

## Blindfold Lake Pictograph Site:

If you can provide me with an exact location I will update this file. Thanks.

Site #29 in Selwyn Dewdney's list of sites he visited from 1957 to 1965; he was there in 1958.

Click on the following link for the Federal Gov't Topo of Blindfold Lake and surroundings:

<http://www.jeffstopos.com/maps/052E09>

Selwyn Dewdney – **Indian rock Paintings of the Great Lakes** (1962) p.2, 46, 65

His classic work begins with the following paragraph -

“About fifteen miles southeast of Kenora, in the water labyrinth of channels, bays, and islands so typical of Lake of the Woods, you will come to the outlet of Blindfold Lake. Nearby, on the north shore, is a vertical rock above a sloping ledge, its face scattered with Indian paintings. As a boy I knew the place. Yet I gave the pictures only a glance, being far more fascinated by the offerings on the ledge, remnants of rotted clothing, chipped and rusted enamel-ware, and traces of tobacco.

Fifteen years later and 400 miles farther east I ran across other Indian paintings on the Fairy Point rocks of Lake Missinaibi. Later, revisiting the place with my wife, I made quick sketches of a few of the symbols— depressingly inaccurate ones, I was to learn years later. Yet over all the years that I knew of these two sites it never occurred to me that there might be others. (p.2-3)

Dewdney devotes an entire page to the Blindfold Lake Pictograph Site. See p. 46 for his discussion. This is the drawing he provides – see next page for the text.



sites to the last: the cluster of seven sites in Whitefish Bay. Here the master designer of water labyrinths, after trying his hand at Quetico and elsewhere, got down to work on his magnum opus. Even old-timers stick to the channels they know; and some of the younger Indian guides have been known to get confused.

The Blindfold site, some miles north of the Bay but on the same side of the lake, I had known as a boy. Bruce and Dorothy Johnston, summer campers from Winnipeg, had sent me, via the Museum, the location and a description of the Sioux Narrows site. But rumours and reports from various sources of at least two of the other sites gave only the vaguest locations, and I am quite sure that without Bill Fadden's knowledge of the bay and keen interest in hunting for sites I should still be looking for at least a couple of them.

Strangely, few residents, summer or permanent, knew of these paintings. Actually, unless one is paddling, or drifting in an outboard motorboat, the passerby has a poor chance of seeing anything interesting along the shore. It is a sad commentary on our holiday habits that speed has become such a mania that we are denying ourselves some of the greatest pleasures to be found in such waters, not least the thrill of rediscovering for oneself these mystifying remnants of prehistory.

Yet I keep reminding myself that as a boy at the Blindfold site, inter-

ested though I was in the Indian past even then, it was the offerings I saw on the ledge below that stayed in my memory. Perhaps the very incomprehensibility of these paintings tends to close off our interest. Certainly the Blindfold paintings are as difficult to read as any others.

What, for instance, is the affair on a tripod to the lower left? A drum? If so, it is quite unlike the Indian drums we know of today. In the centre (not illustrated here) is a crude little moose, whose forebody has almost disappeared under seepage that may offer a dating clue. On the extreme right of this face a monstrous form beneath two upturned canoes suggests the sinister Mishipizhiw.

The real interest, however, centres in the symmetrical grouping shown on the opposite page. A moose, undoubtedly, on the left. But what kind of a creature do we see on the right?

I could not resist the temptation of placing underneath this creature one recorded in the Lake Baikal region of south-central Siberia by A. P. Okladnikov, a U.S.S.R. archaeologist who has made extensive studies of rock paintings and carvings in Eurasia. The finger-painting technique, the curious protuberance on the snout, and the crested back all provide an amazing coincidence of conception and execution. It would be ridiculous, of course, to assume even the most tenuous of cultural links.

About three miles southeast of Sioux Narrows Post Office, facing



Grace Rajnovich in her book **Reading Rock Art** comments specifically on the human figure and the significance of the raised arms. She also draws a parallel between the Blindfold Lake human figure and a similar one at Fairy Point on Lake Missinaibi at the other end of the Ojibwa world.

