

# *Red Rock*

## *Frontier Methodist Camp Meeting*

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DURING THE PAST TEN SUMMERS, since 1940, young people and adults in steadily increasing numbers have gone to Frontenac, a present-day Minnesota mecca for Methodists on the shores of historic and picturesque Lake Pepin. There, in a setting of unusual beauty and charm, the modern pilgrim finds congenial companionship and opportunities for study, worship, and play. Sixty and seventy years ago Minnesota Methodists, seeking the pleasure and inspiration which come from meeting and worshipping together, likewise converged on the Mississippi, though not at Frontenac. Their destination was Red Rock, some seven miles below St. Paul, where from 1869 on the most famous of early-day Minnesota camp meetings were held. Extremely popular on the frontier, where opportunities for social intercourse were rare, the Methodist camp meetings, and especially those at Red Rock, were "the great social, intellectual, and spiritual fair and feast of the times." From near and far, people went to them "in crowds leaving their cares behind them to commune with God and one another under the tree tops and stars."<sup>1</sup>

The camp meeting in America seems to have had its origin with the Cumberland Presbyterians in Tennessee and Kentucky, but it was so readily adopted by the Methodists that it became commonly associated with that denomination. Despite its popularity with nineteenth-century Methodists, the camp meeting never was given official sanction by incorporation into the Methodist *Doctrines and Discipline*; thus, it remained more or less an extracurricular activity, a part of the unwritten law of the church. In the South, and even in the Ohio Valley, camp meetings were at times accompanied by great emotional demonstrations of jerking

<sup>1</sup> William McKinley, "My Ministerial Apprenticeship." This lecture, given on June 8, 1897, and others by Methodist ministers cited herein are in a collection of Methodist Papers owned by the Minnesota Historical Society. The name Red Rock originally applied to an egg-shaped granite boulder located on the low limestone bank where Little Crow and his Sioux band landed when going to their summer home at Kaposia near by. Unable to explain the presence of a granite boulder on a limestone bank, the Indians held the stone in awe, smearing it with red paint and offering gifts of sugar, tobacco, skins, pipes, ducks, and fish to its spirit. In time, the name Red Rock was used to designate the whole area surrounding the boulder. See Mrs. H. A. Hobart, *Memories and Incidents of Red Rock Park Association from its Commencement in 1868 to the Present Time*, 3 (Red Wing, 1887).

and fainting and immorality. Francis Grierson, in his classic, *The Valley of Shadows*, for example, describes a camp meeting in Illinois in the 1850's, which was attended by several thousand people. The scene according to Grierson, "resembled a coast strewn with the dead and dying after a great wreck, and a murmuring tumult alternately rose and fell like that from a moaning wind and a surging sea." In Minnesota, so far as the records attest, no camp meeting congregation ever prostrated itself on the ground or gave way to immoral outrages under the guise of religious feeling. The Minnesota meetings appear to have conformed quite closely to the methods of worship followed in the regular church structures; though, of course, the external trappings of the meetings, the beauty of noonday in the woods, the glare of torches and fires at night, and the effect of mass psychology tended to create strong religious fervor.<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to say when the first camp meeting was held in Minnesota. The Reverend Benjamin Kavanaugh, a Methodist preacher who labored in the vicinity of Fort Snelling about 1840, stated, for example, that no meetings were held in Minnesota during his stay there. Apparently from Kavanaugh's time until the middle 1850's, Methodist ministers were too busy traveling their circuits and organizing classes and societies to hold camp meetings. Finally in 1855 a camp meeting, perhaps the first in Minnesota, was held about three miles from the village of Red Wing, in an oak grove on the farm of Lehmen Bates. The services, which were under the direction of the Reverend Jabez Brooks, principal and librarian of Hamline University, began with a prayer meeting attended by thirty-three persons on Wednesday evening, August 8. A few tents had been pitched in the grove during the day, and more were added as the days passed. Some of the people in attendance traveled over a hundred miles on horseback, in wagons, and by steamboats to reach the meeting. The Reverend David Brooks, father of Jabez Brooks, made arrangements with steamboat captains to carry camp meeting passengers at half price, thereby establishing a precedent followed for many years.<sup>3</sup>

One of those who went by steamboat, the Reverend James Peet of Stillwater, left a description of the camp ground and a brief account of the meetings. He records that a stand was erected for the speakers and leaders, with tents occupied by English settlers on the right, and others occupied by Germans on the left. The preaching was sometimes in English, and sometimes in German, and both groups sang the same hymns simul-

<sup>2</sup> Grierson, *The Valley of Shadows*, 149 (New York, 1948); William W. Sweet, *The Story of Religions in America*, 8 (New York, 1930).

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Kavanaugh to Chauncey Hobart, July 9, 1877; A. J. Nelson, "The Pioneer Church of Minnesota," 46; undated letter from T. M. Fullerton to Hobart, in Methodist Papers.

taneously in their respective languages. The climax of the entire meeting, which lasted until Monday, August 13, was reached at the lovefeast during the Sunday services. Thirteen tents were on the ground at that time, in addition to some emigrant wagons, and about a hundred people joined in the worship. Many confessed their sins and experiences, and renewed their covenants with God. When the invitation was given to the ministers to come forward for Communion, thirty responded, and after they had been served, a large part of the congregation partook of the sacrament. The camp meeting closed, as was customary, with the people marching around the grounds, shaking hands, bestowing blessings on one another, and saying goodbyes. According to those who attended, this camp meeting was a grand success; several people were converted, nearly a score joined the church, religious feelings were quickened, and many Methodist societies were foreshadowed.<sup>4</sup>

After this first meeting, it is doubtful whether a summer passed which did not witness the holding of a Methodist camp meeting in Minnesota. Territorial and early state newspapers gave frequent notice during the summer months to such meetings, and devoted considerable space to news about the largest and best-known. As early as 1858 camp meetings received official protection from the legislature in an act approved on July 28 by Governor Henry H. Sibley. One section provided that "No person shall keep any shop, tent, booth, wagon, or carriage for the sale of, or shall sell, give, or expose to sale, any spirituous or intoxicating liquors, goods or merchandize of any kind within two miles of any public assembly, camp, or grove meeting, convened for the purpose of religious worship." The restriction did not apply, of course, to persons doing business at their regular establishments, licensed before the scheduling of the religious meeting. All others, however, if convicted before a justice of the peace, were subject to a fine of not over thirty dollars, or to incarceration for not over thirty days in the county jail, or to both. The act provided further that any person found "guilty of noisy, rude, or indecent behavior, of exhibiting shows or plays, or promoting or engaging in horse racing or gambling, at, or near any such religious meeting, so as to interrupt or disturb same," or anyone who might "at any religious meeting of the citizens of this State, maliciously cut or otherwise injure or destroy any harness, or tents, or other property, belonging to any tentholder, or other person," should be fined not over fifty dollars by a justice of the peace. Such an offender might, however, be brought before a district court, and, if convicted, fined not over a hundred dollars or sentenced to

<sup>4</sup> Peet's account, dated at Stillwater, Minnesota Territory, August 22, 1855, is in his scrapbook; the Minnesota Historical Society has a photostatic copy. See also Nelson, "Pioneer Church in Minnesota," 47, in *Methodist Papers*.

the county jail for not over ninety days, or both. All fines collected under this act were to be put in the county treasury to the credit of the county's common school fund. From available evidence it would appear that it was not often necessary to invoke the law. Many people, it is true, attended camp meetings out of curiosity and for social enjoyment, but seldom did they cause any serious disturbances.<sup>5</sup>

During the late 1850's successful camp meetings were held in various parts of southeastern Minnesota — on the Eastman place a mile southeast of Lenora, near Caledonia, in a grove south of Hastings, at Bound Grove near High Forest, and on the banks of the Zumbro River between Chatfield and Rochester. With the coming of the 1860's, either in spite of the Civil War or perhaps because of it, camp meetings grew in number and in popularity. Some of the best-remembered wartime meetings were held at Spring Valley, Clearwater, Winnebago City, Plainview, Center Grove, King's Grove south of St. Cloud, Rochester, Mazeppa, Dundas, and Pleasant Grove. And during the late 1860's, abetted by rapid population growth, camp meetings became increasingly numerous and well-attended. On one occasion a Minnesota newspaper reported that at Farmington "Everybody almost has gone to camp meeting. . . . There are three we know of in full blast."<sup>6</sup>

But it is pointless to attempt to list all the meetings. Most of them followed pretty closely a common pattern. The significant feature is not so much the specific location of any particular meeting, but rather the impact which the meetings individually and as a whole produced on frontier society. Each of those mentioned left its influence in the form of heightened interest in religion in its own local area, but none, of course, matched in size and influence the annual Red Rock camp meetings. Still, without the groundwork laid by the local meetings between 1855 and 1868, Red Rock's rapid growth and almost immediate success would not have been possible.

The story of the Red Rock camp meetings begins with 1868, when John Holton, who had helped establish at Kaposia in 1837 the first Methodist mission in what is now Minnesota, proposed to donate ten acres of a grove near Red Rock for use as a camp meeting. His offer impressed favorably the Reverend C. G. Bowdish, pastor of the Newport circuit, of

<sup>5</sup> Minnesota, *General Laws*, 1857, p. 65-67.

<sup>6</sup> This survey is based in large part upon answers to printed circulars or questionnaires sent in 1883 by the Minnesota Methodist Conference Historical Society to Methodist pastors throughout the state for the purpose of securing information about the history of Methodism in Minnesota. The answers are preserved in the Methodist Papers. Those of the following pastors contain information on the subject of camp meetings: Alfred Cressey, Noah Lathrop, F. B. Cowgill, L. P. Smith, W. E. Means, Joseph Hull, W. H. Soule, J. S. Bauk, J. W. Powell, S. S. Burton, J. W. Martin, and W. A. Tickner. See also *Hastings Gazette*, June 29, 1878.

which Red Rock was a part, and after he discussed the plan with various people, the Red Rock Camp Ground Association was incorporated at St. Paul on April 20, 1868. In addition to Bowdish and Holton, those who signed the incorporation papers included the Reverend Harvey Webb of St. Anthony, Parker Paine, and Anson H. Rose. The association was organized for the general purpose of holding camp meetings for religious purposes under the direction and in accordance with the usage of the Methodist church. Nine trustees, elected annually during the camp meeting, were to serve as officers. For the sum of five dollars, the trustees bought from Holton for the association ten acres of land in section twenty-six, township twenty-nine north, range twenty-two west, by the terms of an indenture dated May 7, 1869.<sup>7</sup>

The first camp meeting at Red Rock was held in late June and early July, 1869. The facilities available for participants, as compared with those of later times, were crude and primitive. A covered platform for speakers and singers was attached to a house, or more accurately a shanty, which was used as a preachers' lodging place, though it was equipped only with straw bunks, and had little ventilation. In front of the platform were rude, but substantial, seats, without backs, sufficient to accommodate over two thousand people. Surrounding the seating area were tents for people who wished to remain over night. In spite of the lack of comforts, the first meeting was well attended. On Sunday morning, July 4, according to a newspaper account, approximately two thousand people were present and the sum of five hundred dollars was collected for the purpose of improving the camp site. The steamer "Jeanette Roberts" made semidaily trips to the grounds during the meetings, and on Monday evening, July 5, it took the camp's movable equipment to St. Paul.<sup>8</sup>

At almost every meeting held in the years that followed some improvements were noted. In preparation for the meeting of 1871, held from June 27 to July 3, underbrush was cut, trees were trimmed, cottages built, and lots staked out for sale on about five acres of ground. Prior to the meeting of 1872, the entire camp site was fenced, and some land leading to the main highway was purchased for use as a private road and also fenced. The work of trimming trees and staking out lots continued.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the people who regularly attended the yearly meetings purchased lots and placed tents or cottages on them. By 1874 fifty lots had

<sup>7</sup> The land transfer is recorded in "Book D of Bonds," p. 136, and "Deed Record Book U," p. 221, in the Washington County Register of Deeds office at Stillwater. On June 27, 1879, the *St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer Press* reported that the "venerable John Holton," then eighty-two years old, still attended the Red Rock meetings.

<sup>8</sup> *St. Paul Daily Pioneer*, July 2, 7, 1869; *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 1, 1921.

<sup>9</sup> *Daily Pioneer*, July 2, 1871, June 27, 30, 1872, July 1, 6, 8, 1873.

been sold to private buyers at prices ranging from twenty-five to sixty-five dollars, several cottages had been built, and more were in the process of construction. Parker Paine, J. F. Tostevin, D. S. Johnson, G. H. Colgrave, the Reverend J. W. Martin, a Mrs. Blakeley, and a Mrs. McLean were living in their own cottages during the meeting of 1874. With a single exception, all the cottages were one-story structures, divided into apartments by screens. It was generally agreed that the Paine cottage, which was painted white and had mosquito bars over the windows, was the best in the camp. Most people, of course, lived in tents while attending the meeting. A few were almost luxurious, for they were equipped with arm and rocking chairs, regular bedsteads with good bedding, soft carpets, and full toilet sets. The majority of the visitors, however, remained happy and contented with fewer luxuries. For them, camp stools, straw beds, lavations at the common pump, and hasty toilets made before diminutive looking glasses sufficed. A large wooden structure served in 1874 as an eating house for those who commuted daily to the services and for others who did not care to bother with cooking. Stacks of straw and hay were available for use as bedding for the campers and food for the horses. Situated at opposite sides of the grounds were two large tents which were used for prayer meetings or for general services whenever "the bottles of heaven opened and floods of water descended upon the earth."<sup>10</sup>

From 1874 to 1877 the association continued to improve the camp grounds at Red Rock, but the main features of the encampment remained the same. In preparation for the 1877 meeting, however, some important changes were made. The auditorium space was equipped with new and better seats. The old preacher's stand was removed, and the adjoining house was converted into a "Preachers' Home," where the ministers could stay. A fine new stand, equipped with seats and chairs, was built. Finally, gasoline lamps were installed to light the grounds at night.<sup>11</sup>

In the interval between the meetings of 1882 and 1883, even greater changes were made in the Red Rock camp ground. For example, the camp meeting site was greatly enlarged in July, 1882, when the association obtained from Holton fifty-one acres adjacent to the original ten-acre plot. Subsequently, in May, 1883, the Camp Ground Association was re-organized as the Red Rock Park Association under a Minnesota law passed in 1881. The measure provided that three or more persons could incorporate a camp or grove association, a Sunday school assembly, or a

<sup>10</sup> *Weekly Pioneer*, July 3, 1874; *Pioneer Press*, July 1, 1877.

<sup>11</sup> *Pioneer Press*, June 30, July 1, 1877, July 3, 1878. In 1878 a beautiful George A. Wood organ was added to the one already on the stand.

society for religious instruction. The capital stock could not be less than five thousand dollars, divided into shares of not less than ten dollars, nor more than fifty dollars each. The board of trustees of such a corporation was empowered to draw up bylaws, rules, and regulations concerning behavior on the corporation's grounds, and to appoint officers to keep the peace. The new park association took over the work and property of the camp ground association and continued to hold meetings at Red Rock. Finally, a three-story hotel, erected at a cost of six thousand dollars, was completed for the meeting of 1883. On the first floor was a dining room which ran the entire length of the building. Sleeping quarters on the upper floors would accommodate about a hundred people. Although unpainted when the meeting started, the hotel was ready to house guests.<sup>12</sup>

The expansion of facilities at Red Rock was accompanied by a yearly increase in the number of persons attending the camp meeting. The success of the meetings can be explained in part by the excellent location of the grounds in relation to transportation facilities. Steamboats had easy access to Red Rock, since the Mississippi River bordered one side of the camp site. "Under that prince of captains, Gus Ruley," the "Nellie Kent" probably made more trips to Red Rock and took more passengers there than any other boat on the river. In 1870, it carried passengers between St. Paul and Red Rock for fifty cents a round trip. In 1875, it increased its carrying capacity by adding barges. The next year, a banner one at Red Rock, over a thousand people journeyed to the camp meeting on

<sup>12</sup> "Deed Record Book W," p. 249; "Deed Record Book 2," p. 207; "Deed Record Book 4," p. 600; "Mortgage Record Book R," p. 452; "Bond Record Book R," p. 471, all in the Washington County Register of Deeds office, Stillwater, Minnesota, *General Laws*, 1881, p. 181-183; *Pioneer Press*, June 22, July 2, 1883. According to the *Pioneer Press* of July 1, 1880, the Red Rock Camp Ground Association was out of debt and a new barn and hotel were planned.

## CAMP MEETING!

At Red Rock Camp Grounds,  
Sunday, June 24th.

The largest and grandest steamer ever placed at the disposal of the citizens of Saint Paul and vicinity to attend the Camp Meeting.

**Avoid Heat and Dust by Railroads**

And avail yourself of this excellent opportunity for a pleasant, cool ride on the Mississippi.



THE MAGNIFICENT FLOATING PALACE,

### GRAND PACIFIC,

Will ply regularly between Saint Paul and Red Rock Camp Grounds, as follows: Leaving St. Paul 9 and 11 a. m., 2, 4, 6 and 8 p. m. Returning, leaves Camp Grounds 10 a. m., 12 m., 2, 3, 7 and 10:30 p. m. Round trip, 50 cents. For information and tickets apply to

A. DELANEY, Agent.  
Levee, Foot of Jackson Street.

From the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, June 24, 1883.

the "Nellie Kent" on Sunday, June 25. Other steamboats took passengers there also. In 1874, for example, the "Osceola" carried six hundred people to the services on a single Sunday. In 1877, another six hundred were transported by the "Aunt Betsy," which made three trips to the grounds on Saturday and Sunday during the meeting, and the "Maggie Reaney," which made trips on Sunday. The "Aunt Betsy" charged twenty-five cents for the round trip from St. Paul. During the Sunday meetings in 1879, the St. Paul and St. Croix Company ran three boats which made trips at forty-minute intervals from St. Paul to Red Rock.<sup>13</sup>

Railroad accommodations were available also. The St. Paul and Chicago Railroad, which passed the east end of the ground, each year ran special trains for the benefit of those going to the camp meeting. In 1870, for example, a train left the depot in St. Paul for Red Rock at nine in the morning and returned at twenty minutes after five in the afternoon. On Sunday trains left at eight and two, and returned at six. The cost of the round trip was fifty cents. An extra train was scheduled on Sunday and Monday from Hastings, leaving at nine and returning at five. Some two hundred and fifty round-trip tickets, costing sixty cents each, were sold at the Hastings depot on the Sunday of the camp meeting.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to those who went to the meetings by steamboat and by train, there were many who drove their own conveyances over wagon roads leading directly to the grounds. At a lovefeast during the meeting of 1876 one man revealed that he drove his horses a hundred and fifteen miles in order to attend the services. The distance he traveled was unusual, but his means of transportation was not. Commenting on the meeting of 1883, one reporter wrote: "As it looked at noon yesterday it would remind one somewhat of a Derby day, as there were hundreds of carriages and buggies around the circle and in some places six or eight in depth."<sup>15</sup>

Estimates of attendance at Red Rock not only are interesting, but they illustrate the powerful attraction such meetings had in pioneer days. In 1870, according to the press, about three thousand people were on the camp grounds for the Sunday services. Two years later on the first day of the meeting, June 25, 1872, only twenty-five tents were on the grounds, but by June 29 the number had increased to sixty. On Sunday, June 25, 1876, over a hundred tents dotted the grounds, and six to ten thousand

<sup>13</sup> *Daily Pioneer Press*, June 29, July 2, 1870, June 24, 27, 1875; *Daily Pioneer*, June 30, 1874, June 27, 28, 1877; *Pioneer Press*, July 3, 1878, June 28, 29, July 1, 1879; *Stillwater Republican*, June 28, 1870; *Pioneer Press and Tribune*, June 27, 1876; *Hastings Union*, July 4, 1877.

<sup>14</sup> *Daily Pioneer*, June 29, July 2, 1870; *Hastings Union*, June 22, 29, 1870. Some of the tents on the grounds saw service in the Civil War. *Hastings Gazette*, July 2, 9, 1870.

<sup>15</sup> *Pioneer Press*, June 27, 1876, July 2, 1883.



people visited the meeting. The next year attendance surpassed even that figure. On the Sabbath, trains and steamboats were crowded all day, and the rush was more like that to a circus than to a religious meeting. The village of tents and cottages was literally overrun with people many of whom were there merely out of curiosity or for the pleasure of the excursion. It was a grand picnic, where people of all creeds, colors, and nationalities congregated to have a good time. And 1878 witnessed no let-up. "The camp meeting took a considerable part of the people of St. Paul out of town yesterday. The boats and cars, on every trip, both ways were crowded," was the laconic report of the press. Because the crush of pleasure seekers had become so great, the trustees at their annual meeting in 1878 decided to ask steamboat and railroad companies not to run trips to Red Rock on Sunday when the camp meeting was in progress. If the transportation companies failed to co-operate, the trustees threatened to erect a high fence around the grounds and to close the gates from Saturday night until Monday morning. Their threat, however, had no effect, since boats and trains continued to carry passengers to Red Rock on the Sabbath in 1879. On that one day about fifteen hundred visitors from St. Paul went to the meeting by boat alone.<sup>16</sup>

A banner year in the matter of attendance accompanied the enlargement of the grounds in 1883. On Sunday, fully ten thousand people visited the meeting, and never fewer than five thousand were on the grounds at any one time. On the same day over two hundred tents and twenty-five cottages were occupied. The collection taken at the morning service totaled about a thousand dollars. Most of the people attending the annual meetings were from the vicinity of Red Rock and the Twin Cities, but some of them, especially the ministers, came from other parts of the state. On Sunday, June 27, 1875, for example, Bishop Henry Whipple of the Episcopal church and twenty-five other pastors were present.<sup>17</sup>

Considering the size of the crowds collecting at Red Rock, the amount of disorder and mischief appears to have been small. The Reverend J. A. Wood reported in 1877 that he had attended camp meetings in sixteen or eighteen different states, but nowhere else had he seen such perfect order as at Red Rock. During the same meeting, the first infraction of the law of 1858 occurred. A man conducting a huckstering business near

<sup>16</sup> *Hastings Gazette*, July 9, 1870, July 13, 1878; *Daily Pioneer*, June 27, 30, 1872; *Pioneer Press*, June 23, 25, 27, 1876, June 28, July 3, 1877, June 4, July 1, 4, 1878, July 1, 1879. The average attendance at weekday services in 1874 was given as three hundred by the *Daily Pioneer* of July 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Pioneer Press*, June 27, 1875, June 25, July 2, 1883. Refreshment booths on the grounds during the 1883 meetings charged from fifteen to twenty cents a dish for ice cream and ten cents a glass for what a newspaper reporter termed "poor" lemonade.

the camp ground refused to cease operations after a warning. As a result he was arrested, tried, and fined. In 1880, a thief, who remained unapprehended, stole a pair of boots from one of the ministers, and a pair of earrings, two bracelets, and ten dollars from a Minneapolis woman. Again in 1882 a man was arrested and fined for huckstering within the

## Special Excursion to Red Rock !



On and after Saturday, June 23d, the Steamer Longfellow will leave St. Paul at 8 a. m. and 11 a. m. for Red Rock. Leave Red Rock 9 a. m. and 12:30 p. m.

At 2:30 she will leave St. Paul for Minnehaha Falls, returning at 6:30 p. m. At 7:30 p. m. she will leave for Red Rock, returning after the meeting.  
GEO. H. HAZZARD, Manager.

prescribed limits. Except for these misdemeanors and an occasional disturbance caused by a runaway horse, the Red Rock meetings all took place in orderly fashion. Even steamboat casualties were conspicuously absent. The only near tragedy occurred at the river landing in St. Paul in 1880, when two men and a boy, pushed by a crowd waiting

From the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, June 23, 1883.

to board a boat for Red Rock, fell through the wooden railing into the river. Fortunately, all were rescued.<sup>18</sup>

The religious services at Red Rock did not vary much from year to year, except that as the camp meeting became better established it extended over a longer period than in its first years. A typical day's program will give an impression of the nature of the services. At five-thirty the first bell rang as a signal for rising. The second bell an hour later announced morning devotions in the tents, and at seven a third told that it was breakfast time. At eight-thirty a social meeting or a lovefeast was held in the center of the grounds before the stand. Speaking of a lovefeast in 1877, a reporter said: "This is one of the peculiarly interesting meetings among the Methodists. Hundreds were present, and nearly one hundred testimonies were given within an hour and a half." At all Red Rock lovefeasts several people would be on their feet at the same time, each eager to relate a religious experience. In 1883 at a "social meeting the enthusiasm continued to rise, so that during the extraordinary and eloquent sermon of Bishop C. D. Foss the loud amens of the older Methodist days were heard. Many were affected to tears as the bishop exhorted them to take hold of God's strength and thereby make peace with him."<sup>19</sup>

On a typical Red Rock program, the stand was the scene of a general service at ten-thirty. It consisted of Scripture reading, praying, preach-

<sup>18</sup> *Pioneer Press*, July 3, 4, 1877, June 28, July 1, 1880, July 1, 1881, June 26, 1882.

<sup>19</sup> *Camp Meeting Herald*, May 24, 1879; *Pioneer Press*, June 25, 28, 1876, July 3, 1877, June 28, 1883.

ing, and an exhortation for people to come forward to the altar. At one such service, "The alter [*sic*] was filled three times by seekers," and there was an expectation of "500 conversions this week." At eleven-thirty, recess for dinner was called. During intervals between regular services, singing emanated from many of the tents, and it also was a feature of the regular services, usually to the accompaniment of a melodeon, an organ, and a cornet, a fact which would have horrified many old-fashioned Methodists. A children's service often was conducted in one of the large tents at one-thirty. After a two o'clock sermon and exhortation, a special prayer service, a recess, and services in the large tents took place at hourly intervals during the afternoon. Tea recess began at six o'clock, and lasted an hour and a half or two hours. Then came another sermon, often "an elaborate discourse, full of sound reasoning and able theological deduction."<sup>20</sup>

The evening meetings were usually over by ten o'clock, and after that all was quiet. As a bell chimed the signal for closing worship, the "Nellie Kent" or any other boat that happened to be at the landing would break the silence with a shrill whistle, announcing its immediate return to St. Paul. On the final night of a camp meeting, however, the services often lasted much later than usual; in 1874, for example, the lovefeast and the Lord's Supper were not over until after midnight. Then came the walking around the grounds, a custom which closed every Red Rock camp meeting. All those present marched in double lines while they shook hands, blessed one another, and said their goodbyes. Usually the marching was accompanied by a melodeon and a cornet playing "Shall We Gather at the River?" or some other popular hymn. The music, the glare of the lamps, and the shouts and cries lent an air which was new to many participants.<sup>21</sup>

Preachers who took part in the Red Rock meetings came both from Methodist churches in Minnesota and from distant ones. In 1870, Walter Palmer and his wife, evangelists from New York, were present and assisted with the services. Four years later, Dr. J. M. Ried and Mrs. Amanda Smith came from New York to preach. Mrs. Smith was a Negro evangelist "of an interesting appearance, and her enunciation" was described as "remarkably correct." In 1877, several well-known religious figures were present to preach. These included three "men of great power"—the Reverend William Taylor, who had preached in California, Australia, South Africa, and India; the Reverend William McDonald,

<sup>20</sup> *Camp Meeting Herald*, May 24, 1879; *Pioneer Press*, June 25, 1883.

<sup>21</sup> *Pioneer Press*, June 29, 30, 1876, July 6, 1878. In 1874 the services lasted until 3:00 A.M. on the final night. See *St. Paul Daily Pioneer*, July 3, 1874.

editor of the *Advocate of Holiness*, of Philadelphia; and the Reverend Johnson Nobles, a temperance reformer of New Jersey.<sup>22</sup> And other years attracted to Red Rock ministers and evangelists of national repute — evidence that the meetings were widely known and had more than local significance.

Subjects discussed in sermons and in prayer meetings were usually of a strictly religious nature, as a list of typical titles will show. The following were representative: "The Successful Camp Meeting. What Is It? How to Make It," "The Nature of Sin. Its Consequences," "Repentance, the Sinner's Relation to Law," "Resurrection of the Dead," "General Judgment," "The Returning Lord," "Class Meeting Methods, Utility, Success. Witnesses of Blessing Derived from Them," and "The Gospel Temperance Reform."<sup>23</sup>

Special observances and events occasionally altered the Red Rock routine. In 1875, for example, a missionary meeting was held there to aid the work of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist church. On that occasion the Red Rock Auxiliary branch of the missionary society was organized. A number of women joined and several men contributed financial help and became honorary members.

Whenever a camp meeting extended over the Fourth of July, a temperance celebration was held on that day. One of the most successful, at least in the matter of attendance, occurred in 1878. The first train to arrive was composed of "fourteen cars packed close as herrings" and it carried fifteen hundred people from St. Paul and Minneapolis to Red Rock, arriving at ten in the morning. Several hundred more made the trip on a later train, and the "Nellie Kent" was crowded when it docked. Until the middle of the afternoon, trains and steamboats continued to take passengers to the camp grounds. No signs of disorder, aside from firecrackers snapping, were apparent at any time, although eight to ten thousand people were present. The Reverend Daniel Cobb, the Prohibition party's candidate for governor in 1869, and superintendent of six Red Rock camp meetings, gave the address of welcome to the special guests, who included presidents of reform clubs, and representatives of the Sons of Temperance, the Good Templars, and other organizations. W. W. Satterlee, destined to be the Prohibition party's candidate for governor in 1879, gave the main address, likening the liquor traffic to the slave trade. After the noon meal, a brass band called the people together to hear addresses by John Quigley, former chaplain of the Minnesota

<sup>22</sup> *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 1, 1921; *Daily Pioneer*, June 29, 1870, June 30, 1874; *Stillwater Republican*, June 28, 1870; *Pioneer Press*, June 27, 1876.

<sup>23</sup> *Camp Meeting Herald*, May 24, 1879.

Grand Lodge of Good Templars, J. C. Irvine, grand secretary of the same organization, the Reverend Robert Smith, and others. According to contemporary newspapers, this celebration was the largest temperance meeting ever held in Minnesota.<sup>24</sup>

On June 26, 1880, special excursion trains transported groups of children from St. Paul and Minneapolis to Red Rock for a young people's observance. In the morning an educational meeting, addressed by several ministers, was held in the auditorium; and in the afternoon there was a song service, followed by brief talks by the ministers. The children returned to the Twin Cities at five on the same afternoon.<sup>25</sup>

The reports sent to Twin City newspapers by unnamed correspondents reflect something of the atmosphere of early Red Rock camp meetings. "During the early part of the day," runs one account, "a quiet enthusiasm seems to pervade the vast camp, ready to overflow at the slightest touch; sounds of prayer and praise in private tents mingle with the noise of culinary preparations, and when the first train arrived at 10 o'clock, the camp and the regular camp meeting folks were ready for company." Another account begins: "While I am writing in a canvass tent, and listening to the singing of the second service, in connection with the melodeon and cornet, I hear the words distinctly —

'My God is reconciled,  
His pardoning voice I hear.'

It is very nice and pleasant; and yet it seems that the old-fashioned Methodists of a few years ago had no idea that we should have music at our camp meetings, and everything in such order as we have now; even to camp meeting police, but everything goes pleasantly on, and sweet order reigns. While their elders are at the services, little girls may be seen walking around with their dolls. . . . And when singing is going on at the tents, during the intervals of service, the little children are joining very lively in the singing. . . . Those children will look back at camp meetings as very enjoyable. It is so pleasant, the walk of half a mile to the river, across the prairie, and to be in this large camping ground, including such pretty cottages, and so many canvass tents. The pumps here are a special accommodation on a warm day." A third correspondent's reaction to the Red Rock scene probably echoes the sentiments of thousands. "As we write," said he, "the almost ceaseless singing and worship

<sup>24</sup> Reform clubs, with members pledged to vote the temperance ticket, were formed at various places in Minnesota. The first seems to have appeared at Delano on July 1, 1875. At the conclusion of the regular camp meeting in 1875, a Swedish camp meeting opened at Red Rock. *Minnesota Radical* (Waseca), July 14, 1875; *Pioneer Press*, July 1, 2, 1875, July 3, 4, 6, 1877, July 5, 1878, July 5, 1879.

<sup>25</sup> *Pioneer Press*, June 27, 1880.

in all directions in this 'leafy temple,' impress us with the idea of an earthly paradise, if there be any, on this side of the heavenly abode." <sup>26</sup>

With the passing of frontier conditions camp meetings became less common, until in most sections of Minnesota they ceased entirely. At Red Rock, however, the meetings continued, though with greatly reduced attendance, until 1938, when the camp grounds moved to Mission Farms on Medicine Lake west of Minneapolis. There and at Frontenac Methodists still have summer gatherings that may be described as modern counterparts of the old-time camp meetings.

<sup>26</sup> *Pioneer Press*, June 28, 1876, June 30, 1877, July 5, 1878.

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ALMOST HALF A CENTURY after Jonas Holland Howe brought his family from Petersham, Massachusetts, to a Minnesota homestead, his daughter, Laura Howe Carpenter, recorded her *Reminiscences of Pioneer Life* in the new territory. Laura was only four years old in 1855 when her mother and five little Howes made the westward trek to join husband and father in Plymouth Township, near what is now Minneapolis. The career of Jonas Howe, particularly as an artist, is described elsewhere in this magazine. Here is his daughter's description, drawn from a booklet privately printed for her family, of the Minnesota home of the pioneering Howes:

"The cabin was built of logs, and consisted of one large square room with a loft above which was reached by a rude stairway. In the following summer an additional room was built, a lean-to. . . .

"This was the rudest kind of a home until my mother's industry and skill gave it a cozy look. She papered the rough-hewn logs with newspapers, and hung the whitest of muslin curtains at the two small windows and around her high-posted bed with its fringed counterpane. There was a shelf for books and another for the clock, and there were a few pictures. . . . When the goods from the East came in the fall, there was a crib, a trunk, a chest and huge packing-boxes which held an almost unlimited amount of linen, china, wearing apparel, etc. . . .

"My father celebrated the 4th of July in '56 by taking us to Lake Minnetonka which he greatly desired my mother to see. We rode in the ox cart, entering from behind, and as there were no seats, we sat on the floor of the box on folded quilts. Father walked much of the way. . . . The lake was a calm expanse of blue, reflecting the drifting clouds and the green forests on its shores. This place was the site of the future city of Wayzata: the cart path was to be superseded by a railway, and where the oxen waded into the water to quench their thirst a steamboat landing was built after many years."



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