

Le Conte, Antoine

There has been an old story of the Le Cont's about a petrified man, about whom the old settlers here in Plymouth has repeated to me. This account of it is found in the " 101 Best Stories of Minnesota" by Merle Potter, 1956 Edition, Page 15. The story is " The Petrified Man of Bloomer." The body evidently created a sensation and on page 17 shows where the Le Count brothers entered the controversy .

" Two La Count brothers, Antoine of Medicine Lake and Malve of Red Lake Falls, now entered the controversy. They appeared at Crookston, where they filed a complaint against the Grand Forks claimants, contending that the body was that of their father, whom they had buried in a shallow grave after he was killed near Snake River in Marshall County fifty eight years before. The Crookston paper admitted that there was a striking resemblance between the petrified body and the brothers. Two old squaws viewed the body and identified it, to their satisfaction, at any rate, as the elder La Count. It was even said that Old La Count, who was a guide and horse dealer, limped and that the body had one leg shorter than the other. Arrest of the Grand Forks claimants was ordered, and it was feared that extradition papers would have to be issued before the argument was settled. The sheriff of Grand Forks took no chances, but kept his charge (petrified man) in jail behind lock and key.

At just about this time the moulds in which the " petrified man" was manufactured in Crookston. The plasterer had made the figure when he had nothing else to do. When it was discovered that it was all a hoax Minnesota interest in the discovery vanished. The best authority has it that it was finally sold to a traveling showman who exhibited it in those parts of the country where its true history was not known. "