

Spade and Screen

By FRED ROBINSON, Regina



Writing Rock at Alkabo, North Dakota

Photo by E. I. Syverud

We Visit the Writing Rock

By J. TURNQUIST, Wallwort

While on our trip to Minnesota last fall we visited the Writing Rock, so named from the Petroglyphs on it. It is located in the northwest corner of North Dakota, in Divide County, six miles south and one mile east of Alkabo. It is very desolate country and surrounded by range land for miles. The North Dakota Historical Society has taken over 10 acres of land for a park and has built a small house of stone over the rock so it is difficult to take a photo of the rock now with the common camera on account of not having enough light. Fortunately I have the above snap taken some years ago.

The rock has a very distinct "Thunderbird" engraved on it and many circles with dots in them, also many lines and curves. At the bottom there is the outline of an animal which some think is a horse, but

which looks to me more like a lynx. I examined the carvings which appear very much weathered and as if more than one person has done the writing. The rock stands about four feet high. It has been well taken care of and there are no initials of white man on it. I am told that a smaller stone close by with carvings on it was sent to the University at Grand Forks, North Dakota, some years ago. The carvings are all on the north side of the rock. Judging by the size of it, it has been there since the last glacial period. This part of the country must have been good buffalo hunting ground but there is no hint of that animal in the writings.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This type of petroglyph, of which Mr. Turnquist writes, is the rarest of all stone age relics found on the Plains. Less than a dozen of these inscribed rocks have been discovered in Saskatchewan. They are more numerous in the northern States.