

LEGALS

ected to the Office of the Adjutant General, Contract Management Branch, Bismarck, North Dakota, Telephone (701) 333-2069. DATED: 2 July 2024 OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL, Bismarck, North Dakota By: /s/ JACKIE A. HUBER, Brigadier General, NDNG Deputy Adjutant General, Contracting Officer (7:2, 9, 16)

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A Message from Garcia: The Devil's Tooth parts 1 & 2

The History and Culture of the Spirit Lake Nation

By Louis Garcia ©
1/25/15

Dear Readers: It was pointed out to me that I forgot to publish the second half of Mr. Garcia's story titled "The Devil's Tooth" - the first half ran in the May 28, 2024 issue of the Devils Lake Journal. The second half SHOULD have run in the next Tuesday's paper but it did not. I am running the entire column again, here, for those of you who are collecting the Messages from Louis. Please accept my apologies for the error. — Louise Oleson, editor

The Devil's Tooth (parts 1 and 2):

To the Dakota Nation, Stone (Inyan) is the oldest of all the Spirits that make up the Sixteen Spirits of God, the TobTob Kin (The Four Fours). There are many sacred stones in the land of the Dakota. All were venerated, painted red and offerings presented to the Stone Spirit.

A large erratic bolder deposited by the last Ice Age lies next to a highly traveled road in the Third Commissioners District, Benson County. Due to its shape, it appeared to non-Indians, to resemble

a tooth. Because it was in the Devils Lake area, the name was shortened to Devils Tooth.

It is known locally as The Stone Woman of the Sacred Water (Miniwakan Inyan Winyan). To others it was known simply as the Big Stone (Inyantanka).

The Lake Region was originally owned by the Hidatsa Nation, who moved west to the Missouri River sometime about the year 1500. When the Dakota people began visiting the area some 200 years later, it is not known if they knew the story of this stone or if they considered it sacred. During the Reservation Period (circa 1870) the Hidatsa came back to visit the Dakota at Spirit Lake, and told them the story of the stone.

A certain Hidatsa man took a second wife as was the custom. This was allowed because of the high mortality rate among males due to war and hunting accidents. The first wife was mortified; "he told me I was to be the only one". She packed up her baby on her back and left the hunting camp. In a great state of shock, crying,

not knowing what to do, she wandered aimlessly about. Finally, she slumped down and pouted (Wacinko), a culturally understood motionless state refusing to eat or drink.

Back at the hunting camp it was discovered she was missing. Her brother questioned the husband, his brother-in-law, and was dismissed saying "she is just mad and will return when she is ready". The next day the brother was adamant when she failed to return. According to custom a woman's brother is her protector, no harm can come to his sister. In fear of retaliation the husband joined his brother-in-law and others in search of the woman and her child.

Fanning out across the area they found her sitting on the ground with the child in her arms. She was half turned to stone. Repeated pleadings were of no avail, she would turn herself into a stone and the baby too. She told her family that whenever they were in this area to remember and visit her, to bring her food and gifts. The woman's family called upon Holy Men to turn her back to human state



Garcia

with prayers and ceremony, without result (Albers 1969:4-5; Diedrich 2007: 60, 176; Kenner 2013:96-98).

So the Stone Woman and her child sit there today, but alas she is neglected by the local people. The gravel road which passed right next to her has been moved south and modernized with asphalt. The stone is now within the confines of the Buffalo Pasture, with a split rail fence surrounding her to keep the buffalo from using her as a rubbing stone. It is dangerous to go inside the fence due to the presence of the buffalo, so no one goes inside the buffalo fence to pay homage to the woman and her child. It has been suggested that a road sign be installed as a tourist attraction. However the elderly vetoed the idea saying people will be throwing trash in the area spoiling the

sacredness of the spot.

Now we move on to the second tale concerning the sacred stone. Somehow within the last 20 years another story has come to life. A true story, but taken out of context, as some believe the stone represents a woman who froze to death near the stone.

On March 15th, 1920 Mrs. Andrew Whitehead age 39 and her 3-year-old son were traveling in a sleigh, and became lost in a sudden March blizzard. The mother took the blankets and wrapped up her son Tatankainapena (Appearing Bull) to protect him from the storm. They found her frozen to death, but the boy better known as William Whitehead was alive. In the blinding blizzard See's, the Road (Mrs. Whitehead) could not get the horses to move as one had frozen to death, not perceiving her location decided to stay with the sleigh. Unfortunately, Bill, as he was known, would later regret that his mother saved his life, saying "she should have let me die too".

Mrs. Whitehead had donated a pot of soup to some function. She insisted on delivering the soup even though it was snowing. On her trip home

after completing her task, the storm struck. Becoming lost in the whirling sea of white, she let the horses go, wrapped up her son in blankets and put him between her legs, sat down in the sleigh to wait out the blizzard wrapped only in a shawl. So she froze to death sitting upright. The faithful mother sacrificing herself to save her child (Lorraine Greybear 2015).

Not wanting to end this Message on a sad note, Ambrose Littleghost told me a funny story concerning this sacred stone, now called Devils Tooth. Okitaninwin (Conspicuous Woman) was returning from Ft. Totten. She had gone there to get her land lease money and then stopped to buy some supplies at the Fort Totten Trading Post. She was walking from the fort with a walking stick in one hand, and a sack of supplies slung over her shoulder.

She lived at the Mission where Francis Owlboy lives today. When she reached the holy stone, she laid out some food before the woman and her baby as it was told passerby's should do. If you look today you will notice a small hill or rise in the ground directly

See GARCIA | 9

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