

UC Merced

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology

Title

Rock Enclosures in Southern California

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6m24t86c>

Journal

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology, 3(2)

ISSN

0191-3557

Author

Oxendine, Joan

Publication Date

1981-12-01

Peer reviewed

Rock Enclosures in Southern California

JOAN OXENDINE

ROCK enclosures are archaeological features that have stimulated both speculation and field investigation. Enclosures in southern California vary in construction, are associated with various cultural assemblages, and are located in diverse environments. An exhaustive study of rock enclosures is not, however, presented here; instead, certain selected ceremonial, domestic, and strategic enclosures associated with the late prehistoric and historic periods (A.D. 1500-1900) are identified. These enclosures are described, and comparisons are made within and outside of each respective category.

The documentation of a ceremonial function contributes a new perspective on rock enclosures in southern California. Most investigators expect that the key to function is within the enclosure itself, but the following example shows that the nature may not always be obvious from the enclosure but may be inferred from associated features and artifacts.

PEEXA WIYAAMAY: DANCEGROUND

A ceremonial function has not previously been strongly suggested for rock enclosures in southern California, and only one published source mentions rocks in the construction of religious enclosures. Waterman (1910:281) described the Diegueño dance enclosure as

having a circular, hard-packed dirt floor and brush walls, the latter secured by large rocks. In the absence of brush walls, the Diegueño dance enclosure may well appear as a circular arrangement of rocks. The ethnographic notes of John P. Harrington (n.d.) reinforce the significance of this reference regarding the ceremonial nature of some rock enclosures and give further credibility to a religious interpretation.

In 1933, Harrington visited and interviewed Josefa and Feliz Verdugo at their village, *Peexa Wiyaamay*, in northern San Diego County. This area has sometimes been regarded as Cahuilla territory, but the Verdugos were Luiseño or, as they referred to themselves, Temecula Indians (Chace 1965). The Verdugos were the last of the Indians to live permanently at *Peexa Wiyaamay*, which may be the old Aguanga village of *Picha (Peexa) Awanga* that figures prominently in Luiseño oral history (see DuBois 1908:151). The village site is at the southern edge of a valley, near the base of high mountains, and encompasses a few hills, as well as valley flatland. The danceground is just below the summit of a small hill with prominent, granitic boulders. This highly visible hill is on the west side of a flowing creek and is opposite a much larger hill. The Verdugos showed Harrington various features within the village, including the rock enclosure which they stated was a danceground.

The danceground (Figs. 1 and 2) measures 3.7 m. along the north-south axis and 4 m.

Joan Oxendine, Dept. of Anthropology, Univ. of California, Riverside, CA 92521.

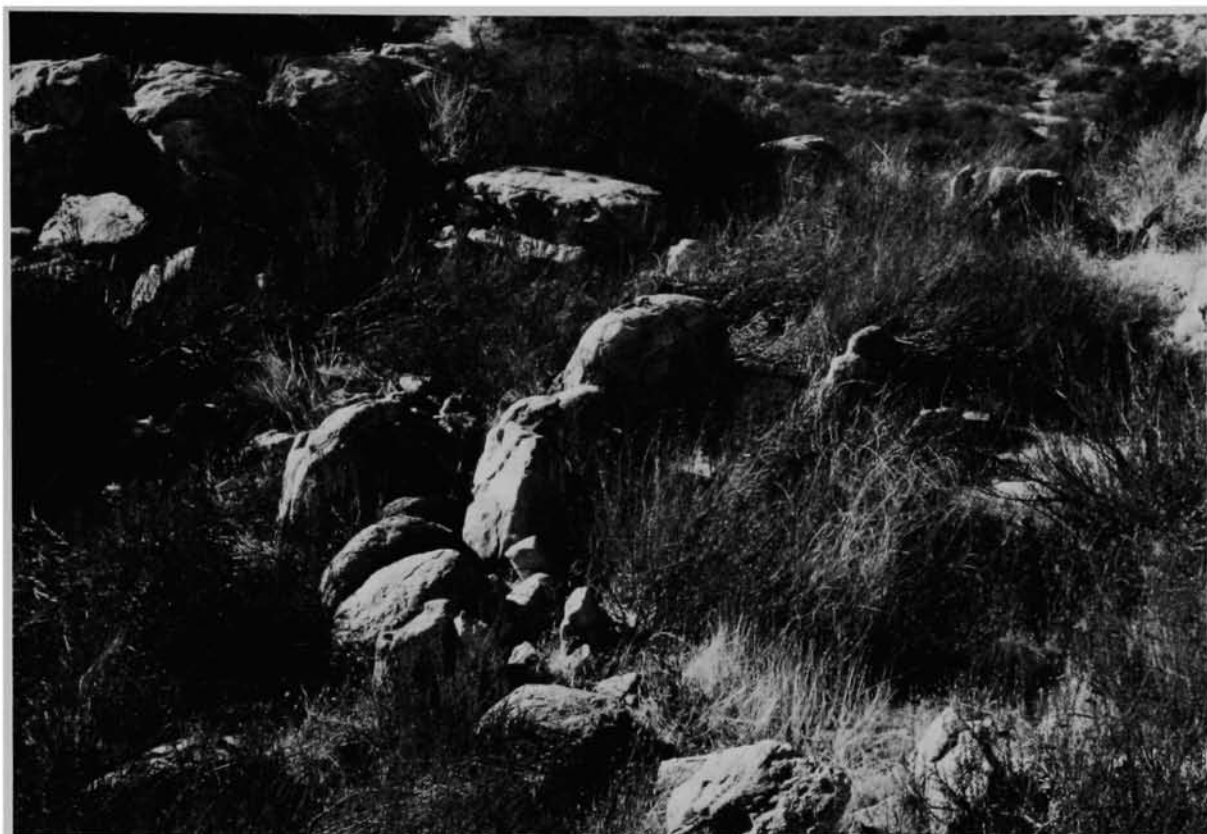


Fig. 1. Unidentified enclosure in foreground, danceground (including flat, rectangular boulder with mortars) behind and to the left. Passage runs behind boulder, in center of photo, to lower left corner of photo.

along the east-west axis. The wall is constructed of exposed bedrock boulders and smaller boulders. The wall is no longer intact, but may have been 75 cm. high if the bedrock boulders formed the standard for wall height. The danceground is distinguished by an opening in the wall at a point that is due north, three milling features in a triangular pattern on a boulder forming part of the wall, a level floor, and lack of midden and artifacts.

The opening at the north end, which is 45 cm. wide, is probably an entrance. It is appropriate that the opening faces north because that direction is significant in Luiseño religion, and it should be noted that Kroeber (1908:179) recorded an entrance at the north end of the *wamkic*, the Luiseño ceremonial

enclosure. DuBois (1908:89) was informed that all ceremonies and invocations were performed facing north, that the sand painting had a "door" to the north which allowed the spirit to escape, that Earth Mother lies with her feet to the north, and that the First Children faced north while attending their brother *Quiot's* funeral.

A prominent, rectangularly shaped bedrock boulder in the wall at the west end of the enclosure has three small, shallow mortars on its flat, horizontal surface. These measure 18 cm. in diameter by 7 cm. in depth, 17 cm. in diameter by 3 cm. in depth, and 14 by 18 cm. and 1.5 cm. in depth. They form a triangle, with the deepest mortar forming the apex of the triangle. Harrington was told that

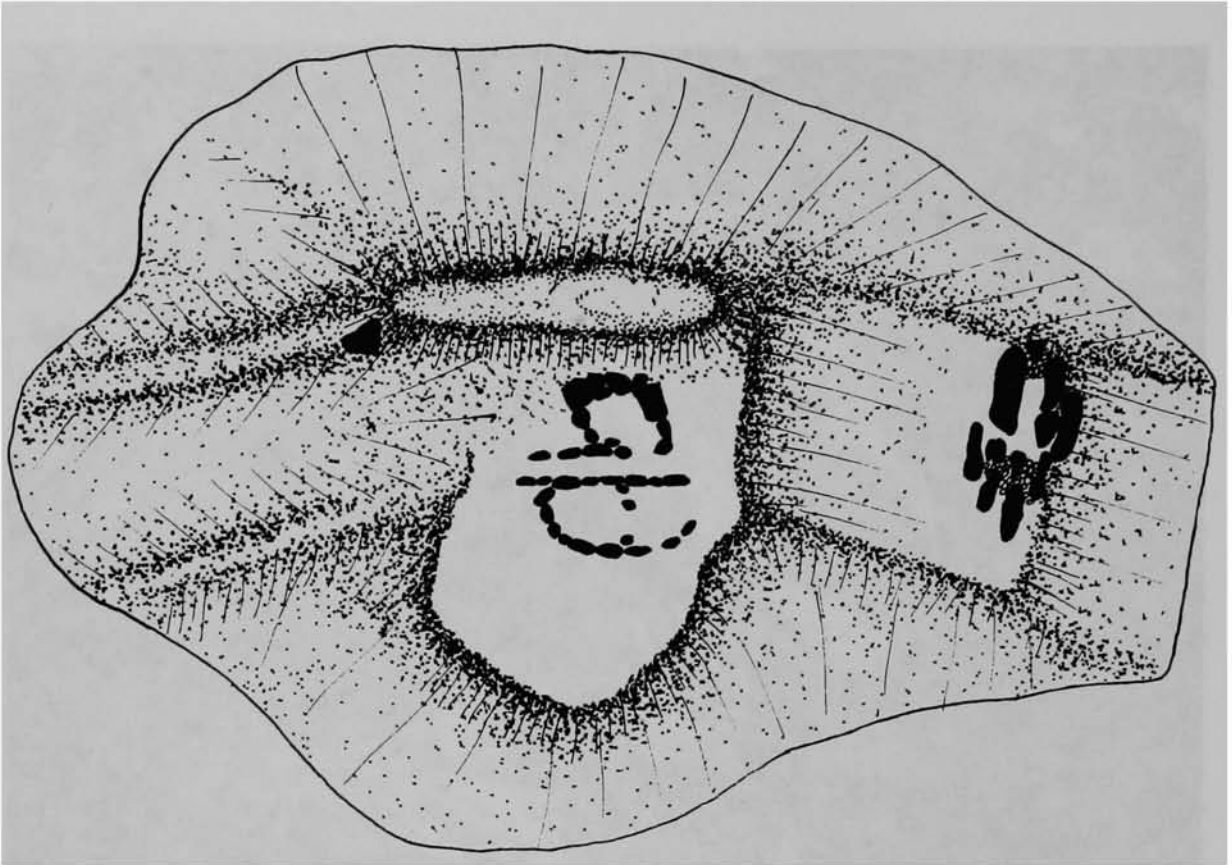


Fig. 2. Artist's rendering showing approximate location and relationship of features on hill.

tobacco had been "pounded up" in these mortars.

The incorporation of tobacco mortars in the wall of the enclosure is noteworthy because tobacco is an important element in Luiseño ceremonies, as it is in ceremonies of other California Indians. For example, tobacco was given to girls during the *weqennic* (girls' initiation) and was smoked during other ceremonies. DuBois (1908: Figs. 1 and 2) even presented photographs of a ceremonial leader smoking tobacco before performing feats manifesting extraordinary personal and ceremonial power.

UISEÑO AND CAHUILLA DANCEGROUNDS

The connotation of the mortars is increased by the number three, which is also

significant in Luiseño religion. During ceremonies certain actions were performed three consecutive times, invocations were made three times, and sacred objects were used in sets of three. The sacredness of this number is obvious in the *maani* (boys' initiation), as described by DuBois (1908:77-90).

The term danceground is not commonly used in ethnographies or histories regarding the Luiseño, although references to dances occur frequently. Luiseño dances were of a religious nature and were performed in conjunction with songs during religious ceremonies. Major public ceremonies and their accompanying dances and songs were conducted within a circular enclosure, the *wamkic* (DuBois 1908:106; Kroeber 1908:185).

Harrington (1933:135-138) gave a lengthy discussion of the Luiseño *wamkic* in which he

included information regarding ceremonial structures of other groups of southern California Indians. Although *wamkic* is a Luiseño word, the shape, materials, and construction techniques of this structure were similar throughout southern California. The enclosure was constructed of wooden posts set in a vertical position with poles tied to these in a horizontal position. Green branches were placed between posts and poles. A fireplace, consisting of a hole in which several stones serving as potrests were placed, was located in the center of the enclosure. The *wamkic* was elliptical, and Harrington noted the dimensions of a *wamkic* at Rincon in San Diego County as 11.58 m. along the north-south axis and 17.68 m. along the east-west axis. The fireplace was 1.21 m. in diameter. In Harrington's example, the brush wall was built around the northern half of the *wamkic* and a rise in ground level served as the southern perimeter. The *wamkic* was always near the house of the village chief and in the center of the village.

Kroeber (1908:179) described the *wamkic* somewhat differently than Harrington did, having observed that the eastern end, where the singers sat, was open; that the north and south ends had gaps which were used as entrances; and that "the *pumalum* or initiated dancers" stood at the western or closed end.

A review of the Cahuilla ceremonial house, which varied slightly from the open enclosure of the Luiseño and other southern California Indians, is appropriate because the location of *Peexa Wiyaamay* near Cahuilla territory puts it into a position in which some blending of Luiseño and Cahuilla cultural characteristics can be expected.

Descriptions of the Cahuilla ceremonial house, which Strong (1929:60) termed the "dance house," show that it was similar but not identical to the danceground at *Peexa Wiyaamay*. Strong (1929:182) wrote that, in

earlier times, the dance house was a dome-shaped structure of brush and dirt laid over a shallow pit, but at the time of his interviews, it was similar to a "modern frame house with walls and roof of arrow-weed." A semicircular fence of arrow-weed or palm fronds enclosed the front of this building, and a smaller room was behind it (Strong 1929:60, 182). The enclosed area was a danceground and the room was the depository for the ceremonial bundle.

A description by Bean (1972:73) differs in a few details. The ceremonial house itself was divided into an area in which the ceremonial bundle was kept, and another in which dances were performed and observers were seated. A cooking area and an enclosed danceground were attached to the house.

The rock wall and perhaps the size of the danceground at *Peexa Wiyaamay* were not typical of the *wamkic*, as described in ethnographic and historic sources, and there is a possibility that the danceground was not a *wamkic*. The *wamkic* has been consistently described as a brush enclosure, and no mention has been made of rocks or a rock wall. While the dimensions of only one *wamkic* have been given (Harrington 1933:138), those are approximately four times larger than the danceground at *Peexa Wiyaamay*. If the typical *wamkic* was roughly 11 by 17 m., then the danceground at *Peexa Wiyaamay* either did not conform to the standard size or was not a *wamkic*.

If the danceground was not a *wamkic*, it may have been a private ceremonial ground. A careful reading of DuBois' description of Luiseño religion produced the explanation that the rock enclosure may have been used for ceremonies which were less public but which also included dances and songs.

Then the songs of the individual for lesser ceremonial occasions, shaman's songs for rainmaking, for fair weather; for harvest; for good luck, doctoring; bad luck, death to

enemies; for deeds of wonder as instruction to boys, and so on. These include songs of *Chatish*, songs of *Numkish*, songs of *Tuknish*, all of which are *Chungichnish* songs [DuBois 1908:105].

DuBois (1908:108) wrote that each "*hechicero*" (shaman or *pul*) has two or three secret songs of the *Chatish* series which "he sings at his house and not at public gatherings." I suggest that the subject danceground may have been used by *pul* or *pulum*, rather than by the hereditary religious and political leader (*nó · t*), while performing secret ceremonies. This is substantiated by two points; that one or more of the Verdugo men were *pulum* (Chace 1965) and that a "medicine house formerly used by the island wizards for secret ceremonies," which Harrington (1926: 107) described, has several parallels with the subject rock enclosure. This "medicine house" will be described in a following section.

PEEXA WIYAAMAY: OTHER FEATURES

Other features which share the hill with the danceground might have been used in conjunction with it. The proximity of these features, which include pictographs, a rockshelter, and an enclosure containing a spirit rock, seem to be indicative of the ceremonial function of the danceground. In his sketch of *Peexa Wiyaamay*, Harrington drew and labeled a "wall" near the danceground; however, when I visited the site I found the "wall" to be another enclosure (Figs. 1 and 2). This second enclosure is close enough to the danceground for the walls of both to form a passage, and the door of the danceground opens onto the passage. This passage is continued beyond the walls of the enclosure by two rows of rocks and leads to the edge of the hilltop on the east side, where it meets a trail which goes to the creek.

The second enclosure measures 3.7 m. along the north-south axis and 6.7 m. along the east-west axis. The walls were once one or

two courses high and might have reached a height of 40 or 50 cm. There is no opening in this enclosure. The soil is darker at the southern end of the enclosure, and there are stone flakes, a few plain potsherds, a fragment of a thermally fractured mano, and an entire metate on the surface. The metate had been placed on end against a boulder.

Although the purpose of the second enclosure is not clear, there is little doubt that the two enclosures are functionally related because of their proximity and connection with the passage. Further, there is precedence for the co-occurrence of ceremonial enclosures. The Luiseño constructed a smaller brush enclosure to the west of the *wamkic* to be used by the dancers when they put on their ceremonial dress (Kroeber 1908:179). The Cahuilla ceremonial house included a circular structure to which a semi-circular enclosure and a cooking area were attached. The Diegueño built two brush enclosures about 91 m. apart for the boys' initiation, and used two enclosures for the "feather ceremony" (Waterman 1910:311).

Other features near the enclosures also have ceremonial significance. There are black pictographs on the wall of a large boulder just southeast of the enclosures. A prominent figure on this panel (Fig. 3) may be symbolic of *Tcorwut*, whom Harrington (1933:133) identified as a *Tcajitejic* (DuBois' *Chungichnish*) magic animal that was conceptualized as an enormous Giant or Ferocious Water Bug. The diamond pattern, symbolic of *Şoowut*, the black rattlesnake which was a *Tcajitejic* avenger, is also present on this panel. The placement of *Tcajitejic* symbols near the danceground conforms with the hypothesis that the danceground was used by *pul* for ceremonies associated with *Tcajitejic*.

At a short distance to the east of this boulder there is a rockshelter with an enclosing rock wall four or five courses high (Fig. 4). Orange-tan pictographs are on the ceiling

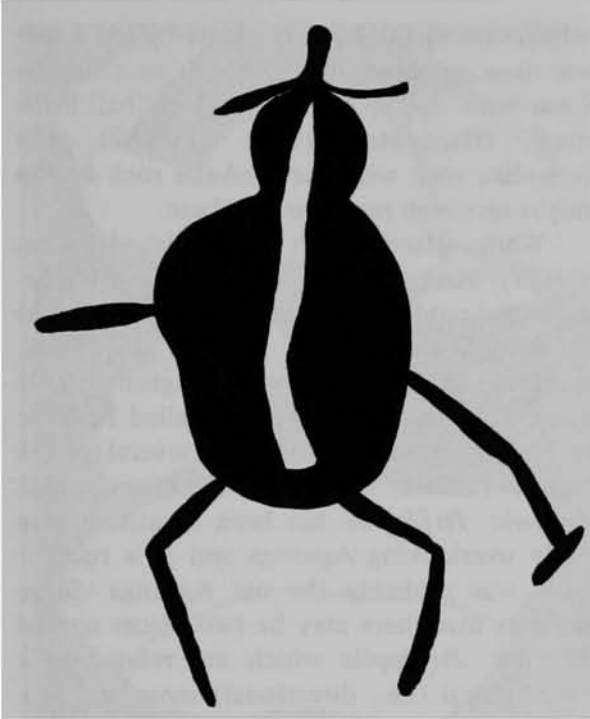


Fig. 3. Black pictograph perhaps symbolizing *Tcor-wut*, Giant or Ferocious Water Bug.

of this rockshelter, which faces east and is above the creek. The pervasive symbol of the rattlesnake is also represented here, along with other symbols.

Harrington's (1926:107) report of a "medicine house formerly used by the island wizards for secret ceremonies" at Rincon, probably Ventura County, is similar to the danceground and rockshelter at *Peexa Wiyaa-may*. The "medicine house" was described as a natural cave with a rock enclosure in front of and to the east of the shelter (Fewkes 1926:8). The enclosure was 5.48 m. in diameter and 90 cm. in height. Harrington reported that "from the top of this stone wall rafters had formerly extended to the roof of the cave chamber, and on these thatch had been placed" (Fewkes 1926:8). Harrington's disclosure that a rock shelter and adjacent enclosure had been used for secret ceremonies strongly suggests that the rockshelter and enclosure at *Peexa Wiyaa-may* might also have been used

for private ceremonies. The close proximity of the enclosed shelter with pictographs, the pictographs on the boulder, and the enclosures at *Peexa Wiyaa-may* seem to be more than coincidental. The *Tcajiticjic* symbolism in the pictographs reinforces both DuBois' statement that the *pul* sang *Tcajiticjic* songs in private ceremonies and my suggestion that the *pul* used the enclosure, rockshelter, and pictographs for private ceremonies.

Curiously, at the southern end and on the southern slope of the hilltop, spaces between the granitic boulders contain a few potsherds, pestles, and thermally fractured metamorphic rocks and manos. There is no obvious reason for the placement of these artifacts and rocks, and it may have been done as part of a religious ceremony or in accordance with religious precepts.

Harrington identified a rock downhill from the danceground, on the western slope, as *Taakwic Pusáppila*. He recorded that a smaller, white rock the size of a human head had been placed on top of the larger one, but that Feliz kept it (apparently the smaller rock) at his house. At the location given by Harrington for *Taakwic Pusáppila* there is an elliptical enclosure (5.8 by 2.9 m.) formed by two long rows of bedrock boulders and two short ends of stream cobbles and bedrock boulders (Fig. 5). The long sides are solid rock, except for one small opening. The boulders at the short ends do not meet, and stream cobbles have been placed so as to seal the gaps and, by so doing, to form an enclosure. The opening which has been left in one of the long sides has been blocked off by an extension of the stream cobbles. The cobbles have been loosely piled up rather than having been stacked. This enclosure may have been intended either to restrict the area from unsanctioned persons or to contain the power of *Taakwic Pusáppila*.

There are seven mortars on the top of one of the boulders forming the enclosure, and

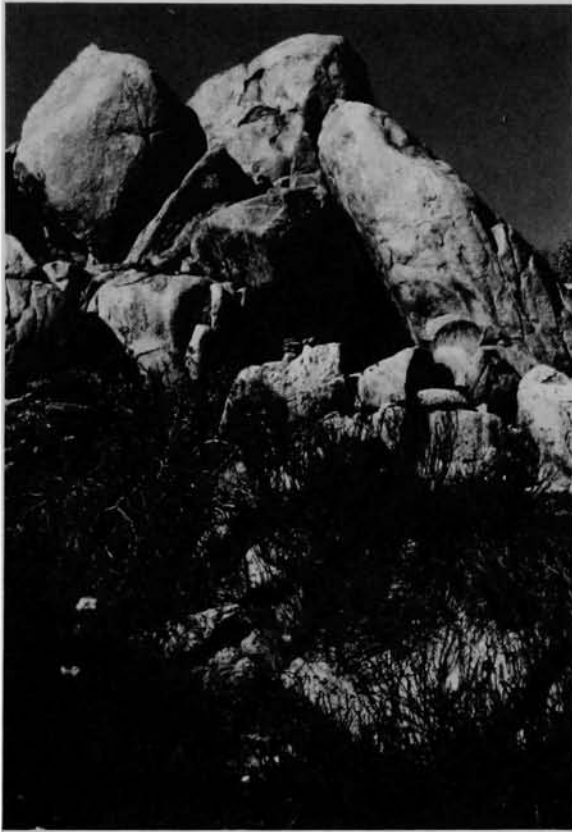


Fig. 4. Rockshelter.

two pestles beside the boulder. Three of the mortars form a triangle and the other four form a square. Like the mortars in the danceground, these mortars may have been used in grinding tobacco for ritual use. The fact that *Taakwic Pusáppila* means "where *Taakwic* pounds up" (Harrington 1933:181) is very supportive of this interpretation.

The head-size rock is not on or within the enclosure, but this absence is not unexpected because of Harrington's statement that it was kept at Feliz' home. The larger *Taakwic* rock may be a torso-like boulder which is within the enclosure, the top of which has been flattened (possibly by human agents). This boulder with the smaller rock set on top would assume a human form. Alternatively, the smaller rock may have been placed on any of the large boulders or even in the niche

which one of the large boulders offers. *Taakwic* is a spirit manifested both as a human form with downy feathers and as "ball lightning" (Harrington 1933: 180-182). The torso-like rock with the head-size rock on top might very well represent *Taakwic*.

While Harrington's unpublished notes identify *Taakwic Pusáppila* at *Peexa Wiyaa-may*, his published annotations describe it as "the highest peak of Palomar Mountain, overlooking Aguanga" (Harrington 1933: 181). There may be two places called *Taakwic Pusáppila*, just as there are several places named *Taakwic Puki*. The coincidence that *Taakwic Pusáppila* has been identified as a place overlooking Aguanga and as a rock at what was probably the old Aguanga village suggests that there may be two places named *Taakwic Pusáppila* which are related in a geographical (i.e., directional) sense and in a spiritual manner.

In addition to those ceremonial features located on the small, rocky hill, there are pictographs on the eastern side of the creek, at the base of a larger hill. There are red pictographs on six boulders and on the ceiling of a shallow overhang, and red and white pictographs on the ceiling of a small, low-vaulted rockshelter. The cremation grounds are southwest of the hill with the danceground. The ceremonial features are grouped on or near the small hill, as if association with the hill itself or with each other were important. Conversely, the location of other religious features near the danceground is indicative of its ceremonial nature.

ENCLOSURES: A COMPARISON

The construction of the three enclosures at *Peexa Wiyaa-may* varies. Although the danceground and its associated enclosure have walls formed by both bedrock and loose boulders, with the latter stacked to achieve a desired height, the danceground differs from the adjacent enclosure in that its length and

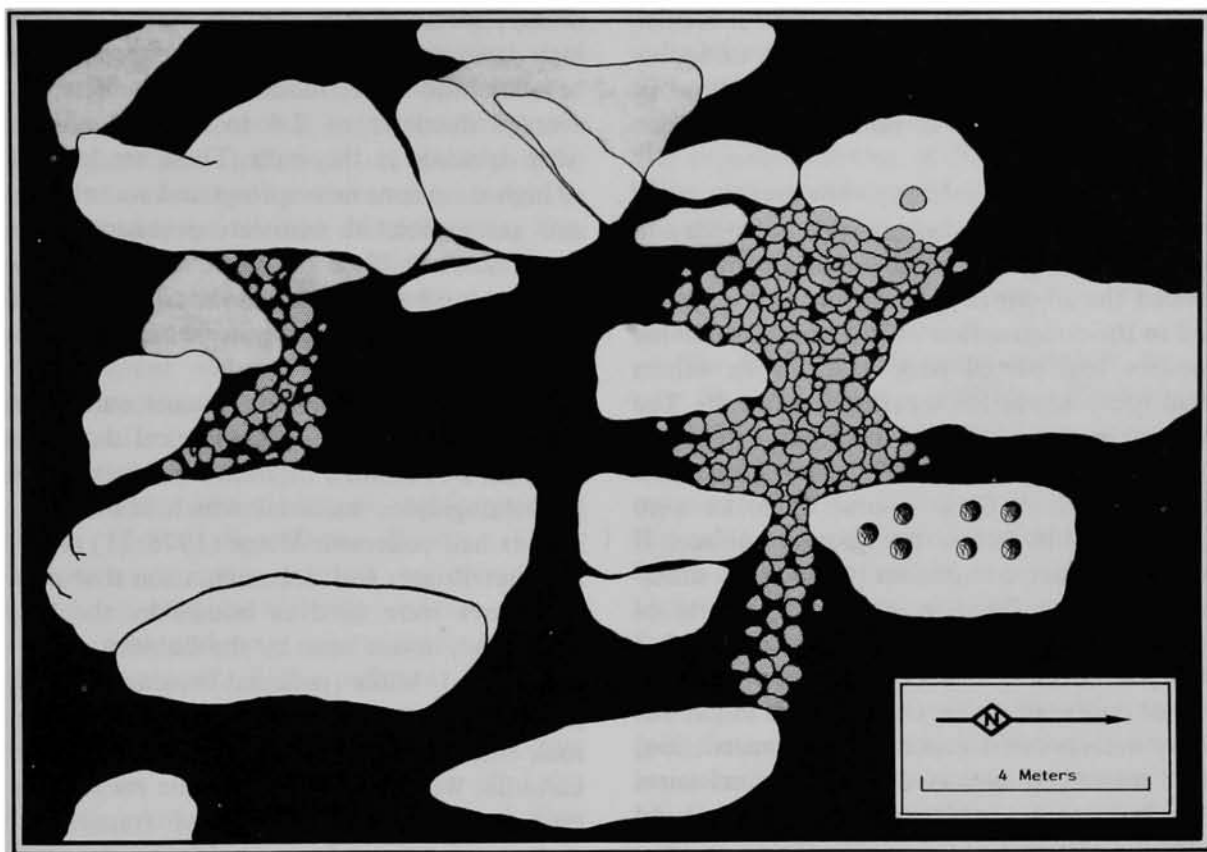


Fig. 5. Aerial view of *Taakwic Pufáppila* enclosure.

width are smaller, its height is greater, and it has a door. The construction of the spirit enclosure is quite different. Loosely piled stream cobbles, instead of stacked boulders, fill the spaces between bedrock boulders. The shape is much more elongated than either of the other two enclosures. Like the danceground, however, there is an opening in the wall.

The danceground has three milling features in one of its enclosing boulders, and the spirit enclosure has seven. Those at the danceground form a triangle; three of those at the spirit enclosure form a triangle and the remaining four, a square. The documented use of those at the danceground was grinding tobacco. Although the use of the other seven is not documented, the fact that *Taakwic*

Pufáppila means "*Taakwic* pounds up" implies that the mortars might have been used in a ceremony, perhaps for grinding tobacco.

The danceground and spirit enclosure lack midden and artifacts, while the enclosure adjacent to the danceground has both.

ROCK ENCLOSURES AS HOUSES

The use of rocks in construction is not well documented in the abundant ethnographic literature concerning southern California Indians, but rock enclosures are not uncommon. In the preceding discussion I have reported the use of one rock enclosure as a ceremonial danceground, another as an affiliate of the danceground, and a third atypical enclosure as the sanctuary of a spirit rock. All enclosures were not, of course, built for

ceremonial reasons, but were built for secular purposes, as well. One purpose was undoubtedly domestic, and several cases follow in which the functions of house and shelter are discussed.

The domestic category, however, is not a simple one because factors such as length and complexity of use and environment influenced the amount of energy and time expended in the construction of the structures. Some houses had partial rock walls, while others had rocks solely for securing brush walls. The latter can be subdivided into two categories, permanent and temporary use. Permanent houses with a single course of rocks were partially built below the ground surface. If the subsurface component (the pit) has subsequently been filled in, the single course of rocks on the surface can be confused with a temporary shelter, which also would have a single course of rocks. Other houses might not have incorporated rocks in their construction, but might be indicated by rock enclosures which were an inadvertent result of ground clearing activities.

The excavation described by Rick Minor (1975:33-38) indicated that the rock enclosure at a site on Kitchen Creek in San Diego County was a house. The interior of the enclosure yielded numerous potsherds, five manos, five hammerstones, five scrapers, four projectile points, cores and flakes, fragments of burned mammal bone, and a concentration of thermally fractured rocks and charcoal. Two mortars and four metates were in bedrock boulders near the enclosure. The enclosure itself was about 30 m. from the main area of the site.

Minor (1975:40) proposed that other enclosures in San Diego County, which were of similar construction and size and which were in similar cultural and environmental contexts, were also houses. The characteristics of enclosures evaluated by Minor (1975:27-29) are as follows: circular or, less com-

monly, rectangular enclosures several courses high (average height 91 cm.), incorporating bedrock and loose boulders to achieve an average diameter of 2.4 to 3.1 m., usually with openings in the walls. These are located at high elevations near springs and waterholes, and are associated with late prehistoric cultural material. Two or more enclosures are present at 88 percent of the sites investigated by Minor, and enclosures are sometimes contiguous.

The identification of an enclosure as a house was based on archaeological data and analysis, but Minor's inference was reinforced by ethnographic material which Malcolm J. Rogers had collected. Minor (1975:31) reported that Rogers had documentation that rock enclosures were used as houses by the Diegueño and, in one case, by the Luiseño.

Philip J. Wilke (personal communication) provided the following information regarding rock enclosures at the relict shoreline of Lake Cahuilla. Wilke suggested that the rocks were used to anchor some kind of framework, perhaps ocotillo stalks, and that the structure provided shade for people fishing at Lake Cahuilla. The rocks forming the enclosures were, in some cases, taken from the nearby fish weirs. Wilke hypothesized that the enclosures were used for no more than four weeks of a single year while the lake was receding.

The enclosures tend to be circular, although the rocks have been displaced so that complete circles are rare. One enclosure, however, was definitely constructed as a semicircle. The diameter of the enclosures varies from 1.5 to 3 m. The displacement of rocks distorted the original wall height and the number of courses composing the walls, and obscured the original openings in the walls. Where the openings are fairly obvious, they face north, south, northwest, or east with no discernible pattern. Two structures appear to each have two entrances, possibly to allow a draft to pass through. A rock in the

wall of one enclosure had been used as a metate, and potsherds were within the same enclosure. The excavation of another enclosure disclosed fish bones inside the structure.

Construction technique, artifactual content, and cultural and environmental contexts are indicative of the use of enclosures. The substantial enclosure which Minor excavated yielded many artifacts and was part of a larger site located in an environment appropriate for a permanent village. The less substantial enclosures excavated by Wilke yielded few artifactual remains, and their context suggested slight use.

Wilke also recorded rock enclosures near Desert Shores, San Diego County. These enclosures are also located on recessional shorelines of Lake Cahuilla and are several courses high and more substantial than any of those excavated. Wilke inferred from the construction that these had been more permanent structures. Similar structures occur widely on recessional shorelines of Lake Cahuilla, notably in the vicinity of Dos Palmas in Riverside County.

In these examples, construction technique is a useful indicator of length and complexity of use. Sparkman (1908: 212-213) confirmed this expectation through his description of Luiseño houses, that is, that a permanent house consisted of an underground component with a brush structure set above, while a temporary or casual house consisted of the brush structure only. Greater effort was expended in the construction of a house which would be used for a longer period of time and for a greater variety of activities. The example by Sparkman does not mention the use of rocks in construction; however, the relative height of the rock enclosure is consistent with Sparkman's example in which more energy was devoted to building a permanent structure. The wall height of Minor's excavated enclosure suggests that the rocks formed the lower section of a true wall, rather

than serving as weights to hold down brush walls. A structure with partial stone walls, as well as the time and energy expended in their construction, is indicative of prolonged use. The expedient nature of the structures which Wilke excavated suggests a brief occupation. Generally, it would be expected that sedentary villages contain substantial structures while temporary camps include less substantial structures, if any.

The height of the rock enclosure, however, is not always a reliable indicator of sedentism, as the following two examples indicate. The circular enclosure at Riv-1428 measured 4.7 by 4.2 m., and the interior was depressed to an approximate depth of 30 cm. below the rim formed by a single course of rocks. While the simple configuration of rocks forming the enclosure suggested light use, the depression within suggested that this might have been the remnant of a semi-subterranean (pit) house, with the rocks serving to secure brush walls. Inferences regarding the function of this circular enclosure were based on surface information because the site was destroyed shortly after I recorded it and excavation was not possible. The surface material, however, was supportive of the interpretation as a permanent dwelling.

Site Riv-1428 covered 2520 square meters of a south-sloping ridge, but milling features extended across a creek to another ridge. Features included six bedrock mortars, one bedrock grinding slick, one bedrock metate, and a rectangular enclosure. This enclosure was 2 m. north of the other. It had three sides formed by a single course of rocks, with the fourth side open. The dimensions were 3 m. for the long side and 1.6 and 1.8 m. for each of the shorter sides. The rocks might have held down the brush walls of a sun-shade and/or wind-screen. Fragments of portable mortars and metates, potsherds, stone flakes and tools (including several Cottonwood Triangular projectile points), and fragments of

marine shell were on the surface of the site. Two pestles were adjacent to bedrock mortars. Fragments of marine shell and potsherds were within the circular enclosure and adjacent to the rectangular one.

This site was one of three deep midden sites and three rockshelters within what appeared to have been a village complex. The enclosure seemed to be part of a permanent house, and inferences regarding permanence were based on the pit component of the house, the variety and density of features and artifacts, and the probable *ramada*. The presence of a *ramada*, which can be built fairly quickly, contrasts with that of the circular pit enclosure, which would have been a more substantial and permanent house.

The second example in which circular enclosures, actually clearings in this case, a single course high were inferred to be indicative of permanent "pit" houses can be found in published fieldnotes of Harrington. While collecting ethnographic data in 1925, Harrington visited Santa Ynez, Ojai, and Simi valleys. At an unspecified location, he observed the construction of an Indian *jacal* "by one of the few survivors who still know how to make them" (Harrington 1926:107). Although the construction technique and materials reported by Harrington did not include rocks, the ground at the house site was cleared and leveled, effecting a circular enclosure of rocks.

During that same field season, Harrington visited several archaeological sites in the *Canada de las Uvas* (Grapevine Canyon). At the village of *Milyahu* (or *Misyahu*), he noted 30 "wigwam circles" varying in diameter from 3.65 to 6.1 m. on the summit of a hill (Harrington 1926:109, 1927:232). The circles were marked either by rings of rocks or by rings of raised earth which marked the former walls. A photograph of one enclosure shows that some rocks had been stacked on top of each other while others had been stacked against each other. On the basis of the house

construction that he had watched, Harrington interpreted the rings of rocks as clearings for "pit" houses. He added that little was found under the surface of the floors but that firepits were in the centers of the circles.

ROCK ENCLOSURES AS FORTS

In addition to ceremonial and domestic functions, rock enclosures might also have served strategic purposes. The fort hypothesis is, in part, founded on ethnographic information. Spier (1923:306) reported a story in which one Diegueño clan built a stone fort as a defense against two other clans, and Minor (1975:32) related that contemporary Diegueño regard rock enclosures as forts. In a comment on the fort hypothesis, Minor (1975:32) remarked that many of the enclosures in San Diego County were in indefensible positions. As further caution against inferring all enclosures as forts, Minor added that multiple enclosures of varying sizes were not necessary to a defense/offense situation, and that elevated landforms with boulders were equally suitable for villages.

Ron May (1975:2) proposed that certain rock enclosures in San Diego County had been forts. These enclosures average 4.9 m. in diameter and 91 cm. in height. May tested the fort hypothesis by excavating one enclosure near Alpine, San Diego County. Although his field investigation was inconclusive, May conjectured that warfare would not necessarily be discernible through material evidence.

While relatively small enclosures in San Diego County have been considered to have been forts, Harrington (1926:111) reported a "fortification wall" at least 1.5 m. high which encircled a hilltop on the Santa Maria Ranch (probably Santa Barbara County). According to Harrington, this rock enclosure had been used for "outlook purposes." Assuming that this massive enclosure had been a fort, there was variation in the dimensions and construc-

tion of fortification enclosures, just as there was variation in the construction of ceremonial enclosures and houses.

SUMMARY

The danceground at *Peexa Wiyaa-may* probably served as the secret or private ceremonial enclosure of a Luiseño *pul*. This enclosure of rocks is distinguished by a gap in the wall at a point which faces north, the ceremonial direction of the Luiseño. The gap opens onto a passage that is formed in part by the wall of an adjacent rock enclosure. The danceground is further distinguished by a triad of shallow mortars on one of the boulders forming its wall. The interior of the enclosure lacks midden and artifacts, and the ground surface is level.

The enclosure is formed by joining bedrock boulders with smaller boulders, and stacking the latter to reach a certain wall height. The areal dimensions are 3.7 by 4 m. The height was probably 75 cm.

The danceground is associated with a somewhat larger and more elliptical enclosure which is adjacent on the north side. This enclosure has the same type of construction. Its areal dimensions are 3.7 by 6.7 m., and the height may have been 40 or 50 cm. The interior contains midden and artifacts.

An enclosure containing *Taakwic Puf-áppila*, a spirit rock, is down the slope to the west. The enclosure is formed by bedrock boulders which have been joined by layers of stream cobbles. The use of stream cobbles rather than boulders characterizes this enclosure, as do the spirit rock, seven mortars on one of the boulders forming its wall, and a doorway.

The uses of rock enclosures can be understood only on the basis of total site and environmental context because there is no uniformity in the enclosures themselves by which function can be inferred. Houses, shel-

ters, and perhaps forts share construction techniques with the danceground and its companion enclosure. The obvious characteristics of enclosures (height, size, and shape) vary independently of function. Walls several courses high are common to the danceground, houses, and forts. Permanent houses may have, but are not exclusively represented by, high walls. Variations in size and shape crosscut function. Lack of midden and artifacts in the interior of the enclosure is common to the danceground, temporary shelters, and possibly to some permanent houses and forts.

Some enclosures have openings in the walls, while others do not. Generalizing from *Peexa Wiyaa-may*, the opening in the wall of a danceground would be expected to face the ceremonial direction of the respective group. The significance of directions faced by openings in the walls of houses and shelters has not been determined, but such openings may have been influenced by religious concepts or by the environment. Any openings in forts would likely have been qualified by strategic considerations.

The combination of its characteristics with their ceremonial connotation and its association with other ceremonial features sets the danceground apart from other rock enclosures. If the characteristics are examined individually, however, there are only two unique ones, the triad of shallow mortars and an entryway to a passage. The opening to the north, the level ground surface, and the lack of midden and artifacts by themselves are not unusual with rock enclosures, and take on ceremonial significance only when considered together. Similarly, the co-occurrence of enclosures and of enclosures and pictographs have been reported at other sites. Their relationship and significance at *Peexa Wiyaa-may*, however, are indicated by their proximity and location on the same small landform.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Vincent Ibanez for assistance in locating *Peexa Wiyaaamay*, Ben Acuña and the Contreras family for permission to visit the village site, Philip Wilke for information on enclosures in the vicinity of ancient Lake Cahuilla, and SMITH CHADWICK for graphics.

REFERENCES

- Bean, Lowell John
1972 *Mukat's People: The Cahuilla Indians of Southern California*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chace, Paul
1965 Notes of a Conversation with Horace Parker Regarding the Verdugo Family. Manuscript on file with the author.
- DuBois, Constance Goddard
1908 The Religion of the Luiseño Indians of Southern California. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 8(3):69-186.
- Fewkes, J. Walter
1926 Administrative Report. Bureau of American Ethnology Annual Report 43:1-19.
- Harrington, John P.
n.d. Unpublished field notes on file at the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
1926 Researches on the Archeology of Southern California. Explorations and Field-Work of the Smithsonian Institution in 1925. Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections 78(1):106-111.
- 1927 Archeological and Ethnological Researches in California. Explorations and Field-Work of the Smithsonian Institution in 1926. Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections 78(7):232-236.
- 1933 Annotations. In: Chinigchinich, by Gerónimo Boscana, P. T. Hanna, Ed. Santa Ana: Fine Arts Press. (Reprinted by Malki Museum, Banning.)
- Kroeber, A. L.
1908 Notes on the Luiseño. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 8(3):174-186.
- May, Ronald V.
1975 Hakataya Stone Forts in Southern California. *The American Archaeologist* 2:2.
- Minor, Rick
1975 Stone Enclosure Sites in San Diego County. *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly* 11(4):27-44.
- Sparkman, Philip Stedman
1908 The Culture of the Luiseño Indians. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 8(4):187-234.
- Spier, Leslie
1923 Southern Diegueño Customs. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 20:292-358.
- Strong, William Duncan
1929 Aboriginal Society in Southern California. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 26.
- Waterman, T. T.
1910 The Religious Practices of the Diegueño Indians. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 8(6):271-358.

