

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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 Indian Cave Petroglyphs

AND/OR COMMON

Indian Cave Petroglyphs

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

☒ VICINITY OF

☒ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

West Virginia

CODE

54

COUNTY

Harrison

CODE

033

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT  
☐ BUILDING(S)  
☐ STRUCTURE  
☒ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC  
☒ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH  
**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**  
☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED  
☒ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
☒ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☒ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM  
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK  
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

John R. McDonald

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Jane Lew

☒ VICINITY OF

STATE

West Virginia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Harrison County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

301 W. Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Clarksburg

STATE

West Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Site Survey Records - Harrison County

DATE

July 21, 1960

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS W.Va. Geological and Economic Survey - Archeology Section

CITY, TOWN

Morgantown

STATE

West Virginia

## CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

The site of the Indian Cave Petroglyphs was first reported by W.H. Holmes of the Bureau of American Ethnology who visited there in 1889. He described the petroglyphs as occupying an area of twenty feet by four feet on the back wall of a rockshelter. The petroglyphs were described as being comprised of death heads, a human head or face, three cranes or turkeys, three mountain lions, two rattlesnakes, one turtle, a hand, a star, two tracks and a few undefinable characters. Holmes indicated that hematite had probably been used in many places on the petroglyphs but that it had weathered away except for traces in parts of a few figures.

Besides recording and drawing the petroglyphs, Holmes excavated the shelter. He uncovered hammerstones and small pieces of worked hematite that were probably used in executing the petroglyphs. He also found pottery tempered with either shell or grit. The pottery indicates an occupation or occupations between A.D. 500 and A.D. 1675.

Garrick Mallery mentioned the petroglyphs in his Picture Writing of the American Indians in 1889. However, he merely quoted Holmes' report and reproduced his drawings.

In 1958 an account of this site was published by William E. Davies in Caverns of West Virginia. He described the cave as a "shelter, oval in shape, twenty feet wide and four to five feet high. . .on the walls are numerous pictographs. . .depicting turtles, foxes, rattlesnakes, birds, fish. . ." He also noted that there was a human hand and that the drawings were tinted with barely discernable colors. Davies also published a drawing of the petroglyphs, including two human figures on the front of the cave above the entrance, which were mentioned but not drawn by Holmes. Davies' drawings closely correspond to those Holmes had done 69 years earlier.

More recently, the site has been studied by James L. Swauger. In October 1970, he distinguished 26 designs inside the shelter corresponding to those of Holmes, but he did not find the human figures at the shelter entrance. He also noted the presence of "red coloring matter" still preserved in some of the figures. Swauger characterized the designs as one star, three birds, one thunderbird, one human form, one human hand, four human heads, one human external female genitalia (which Holmes did not describe), two animals, two deer tracks, one panther, one "U"-shaped track, two fish, two rattlesnakes, one turtle, one concentric circle and three abstract figures.

These petroglyphs are virtually unchanged today. Situated in the Dunkard Series Sandstone at an elevation of about 1200 feet, they appear from the pasture below to be only two boulders standing on the hillside.

The figures were executed by two methods. In one the figure was outlined by grooves pecked and rubbed into the sandstone. The other method was by rubbing the surface so that the entire form of the figure was depressed. Red ochre or hematite was employed to delineate the life lines of two animals, and again upon parts of a face and a bird figure. The figures on the exterior of the shelter have been so severely weathered that they are barely and incompletely visible. All that can be observed now are a few meaningless lines. The figures within the dripline of the shelter are remarkably well preserved.

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

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Indian Cave Petroglyphs Site (46 Hs 1) is a fine example of gross Indian rock art. It is not certainly known which culture grooved and pecked the figures into the rock, precisely when they were made, or why they were made. It is supposed that they were made by Late Prehistoric peoples, but it is unknown whether they were carved for religious reasons, for communication or just as an expression of art.

The designs on this petroglyph are similar to many others in the upper Ohio Valley. Birds are a common motif in this area as are panthers, X-ray designs, deer tracks and human forms. The rattlesnake design is relatively rare, and the fish is a unique design among those petroglyphs studied in the upper Ohio Valley area. Also unique is the presence of traces of red ochre preserved in parts of several figures. The use of hematite or red ochre to outline features on a petroglyph may not have been an uncommon practice, but few such petroglyphs have been reported. The Indian Cave Site is one of only a few sites in the eastern United States where red pigment remains have been found associated with petroglyphs.

In 1890 W.H. Holmes stated that the Indian Cave Petroglyphs were "carefully elaborated and well preserved" (Holmes: 217). Since that time, others have remarked on the quality of the execution of the figures and the fact that traces of the red pigment have survived.

Blizzard, William C. "West Virginia's Earliest Artists," Charleston (W.Va.)

Gazette-Mail, March 26, 1961.

Davies, William E. and Paul H. Price. Caverns of West Virginia. Morgantown,

W.Va.: West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey, 1949. (XIX, 144-46)

Holmes, W.H. "A West Virginia Rock Shelter," The American Anthropologist, III,  
No. 3 (1890).

Mallery, Garrick. "Picture Writing of the American Indians," 10th Annual Report

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

C

B

ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

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 Joan K. Pitts, Archeologist, West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey  
for the

ORGANIZATION

West Virginia Antiquities Commission

DATE

October 8, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 630

TELEPHONE

(304) 296-1791

CITY OR TOWN

Morgantown

STATE

West Virginia

## 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

*Leonard M. Davis*

TITLE

West Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

November 10, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

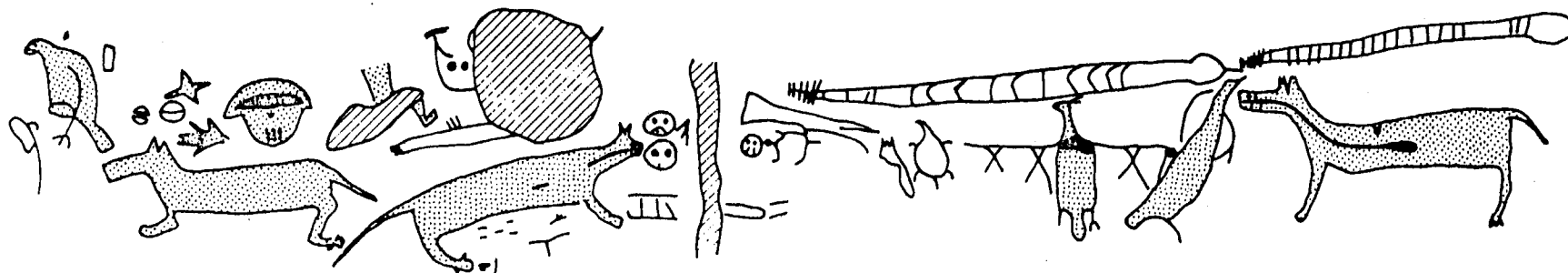
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE one

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE (continued)

- of the Bureau of Ethnology 1888-1889, Washington, D.C.  
Mayer-Oakes, William J. "Prehistory of the Upper Ohio Valley," Annals of the Carnegie Museum, Anthropological Series, XXXIV, No. 2 (1955), 259.  
Norona, Delf. "Indian X-ray Drawings," West Virginia Archeologist, No. 7 (1955), 9-19.  
Swauger, James L. Rock Art of the Upper Ohio Valley. Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz, Austria, 1974.



# INDIAN CAVE PETROGLYPHS

ONE METER

- GROOVES
- ENTIRE SURFACE DEPRESSED
- RED PIGMENT
- RECENT WEATHERING SCARS OR CRACKS



