

30¢



Pipestone

A PATH, A STREAM, A WOODED PLACE . . .

A pleasant walk through
forest and meadow
without wall
or machine.





For the modern visitor,
this trail is a diversion,
with a salutary quality of
the unfamiliar.

It was the accustomed
home of the original American;
the game trail was his path,
the rocks his guide-posts.

- PIPESTONE -

A GUIDE THROUGH THE PIPESTONE NATIONAL MONUMENT

by Clifford Soubier

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This booklet is intended as an aid in understanding the Indians' world: the little portion of it traversed by the trail. There are signs along the way to identify some of the features. But to reawaken the feeling of oneness with the natural world is beyond words. To experience this is the most difficult, because it requires no effort. One must, in fact, lay aside effort and simply see - and hear —

In the days when the sacred red stone was most sought
by the Indians, this part of the country was the homeland
of the Yankton Dakota, commonly referred to as Sioux.
As a tribe, they guarded the land from intruders,
but they did not "own" the land, in the sense of individual
property rights.

The land was Life, the Mother of All, and no man could own life.

Nowhere was this more true than at the place of the red pipestone.
The spirit of the stone was shared by the place where it had formed
at a time beyond memory.

This was a place where all men could come without fear;
where no hand would be raised in anger.

Men as different from one another as Poles and Scotsmen
laid aside ancient animosities in a common reverence.

As diverse as were the tribes of American Indians,
they shared certain beliefs:
that all living things were brothers in spirit,
that the earth was the origin of all life,
and that to cut into the earth was not a thing to be done lightly.

AT THE QUARRY

The quarry reveals part of the cycle of the earth's life.

Millions of years ago, the layer of red pipestone was
soft clay. The weight of the quartzite deposit
compressed this clay into a smooth-textured stone.
The quartzite layer itself was once sand,
deposited by an ancient sea.

Whole worlds have come and gone, with plants and creatures
never seen by man, and now another world rests lightly on top —
our world.

The thin layer of soil on the quartzite supports
all the forms of life with which we share sun and air.

From the edge of the quarry to the horizon
you can see a small remnant of virgin prairie.

When the Indians first came here for pipestone, this was a vast plain,
treeless but far from barren. The grass, enormously varied, thick
and lush in the rich soil, stretched in an almost unbroken carpet
westward to the mountains.



The prairie was a world unto itself. The grass supported enormous herds of antelope, elk, and, greatest of all, the buffalo.

Sacred animal of the Plains Indians, the buffalo provided all things necessary to sustain life: meat, hides for shelter and clothing, bone and horn for tools, sinew for thread.

The vast herds of buffalo migrated as the grass matured. Their coming was life renewed to the Indians. Many of the ceremonies with the Sacred Pipe were to ask for success in hunting the buffalo.

Besides providing food for animals, the prairie provided a great variety of plants familiar to the Indians; some useful, some only sacred, some to be avoided. A few fell into more than one category: stinging nettle makes strong cord - nature can be harsh and beneficent at the same time.

Of all plants, the most valued was tobacco. Even before the pipe, there was sacred tobacco, a gift of the Great Spirit. From the earth, mother of all, the tobacco's spirit, in the form of smoke, drifts to the heavens.

BY THE LAKE

Passing between prairie and woods, this trail borders two very different environments known to the Sioux. Originally a woodland tribe, they displaced other tribes in this region, having been in turn forced from their forest home to the east by more powerful tribes armed with weapons obtained from Europeans.

Thus before they had even seen any of the outsiders, their lives were changed by them.

The Sioux quickly exchanged their canoes for horses, when these became available. The horses permitted them to follow the migrating buffalo herds. Earth lodges were abandoned for teepees, which could be readily moved, and within a few years, the Sioux changed completely into a nomadic group, with a whole new culture based on the horse.

These were the Plains Indians as the European settler knew them, riding to the hunt and to war on swift ponies, carrying both the ancient bow and the modern rifle.



This magnificent phase of Plains culture was also the last, for the European invader had decided that the unsettled prairie was a barrier to progress.

Forty million buffalo were annihilated, and with them, a way of life.

The Sioux were forced to adapt once again. This time the change was total. Where the horse and gun had enabled the Indians to survive even better in a world they knew well, their only hope now lay with an alien culture which rejected their values.

And so the place of the red pipestone became a reservation, and the wandering hunters set about learning the white man's way with the land.

Nature, they were now given to understand, was an adversary to be conquered. A stream, for example, need not be left to its own devices. This small pond, known as

Lake Hiawatha, was once a low swampy area. A dam was built in the 1930's to enlarge it and provide a swimming pool for the students at the nearby Indian school.

Whatever its success as a swimming pool, it is somewhat less than satisfactory as a lake.

A lake, after all, is more than a body of water.

It is a living entity, subtly intertwined with its surroundings.

When the dam was built, the natural flow of water was already altered by changes upstream for irrigation. If this pond were really to be a lake, it would require backwater - marshes that act as overflow for lakes. They fill with melting snow and spring rain, and then release their water gradually, keeping the level of the lake constant. Since the land where backwater might occur for *Lake Hiawatha* has been drained and cultivated, the water level fluctuates from spring torrents of mud to an algae-choked trickle in summer.





Pipestone Creek today is in reality more of a canal than a natural flow of water. This may seem a harsh judgement to anyone strolling along this trail, for the surroundings are pleasant enough. We can but dimly conceive what we have never known, as in our grandparents' tales of buffalo herds. We may experience the same difficulty in telling our grandchildren of the taste of pure water, or the value of solitude.



AT THE FALLS

In the vicinity of the falls, remnants of Indian legend have intermingled with settlers' landmarks. The *Stone Face*, *Leaping Rock*, inscriptions, and the falls itself; each reveals an aspect of varied uses of the place.

Climb the stone steps and you will see the Nicollet inscription, chiseled in 1838 by the first U.S. Government expedition to visit the Pipestone quarries.

Led by Joseph N. Nicollet, a French mathematician and scientist, the expedition produced the first accurate map of the upper Mississippi country.

The rock ledge a few paces further contains other inscriptions, left by pioneers who settled this part of Minnesota.

These inscriptions are regarded as valuable historic relics, but to scratch one's initials today would be a violation of propriety and law. What is the difference?

It's largely a matter of numbers.

Only a few outsiders had passed by when the Nicollet party camped here; their mark is a historic record.

The early settlers, relatively few in numbers, who endured hardships in making the journey, perhaps earned the right to leave some sign of their passing.

Places once remote are now reached with ease by ever-increasing numbers. The resulting burden on the land can be endured only if freedom is tempered with restraint. The flower trampled today is denied to hundreds tomorrow.

The rock pillar between the Nicollet inscription and *Inscription Rock* carries a natural formation known as the *Old Stone Face*. Whether it was so known to the Indians is difficult to say — the legends, as they have come down to us, are distorted. Often the deeper meanings are lost in translation, and what remains is regarded merely as quaint.





The group of boulders at the entrance to the Monument, known as "*The Three Maidens*," refers to an Indian legend which actually involved two maidens. Perhaps the additional maiden is a result of the European tendency to see folk lore in terms of threes.



The legend of *Leaping Rock*, however, seems to be well-founded. Early explorers such as Nicollet and Catlin were curious about arrows stuck in the cracks atop the stone pillar. The Indians explained that young men leaped the chasm from left to right and each placed an arrow as proof of his courage.

Winnewissa Falls was lowered about eight feet by blasting the rim. This was done to gain a few extra acres of tillable land. A few sticks of dynamite accomplished what nature requires eons to do - but without the subtle adjustments of the surroundings that accompany gradual transformation.

Walking around the falls, we can see evidence of nature's way of changing the face of the earth.





The fresh waters of the creek flow over ripple marks in the rock formed when the quartzite was sand under an ocean millions of years ago.

Water freezing in the cracks breaks off chunks, allowing plants to take hold in the openings.

By such slow but inexorable processes, the inert rock is made ready to support life.

Our trail passes the quartzite ledge and other signs of continuing creation.

Orange and green lichens coating the rocks are the first visible signs of life to gain a foothold. They require no soil since they secure food and moisture from the air. They release an acid which decomposes the rock into humus.

The humus will support mosses, which thrust their roots into minute cracks. As the cracks expand and gather more soil; grasses, shrubs, and finally trees replace the simpler forms of life.

By these processes, the rich soil of the prairie was formed over the centuries. Soil is produced by plant life, and is dependent on plants to hold it in place.

It takes about 500 years to produce about an inch of topsoil. One rainstorm can wash away several inches of plowed earth.

When George Catlin sketched this rock ledge in 1836, there were few trees, nor any on the surrounding plain. Suppression of fire and the introduction of plants not native to the region have changed the character of the land greatly, and left it dependent on continued management.

Were the trees and allied plants not here, the creek banks would be dominated by the brome grass and other exotics which have invaded the meadow to the left, just past the rock ledge. Brome is a forage crop introduced into this country. Once it has displaced the hardy native grasses, it is extremely difficult to control.

The meadow was the scene of an earlier, more dramatic invasion when the renegade leader Inkpaduta camped here after the Spirit Lake Massacre of 1857. The Indians did not ordinarily camp so near to the quarry, as it was sacred ground. Being an outcast, despised of white and Indian society alike, Inkpaduta had perhaps fallen into the prevalent habit of ignoring tribal customs and boundaries.

Although outlaws like Inkpaduta were in the minority, settlers seldom took the trouble to distinguish between good and bad Indians.



Even when permitted to exist, they were respected only to the degree that they adopted the white man's ways. Their way of life was regarded as aimless and wasteful, their beliefs pagan and idolatrous.

The Indians had evolved a body of belief, as do all men, as a means of understanding their environment, as a means of survival. It would be absurd to suggest that the Indians consciously practiced what we now call 'conservation,' in some sort of paradise. The fear of violent death or starvation was their daily lot; but from fear came its refinement: reverence.

Their very regard for nature arose from a deep knowledge that their survival was dependent on the stability of their environment.

They knew, as do all people who live close to the origins of life, that everything must somehow be paid for.

The earth's bounty was seen differently by the earliest settlers from Europe, who gained a precarious foothold on the continent only with the help of the natives.

Friendly Indians shared the game, the furs, and the plants.

Half of our agriculture is based on plants used by the Indians, including two of the world's greatest food products: corn and potatoes.

Their medicinal herbs were the foundation of many of our drugs.

We gladly accepted the **things** that the Indians offered, but their ideas seemed to have no value for us. This is not to say that there were none among those who came to this continent who had respect for the land. But as they gazed westward into the seemingly inexhaustible supply, there seemed no need to wait upon Nature's willingness to support their numbers.

And almost at the same time that this abundance was discovered, technology blossomed to utilize it.

In the brief, exhilarating period that European man swept from sea to sea, it seemed that mankind, with machine and chemical, was freed at last from the yoke of dependence on nature's gradual and erratic ways.

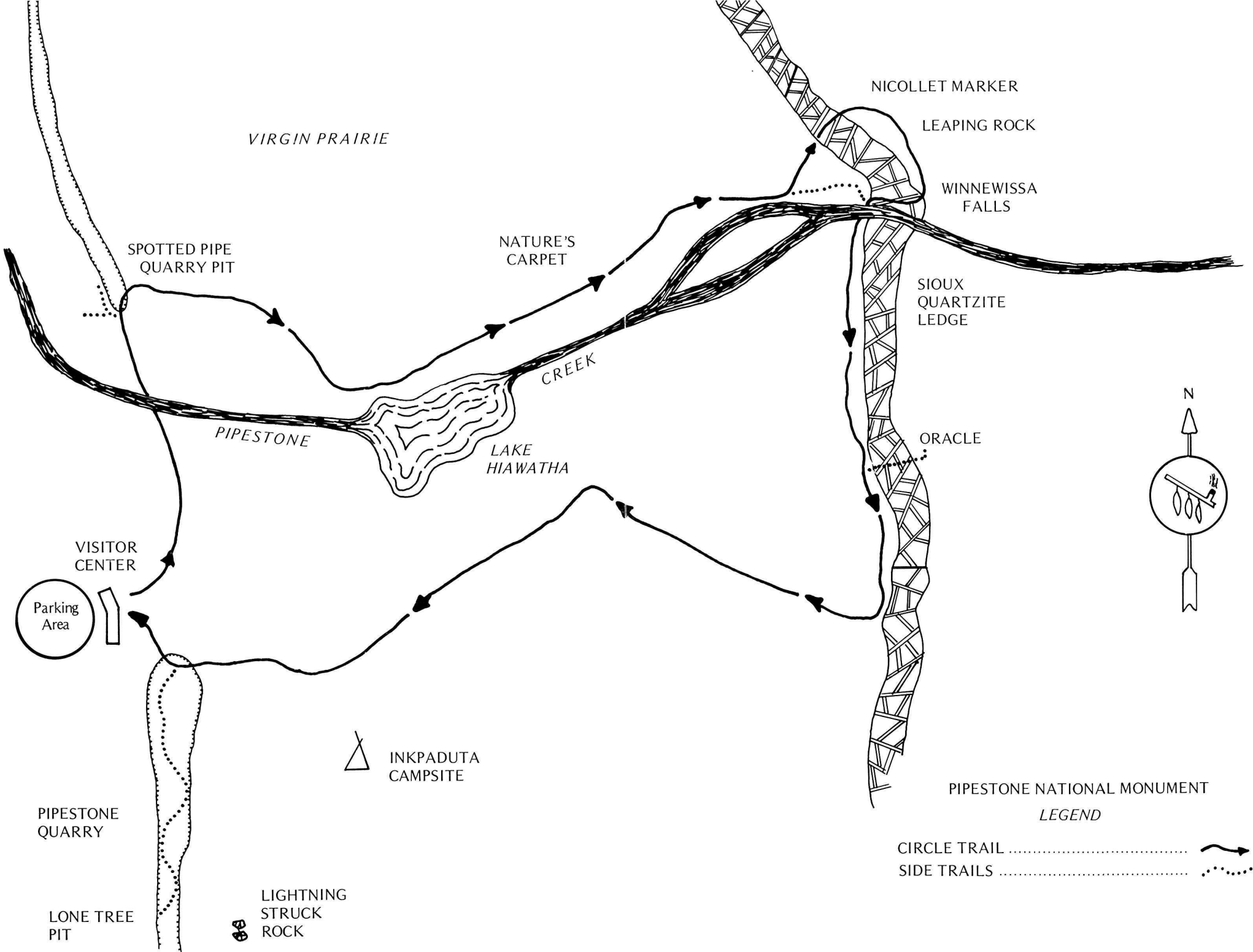
That time has passed. The debt to the earth has fallen due. Science has begun to prove what the Indians knew from within — that the universe is one, and that to disturb one strand of life without due regard for the whole is an offense against creation.

*Grandfather Wakan-Tanka, Father, Wakan-Tanka,
I offer to you your sacred herb.
O Grandmother Earth, from whence we come,
and Mother Earth, who bears much fruit,
Listen!
I am going to make smoke
Which will penetrate the heavens,
Reaching even to our Grandfather, Wakan-Tanka,
It will spread over the Universe,
Touching all things!*

— Oglala Prayer*

*from The Sacred Pipe, Black Elk and Joseph Epes Brown,
University of Oklahoma Press.





VIRGIN PRAIRIE

NICOLLET MARKER

LEAPING ROCK

WINNEWISSA FALLS

SPOTTED PIPE QUARRY PIT

NATURE'S CARPET

SIOUX QUARTZITE LEDGE

CREEK

PIPESTONE

LAKE HIAWATHA

ORACLE

VISITOR CENTER

Parking Area

INKPADUTA CAMPSITE

PIPESTONE NATIONAL MONUMENT
LEGEND

PIPESTONE QUARRY

CIRCLE TRAIL
SIDE TRAILS

LONE TREE PIT

LIGHTNING STRUCK ROCK





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