

The Bear Clan Site

The Bear Clan site is somewhat unique in this area, in that all of the symbols relate only to the bear clan. Mel Langness, a bear clan member, explained the symbols as he was taught by his bear clan elders (Figure 1a & 1b).



Figure 1a



Figure 1b



Figure 2

Mel explains that the bear clan from four groups arrived in the area from the north in order to participate in a ceremony with the “Red Man” (this pictograph is nearby). They arrive at the center place (circle with the cross), Figure 2. They then traveled a short distance to Little Black Mountain (only a few miles and visible from this site), but first had to circle the mountain, Figure 2 (center).



Figure 3

Mel explained that while at the site, the leader of one of the bands died (figure at top left of Figure 3). The three remaining leaders (far left of Figure 3) selected a leader to replace the deceased leader. He is depicted at the bottom center of Figure 3, next to the bear clan symbol.

Mel did not know the meaning of the two concentric circle symbols (portals) or the wavy line (map) in Figure 3. The map could represent the Virgin River and the Fort Pierce Wash, where they join and where they then go through the Virgin River Gorge. The “n” shaped symbols could represent the mountains that run along the Arizona Strip and form the south wall of the valley.

Mel did explain that the vertical wavy line in Figure 4 (right side) represents the mountains and the “V” notch represented the Virgin River Gorge. He said that the Bear Clan left the area going to the south, through the Virgin River Gorge.



Figure 4



Figure 5

The large vertical white line in Figures 4 and 5 was formed by a lightning strike sometime after the petroglyphs were made.

Mel did say that the site was still used by bear clan members. The members leave small rocks as “offerings” on the natural rock shelves (Figure 6). Mel said that he could tell who was at the site by the size and placement of the rocks in the various small alcoves.

