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Mendocino County and Rock Art Conservation

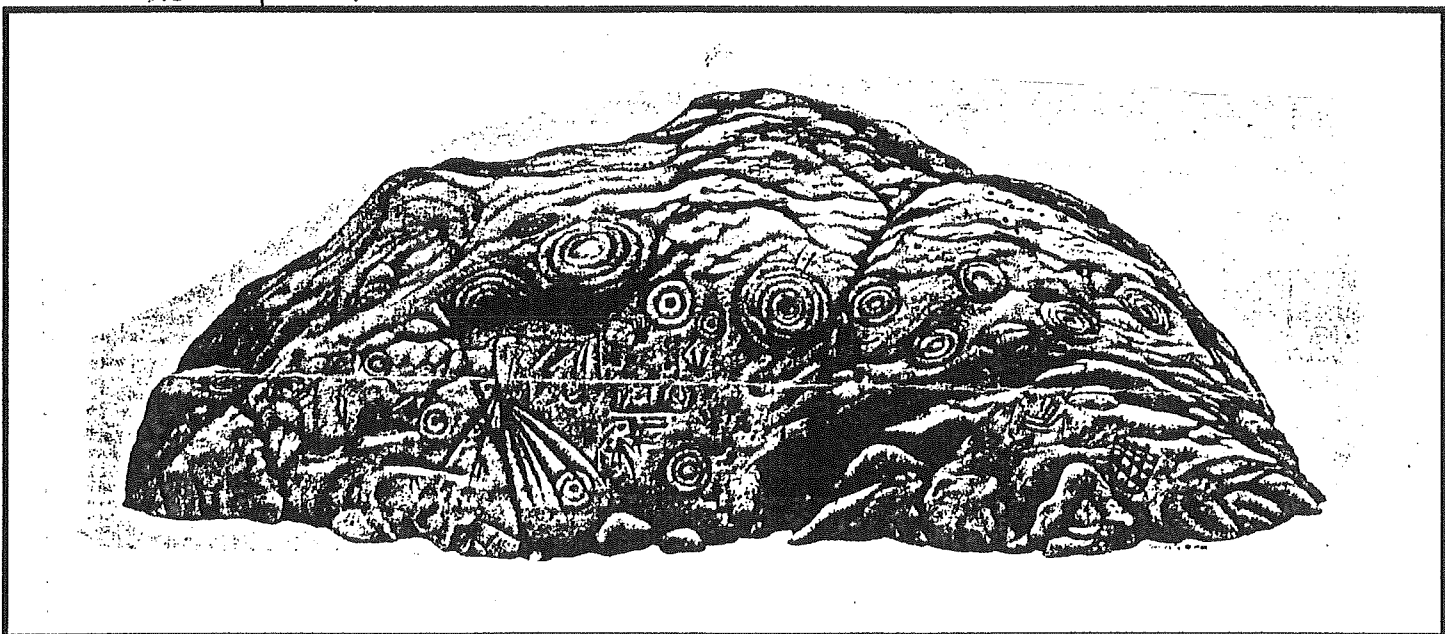
by Mark Gary and Dan Foster

Mendocino County is a mountainous area, dominated by the redwood belt of the North Coast Ranges, and the rolling oak woodlands that surround the half dozen grassy interior valleys. The timber industry, ranching and agriculture have been the three leading land uses for the past 130 years. Today, Mendocino County is faced with an acceleration of timber harvesting and major subdivision and land development. The various agencies that regulate these ground disturbing activities, including Mendocino County Planning Department, have realized an increase in the number of archaeological reviews required.

The Mendocino County Archaeological Commission was established 15 years ago to meet the resource protection needs of County approved projects, such as subdivision or gravel extraction. The five Com-
development

missioners (appointed by the Board of Supervisors) include: 1 representative of timber, agriculture or ranching, 1 representative of the Mendocino County Museums, 1 Native American, 1 Professional Archaeologist, and 1 representative from the Mendocino County Planning Department. The Commission has the duty of reviewing projects that may potentially impact archaeological resources. It is the responsibility of the applicant to have a records check made at the Northwest Information Center, Sonoma State University. Based on the Information Center recommendation, and the applicant's and commission's knowledge of the project area, an archaeological survey may be required.

Surveys are performed by ~~listed~~^{hired} professional archaeologists, and the applicant is provided with a letter from the County explaining what to expect from the archaeologists. The survey results are presented to the Archaeological Commission, and, if there are sites involved in the project area, recommendations are made for the protection of the site and incorporated into the terms of project approval. Applicants are always made aware of the possibility of a
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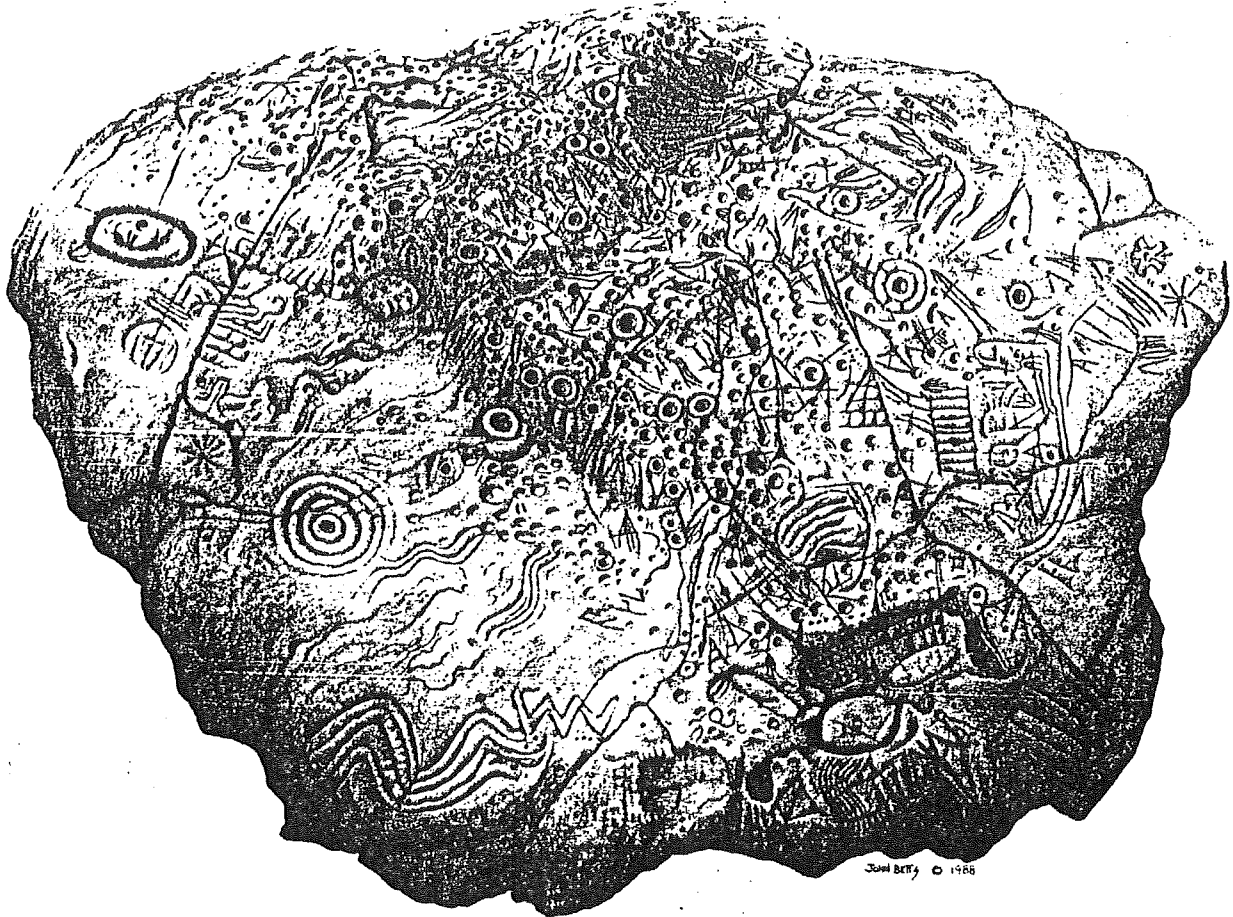


Spyrock Petroglyphs (MEN-1912), an example of the complexity of rock art motifs found in Mendocino County. The concentric circle figures could date to 100 BC and are thought to be the oldest art style known for the northwest coast. Drawings by John Betts ©.

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discovery made during operations and advised on how to proceed should that occur. In addition, the Mendocino County Archaeological Ordinance makes it a misdemeanor to knowingly disturb any archaeological site, punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000.

One site leads to another, and due to the immense public interest in Mendocino County Archaeology, ^{Mar} ^{Gar} began a lecture series in 1985. The lectures are given to schools, civic groups and foresters. Slides are shown of recent excavations and rock art, and artifacts are brought for examples. The public has responded by reporting hundreds of new sites, and for rock art, the public awareness program has more than doubled the data base.



^{AD} ^{PIRES} **The Keystone Petroglyph boulder (MEN-2200)** is perhaps the most complex boulder in the northwest coast region and also one of tremendous archeological significance. Analysis has shown that at least three distinctive "styles" are present, one superimposed upon the other. Drawing © by John Betts.

As a spin off of the Archaeological Commission, and as a representative of the Mendocino County Museums, I am often asked to advise a landowner on how to take care of a discovery. Property owners, for the most part, are very interested in archaeological sites and there are many owners who have made surface collections. When I meet with an owner on a site and see their artifact collection, I attempt to educate the person about the extent of the site, the importance of the relationship between the site and the artifacts, and how to best take care of these resources.

To illustrate how little attention rock art in Mendocino County has received, a short history of research is presented. The first petroglyph site on record was noted by William Snell in 1868. In 1908, Samuel Barrett published his ethnogeography that reported on several Pomo Baby Rocks. In 1929, Julian Seward reported on 8 sites. By 1940, a total of 9 sites had been recorded. For the next 23 years, not a single petroglyph site was recorded. Between 1963 and 1983, the total number of sites had risen to 25.

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1978, Rock art researchers during the period 1868 and 1983 include: Steward 1929; Barrett 1908 & 1952; Heizer 1953; Heizer and Clewlow 1973; Clewlow and Hedges 1978, 1982 & 1983; and Foster 1982 & 1983. Despite a small sample of sites, specific styles and functions were advanced by the authors.

For the past 5 years, the more than 25 new petroglyph sites recorded in Mendocino County, were recorded mainly due to public participation. Adding to the total are sites recorded by the California Department of Forestry (Daniel Foster, Program Manager) and the California State Parks and Recreation (E. Breck Parkman, Northern Region Archaeologist). Five petroglyph sites were discovered shortly after a lecture to the UC Hopland Field Station staff and employees. Following a lecture to a PTA group, two sites were reported west of Willits, and so on.

While an increase in public awareness can lead to an increase in data and knowledge, the increase in numbers of people coming to Mendocino County can increase the amount of defacing and ultimate destruction of sites. For example, the Fish Rock Petroglyph Site (MEN-2019) is located adjacent to a county road that has experienced an increase in traffic. In the past year the boulder has been scratched by a ranch worker and spray painted by a log hauler to announce the CB channel he was on.

Spyrock (MEN-1912) is also a petroglyph boulder site located adjacent to a county road that is receiving increased traffic. Over the years, this schist boulder has been the target of various kinds of damage. The locals are very concerned with the continuing vandalism, and they will confront visitors to the site. These petroglyph sites by the side of the road are very vulnerable and present a difficult challenge to conservation in Mendocino County.

An integral part of rock art conservation is to thoroughly record the site. It is very important to have accurate records should the site be destroyed. These sites are usually located on private land. The recordation effort depends largely on volunteers, willing to be trained, who can spend the time needed to completely document a site.

Methods employed in recording rock art sites in Mendocino County include, but are not limited to photography, videography, molds, scale drawings and illustration. The Keystone and Spyrock illustrator, John Betts, worked to depict the various aspects of element interpretation, application methods (such as pecking or incising), and superimposition.

Ultimately, we will need to do more to protect sites like Spyrock. For the people of Laytonville will help

the County Archaeological Commission develop a conservation plan. When the local public has an awareness of the value of such a resource, and has a say in how to protect it, it will be their plan that will have the best chance for success.

The Keystone petroglyph location (MEN-2200) is a single mica chlorite schist boulder containing 2000 elements representing virtually every known style in the area. The boulder is completely decorated with glyphs.

These two sites, Spyrock and Keystone, are significant for a number of reasons. First of all, the discovery of Spyrock in 1982 provided the first evidence of elaborate, complex rock art boulders in the northwest region. The accepted "Northwest Coast Style Area" reported by Clewlow (1978:622) was actually a description of only one of the "styles" present, the most recent one characterized by deeply incised lines on schist boulders.

This style is thought by Clewlow to have appeared around 1600 AD. Both Spyrock and Keystone contain the characteristic incised lines and cupules described by Clewlow. Both rocks, however, contain entirely different rock art elements including concentric circle motifs carved in bas relief. There are fourteen examples of these on Spyrock and two on Keystone.

It is our opinion that these figures are part of a rock art assemblage that dates back at least a few thousand years. This rock art culture was never well developed in this area, since only four sites have been found which show traces of it. We had long suspected tremendous antiquity to this early rock art style due to the highly weathered appearance of these glyphs at Spyrock when compared to the incised linear motifs. We could not demonstrate our hypothesis, however, since superimposition was absent.

A few years later, the Keystone boulder was discovered which provided the evidence we were looking for. At least three separate rock art styles are present on this rock, the oldest of which is characterized by concentric circle motifs carved in bas relief. An incredibly complex assemblage of other elements are also present, including hundreds of cupules and thousands of incised lines. Careful analysis of the superimposition revealed that these were placed last, always carved on top of earlier motifs.

Rock art studies in the northwest coast region are continuing. Leigh Jordan is working on an M.A. thesis from Sonoma State, and Breck Parkman is leading an effort to update Heizer and Clewlow's earlier work. One thing is certain: the rock art of this region is far more complex than previously recognized. Our goal is to bring this to the attention of landowners, public review agencies, and rock art scholars.

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SCA Martin A. Baumhoff Special Achievement Award

In November 1989, the SCA Executive Board established a major new award to acknowledge and honor "Special Achievement," to recognize outstanding contributions by an individual to the understanding or preservation of archaeological resources. The award would be for successful work which was completed during the year leading up to the annual meeting.

The Society's two current major awards, "Lifetime Achievement" and the "Mark R. Harrington Award for Conservation Archaeology," both recognize the cumulative efforts and contributions of an individual or organization over many years. By their nature, these awards tend to be given to senior members of the profession.

Marty Baumhoff, photo courtesy of UC Davis

The new "Special Achievement" award could be used to honor the completion of a single major accomplishment, - a particularly special dissertation, thesis, publication, research, etc. Certainly, in past years, there have been notable special achievements that the Society could have properly recognized and honored. While the "Special Achievement award might not be given every year, by similarly acknowledging worthy special accomplishments the opportunity for continuity would be established.

It is appropriate to name the SCA's "Special Achievement" award in honor of Martin A. Baumhoff (1926-1983). It is anticipated that this award might often be presented primarily to recognize outstanding research in archaeology. Dr. Baumhoff was best known, perhaps, for his imaginative archaeological research, but he was also concerned with politics, teaching and statistics; he was a scholar of wide-ranging interests. The Society was not able to honor Dr. Baumhoff during his lifetime, although he was a supporter of the SCA and contributed to SCA data sharing and annual meetings. With this award, the spirit of Martin A. Baumhoff's own "Special Achievement" is perpetuated. ~~By Paul G. Chace~~