

Kinomagtewapkong: The Teaching Rocks. 1987.

transcript of narration...

1. "In the Stony Lake area near Peterborough, Ontario there are outcroppings of soft rock. Carved in these rocks are symbols which are similar to ones found in many parts of North and South America. The carvings are significant in the social and philosophical teachings of the Ojibway people but the precise meanings of the many symbols are carefully shrouded in mystery."

2. Kinomagtewapkong means "the rocks that teach." "Wapkong" is where the rocks are situated. Kinomage is "to teach."

3. Years ago a child who was very active, with his legs going who was obviously going to be a smart person would be brought to the petroglyphs to be trained (like a priest). It was not for everybody but for someone who would become an elder and a priest in his own right. (Narrator) History opened up for me and it was of value when I got older.

4. The narrator found out about the teaching rocks from his 112 year old (!) grandfather. He brought people there. He stayed with people at Stony Lake.

5. According to the elder that read it, Algonquin/Ojibway people made the carvings.

6. The rock is like coarse crystals of salt. The petroglyphs were made by gouging and hammering.

7. At one time the depth of the petroglyphs was the depth of a person's fingers folded or about 2 to 3 inches deep.

8. The leaves and pine needles protected it.

9. Since it was opened up in 1954 its deteriorated. They would open it up and then cover it up.

10. It tells of life way, way back and what things were to happen. (Images of a female petroglyph with a vulva form and petroglyphs near cracks)

11. It tells about the female. What her work is, the foundation of the family.

12. The elder had never seen it before. The more he saw it the more he could read it.

13. He's not given us everything.

14. We have to live a certain way before we can carry the wisdom that it has.

15. He wouldn't tell us everything. The elder said you don't learn from the top. "The elder hasn't told us totally."

16. The medicine wheel, the wheel of life usually starts from the east, where day begins, where life begins.

17. The midlife is in the south. The sunset is where our life ends.

18. In the north our spirits may be, when the tobacco is burned, meeting the sun (i.e. the North is where the spirits meet the hereafter and make the journey home at death along the road of souls across the sky, etc.).

19. We are put on the earth to look after and take care of the earth, not to mutilate it.

20. Children who mutilate the earth must be taught not to. You should redirect children not to abuse the Earth.

21. All people are endowed with a soft voice that animals will understand. Speak softly to them so they know you won't harm them. They are beautiful. We should coexist with animals.

22. You are honored to coexist with animals and not have them run away.

23. The heron arrests the overpopulation of diseased or sick fish. It prevents illnesses.

That's why it's held in high regard.

24. My family, the beaver clan, couldn't trap the beaver. My Grandmother said, "Watch the beaver, you will learn much from them."

25. Every blade of grass has a right to grow. Whenever you set up your shelter don't leave it there long enough to kill the grass. The Great Spirit gave you a strong body to do these things.

26. Indian people were very well traveled in a season. They would go around Lake Michigan and Lake Superior.

27. Lake Superior was "the large body of water of the Ojibway," entirely encompassed by the Ojibway.

28. There are paintings around the lake about things that happened and what would happen.

29. The Dakota would come down and trade medicines with the Ojibway at Lake Superior at Duluth (e.g. the Dakota brought sage and the Ojibway brought bitterroot). The moon of May (the quiet month) would be when they met. After that the wind began to blow heavily.

30. Paintings are found in many places throughout the Ojibway speaking world. They can be found in unusual places.
31. If an elder had a dream he would paint on the rocks. He knew someone sooner or later would be able to translate or read the paintings. It might be one or two generations before someone would come along who could read the paintings.
32. There are places where birch bark scrolls are hidden away in the Great Lakes.
33. The Mide religion is a slow process. Coexist and be able to see the good in everything.
34. The sweat lodge is a purification process.
35. You bring tobacco to an elder, sweat, fast for 4 days (for the vision), sweat, have a ceremony, and then have a feast.
36. The sweat lodge was created, like the rocks, by the Great Spirit. The rocks and circle symbolize Mother Earth.
37. Water cleans you up. Water has spirit too. It is poured on the sweat lodge rocks.
38. Your mind is no longer in turmoil at peace with everything. It is the most wonderful feeling to have.
39. They paddled the length of Stony Lake to Youth Creek which would direct them where they were going.
40. They came to rocks that pointed to the area where they were going to (Shinooge Waabkong or "to point, rocks" or the "pointing rocks").
41. Animals and deer looked at them and they knew they were in hallowed ground and no harm would come to them.
42. They did not speak because it was a place of reverence. They felt eyes on them. This is where some of our elders came to think and to pray there.
43. He could hear water dripping into deep cracks and wondered how far down it was and perhaps that's the reason why they made the impressions and picked that spot.
44. The creator has always sent prophets or messengers to help guide mankind and to keep balance.
45. They add. Each is like a chapter in a book.

46. Don't contribute to the mess. Young people need to be guided to be environmentally conscious. We start the ball rolling. Young people today are asking. Not everyone's vision is blocked.

47. If you think when you look at the petroglyphs it will make some sense to you and give you some sense of peace when you think that there were people who existed there at one time with wisdom.

48. Narration: Fred Wheatley; Additional Voices: Kay Taylor, Jim Small Legs, Liana Wolf Ear. Thanks to National Museum of Civilization, Trent University Department of Native Studies.