

“Ash Creek Pipeline and Chief Toquer Reservoir” – Archaeological Treatment and Management”

by

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Presented to

Dixie Archaeology Society

May 13, 2015

Samira Hall described the results of survey work that was performed prior to the construction of a reservoir north west of Toquerville Utah.

The general archaeology of the area consists of 16 prehistoric sites of which 9 needed testing and 3 need field excavation. Also there were 10 historic sites that would be affected by the construction. Samira and her team also gathered oral histories of the area from local residents and from the Southern Paiutes.

Samira began her talk with a brief history of Toquerville. The town is an early pioneer-farming town that served the Silver Reef, Leeds, Harrisburg and Toquerville area. The area was relatively isolated because of the poor road conditions between Toquerville and New Harmony. Once the mines in Silver Reef closed the economy suffered because they could not get their farm goods to market.

The Toquerville area was originally settled by the Paiutes and is named after a Paiute leader, Chief Toquer. Chief Toquer welcomed the pioneers because he considered them better than the miners. They also had farming technology that could help his people and he felt they would help stop the slave trade that was focused on the Paiute women. Chief Toquer is thought to be buried in the area, however his gravesite has not been located.

The prehistoric sites have a large number of hearth and roasting pits along with a very large number of monos and matates, hammer stones and obsidian tools. It is assumed that this area was a “processing area” for yucca and agave. The survey team also noticed a number of yucca plants that have white stone circles around them. The Paiutes used yucca for a wide number of applications. Agave was a source of instant energy (high sugar content) for the natives. Samira felt that most of the “prehistoric” sites date to the 1700 – 1800’s. Dating of the sites still needs to be completed.

There is rock art in the area. Two of the larger panels are shown. The rock art is not affected by the proposed reservoir but could be affected by road traffic bringing lava rock to the reservoir site.





The site of the proposed road way is along the base of the lava rock ridge. One of the rock art panels is on the large rock in the right center of the photo.

This rock art is deemed to be of special significance to the Southern Paiutes. However Samira said that the state officials have determined that the rock art is not significant and no special steps will be taken to protect it.

Some sites that may be of interest:

History of Toquerville - <http://www.toquerville.org/index.php/about-toquerville/history>

Chief Toquer - <http://www.ksl.com/?sid=15346945>

Chief Toquer Historical Marker - http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMFJYC_Chief_Toquer_Historical_Marker

Paiute Graves - <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705371757/Dispute-over-Indian-graves-erupts-near-Toquerville.html?pg=all>

Paiutes Upset at Excavation - <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705371757/Dispute-over-Indian-graves-erupts-near-Toquerville.html?pg=all>

Toquerville Rock Art –

<http://dixierockart.webs.com/Field%20Trip%20Reports/Toquerville%20Petroglyph%20Site.pdf>

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Photos and Story by John Mangels