

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**DATA SHEET**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	SEP 4 1970

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC McConkie Ranch Petroglyphs (42Un415)

AND/OR COMMON Dry Fork Valley Petroglyphs

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Approximately 8 miles northwest of Vernal

CITY, TOWN	VICINITY OF	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT	
Vernal		I	
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Utah	149	Uintah	047

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Mrs. Virtus McConkie

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN STATE  
Dry Fork VICINITY OF Utah

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Uintah County Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN STATE  
Vernal Utah

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Survey Report of the Rock Art of Utah

DATE

1970  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS Utah State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN STATE  
Salt Lake City Utah

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The site is located in Dry Fork Valley, a major tributary of Ashley Creek, a narrow valley with permanent water, approximately 8 miles northwest of Vernal. The site consists of numerous separate panels along the base of the yellow Navajo sandstone cliffs which form the north and east side of the Dry Fork Valley. The panels are scattered along the cliff for about 2 miles, with the greatest concentration behind the McConkie ranch house. There is a long talus slope below the cliff which is about 100 to 150 ft. high. The site overlooks the whole lower portion of the Dry Fork Valley.

This site, one of the most well-known in the Western United States, is considered to be the type site of the Vernal Style. It is characterized by elaborate anthropomorphs, generally with trapezoidal bodies, headdresses, necklaces, earrings, kilts and other decorations. They commonly hold shields and masks, the latter have been interpreted by many as severed heads (Wormington 1955:145). By far, the main focus of the panels is on the elaborate anthropomorphs. Every panel has several, and in many panels this is the only figure present. Animals are also present but they are insignificant, as are the occasional geometric designs. At least two of the panels show what are apparently bears, either "fighting" or "dancing" with the anthropomorphs. In general, the ornaments (necklaces, earrings, kilts, and headdresses) are more deeply carved than the anthropomorphs themselves. In several cases weathering has almost completely obliterated the figures except for these ornaments. Often, other anthropomorphs have been superimposed on these older figures. Red pigment is present on a few of the panels, but is badly faded. In some cases it was used to accentuate the carvings, on others it apparently represents all that remains of earlier pictographs. The panels resemble those in Nine Mile Canyon, to the south, in being small and scattered along the valley walls for a great distance.

During the 1930's, many of the panels were numbered by Albert Reagan and chalked in by Reagan or Frank Beckwith for identification and photographic purposes. Most of the chalking and numbers still remain. None of the panels appear to be marked by vandalism, and the site is very well protected by the McConkies who charge admission to the site and conduct tours. The site is presently visited by many hundreds of visitors each year and maps are available in Vernal giving directions to the site for tourists.

Wormington, H. M.

1955 A Reappraisal of the Fremont Culture. Proceedings of the Denver Museum of Natural History, No. 1. Denver.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
X PREHISTORIC	X ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__ COMMUNITY PLANNING	__ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__ RELIGION	
1400-1499	__ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__ CONSERVATION	__ LAW	__ SCIENCE	
1500-1599	__ AGRICULTURE	__ ECONOMICS	__ LITERATURE	__ SCULPTURE	
1600-1699	__ ARCHITECTURE	__ EDUCATION	__ MILITARY	__ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
1700-1799	__ ART	__ ENGINEERING	__ MUSIC	__ THEATER	
1800-1899	__ COMMERCE	__ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__ PHILOSOPHY	__ TRANSPORTATION	
1900-	__ COMMUNICATIONS	__ INDUSTRY	__ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__ OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__ INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES approx. A.D. 500 to 1200 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Basketmaker-Fremont (?)

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Dry Fork Valley Petroglyphs are probably among the most photographed, well-publicized and best known examples of aboriginal rock art in the state of Utah and in the Western United States. The site was thoroughly photographed by Albert Reagan in 1931, who published his material in numerous journals (Reagan 1931, 1932, 1933). Frank Beckwith's work also helped make the site famous, calling it the "best in the state" (Beckwith 1935:40). The site is considered to be the type site for the Vernal Style, attributed to the Fremont Culture, but it may be pre-Fremont. Wormington has the following comments on the petroglyphs in the Vernal area: "In Dry Fork Canyon, 8 miles from Vernal, Frank Beckwith found numerous pictographs (Beckwith, 1935). Two panels are shown in Fig. 59 (p. 145). The shape of the bodies, the elaborate necklaces and belts, the horned headdresses, and the lines below the eyes all suggest Fremont work. It is interesting to note the presence of two crownlike headdresses. The magnificent headdresses of flicker feathers found in Mantle's Cave and a similar specimen reported from the Fremont area would probably be depicted in such a manner. The head carried by the individual in the lower panel is also of interest. It could be a mask, but masks are not likely to have necks. Perhaps, as Reagan and Beckwith have suggested, it represents a trophy head. The head in the upper panel is more mask-like." (1955:145).

The evidence, however, does not clearly point to a specific Fremont cultural affiliation for this art style. The headdresses found in cave deposits noted above are probably associated with earlier Basketmaker components at the sites. In addition, the shield figures are found in a much wider area than that assigned to the Fremont Culture, as far north as Pictograph Cave in Montana. Many of the figures do closely resemble those found along the Fremont River, which are also generally ascribed to the Fremont Culture. Again, it should be noted that cave deposits adjacent to the panels in both Dry Fork and the Fremont River contain much cultural material that could be ascribed to an earlier Basketmaker II or III level of technology.

Thus, there is still considerable question regarding the exact dating, cultural affiliation, and meaning of this distinctive rock art. Nevertheless, there can be no question regarding its significance, aesthetic value, and importance for understanding the cultural affiliation of various prehistoric populations.

Beckwith, Frank  
 1935 Ancient Indian Petroglyphs of Utah. El Palacio, Vol. 38, Nos. 6, 7, 8, pp. 33-40.

Reagan, Albert B.  
 1931 The Pictographs in Ashley and Dry Fork Valleys, in Northeastern Utah. Transactions, Kansas Academy of Science, Vol. 34, pp. 168-216.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Schaafsma, Polly  
 n.d. Survey Report of the Rock Art of Utah. Manuscript, on file, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.  
 1971 The Rock Art of Utah. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. 65. Cambridge.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>11</u> <u>2</u>	<u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Claudia F. Berry/Archeologist

ORGANIZATION

Utah State Historical Society

DATE

July 14, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

603 East South Temple

TELEPHONE

328-5755

CITY OR TOWN

Salt Lake City

STATE

Utah

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Melvin T. Smith*

TITLE Melvin T. Smith, State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE July 16, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 9/25/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Ronald M. Pierberg*  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 9/24/75

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE Two

1933 Summary of Archeological Finds in the Uintah Basin, in Utah, to date. Utah Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, Vol. 10, pp. 3-18. Salt Lake City.

Wormington, H. M.

1955 A Reappraisal of the Fremont Culture. Proceedings of the Denver Museum of Natural History, No. 1. Denver.