

Cave Valley – The Flute Cave

On Saturday, June 12th, 13 DAS members gathered to travel up Kolob Terrace to Cave Valley. The day was partly cloudy with very mild temperatures in the 70's (unusual for June). The trip was perfect considering that there were showers the prior evening and severe thunder storm later in the day. All in all, excellent planning! Kay "Feather" Robinson led the trip.



Cave Valley is a beautiful meadow about 2/3 thirds of the way to Kolob Reservoir. There were an abundance of wild flowers in bloom, and Feather took time to talk about the flowers and plant life that the early Native Americans used for food and medicines. Feather also pointed out the geographic features that would have made this a good place for the Native Americans to live and more importantly to hold ceremonies. The Cave Valley site was and is an important ceremonial site for the Native American people. She said that there were villages in the meadow, most likely from the Archaic or Basket Maker period. We did find some pot shards in the meadow, indicating later habitation as well.

The rock art in the Cave Valley site are pictographs in various colors including black, white, yellow, red and turquoise done mostly on a black background. The anthropomorphic figures are unique and have spawned the term "Cave Valley Style". Most / All of the figures in the cave are spirit beings, as they are incomplete; having no hands or feet, although some have three fingers and toes.



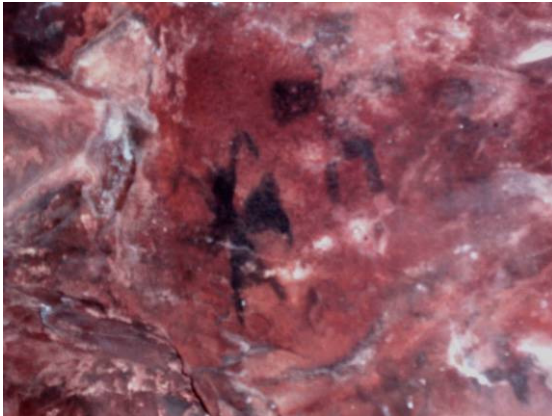
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(2)

Figure 1 – Cave approach

Figure 2 – Glyph at the cave entrance showing a birthing scene, with the mother giving birth to a powerful baby (power line over his head). Feather calls the cave a “birthing cave”. These pictographs are a completely different style than the rest of the glyphs in the cave. Feather attributes these glyphs to the Paiute.



(2)



(4)

Figure 3 – Bats (?) in a black on black motif.

Figure 4 – Another black on black scene.



(5)

Figure 5 – this is the main character in the cave. He is a transitional figure with 4 toes. Note the red ear bobs, the headdress of dots (stars), the yellow spirit helpers around him (yellow figures). Especially note the two flute players (yellow) playing into his ear. The yellow figures are what is termed the “cave valley style”. Some of the helpers have their hands toward the ground (earth) while one has one hand up and one hand down. Most have a headdress showing to the side of the head. The triangular head, body, arms, legs and headdress typify the cave valley style.



(6)

Figure 6 – another main character in the cave valley style. He also has flute players playing into his ear. This figure was created after the black on black figures – notice the superposition of the yellow figure over the black cave valley figure in the background.

Figure 7 – A scene having many figures both human and animal along with a spiral indicating a journey or energy.

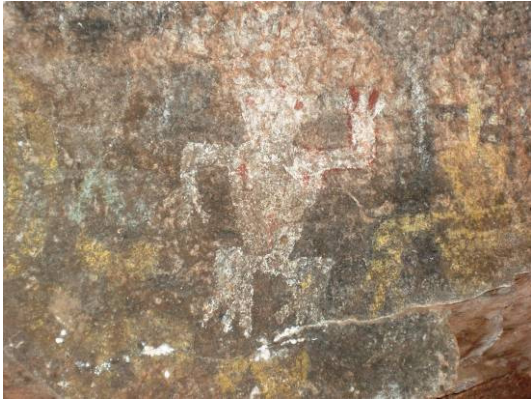
Figure 8 – a yellow and black figure with a yellow headdress and a yellow mouth. He appears to be performing a snake dance.



(7)



(8)



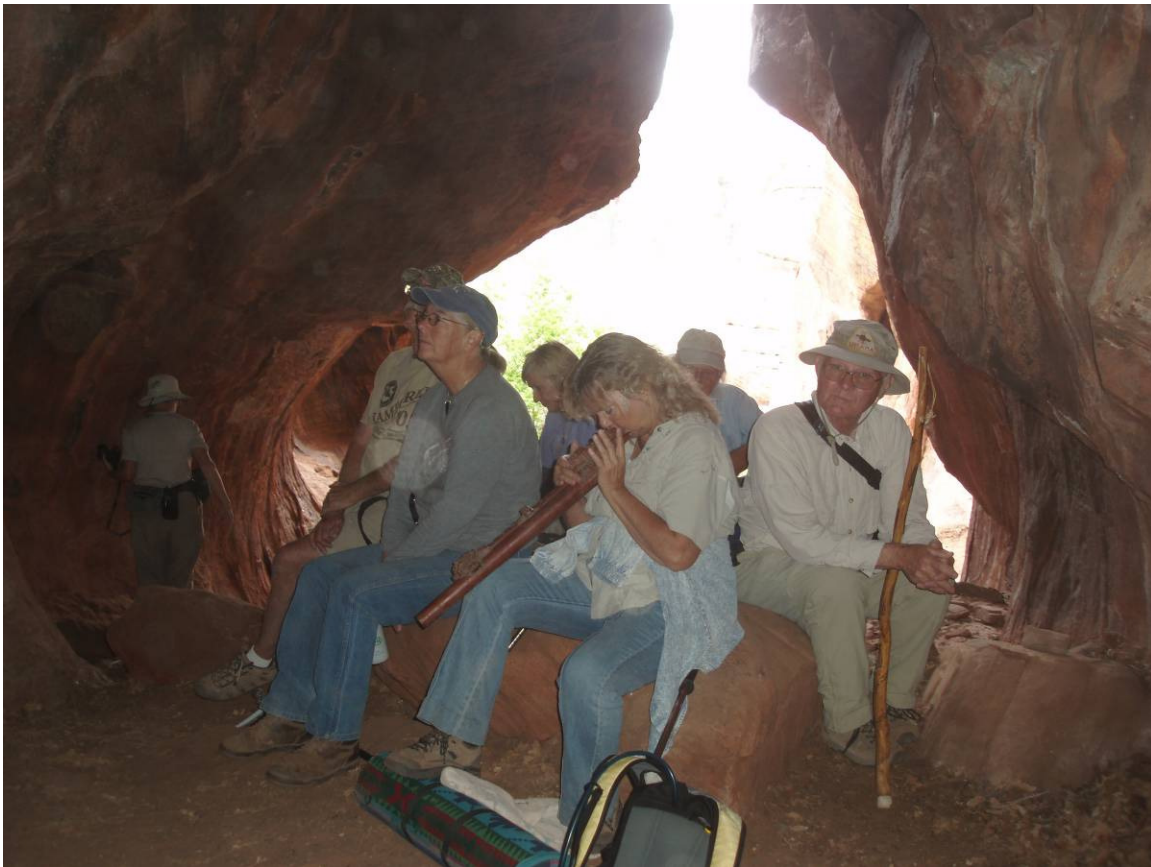
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Figure 9 – white on black figure with red accents. Note only 3 figures and toes (spirit being) with on hand up and one down. He also has a headdress of stars.

Figure 10 – yellow on black figure with a yellow deer below. The deer is also a spirit being with only 3 toes. They are next to the spiral.



(11)

Figure 11 – Feather playing her clay flute to honor the ancestors. She says that the figures on the walls indicate that the flute was used within the cave for ceremonies.



(12)

Figure 12 – view from the cave looking out into the valley.

Thanks to Feather for leading this adventure and providing information and stories that made the visit special.