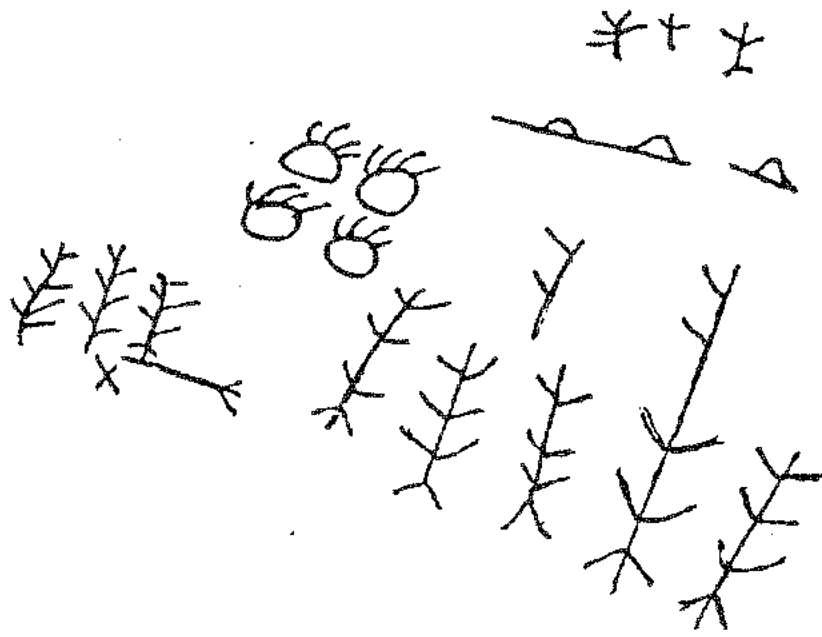


Figure 3a: Before Vandalism

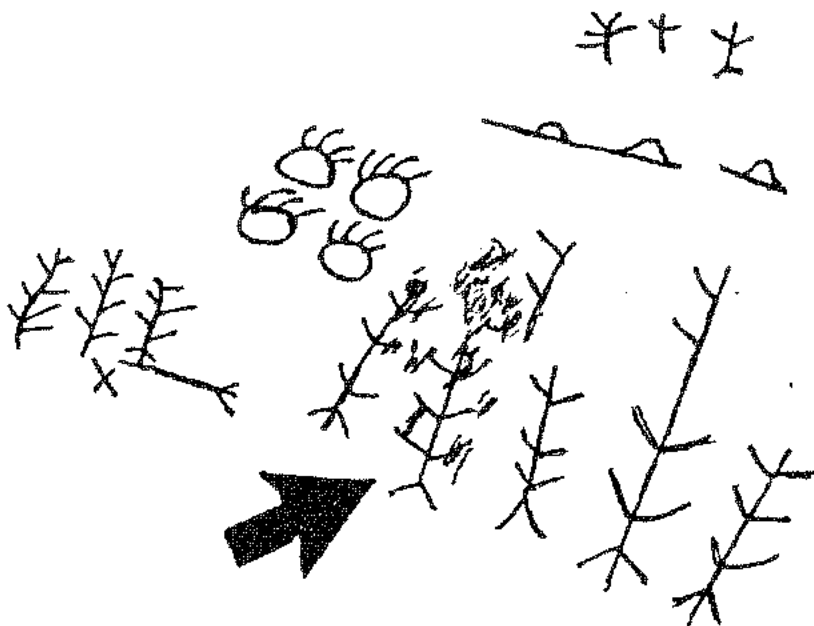


Figure 3b: After Vandalism

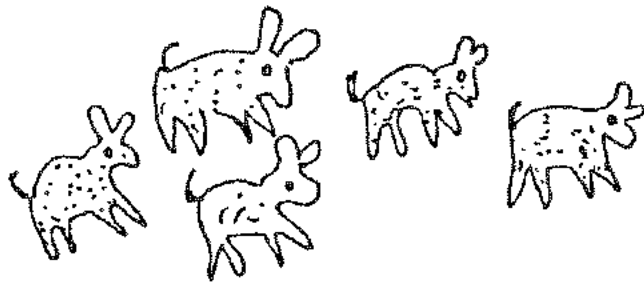


Figure 4a: Before Vandalism

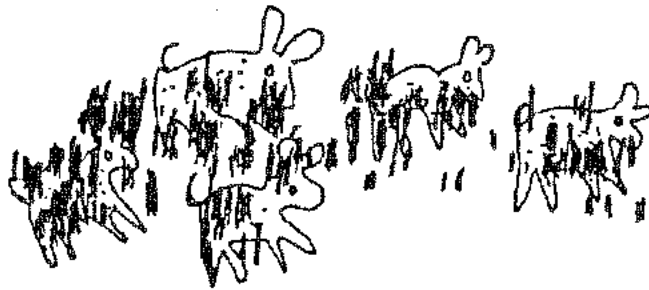


Figure 4b: After Vandalism



Figure 5 Vandalism of Rock Art

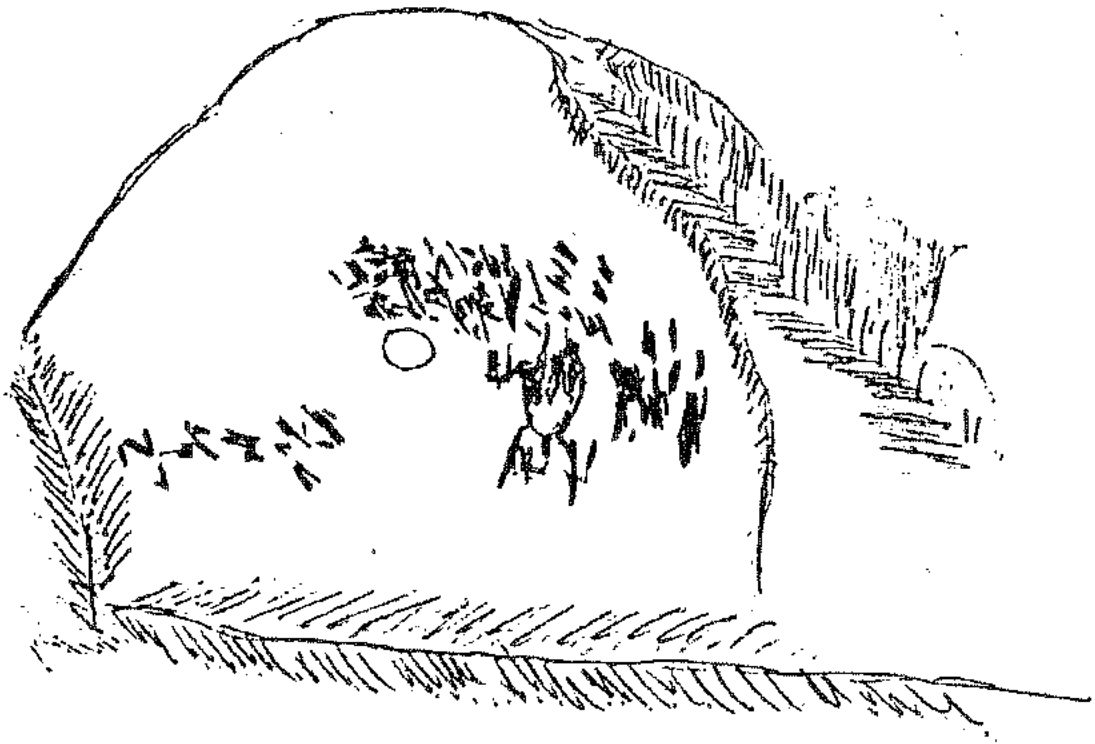


Figure 6: Vandalism of Rock Art



Figure 7: Vandalism and Obliteration of Rock Art

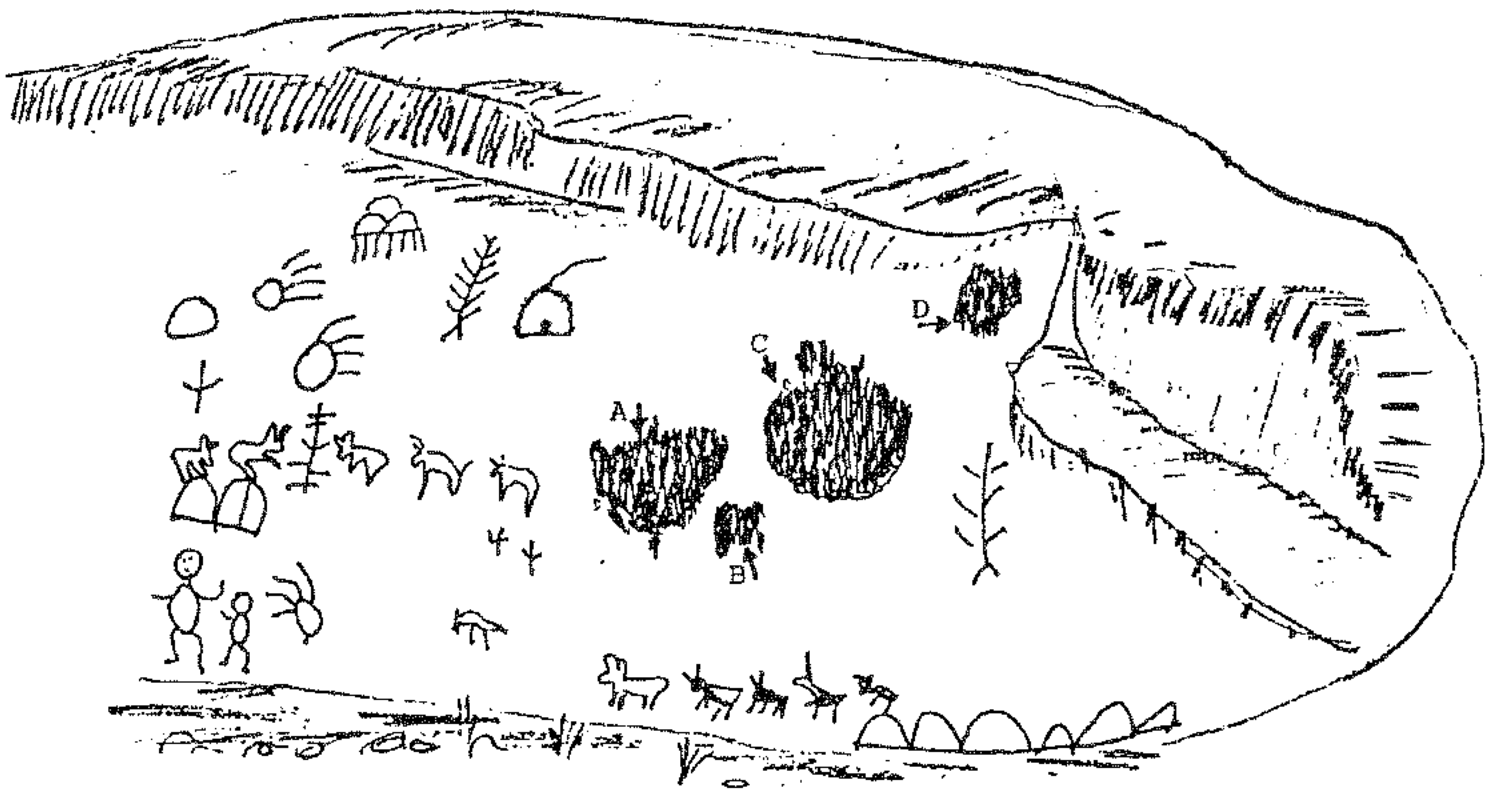


Figure 8: [Right hand side of rock]
 Total Obliteration of Rock Art at Points A,B,C, and D

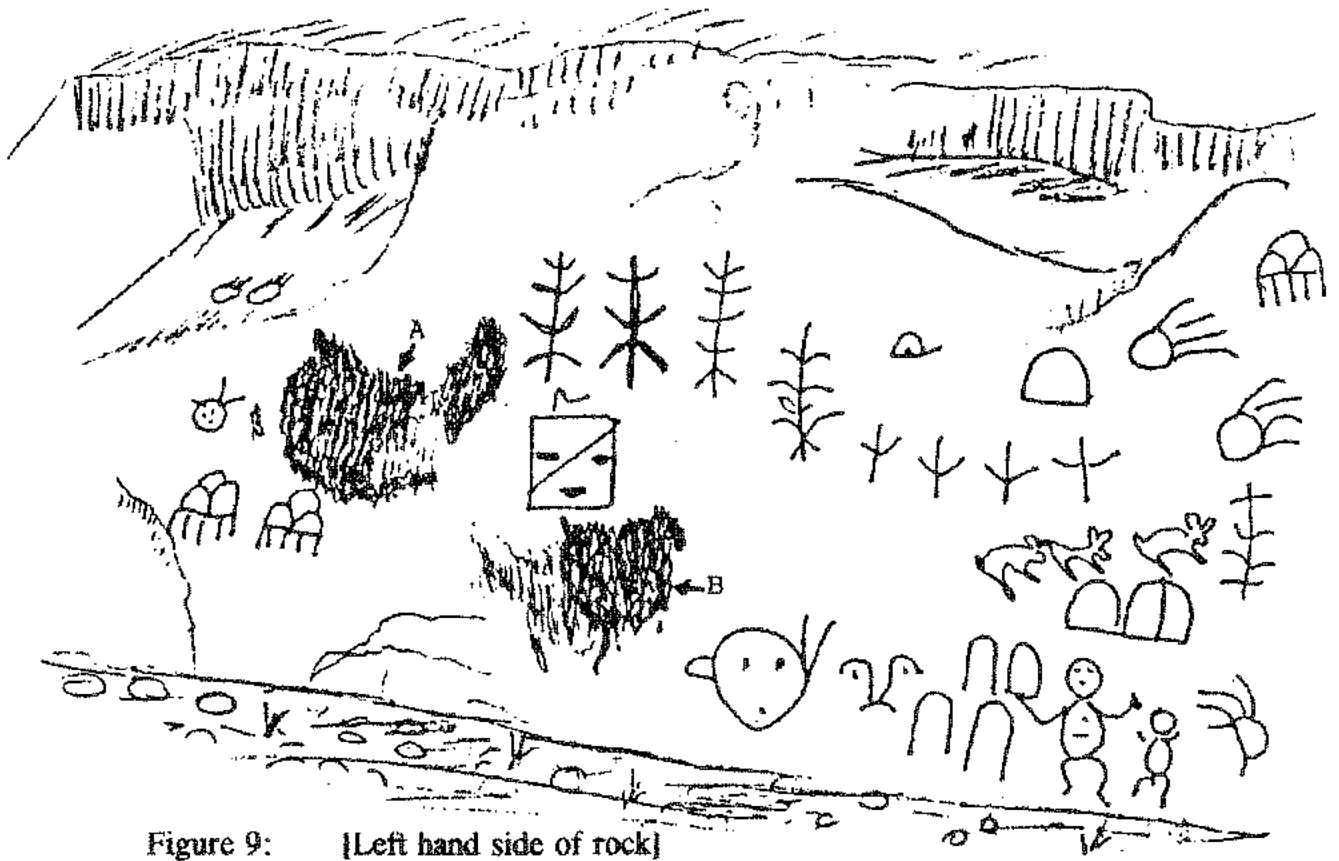


Figure 9: [Left hand side of rock]
 Total Obliteration of rock art at points A and B