



EI-15691

T RIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
S TANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE

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September 25, 2008

Catherine Glidden
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Streets SW
Washington, DC 02423-0001

THPO file 08-118

RE: Sites along the DM&E corridor.

Dear Ms. Glidden,

Enclosed for you reference are two documents. The first is titled, "Notes of D/Lakota Burial Lodges." It provides excerpts from a variety of historic sources that document the long history of Dakota and Lakota use of tipis as burial lodges. Stone circles might be burial locations. The second document is titled, "Sacred Use of Stone Circles." This document provides a transcription of a hand written, 1950 interview of Frank Zahn, an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Mr. Zahn described the sacred use of stone circles by D/Lakota people decades before there was any concern about preserving Native American sacred sites. These two documents provide an underpinning for treating all stone circles as TCPs/sacred sites.

More generally those sites within the DM&E corridor that have some type of stone features (stone circle, rock cairns, effigies) should be treated as potential Traditional Cultural Properties and/or sacred sites. To complete the National Register evaluations of these kinds of sites, they must be individually visited and assessed by tribal elders.

Sincerely,
STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE

Waste'Win Young
Waste'Win Young
Acting Preservation Officer

Attachments

CC: Paige Hoskinson Olson, SD SHPO

Notes on D/Lakota Burial Lodges

Byron Olson
Tribal Archaeologist
SRST THPO
May 19, 2008

Stone circles may represent burial locations. The following excerpts are from ethnographies, winter counts, and other sources that document D/Lakota use of burial or funeral lodges.

Teton and/or Middle Sioux: "Only very specially favored people were "cause to live in their own tipi." It meant that the burial scaffold was erected and the dead bound thereon and a completely equipped tipi was built over it. The doorway was carefully fastened and the base weighted down with heavy logs to insure its security during storms. A tipi on a lonely prairie, with no smoke coming out, and no sign of life about, was avoided as the abode of a ghost" (Deloria 1932:227n).

Lakota 1712: High Hawk winter count reads, "Four Lakota killed." Curtis remarks that a burial tipi is represented in the pictograph (Curtis 1908: Vol. 3, 162)

Lower Yanktonai, 1735: Entry in the John K. Bear winter count reads, "A woman was laid to rest in a tipi" (Howard 1976:31).

Yanktonai 1842-43: Entry in the Blue Thunder winter count: "Man 'Holy Tracks Buffalo' die. Bury him in a striped tipi. A big man but not a chief man" (Howard 1960: 376).

Whirlwind's band of the Oglala, 1847: "He [Shaw] and Henry prepared to return homeward; first, however, they had placed the presents they had brought near the body of the squaw, which, most gaudily attired, remained in a sitting posture in one of the lodges. A fine horse was picketed not far off, destined to be killed that morning for the service of her spirit, for the woman was lame, and could not travel on foot over the dismal prairies to the villages of the dead. Food, too, was provided, and household implements, for her use on this last journey" (Parkman nd. 101-102)

Dakota burial lodge, 1863. "They saw just the top of a teepee in the timber on the east bank of the river [Missouri River] and heard afterwards that it contained the body of a Dakota killed in the fight with the white men" (Libby 1976:186). [This may be a reference to a Sioux casualty from the battle with General Sully's troops at Whitestone Hill or with General Sibley troops or with miners (see below)]

Lakota Burial (1864?)

Report by White Cow Walking [Mother = Maka Wastewin 'Good Earth Woman' – Oglala; Father = Pte San Mad-- Oglala; Wife of the Ihanktowanna

Wife's Mother = Winona Tonkawin – 'Big first born woman child woman'; Wife's father = Hehakapa – Elk Head of the Yanktonaise.

"He [Elk Head] was killed at the battle at Ward's creek, with a boat load of miners, and was buried in a tree in the first coulee north of the N. P. bridge [across the Missouri between Bismarck and Mandan]. She says four Indians were killed, three being buried in a tipi there. She was 14 years old then and was present" (Welch nd a: 56) (interview circa 1926)

Sioux or Crow Burial Lodge, Yellowstone Kelly, ca. 1869: "At this point [on the Missouri opposite the mouth of the Yellowstone], where the land is bare of timber or brush, there stood a stout post of cottonwood with a crotch, and a couple of old buffalo skulls lying at its foot. I fancied that an Indian scaffold had one stood there and I [Yellowstone Kelly] asked Lambert about it,

"He said that many years before a fight had occurred on that bottom between a war party of Crows and the Sioux, and a chief was killed. He did not remember whether it was a Crow or a Sioux, but a low scaffold was erected and on this crude platform the body, wrapped in a fine robe, was placed, together with the arms and other equipment considered necessary to furnish the ghostly abode of dead warriors. Over all was placed a stout skin lodge of the regulation type, poles, smoke fenders, and entrance flap.

"This landmark stood for many years. Gradually the sinews and thongs that held the skin and framework rotted and fell apart. Storms scattered the light gear and the wood decayed until nothing was left but the stout crotch and the buffalo skulls at its foot" (Quaife 1926: 67-68). Kelly also mentions in passing "the funeral lodge of Long Horse, a noted Crow chief, who was killed at the head of his warriors while charging the hostile Sioux concealed in thick brush and timber [near Major Reed cabin, Judith Basin – now Lewistown, MT]" (ibid.:117)

Hunkpapa, 1870: "Three months later [after the battle where thirty Crows were killed], when the weather had moderated and their relatives had all assembled, the Hunkpapa returned to the scene of the battle, camping about three miles away. They went to the place and recovered the bones of their dear ones. The relatives of Looks-for-Home carried him back to the camp, placed him upon a fine bed in a tipi, and when the camp moved, left him there in the burial lodge, lying in state" (Vestal 1957:116). Walter Campbell's field notes give the name as "Look for Him in Tent." He was the head of an *akicita* and was an uncle of Sitting Bull's. In mourning, Sitting Bull cut his hair, put on mud, and took off his shoes and leggings. (Campbell: nd: 8-9).

Burials on the Little Big Horn

Sans Arc burial lodge, June 25, 1876: "The Young Hawk came. He got off on the north side of the teepee, took a knife from his belt, pierced the tent through and ran the knife to the ground. Inside of the lone teepee he saw a scaffold, and upon it a dead body wrapped in a buffalo robe" (Libby 1976:94). All the Scouts stopped at the lodge perhaps half an hour. One of them called out: "There is plenty of grub here." One Feather went into the tipi and drank the soup left for the dead Dakota warrior and ate some of the meat" (Libby

1976:121). This warrior was Old Elk, also called Old She Bear, who was wounded in the fight on June 17, 1876 with Crook on the Rosebud. This tipi was left on the campsite of June 23rd which was on the forks of Reno Creek, about four miles from its junction with the Little Big Horn. Custer ordered the "Lone Tipi" be set on fire. Daniel Knipe passed this burning tipi on the way to meeting Benteen

There may have been two burial lodges at this location. Charles Varnum reported seeing two tipis at the June 23rd campsite when making a reconnaissance from the Crows Nest, dawn, June 25 (Hammer 1976: 60n).

"The bodies of the seven Sioux had been brought to the new encampment [on the Greasy Grass] on travois and were placed in a tepee on the extreme right, or south, of the town of tepees" [1886 statement of Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull (Hunkpapa) in Graham (1986:83)]. Note: Mrs Spotted Horn Bull attributes these fatalities to a fight with Crows seven days before the Custer fight, but the statement refers to Sioux casualties from the Rosebud fight with Crook, including his Crow allies. Julia Face (born to the Oglala, married the Brule, Thunder Hawk) reported in 1909 that, "Plenty Lice and another warrior were wounded on the Rosebud. [They] died in camp on the Greasy Grass" (Hardorff 1991:192). Hardorff notes that Plenty Lice may have been wounded on the Rosebud, but he fought and was killed during the Custer fight.

Burial lodges left after the Battle of the Little Big Horn, 1876: "The Dakotas then moved towards the ford, only five tents were standing on their camping place [along the Greasy Grass]. . . . Then the party [of Arikara scouts] approached the five Dakota tents and they rode among them. . . . The soldiers in the party were busy stripping off the buckskin shirts from the bodies of the dead Dakotas there and taking their ear rings. . . . The five teepees in the deserted Dakota camp were thrown down and some of the bodies stripped by the soldiers they had seen there. They went on to the Dakota camp and found the body of a young Dakota lying on a tanned buffalo hide. Young Hawk recognized this warrior as one who had been a scout at Fort Lincoln, Chat-ka. He had on a white shirt, the shoulders were painted green, and on his forehead, painted in red, was the sign of a secret society. In the middle of the camp they found a drum and on one side lying on a blanket was a row of dead Dakotas with their feet toward the drum. Young Hawk supposed that a tent had covered them, with the entrance to the tent at the side opposite where the dead bodies lay, that is, at the holy or back side of the tent. When alive these braves would sit on the other side and drum. The drum was cut up and slashed. Farther on they found three more groups of dead Dakota lying on canvas, buffalo hides, or blankets at the back side of where the tent had stood, that is, opposite the opening. All the fine buckskin shirts they had worn as well as beads and ear-rings had been stripped off by the soldiers. These groups of bodies were two, three, or four" (Libby 1976:106-110).

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SACRED USE OF STONE CIRCLES

Byron Olson
THPO Office
Standing Rock

Sebastian "Bronco" LeBeau's Comments:

"... traditional Lakota people identify these features [stone circles] as Mime'ya In 'yanj Ti "Stone Ring Lodge" and the feature is associated to the performance of a specific ceremonial activity of the Lakota. Identification of the site according to a native perspective can change its property type from historic property to a traditional cultural property, and subsequent association to a specific ceremonial practice indicates that it may be a sacred site, which in turn can change its potential NRHP status" [Sebastian "Bronco" LeBeau, *Final Cultural Resources Management Plan Lake Oahe, South Dakota* (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District: 2004), Vol. I, p. V-3]

Frank Zahn's Comments.

Frank Zahn, an enrolled member and judge of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, described some of the ceremonial uses of stone circles in a 1950 interview given to Smithsonian Institute River Basin Survey personnel. Zahn was one of the Tribe's judges and was deeply interested in tribal history. His comments were made long before there was any concern about protecting or preserving the sacred sites of Indian peoples. Zahn's comments were recorded by Farrell and Hottman. The following is a transcription of their hand-written notes in site file 32SI100 (on file at the State Historical Society of North Dakota). Words that cannot be clearly read are marked with a "[?]." All other remarks in square brackets are in the original.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION RIVER BASIN SURVEYS CONTINUATION FORM

Site No. 32SI00-R3
Item No. 8

AF-1
(Rev. 4/26/50)

F. B. Zahn, Fort Yates. Large stone wheels sometimes 200' in diameter have 8 spokes or radiating alignments of rocks coming from center made of smaller rocks than the embedded rocks on the circumference. These are not "medicine wheels" but places where the sun dance or other ceremonial dances were held. Four of the radii were oriented to the cardinal points of the compass, the remaining four were to honor the sun, moon, heaven and earth, sacred points to the Indians. One such large ring is on "Sacred" Mountain, a butte SW of Cannonball Substation at the Trading Post.¹ The last sun dance was held here in 1886 (?) [date problematical to

¹ Probably Twin Buttes west of Cannonball, but possibly an unnamed butte directly south of the modern community.

informer].² These large stone rings have openings oriented to the east. Informer confirmed statements of Winston Hall* that there was a large "medicine wheel" east of Mobridge. He stated that there was one 7 miles SW of Fort Yates. These rings are usually on high places. Near Fort Yates old roof pendants [?] form excellent areas for ceremonial rings.

Recorded by Farrell and Hottman

Date Aug 23, 1952

* of Mobridge Post Office

Sheet # 2 F. B. Zahn - informant 32SI00 - R4

East of Mobridge, there is a high prominent point near the Power Company antenna. Here is the reputed area of the "medicine wheel." Both the "Rees" & the Sioux used these big rocks to pray to the Great Spirit.

Most of the ceremonial rings near Fort Yates are considerable distance from the Missouri river, to the west.

On the subject of Tipi rings, Judge Zahn was vehemently opposed to the suggestion that the encircling stones were used to hold down the skins of tepees. "Tepees were always pegged down with stakes - first thing!" He continued that "tipi rings" were actually used in two types of ceremonies. One called "the Eagle Catch" generally was about 5 ft diameter to 15 feet composed of light colored rocks about 8" - 14" in diameter which were partly buried in the outside circumference. In the center, a pit was dug and covered over with brush on top of which two or three dead rabbits were placed. An Indian would ensconce (?) hide himself under the brush and wait for an eagle to be attracted to the catch.

Sheet 3 F. B. Zahn - informant 32SI00 - R5

"Eagles never swooped down, catching the dead prey on the fly and swoop away." Rather the bird would alight on the brush and begin consuming the rabbit. Then the hidden Indian would grasp the sacred bird and dispatch it by breaking its neck over the knee with the head down (with ceremonial prayer the Eagle if they (illegible)). A sacred knife was used only to cut off the wings of the dead bird after the feathers were pulled out. All the while the Indian would pray and talk to the spirit of the Eagle. The disposition of the body of the bird was not asked. The encircling stones of the ring were so placed as to represent to the Eagle, supposedly, a circle of rabbits running about.

This is why the rabbit & the Eagle are closely associated on the Indian roach or dance head dress. Weasel fur forms the tail of the roach and on it partly down to the mid back of the Indian, rabbit ears are sewn and on the end of the fur piece rabbit legs are tied. The rabbit tail is the final piece of the roach hanging down to approximately the back of the thighs.

² "Last" sundance was held near Fort Yates in 1881, after which the ceremony was banned by the BIA. The first "new" sundances were held in 1936 at Little Eagle and in 1937 at the original Cannonball sundance grounds.

The Eagle catch has a doorway and the stones form a complete circle. The pit is generally 3 feet deep. An eagle catch is never used twice after an eagle has been choked to death.

The second use of tipi rings was in an individual ceremonial for five different purposes: the crying ceremony; the name seeking ceremony; the search for a vision which allowed one to become a bear medicine man or a buffalo medicine man; and the love ceremony conducted only for princesses, the daughters of the highest chiefs. [Reference here is to the Sioux. The Princesses are usually only small babies and the informant spoke of the princesses as being the main participants even tho they were immobile and merely placed inside the ring.]

In the Crying ceremony a ring of rocks were chosen and placed in a circle about 10 feet in diameter. Measurement varied. The single participant would make a parallel incision above both breasts and let the blood run from the wounds. Generally they . . .

. . . sat within the ring for three days without food and water and was actually an endurance ceremony for gaining visions and communicating with the Great Spirit.³

The name seeking ceremony utilized a similar circle of stones but in this case was only for a single individual of between 16-20 years old. During the stay, lacking water and food, hallucinating were the communication with the Great Spirit and one vision was selected for the individual's name.

Evidently, the bear & the buffalo were both used as symbols of two types of medicine men. In either case, the circles were of stone and similar to the above. Vision was sought thru endurance to communicate with the Great Spirit to allow supplicant to choose a role. Sometimes buffalo heads are found in or near these rings. Judge Zahn found one August 22, 1952, west of Fort Yates on a high butte. [Perhaps the slightly . . .

. . . raised altars with the buffalo heads placed on top, found by Hurt at the Thomas Riggs site were part of the paraphernalia of a medicine man living in the particular lodge. Perhaps each lodge had its own buffalo medicine man.]

³ *hanble'ceya*, 'to cry in vision seeking'

The "love ceremony or dance" was conducted within similar rings. The "princess" or daughter of the reigning chief or of other chiefs was placed at the center or at the eastern edge of the ring. Two men in regalia with lighted pipes would dance up and back from the baby all the time wafting smoke back and forth across the infant. Both dancers would approach the chief at the same time.⁴

Two other types of stone rings were commented upon: The Swastica and the women's dance ring.

The swastica symbolized the placing of four elbow pipes of participating . . .

Sheet 7 F. B. Zahn - informant 32SI00 - R9

. . . enemies who had come together for some reason. [swastika design] Each of the quadrants represented the pipe of an enemy. The bowls were placed toward the center.

The other type of stone ring, the women's dance ring was shaped with parallel lines of stones five feet apart, oriented into the cardinal points of the compass and meeting at four junctions in the center . There was no outside circle. In each of the paths two women would dance to the center and then move backwards while two others in similar places around the center would follow the example. Women "in the old days" were not allowed to participate with men in the dances except in this one.

32SI00 - R10

Hunk a ya pi or Love Ceremony
girl then can wear plume upright. No can wear feathers.⁵

⁴ 'coming of age' ceremony; child beloved.

⁵ The blank space is in the original. Probably the sentence should be read as "No woman can wear feathers." A distinction was drawn between feathers proper and down (= "plume")