

# **“The Rock Art of Utah”**

by

Troy Scotter

Utah Rock Art Research Association (URARA)

Presented to

Dixie Archaeology Society

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Troy Scotter is a member of the Utah Rock Art Research Association and is an amateur archaeologist who has taken a strong interest in the preservation of Utah’s cultural resources, especially rock art.

Troy began his talk by summarizing the groups of people who have populated Utah over time.

Paleo Indian                      12000 – 8000 BC

Archaic                              8000 – 500 BC

Barrier Canyon

Glen Canyon

Desert Archaic

Anasazi

Basketmaker                      500 BC – 800 AD

Puebloan                              800 – 1300 AD

Fremont                              200 – 1300 AD

Numic Speaking                      1200 - Present

Ute, Paiute, Shoshone

Navajo                              1700 – Present

The Utah rock art could be attributed to any and all of the above peoples.

Troy said that there are over 89,000 recorded archaeology sites in Utah, with over 4,000 recorded rock art sites. He also said that less than 10 percent of the sites have been surveyed.

He said that it is difficult to document the age of any rock art site but some limited things could be stated. For example, Fremont sites appear to be newer than Barrier Canyon sites because the Fremont rock art is often written on top of the Barrier Canyon style rock art. This is called superposition.

Troy then went on to show examples of various styles of rock art from sites located throughout Utah. Some of the sites he discussed are:

San Rafael Swell – Buckhorn Wash – Barrier Canyon Style – figures with no arms / legs, snakes, dogs – great attention to detail

Rochester Creek

Fremont Indian State Park

Thompson Creek / Se-go Canyon

Moab – Newspaper Rock – Ute

Bluff / San Juan River – Anasazi – Basketmaker style over top of Glen Canyon Linear Style

Bluff / Sand Island

Troy provided an handout with a listing of PUBLIC rock art sites in Utah that can easily be visited (<http://dixierockart.webs.com/Technical%20Presentations/Public%20Rock%20Art%20In%20Utah%20v3a.pdf>).

Troy observed:

- There is more rock art attributed to earlier peoples
- The earlier rock art seemed to be much more detailed

Troy attributed this to the development of the kiva where religious ceremonies were brought “inside” rather than being “outside” events.

Troy ended with a number of factors that are threatening archaeological sites:

- Changes in Society
- Increased Population
- New Technology (Internet, GPS, etc.)
- Energy Needs (Oil, Natural gas, etc.)
- Politicians and Activists
- Actions by both the State and Federal Governments

Troy felt that the only ways to preserve archaeological sites are through documentation and education.

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John Mangels