

The Indian Rocks.....

David Bedell

By Toni Bedell



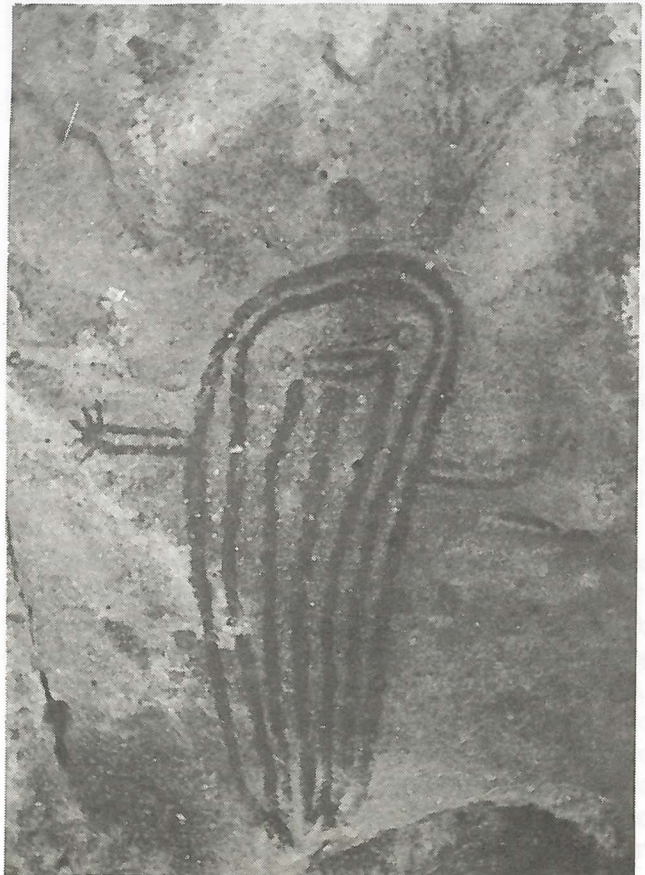
The cave in which the paintings are located.

This story is about a place 'we' call the Indian Rocks. The Indian Rocks are, in essence, a large cliff with a cave in the face of the cliff. Inside the cave there are paintings on the ceilings and the walls. How old they are and who painted them and with what are still mysteries to 'us all'. Mystical also is their meaning.

I (Toni Bedell) have visited and lived near the Indian Rocks for many years. I have spent a lot of time there, and have always kind of taken the paintings for granted. Then I realized how little I really knew about them, and how much more I would like to know. I joined Three Wire Winter and decided to write a story, so that I could learn more about the rocks and tell others. I interviewed my father, David Bedell, for information about the rocks. He owns the land and was brought up living near the cave. I asked him to describe the Indian Rocks.

"The cave is embedded in a rock cliff about 15 feet from the ground. The paintings are located on the ceiling for the most part, and a few are on the wall just below the ceiling. The ceiling is 12 feet from the floor of the cave. Throughout the years the paintings have been corroded with minerals so that parts cannot be seen any more. The paintings that are protected from the wind, rain, and snow, are cleaner and more defined. Most of the paintings are horizontal, especially the good ones."

"The paintings differ greatly in size. The largest one is two and a half feet long and ten inches wide. It is the most outstanding thing in the cave. We've always called it the "cactus-man" painting, but everyone has their own ideas of what it looks like. The design is out of the ordinary. It is a little bit different than anything I've ever seen in a book or anywhere else. It's real eye catching and very easy to remember. It's also my personal favorite out of all the paintings. Many have different ideas of what it might stand for."



"The Cactus-Man"

“There are two other paintings that are also special to me. They are much smaller than the “cactus-man” painting, and one of them is done in two colors, (dark red and orange). To me they both look like spacemen or aliens, but everyone interprets them differently. I’ve read a lot of Van Daniken’s books, *Chariots of the Gods*, *Gold of the Gods*, etc. And these two paintings are very similar, almost duplicates of some of the paintings he has based his theories on. Maybe the paintings are a lot older than we thought, and maybe some of them are paintings of proposed extra-terrestrial beings! No one knows for sure!”



years. Now it doesn't rub off or smear at all, it's very permanent.”

“We never found any other real Indian artifacts in the cave, except for a few pieces of flint. However, in a field about a mile south of all the caves, my father found several arrowheads.



The paintings could be much older than we thought! Are they paintings of extra-terrestrial beings?

I would like to thank Jenny Newton for doing these drawings for me.

“Near the mouth of the cave, there is a huge rock that has fallen down from the ceiling. This rock weighs about four or five tons. There is a split down the middle of it and a hollow in the front. We have always used it as a fireplace, and it works very efficiently. When a fire is lit in the front of it, it draws smoke out the back. None of the smoke stays in the cave, but the heat does. Whether or not the rock fell down or was formed naturally, I don't know. It's not a very high grade of rock, so it's hard to tell.”

“Most of the paintings are done in a dark red or rust color. The only one that is two-tones is the red and orange one. I really don't have any idea what they used to paint them with. I have read about Indians using a mixture of berry juices such as chokecherry juice, roots and possibly even blood! It must have stained pretty far down into the rock for it to have lasted for so many

I'd say he found about six altogether. As a matter of fact, I think my brother, Junior, probably still has them. Other than that, I don't know of any other Indian artifacts that were found in or near the cave. Of course, there have been so many people in and out of there throughout the years, that I can't really be sure.”

“I first saw the cave and paintings when I was about three years old. I lived about a half a mile below the caves until I was five. Then we moved south of there. As kids, my brothers and I would often go up to the cave to play or hunt for rock chunks. And sometimes my mother and father would pack a picnic lunch and take the whole family up there for a Sunday outing.

“As a young kid, I knew that we really didn't own the property. The government did. That's when I first began wanting to own the land. Years later, when we sold our ranch, I kept

twenty acres of land below the rocks and became an adjoining land owner. Then I petitioned to the Bureau of Land Management to put the land up for sale, and they did. So I bought it. It was an isolated tract of land, so they had no apparent use for it. They didn't do a sight inspection of the land before they sold it, which was lucky for me, but I think it was a bad mistake on their part. I don't think they let anybody homestead the land in the first place because of the paintings."

"The rocks definitely influenced me to buy the property because it was always my goal to own the Indian Rocks. One reason for buying the Indian Rocks was that I wanted to see the paintings preserved. I didn't want to see them get defaced or torn up. I knew that they were old and valuable, maybe not in money terms, but valuable to me personally. I don't know what the government would have done with them if they would have kept them. I would hate to see them commercialized, which would have ruined what I thought was the whole idea of the paintings. I don't care if people want to go up there to look at the paintings, but I don't like seeing any beer bottles or anything else left at the place. I've already had a few run-ins with people who thought they needed to litter up there, and I simply told them that if they couldn't respect the property, I didn't want them up there."



The painting in the lower right corner is only partly visible due to the weather and erosion over the years.

"Not much research has been done on the paintings, although I have tried many times to get an archeologist up there. The people with some archeological experience who have looked at the paintings have said that they just can't really say anything for sure about the age. There were a couple of government archeologists that stayed there for two weeks, when I was probably nineteen or twenty years old. We really didn't get much out of them, but they did think for sure that they were painted in a pre-whiteman era. They thought that the best painting, the "cactus man", might be a depiction of white man before the Indians had ever seen us. White man was often thought of as a god by the Indians. They also thought that the painting that looks like a horse, was possibly done before the Indians had ever seen horses.

"Horses haven't been in North America for all that long. The Spaniards brought horses to this continent in the fifteen hundreds. It wasn't until the late seventeen hundreds that horses were around this part of the country. The Ute Indians were almost the only Indians that lived around



here, but I don't think that they painted them because none of the paintings have anything to do with the Ute Indians. They did do some sandstone carvings, but they didn't do any paintings that I know of. I think that the paintings were done before the era of the modern Indian. They could be four or five hundred years old, or maybe even older than that. No one really knows for sure."

"The only proof I have on how old they are is a guy named Mike Murphy. Mike was an old fellow who lived on the Larson place, which is right below the Indian rocks on the county road. He moved into the Clark area as a very young kid and lived there until he died, about twenty years ago! He told me when I was in my teens, that he had observed the paintings all of his life and had never seen any change in them. That has always kinda stuck with me. He was over eighty-five years old when he died twenty years ago, which means that he saw the paintings ninety to one hundred years ago."

Throughout this story I have learned about the paintings. However, there are still many things we don't know about them. If anyone of our readers has studied Indian paintings and would like to look at these, or could tell us something about them, please get in touch with David Bedell or write to **Three Wire Winter, Box 664, Steamboat.**



Toni and her father, David.

