

Picture Rock Pass  
The Medicine Men Trail



Finding Petroglyphs

**WARNING:** The Medicine Men Trail is only 2700' long but with the return trip and all the side trips and looking around, several miles may be walked before returning to your vehicle.

**Caution** should be taken whenever you are doing something new and different. The air is thinner at over 4000 feet and the heat in this dry desert air can dehydrate a person quickly. Pace yourself and do not go alone. Take some water and be prepared. Watch for rattlesnakes and be careful of the rocky terrain. A twisted ankle or a bad fall can be more than just an inconvenience.

### **Stepping out on the trail**

This booklet is designed to help you find some of the many petroglyphs in this area. The pictures and measurements are to assist you in your search for points and items of interest as you walk through these high desert domains.

It is important to know how far you travel every time you take a *pace* or a single step. You do this by walking some known distance and then dividing that distance by the number of steps you have taken to cover that distance. For example if you take 17 steps to go 40 feet then you should divide 40 by 17 to get the length of your average step.

$$40 \div 17 = 2.352941176471 \text{ or } \underline{2.35 \text{ feet}}$$

In order for you to travel 100 feet you will have to know how many times 2.35' will go into 100'.

$$\underline{100 \div 2.35 = 42.55}$$

This would mean that every time you take forty-two and one half steps you have traveled approximately 100 feet. Of course your *pace* will vary if you are going uphill or down and whether you are tired or just starting out.

An individual can get very good at keeping track of the distance they have traveled with this method. It can be fun and a great learning tool for adults and children alike. There is a space in the back of this booklet for you to do your math and take down notes about what you see along your walk.

# Picture Rock Pass

🚗 Just south and below Picture Rock Pass, between mile post 63 (the summit) and mile post 64, there is a large parking area to the west side of highway 31.

☞ Across from the entrance to the parking area on the east side of Highway 31 there is a medium size boulder, Sheep's Head Rock, with light petroglyphs upon it.



Sheep's Head Rock ☞

☞ On the northeast end of the parking area and on the west side of the highway there is the old rock lined road used by the early settlers leading up to the pass.

☞ If you walk up this old road to the Summit of Picture Rock Pass you will come back to Highway 31. As you near the elevation sign at the top you will see a light sandy path going up the cut bank on the left or southwest side of the highway. 100 feet up this trail you will see a large boulder [8'x8' Summit Rock ☞] 25' South of the trail to your right. On the other side of this boulder are the central petroglyphs of the pass.

☞ 👁 👁 Standing at the Summit of Picture Rock Pass, 4830 feet above sea level, you can look to the east and see an old rocky road going north. It is not much more than a wide foot path going down hill.

Egli Rim rises high up to your right. On a clear day as you look far north the tops of the Three Sisters can be seen slightly to the west across the Silver Lake Valley.



### Summit Rock ☞

🚚 There is a small gravel turnout on the east side of highway 31 at the Summit of Picture Rock Pass across from the elevation sign. It is at that turnout that the Medicine Men Trail begins. It is the continuation of the old road built by the early settlers to this high desert valley.

# The Medicine Men Trail

On the east side of Highway 31 at the Summit is the beginning of a 2700' trail that leads to the Medicine men rock. There are many sights to see including several dozen petroglyphs, a 150' cascading hollow log water trough built around the turn of the century, early scab telephone posts in rock cairns, numerous chip sites, spectacular scenery and a wide variety of flora and fauna found in these high desert domains.



The road is lined with the rocks that were painstakingly removed from the thoroughfare as the sand and dirt was washed and blown away. There is a much steeper road still seen on the other side of the present highway that was better for horses going up. Horses did better with short steep pulls up hill. The more gradual grades were used for down hill traffic where the teamster would ride his brake to the bottom of the grade.

There are several short Juniper posts sticking up from rock cairns which are still visible along the trail. They were part of an early telephone system and once had longer Lodge poles attached or scabbed on to them supporting wires for an early telephone system.

i d ☞ Walking down this old road for a little more than 500' feet [☞550'], looking in a northerly direction [to the right], you should see a 4½ foot high wooden post sticking up out of a short rock cairn about 100 feet off the trail.



d If you continue down the road for another 400 feet [☞900'] you will come to a fork. Take the right fork and continue for another 150 feet [☞1050']. At this point you should see another 4½ foot post and rock cairn to your right about 60 feet off the trail.

☞ Leaving the trail and walking approximately 58 feet toward the post and then continuing another 58 feet you should come across an old log watering trough.



**The trough** is made from 10 hollowed out logs stretching for over 150 feet to the base of the rim rock. They were filled from a cistern and spring dug into the side of the rocky slope.

It was originally constructed with logs that were hauled up the rocky pass. Two holes were bored into the tops of the logs every foot. One was an

air intake and the other a chimney vent. Then burning coals were placed inside to carefully hollow out the logs.

The finished troughs were used to hold water for the bands of sheep that were grazed through this area in the early part of this century. They were also used by wildlife.

The spring and cistern fell into disrepair. They remain today as a testimony to the resourcefulness and hard work of the early settlers in these remote high desert valleys.

The water that once supplied the wooden troughs flows no more above ground. Perhaps, in the days when the native inhabitants tapped away at the boulder art, that you now seek to find with the help of this book, the water from this now underground spring flowed more freely. It was likely the source for water needed for a comfortable and secure camp.

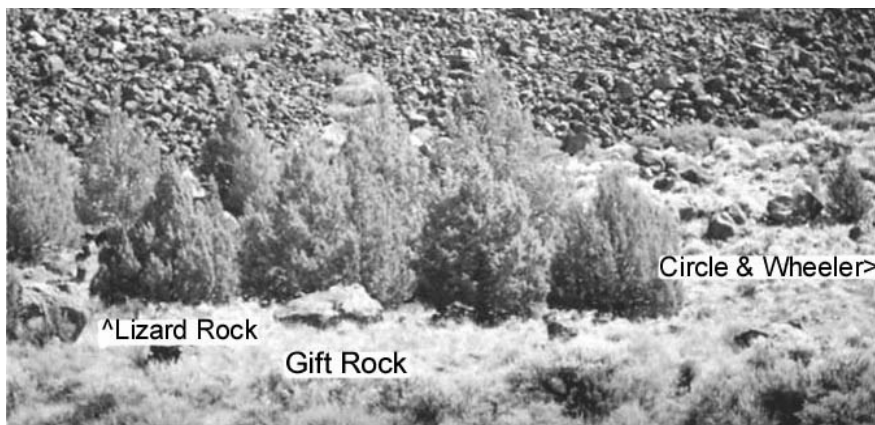
🌸 The flora and fauna in the area benefit from the remaining moisture. Along this ledge and in the rocks above you will find wild flowers, including Indian paint brushes and more medicinal plants like Yarrow, Wild Currant, Sweet Clover, and Mules Ear.

The spring that once served the ancient inhabitants now supports the flora of the area. The sandy soil made a more comfortable camping sight and the high rocky cliffs offered some protection. Today the sage brush surrounds the clear areas that were once thriving campsites as if they are still waiting for the former inhabitants to return.



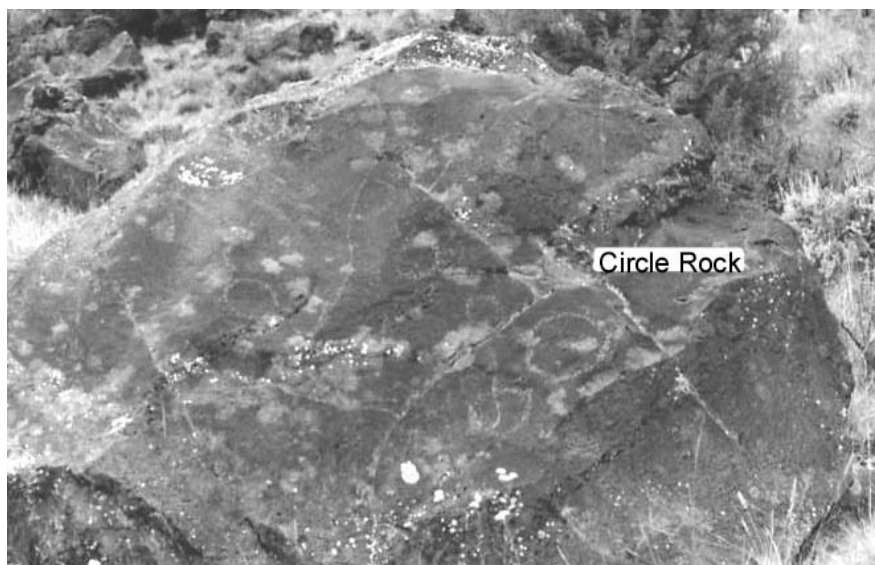
d Just beyond the 1200 foot mark [ $\delta\Omega$ 1200'] in the trail, you will see one of the 4½ foot scab posts and rock cairns to your left some 200 feet away where the old number nine phone wire crossed the road.

d Approximately 70 feet off the road [ $\delta\Omega$ 1800'] to the northeast toward Egli Rim is a small low rock [Gift Rock  $\mathfrak{K}$ ] upon which you should find your first petroglyphs. The picture on the next page shows the rocks as they sit beneath the rocky rim.



d Using Gift Rock as a point of reference looking toward Egli Rim you can see a number of rocks and boulders. Walking in an easterly direction toward the rim and slightly to the right you will come to a larger rock (9 feet) with distinct circular petroglyphs.

Circle Rock ☼.





d About 40 feet directly behind you [South by South East] while facing Circle Rock there is another large boulder with an example of very dim petroglyphs around the base.

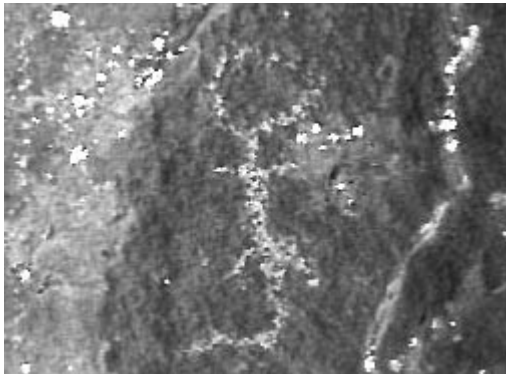


d Walking past the east side of Circle Rock continue in a north-westerly direction for 130 feet. There is another large boulder with a clear face called Wheeler Rock. ☹

d If you return to Gift Rock, facing the petroglyph, walk toward Egli Rim but go to the left of Gift Rock. About 65 feet away is a medium size

boulder [6'] just to the left of a juniper. This is The Lizard Man ☹. Look for more pictures on an adjacent rock.

### The Lizard Man



d Now return to the road and continue along the path for 400 feet [02200'] where you should easily spot the low small flat Pat's Rock just 10 feet off to the right of the road ☞ .



d Beyond the 02400' mark there is a slight fork in the road and again you should stay to the right.

### **Dancing Man Rock**

d Walk 100 feet farther down the road. Looking to the right about 70 feet off the road just beyond the 02500' mark there is the Dancing Man ☞ boulder set in the junipers.



The Dancing Man Rock seen from the Road.

Below is a close-up, The Dancing Man Rock.



d 200 feet farther through the junipers you will come to a sharp left turn in the road. West by northwest from the turn, a mere 50 feet away, you should easily spot The Medicine Men ⌘ [ø2750'].



## The Medicine Men Rock ☸

There are several petroglyphs on this same rock and adjacent rocks that show similar characteristics. The other rocks found along the rim will show similar designs and pictures in one spot with distinctive differences in others. These variations and similarities from one location to the next but still in the same general area could lead one to believe that these petroglyphs were marks of the individual families or clans.

The petroglyphs mentioned in this book are not the only ones in the Summer Lake area nor the only items of interest. We hope you have as much fun as we did in walking these hills and paths searching for these pictures and markings.

As I watched my own children playing amongst the trees and rocks I could imagine earlier children playing among these same rocks on a cold winter morning as their own Fathers chipped away at these boulders for their own purposes and for our entertainment thousands of years later.

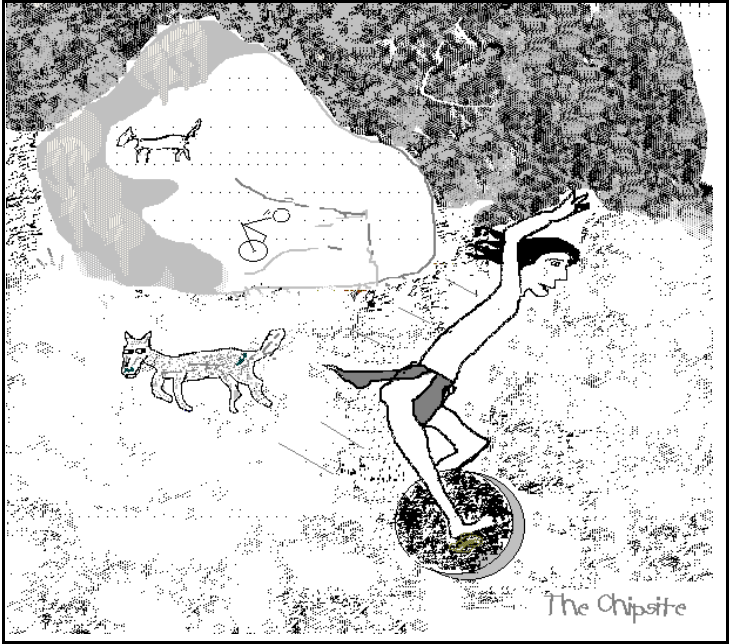
Can any of us hope to leave such long lasting marks of interest and wonder to memorialize our own brief stay upon this planet earth.

Speculation and controversy have surrounded all petroglyphs and the theories of their purpose are as numerous as the pictures themselves. They have been attributed to everything from secret religious rights to UFO visitations. The true purpose and significance of these pictures may not always be as dramatic nor mysterious as we would like to believe.

The answer could be as simple as these campsites were used by migrating inhabitants and disputes could be avoided by marking off your favorite family camping area with a symbol representing your family clan.

There has also been speculation that some of these markings were made by Spanish who were marking trails as they explored the west coast of the Americas looking for treasure and the fabled city of gold.

You may have a theory of your own.



**The discovery of the first unicycle**



## NOTES

We hope you enjoyed your hike and if you have any comments or suggestions please let us know. We would love to hear from you. ☺

### **Notice:**

Please leave everything as you have found it so the next travelers will find the area as pleasant and interesting as we hope you have. Take only memories, pictures and please leave nothing behind.

Thank you for your cooperation and good journey.

About this booklet:

“Words are the symbols of ideas.” Samuel Johnson

### Legend of Symbols

- i ..... Beginning point
- d ..... Directions on the trail of the petroglyphs
- ∞ ..... distance from the beginning of your walk
- ⌘ ..... petroglyph
- 🚗 ..... Parking
- 👉 ..... Point of interest
- 🌸 ..... Flora
- 👁️👁️ ..... scenic Viewpoint
- ⊙ ..... end of tour

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- 8 .....Lizard & Pat Rock
- 9 .....Dancing Man Rock
- 10..... Medicine Men Rock
- 11..... Cartoons Chipsite
- 13..... You are here ← :-)

This booklet was a family project to assist people in searching out local petroglyphs and historical landmarks at Picture Rock Pass.

For more information contact us at:

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