

Morton's History of Nebraska

Authentic—1400 to 1906—Complete

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CHAPTER II CONTINUED.

These cessions gave the United States title to the east two-thirds of the state. The earliest treaty by which they acquired title to land in this state was made with the Kansas in 1825; by this treaty the Kansas ceded a semicircular tract along the south line, reaching from Falls City to Red Willow county and nearly as far north as Lincoln. So it seems that the Kansas at least laid claim to part of our territory.

The next detachment of the great Siouan family to invade Nebraska was from the northern branch of this tribe which dwelt along the Great Lakes. The Assiniboin had separated from this branch as early as 1650, and, according to McGee, were near the Lake of the Woods in 1766, so they had not long wandered over our soil when written history began.

The Pawnees and Omahas joined in repelling the advance of these northern tribes and held them well back from the waterways for many years, but they hunted on the head-waters of the Platte and Republican and even as far south as the head-waters of the Smoky Hill and Solomon rivers. The Crows were doubtless the first to encroach on the Platte valley; they drifted to the Black Hills in an early day and hunted on the Platte from the northwest. The Blackfeet, a branch of the Saskatchewan tribe, came later. The Yankton, Santee, Brule, Sisseton, Ogallala, Teton, Minnetaree, and parts of other tribes from time to time hunted or fought on the head-waters of the Platte. They joined in ceding the northwest part of the state to the United States in 1868, reserving for themselves a common hunting right, which they relinquished in 1875. They are now on the various reservations in Dakota and Indian Territory.

The Winnebagos were the last of the great Siouan family to come; they were moved from Minnesota to a part of the Omaha reservation in 1862, where they still reside. Schoolcraft says this tribe once lived on a branch of the Crow Wing river in Minnesota. Some of the Santee Sioux were moved to Nebraska at the same time, but many of both tribes came across the country before.

To the Algonkian family belong the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Atsina, who wandered over the western part of Nebraska, as did the Sac and Fox tribe, which had a reservation in the extreme southeast part of the state from 1836 to 1885. The Algonkian family once occupied the greater part of the Mississippi valley. At a very early date the Cheyennes drifted westward through the Dakotas and gave their name to one of the important streams. Later they drifted southward. Lewis and Clark mentioned this tribe as occupying a position on the Cheyenne river in 1804, while Long in his expedition of 1819 found a small band which had seceded from the main stock on the Cheyenne river, and had roamed with the Arapaho along the Platte river. There is a record, by Fremont, of this tribe being on the Platte above Grand Island in 1843. They ceded the southwestern portion of Nebraska in 1861.

The Arapahos, like the Cheyennes, occupied Nebraska as a roaming tribe. The impression left by the very limited number of writers who have spoken of them seems to be that they came from the north. They were pressed by the Sioux from the east and by the Shoshoneans from the west. The date of their coming to Nebraska is obscure. The time of their separation from the eastern parent stock is shrouded in antiquity, and as early travelers found them a wild race, and not easy to study, little of their early history is recorded. They joined the Cheyenne and Arkansas Indians in ceding to the United States government the extreme southwest portion of Nebraska. So far as can be learned the Arkansas never occupied any part of Nebraska. The Atsina were closely allied to the Blackfeet (Siouan) and, since whites have known them, have affiliated with that tribe. They are distinctly Algonkian, however, and have a legend telling how they came to separate from the Arapahos.

As stated above, the Algonkian stock occupied most of the Mississippi valley at one time. The United States purchased all of Missouri north of the river, most of Iowa, and a part of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota from the Sacs and Foxes. They seem to have been the original owners of the Mississippi and Missouri front, and the Siouan tribes as they drifted westward doubtless had them to deal with. This may account for the movement westward of the Otoe and the Kansas tribes across the river. The Sacs and Foxes relinquished their possessions and retired to a southern reservation, excepting a band who took a reserve on the Great Nemaha river, partly in Nebraska and partly in Kansas, and which remains in the Great Nemaha agency.

Powell does not believe that the Shoshonean family occupied a part of Nebraska, and it is doubtful whether any part of this family had more than a transient home within the state. It is certain that the Comanches roamed over our territory, and doubtless the "Padoucas" once had a more or less permanent home here; at least the north fork of the Platte river was known in the early days as the Padouca fork. Mooney says: "In 1719 the Comanche were mentioned under their Siouan name of Padouca as living in what is now western Kansas

and by a sort of evolutionary southward movement to Bellevue; still later to the subagency on the Iowa border opposite Bellevue. In 1853—January 19—Council Bluffs was substituted for Kanesville, which was the original name (derived from a brother of Kane, the arctic explorer) of the hamlet on the site of the present city of Council Bluffs. Thereafter the place was known by its present name by designation of the postoffice department; and it was formally incorporated by act of the Iowa assembly, February 24, 1853. According to the Frontier Guardian of September 18, 1850, a census taken at that time yielded a population of 1,103 for Kanesville and 125 for Trading Point or Council Bluffs; so that as late as this date the migratory name of Council Bluffs had not reached the northern settlement of Kanesville, but by local usage was confined to Traders, or Trading Point.

The domain of the Omahas lay to the north of the Platte river, and that of the Otoes about its mouth—both along the Missouri river. A strip of land intervening was a source of chronic dispute between these tribes. At the time of the Louisiana Purchase the Otoes numbered about two hundred warriors, including twenty-five or thirty Missouri. A band of this tribe had been living with the Otoes for about twenty-five years. In 1799 the Omahas numbered five hundred warriors; but as the Mormons found them in 1846 this tribe, and the Otoes as well, had been reduced by the scourge of small-pox to a mere remnant of their former numbers. These Indians are described by their white neighbors of that time as being almost destitute of martial spirit and not viciously inclined, but naturally ready to rob and steal when prompted by hunger, which, fortunately for their white neighbors, was their nearly chronic condition. Orson Hyde, editor of the Frontier Guardian, in its issue of March 21, 1849, inspired by the wisdom of Solomon, advised the use of the rod, and a real hickory at that, on the thieving Omahas and others. It is said that the Omahas were exceptionally miserable. "Unprotected from their old foes, the Sioux, yet forbidden to enter into a defensive alliance with them, they were reduced to a pitiable handful of scarcely more than a hundred families, the prey of disease, poverty-stricken, too cowardly to venture from the shadow of their tipis to gather their scanty crops, unlucky in the hunt, slow to the chase, and too dispirited to be daring or successful thieves."

In the region between the Niobrara and Missouri rivers were the Poncas, some five hundred or six hundred in number, and but little better than the Omahas and Otoes in condition and circumstances. According to Lewis and Clark, the Grand Pawnee and Republican Pawnee, numbering respectively five hundred and two hundred and fifty men, dwelt, in 1804, on the south side of the Platte opposite the mouth of the Loup; the Pawnee Loup or Wolf Pawnee, comprising two hundred and eighty men, on the Loup Fork of the Platte about ninety miles above the principal Pawnee; and a fourth band of four hundred men on the Red river. Clayton's Emigrant's Guide, in 1848, finds the old Pawnee Mission station at Plum creek, latitude 41° 24' 29", nine and a quarter miles east of the Loup Fork ford (latitude 41° 22' 37"; longitude 98° 11'); and the old Pawnee village, formerly occupied by the Grand Pawnee and Tappa, half a mile west of the Loup Fork. This village was burned by the Sioux in the fall of 1846. In the spring of 1847 the Pawnee were found on the Loup Fork, about thirty miles east of the old village, according to the same authority.

Spain was preeminently the seat of chivalry at the time of the discovery of America and during the following centuries, while the country now comprising the United States was being discovered and colonized in detail—until it was laughed out of her by Cervantes and knocked out of her by the practical and prosy peoples of the more northern countries and of the Teutonic race. But the spirit of chivalry was prolific of adventurous discoverers through whose valorous enterprise Spain had come to possess, at the time the little strip along the Atlantic comprising the American colonies was ready for political separation from Great Britain, the whole territory west of the Mississippi river now comprised in Mexico and the United States, except that portion within the limits of the states of Washington and Oregon. That part of these Spanish domains north of the present boundary line of Mexico comprised more than two-thirds of the present area of the United States. At this time Spain also dominated Central and South America. Though Spain was the first discoverer of America, and established the first permanent colony within the territory of the United States, she no longer owns a foot of the continent; and she became so weak that she lost all her holdings by force. It was of the spirit of Spanish chivalry to seek success by the royal road. Her explorers and discoverers were either animated by the search for gold—like De Soto and for the swift nor the final battle for Coronado—or for more illusive treasure, such as Ponce de Leon's elixir of life. But the ultimate race was not the strong. The continent came to the men who knew how to wait.

While it is still an unsettled and perhaps not very important question whether the Spanish Coronado was the first white man to set foot in Nebraska, there is no doubt that he was the first white discoverer of whom there is any account of the great plains tributary to the Missouri river, and that he came very near to the southern border of the state.

In 1539 a Franciscan friar, Marcos de Niza, whom Don Antonio de Mendoza, viceroy of Mexico, had sent to investigate reports of populous settlements in the region now comprised in Arizona and New Mexico, brought stories of vast wealth in the Seven Cities of Cibola. An army of about three hundred Spanish soldiers and one thousand Indians and servants was raised and equipped for the conquest of the new country, and Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, governor of New Galicia, a western border province of Mexico, was placed in command of the expedition. Coronado appears to have been a bold and venturesome cavalier—a fit lieutenant of the ambitious viceroy. The expedition started from Compostela—the capital of Coronado's province, about three hundred and seventy-five miles northwest from the city of Mexico—February 23, 1540. On the 7th of July Coronado, with an advanced detachment of the main army, captured one of the seven small Zuni villages, which, situated near the present western border of New Mexico, in about the latitude of 35°, and within a radius of five leagues, constituted the Seven Cities of Cibola. These villages were composed of small storehouses, three or four stories high, but the disappointed Spaniards found in them poverty instead of the fabled riches. On an expedition from this point Coronado was partly compensated for his disappointment, though doubtless in a way which he did not fully appreciate, by discovering the grand canyon of the Colorado.

Now it was found that the riches lay far beyond in the land of Quivera; and, probably through a stratagem to get rid of their oppressive and cruel visitors, the story of the New Eldorado was told by a native of Quivera who was met with as a captive of the natives of Cicuye, a fortified village east of Cibola on the Pecos river. The "Turk," as the Spaniards called the slave, on account of his appearance, told more stories of large towns with hoards of gold and silver and vast herds of buffalo in his country to the east. The greedy credulity of the Spaniards again listened to these fabulous tales, and in April or May, 1541, the army took up its eastward march with the Turk for its guide. The slave intentionally led them by a wandering course far to the south, and, provisions becoming scarce in the neighborhood of the head-waters of the Colorado river of Texas, Coronado sent back all of the army excepting from twenty-six to thirty-six soldiers, with whom he pushed northward on his journey of forty-two days to Quivera, now under the guidance of a good Indian, Ysopete, also a native of the plains, the perfidious Turk having been taken into custody. The party crossed the Arkansas in the neighborhood of its southern bend, not far from the present site of Dodge City. Thus the first white man's crossing of the Arkansas was at a place which two hundred and sixty years later was to become an angle in the division between the Louisiana Purchase ceded to the United States and the residue of territory still held by Spain. At this point the boundary line changed from its northward course to the west along the Arkansas river. About eighty miles to the northwest, at the site of the present town of Great Bend, Coronado found the first Quivera village. He first met Indians of that name beyond the crossing not far from Kinsley and Larned. Here immence of his exposure seems to have moved the Turk to confession that his people were strangers to the precious metals as well as to other riches, and he was straightway strangled by the enraged Spaniards. There was now nothing left for them to fall back upon but appreciation of the richness of the soil; for Jaramillo, one of their chroniclers, says: "Some satisfaction was experienced on seeing the good appearance of the earth;" and Coronado himself writes that the soil of Quivera was "fat and black," and "the best I have ever seen for producing all the products of Spain." The buffalo is described by these travelers in a very naive and realistic manner. Like the reindeer to the Laplander, this beast was food and raiment for the Indian natives, and it is curious to note that buffalo "chips" were used for fuel then, as they were until recent days by our own pioneers. "One evening there came up a terrible storm of wind and hail, which left in the camp halibones as large as porringers, and even larger. They fell thick as rain drops, and in some spots the ground was covered with them to the depth of eight or ten inches. The storm caused many tears, weakness, and vows." Making a moderate allowance for the quickened imagination of the belated Spaniards, these stories of what they saw indicate that they journeyed not far from Nebraska. The substantial agreement of the conclusions drawn by Mr. Hodge of the ethnological bureau, of the accounts of their journey by the Spanish travelers themselves, with the actual field work of Mr. J. V. Brower, leaves little room for doubt that these adven-

turers reached the neighborhood of Junction City, or perhaps Manhattan, Kansas. Mr. Hodge, writing as late as 1899, observes that the common error in determining latitude in the sixteenth century was about two degrees; therefore when Coronado said that Quivera, "where I have reached it, is in the 40th degree," that means that it was in fact in the 38th degree; and Mr. Hodge adds: "Nothing is found in the narratives to show positively that either Coronado or any member of his force went beyond the present boundaries of Kansas during their stay of twenty-five days in the province of Quivera." Mr. E. E. Blackman, of the Nebraska State Historical Society, thinks that the statements accredited to the Indians by Jaramillo, that there was nothing beyond the point reached by the Spaniards but Harahey—the Pawnee country—coupled with his own demonstrations that the Quivera village extended into Nebraska, show that the Spaniards crossed our border; and Simpson's studies led him to the conclusion that it is "exceedingly probable that he (Coronado) reached the 40th degree of latitude (now the boundary between the states of Kansas and Nebraska) well on towards the Missouri river." Bandelier, George Winship Parker, Hodge and Brower all substantially agree with H. H. Bancroft's earlier statement (1899) that, "there is nothing in the Spaniards' descriptions of the region or of the journey to shake Simpson's conclusion that Quivera was in modern Kansas."

The writings of the Spaniards referred to are, in the main, Coronado's letters and formal accounts of the journey by Jaramillo, a captain in the expedition, and of Castaneda who went back with the main body of the army, but industriously collected his material from hearsay. The latest and perhaps the most thorough manuscript work has been done by Parker in *The Coronado Expedition*, and Hodge in *Coronado's March*, and the results of their researches substantially accord with the field work of Brower and Blackman, which is still under prosecution, and may yet show that Coronado was the discoverer of Nebraska proper.

While this expedition appears to have been barren as to practical results, yet it has been said of it that "for extent in distance traveled, duration in time, extending from the spring of 1540 to the summer of 1542, and the multiplicity of its cooperating branch explorations, it equaled, if it did not exceed, any land expedition that has been undertaken in modern times." Another writer observes that "a bare subsistence and threatened starvation were the only rewards in store for the volunteers upon this most famous of all the Spanish explorations, excepting those of Cortes. They discovered a land rich in mineral resources, but others were to reap the benefits of the wealth of the mountain. They discovered a land rich in material for the archeologist, but nothing to satisfy their thirst for glory or wealth." But this erudite author, like his Spaniards, has missed the main point. For they discovered the future granary of the world; and the fact that they were oblivious or disdainful of their main discovery pointed the moral of future Spanish history. The Spaniards took nothing and they gave little—two friars left as missionaries at Cibola and who soon wore the crown of martyrdom. To Spain, from the first, nothing in her new-world conquests was gold that did not glitter; and for this she disdained to dig—it was easier and more chivalrous to rob. She of course made pretense of having substituted for this mere material good the priceless but easy gift, religion. A shrewd or not a juster race came after who were able to discern the true and inexhaustible body of gold hidden in the dull-hued soil; and they tilled and patiently waited nature's reward. And lo, to them is the kingdom. And Spain has her due reward. Driven from all her vast outlying domains by the relentless force of the modern industrial spirit, which she could neither assimilate nor entertain, into a little corner of Europe, there she lies, oblivious to progress, surviving chiefly as an echo, and consequential merely as a reminiscence of the dead past.

The earliest authenticated exploration by white men on Nebraska soil was that of two brothers, Pierre and Paul Mallet, and six other Frenchmen in June, 1739. The Mallet brothers had probably come up from New Orleans the year before and had wintered near the mouth of the Niobrara river. An account of their journey from that neighborhood to Santa Fe forms a part of the Margry papers, which consist of reports of early French explorers of the trans-Mississippi country to the French authorities at New Orleans, and which have been printed by Margry in Paris.

In 1804, following the purchase of Louisiana, the Lewis-Clark expedition was sent out by President Jefferson for the purpose of gaining knowledge of the new and almost unknown territory. Following is a description of the company and outfit taken from the journal of Lewis and Clark: