

My First Encounter

Tyson Flute

BEFORE YOU READ: What is an origin story? What is your origin story?

We, Dakota People, come from the mouth of the Minnesota River. Our origin story begins there. Our sacred pipe is the color red. Here is the story of how the stone became red: When the Earth was new to people, the Dakota people were listening to the bad spirits in four directions. Our Creator flooded the Earth to cleanse the bad spirits from our souls. Our ancestors' blood stained the pipe-stone red. We, Dakota People, prepare the sacred pipe by placing tobacco in it and praying to the four directions. A *hoka wicasa* (holy person) sings the *Canupa Odowa* while packing the pipe.

The first time I came across the river at the age of 12, I was driving to a powwow at Prairie Island. I remember the road was red, and I was on my way to bettering myself. At powwows, there is dancing, drumming, and singing. The grass was bright green and smelled like it was just mowed yesterday. My eyes focused on the color of the water; it was a copper color.



My hands cupped the water, and to my surprise, it was clearest water I had ever seen in my life. My mouth began to slurp this clear water. My soul was refreshed by the



Dancer at the Prairie Island Powwow. Photo: Lorie Shaull.

pure water. Alas, I was leaving the river, and my heart felt I was leaving thousands of relatives that fought for me to be here today.

Tyson Flute is a Dakota from South Dakota. He is a single dad with two great kids, and he participates in the Family And Child Education (FACE) program at Enemy Swim Day School in Lake Traverse Reservation, SD. He was involved in the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota.

AFTER YOU READ: What does Flute mean when he says, thousands of relatives “fought for me to be here today”? Read the article on p. 9 to learn more about Native Americans’ struggle to survive.

Anonymous Person Buys Sacred Pipe at Auction for \$40,000 and Returns It to the Dakota People

Look up the story of this sacred pipe. Who made the pipe? What happened to him? What happened to the pipe? What should happen to sacred objects that belong to Native American people but may be in museums now or in private collections? Read more here: <www.mprnews.org>.



Photo: Skinner Auctioneers