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## *The Pipestone Quarry and the Indians*

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IN MINNESOTA'S DEEP SOUTHWEST there is a section of land which may lay claim to being "classic ground."<sup>1</sup> George Catlin felt that way about it, and used the phrase in referring to the area when he made his memorable trip of the 1830's. Minnesotans may have forgotten that Henry W. Longfellow pointed specifically to this spot in his *Song of Hiawatha*. Here are a few of his lines:

On the Mountains of the Prairie,  
On the great Red Pipestone Quarry,  
Gitche Manito, the mighty,  
He the Master of Life, descending,  
On the red crags of the quarry  
Stood erect and called the nations,  
Called the tribes of men together.

Longfellow never actually saw this country. His mountains are the Coteau des Prairies. While we wouldn't think of calling them mountains, several of the early explorers used that term in their reports. The name Coteau des Prairies, given to the area by the earliest French explorers, means Highland of the Prairies. This land feature of southwestern Minnesota was formed by the ice sheet of the last glacial epoch. It is the terminal moraine left by one of the massive lobes of this great ice sheet. The *coteau*, or highland, begins in the eastern Dakotas and runs southeasterly on into Iowa. Both the eastern and western slopes of the highland are in the main so gentle as to be almost imperceptible. In Pipestone County, stone outcroppings break that gentle declivity and

<sup>1</sup>This is a revised version of a paper read before the evening session of the Minnesota Historical Society's twenty-fourth annual tour, following a dinner at the Pipestone Country Club on September 23, 1950. *Ed.*

give rise to the quarry.<sup>2</sup> And it is this quarry country that became classic ground, a view which grew with the years until the national government established there an Indian reservation, then an Indian school, and finally a national park or monument. But the thing that brought recognition as classic ground was the high regard which the Indians themselves had for the locality—a regard which, for some of them at least, was linked with spiritual considerations. Legends, often having a religious tone, had their setting in this locale. To the Indians who gave credence to these legends, this ground was wakan, or sacred.

The pre-Columbian Indian had a Stone Age culture. He lived close to nature, but in no sense was he master of mother nature. Rather he lived in awe of her and worshipped her various manifestations—sun, moon, waterfalls, fire, rocks. His spiritual feeling ran deep, touched albeit with a vein of superstitious awe. His worship tended to take on a negative characteristic in that he sought to appease the spirits so as to ward off evil which otherwise might be inflicted upon him.

The practice of smoking was widespread among the tribes of the red man. In consideration of his reaction to the practice, the white man from Europe could not have thought too poorly of the custom. One aspect of smoking, however, the white man did not adopt—the Indian's veneration of the pipe and tobacco, his use of them in a ceremonial manner. The Indian could and did enjoy smoking for the pleasure it afforded, and the Sioux has been labeled "an inveterate smoker." Now the Indian's nature was such as to be impressed with the mysterious character of rising smoke, its spirit-like quality, and he could be made to feel that tobacco and the pipe were gifts from the Great Spirit. A type of pipe, to which the French gave the name calumet, came into common use for ceremonial purposes. The bowl of the calumet, in which the tobacco was placed, was shaped from a hard substance, generally stone. Attached to the bowl was a stem two to three feet long, hollow centered to allow passage of the smoke to the mouth. The calumet seems to have been in veneration for centuries. It was used to make treaties or agreements more binding, to place strangers on a basis of friendliness, to insure safe passage through country held by other tribes, to promote peace. The peace pipe then was an Indian contribution.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Newton H. Winchell and Warren Upham, *The Geology of Minnesota*, 1:533-536, 544 (Minneapolis, 1884).

<sup>3</sup> R. H. Landon, "The Story of Pipestone," in *Minnesota Archaeologist*, 1:5 (April, 1939); Rose A. Palmer, *The North American Indians*, 31, 32 (*Smithsonian Scientific Series*, vol. 4—New York, 1938); John W. Davis, "A History of the Pipestone Reservation," 1, 2. The latter is an unpublished master's thesis prepared at the University of Colorado in 1934; the Minnesota Historical Society has a copy on filmslides.

A firsthand portrayal of the role of the calumet appears in the narrative of Peter Pond, a Yankee fur trader from Connecticut who was on the Minnesota frontier from 1773 to 1775, even before American independence had been won. In quaint style, with abominable spelling, he tells of approaching a camp of the red men "with Our Loded Horses and Cum-ing Near the Camp Made a Stop and Seat Down on the Ground. I Per-seaved five Parsons from the Camp Approaching—four was Employed in Caring a Beaver Blanket finely Panted—the Other Held in his Hand a Callemeat or Pipe of Pece—Verey finely Drest with Differant feathers with Panted Haire. They all Seat By me Except the one who Held the Pipe. Thay Ordered the Pipe Lit With a Grate dele of Sarremoney. After Smokeing a fue Whifs the Stem was Pinted East and West—then North and South—then upward toward the Skies—then to ye Earth after which we all Smoked in turn and Apeard Verey Frendlye."<sup>4</sup>

Ceremonial pipes used by the Plains Indians came in considerable proportion from Minnesota. In the red stone from the quarries of Pipestone County the Indians found a substance admirably suited to the shaping of their calumet bowls. One student suggests that the Indians "must have considered it a God-send when they first discovered a soft stone that could easily be carved with the primitive tools which they possessed." And if one may use the words of a twentieth-century Supreme Court ruling, the southwest corner of Minnesota became a place where tribes were "want to gather under solemn truce to quarry," a spot regarded "by the tribesmen with sentiments bordering upon religious reverence."<sup>5</sup>

Knowledge of the Pipestone area reached only a comparatively few white men at first. And those few who did know of it learned largely through word of mouth presentations by the Indians themselves and by trappers and traders. Occasionally, however, an explorer might make a written statement of some report gained from the red men, although until the 1830's probably none saw the quarry firsthand.

There was the French explorer, Charlevoix, who traveled in the Mississippi country in 1721. He wrote of the pipe of peace which, he said, "is ordinarily made of a species of red marble, very easily worked, and found beyond the Mississippi among the Aiouez (Ioways)." A few years

<sup>4</sup> Peter Pond's "Journal" was first published in the *Connecticut Magazine*, 10:235-259 (April, May, June, 1906); it has been reprinted in several other publications, including Charles M. Gates, ed., *Five Fur Traders of the Northwest* (Minneapolis, 1933). For the present passage, see p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Davis, "History of the Pipestone Reservation," 7; *The Pipestone Indian Shrine*, 8 (Pipestone, 1933). The latter, a booklet of forty-four pages compiled by the Pipestone Indian Shrine Association, contains "Indian Legends and Historical Facts regarding the Red Pipestone Quarry, Winnewissa Falls and the 'Twin Maidens.'"

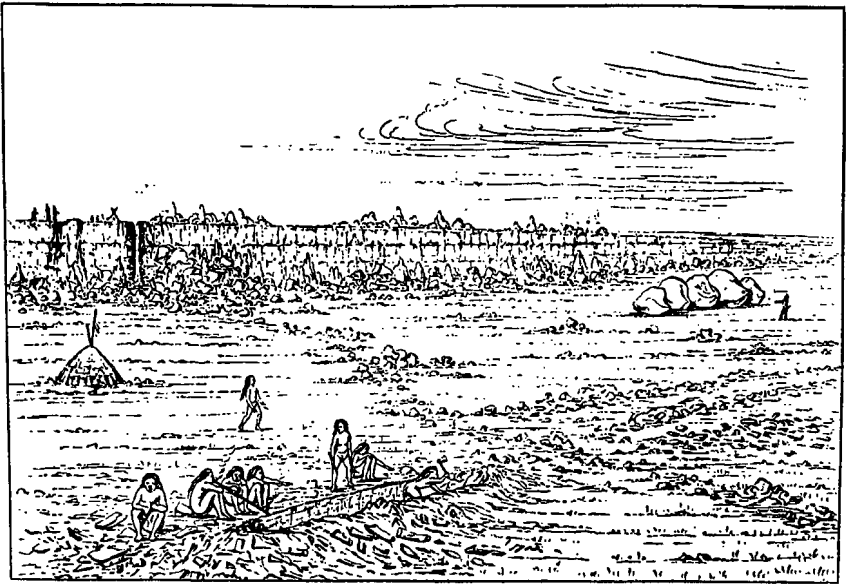
after Great Britain took the interior of the continent away from the French, a British trader and explorer named Jonathan Carver spent parts of the years 1766 and 1767 in the Minnesota country and wrote an elaborate account of his travels. In this account he recorded that near "the Marble River, is a mountain, from which the Indians get a sort of red stone, out of which they hew the bowls of their pipes." Peter Pond, whose Minnesota journeyings followed Carver's by eight years, referred to a calumet "made of the Read stone of St. Peters River so Much esteemed among the Eastern and Southern Nations."<sup>6</sup>

In all these cases there is one brief reference to the Pipestone locale—no more. Not until the third decade of the nineteenth century does one meet with accounts which seek to elaborate upon the quarry country. Four persons visited the Pipestone Quarry during the 1830's and took pains to write about their findings—Philander Prescott, George Catlin, Joseph N. Nicollet, and Charles C. Frémont. The first two were independent adventurers; the last two were government explorers and were on the same expedition.<sup>7</sup>

At the time of his visit to the quarry, Philander Prescott was a fur trader working out of Mendota. In 1831 he traveled to his trading post on the Big Sioux, a branch of the Missouri River, where he wintered and traded, and then returned to Mendota. Both on the way out and on the way back he stopped at the quarry not only to observe, but also to work it. Other traders probably had done the same, but Prescott was different—he wrote about his experiences. Prescott's style of writing, like Peter Pond's, was crude but descriptive. The following excerpt from Prescott's "Reminiscences" reveals that Indians were in his company and that he worked with them in quarrying. He records that on his journey westward, probably in September, 1831, "we camped and dug pipe stone one whole day we got out a considerable quantity but a goodeal of it was shaley and full of seams So we got onley about 20 good p[i]pes after working the rock all day." Prescott goes on to describe the methods used by the natives in working the quarry: "the Indians have labored here verry hard with hoes and axes thy only tools th[e]y have except large stones which they use forr breaking the rock . . . the Sioux cl[e]are off[ ]

<sup>6</sup> Edward D. Neill, *History of Minnesota from the Earliest French Explorations*, 514 (Minneapolis, 1882); Winchell and Upham, *Geology of Minnesota*, 1:24; Gates, ed., *Five Fur Traders*, 52.

<sup>7</sup> Another explorer, Count Francesco Arese, moved along the "Red Pipestone River" in the summer of 1837 while hunting buffalo. He failed to mention the quarry, but referred to rocks close to the river of a "greyish red" and told that, upon meeting a family of Sioux, "we all shook hands and passed pipes around." See Andrew Evans' translation of Arese, *A Trip to the Prairies and in the Interior of North America*, 95 (New York, 1934).



### THE PIPESTONE QUARRY IN 1836

[A sketch by George Catlin, in his *North American Indians*, 2:164 (London, 1842).]

the dirt then get stones as large as two Indians can lift and throw it down as hard as th[e]y can and in this way break or crack the rock so they can get their hoes and axes in the cracks and pry out piec[e] after piec[e] it is verry laborious and tedious." The old trader recalls that "after we had worked the pipe stone quarry until we were tired we made preparati[o]ns to be off as our Indians were getting alarmed for fear of enemies although I never heard of any of them being killed at the pipe stone quarry."<sup>8</sup>

Prescott waited two decades before writing his "Reminiscences" and they have remained unpublished for about a century. This was no way to gain nation-wide attention for the land of the red pipestone. There

<sup>8</sup> Prescott's manuscript "Reminiscences," which are addressed to Governor Ramsey, are owned by the Minnesota Historical Society; the extracts here quoted are on pages 133 to 139 of a typewritten copy. No part of the manuscript was printed until recently, when Donald D. Parker quoted some passages in an article on Prescott published in installments in the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, *Daily Argus Leader* for October 1, 8, 15, and 22, 1950. Another entry for 1831 is in Lawrence Taliaferro's Journal, also owned by the Minnesota Historical Society. Under date of August 15, Taliaferro, who was the Indian agent at Fort Snelling, recorded: "Ratter and six men start for the Pipes Stone Quarry and are to bring me specimens of the same for several cabinets." William W. Warren noted that the "quarry had been known to, and visited by white traders for nearly a century before Catlin saw it and wrote his book." See "History of the Ojibways," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 5:114 (1885).

must be more aggressive writing. That was furnished by George Catlin following his trip to the quarry in 1836. Fairly well-known even then, Catlin was to gain attention on a national scale as a painter and writer. His one passion was the American Indian, whose life he sought to portray. In his first years of travel among the aborigines of the United States, he tells that he heard frequent mention of the spot near the Coteau des Prairies where various tribes of Indians said they obtained the red stone for their pipes. In Catlin's own words, this was the case for "almost every tribe of Indians on the Continent." And so, he said, he "had contracted the most impatient desire to visit it."<sup>9</sup>

New York was the starting point of his trip. His quickest way to the country of the Sioux was by water—the Great Lakes, Green Bay, then the Fox, Wisconsin, and Mississippi rivers. From Fort Snelling he went up the Minnesota River to a point near New Ulm, then across country to the Coteau des Prairies, and over these highlands to "classic ground."

Two trading posts of the American Fur Company provided stopping points—that of Le Blanc, or Louis Provençalle, at Traverse des Sioux and Joseph Laframboise's station at the Great Oasis. At Traverse des Sioux, Catlin tells that he ran into a gathering of Sioux who showed a sullen hostility to his mission. He and his traveling companion, Robert S. Wood, were called to a kind of council meeting, where they were told to turn back. A dozen or more Sioux braves spoke, and Catlin reported their words. A brief portion of one speech will give the tenor of their plea:

"*Brothers*—I speak strong, my heart is strong, and I speak fast; this red pipe was given to the red men by the Great Spirit—it is a part of our flesh, and therefore is great *medicine*. ('How! how!')

"*Brothers*—We know that the whites are like a great cloud that rises in the East, and will cover the whole country. We know that they will have all our lands; but, if ever they get our Red Pipe-Quarry they will have to pay very dear for it. ('How! how! how!')

"*Brothers*—We know that no white man has ever been to the Pipe Stone-Quarry, and our chiefs have often decided in council that no white man shall ever go to it. ('How! how!')

Catlin endeavored to assure the Sioux that he was not a government official on a mission intended to wrest the quarry from them, but that he and his companion had heard that the "Red Pipe-Quarry was a great

<sup>9</sup> The account of Catlin's journey to the Pipestone Quarry as here given is based upon his *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians*, 2:160-176, 201-206 (London, 1842). Catlin's sketch of the quarry faces page 164.

curiosity" and that they were merely interested in viewing it. "We have started to go to it," said he, "and we will not be stopped." And they proceeded on their way unmolested.

The country in and around the quarry impressed Catlin as having a "sublime grandeur." Topography then came in for some treatment, but by far the major portion of his portrayal of this "classic ground" was made up of a recital of the many legends which were linked to the locale. How many of these legends he obtained from the local Sioux and how many he had gathered on his travels over the country Catlin did not make clear. But he did emphasize that they were legends. "This place is great," he said, "(not in history, for there is none of it, but) in traditions, and stories, of which this Western world is full and rich."

All were legends, that is, except one. And that one? The quarry in Catlin's day was held by the Sioux, but at one time, he insisted, it had been "held and owned in common, as neutral ground, amongst the different tribes who met here to renew their pipes." He goes on to relate that "for centuries" pilgrimages had been made to the quarry "by all the neighboring tribes" to obtain the precious material for shaping their calumets. In the quarry precincts the war club and the scalping knife were put aside "under the fear of the vengeance of the Great Spirit." As support for this view, Catlin points to statements made to him by Indians of other tribes, to the pictographs carved in the quartzite and which, in his judgment, were "*totems and arms*" of visiting tribes, and finally to the many legends which sprang into existence only because of this earlier condition. The implication was that where there was so much legend there must be some basis in fact.

There are those who feel that Catlin here allowed his enthusiasm to lead him to overstatement. Questions are raised about the likelihood of an Indian tribe surrendering so valuable a property to the common use of all tribes and also of the difficulty that would be encountered in making regular pilgrimages by a tribe at some distance from the quarries. Henry H. Sibley, who had been in the Minnesota country two years when Catlin came along, was one who felt that misrepresentations had been made. Sibley had been irked by the man, and by his readiness to allow the report to grow that he was the first white man to visit the quarry when "it is notorious that many whites had been there and examined the quarry long before he came to the country."<sup>10</sup>

Calumets made of red pipestone have been found in many parts of the United States—in Indian mounds as far away as Ohio, Florida, and

<sup>10</sup> Landon, in *Minnesota Archaeologist*, 1:5; Neill, *History of Minnesota*, 514 n.

Louisiana. Deposits of red pipestone, or catlinite, as it has come to be called, have been reported in other places besides Minnesota: in Wisconsin, South Dakota, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, and Arizona. The Wisconsin deposits, however, are the only ones which seem to give evidence of having been worked before the white man arrived. It seems reasonable to hold, therefore, that most of the catlinite calumets found over the United States came from the quarry of the Coteau des Prairies. Indians the country over, of course, used several other materials for making their calumets. Then, too, several fur-trading companies manufactured red calumets for sale among the various tribes, a practice that began about the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> It is, therefore, possible that some of the red stone calumets found are not genuine, if to be genuine they must have been made by the Indians. In the writings of those who had early contact with the aborigines there is a body of testimony to be found which should make one thing clear—the red calumet was in common use among the Plains Indians, especially those of the northern Plains. In lesser amounts pipestone was used by Indians of the southern Plains and also of the Mississippi Valley. The source of the stone for sacred red pipes of these Indians must have been in large part the Pipestone Quarry. While some of the red men went directly to the quarry, many of them could have obtained their calumets by trade or by other contact with the Indians of the northern Plains.

Catlin's works were widely read, and people came to know of the Pipestone Quarry before there was a Minnesota. Another boost to interest in the region came when the justly famed Joseph N. Nicollet made his expedition of 1838, just two years after Catlin's visit. Nicollet had four companions on this government-sponsored venture, one of whom—John C. Frémont, the pathfinder—was to bask in the national spotlight for over two decades after his visit to the quarry. Nicollet had just completed a map of the upper Mississippi Valley, which was not only the first reliable map of the region, but was recognized widely as a singular contribution to American geography. His 1838 assignment was to study the country between the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers. Exactng—that was the way officials came to look upon his exploring and reporting. It helps to explain, too, why the people of Minnesota saw fit to give his name to a county, a town, and to a principal avenue in Minneapolis.

Three days the Nicollet party of five remained at the quarry. They, too, found Indians at work, and helped them. Nicollet noticed that the

<sup>11</sup> Davis, "History of the Pipestone Reservation," 11, 12, 112-115; Landon, in *Minnesota Archaeologist*, 1:5, *Pipestone Indian Shrine*, 7.



Sioux were encountering difficulty in removing the tough top layer of red quartzite, a necessary first step before they could get at the thin layer of catlinite below. They pleased the Indians by using gunpowder to blast away the top layer of the hard stone over a fairly large area. They also found time to carve Nicollet's name, the initials of his companions, and



### THE THREE MAIDENS

[Sketched by Jo Lutz Rollins, September 24, 1950.]

the date in the hard quartzite. It is significant that this careful observer paid his respects to the ceremonial attitude which the Indians held toward the quarry. And there was recording of legend in his official report. He referred to the Indian belief in the opening of the quarry by the Great Spirit and to the salute of lightning with which the Great Spirit greeted any visitor to the grounds—views held at least by the “young Indians, who are very fond of the marvellous.” Nicollet noticed that the grass before the “Three Maidens” had been killed for some great space by the profuse offerings of tobacco and food which the Indians had placed before these boulders as ceremonial offerings to bless their quarrying.<sup>12</sup>

The Three Maidens are large boulders of a substance wholly different from any rock formation in the vicinity. Newton H. Winchell speaks of them in his monumental survey of the *Geology of Minnesota*, noting three other smaller boulders, making a cluster of six and all resting on the surface of the red quartzite a short distance from the quarry. The six

<sup>12</sup> Winchell and Upham, *Geology of Minnesota*, 1: 69; Davis, “History of the Pipestone Reservation,” 52; J. N. Nicollet, *Report Intended to Illustrate a Map of the Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River*, 14-17 (Washington, 1843).

boulders were at one time a single boulder, which was split later through the action of frost. The original boulder must have been carried by a glacier and dumped near the quarry. And since the Three Maidens are each about twelve by twenty feet, the boulder must have been from fifty to sixty feet in diameter, making it more than likely the "largest ice-transported block known in Minnesota." The Three Maidens are composed of a red, coarse-grained granite, whereas the quarry is made up almost in its entirety of red quartzite, which Winchell claims is "the hardest stone in the state, or in the United States, probably, that can be stated to have been used for purpose of building." Catlinite is a softer stone made of fine clay which has been subjected to heat and pressure—indurated clay to use the geologist's term. The catlinite appears in a thin layer, generally from two to four inches thick. When the Indians first began quarrying, they dug out the part of the catlinite layer that was close to the surface. The layer, however, dips downward; thus, the more pipestone taken the deeper the Indians had to quarry for it. The task of removing the superincumbent layer of quartzite became increasingly difficult. In quarry pits now being worked, the catlinite layer is found at a depth of approximately six feet.<sup>13</sup>

It was in the quartzite close to the Three Maidens that the numerous pictographs were found. Because of the hardness of the stone, the crude drawings of the Indians could not go deep, but for the same reason they have endured. Among them are representations of the turtle, bear, elk, wolf, buffalo, bird tracks, and the human form, all of which give emphasis to the concentration of Indian lore in the Pipestone quarry area.<sup>14</sup>

The name "Three Maidens" suggests legend, and of legend there seems to be no end in and around the land of the red pipestone. Prescott, Catlin, Nicollet—all gave reports of them. And the store of legend grew in the years following these earliest writers. At times the fables were new, but in the main they were variations of those reported in the 1830's. Handed down orally from generation to generation, it is not strange that they should have varied from tribe to tribe. Most of them are in some way related to the workings of Gitchi Manito or Wakantonka. These are Indian expressions which when translated become Great Spirit. Prominent among them is the peace injunction which Longfellow emphasized

<sup>13</sup> Winchell and Upham, *Geology of Minnesota*, 1:149, 545, 546; interview with Lyle K. Linch, superintendent of the Pipestone National Monument.

<sup>14</sup> *Pipestone Indian Shrine*, 12, 13; Winchell and Upham, *Geology of Minnesota*, 1:555-560. The latter volume contains four full-page plates picturing forty examples of the rock inscriptions once to be found at the Pipestone Quarry. Since visitors defaced the petroglyphs, the best of them were removed from their original location. They are now preserved at the Pipestone National Monument and in the local library.

in the *Song of Hiawatha*—the plea of Gitchi Manito that the Indians wash off their war paint, bury their war clubs, and, as a symbol of their peaceful intent:

Break the red stone from this quarry,  
Mould and make it into peace pipes.

The first calumet, or peace pipe, was, of course, shaped at the quarry by the Great Spirit. In legends explaining the origin of pipestone, it is always blood which gave the stone its color—buffalo blood from animals slain by the Great Spirit for food, human blood from those who died in an ancient, great catastrophe. The Pipestone Quarry, too, in Indian lore was the site of the creation of man. Wakantonka took the red stone, and from it shaped first man, then woman, and the two walked off together. There are several versions of the story of the origin of the human race, and they vary greatly. There is also a tradition of a flood ("freshet," Catlin calls it) in which men and women try to save themselves by seeking the top of the Coteau des Prairies. The "Leaping Rock" was a testing point where a young brave might demonstrate the sincerity of his love for a maiden by risking death in a leap from a high ledge to a solitary pillar of stone where, as Prescott put it, "there was nothing to hold onto and all he could do was to jump and stand right where he struck." As for the Three Maidens, in one of the manifestations of the Great Spirit two maidens disappeared for shelter under these boulders. Their spirits remained there, and offerings must be placed before them if one is to hope for good quarrying.<sup>15</sup>

A people who looked upon a place with the reverential awe with which the Indians seemed to regard the quarry of the red pipestone could hardly be expected to relinquish their control of the area without a protest. By the middle of the nineteenth century that "great cloud that rises in the East" had rolled to the borders of the Suland—and it was the Sioux who claimed the quarry in this century, no matter what the situation may have been in an earlier day. Then came the treaties of 1851 and the sale to the federal government of southern Minnesota. There was no mention of the quarry in the treaty of Traverse des Sioux. The Yankton Sioux were not party to that treaty, and they disputed the right of the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands to cede land held jointly with the Yankton. They claimed that their right to the quarry was as strong, if not stronger, than that of the other two bands, since their villages were actually closer to it. Grumblings continued through the 1850's, and whites who knew about

<sup>15</sup> Catlin, *North American Indians*, 2:164-166, 168-170; *Pipestone Indian Shrine*, 13-17; Davis, "History of the Pipestone Reservation," 42-46, 53-56; Prescott, "Reminiscences," 138.

this discontent were concerned. Congress appropriated twenty-one thousand dollars for payment to the Yankton Sioux, thinking that it might appease them. But Congress was due for a surprise; the Yankton tribe refused to accept the money. They wanted another kind of settlement. They finally obtained what they were after in the important treaty of



#### THE LEAPING ROCK AND THE FALLS OF PIPESTONE CREEK

[Sketched by Chester Kozlak from a drawing made in 1859 by W. O. Williams.]

1858. That treaty was important for the whites as well as the Indians. It was for South Dakotans what the treaty of Traverse des Sioux was for Minnesotans. In it the Yankton band sold all their South Dakota lands to the United States except for a reservation of four hundred thousand acres. Five months of negotiation were required before the Yankton delegation of sixteen chiefs agreed to the terms of the treaty. They held out stubbornly for one point in particular. It was contained in Article 8, the first statement of which reads: "The said Yankton Indians shall be secured in the free and unrestricted use of the Red Pipestone Quarry." In fulfillment of the provisions of this article, the federal government set aside a reservation of 648 acres, the survey of which was completed in 1859, well in advance of the regular survey. And so was created a special reserve, comprising a little more than a section of land located immediately north of the present city of Pipestone. Except for a small grant of land for a railroad right of way, the reservation area today is the same as it was in 1859.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Pipestone Indian Shrine*, 21-24; Davis, "History of the Pipestone Reservation," 63-70.

In the opinion of Arthur P. Rose, who wrote a history of Pipestone County, the existence of the reservation delayed white settlement. He points to census figures for 1860 and 1870 to show that Rock, Lincoln, Murray, and Nobles counties, all bordering on Pipestone, had settlers in those years, while Pipestone had none. Not until 1874 could Pipestone County claim a resident. As reasons for this delay, Rose gives the presence of an Indian reservation in the Pipestone area, the many legends that were associated with the locale and with the name Pipestone, and memories of the Sioux Outbreak of 1862. Careful examination of the record of early settlement of neighboring counties would suggest that while each of them could report residents at an earlier date, they were very few in number, and that for all of them the period of heavy influx was the decade of the 1870's, when the first pronounced rush of Pipestone lands occurred as well.<sup>17</sup>

Interestingly enough, the man who spearheaded the settlement of the county and the establishment of the town of Pipestone was attracted to the place, in part at least, because of its Indian lore. C. H. Bennett was the man, and to the day of his death he sought to safeguard that lore. On an exploratory trip in 1873 Bennett selected the land immediately south of the quarry as the site for the city he intended to found. In the next year he led a group from Le Mars, Iowa, into the county and he induced D. W. Sweet to guide another from Rock Rapids, Iowa. With their arrival, Pipestone, both town and county, were on the way. The next four years were discouraging to the town's founders; settlers came only in dribbles. Some moved away. The word "grasshoppers" tells the story. The boom year was 1878, with almost eight hundred land filings reported. A newspaper in Rock County, to the south of Pipestone, reported on March 17, 1878, that "Parties from Pipestone City who came down yesterday report meeting no less than twenty-two covered wagons enroute to that place."<sup>18</sup>

Bennett's interest in Indian lore took root and grew until it became a community tradition. In a meeting of town residents, few as they were in April, 1876, a motion was adopted "that we respect and enforce to the best of our ability the rights of the Indians to the Indian reservation." Unfortunately there were exceptions; a few squatters liked the lands of the reservation and hoped that a *fait accompli* would lead to legalization. It required troops to change their minds. Eviction of the squatters in

<sup>17</sup> Arthur P. Rose, *History of the Counties of Rock and Pipestone*, 261 (Luverne, 1911); Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration, *Inventory of the County Archives of Minnesota for Rock, Lincoln, Murray, and Nobles counties* (St. Paul, 1937-42).

<sup>18</sup> Rose, *Counties of Rock and Pipestone*, 262-269.

1887 ended an attempt to deflower the prairies of the reservation. In 1875 one of the pioneer settlers, D. C. Whitehead, suggested that an Indian school on the reservation would be a boost to settlement as well as a benefit to the Indians. This idea was nurtured through the years by the community and, with the able support of John Lind in Congress, an act was passed in 1891 which called for the establishment of seven Indian schools over the country, with one to be located on the Pipestone Indian Reservation. The school's first building was erected in 1892. The choice of building material was fitting—the red quartzite of the quarry.<sup>19</sup>

The decision to establish an Indian school at Pipestone gave rise to an issue—an issue which moved in and out of Congress, the Court of Claims, and the United States Supreme Court for almost four decades. It was not settled until 1928. The question was raised by the Yankton Sioux, a hundred and sixty-seven of whom signed a petition complaining that the decision to build a school on their reservation was made by Congress alone, without consulting the Indians. In their petition they expressed the fear that this represented an attempt by Congress to “invalidate, if not extinguish, their right to this property peremptorily and without compensation.” In the courts the issue boiled down to this question: When the Pipestone Reservation was created by the treaty of 1858, did the federal government grant to the Yankton Sioux an absolute title to the land, or merely a right in the nature of an easement? If the Sioux had been given an absolute title, then at the time the Indian school was built the federal government should have compensated them for its exercise of eminent domain. After prolonged and complicated litigation, a decision was reached in favor of the Indians, and the Court of Claims held that the amount due them was \$100,000.00 plus interest since 1891—an amount which was fixed at \$228,558.90, or a total of \$328,558.90. Congress made the necessary appropriation, and the sum was distributed among the 1,953 members of the Yankton band. The Indians won the financial award, but by the same token “fee title to the reservation . . . passed to the United States.”<sup>20</sup>

The march of years seemed to give increasing prominence to the sentiment that the Pipestone Quarry was meaningful enough in the traditions of the Indians to warrant some very special recognition. The sentiment grew slowly, but come it did: reservation—1858, Indian school—1891, financial award—1928. This growing recognition did not just happen.

<sup>19</sup> Rose, *Counties of Rock and Pipestone*, 262, 265; *Pipestone Indian Shrine*, 39, 40; Davis, “History of the Pipestone Reservation,” 70–79; James H. Baker, *Lives of the Governors of Minnesota*, 380 (*Minnesota Historical Collections*, vol. 13).

<sup>20</sup> Davis, “History of the Pipestone Reservation,” 79–97; *Pipestone Indian Shrine*, 24–27.

It came only after untiring work by sympathetic and enthusiastic pioneers, by the persistence of the Indians themselves, and by the continuing effort of interested leaders of a later day. An agency which in a more recent period has been responsible for much effective work is the Pipestone Indian Shrine Association, composed of representatives of more than fifty local and state organizations. Miss Winifred Bartlett, president of the organization, was one of its most active spirits. Among aims announced by this association were three of significance: "to preserve the natural features of the typical prairie" of the Pipestone Reservation, "to honor the race that established its Shrine at this place," and to again make the quarry "a common meeting place for all the tribes." The culmination of this interest and of the trend which had been in evidence so long was the establishment by Congress of the Pipestone National Monument. It came in August, 1937, a century, more or less, after the visits to the quarry of Prescott, Catlin, Nicollet, and Frémont. Promotional work for the passage of the act creating the monument was done primarily by the Indian Shrine Association. The task of guiding the measure through Congress was undertaken by Senator Henrik Shipstead and Congressman Frank Clague.<sup>21</sup>

Now it will be remembered that the reservation as created in 1858 embraced slightly more than a section of land. The 1937 act designated as a national monument a little less than a fifth of the reservation, or 115.6 acres. This portion is in the southern part of the reservation, and it contains, as it logically should, all the features which the Indians cherished. The law establishing the monument declared that the quarry found therein should be accessible to members of any tribe who might choose to work it, and that quarrying was to be reserved exclusively to Indians. And so another goal was achieved by those who sought to build respect for the traditions of the red man. And Minnesota gained its only national monument.<sup>22</sup>

The monument grounds are a part of the national park system, and therefore are open to the public. The visitor, if he has imagination, may catch a glimpse of the emotional life of the first Americans. It is not likely that he will see active quarrying. The press of white settlement, increasing difficulty in getting down to the catlinite layer, and the changed attitudes of the modern Indian have led to a complete disappearance of the quarry pilgrimages. The Pipestone community, however, has continued to nurture interest in this classic ground. Annually, in midsummer, a

<sup>21</sup> *Pipestone Indian Shrine*, 7; *Minneapolis Journal*, September 11, 1937; interviews with members of the Pipestone Indian Shrine Association and with residents of Pipestone.

<sup>22</sup> Reported in *Minnesota History*, 18:458 (December, 1937).

pageant entitled the "Song of Hiawatha" is presented there. About a hundred and sixty people, some of them Indians, make up the cast. Interestingly enough, the person who in recent years has played the role of Gitchi Manito is an Indian who is descended not from the Sioux, but from the Chippewa, a tribe which in times past was the bitterest enemy of the Sioux.<sup>23</sup>

The Pipestone National Monument was established to honor America's first inhabitants. It is a symbol, too—a symbol of peace. Today's Minnesotan who gives thought to the Indian's record may at times give overmuch attention to the play of force in that record. He might well remember that even the Sioux, fiercely warlike as they were, had a hand in carrying forward the movement which would preserve as a monument at Pipestone a small corner of their ancient lands; and they did so, at least in part, because that corner represented in a very special way the strivings of their race for peace.

<sup>23</sup> Interviews with residents of Pipestone, including Mr. Linch.



PHILANDER PRESCOTT, the pioneer Minnesota fur trader whose visit to the Pipestone Quarry in the fall of 1831 is reported in the preceding article, described this picturesque Minnesota site in his "Reminiscences" as follows: "This quarry was discovered by the Indians but how and when we never have learnt It is on the head of a little spring branch in fact a part [of] the stream takes its rise from under the same ledge that forms the quarry Where it was first discovered appears to be near the top of the ground and runs south and lies flat between two lairs of solid rock that looks like granite The further you go south the deeper it gets also east It runs under the ledge that covers the quarry The north end of the diggings were about 2 feet deep and about ten feet wide and instead of working eastward and under the bank to [the] ledge they have dug south and when I was there the diggings were about one hundred yards long and at the south end the diggings are about ten feet deep and the p[i]pe stone is about a foot thick but in seems from ¼ to 3 inches thick In the deep part of the quarry there is more clay and the pipe stone is speckled otherwise pale white spots and some has a deeper red spots and some is a pure red and smo[oth] as marble and fire does not crack it We got out a considerable scaly pieces of which we made some verry pretty flat pipes."





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