

“Ute Rock Art in 9-Mile Canyon and Beyond”

by Layne Miller

Presented to Dixie Archaeology Society

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Layne Miller is a past president of the Utah Rock Art Research Association (URARA) and a regional expert about rock art in Eastern Utah. He is a regular visitor to 9-Mile Canyon as he serves as a tour guide for the City of Price Utah to places such as 9-Mile Canyon, Range Creek and the San Raphael Swell. He has been visiting these locations for the past 25+ years.

Layne began his presentation with a brief history of the Utes. Historically, the Utes were a nomadic, desert archaic people. They were hunter / gatherers who traveled by foot and lived in wikiups in small family groups. **Until they got the horse!**

The Utes got the horse following the Pueblo revolt in 1680, which for a brief period forced the Spanish from the southwest. Within less than 50 years, the Utes were accomplished horseman and adopted an entirely different life style – a cultural change. They traveled to California for trade and into the Great Plains. Here they hunted Buffalo and the Buffalo became a cultural and religious symbol. They also revered the Bear who became another cultural symbol. Layne described the Ute Bear dance, which is held every spring to mark the arrival of spring. It is held after the first thunderstorm and is a special religious and social occasion.

The Ute domain ranged from eastern Utah and into most of Colorado – essentially the Rocky Mountains.

Layne theory is that if we can identify and understand Ute Rock Art we may begin to understand other rock art. He feels that Ute oral history may help in our understanding, as the Ute rock art is relatively new – less than 300 years old.

Layne has arrived at a number of identifiers that distinguish Ute Rock Art in Eastern Utah and Western Colorado:

- Chisel Marks – the chisel marks in glyphs indicate they are relatively new and likely Ute.
- Bears – images of a bear and / or bear foot prints. He showed photos of glyphs with bears climbing trees along with many bear paw prints.



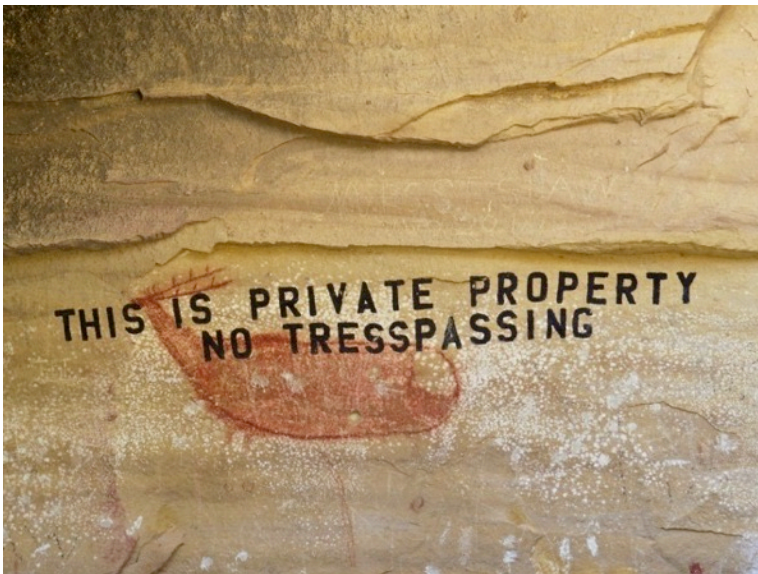
Ute Bear Paw

- Bison – Ute Buffalo often are shown with their hooves showing, similar to what one would see if tracking the animal. This is also true for bear and deer / elk.



Ute Buffalo – note the hooves on the left image

- Elk with “boat” shaped bodies –



Ute Elk along with some misspelled graffiti

- Horses – The Ute style horse has a long body with an arching neck. The body is often stippled.



Ute Horse with rider – top center

- Warriors with Horses – Ute warriors are often depicted with feathered headdresses, a lance. Their horses are “Ute style”, often with decorated horse manes.



Ute Warrior on his Horse

- Shields – Ute shields often are adorned with feathers.
- Owls –



Ute Owl

- Pictographs made with “Pigment Sticks” –

Most of the images are courtesy of Mel Langness.

John Mangels