**SPIRIT STONES WILBERT B. HINSDALE 1929 Edited July 2020 for Pulpit Rock Leads**

***Joseph Addison*** in **the Spectator** (1709). "*The Americans believe that all creatures have souls, not only men and women, but brutes, vegetables, nay, even the most inanimate things, as stocks and stones. They believe the same of all works of art, as knives, boats, looking-glasses; and that as many of these things perish, their souls go into another world, which is inhabited by the ghosts of men and women. For this reason they also place by the corpse of their dead, food, a bow and arrows, that he may make use of the souls of them in the other world, as he did of their wooden bodies in this. How absurd soever such an opinion may appear, our European philosophers have maintained several notions altogether as improbable."1*

Although the Indian's religion did not have a personal god, or a pantheon of divinities, he recognized what has been variously described as "the supernatural,” "a mystic potency,” "the more than human,” "cosmic reality," "determiner of destiny," "a mystery of purpose," or an "X" which possesses some "transcendent power concretely divine." Nowhere in the world did men reverence "stocks and stones" as such. Everything in nature possessed a "power " usually referred to as spirit, that evoked awe and occasionally ceremony.2 **(Brinton)** Whatever was unusual in shape, color, movement or N situation caused the Indian, as he passed by, to hesitate and perform acts that may not have been worshipful, but they were reverentially respectful, and his ceremonies, upon such occasions, may well be described as religious.

Bela Hubbard "***Sacred stones were not uncommon in these parts. I have seen several such altars, sometimes in the most wild and lonely situations, invariably covered with bits of tobacco and other petty gifts."***3 1837: "Upon a swelling knoll, overlooking the bay, in the midst of a tract of country from which all timber had been burned, was a spot which seemed to have been dedicated to the evil Manitou. Here an altar was erected, composed of two large stones, several feet in height, with a flat top and broad base. About were several small stones which were covered with propitiatory offerings, — bits of tobacco, pieces of tin, flints, and such articles, of little value to the Indians, as, with religious philosophy, he dedicates to his Manitou."4 **Mystery stones** were common along the Lake Huron shore. Near arid around the stones were large numbers of pipes, tobacco, beads, ear jewels, silver brooches, buttons and various kinds of trinkets. There was a story that Shin-gaw-ba, a divine chief, lived there a long time ago. He told his people he would come back to the stones for the presents that they might leave for him. The Indians called the place Shin-gawba-waw-sin-eke-go-ba-wat-waw-sin-eke, signifying **"image stones."**. These valuable relics were finally broken up by fishermen and used for net anchors.

***worn quite smooth by the Indians. It was a sacred Indian god which they all stopped and worshiped by a speech or a smoke. They also left other articles in addition to pieces of tobacco, and among them were pieces of copper*** cut from the copper boulder on the Ontonagon River, Lake Superior. They call these things their ***'Manitou personnel'*** but the proper Ojibbeway word is said to be **'Nigouimes,’** which means **'my hope’** One calls a tree, another a stone or block, 'his hope.’

There are certain ***fixed days for honoring this statue with feasts, games, dances and prayers***, which are addressed to it with diverse ceremonies. Among them is one which All the men, one after another, approach the statue and, in order to pay it homage with tobacco, offer it their pipes, that it may smoke; but, as the idol cannot avail itself of the offer, they smoke in its stead***, blowing into its face the tobacco-smoke***, which they have in their mouths,— which may be regarded as a mode of offering incense, and performing sacrifice.” By **"black bronze" the father means of course copper**.14 the reason for calling it a ***"spirit" object*** now placed in the **Museum of Mineralogy of the University of Michigan**. Kohl says in Kitchi-Gami, pp. 60-61: " the most superstitious reverence for **copper**,

Copper mentioned in Squires p176 <https://archive.org/details/aboriginalmonume0000squi>

occasionally the objects had been **bedaubed with paint**, probably to "bring out the features" more distinctly. Some of them have been referred to as "***idols," but idols are usually man-made effigies to represent deities and belong to a different, if not a higher, grade of worship than the mere abiding place of orenda or mana in a natural object.*** At certain places the Indians had made stone piles, built up one stone at a time by passers-by. These heaps, no doubt, were located at certain spots where some event had occurred, or where previously a "spirit tree" had stood. Tobacco pipes, especially those of peculiar material like catlinite, were nothing more or less than transportable spirit stones or diminutive altars. Catlinite was considered sacred, and before breaking off pieces for pipes, one asked permission from the presiding spirit. Although it is going far afield for an illustration, Lot's wife cannot be better described than by calling her, after she became a "pillar of salt," a spirit stone. If there was a "pillar of salt" at all by the Dead Sea, it stood there ages before the legend of "looking back" was associated with it. No mention can be made of lakes, springs, streams, waterfalls, caves, hills, mountains or trees that were the depository of votive offerings, although they would classify under the general term **"spirit objects."**

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN 1 The Spectator in Miniature, from the second London edition (A. Sherman, Phila., 1826), 1: 65. **2 Brinton, Daniel G., Religions of Primitive Peoples**, p. 131. 3 Michigan Pioneer Collections, 3: 649. **4 Hubbard, B., Memorials of a Half-Century (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1887), pp. 85-86.** 5 Oliver, D. D., Centennial History of Alpena County, Michigan (Argus Printing House, Alpena, Michigan, 1913), p. 25. 6 Unpublished manuscript. **7 Squier, E. G., Antiquities of the State of New York (Geo. H. Derby & Co., 1851), p. 171**. <https://archive.org/details/antiquitiesofsta00squirich>

8 Gagnieur, Rev. Wm. F., S. J., "Indian Place Names in the Upper Peninsula, and Their Interpretation," Michigan History Magazine, 2 (1918): 532. 9 Blois, John T., Gazetteer of the State of Michigan (Sydney L. Rood & Co., Detroit, 1838), pp. 317-318. 10 Stannard, Mae E., and Hunzicker, Beatrice Plum, "Glimpses of Huron Shore in Early Days and the Story of Harrisville," Al11 Williams, Ephraim S., Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, 10: 139-140. 12 Kohl, J. G., Kitchi-Gami (London, 1860), p. 58. 13 Schoolcraft, H. R., Personal Memoirs of a Residence of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes on the American Frontiers, A.D. 1812 to A.D. 1842 (Lippincott, Grambo & Co., Phila., 1851), p. 99. **14 Kenton, Edna, The Indians of North America, 2: 164, quoting Le Mercier's Relation, 1664-65, xlix, Doc. CXVII, pp. 241, 243.** 15 Moore, Charles, Report of U. S. National Museum, Washington (Government Printing Office, Washington, 1897), p. 1023.cona County Review, 1926, p. 4.

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