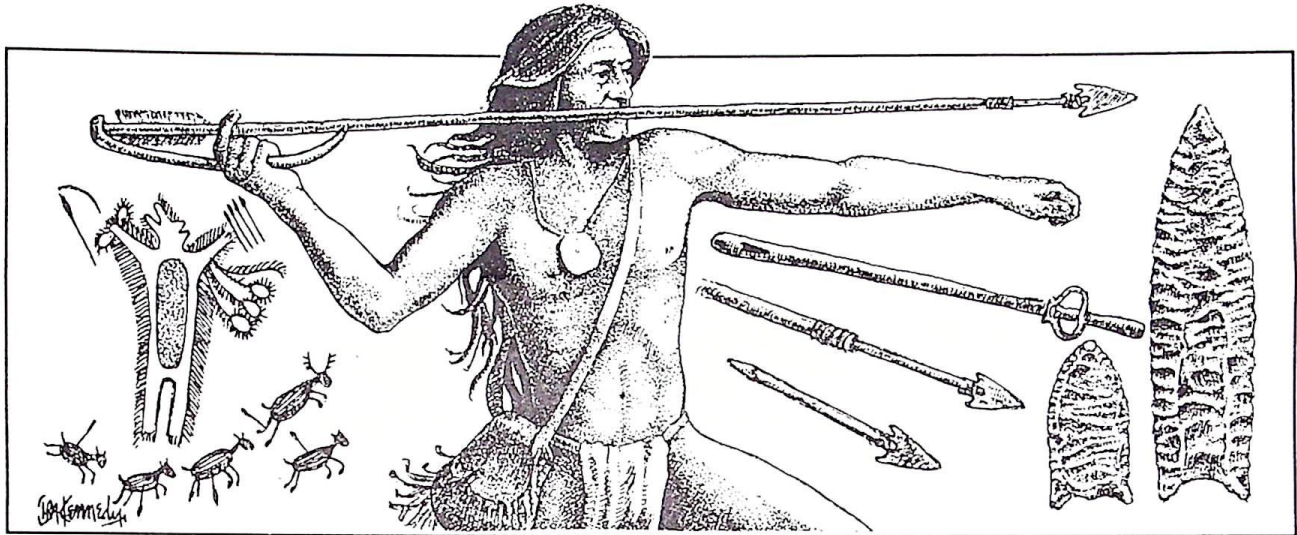


ENCHANTED ROCK

NEWSLETTER

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The Atlatl, or spear-thrower. For a detailed description see "About the Atlatl" on back cover.

THE FIRST PEOPLE & ENCHANTED ROCK

Text and art by Ira Kennedy

Hunting the mastadon and mammoth, the first people of America wandered out of ice and tundra into the New World. One of their numerous migrations charted the Old Pinta Trail, which became a well-worn route that stretched from Canada down the Great Plains, crossed Sandy Creek at Enchanted Rock, and continued to South Texas. These hunter-gatherers had flint-tipped spears, fire, and stories. With these resources, some twelve thousand years ago, the first Texans became the wellspring of Plains Indian culture.

The names of the original tribes in the area are not known. The first written records, dating from the sixteenth century, are of the Tonkawa. An interesting commentary on Enchanted Rock and its inhabitants is found in *The Scouting Expedition of McCulloch's Texas Rangers*, by Samuel C. Reid, Jr., published in 1848. : "We are unable to give to the reader the traditional cause why this place was so named," Reid wrote about Enchanted Rock, "but never the less, the Indians had a great awe, amounting almost to a reverence for it, and would tell many legendary tales connected with it and the fate of a few brave warriors, the last of a tribe now extinct, who defended themselves there for many years as in a strong castle, against the attacks of their hostile brethren. But they were finally over-

come and totally annihilated, and ever since, the 'Enchanted Rock' has been looked upon as the exclusive property of these phantom warriors. This is one of the many tales which the Indians tell concerning it."

It is very likely that Reid's informants were the Tonkawa, who frequently served as guides to the Rangers, and who, more than any other tribe, would have had any knowledge of "a tribe now extinct" that inhabited Enchanted Rock.

Due to the lack of published research, the religious beliefs of the Tonkawa are very sketchy, but seem to have been shaped in large measure

Continued on back page.

Islands Surrounded by Rock

The vernal pools are very delicate ecosystems, supporting a wide variety of plant life plus a unique invertebrate, the fairy shrimp. Whether the pools appear as bare rock depressions or filled with plant life, all the pools are in a process of evolution which has required thousands of years. The subject of ongoing research by environmentalists, the pools are easily impacted by careless visitors. Avoid walking through or otherwise disturbing these areas. Stay on the rock. Photo: A lone liveoak stands in a vernal pool on the summit of Enchanted Rock.



NATURAL AREAS WORK:

THE PROOF IS IN PLANT DIVERSITY

Enchanted Rock is a place of significant ecological interest. It is here that desert and wetland species meet. A visitor can stand in one place and see examples of the entire evolution of plant life on the planet--from lichens, mosses, ferns, annuals, and perennials to shrubs and trees.

Within its 1,643 acres are over five hundred species of plants. Over one hundred of these inhabit the *vernal pools*, weathered pits which impound soil and water on the summit of Enchanted Rock and the surrounding outcrops. Almost a dozen of the native plants are unique to the area. The Hammock fern, *Blechnum occidentale* L.; the Basin bellflower, *Campanula reverchonii*; and the Rock quillwort, *Isoetes lithophylla*, can be found here, all of which are considered either threatened or endangered by the Smithsonian Institution.

In the twenty-five years prior to becoming a state natural area, twenty-eight native plants became extinct within its present boundaries. However, the good news is that, ac-

cording to research by botanist Bob O'Kennon, during the ten years that the park has been under state supervision, twenty-three of those species have re-

turned, and over one hundred species have been added to the list. Beyond that, O'Kennon has located a previously unidentified species belonging to the sunflower family.

It is believed that the primary reason for such a remarkable recovery is due to the removal of cattle, which were a perennial presence when the area was operated as a private park. However, with over 300,000 visitors annually there can be little doubt that humans are impacting the ecology of the park. All visitors are individually responsible for their actions. Please, do not pick flowers, harvest plants, and watch where you are walking. The plant you save could be endangered.

In the near future the *Enchanted Rock Newsletter* plans to print a more detailed account of O'Kennon's research. IK

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the premier edition of the *Enchanted Rock Newsletter*. Topics covered in this publication will include all aspects of the Enchanted Rock adventure: from history to current events, from hiking to rock climbing. Special emphasis will be on the appreciation and preservation of this remarkable state treasure.

We hope this service enhances your experience and understanding of Enchanted Rock. Letters, comments and suggestions are welcome.

Although the newsletter bears the name "Enchanted Rock," it is not produced by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. All of the opinions expressed here are those of the publisher/editor, Ira Kennedy. We will neither publish nor advocate political causes. There are other, more appropriate venues for such debate. Also, we will not accept either display or classified advertising. Publication will be financed by subscriptions only; therefore, if you like what you see and read, please subscribe. Privately published every other month, subscriptions are \$10 per year.

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Coming Events

Ira Kennedy will be giving a series of free talks at Enchanted Rock on its history, mythology, and archaeology, once a month, beginning in March. A frequent speaker at the Rock, and the author of numerous articles on the subject, Kennedy was most recently featured on the syndicated TV program, *Texas Country Reporter*, in a segment on Enchanted Rock.

March 26, (Saturday @ 9 p.m.) _____

History and Legends of the Rock.

April 24, (Saturday @ 7 p.m.) _____

Sacred Geography & Enchanted Rock. From the summit of Enchanted Rock, where sunset & full-moonrise can be observed.

May 21, (Saturday @ 8 p.m.) _____

Indian Stone Artifacts & Enchanted Rock.

In the next issue

Featured in our next issue will be an article on Jack Hays, the renowned Texas Ranger, and his encounter with Indians on Enchanted Rock.

For hikers and those interested in things archaeological we will have a brief article on monos and metates, the grinding stones used by the Native Americans, and locate where bedrock metates can be found at Enchanted Rock.

Are you curious about who resided at Enchanted Rock the longest? Hint: he was neither Anglo, Hispanic nor Indian. All available information, which isn't much, will be in the next issue.

The Gift Shop

The park headquarters has a limited, but interesting variety of quality souvenir or gift items. From postcards to posters, patches to t-shirts, and booklets to books, all can be purchased at reasonable prices. Of particular interest are two books: *The Dome Drivers Manual* is the guide to rock climbing at the park; and for those interested in geology, the *Enchanted Rock State Natural Area: A Guide to the Landforms* is highly recommended.



Although rock climbing is one of the most popular activities at Enchanted Rock, it isn't for everyone. However, the climbers do provide excellent photo opportunities for the professional and amateur shutterbug. This shot was taken of a climber on the east face of Freshman Mountain with a 35mm Pentax mounted on a tripod using a 80-200mm zoom lense and ASA 100 Kodak film. The f-stop was not recorded. Photo by Ira Kennedy.

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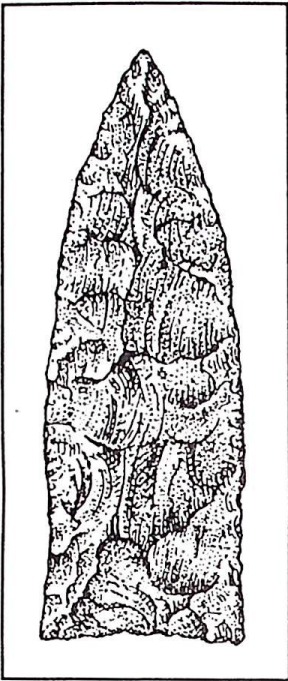
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ABOUT THE ATLATL



The atlatl, rhymes with rattle-rattle, is an Aztec word for the spear-thrower, an ingenious invention which, by employing centrifugal force, allowed prehistoric hunters to throw a stone-tipped shaft further, and with greater power and accuracy than would have been possible with an ordinary spear.

The mainshaft, made of a pithy-centered lightweight wood such as yucca or willow, was usually four to five feet long. Upon impact, the shaft would flex toward, and then spring away from, the prey leaving the stone-tipped foreshaft inside. The hunter would then retrieve the mainshaft and insert a new foreshaft. This weapon was particularly useful when hunting the mastadon and great bison, the earliest prey of its inventors.

Most of the "arrowheads" found today were used with the atlatl. The projectile points used with the bow and arrow, frequently called "birdpoints," (generally less than 3/4 of an inch long) were not used until approximately 700 A.D.

The picture on the cover depicts an Indian using the atlatl. A copy of a Pecos River pictograph to the left of the central figure is that of a shaman with the atlatl in his right hand and several compound arrows in his left. To the right is a top view of a straight-style atlatl with leather finger loops; and details of the compound spear. At the far right are the Clovis and Folsom points. These are the oldest projectile points in the Americas, and date from 10,000 - 8,500 B.C. and are named for locations in New Mexico where they were first discovered. The oldest authenticated projectile point found at Enchanted Rock is a Plainview type, dating from around 8,000 B.C.

Plainview point, drawn actual size.

The First People, continued from the cover by Tonkawa myths regarding the spirits of the dead. In *The Indians of Texas*, published in 1961, the author W. W. Newcomb, Jr., notes: "Souls of women were thought to go directly to the home in the west singing as they went; souls of men, however, were apt to hang around watching their living relatives and calling to them. If the dead were not properly buried, their spirits would remain to haunt the miscreants... Certain places were avoided, particularly at night, because strange sounds attributed to the souls of the dead were heard there." Possibly, some of the more ghostly legends and reports of the Indian's fearful reactions regarding Enchanted Rock and the mysterious noises said to emit from it can be traced to the Tonkawa.

In the early 1700's the Apache displaced the Tonkawa at Enchanted Rock. It is with the Apache myths, which have been the subject of greater study, that we get a more complete picture of Plains Indian beliefs as they relate to the sacred nature of Enchanted Rock.

According to the Apache, the Giver of Life sent the *Gan*, or mountain spirits, to teach the people a better way to live, govern, hunt, and cure illness. According to the myth, these benevolent but powerful mountain spirits live forever in the mountain's caves and can be appealed to for guidance and protection.

By the end of the 1700's the Comanche had displaced the Apache. The Comanche, like many other plains tribes, looked upon the sun as the universal father. Jean Louis Berlandier, in his firsthand account, *The Indians of Texas in 1830*, wrote: "The sun seems to be the single object of creation they venerate most assiduously... In general all the nomadic peoples make no sacrifice to him... After the

sun, the earth takes second place in their devotion... Their various superstitious ceremonials, handed down generation after generation from their ancestors or picked up in some other way, are celebrated amid the majestic monuments of nature... You may see Comanches and others, hoping for a revelation or some important inspiration... seek out some high and lonely place where they build a sort of sepulchre of stones. There they pay homage to the object of their veneration, whereupon they go to sleep hoping for a dream that will reveal the counsel they have prayed for."

There is no question that the summit of Enchanted Rock was the site for both the *Gan* dance of the Apache and the vision quest of the Comanche and other Plains Indians.

In 1892, James R. Mooney wrote in *The Ghost Dance Religion*, about Wovoka, a famous Paiute prophet and medicine man, whose influence was felt throughout the Plains. Although the excerpt is not specifically about Enchanted Rock or its native inhabitants, on a deeper level it speaks directly to the spirit of the place, Plains Indian spiritual leaders, and the mythological foundation of their religion.

"[Wovoka was] by nature of a solitary and contemplative disposition, one of those born to see visions and hear still voices... His native valley, from which he has never wandered [was] roofed over by a cloudless sky whose blue infinitude the mind instinctively seeks to penetrate to far-off worlds beyond. Away to the south the view is closed in the the sacred mountain of the Paiute, where their Father gave them the first fire and taught them their few simple arts before leaving for his home in the upper regions of the Sun-land... It seems set apart from the great world to be the home of a dreamer."