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Slicks in the San Luiseño Area

FLORENCE C. SHIPEK

Although I have not seen the slicks described by True and Waugh (1981:84-115), a notable slick exists on a vertical rock face near the north end of Rincon Reservation which I will describe.

In company with several San Luiseño elders, we were tracing the pre-1900 irrigation works built and maintained by the Rincon Band prior to the days of Indian Agency control. After following flume and irrigation canals, they led me to the northern part of the reservation to see an earthen reservoir built to supply water to this part of the reservation which was too high to receive water from the river. The Rincon men walked a short distance beyond the reservoir to a large boulder over two meters tall. They called me to come, they wanted to show me something to see if I knew what it was. They pointed to a polished, glassy surface about 25 cm. high by 20 cm. wide on the vertical face of the boulder and about 1.2 meters above

the ground. The men then demonstrated the use of the slick, indicating that it was used by both men and women on their return from hunting, gathering, or some other errand. Starting at the rough outer edge, one ground and smoothed a fingernail thereby removing extra length and trimming rough edges. I used the slick in this manner and discovered that working from the edge toward the center produced beautifully smoothed and polished fingernails. The Rincon men told me that Rincon people had used this particular slick at least until 1920.

The boulder was a hard, fine-grained Bonsall Tonolite, and weathering had not yet affected the glassy polished surface of the slick. Located outside the protohistoric village, the boulder occurred along the trail entering the village from upper Portrero Creek. I suggest that the slicks of the Frey Creek area be examined to determine if they are comparable to this slick of Rincon.

REFERENCE

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