

PH 035913/

# DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED	SEP 7 1976
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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**  
HISTORIC  Lemmon Petrified Park

AND/OR COMMON

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Lemmon

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

South Dakota

CODE

046

COUNTY

Perkins

CODE

105

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Lemmon

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Lemmon

VICINITY OF

STATE

South Dakota

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Perkins County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Lemmon

STATE

South Dakota

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

South Dakota Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Historical Preservation Center, USD Alumni House

CITY, TOWN

Vermillion

STATE

South Dakota

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

If the traveler crosses the northern plains of South Dakota to the city of Lemmon, he will come upon a very interesting and unusual site—the world's largest petrified wood park. This site consists of 3200 tons of petrified wood, 100 tons of petrified grass, and tons of cannon ball boulders which are either standing in the condition they were found or stacked and cemented together to form conical pyramids, pillars, various other configurations, and three buildings.

Of the structures, two of them serve a functional purpose: one houses the Chamber of Commerce, and the other, a museum. Both use petrified logs in their construction, but the latter utilizes it throughout including a petrified grass floor. The polygonal-shaped museum's main exterior features are spires of varying height along the roof's edge; the interior exhibits are mostly related to local history, geology, or pioneer life. The third structure employs over three hundred tons of petrified wood and resembles a miniature castle.

The stone itself dates back to the Mesozoic times and there are numerous examples of fossilized plant and animal life captured within the material. It comes in a variety of sizes and shapes and has a diversity of color. The cannonball boulders come from a similarly named river in North Dakota and derive their name from their oval and smooth look. The interplay of the current and the sand, which rubs against the stones, causes them to take on their appearance. Their diameter varies from a half a foot to several feet.

All of this stone appears in an area of less than an acre and it creates a rather bizarre picture. The park has changed since it opened in 1932 because some of the visitors have stolen the stone, and also, the construction of a tennis court caused the loss of some monuments. Also, the Chamber of Commerce building was once a gas station, but overall, the site still retains much of its original appearance.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1928

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Olaf S. Quammen

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The city of Lemmon has the world's largest petrified wood park which has been important to the city's commercial development. It also is significant in the social humanitarian area for two reasons. First, Ole S. Quammen, the founder, built the park partially to hire the jobless during the years of the Great Depression. Secondly, Alice Quammen, his daughter, donated the park to the city for the public's benefit.

Ole S. Quammen was among the people who arrived on the first passenger train into Lemmon in 1907. He owned and operated a lumberyard which was a prosperous enterprise in a newly developing town located on the treeless plains. However, he has become better known for his hobby than his business success. Quammen was an amateur geologist who roamed the county examining petrified wood which was quite abundant.

Around 1926 he and his son David began to formulate plans of establishing a park with examples of petrified wood made into various configurations. The idea was not implemented until 1928. The father believed that gathering the best example of the material in one place would enhance his studies, provide an interesting exhibit, and help hire the jobless. The project took around four years to complete. It gave many people, especially ranchers, an income during those early depression years. They continued to work on the park with the completion of the museum in 1933. The Quammens had gathered 600,000 pounds of petrified grass, 8,200,000 pounds of petrified and agatized wood, and 13,000 bones. This was quite an achievement for them and all the people who hauled those stones by wagon.

Unfortunately, both father and son were unable to enjoy their success very long for they both died in 1934. The park then came under the ownership of Alice Quammen who kept the land until she donated it, with conditions, to the city in 1954. Since then, the city has maintained the park and hired caretakers to take care of it and dispense information to tourists.

To many people, this site is extremely important to history and development of the city. The construction of the park employed many people who might have had to otherwise leave the area. Also, since its inception, it has been a boon to the tourist industry for the state and especially to Lemmon. This, of course, is important to the commercial development of a city. Although it is less than fifty years old, it must be remembered that the town was not started until 1907 which makes it a rather early undertaking in the city's history. It is definitely Lemmon's most important landmark.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Boorman, Jane Ed., "Lemmon: Half Century of Progress 1907-1957" (souvenir program), 1957.  
 LEMMON TRIBUNE, March 8, 1962.  
 Sandwick, Gelda, personal interview, Lemmon. September 16, 1975 with Scott Gerloff.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Longitude 102° 9' 04"

Latitude 45° 56' 15"

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Scott Gerloff, Historic Preservation Assistant II

ORGANIZATION

Historical Preservation Center

DATE

December 1975

STREET & NUMBER

USD Alumni House

TELEPHONE

605/677-5314

CITY OR TOWN

Vermillion

STATE

South Dakota

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*John J. Little*

TITLE

*State Historic Preservation Officer*

DATE

*30 Aug 76*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Robert B. Rettig*

DATE

*11/21/77*

ATTEST

*Charles [Signature]*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

*11/19/77*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER