

WORLD MUSIC

CANADA

WD-CA1 Canada 1958

THE BANFF CAVE *

World – Folk – Ballad – Vocal & Instrumental

Comp: Stu PHILLIPS ([LY-WD1](#))

Perf: Stu PHILLIPS (vocal & guitar)

Prod: (CD) Richard Weize

Prod. Co: Rodeo Records; Halifax, Nova Scotia
& (CD) Bear Family Records; Hambergen, Germany

Rec. Date: 1958

Liner Notes: (CD) Stu Phillips & Colin Escott, 1993

Time: 1:15

A.1. Original **LP:** STU PHILLIPS SINGS ECHOES OF THE
CANADIAN FOOTHILLS

Rodeo RLP-17 (mono) & Rodeo SRLP-17 (stereo)
12" 33rpm (Sd 2 – Bd 5)

2. Reissue on Compilation **LP:** OUR LAST RENDEZVOUS (1968)

RCA Victor SP-4012
12" 33rpm (3XLPS)

B. Reissue on German **CD:** A JOURNEY TO THE PROVINCES (1994)

Bear Family BCD 15721 (Tk 34)

Notes: Phillips tells us "I came to Calgary when I was in my early teens. My father was a railroad architect.



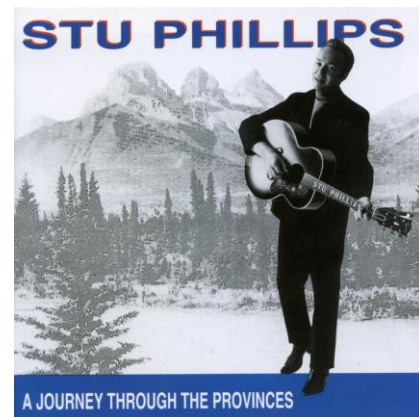
He built hotels, sheds, stations and so on, and I ventured out west with my father. He was working on a project out there." (Phillips 1993) This was probably how he learned the tale about the Native Canadians and the building of the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railroad) around Banff that he was to later use in this country ballad.

During the 1950s, Phillips was an announcer and singer on radio stations in Edmonton and Calgary. He later worked at CHCT-TV television station in Calgary. (Anon 1, n.d.)

The Cave and Basin, is located one mile (1.5 km) west outside of Banff, Alberta. It was originally discovered by CPR

construction workers, William & Tom McCardell and Frank McCabe, who descended the skylight entrance using a tree trunk.

The area around the cave became Canada's first National Park in 1885 then known as Rocky Mountains Park and now called Banff National Park. (Anon.2, n.d.) Early visitors had to climb down a ladder through the pit entrance until in 1886 when a tunnel was cut into the cave. The old postcard shows the walkway around the sulphur pool with daylight streaming in from the skylight entrance.



Phillips sets down a stirring Native Canadian rhythm on guitar and sings 7 stanzas of this ballad that tell how the local Native Canadians tried to stop the railroad from passing next to the hot spring cave outside Banff because evil spirits dwelt there. Nearly every stanza mentions the cave or what was found inside it: the bubbling pool, skulls on the cave floor, and “big icicles” –

II. There's a cave ahead, explained the chief
Where the evil spirits dwell
Where they sit around the bubbling pool
That boils them through to hell.

III. The cave is hot and humid
An' there are skulls upon the ground
From the roof, the strangest thing,
Big icicles hang down.

The engineer tells the tribe's chief to fear not, they would pass the mainline tracks beneath the cave. Thus everyone was happy in the end and the song finishes with Native Canadian shakers.

Ref: Anon. 1 n.d., Stu Phillips, [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)

Anon. 2 n.d., Cave and Basin National Historic Site of Canada, [Cave and Basin](#)

Cave & Basin National Historic Site, Banff National Park, (Video of cave & area – 3:00), [Real Banff](#) (◀VIDEO)

Duckeck, Jochen 2011, Banff Cave & Basin, [showcaves](#)

Phillips, Stu 1993, Interview with Colin Escott, Liner notes for CD, Bear Family Records, p. 4

Stu Phillips, Our Last Rendezvous LP, [Allmusic](#)

Stu Phillips, Journey Through the Provinces CD, [Amazon](#)

caveinspiredmusic.com