



Painted Rock

Painted Rock is located on the Tule River Indian Reservation, above Porterville, in the Sierra Nevada foothills of central California. This site, also known as CA-TUL-19, is a rockshelter associated with a Native American Yokuts village. The site, located immediately adjacent to the Tule River, includes bedrock mortars, pitted boulders, midden and pictographs. The pictographs are located within the rockshelter, and are painted on the ceiling and walls of the shelter. The pictographs include paintings of a male, female, and child Bigfoot (known as the family), coyote, beaver, bear, frog, caterpillar, centipede, humans, eagle, condor, lizard and various lines, circles, and other geometric designs. The paintings are in red, black, white, and yellow.

This rock art site is unique; not only because it contains a Bigfoot pictograph, but also because of the traditional Native American stories that accompany it. There are no other known creation stories involving a Bigfoot-like creature in California. As far as can be determined, there are no Bigfoot creation stories anywhere else in the west. There is also no

evidence of any other Bigfoot pictographs. Most states, including California, keep a database of all recorded sites located on federal, state, county, city, or private land. Based on that information, there is no other known Bigfoot pictographs or petroglyphs anywhere in California, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, or Idaho.

This paper will describe the rock art, the known history of the site, the traditional Yokuts Hairy Man stories, and the association of the rock art with other Penutian language groups.

Probably the most unusual feature of this site is the presence of an entire Bigfoot family. Besides the male Hairy Man, there are also a female and child "bigfoot." The mother is 1.8 meters high by 1.2 meters wide, and is solely red (Figure 6). The painting represents a 6-foot high, two-legged creature with her arms open (Figure 7). She has five fingers and little other detail. Immediately adjacent to her, and directly under her right hand, is her child. The child measures 1.2 meters high by 1 meter wide and is also solely red. The painting represents a 4-foot high, two-legged creature with small arms and five fingers. The figure has an unusually rounded head, suggestive of a sagittal crest.

Clellow (1978) estimated that the paintings were made around A.D. 500, but could be as old as A.D. 1 or as young as A.D. 1200 (2000 to 700 years old). Latta (1949) noted that year-round occupied villages were placed at important places, either where paintings were or at some place where Indian ceremonies were performed. Archaeologically, the village at Painted Rock was occupied in the late prehistoric, around 500 years ago. Since it is believed that the paintings were present prior to the village, the paintings are likely 500-1000 years old.