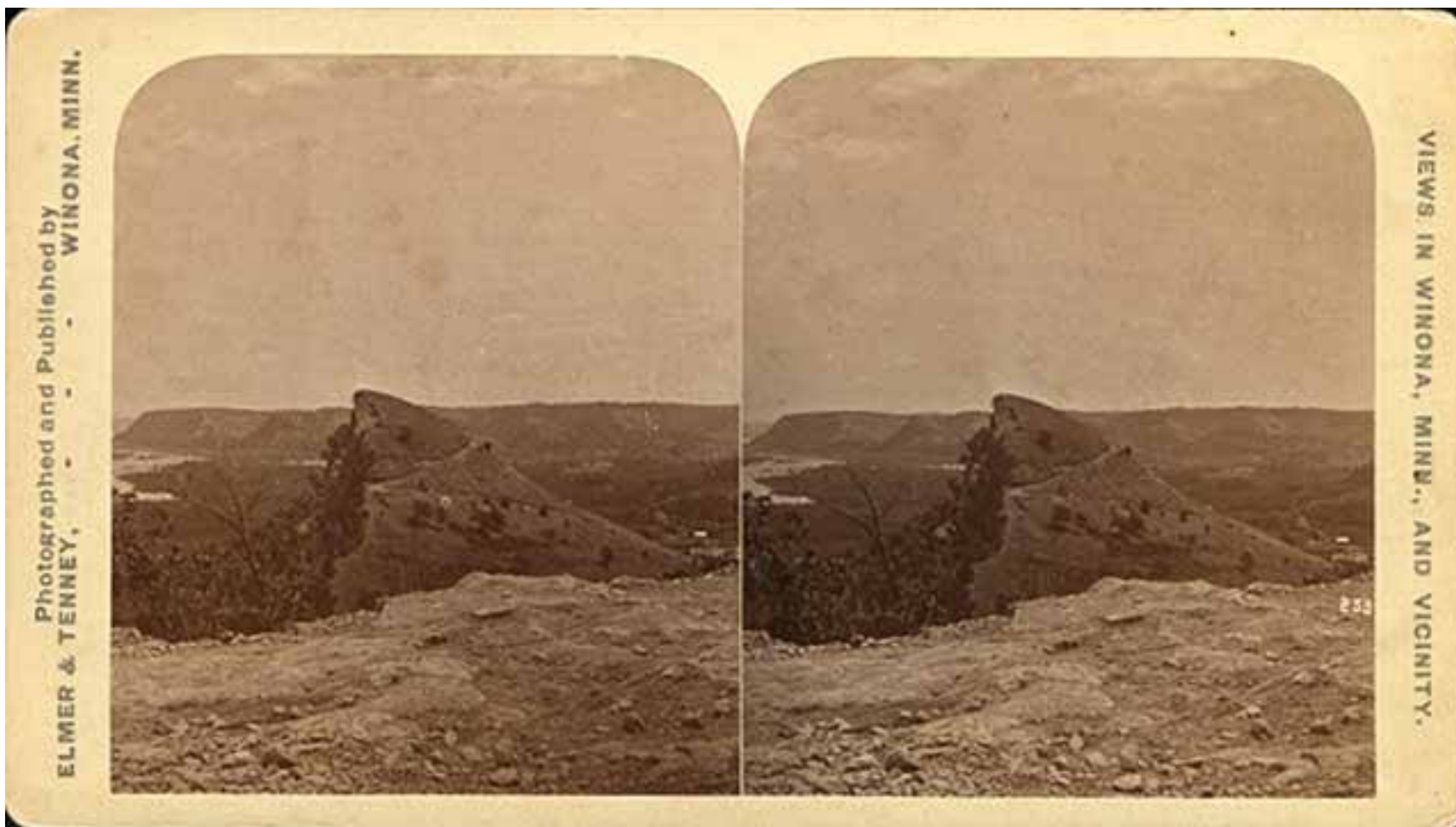


Dakota Oral History

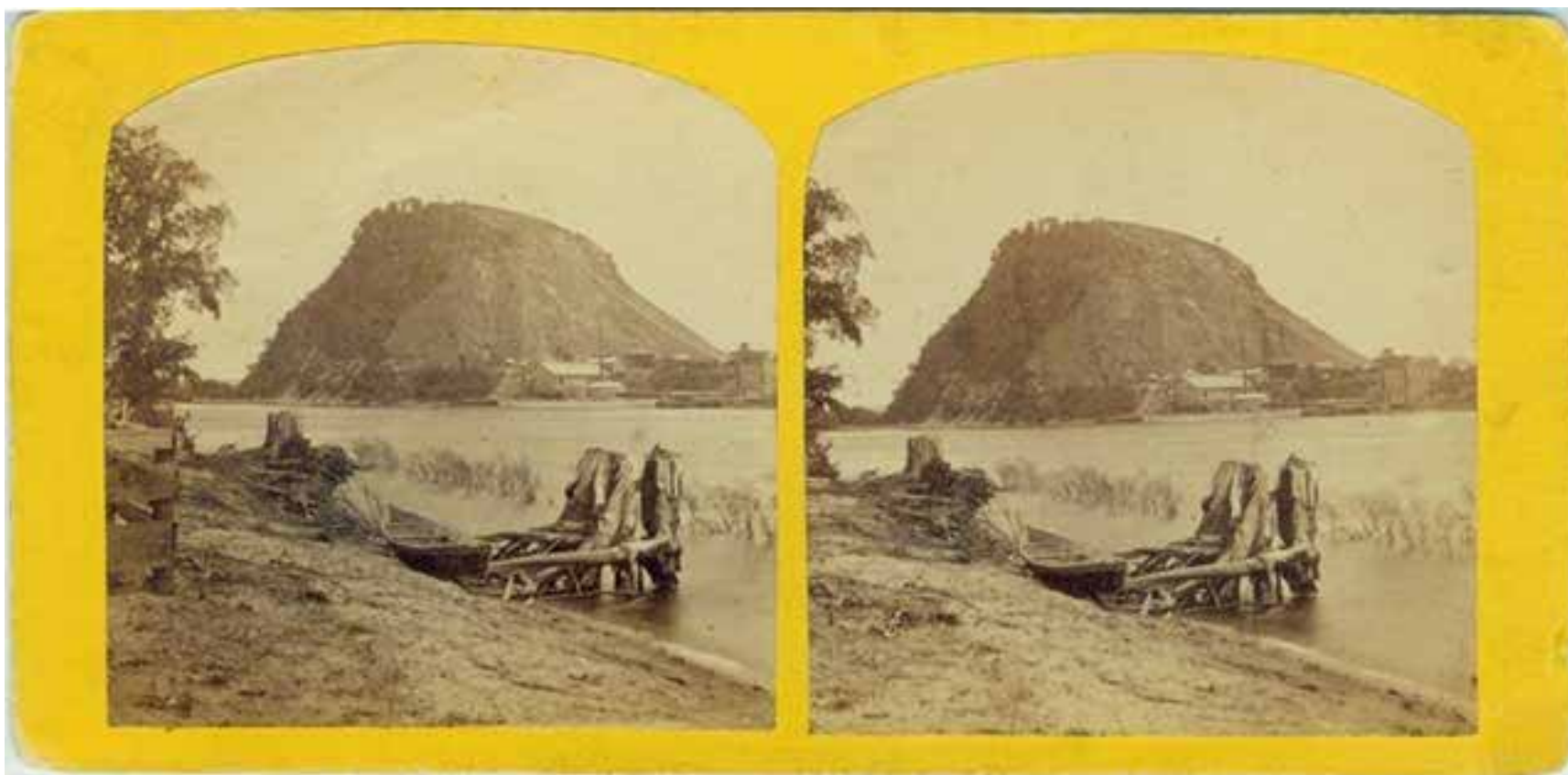
The Dakota people believe that the place of first creation happened at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, known as “Bdote.”

As the population spread and grew from Bdote, a cultural hub formed around He Mni Caṅ – Barn Bluff, near where Red Wing is today.





**1870 Photo of Wapaha Ša Paha
Wabasha's Hat/Sugar Loaf Bluff**

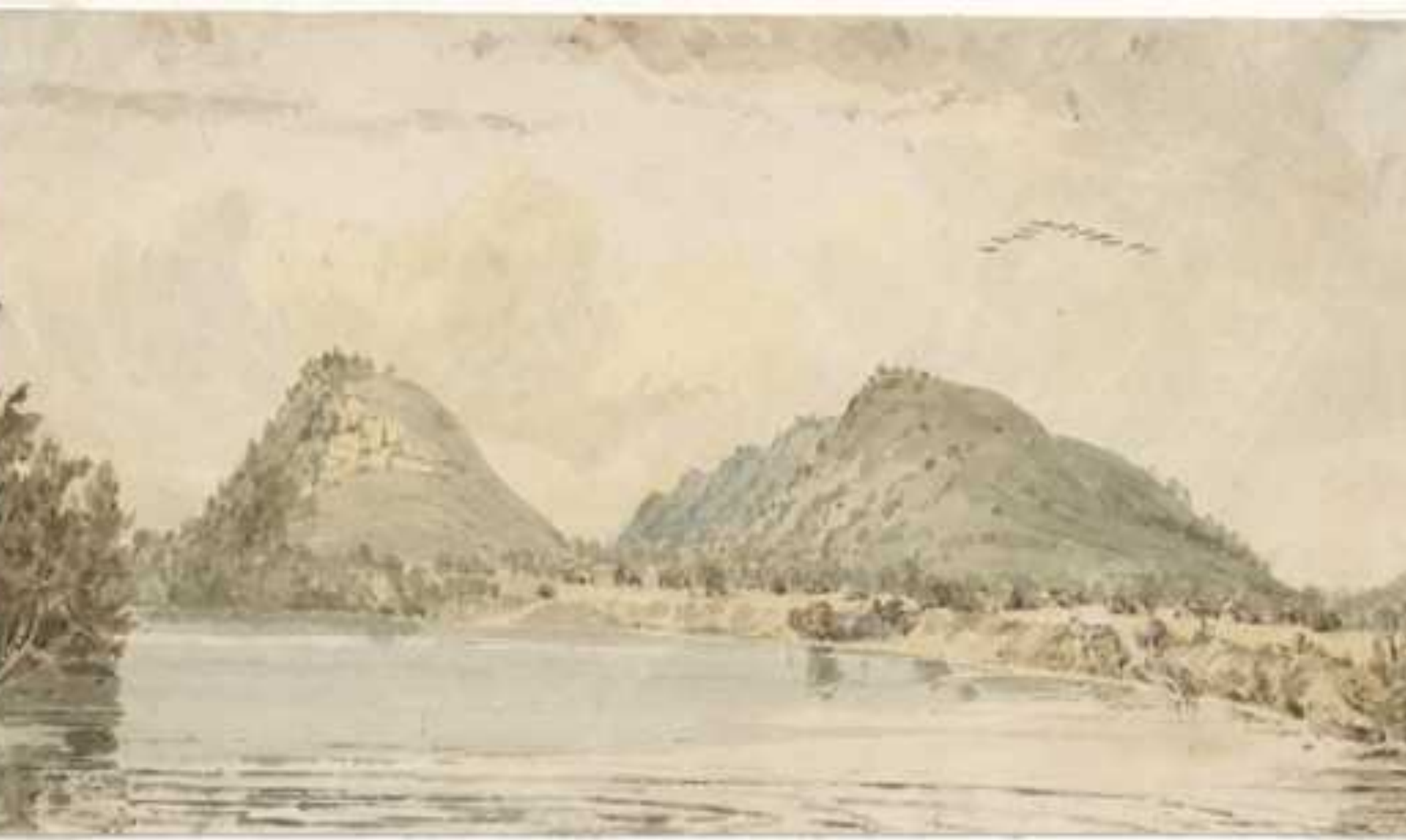


1870 Photo of He Mni Caŋ - Barn Bluff

Ĥe Mni Caŋ & Wapaha Ša Paha

Dakota oral history describes a time when a disagreement arose at the site of Red Wing between two Dakota factions: one under the leadership of Remnechee and the other under Wabasha. “Good spirits” prevented an outbreak of war by enveloping the area in darkness, accompanied by lightning and the earth’s rumbling.

When daylight returned, half of a great hill that was once there was gone, leaving behind Ĥe Mni Caŋ – Barn Bluff. The other half of the hill, together with Wabasha and his followers, was transported down the Mississippi River at present day Winona. The hill known as Wapaha Ša Paha (Wabasha’s Hat or Sugar Loaf Bluff) came to rest there, and Wabasha’s band formed their village.



***Watercolor by Seth Eastman, titled:
Red Wing's village, seventy miles below the Falls of St. Anthony,
ca. 1846–1848.***

Landmark Through The Ages

*“...the most beautiful prospect that
imagination can form.”*

Jonathan Carver, 1766

*At “...the band of the Aile Rouge,” we
“ascended a high hill called the Barn from
which we had a view of Lake Pepin.”*

Zebulon Pike, 1806

*“...called the Grange, from the summit
of which you enjoy the most
charming prospect.”*

Henry Schoolcraft, 1820



Henry Schoolcraft wrote of the view from the East Overlook in 1820:

“...Lake Pepin spreads its ample sheet across the entire valley of the river, from bluff to bluff, and the indentures of its shores recede one behind another...”

Lithograph by A. Ruger, ca. 1870

Wabasha Reservation - Half-Breed Tract



Detail from Minnesota Map No. 33 in Indian Land Cessions in the United States 1845-1893, Charles C. Royce, comp. (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1899).

Wabasha Reservation - Half-Breed Tract

In 1830 the Dakota and other tribes signed a treaty that in part involved the establishment of a tract of land for people of Dakota and European ancestry (sometimes called “half-breeds”). The tract of land began at He Mni Canj – Barn Bluff, then extended away from the Mississippi River southwest fifteen miles, continued southeast in a line parallel to Lake Pepin, and ended near Wabasha opposite the mouth of the Buffalo River.

The area was called the “Wabasha Reservation” or the “Half-Breed Tract,” although the Dakota preferred to name the people of mixed ancestry with terms that generally translate as “our relations.” The tract was abolished in later treaties.



Benjamin Young (1814 to 1899), also known as Pa Inyanka Duta or Rolling Red Hoop, selected a large tract of land in the half-breed tract around He Mni Caŋ – Barn Bluff. His mother was a Dakota woman named Hapstiŋ. Hapstiŋ was a sister of Chief Wabasha’s mother. His father was Stephan Young, a Scottish man who served as an interpreter for early American visitors to the area in the 1830s.

Mr. Young’s land claim became embroiled in a boundary dispute that was eventually resolved. Later there was an additional dispute over whether Young had made the required improvements to the land to provide evidence of his occupancy of the land.

Young became discouraged and subsequently relinquished his claim to Dr. Sweeney. Young was compensated, in part, with a “yoke of cattle.”

Five months before the U.S.-Dakota War, Young mustered in at Fort Snelling on March 14, 1862, to serve in the Civil War. Serving in Company G, Fifth Minnesota, he saw action in every major campaign and rose to the rank of Corporal. In the 1870s he relocated to Santee, Nebraska and is buried there.

*“What we call wildness is a civilization
other than our own.”* **Walden, 1854.**

*“In wildness is the preservation of
the world.”* **Walking, 1861.**

Henry David Thoreau

Henry David Thoreau (1817 – 1862) is known for his masterpiece, Walden (1854), a philosophical novel of living life close to nature.

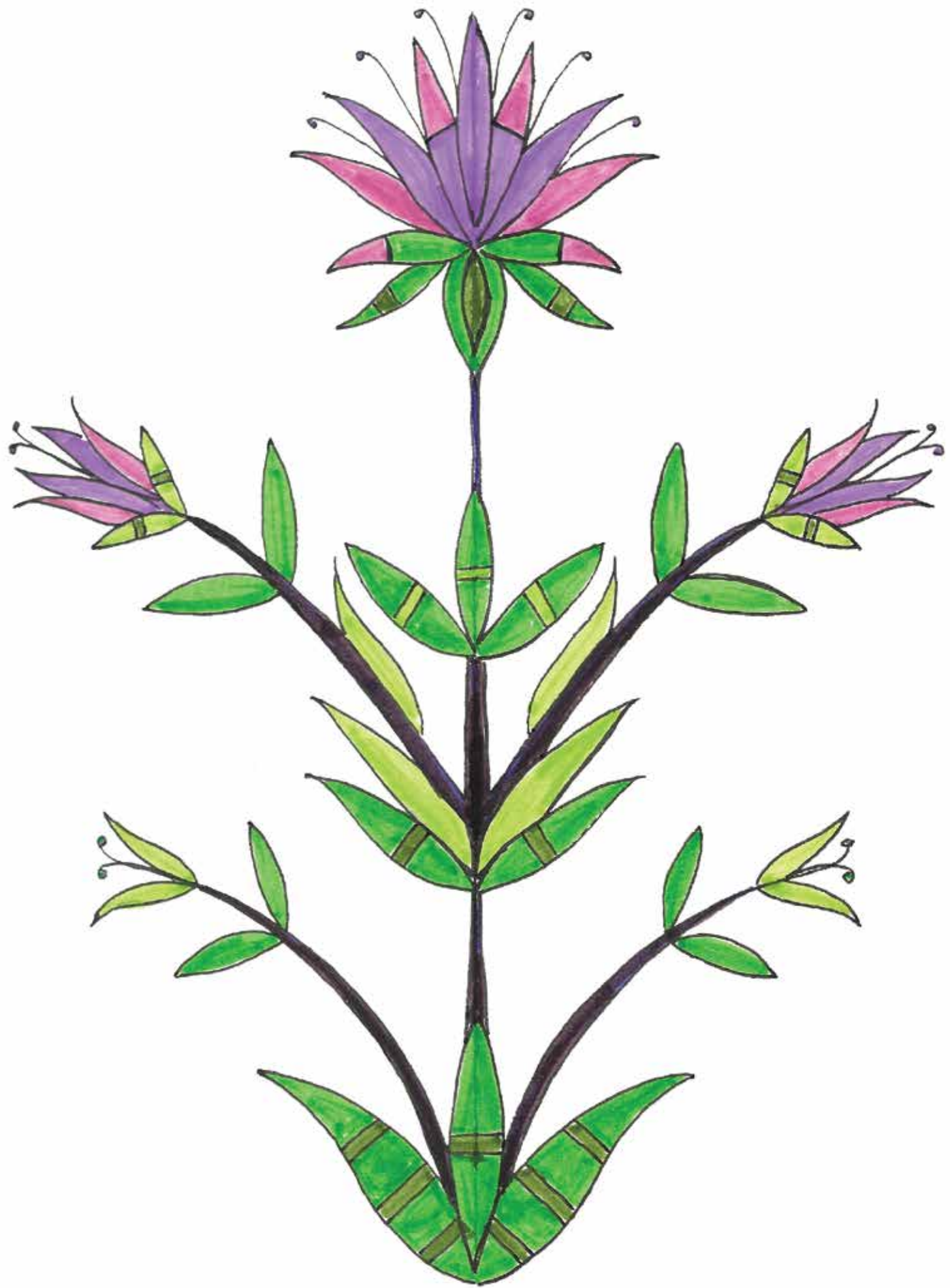
Thoreau and his traveling companion, seventeen-year-old Horace Mann, Jr., a family friend and aspiring naturalist, set out on an excursion from Massachusetts to Minnesota in 1861. On the way home they visited Red Wing for four days in July. Henry read his mail “...near the top of a remarkable isolated bluff here, called Barn Bluff, or the Grange, or Redwing Bluff.”

Thoreau's letter to Frank Sanborn, June 25, 1861.

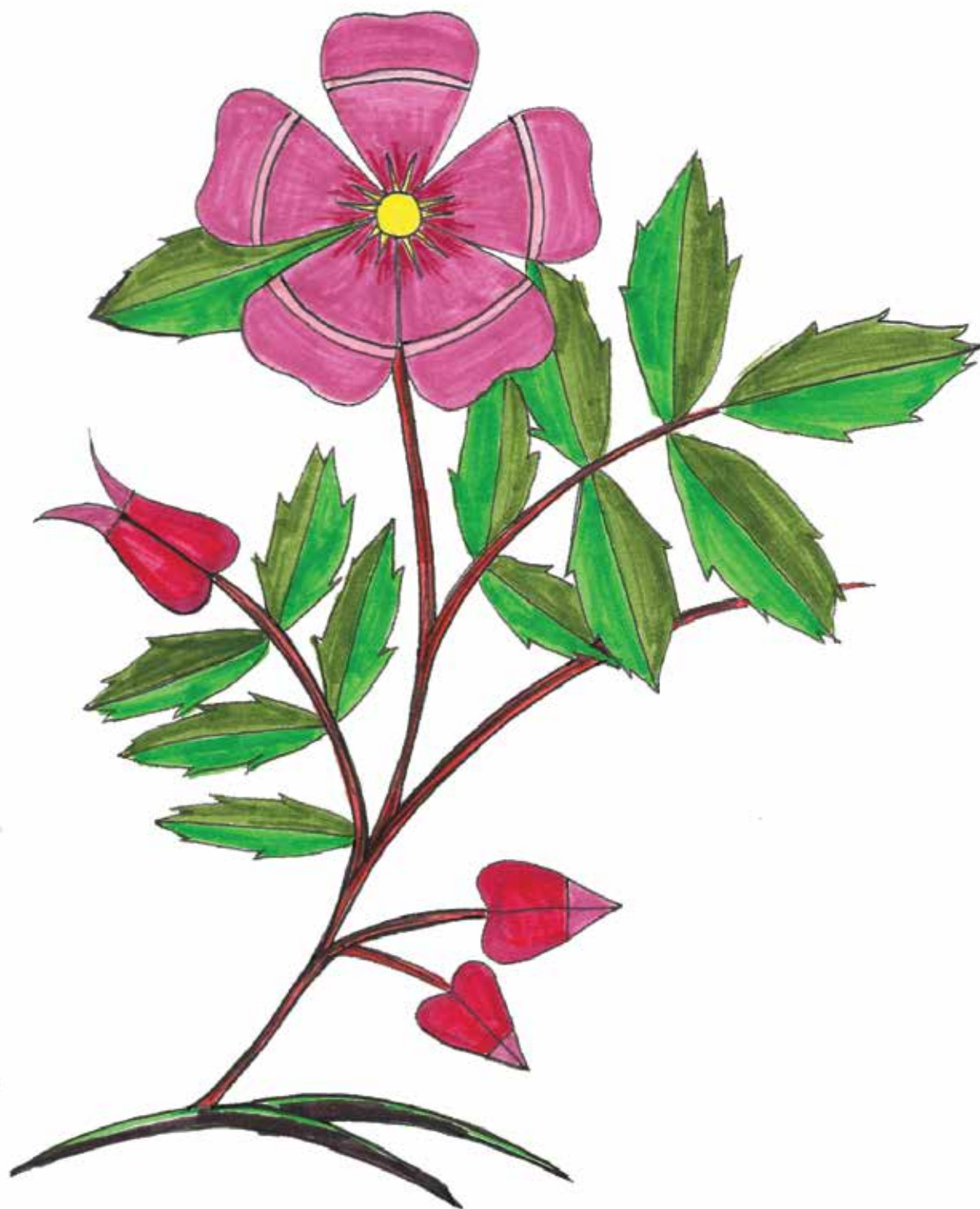


*How little appreciation of the
beauty of the landscape there is
among us!*

**Henry David Thoreau
Walking, 1861**



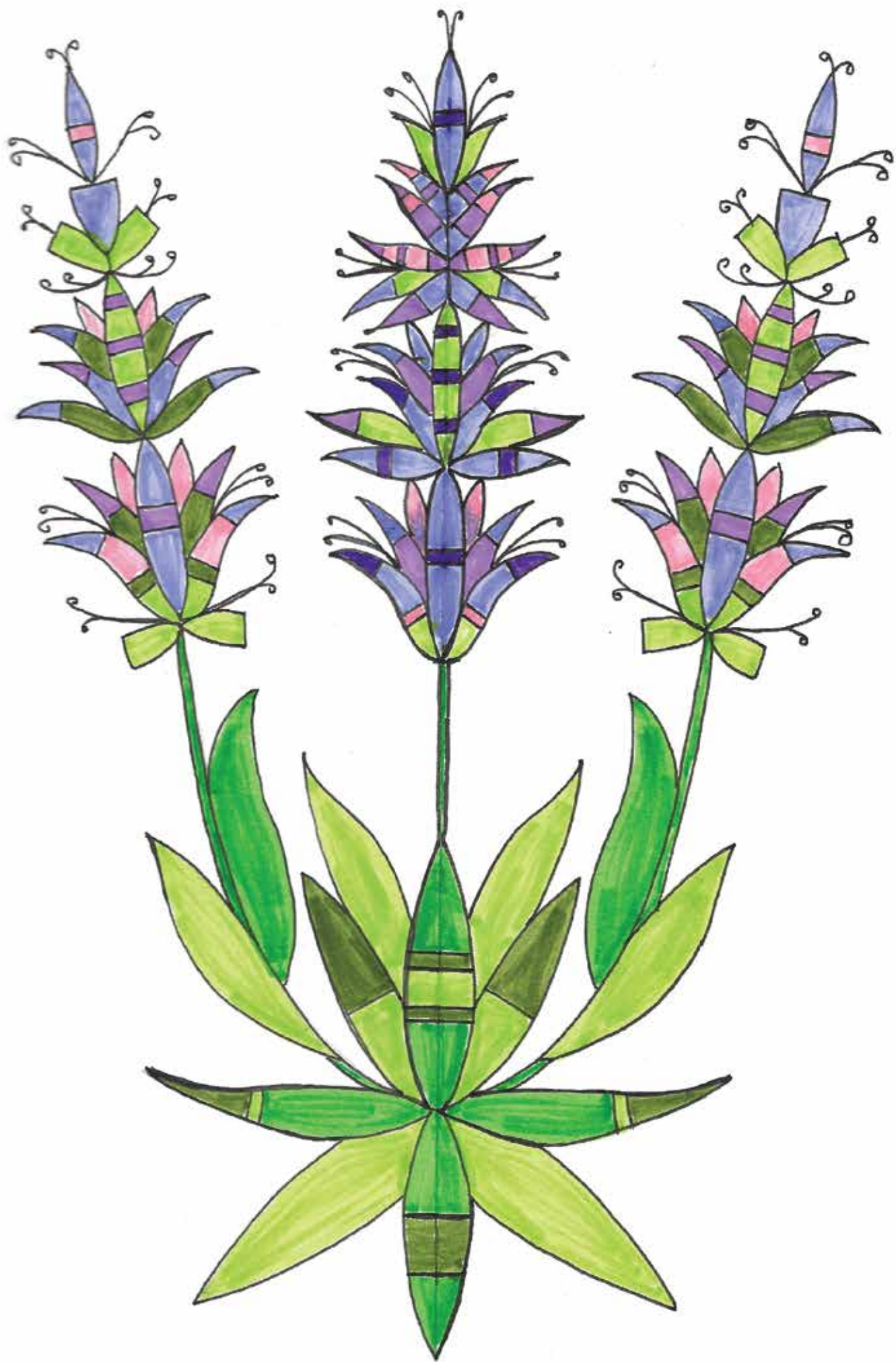
Bergamot



Wild Rose

Cole Redhorse Jacobson

I am an artist in both a contemporary and traditional sense, using western mediums as well as the materials my people used to create. As a Dakota artist, everything about being Dakota inspires me. Mni Šota is our homeland and it's what inspired our people from our creation, forward to now. For my ancestors, the stars, the waters, and the earth inspired the art they created every day. Their art was both decorative and tactical, used as teaching tools and for expression. It is in this same vein that I aspire to be as an artist, and it is what I model my work after. If we do not continue these traditions they will disappear.



Hyssop



Why Restore the Bluff Prairies?

Minnesota has lost most of its native tall grass prairies and oak savannas, and now these plant communities are some of the rarest and most endangered in the U.S.

The high quality prairies and oak savannas at He Mni Caŋ – Barn Bluff are large enough to provide habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals.

“What are the natural features which make a township handsome? A river, with its waterfalls and meadows, a lake, a hill, a cliff or individual rocks, a forest, and ancient trees standing singly. Such things are beautiful, they have a high use which dollars and cents never represent.

If the inhabitants of a town were wise, they would seek to preserve these things, though at a considerable expense; for such things educate far more than any hired teachers or preachers, or any at present recognized system of school education.”

Henry David Thoreau

Journal, January 3, 1861 prior to his Minnesota trip later that summer.

Preserve, Protect, Restore Our Natural Resources

Beginning with He Mni Caŋ – Barn Bluff, Red Wing launched a program to restore critical bluffland prairies in 2011.

A Habitat Management Plan was prepared by Tim Connolly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

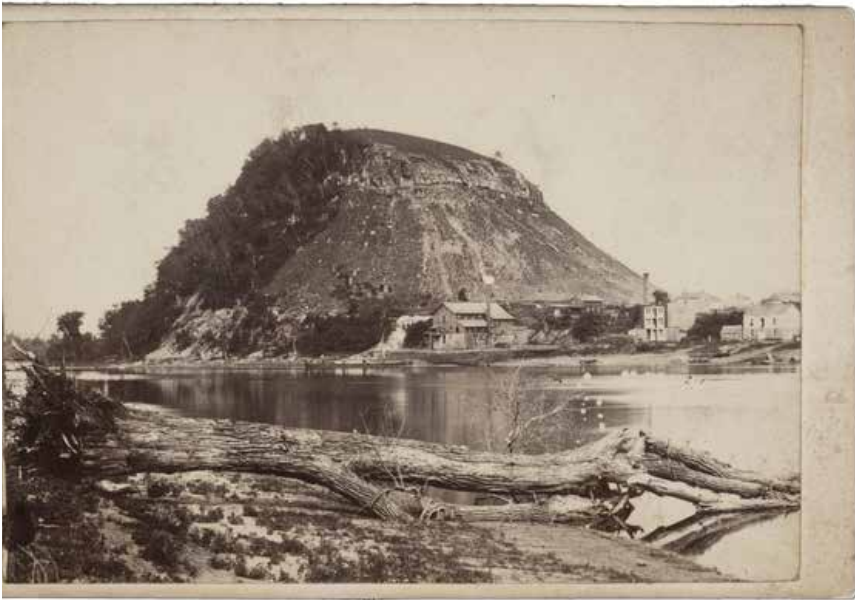


***Priority One:
Maintain and restore the prairies and oak savannas. (See Map)***



***Priority Two:
Control exotic species by removing unwanted
vegetation with the help of controlled fires.***

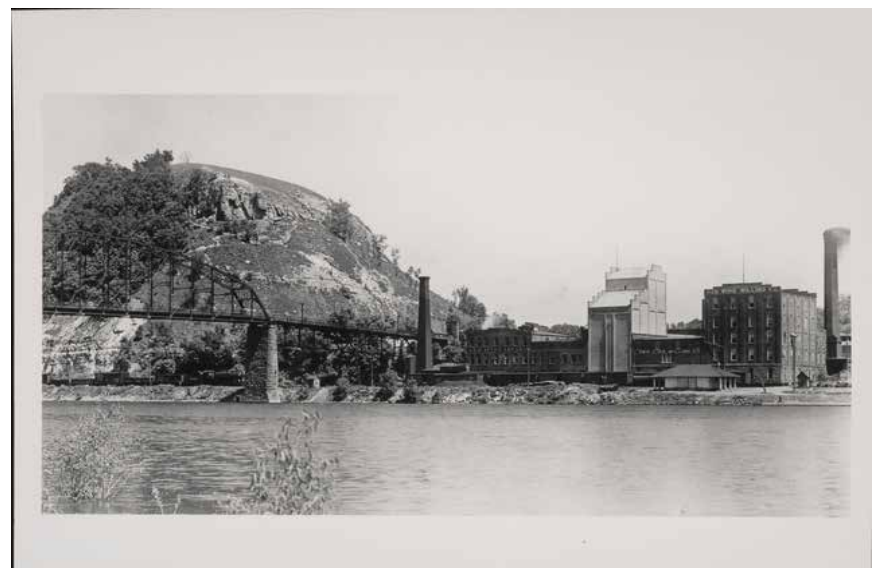
Riverfront Scenes



1865



1898



1930

Backdrop to History

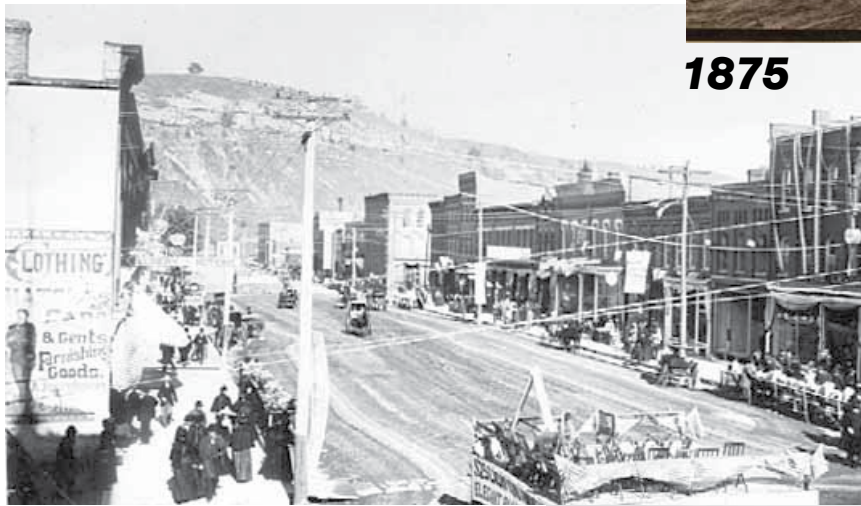
The Mni Cañ – Barn Bluff was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 3, 1990. The bluff is one of Minnesota's most iconic landscapes and Red Wing's most popular photographic subjects.

Photos taken of the historic downtown and riverfront have depicted the life and times of the community since the early days of photography, with the bluff providing the stage and the backdrop.

Downtown Scenes



1860



1875

1896 Street Fair



**1900 Webster's
Way Trail
Maintenance**



1941

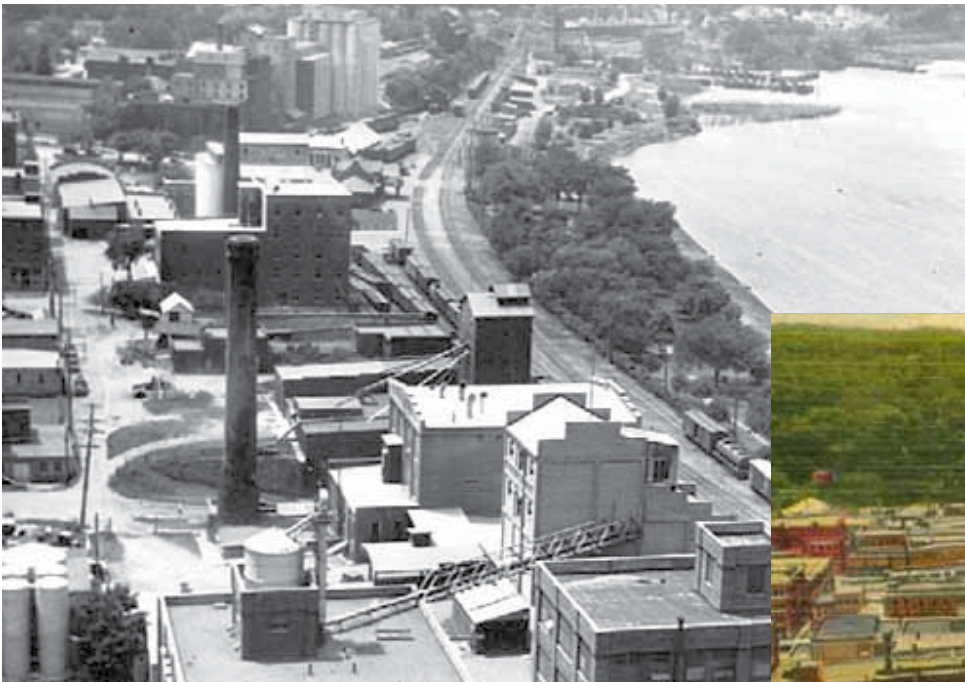
View to the West



1870



1890



1936



1940

Documented from the Heights

The history of Red Wing and the surrounding valley have been recorded over time by photographers who have climbed He Mni Caṅ – Barn Bluff to enjoy the view below. These bird's-eye views provide a wonderful chronological account of the community.

Photos of the Mississippi River, 1900





***He Mni Caṅ – Barn Bluff, near Red Wing, 1840s
Teepees in foreground
Courtesy Goodhue County Historical Society***

Bdewakanṭuṅwan – *“Those Who Were Born of the Waters”*

Tataṅka Mani (Walking Buffalo) was born in the mid-1700s and was leader of a Bdewakanṭuṅwan Dakota tribe. He was one of a succession of Dakota leaders (including his father by the same name) who had winter villages on the west side of the Mississippi River near Lake Pepin and reportedly carried a scarlet-dyed swan’s wing. Sometime after 1812, the village was moved to the foot of He Mni Caṅ – Barn Bluff.

Tataṅka Mani was known for his great skill in hunting and warfare, and his followers believed he possessed supernatural power and the ability to tell the future through dreams.

He died on March 4, 1829.



***Dakota Indian Village – circa 1860
Painting by Art Kenyon, 2019***



**1870 View of Red Wing
He Mni Caṅ – Barn Bluff in the Background**

Early Town Development

Red Wing events and development have also been chronicled from the surrounding bluffs, with the presence of He Mni Caŋ – Barn Bluff reminding us of where we are.

Viewed from the Surrounding Bluffs



1880



1915

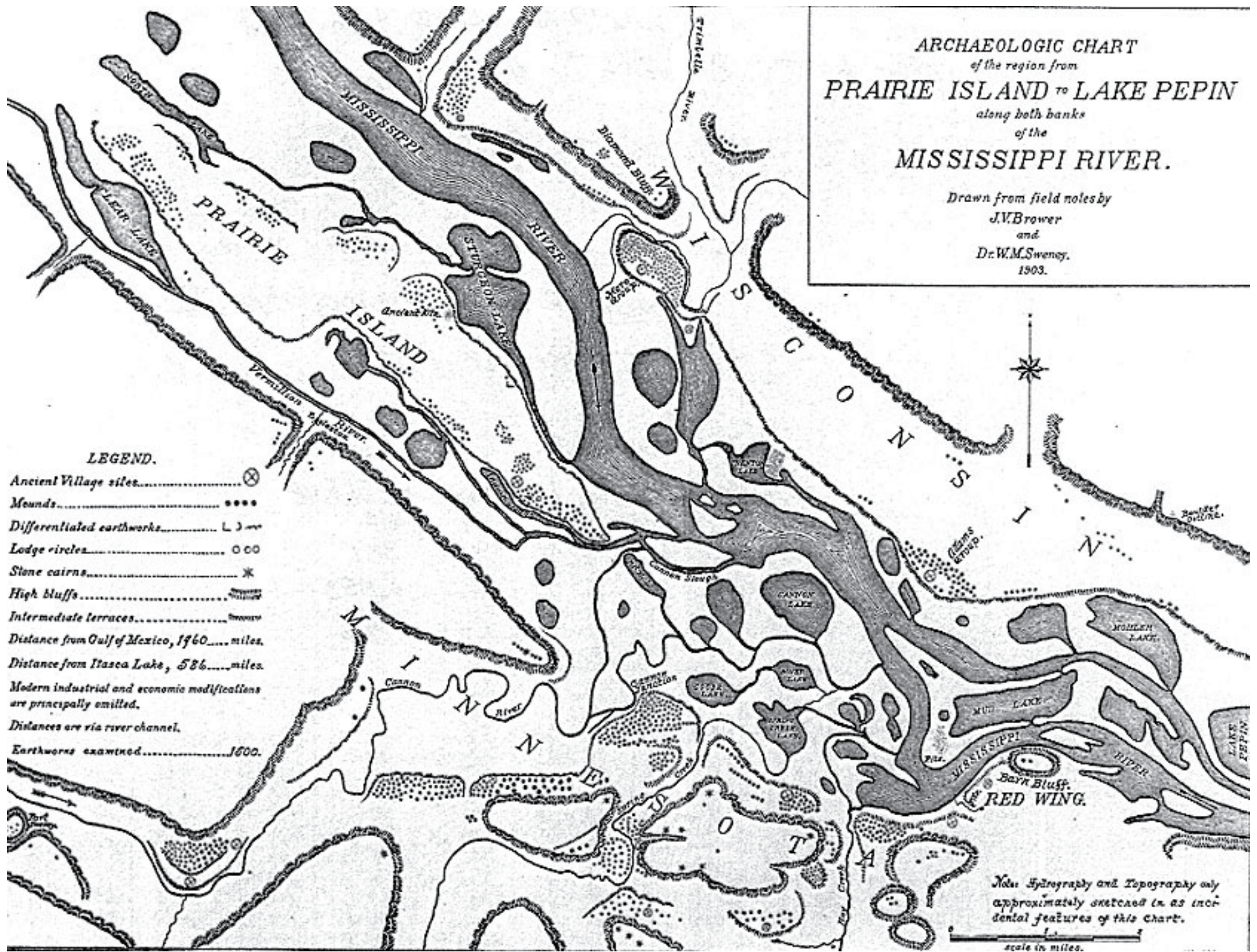
Native American Earthworks

About 1,000 years ago, when the Mississippi River and land around Red Wing began to resemble their current configuration, the fertile river valley became home to numerous village sites. During this time, Indigenous people constructed more than 2,000 earthworks in the surrounding area. (See the early Archaeological Chart created by J.V. Brower and Dr. W.M. Sweeney in 1903 below.)

With evidence of mounds atop the bluff and reports of artifacts from this era at the foot of the bluff, archaeologists incorporated He Mni Can - Barn Bluff into the cultural landscape. They referred to it as The Red Wing Locality.



A Region Of Cultural Significance



A Sacred Place



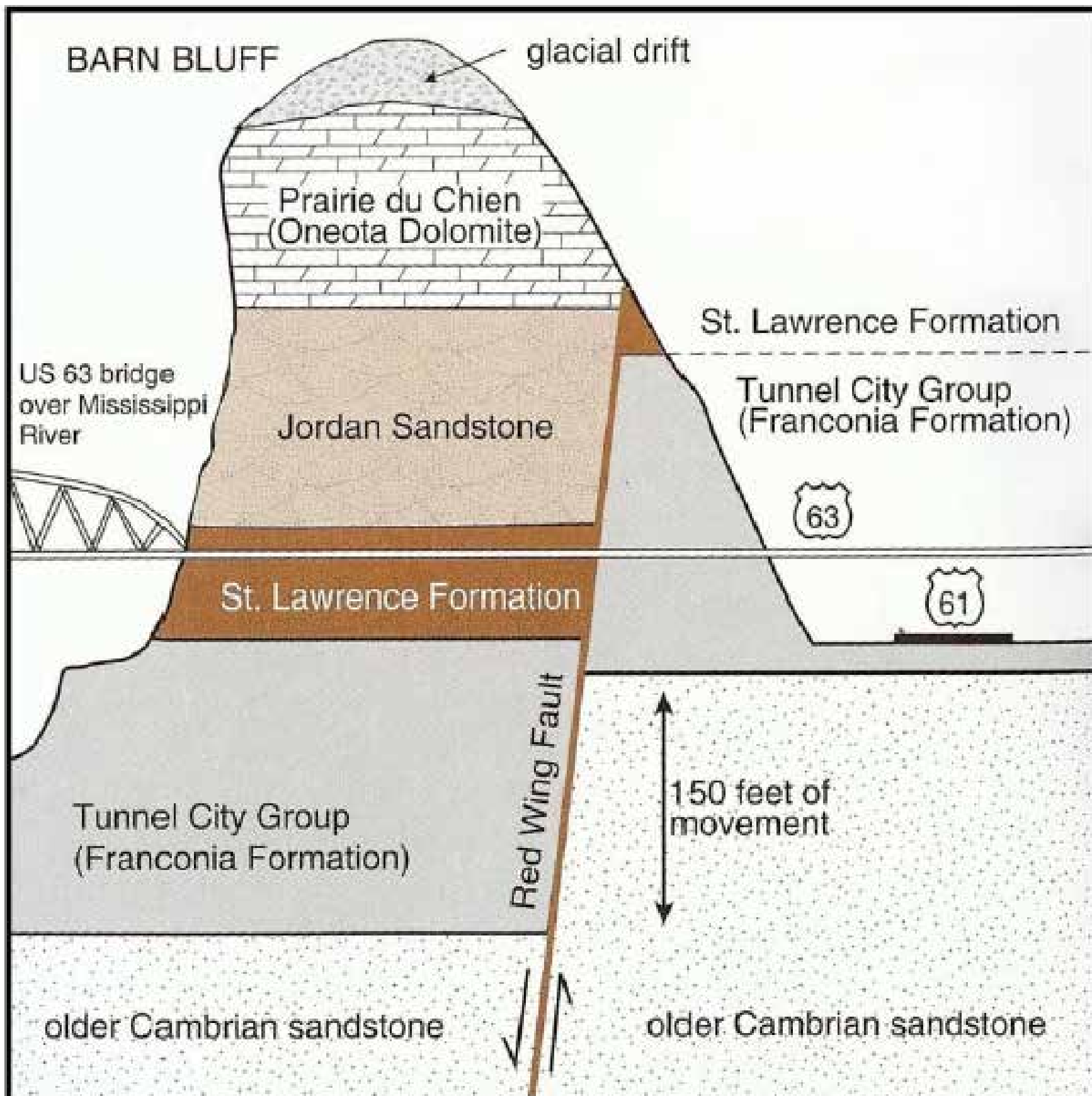
1915 Photo

He Mni Caŋ – Barn Bluff is considered “Wakaŋ” or sacred to the Dakota people. Many medicinal plants grow abundantly in the area, and the Dakota buried their dead on top of and around the area of the bluff. For generations, an unusual rocky outcropping on the western side of the bluff resembled a face and was known to the Dakota as Caske Cistiŋna (the Small First-Born). That section of the bluff was destroyed in the middle of the 20th century when the Hiawatha Bridge was built over the Mississippi River.



Geology of this Place

Imagine stepping back in time more than 10,000 years ago. Glacial drift remnants on top of He Mni Caŋ – Barn Bluff tell us that the last glaciers in Minnesota rode over the top of the entire area before the valley eroded. As the glacier retreated, glacial Lake Agassiz lay in what is now the Red River Valley, and glacial Lake Duluth occupied the Lake Superior basin. Both bodies of water drained into the Mississippi, the former through the Minnesota River and the latter through the St. Croix. This drainage created the five mile-wide valley that we see today. He Mni Caŋ – Barn Bluff was then an island in the water-filled valley.



(Richard W. Ojakangas, Roadside Geology of Minnesota, Mountain Press Publishing, 2009)

Red Wing Fault

The Red Wing Geological Fault

The exposed fault at He Mni Caṅ – Barn Bluff was created 250 to 300 million years ago and is one of the most visible in Minnesota. The fault was created by greenish Franconia Greensand being pushed against yellow St. Lawrence Siltstone. The rock strata at the fault line slipped down approximately 150 feet, and the color difference in those two types of rock is what makes the fault stand out. The fault is visible on the south side of the bluff from Highway 61.

What is a Land Acknowledgment?

A Land Acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that we gather on the traditional and sacred land of the Dakota people, and we honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations, including the Prairie Island Indian Community, descendants of the Bdewakantunwan Band of the Eastern Dakota, and other Indigenous nations.

Why A Land Acknowledgment?

A land acknowledgment is a step in reconciliation. It begins by respecting and honoring the Indigenous history in Red Wing, which started long before European and American explorers and settlers came to this area.

This is a shift toward understanding the truth about our past and invites today's visitors to learn more about Indigenous history and culture. Recognition is one step in a long reconciliation process that becomes more meaningful through relationships and action.

We make this acknowledgment here at He Mni Caŋ – Barn Bluff because this is a sacred place to the Dakota people.

Communities Coming Together



On October 16, 2018, officials of the City of Red Wing and Prairie Island Indian Community, along with many residents of both communities, came together to celebrate He Mni Caŋ – Barn Bluff and a decision by the Red Wing City Council to prohibit graffiti on the bluff.

Today, the connection between Prairie Island Indian Community and the City of Red Wing is growing stronger, and both communities view this bluff as a positive way forward.

Mitakuye Owasin
We Are All Related

Working Together



A joint committee of representatives of the Prairie Island Indian Community, the City of Red Wing, and consultants worked together to develop educational and interpretive plans for He Mni Caŋ – Barn Bluff.

Committee members include, Front Row from Left: Franky Jackson, Tori Campbell, Nicky Buck, Steve Kohn, Brian Peterson;

Back Row from Left: Michelle Leise, Jacob Burgstahler, Therese Huffman, Noah White III, Arthur Lockwood, Joey Taylor, and Ron Seymour.