



Petroglyphs



Example of petroglyphs recovered from the Three Maidens area. These are on display in the Visitor Center.

What are they?

Petroglyphs are rock engravings which are found in various locations around the world. They are thought to be an ancient way of writing or drawing from long ago. Petroglyphs have been found at Pipestone National Monument, and are very similar to the ones found at the Jeffers Petroglyph site. These glyphs may date from either of the two early prehistoric periods: the Early Woodland Period (3000 B.C. to 500 A.D.) or the Late Woodland Period (900 to 1750 A.D.).

Most petroglyphs were produced by pecking. They were either made by striking the surface of the rock with a sharp piece of stone or, for more precise control, by chiseling the rock using a hammer stone on the stone chisel. The design was usually started with a series of dots joined into lines by continued pecking.

Take a look at the petroglyphs located in the Cultural Center at Pipestone National Monument. The purpose of the drawings and all other "rock art" may include ceremonial descriptions, recording of important events, clan or family symbols, or history. There were many reasons for carving images. One of them might be that stories were told through pictures.

Pipestone National Monument

Purpose

The legislative purpose of the Monument is threefold:

- To administer and protect the pipestone quarries, reserving the quarrying of pipestone for Indians of all tribes.
 - To preserve, protect, and interpret the cultural and natural resources associated with Pipestone National Monument
 - To provide for the enjoyment and benefit of all people.
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National Monument

Significance

The following statements identify significant cultural and natural components of Pipestone National Monument's ethnographic landscape.

Pipestone National Monument is significant as the only location where Indians have quarried the red pipestone (catlinite) from very early times to the present.

The National Monument is significant as a sacred site associated with American Indian spiritual beliefs and cultural activities.

Pipestone National Monument is significant for its history of American Indian and European-American contact and exploration in the early 1800's, specific quarrying rights, and the Pipestone Indian School (1893-1953).

Pipestone National Monument protects a significant cultural/ethnographic landscape.

Pipestone National Monument is significant for the landscape it protects, which consists of the tallgrass prairie that developed in association with the site's distinct hydrologic features. These features combine to provide an unusual array of habitats supporting a diverse assortment of prairie plants and animals and rare habitats, federally listed threatened and endangered species, and globally rare remnant plant communities.