

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC) DAM
Pipestone National Monument
36 Reservation Avenue
Pipestone
Pipestone County
Minnesota

HAER MN-118
HAER MN-118

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC) DAM

HAER No. MN-118

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 714512, Northing 4876950 (NAD 83)

Significance: The dam was part of the initial development at Pipestone by the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division (CCC-ID). The dam has local significance and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the CCC and Works Progress Administration. The materials and naturalistic design of the resource reflects the philosophy of incorporating natural landscape elements into planning and design.

Description: According to the “Development of Dam #1 (HS-5), Pipestone National Monument:” A shallow body of water located below the falls of Pipestone Creek (now commonly known as Lake Hiawatha) was first noted in the fall of 1836 by artist/ethnographer George Catlin in his quick sketch of the falls and creek watershed. This diminutive lake was first recorded in a photograph by William Illingworth in June 1870. The photo, taken from a vantage point atop Winnewissa Falls, shows a small body of water far in the treeless distance to the west.

By the end of the 19th century, tourism and travel had begun to be recognized as important regional industries. Minnesota established two state parks in the 1890s, and by the early 1900s a state park movement developed. Local residents and civic groups focused efforts in the development of a local recreational park.

“The Pipestone community supported the idea. In September 1924, the American Legion post in Pipestone organized a volunteer work force to help maintain the area. They cut weeds around Winnewissa Falls, hauled loose rock to the foot of the lake, scraped and deepened the lakebed, and built a small dam. They estimated this would raise the level of the lake to about 12 feet at its deepest, and make it more attractive as a site for swimming.”¹

According to the “Pipestone National Monument: Ethnographic Landscape Report”: “A small dam is located on the downstream side of Lake Hiawatha. In spring of 1934, the CCC-ID constructed a dam of Sioux quartzite as the site of the American Legion. The structure was listed as contributing in the 2003 National Register nomination form.”

After years of ice floes, the Pipestone CCC Dam was in disrepair. In 1963 National Park Service employees removed the remains of the 1930s dam and replaced it with a spillway of native fieldstone, cemented to a framework steel reinforcement rods.² No additional work was done to the

¹ “Development of Dam #1 (HS-5), Pipestone National Monument.” National Park Service.

² “Completion Report: Surfacing Circle Trail, North Half; Reconstruction of Dam,” May 22, 1964, U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service.

dam until 2007 when the missing capstone and cement which gradually eroded since their 1963 placement, were replaced.

History: In 1933, the first piece of major legislation in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Civil Works Administration established the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW), popularly known as the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), through Executive Order 6101. This organization enlisted young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five to preserve and protect the nation's natural resources, and to reduce unemployment. Many projects focused on forestry, flood control, soil erosion, and forest fires. Enrollees built new roads, reservoirs, and fire towers and planted millions of trees in U.S. national, state, and community parks.

Initially developed to provide relief to unemployed youth, the ECW was modified on April 14, 1933. The organization expanded enlistment to include 14,000 American Indians. By the end of 1933, it was reported that there were 67 reservation projects. Before the CCC (ECW) was ended in 1942, over 80,000 American Indians had worked for the relief agency.

The Indian ECW (IECW) was administered solely by the Office of Indian Affairs in the Department of the Interior, outside the restrictions of the principal ECW organization. The Office of Indian Affairs selected the men and directed the work. Few camps were constructed since most of the men were married and worked on projects on a daily basis and returned home at night. Additionally, the tribal council participated in the administration of the work projects and American Indians were given wide latitude in the selection of work projects and supervisors in an effort to give them management of their own affairs. Like the rest of the ECW enrollees, they received a \$30 monthly stipend and health and education benefits. Unlike other ECW work, there was no prevailing plan or control at Pipestone, no monthly reports or monthly inspections. Each reservation or project individually requested funding and approval for work directly to the Office of Indian Affairs.

The IECW program did not begin at Pipestone Reservation until January 1934. Pipestone Indian School Superintendent Balmer provided general supervision of projects at the reservation, using as much Indian labor as possible. In a letter from Superintendent J.W. Balmer to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier on December 27, 1933, Balmer described the condition of the "Park Area." He wrote that the park site "embraces the Red Pipestone, Winnewissa Falls, the Rock of Gitchhe-Manitou, and several other noted historical points and also includes practically the entire lot where timber, bush, shrubs, or other growths of this nature exist." In addition to the pipestone quarries, he noted the ledge outcrop of quartzite and "several caves and other interesting formations that are a natural part of the rock ledges."

Balmer outlined plans for the \$3,000 appropriation for the "Park Area" including the construction of approach roads, foot paths, gravelling approaches and paths, building benches, construction of gate posts, construction of dam No. 1 at Lake Hiawatha, construction of dam No. 2 at the lower outlet of Indian Lake and fencing around the entire "Park Area" with the work being completed by May 1, 1934.³ On April 6, 1934, Balmer wrote again to Collier, reporting that only limited work had been

³Superintendent J.W. Balmer, Letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier, December 27, 1933, NARA CCC-IN General Records, 1933-34. Pipestone Box No. 172, File 40754 1933-344.

completed at Pipestone “due to the lateness of the appointment of [the] Group Foreman.” Balmer then submitted a revised outline for projects from April 1, 1934 through March 31, 1935 which included clean-up and landscaping, a public campground shelter and campground area, three park entrances, a footbridge, and two miles of fencing.⁴ Collier questioned the dam and campground development in a April 16, 1934 letter to Balmer, seeing the developments as for recreational means, but ultimately approved the projects “with the understanding that the development of the wells or springs will be restricted to those that unquestionably are for the community benefit and with the understanding that great discretion will be used in the connection with the erosion control work.”⁵ By April 26, 1934, ECW District Supervisor J.H. Mitchell inspected work done at Pipestone and reported 25 men currently employed to build the native rock dam, which was then almost complete.⁶ The last portions of the dam were in place by June 1934.⁷

Sources:

Corbett, William P. “A History of the Red Pipestone Quarry and Pipestone National Monument.” M.A. Thesis. University of South Dakota, July 1976.

“Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Pipestone National Monument.” National Park Service, 2007.

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

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“List of Classified Structures.” Internal Assessments. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, Omaha, Nebraska. Accessed 5 July 2012.

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

Webb, Paul L. and Paul L. Beaubien. “Mission 66 Prospectus: Pipestone National Monument.” Internal document. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1956.

Wilkins, JoAnn and Donald L Stevens. Pipestone National Monument. National Register of Historic

⁴ Superintendent J.W. Balmer, Letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier, April 6, 1934, NARA CCC-ID General Records, 1933-34, Pipestone Box No. 172, File 40754 1933-344.

⁵ Commissioner John Collier, letter to Superintendent J.W. Balmer, April 14, 1934, NARA CCC-ID General Records, 1933-34, Pipestone Box No. 172, File 40754 1933-344.

⁶ ECW Supervisor L.H. Mitchell, Letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier, May 3, 1934, NARA CCC-ID General Records, 1933-34, Pipestone Box No. 172, File 40754 1933-333.

⁷ Special Agent B.G. Courtright, Letter to Director of Investigation Louis R. Glavis, Interior Department, May 28, 1934, NARA CCC-ID General Records, 1933-34, Pipestone Box No. 172, File 40754 1933-344.

Places Nomination. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington D.C.
Listed 2003.

Historian: Pipestone National Monument was recorded from 2009-10 by Katherine Kaliszewski, National Park Service 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.

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 treatment of historic structures at Pipestone National Monument. The CCC Dam, a contributing structure in the park historic district, will be retained and preserved as a result of general management planning for Pipestone National Monument.

The CCC Footbridges (HAER No. MN-119), the Nicollet-Fremont Marker (HABS No. MN-171), the Circle Trail (HALS No. MN-3), the South Quarry Line Trail (HALS No. MN-4), and the Sioux Quartzite Steps c also will be retained and preserved as part of the programmatic agreement that implements the preferred alternative of the general management plan. However, the Mission 66 Pipestone Visitor Center (HABS No. MN-167), Residence (HABS No. MN-168), 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) will be demolished. 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-118-1	View of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Dam and Lake Hiawatha, looking east.
MN-118-2	View of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Dam (left mid-ground) and Lake Hiawatha, looking east-northeast.

HAER No. MN-118-01



Kodak 100T MX



HAER NO. MN-118-02



