

PIPESTONE MISSION 66 RESIDENCE
Pipestone National Monument
36 Reservation Avenue
Pipestone
Pipestone County
Minnesota

HABS MN-168
HABS MN-168

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Interior Regions 3, 4, and 5
U.S. Department of the Interior
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, NE 68102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PIPESTONE MISSION 66 RESIDENCE

HABS No. MN-168

Location: Pipestone National Monument, 36 Reservation Avenue, Pipestone, Pipestone County, Minnesota

USGS Pipestone North Quadrangle – Minnesota 7.5 Minute Series, 2010
UTM: Zone 14, Easting 714764, Northing 4876494 (NAD 83)

Significance: The Pipestone Mission 66 Residence was constructed as part of the Mission 66 development. The development is eligible under National Register of Historic Places criterion A, as the Mission 66 program changed Pipestone from an underdeveloped park to a classic National Park Service (NPS) visitor experience. Moreover, park managers used Pipestone as a success story to promote Mission 66 to Congress and to the public. The development is also eligible under criterion C, as an example of “Park Service Modern” design at a small park. The planning and development at Pipestone epitomized the team design process of Mission 66, featured a design by a leading architect, John Cabot of the Eastern Office of Design, and reflected understated contemporary architecture in harmony with the park landscape.

Description: The National Park Service Women’s Organization, formed in 1953 by a group of employee wives, described the available substandard park housing in a report submitted to Conrad Wirth. Most of the residences in use during the 1950s were created during the 1920s and 1930s by the CCC and some lacked modern amenities like electricity and indoor plumbing. Of the field employees surveyed by the Women’s Organization, 10 percent were living in tents and another 24 percent lived in one-bedroom houses or apartments. The majority of all respondents (60 percent) considered their housing below “the standard of surrounding communities.” Of those living in two- or three-bedroom facilities, 50 percent felt their accommodations were below community standard. Most summer employees lived in dormitory-style apartments and a few “trailers” to handle increased temporary seasonal staffing. The Women’s Organization, led by Herma Albertson Baggeley, the first woman to achieve permanent status as a naturalist in the NPS, compiled a survey outlining the model park residence. Individual buildings offering yards for children’s play space and privacy built off a standard plan emerged as the preferred option, as women who frequently moved between parks could plan for their new homes and be reassured that each house would have similar measurements and lay-outs.¹

By 1955, NPS Director Conrad Wirth and Director of Branch of Planning and Design Thomas C. Vint endorsed a standard plan that included many of the Women’s Organization’s requests. A two- or three-bedroom ranch reflected the standard seen in communities surrounding most parks and also embodied the 1950s single-family home ideal. While the basic plan could be constructed by local contractors to the NPS specifications, the homes also allowed options for an attached garage and entry way addition, for the plan to be flipped as “left handed” or “right handed,” and for construction details that would reflect the park’s regional climate, such as insulation, air condition, etc.

¹ Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2007), 89-91.

The “Pipestone National Monument Mission 66 Prospectus” states: “In addition to the present residence now used by the Superintendent, another set of family quarters will be required to house the interpreter. The nature and location of the area requires that at least two persons reside on the grounds for protection purposes.”² Pipestone National Monument’s pre-Mission 66 residence was built in 1950 for the park’s first live-onsite supervisor Lyle Linch after he received complaints similar to those reported by the Women’s Organization when moving to the park in 1948. Linch campaigned for permanent housing suitable for a family after being separated from his family during his first winter on the job.

The NPS Midwest Regional Office accommodated Linch’s request by including a residence in its 1949 construction plan for the park. The resulting house was characteristic of 1950s single-family homes and conveniently fit the NPS’s newly endorsed Mission 66 standards. Its three-bedroom ranch design, with attached garage and entryway, made it an ideal model for future Mission 66 residence construction.³

The Pipestone Mission 66 Residence, constructed 1956-57, is a variation of Standard Plan PG-3016, typical of residences built as part of the Mission 66 program nationwide. Plans for this house were “slightly modified” by “flopping the living room, dining room, and kitchen section to place entry and living room on the same side.” The residence, sheathed in tan aluminum siding, is located on the east side of the residence access road and is the northern-most building. The three-bedroom residence is covered with horizontal siding and topped with a side-gable roof with red asphalt shingles. The large picture window offers the only adornment on the building. There are two doors on the front façade with the main door located near the center of the house and a secondary door near the garage. A picture window, flanked by one-over-one, double-hung windows, is located to the south of the front door. The remainder of the windows are one-over-one and double-hung, with the majority being paired.

The entrance leads into a small foyer that is separated from the living room by a partial wall and screen. Hallways leading to the bedrooms and the dining areas also intersect at this point. The kitchen is located at the rear of the house, just off the dining room. A doorway on the east exterior wall of the dining room accesses the patio at the rear of the house. The resulting house embodied traits common in 1950s single-family homes and conveniently fit NPS’s newly-endorsed Mission 66 standards with its three-bedroom ranch design, attached garage, and entryway, making it an ideal model for any Mission 66 residence construction.

History: Located in the southwest corner of Minnesota, the Pipestone area had been a sacred place for American Indians for hundreds of years. Long before it became a National Monument, tribes from around the country traveled miles to the site to quarry sacred pipestone. After being designated a National Monument in 1937, and categorized as a small, cultural park, the monument was mostly overlooked by the NPS. It would not be until the 1950s before any true park development occurred.

² “Mission 66 Prospectus: Pipestone National Monument,” National Park Service, June 6, 1956, General Files 1952-1960, Box A-34, File A98, National Archives Records Administration-Central Plains.

³ Hal K. Rothman and Daniel K. Holder, *Managing the Sacred and the Secular: An Administrative History of Pipestone National Monument*, (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service: 1992), 96-97.

The situation changed in 1951, when Conrad Wirth became Director of the NPS. In the interest of both modernizing the national parks and making them available to larger crowds of visitors, Wirth spearheaded the development of the Mission 66 program. It was under this program that Pipestone received funding for major developments.

Over a two-year period, 1957-58, an NPS team designed and managed the construction of the Mission 66 facilities and completely transformed the visitor experience at Pipestone National Monument. This included the new visitor center, administrative offices, maintenance facilities, a new entrance road and parking lots, improvements to the quarry exhibit and trail system, and a new residence near the previous park housing.

After the shortages and struggles of the Great Depression and World War II, Americans of the late 1940s and 1950s were ready to engage in leisure and recreation. At that time, car ownership was increasing exponentially across the United States and the developing interstate highway system allowed for accelerated travel across the country. Annual visits to national parks jumped from 3.5 million in 1931 to 30 million in 1948.⁴ By 1950, 99 percent of visitors arrived in national parks by automobile.⁵

Despite the large rise in attendance, government funding for parks within the NPS remained low, and in some cases funding was less than what was received during the 1930s.⁶ Park concessions and visitor areas were unable to handle the influx of modern park visitors because they did not have enough staff to handle the increase in interpretive and custodial operations. In addition, older roads and trails were not equipped to handle the surge of automobiles and larger crowds.

Lack of funding for park operations soon became an issue for the American public. In 1953, Bernard DeVoto of *Harper's Magazine* wrote an article that highlighted the national parks' deterioration. In "Let's Close the National Parks," DeVoto called for park activities to be shut down, which he said would save them from further harm. In the meantime, the NPS could work to procure the additional funding needed to properly manage the parks.⁷ Similar articles soon followed. It was not just poor funding that these writers complained about, they also argued that the parks were losing the very core values that visitors were meant to experience.⁸ In response to this criticism, Director Conrad L. Wirth crafted a program that would increase Congressional funding to the parks.⁹

Wirth was born in 1899, and grew up in Minnesota, where his father was a well-known superintendent of the Minneapolis park system. Wirth studied landscape architecture at Massachusetts Agricultural College (now the University of Massachusetts). In 1931, he began working for the NPS under the recommendation of Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr. In 1933, Wirth

⁴ Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 1.

⁵ Carr, 5.

⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁷ Ibid., 6-7.

⁸ Ibid., 55.

⁹ Ibid., 57.

became chief director of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program in state parks and was appointed director of the NPS in 1951.¹⁰

In February 1955, Wirth began to develop a comprehensive project for the entire National Park System that could respond to the modernization occurring in the United States and incorporate it into NPS plans and facilities. To accomplish these goals without having to submit a yearly budget to the U.S. Congress and wait for passage, Wirth preemptively asked for funding for an entire decade as a way to ensure enough money to modernize the parks.¹¹ The program was to receive money slowly over the following decade and use that funding for updating park buildings, structures, roads, and concessions, along with hiring new staff. Named Mission 66, the project would launch in 1956, and conclude in 1966, in conjunction with the fiftieth anniversary of the Organic Act and the establishment of the national parks. After several dry runs and administrative delays, Wirth introduced Mission 66 to President Eisenhower and his cabinet on January 27, 1956. The program received immediate approval from the President. The necessary documents for final authorization were signed in early February.¹²

In the 1920s, the NPS had developed its “rustic-style,” which emphasized the use of natural materials that blended into the surrounding landscape. The rustic-style included using pueblo design on buildings in the southwestern parks and using mountain lodges in the northwestern parks. Although NPS architects were familiar with modern architecture in the 1930s, they chose to reject it on its aesthetic values as not appropriate for a natural environment.¹³ In contrast, Mission 66 buildings were intended to stand apart from their settings and to be more obvious as park visitor centers. Instead of blending into the national area, visitor centers also became less ornamented and used more man-made material, also indicative of the modern style.

While NPS architects embraced modernism in the design of visitor centers, construction and cost were more important than an interest in advancing or adding to the new style. The use of mass-manufactured building materials like steel, concrete, and glass were cheaper and saved money that could be used to construct additional buildings elsewhere.¹⁴ By using these new, more functional building styles and construction, the NPS was able to utilize local contractors, who could be found at a reasonable cost within the region.¹⁵

Although Pipestone was established in 1937 without an operating budget or full-time staff, throughout the years plans for development moved forward.¹⁶ Several smaller construction projects preceded the Mission 66 initiative. As early as 1925, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) erected a small brass plaque to commemorate the first Euro-American exploration of the area

¹⁰ JoAnn Wilkins and Donald L. Stevens, Jr., “Pipestone National Monument,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington D.C., 2003, Section 7: 1.

¹¹ Allaback 3.

¹² Ibid., 4.

¹³ Carr, 157.

¹⁴ Allaback, 13.

¹⁵ Carr, 91.

¹⁶ Rothman and Holder, 73-74.

by the Fremont-Nicollet Expedition.¹⁷ Based in the City of Pipestone, Minnesota, the Indian Division of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC-ID) constructed footbridges, built dams, and cleared paths throughout the area during the Great Depression.¹⁸ In the early 1950s a new Circle Trail was developed by Pipestone residents and park officials. Also at this time, a new ranch-style house was built for use as a residence for the park superintendent and as an administration and visitor information contact station for the Monument.¹⁹

In the decade before Mission 66, Pipestone National Monument almost doubled in size, growing from 115 to 279 acres.²⁰ Although the Three Maidens area was included in the Monument's enabling legislation in 1937, the land was not officially transferred from the City of Pipestone to the NPS until 1949. Four years later, the Monument acquired 250 acres from the Pipestone Indian School when the school graduated its last class and abandoned the premises.²¹ The additional land made it possible for the Monument to accomplish some of the park's improvements both before and during the Mission 66 initiative.

As a result of several factors, Pipestone National Monument was the first small cultural park to receive funding for Mission 66 development, but largely because NPS Director Wirth had a personal connection with Minnesota and Pipestone was the only NPS unit in the state in 1957. The centennial anniversaries of both the State of Minnesota and the Pipestone Indian Reservation coincided in 1958.²² Pipestone National Monument received more than \$250,000 for the modern development of the park, which would include construction of a visitor center and another new residence for the additional full-time employees that the park was planning to hire.²³ Development and plans for the Monument were outlined in the "Mission 66 Prospectus, Pipestone National Monument," which was prepared by park superintendent Paul L. Webb and Minnesota archeologist Paul L. Beaubien.²⁴

Once constructed, several important figures attended the dedication of the new facilities; including Minnesota Lieutenant Governor Karl F. Rölvaag, Minnesota Representative H. Carl Anderson, and NPS Regional Director Howard W. Baker. The ceremony was presided over by NPS Director Conrad Wirth.²⁵ All the Mission 66 development was completed in 1959, including an additional residence for park staff, the Quarry Line Trail (an extension of the Circle Trail), and a comfort station near the Three Maidens, a spiritual site consisting of three large boulders of granite. The NPS

¹⁷ "List of Classified Structures," Internal assessments, National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, Omaha, Nebraska, Accessed 2 August 2010.

¹⁸ Kathleen Fitzgerald, "Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Pipestone National Monument," Internal draft, National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, Omaha, Nebraska, 2006, 44.

¹⁹ Kathleen Fitzgerald, "Pipestone National Monument, Ethnographic Landscape Report," U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2007, 102.

²⁰ Fitzgerald, 91.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Wilkins and Stevens, Section 8: 8.

²³ Rothman and Holder, 108-109.

²⁴ Paul L. Webb and Paul L. Beaubien, "Mission 66 Prospectus: Pipestone National Monument," U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1956, 8-9.

²⁵ Fitzgerald, 111.

labeled the project an instant success.²⁶ In the first year, visitation increased from 64,459 visitors in 1957 to 126,604 visitors in 1958, visitation remained above 100,000 for all but one year of the next three decades.²⁷

Sources:

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²⁶ Ibid., 98.

²⁷ Wilkins and Stevens, Section 8: 9

Historian: Pipestone National Monument was recorded from 2009-10 by Katherine Kaliszewski, NPS Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) intern with supplemental material provided by Donald L. Stevens, Jr., Chief of History and National Register Programs MWRO. Photographs were taken by Daniel R. Pratt in July 2009. Interns Hilary Retseck and Kayla Hassett and MWRO historian Alesha Cerny completed the report narratives in 2012. The survey was reformatted and edited for transmittal in 2021 by Cerny. As a result of general management planning, the residence is slated for demolition.

Project Information: This report was commissioned in order to comply with a stipulation in a programmatic agreement between the National Park Service and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer regarding the demolition of Pipestone Mission 66 development buildings and structures. The Mission 66 Residence, a contributing building in the park historic district, will be demolished as a result of general management planning for Pipestone National Monument.

The Pipestone Visitor Center (HABS No. MN-167), Mission 66 Restroom (HABS No. MN-169) and Entry Road (HAER No. MN-116), as well as the 1950 Residence (HABS No. MN-170) and the Residence Access Road (HAER No. MN-117) also will be demolished as part of the programmatic agreement that implements the preferred alternative of the general management plan. The buildings and structures interfere with the spiritual significance of the Pipestone quarries and associated natural/ethnographic elements of the National Monument. The ethnographic landscape will be restored to a more natural appearance. HABS, HAER, and HALS documentation will be completed on several buildings, structures, and landscapes in the park to mitigate the adverse impacts of this extensive landscape restoration project.

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Scale stick in photographs in 4 feet long.

INDEX TO BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Daniel R. Pratt, photographer, July 2009

MN-168-1	View of Pipestone 1950 Residence main (west) façade, looking east.
MN-168-2	View of Pipestone 1950 Residence rear (east) façade, looking west.
MN-168-3	Oblique view of Pipestone 1950 Residence, looking southwest.
MN-168-4	View of front door and window of Pipestone 1950 Residence, looking east.
MN-168-5	View of Pipestone 1950 Residence living room, looking north-northeast. Hallway to kitchen (to right) and bedrooms visible in center background.
MN-168-6	View of Pipestone 1950 Residence kitchen and dining room, looking south.