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For many years after his first visit, Herman Womack had tried to track down the legend of the cave and the reason for the arrows in the rocks. One explanation came from an old Apache who had lived all his life around Fossil Creek. He told of a legend about a ceremonial cave of the early Apaches where they took their young men and allowed them to choose one arrow from their quiver and shoot it into the crevices. If it stayed this was a sign that the Indian youth had reached manhood and would be a great hunter. It was said that the Apache ancestors who guard the cave would hurl great rocks upon anyone who disturbed these arrows. We must admit that we didn't see an ancestor throw the rock but the near miss of the crashing boulder that filled the crevice with choking dust and plunged it into darkness was convincing enough that the rest of the arrows might well remain where they were. And as far as we know they are there yet.

\* \* \*

### A GAME OF SKILL?

Robert S. Begole

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In the late 1970s Paul Johnson, the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Naturalist, discovered a broken, two-piece arrow shaft on a small ledge at the base of a steep canyon wall. Subsequently, it was accessioned and catalogued in the Park's artifact collection. However, a perplexing question remained, "How did the arrow arrive on this low ledge?" Could it have been from one of the numerous flash floods sweeping through the canyon every few years?

The mystery may have been solved with the discovery of two barely discernable small cracks higher on the canyon wall. One was twenty-three feet and the other thirty-nine feet above the canyon floor. Into these cracks had been shot more than forty arrows. With some ingenuity and considerable aplomb a difficult task was performed in retrieving seven more broken arrow shafts for examination and addition to the Park's artifact

collection. The arrows were of two types: (a) a one-piece shaft of plain wormwood (*Artemisia ludoviciana*) with the sharpened points fire hardened, but due to the elements as well as time, no arrow-feathering remained on the shafts; (b) a two-piece shaft consisting of a six- to eight-inch fire hardened foreshaft of wormwood or mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*) inserted into the mainshaft of Carrizo cane (*Phragmites communis*) and glued with mesquite gum. In the area of cane and wooden point juncture the cane was reinforced with sinew. Indications of scorching could be recognized in the Carrizo cane showing that the cane had been straightened with an arrow shaft straightener.

Some years ago, on an elevated terrace across the canyon, I had recorded a small habitation area consisting of a dozen or more dwelling sites. These sites appeared to encompass four different ages. With early morning cross lighting, three or more San Dieguito I swept circles can be seen as well as several faint San Dieguito II rock circles. Easily noticeable are several small (78" OD) Amargosan I type rock slab outlined circles. Near one of these circles lies a boulder and cobble ground figure depicting a snake. It was constructed with a 12.5" x 15.5" boulder as the head, a cobble body and a 19.5" cobble and pebble circle representing the tail rattles. The overall length of the figure was 110" and surprisingly was found to lie in a true north-south direction. Perhaps this orientation carried an important meaning.

The last period of habitation lies along the west side of the terrace opposite the canyon wall containing the arrow shafts. The Southern Diegueño, the last people to inhabit the area, probably stopped here only temporarily as evidenced by the small amount of pottery sherds and pieces of chipping waste. In all probability, it was these Diegueños and guests who were responsible for the arrows shot into the cracks of the canyon wall. Several cracks show evidence of a roosting place for small bats. Perhaps originally one of these cracks containing bats was used for target practice, then later another crack sans bats was utilized as a target in a game of skill. Judging from the expenditure of arrows, surely it must have been quite a riotous time for the locals and guests as they vied with one another to lodge an arrow into a predesignated small crack.



