

“Out Of Epigraphy Comes Forth Kansas History”

by
Crystal Trickle

*“To understand ourselves we have to understand history and what we are looking at here is history.”
—Rollin Gillespie (1985)*



Figure 1. Guest speaker Crystal Trickle lectures to a class of Kansas junior high students about the importance of their ancient Kansas history. A young epigraphers club is in the works for local Kansas school children. © Crystal Trickle 2008.

Inasmuch as historians have tried to answer historical questions through the study of written documents and oral accounts, a play on the Society’s motto *Ex Epigraphia Historia* (out of Epigraphy comes forth history) seems an appropriate title for a report concerning recent epigraphic discoveries in Kansas. The discovery of inscriptions and solar constructs in America’s heartland are beginning to add to an exciting new chapter being written in Kansas history. These sites are of special interest, partly because of their extraordinary archaeoastronomy and use of ancient script like characters, but also because they demonstrate the genius of those who came before us. While viewing the man made inscriptions and solar phenomenon we are able to be in contact with Antiquity, so that even through the passage of time we are able to be in touch with people, like us, who left intentional messages, even for us today. In essence we become a part of their story.

Much of the field exploration in Kansas has been carried out by Keith Jeffries and two of his brothers Ron and Dean Jeffries. Without their contributions many of the sites within the state would have remained unidentified. Wayne and Crystal Trickle and Ben and Colleen Westerman have added a significant role in completing the field team.



Figure 2. Epigrapher Keith Jeffries photographed at a Lincoln County, Kansas petro glyph site. © Crystal Trickle 2007.



Figure 3. Undeciphered Petroglyphs from a north central Kansas site that is situated along the Saline River discovered by Keith Jeffries. ©Keith Jeffries/Crystal Trickle 1995.

Twin Caves



Figure 4. Twin Caves probable Ogham “Six Sun Months” inscription. ©Crystal Trickle 2006.

Two shallow caves sit quietly along the Saline River in North Central Kansas. The caves are very similar in size and length. They are oriented north and south from one another. The northern cave has been used to construct a sundown solar alignment to memorialize equinox day. A group of long vertical strokes along the

north wall may entail an Ogham inscription. The grouping of two, five, and three strokes can be seen within the inscription to make the Ogham letters G-R-N. This could be used to spell the Irish word *grian* (sun). The six strokes in the beginning of the panel might indicate a count of "Six". The single stroke at the end of the panel might be the letter M meaning *mi* (Month). So the inscription may indicate "Six Sun Months" which could designate equinox alignments that would take place six months apart. Thus the panel is similar in context to the "Six Months" inscription found at the Anubis Cave complex in the Oklahoma panhandle, although there is a reordering of the grammar. The decipherment of the inscription in the Equinox Cave at the Twin Caves site led to the discovery of the archaeoastronomy.

The video is titled *Kansas Archaeoastronomy Matches Unorthodox Finds in CO & OK*.



Archaeoastronomy

Figure 5. Fish-like illumination during the equinox light and shadow display at the Twin Caves site. © Ida Jane Gallagher 2008.

On the wall above the "Six Sun Months" inscription there is interplay of light and shadow within the northern cave at sundown on equinox. The display closely resembles a fish with gaping mouth. A deeply carved symmetrical arrow pointing downward is the intended target for the fish like illumination. What was the intention of using the fish to memorialize equinox? Could these ancient explorers have used this fish like illumination to signify the constellation Pisces? The sun is currently situated in Pisces at the point of the Vernal equinox. The Sun's position at the autumnal equinox is currently in the constellation Virgo, but a little over 2,000 years ago the sun's position on the plane of the ecliptic resided in Pisces during the Autumnal equinox. Astronomical correlations and implications are being researched at the site and updates will be given as new information comes to light. Time lapsed video footage of the Autumnal equinox 2008 can be watched on Scott Monahan's YouTube channel via the internet.



Figure 6. Cupules are used in the representation of constellations (from top clockwise) Pegasus, Draco, and Scorpio. ©Crystal Trickle 2006.

Another inscription of great importance at the Twin Caves site with astronomical intent can be found across a small draw from the equinox cave. The panel contains cupules which pictographically resemble the constellations Pegasus, Scorpio, and Draco and. There is possible Tifinag script used within the inscription as well. The intent of the engraver is under consideration, and implies that the site was an important place of astronomical observation.

Inscribed Bone Amulet



Figure 7. Inscribed bone fragment from Rice County, Kansas. © Crystal Trickle 2007.

During the course of discovering numerous artifacts in Rice county, Kansas Kermit Hayes found a small 2" long bone fragment with a clearly cut inscription upon it. Two archaeologists upon examination thought that the piece of bone had been worn as an amulet.



Figure 12. Wayne Trickle poses with an inscription that he uncovered on a field trip in Kiowa, County Kansas. Close up of the inscription is below. © Crystal Trickle 2007.



Figure 13. Close-up of inscription unearthed by Wayne Trickle in Kiowa County. Research is being conducted to try to determine the interpretation of the panel. © Crystal Trickle 2007.

The quest to learn more about the Kansas epigraphic and astronomical sites continues. What an opportunity to watch history unfold as we learn and grow in the understanding of the ancients who came before us. Many cultures at many time periods may have left their mark in Kansas and it is of the utmost importance to receive the deliberate messages as they intended them to be received. It is also very important to protect

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these sites from harm. Many of the sites reside on private property. The sites can not be disclosed to the general public, as this would make the sites very vulnerable and possibly eradicate ancient history. It is evident that whoever produced these sites were very sophisticated individuals who left a trail of written inscriptions to help discover the remnants of our ancient Kansas history.

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Curtis Brown, Don Buchanan, and Crystal and Wayne Trickle at the Spring Conference of NEARA (the New England Atiquities Research Association) in April 2009.