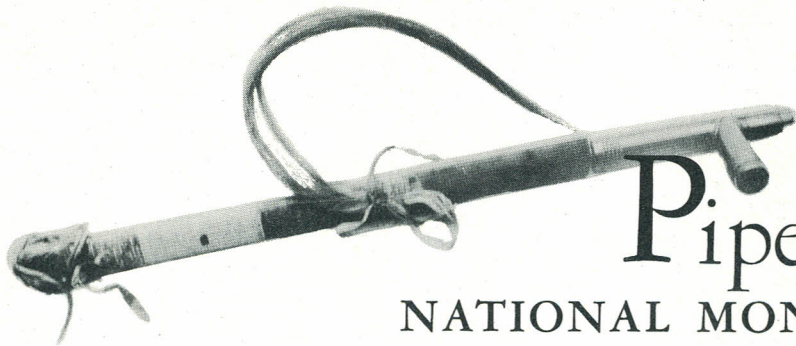


Pipestone

NATIONAL
MONUMENT



MINNESOTA



Pipestone NATIONAL MONUMENT

Noted Minnesota quarries from which for centuries the plains Indians and other tribes obtained the red stone preferred for tobacco pipes.

FOR many centuries a considerable portion of the ceremonial pipes used by the American plains Indians and other tribes were produced from the unusual red stone secured in the famed quarries near Pipestone, Minn. The awe in which many of the Indians traditionally held the vicinity of these quarries made this area "classic ground" in the words of George Catlin, the eminent American artist who traveled among and painted the American Indians, 1829-38, and who was intrigued by the mysteries attending the unusual significance conceded the area of the quarries. Common ground, where hostile tribes met in peace, it was unique to a degree that suggests the significance of the pipe to the first Americans.

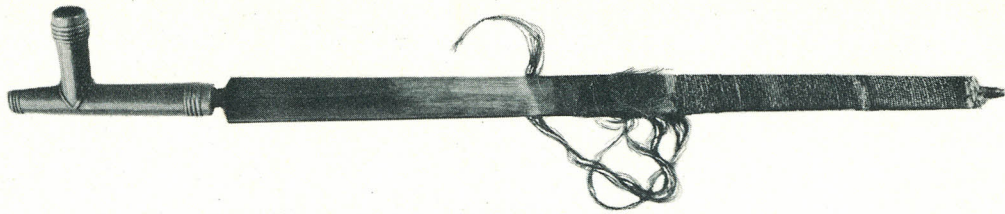
Pipes and tobacco are today so common all over the world that they are taken for granted. Forgotten is the fact that tobacco and its varied forms of use were borrowed, along with many important staple foods, from the Indian. The significance of tobacco and the pipe in American history is also usually overlooked. Soon after

the discovery of America, tobacco spread around the world and became an important article of commerce and trade. Its cultivation and sale greatly accelerated the development of the American colonies, and the expression "the pipe of peace" is a well accepted item of American thought and speech.

Present day Americans know that the pipe of peace was to the American Indians an institution of great antiquity and sacredness. Whenever the Indians met together or when white men conferred with them, the discussions were solemnized with the ritual smoking of the pipe. Treaties were arranged, lands acquired, and wars terminated over a pipe. We cannot be sure whether the fragrant tobacco or the pipe itself was originally the sacred object; but, from earliest historic times, we do know that the pipe, its trappings, and its use were completely surrounded with a complicated ritual. The abuse or ignorance of the proper ritual was considered the highest possible discourtesy.

Modern view of Indians quarrying pipestone





Typical Sioux calumet with decorated flat stem. (Photograph by courtesy of the U. S. National Museum)

The same aura of peace and sanctity hovered over the pipestone quarries. So famous was this spot that the earliest white men to visit the northern reaches of the Mississippi River heard of the site and its sacred nature. George Catlin reached the site in 1836 only after an altercation with an unidentified band of Sioux, who tried to prevent his trip. They were probably the Dakota-Sioux, who had claimed the quarries and were preventing other tribes, such as the Ponca, Mandan, Sauk, and Fox, from using the stone. Although other white men had intruded upon the area before him, Catlin's description of the quarries was the first to be published. The smooth red stone is now called catlinite in honor of this famous traveler. Joseph Nicolas Nicollet, who headed an exploring expedition of the United States Government in this region, also visited the pipestone quarries in 1838.

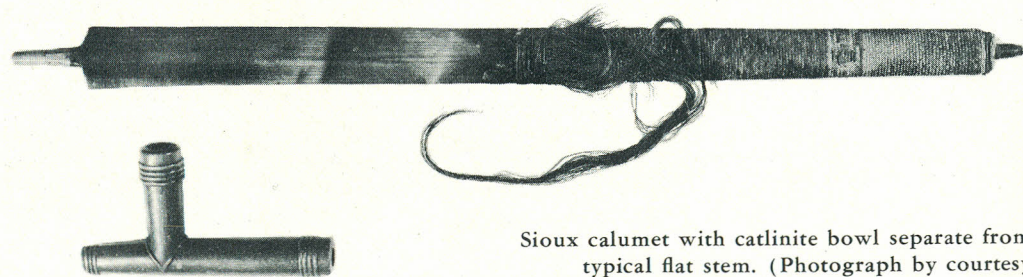
The Pipes and Their Production

The type of Indian pipe known best is the Sioux calumet, the stem of which was 2 to 3 feet long, made of ash and gaily decorated with feathers, porcupine quills, and paint. The bowl was relatively slender and high, resting upon a squared stem which projected beyond the bowl in front. Catlin printed the speech of a Ponca chief who gave him a pipe for which the Indian had personally quarried the stone.

Aboriginal operation of the quarries was slow

and arduous work. With the crudest of tools, the overlying soil and rock were removed from the thin vein of pipestone. A suitable block of the soft stone was then roughed out either by chipping against another stone or sawing with thin sandstone slabs. The bowl and stem holes were drilled before the final form was given to the bowl. In prehistoric times, this shaping was done with flint tools; in historic times, the carving was done with steel implements. After the pipe was formed, it was smoothed by rubbing. According to some early accounts, the fine high polish was given by hand-rubbing oil into the surface of the pipe. Because of the properties of the stone, a bright finish also could be obtained by polishing with a stone or piece of bone. Proper polishing and finishing of one of these specimens took many hours. It is difficult to realize that the exquisitely finished objects were made with the simplest of tools.

The red pipestone of Minnesota was, for centuries, in great demand over much of America. In recent times, the Sioux made pipes by the hundred, trading them to tribes to the west. Before 1800, most of the tribes in the great plains came to the quarries themselves for the raw material. The Indian of the Southeast and the Far West, however, apparently traded for the finished pipes. Typical calumets have been found in Mississippi among the Choctaw, in North Carolina among the Cherokee, and in other areas.



Sioux calumet with catlinite bowl separate from typical flat stem. (Photograph by courtesy of the U. S. National Museum)



The Three Maidens—Indian ceremonial rocks

Geology of the Area

Pipestone as a mineral is not unique. Deposits are known in Ohio, Wisconsin, and South Dakota. At Pipestone National Monument, the pipestone deposit is about a foot thick and is made up of several beds lying between massive layers of an ancient formation known as the Sioux quartzite. The exact origin of the pipestone is unknown. It is believed that, originally, it was of clay-like composition and buried between thick deposits of sandstone. The great weight of overlying beds, together with accompanying heat and associated chemical action, changed the sandstone to quartzite and the clay to what is now called catlinite. The quartzite as seen today was originally deeply buried. Earth forces gradually lifted the earth's crust in this region so that all but 6 feet of the overlying rocks were removed by erosion, leaving the pipestone stratum exposed in gullies which have been cut through the beds of quartzite. Although pipestone is formed in a few other places in the United States, the quarries in the monument area are the most famous.

Later History

Because of its sacred importance to the numerous bands of Sioux, the quarries figured in Indian treaties and were widely discussed during the nineteenth century. The last litigation about this tract between the Yankton-Sioux (who had acquired the area by treaty in 1858) and the Government continued from 1892 to 1928. The full claims of the Yankton were extinguished for a total of \$328,558.90. This sum was divided among the 1,953 tribesmen.

The romantic appeal of the quarries is seen in Longfellow's mention of them in his poetic

glorification of the Indian. From Hiawatha come these lines:

*"Therefore be at peace henceforward,
And as brothers live together . . .
'Bathe now in the stream before you,
Wash the war-paint from your faces,
Wash the blood stains from your fingers,
Bury your war-clubs and your weapons,
Break the red stone from this quarry,
Mould and make it into Peace-Pipes,
Take the reeds that grow beside you,
Deck them with your brightest feathers,
Smoke the calumet together,
And as brothers live henceforward!"*

Legends and Points of Interest

Legends regarding the origin of the quarries are numerous. They vary from tribe to tribe, but there is in each legend some action by the "Great Spirit," which set aside the quarries as common property or neutral ground. One of the most common legends is that the Supreme Being frequently instructed his red children that pipes made from this stone were their own blood and flesh.

According to legends, a couple of Indian maidens who lived in holes under the rocks were the guardians of the sacred quarries. To these legendary guardians the Indian miners made offerings of tobacco at this spot before beginning work in the quarries. A group of six glacial boulders near the quarries is called the Three Maidens.

Near Winnewissa Falls at the end of the quartzite outcropping, which marks the location of the quarries, is a shaft of the same stone, called Leaping Rock. The Mandan and other tribes used this as a trial of strength for young men. It stood some 7 or 8 feet away from the

crest of the quartzite ridge. Its surface, as well as that of the ridge, was polished and smooth. If the young man could jump from the ridge to the Leaping Rock, plant an arrow in one of the crevices, and leap back, he had established himself as a man. If his foot slipped or he could not leap the distance, he fell about 30 feet.

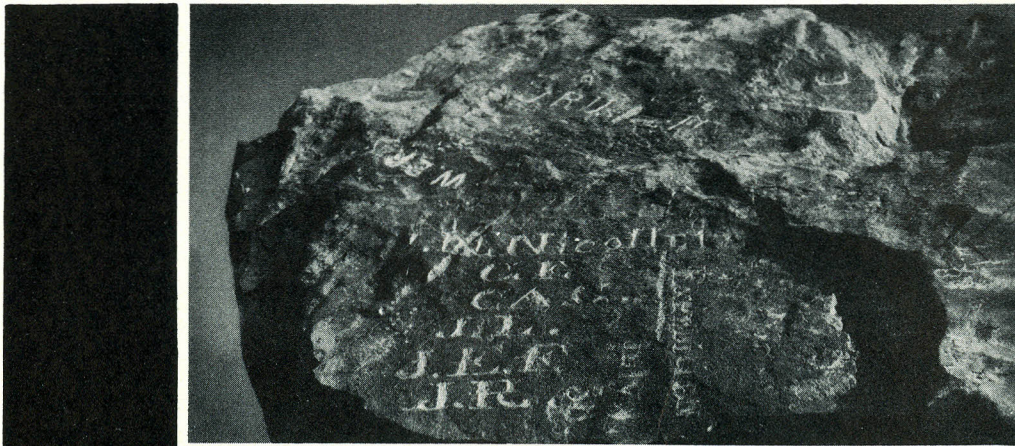
There is a stone marker in the monument memorializing Nicollet's visit to the quarries where he carved his name and the initials of his party. The inscription is still legible today. Of interest is the fact that the initials "C. F." in this inscription, identify as a member of the expedition Lt. John C. Fremont, who later became famous in the exploration of the Far West.

The Monument

Pipestone National Monument was established on August 25, 1937, pursuant to an act of Congress. The area now consists of 115.60 acres of typical, level prairie land, which has never been cultivated and is still covered with native grasses. The quarries, Winnewissa Falls, Leaping Rock, and the Three Maidens are the principal features of the monument.

In the National Park System there are several areas representative of different prehistoric peoples. For example, cliff dwellings and other buildings of the Pueblo Indians are protected at Montezuma Castle and at Chaco Canyon National Monuments in Arizona and New Mexico.

Inscription left by the Nicollet Expedition in 1838



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Oscar L. Chapman, Secretary

National Park Service, Newton B. Drury, Director

At Ocmulgee and Mound City National Monuments are preserved evidences of structures made by the mound-building eastern Indians. Unlike any of these, Pipestone National Monument protects the remainder of a raw material exploited by many of the plains tribes for centuries and the use of which is still reserved to Indians of all tribes.

How to Reach the Monument

Pipestone National Monument is located adjacent to the northern boundary of the city of Pipestone, Minn. State Highways 23 and 47 and U. S. Highway 75 reach the city and the monument. These points are also served by several main railway lines, including the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific, the Great Northern, and the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha.

Administration

Pipestone National Monument is a part of the National Park System owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent is in immediate charge of the area. Requests for literature and information about the monument should be addressed to the Superintendent, Pipestone National Monument, Box 371, Pipestone, Minn.

