



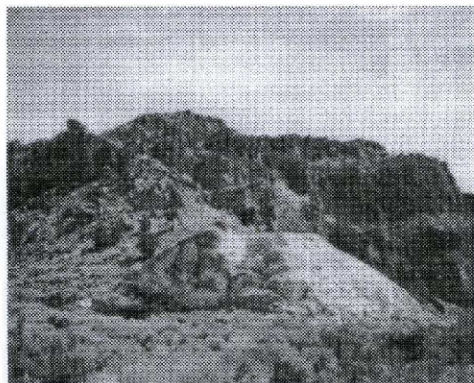
SPIDER WOMAN ROCK

A part of the park that is of significance to the Fremont, the modern Indians and the historic settlers is Spider Woman Rock and other sites in Skinner Canyon.

Turn left on the frontage road and go east 2.2 miles. The parking area is to the left of the road in the mouth of a narrow canyon that goes north.

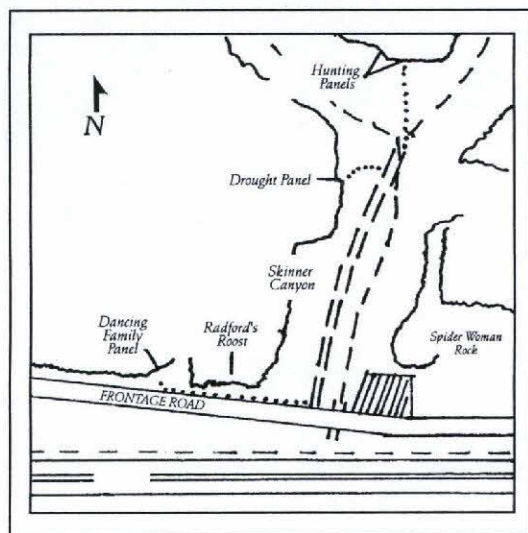
SPIDER WOMAN ROCK

The cut on the east side of the mouth of this canyon is what is left of Spider Woman Rock. Before destruction for I-70 construction Spider Woman Rock was shaped like a spider with its head facing south towards Clear Creek. Part of the back and a rock thought to be twins that she is carrying remain. Around the base of the rocks on the powdery white tuff was a number of rock art panels. These panels are each thought to have been parts of the legends telling about Spider Woman and her involvement in the creation of people on the earth. Spider Woman Rock was considered sacred to the Hopi. Its destruction was a great loss in information to both the park visitor and the Native Americans who considered it holy.



THE HOPI LEGEND OF SPIDER WOMAN

In the beginning there were only two- Tawa, the sun god, and Spider Woman, the earth goddess. All the mysteries and power from above belonged to Tawa, while Spider Woman controlled the magic from below. In the underworld, abode of the gods, they dwelt and they were all as one. There was neither man nor woman, bird nor beast, there was no living thing until these two willed it to be. These two had a mighty thought- they would make the earth to be between above and below where now lay shimmering only the endless waters. So they sat side by side, making the first magic song, a song of rushing winds and flowing waters, a song of light and sound and life. Many strange thoughts formed in Tawa's mind- beautiful forms of birds to float in the above, of beasts to move upon the earth, and fish to swim in the waters. Spider Woman got clay and made the thoughts of Tawa take form aside, but they breathed not or moved. "It is not good that they lie still and quiet," Tawa said. "Each thing that has a form must also have a spirit." They laid a white blanket over the many figures and made a mighty incantation over it and soon the figures stirred and breathed. "Now let us make ones like you and me so that they may rule over and enjoy these lesser creatures," said



Tawa, and Spider Woman shaped the thought of her lord into man figures and woman figures like their own, but after the blanket magic had been made, the figures still stayed inert. So Spider Woman gathered them all in her arms and cradled them while Tawa cast his eyes upon them. They now sang the magic song of life over them, and at last each man figure and woman figure breathed and lived. Before placing them on earth, Spider Woman divided them into groups, telling them to live separately as groups forever. They will be called the Hopi, Zuni, Paiute.



THE CURSE OF SPIDER WOMAN ROCK

As the path for I-70 was being cleared it was necessary to move Highway 4 and level Spider Woman Rock. The Paiute Indians were contacted and could find no significance to the rock art, so leveling began. A Hopi religious leader visited the site as the leveling had started and ask that the ridge be saved because it recorded the Hopi legend of the creation of the world. The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) archaeologist said she would try to stop the construction until the value of the site could be assessed. By the time word went through the UDOT chain of command then back through the construction company to the equipment operator, it was too late. The ridge was destroyed and hauled away. When the Hopi religious leader returned and saw what happened, he put a curse on UDOT through Spider Woman and





her daughter Salt Woman who controls all the natural phenomena such as weather. After this curse was invoked on UDOT the major flooding problems of 1983 began. Billies Mountain slid blocking Highway 50 and a railroad track and flooding Thistle, Utah. The waters of Utah Lake rose covering I-15 near Provo. The Great Salt Lake covered I-80 near Kennecott. The bridges on I-70 over Fish and Shingle Creeks have never completely settled and some of the workmen said all the concrete poured after the curse seemed to crack in the pattern of a spider web. The Hopi religious leader clipped the news articles out of national newspapers and sent them to the UDOT director to show what Spider Woman was doing to them for destroying her sacred monument.



In 1985 Fremont Indian State Park and Museum was given most of the land in Clear Creek Canyon and a visitor center was planned. The park did not want to build its visitor center on land that the Hopi's thought to be cursed. In consultation with the Hopi and Paiute it was decided that if the visitor center was built in Little Dog Canyon behind the two small hills in the mouth of the canyon (named the Twin Warrior Mounds after the grandsons of Spider Woman) that it would not

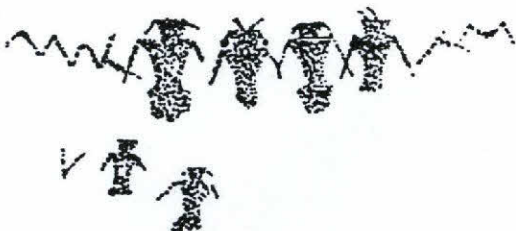
be affected by the curse. This is why the visitor center is located where it is.

RADFORD'S ROOST

The ridge to the west of Skinner Canyon, where the power poles are, is what is left of a point that extended to the far side of I-70. Archaeologist working on this ridge gave it the unofficial nickname of Radford's Roost, after a landowner who had lived nearby (where I-70 now is) since 1959. The Radford's built a chicken coop on the ridge because it was the place on their property that got the most sunlight. At the base of Radford's Roost was a small cave that showed evidence of limited Fremont use. On the destroyed part of the ridge was a two room adobe like structure in which each of the rooms were six feet square. Next to it was a circular pithouse with a crawl way extending to the south. The pithouse was 16 feet across.

DANCING FAMILY

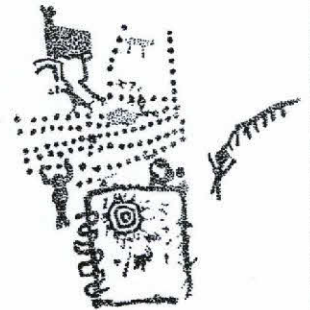
Follow the frontage road west through the Radford Roost cut, go past a columnar slab that fell in 1996 to a small canyon from the north. The dancing family panel is on the rocks on the west side. Some of the red pictographs on the red rock are hard to pick out.



DROUGHT PANEL

Drive or walk up the dirt road, going into Skinner Canyon, .25 miles. Just past electric poles to your right is a grassy area on your left, where you can park. The drought panel is on the west canyon wall near a rockslide.

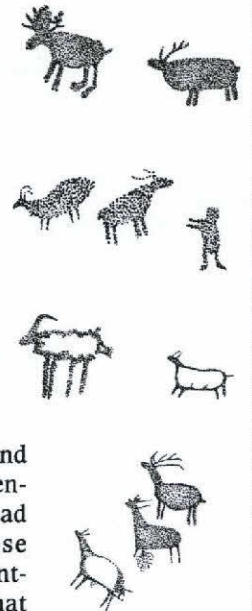
This south facing panel is located here for a precise reason. It is thought to tell about the great drought which has been confirmed by tree-rings to have occurred in the A.D. 1200's. The lines of dots show the fields of corn that had been planted, but did not come up. The human with his hands in the air is praying. The symbol above him means rain and that is what he is praying for. The square is a map. Look straight ahead at the south walls of Clear Creek Canyon and you will see the area that they have drawn. Landmarks on the top of the cliff can be seen above the square on the right side, the wavy line on the left side is a trail that is suppose to be the only way up the cliff and lead to a spring where they prayed and left offering for rain. The deity to which they prayed has his hands over his ears and did not listen to the request. More drought information is on an adjacent panel which lies face down as a result of blasting for the construction of I-70.



HUNTING SCENES

From the road on which you came up Skinner Canyon, look up canyon (north). Straight ahead is a cliff face that can most easily be picked out by the bullet holes on it. The hunting scene is beneath the holes. To get closer, follow the dirt road on foot.

The animals shown in these panels are unique compared to others in the Clear Creek area. Look at the detail used in creating these animals which possibly include desert bighorn sheep, deer, elk and maybe a moose. The artist varied the density of dots to make some areas darker and thereby make the figures look three dimensional. The positioning of the limbs and head make the animals seem alive. These petroglyphs are reminiscent of the cave paintings in France in the detail and movement that they portray.



HISTORICAL DUMP

As you approach the mouth of Skinner Canyon off to the left (east) of the dirt road is a dump that was used from about 1910 to 1950. The park considers this area to be a valuable source of information about the historical use of Clear Creek Canyon and is currently determining how to best manage it. Please do not pick up or move items or leave new garbage.

This is your last stop on the Spider Woman Rock Trail. If you want a fun hike, just across the frontage road is the 2.5 or 6 mile hiking biking loop. Ask at the visitor center for more information.