

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Indian God Rock Petroglyphs Site - 36 VE 26

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number ~~On the right bank of the Allegheny River, about 1/2 mile upstream from Brandon, Pennsylvania.~~ not for publication

city, town Rockland Township vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Venango code 121

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad

street & number Smithfield and West Carson Streets

city, town Pittsburgh vicinity of state Pennsylvania 15222

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Venango County Courthouse

street & number Route 322

city, town Franklin Venango County state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

See references for early accounts
title Upper Ohio Valley Survey and James L. Swauger Petroglyph Studies has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1974 to present federal state county local

depository for survey records Carnegie Museum of Natural History and Upper Valley Sta

city, town Pittsburgh state Pennsylvania

7. Description

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 Indian God Rock Petroglyph Site (36 VE.26) is a massive, free-standing boulder seven meters long and four meters wide with carvings covering most of the west face. The boulder slants eastward from the Allegheny River at a 50° angle and achieves a thickness of four meters where it rests on the river bank. The rock lies on the right-of-way of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad on the east bank of the Allegheny River about 3.2 kilometers from Brandon, Rockland Township, Venango County, Pennsylvania (Swauger 1977), (Fig. 1).

The American Indian glyphs have become somewhat obscured in modern times by the combination of erosion and the propensity of modern Pennsylvanians to add names, dates, and figures to the original carvings. Dr. James L. Swauger of the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh recorded 56 designs during reconnaissance in October, 1963 (Table I). Coded on this table are the letters S and L which denote recordings of the figures from an early photograph by Father Clifford Lewis and from work done by Schoolcraft (1856). Figure 2 is a replication of Swauger's field sketch of the glyphs.

Most notable of all the designs are perhaps Nos. 18 and 25 which are the only true American Indian representations of bows and arrows recorded in the petroglyph studies of the Ohio Valley. Other designs on the Indian God Rock include geometric, human, and mammal forms. Figure 3 is a photograph of a drawing done by Captain Seth Eastman for Schoolcraft's study of the site (Schoolcraft, IV, 1856:Plate 18).

3. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input 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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates Dates of individual elements unknown. **Builder/Architect** N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

According to Swauger (1974:109), the Indian God Rock petroglyphs were likely carved sometime during the period A.D. 900 to A.D. 1750 and most likely a time between A.D. 1200 and 1750. The Indian God Rock itself represents the earliest mention of petroglyphs in the Upper Ohio Valley and we have the record of Captain Pierre Joseph Celoron de Blainville commandant of a French expedition into the Ohio country stating:

"On August 3, 1749, buried upon the southern bank of the Ohio, at four leagues distance below the River aux Boeufs, directly opposite a naked mountain, and near an immense stone upon which certain figures are rudely enough carved, a leaden plate, and have attached in the same place to a tree the arms of the King (Laming 1885-1886:104)."

Swauger (1977) also details the record left by Father Joseph Pierre de Bonnecamps, chaplain to the Celoron expedition:

"The 3rd (August, 1749)....In the evening, after we disembarked, we buried a 2nd plate of lead under a great rock, upon which were to be seen several figures roughly graven. These were the figures of men and women, and the footprints of goats, turkeys, bears, etc., traced upon the rock. Our officers tried to persuade me that this was the work of Europeans, but, in truth, I must say that in the style and workmanship of these engravings one cannot fail to recognize the unskillfulness of savages. I might add to this that they have much analogy with the hieroglyphics which they use instead of writing (Bonnecamps 1950:169).

Swauger himself states (1977:3):

"The God Rock petroglyphs are so spectacular that they attracted attention from early days (Blainville 1749; Bonnecamps 1750; Day 1843; Schoolcraft 1853-1856:4,173; Whittlesey 1872; Mallery 1886; Mulkearn and Pugh 1954; and Peterson 1958). In a note of March 17, 1971, E.R. Eller, former Curator of Geology and Invertebrate Paleontology, Carnegie Magazine, commented on its magnetism: 'It is interesting that when the Allegheny River was navigable, steamships would often stop at this rock so that passengers could observe the petroglyphs.' "

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .006 acres

Quadrangle name Kennerdell

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	17	510017	2000000
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
---	--	--	--

D			
---	--	--	--

E			
---	--	--	--

F			
---	--	--	--

G			
---	--	--	--

H			
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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
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state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Verna L. Cowin

organization Carnegie Museum of Natural History

date April 15, 1982

Section of Man

street & number 4400 Forbes Ave.

telephone (412) 361-0500

city or town Pittsburgh

state Pennsylvania

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

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date _____

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

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Indian God Rock Petroglyphs

Continuation sheet Site 36 VE 26 - Venango Co. Item number 8. Significance Page 2

Artistically, the symbols carved on the Indian God Rock and catalogued on Table I in the descriptive section of this paper, have been attributed Chippewa (Cadzow 1954:50) and to what Swauger calls proto-Shawnee (1977). Categories of the designs by numbers are:

Artifact

Bow and Arrow: 18,25.

Geometric

Abstract: 1,2,5,6,7,10,11,12,14,15,16,19,21,23,24,26,28,30,
31,35,36,41,42,43,44,45,49,51,53,54,55.

Circle: 3,33,37,38.

Comb-like: 4,17.

Human

Human Being: 20,29.

Human Face: 9.

Human Hand: 13,39.

Mammal

Animal: 22,32,34,46,50.

Animal, X-ray: 8.

Spirit otter: 27.

Pitt: 40,47.

Swauger (1974:112) notes:

"Some of the carvers were excellent observers and fine craftsmen. Others were not, producing pedestrian or even poor designs. So many of the designs, particularly large and complicated designs, are of mythical figures or figures known from birch-bark scrolls to be mystical personages that it is likely that many of the carvers were shamans.....They must have been a peaceful folk because few weapons and no scenes of warfare are on the sites."

Figure 4 shows the location of the Indian God Petroglyph Site, 36 VE 26, and its position relative to other petroglyph sites in the Upper Ohio Valley (Swauger 1977).

Because of documentation early in the historic record at the time of French exploration the continued interest of scholars in the origin and meaning of the symbols, and the thorough documentation by Swauger, the Indian God Rock stands as an extremely important single-standing monumental artifact of artistic and symbolic American Indian traditions. No other single monumental engraved rock within Pennsylvania has so distinguished a record.

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Indian God Rock Petroglyph

Major

Continuation sheet Site - 36 Ve 26, Venango Co. Item number 9. Bibliographical References Page 2

- Blainville, Pierre Joseph Celeron de
1749 See Lambing, A.A. (1885, 1886) and Marshall, John (1878) for translations.
- Bonnecamps, Joseph Pierre de
1750 Relation du Voyage de la Belle Riviers fait en 1749 sur les Orderes de M. de Celeron. A. Quebec. October 17. In The Jesuit Relations, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites.
- Cadzow, Donald A.
1934 Petroglyphs (Rock Carvings) in the Susquehanna River near Safe Harbor, Pennsylvania. Safe Harbor Report #1. Publications of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission 3.
- Day, Sherman
1843 Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania. George W. Gordon.
- Lambing, A.A.
1885- Celeron's Journal, Catholic Historical Researches 2 (2)
1886 Oct. 1885; Jan., 1886; April 1886; July 1886; July, 1886, Pittsburgh.
- Mallery, Garrick
1886 Pictographs of the North American Indians: A Preliminary Paper. Bureau of Ethnology: Fourth Annual Report. Smithsonian Institution, 1882, 1883. Washington.
1893 Picture Writing of the American Indians. Bureau of American Ethnology Tenth Annual Report. Smithsonian Institution, 1888-1889, Washington.
- Marshall, John
1878 DeCeleron's Expedition to the Ohio. Magazine of American History. 2 (3):129-150. New York.
- Mulkearn, Lois & Edwin V. Pugh
1954 A Traveler's Guide to Historic Western Pennsylvania. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh.
- Norona, Delf
1955 (Anon.) Indian X-Ray Drawings. West Virginia Archaeologist 7:9-19.
- Schoolcraft, Henry R.
1853- Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States. Collected and Prepared under the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs per Act of Congress, March 3, 1947 Lippincott, Philadelphia
1856

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Indian God Rock Petroglyph

9. Major
Bibliographical

Continuation sheet Site - 36 Ve 26, Venango Co. Item number References Page 3

10. Verbal Boundary Description

Swauger, James L.

1974

Rock Art of the Upper Ohio Valley. Akademische Druck-und Verlagsanstalt. Graz.

1977

The Indian God Rock Petroglyph Site 36 Ve 36. Pennsylvania Archaeologist 47 # 1, Milton.

Thwaites, Reuben Gold

1900

The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791. 73 Volumes. Cleveland.

Whittlesey, Charles

1872 or

1874

(Anon.) Ed. Rock Sculpture near Barnesville, Belmont County, Ohio, Western Reserve and North Ohio Historical Historical Society Historical and Archaeological Tracts i (11):108.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Since the nominee is a single rock, the description begins with a description of how to access the nominated site.

Travel from the town of Brandon, Pennsylvania, to the site of the Indian God Rock Petroglyph Site, is via State Route 257 to Rockland, Pennsylvania. Turn west on Legislative Route 8876 through Coal City to the town of Brandon. The road is a dirt road, and the water level, and local conditions are such that it is not possible to travel more than one mile to the 15 mile post and a line shack at which a turn-around is just large enough for a vehicle. The Indian God Rock Petroglyph Site is on the hill to the east of the line shack. The site is located on the edge of the hill, and is located on the 7.5 minute quadrangle and is located on the 15 minute series on the Franklin Topographic Map. The nominated site is located on the 15 minute series on the 7.5 series on the 15 minute series. The specific rock measurements of 4x4x7 m are submitted in lieu of any acreage measurement or evaluation. The site is accurately plotted on both the submitted maps and measurements from the river edge would be insignificant given the fluctuations of water level over seasonal variations. As stated in the site description section, the Indian God Rock Petroglyph Site lies on the right-of-way of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad on the east bank of the Allegheny River 0.25 km up stream from Brandon, Rockland Township, Venango County, Pennsylvania.