

Fremont Arrowheads

Clifford Lamont Rayl

Transcribed and edited by Steven J. Manning

Clifford Rayl presented this paper at the URARA Symposium in Green River, Utah on Saturday August 31, 1996. Clifford passed away before it was published. Since many URARA members appreciated Clifford's humor and enjoyed his presentation, I felt it appropriate that it be published in this volume. Transcribing Clifford's presentation, determining how to edit the text, and assembling the presentation in a form suitable for publication was a most difficult task. Clifford presented this paper extemporaneously. Usually before a paper is published, the speaker has time to polish his remarks, put them in a suitable form, and organize his slides into suitable figures. Clifford's death made this impossible. A videotape of Clifford's presentation apparently exists, but I was unable to locate it. Without the videotape it was not possible to determine which pictures Clifford used. The slides used in his presentation also could not be located. Therefore, I have included three arrowhead figures from his library, the rock art slides are from my own. Fortunately, an audiotape of the symposium had been made. Following the transcription of his presentation, I was uncertain to what extent I should edit it until Layne Miller told me of a situation involving a presentation of an old river runner Clifford knew. The river runner died shortly after giving a presentation, which Clifford attended. His presentation was later edited and published. Layne told me that Clifford was extremely critical of the publication because he felt it was edited to such an extent, and made so formal, that it was as if a different person gave the presentation. The old river runner's character and personality were gone. With this in mind, Clifford's presentation is reproduced here with only minor editing and a few added comments, which are indicated by square brackets.

I never knew anybody who could change a trend. [Referring to Sally Cole's disapproval of the term "rock art". Sally presented the preceding paper.] I don't know what we'd do without the term rock art.

The purpose of my being here today is solely to preserve the amateur status of this organization.

I had a very traumatic experience that I have to tell you about. Nina called me up and said that she needed the symposium paper that I gave last year, and I said, "That's no problem, I have it on video". So I took the video out and looked at it.

Rule number one: Never watch a video of your symposium presentation. Rule number two: Never suppose yourself to be anything but an amateur. Rule number three: Don't take yourself too seriously. If we can get started on that note, why then before I am done here, I will have preserved the amateur status of this organization.

You're going to wonder what in the heck arrowheads have got to do with rock art. (Oh, if I act confused on some of these slides—I haven't seen them either.) I want to show you these [arrowheads]. This one right here is called an Adena, and it's got about a six thousand year BC

date on it, and most of them come out of Missouri, Ohio and Illinois. That just about flipped me. Now, what caused all of this—they put these [arrowheads] in cases and in all of these books I got—these fancy books—you always have these arrowheads pointing away from you [pointing up]. If you take and turn the book over—well if you don't know what side of the book is up you know [you might have a problem]—if you turn the book over, they start looking like that (Figure 1).

Boy this is going to be exciting! It was exciting to me. I thought, hay, every year I look for an irony; and I thought, boy, this is about as irony as you can get. So anyway, looking at this one figure right here—some of you have already guessed—it doesn't take much to see where we're going. I'm going to show you a whole bunch of these as "The Collection". I'm going to show you a little bit of "The Collection" and we are going to go real fast. Not every arrowhead—except the one over on the right—not every one of these looks like what I'm talking about. Here's some that are different size. A couple of these—that one, this one, this one down here, are called "Narrow Notch". I found that in a book. Look at this one here. When we get over to the panels you say, "What am I leading to"? I've already given away my secret. When you get over to the panels, you will see that they [the glyphs] don't have any arms, legs or nothing on them. You say, "Well, good grief, they must be something different".

This is the Thorn Collection (Figure 2). You can see they just took them and put them in the case. I came to find out that they are from three ages. They are Paleo, and they are Archaic and Woodland, and

if you can start picking these out when I get down to the pictures, you can see what I am talking about. By now, some of you will even know in what age group, what archaic age group that we're talking about. Here is a whole bunch of them. They are all different sizes. These were all found in and around Vernal, and therefore they came out of the Fremont area. We are not going to restrict these to Fremont, but I would like to show you which one I think is Paleo, which one I think is Archaic, and which one is the rock art that matches that one, and some of these that specifically come out of the Fremont period. Like I say, it is just according to which way you look at these.

I'm going to run these [slides] real fast, because I don't want to use all my time on the Thorn Collection. I did promise the museum that you people would come up there and look at these. That's the only way I got to take these pictures. That is the reason why I am doing the commercial. They are at the Heritage Museum in Vernal, and they would just be tickled to death if we would come up there and do something like we're doing here.

Look at these points (Figure 3). What is really funny is when we go down the canyons—and look at that one the left—and we see those on the cliff wall. I might show you the same one twice because I put it in twice—but each one of those is a different slide. Like I say, if I act confused it's because, I don't know if I looked at them real good.

This one right here is a Mojave. You say, "Golly dang; they found that up to Vernal?" This one is an archaic Mojave point. I don't know anything about arrowheads. So if anybody wants to jump

up—after the meeting of course—and start telling me about arrowheads, I probably won't even listen, because I'm really not interested. My main thing is rock art, and you're going to see in a minute just exactly where I am going with this. Then I am going to switch off on Archaeoastronomy, and you are going to say, "This guy is not very consistent", but people that know me think I am.

Now this is starting to get mundane. What we're doing right now is establishing from this large collection [about 28 slides]—I'm establishing an arrowhead form, and where am I going? I am going to take it to the wall in about two seconds. I want to take these figures right over there, and they don't have any [appendages]. These could be—if you were really describing them—these could be spirit figures, because they don't have any arms or legs or whatever else, and that's not where I'm going.

I am getting into the bigger ones now to show you that some of the bigger arrowheads are starting into a different form. This one here, you might want to see if you don't see that one on the wall someplace. Here are some more that fall into the Paleo category and run into the 6,000-year dates.

There is one thing that bothers me about dating arrowheads. Virgil, down in Monument Valley, said his father was a medicine man, and I asked him, I said, "Virgil, did you ever find any arrowheads?" He said, "Yes." "What did you do with them?" He said, "I took them home and gave them to my dad, and he put them in that little medicine pouch"—those little leather sacks that they have. So to me this really brakes up [i.e., destroys] any consistency in the dating of

these. Dating really isn't related to anything because of the value that they give them. It's the same thing that Tom Freestone was doing in taking the sand off of the wall and tapping into the power of grooves [Freestone 1996]. They also were doing that in the fact that they revered these old arrowheads. There was a lot of power and a lot of prestige that went with these old arrowheads in terms of medicine. They put them in the pouch.

This is the one right here that I want to start on (Figure 4). I was up at Tom's ranch one time. I asked Sally if she remembered [what she told me to do], and she said yes, and I'll bet she didn't, because that's been too long. Sally Cole one day gave me an assignment. She said, "Clifford, I want you to..."—it must have been an archaeological climate because I was supposed to use that format. I was supposed to record where every one of these was at. This is at Fish Creek Cove (Figure 5), and there should be another one. There are three of these. I was to record the position where it was found and all the information I could get. And whether she knows it or not, I took this assignment serious. I will show you what has developed in the last few months. That was five years ago, and I was so serious I only did it just the other day. But anyway, I want you to look at that first form. We are back again to an Adena point—I think the book calls it—at 6,000 BC.

Now I am going to show you rock art. This is my living proof. This is where I want to start my argument. I don't want you to believe me. I want you to just get out there and prove everything I am telling you. You go out and come back and tell me where I am wrong. This happens to be—Layne Miller told me this was

down to Ferron Box (Figure 6). Is that correct Jesse? [Jesse replied, “Yes.”] That’s Ferron Box. What date it is? I don’t have the slightest idea. Right at this point, it is not important, but that is in the Ferron Box. There are no arms, there are no legs, there are no eyes, there are no shields, there is no nothing—there is a row of arrowheads. [*Statement from the audience*: “That’s on equinox”.] That is on equinox. They had a row of arrowheads at every equinox. They had two a year. This is were I am coming from. This is where I am doing. This is what I am trying to show you, and this is my whole argument. I am going to take this in a minute to the slide that was just before. I’m going to show you something I found on August 26, so you think that I have been really working heavy on this. On August 26, I had another clue, and I am going to give you one more clue, and all you are supposed to do with this is put it into your mixer and mix it up and whatever it comes out, you are stuck with it.

Here we go to the points. I am going to show you some points, and then I am going to show you some rock art. That’s just strictly for the one. What one am I taking about? It is specifically that one right there. And do I have some more? You bet. I will have to hurry. Here we go back to this Adena point again, this white one. And some more of them here, and here we come back to that one. What is that? Possibly Barrier Canyon? I don’t know. I am not going to try and identify it. The only thing I put this in for is that Nina took this slide for me. She went out after I discovered this, and I didn’t know when I was going to get to Vernal, and her camera seemed to be better than mine. And here we are back again.

This is a Fremont figure here, and there should be another one by it. We start getting the shapes, but these have arms and tops on them. This is a nice one that is rather like the Barrier Canyon. This is getting in more to the Fremont shape to show you that it was used over a period of time; it wasn’t restricted to just one certain time.

That is Steve Manning. I don’t know what he is doing, but it looks fun. There are some small figures over there. This is Indian Creek. This is the first time I met Steve, and Sally and Chuck, and Ray Williamson. We were at the Edge of the Cedars [Museum].

Look at this form here. This form is more into the Fremont style than we are into the Barrier Style in terms of the point, but they haven’t changed their concepts. Start looking at these—no arms, no legs and whatever else. When we get to a point here, I will tell you what I—there is some more Barrier stuff here. Somewhere I need to stop and just tell you what I think these are—look at these. They have put something on them—they have bird wings on them—tail feathers.

Maybe I ought to read you what Von Dell Chamberlain has to say. He’s wonderful. I hate to admit it, but he is. He quotes the “Song of the Stars”. He says, “We are the stars which sing”. We are going to go over to a different idea now. [I am going] to establish why the arrowhead has become part of the rock art. He published this last Sunday. It may or may not even work. If it doesn’t work—just throw it out. [Clifford’s comments while he read the following quote are indicated by {}.]

To Hear Song of the Stars, Gaze Upward and Listen

Today I want to share with you a gem from my treasure trove. In 1882, Charles G. Leland, journalist, essayist and folklorist, began collecting legends from the northern Algonquin Indians. He published his findings in 1884, prefacing the stories with the statement that the old people said the tales were once sung and that many of them were poems. Leland's book ended with a poem that is as beautiful and insightful, at least for me, as any piece of literature I have ever known.

The Song of the Stars

“We are the stars which sing
We sing with our light;
We are the birds of fire,
We fly over the sky.
Our light is a voice.
We make a road for spirits,
For the spirits to pass over.
Among us are three hunters
{Why arrowheads? Why hunters?}
Who chase a bear.
There never was a time
When they were not hunting.
We look down on the mountains.
This is the Song of the Stars.”

{I am going to read you what he has to say because I aren't this smart.}

The story about the hunters chasing a bear has been widely publicized since Leland's time. Indeed, it has been in Boy Scout books for many years. {I was a Boy Scout—for many years.} This is a story relating the stars to the Earth and the seasons. One fine spring day, three hunters began chasing a bear, quite unaware of the journey they had embarked upon. The elusive creature led them northward, keeping

out of reach ahead of them. So intense was the chase that the hunters did not even notice when the bear stepped from earth to sky: they followed, rising above rocks, trees and mountain tops. The longer they pursued, the more determined they became. After many months, they got close enough to wound the bear.

{The panel that I was showing you near Cove Fort, had blood coming out of a deer. The Indians used whatever they had available locally—when you're adapting this thing. Bears were all over this continent for the early part, but when you were applying blood—you could apply it to sheep—you could apply it to the deer. Those deer on the Cove Fort are absolutely still dripping the blood.}

Blood dripped down, captured by leaves, transforming the landscape in crimson glory. The bear swooped down to Earth. Hidden in a cave, it rested, healed and gained strength. When spring arrived, the hunters found the bear and took up the chase again. Every year the story is retold by movements of the sky and cycles on the ground. The bear, formed by the four stars of the bowl of the Big Dipper, rises upward in the northeast on spring evenings. The three hunters, {That's what we are interested in—three hunters that look like arrowheads, that don't have any arms and legs or anything.} the handle of the Dipper, follow. By summer, they are high over the North Star as darkness comes. When autumn arrives, the hunters' arrow finds its mark, as the bear moves low in the northwest and forests blush in fulfillment of the year. On winter evenings, the bear passes under the Pole Star, brushing the horizon to disappear from easy view. With the blossoms of spring, however,

bear and hunters are rising again. Every year the drama repeats to help us remember the order of things, as well as the stories that connect children to their ancestors. The poem reminds us of the concept that the Milky Way is the road for spirits traveling to the next world. This Algonquin idea is common to many other North Americans, and it is found across the waters in Scandinavian lands (Von Del Chamberlain 1996).

The point I am making is that these figures on the wall are depicting these arrowheads and are depicting something to do with hunting—possibly like the three hunting, and this could be a teaching aid. If it's not, then the connection between the earth and the sky [could be shown] with this type of a symbol on the tail here. In the San Francisco Peaks area, when the clouds come down and settle on the peaks, the spirit helpers go up on the San Francisco Peaks and transfer messages from the seeds into the clouds, so the clouds will carry them back to the creator. So we know that these people were dealing in the transfer of a message, and possibly we are looking at some of those; either the three hunters or possibly something that is transferring the messages from earth up to the sky.

Now I will show you some more which runs into the Barrier, and we will just run it on through to make my point that I do have enough evidence in rock art to support my idea. This was back to this Paleo point again, and as you can look around the wall on the rock art, you can see these figures. They are not all the figures. Most generally, there is only one or two, and these could possibly be those, if you use the Indian interpretation. I had the medicine man tell me that these panels—you don't go around the rock art panels,

([which] is the thing that you hear the most)—because they have spirits, and there are good and bad spirits. Last weekend we showed a Ute boy a whole bunch of these pictures here and he threw the book on the ground and he said, "Stay away from those!" That was his admonishment—this was Chunky out to Roosevelt. He said, "Stay away from those spirits". So, if these on the wall are spirits, then they would be the spirits of the arrowhead. Then these would contain the spirits, and they would go there to converse and become acquainted and to solicit the aid and the help of the spirit in this rock art to help them in the hunt.

This is Indian Creek, and I will show you a couple, and if you will look around on the panel there is one clear over there. Look all through that jumble, there is one of those spirit helpers. Here we are again. This one is more Fremont than Barrier, and look at this one. This is really neat because there is an arrowhead inside of an arrowhead (Figure 7). That is in Indian Creek, and it is open for inspection if anyone wants to go and look. Take lots of water.

This is one of the Mojave points that was in the collection [Heritage Museum in Vernal]. I was quite taken by this because of the fact they're finding this at Vernal, and yet they call this a Mojave archaic point. This is back to the same thing, and if you will, and why I want to comment on this. I don't want arrowheads this time. This looks like it has been superimposed. It has been superimposed for a reason. If we start giving new meaning to that glyph right there, and it goes over the animal, then to me that gives—that is telling me that it is a hunting glyph, because of the fact that it is superimposed right over the animals,

and it is part of hunting. That is a supposition that an amateur gets to make.

Look at this one. This is really neat. Look at the head. They call that a “Square Notch” back in the east—if you were in—I think it was Maine. This book that Rob Bartlett gave me yesterday before he died—I don’t know if he knew where he was going or not—but he gave me this book, and all of this is Maine rock art of Maine arrowheads. This stuff has the type of head that we are looking at here and it came out of the area of Maine, Illinois, Missouri and Ohio. And they found an abundance of it in the Vernal area. Here we go again. Pretty much the same thing. You can see the figures. You can see a nice figure over here and you can see one here. No arms and legs. No anything—in an arrowhead position. [Comment from timer: “Your time is up”.] Is that it? Give me just enough to get off.

This is some of the Barrier Canyon Style. This is the Buckhorn panel—the one that has been cleaned—since it’s been cleaned. You can see the shapes there. Some of these have arms on them and some of them don’t, so every one of those is not an arrowhead. Not by any means. This is the little guy right here

that’s shaped like an arrowhead, but he has the tail of a bird. I am positive that he is a spirit helper, and that his main function is to carry those messages back to the creator—back to the sky at least. This is Spur Canyon. That is Virgin Springs. This is Peek-a-Boo Springs. Nice big figures—no arms, no legs, no feet, no nothing. There are three figures right there, and only one would qualify as an arrowhead, really—even these figures here without arms and legs. I don’t put any interpretation on this, but here they are, and this is the evidence of the Barrier—most of the Barrier Canyon type stuff. As you scan this panel, you can find what I am telling you. Here’s some that are more—a little fatter and more Fremont looking.

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