

AN ANCIENT BUST.

Unique Specimen of Aboriginal Handiwork.

During the mild days of January, 1901, Master Perry Eells, who lives near the Roca Indian village site, picked up the specimen of Indian handiwork which is illustrated here in half-tone.

He informed me some days later that he had found "a face cut out of stone," and promised to bring it over for my inspection. Perry is a boy who sees every curious rock, and living near the quarries, which are noted throughout the state for their rich fossiliferous deposit, he finds many specimens which puzzle him and frequently he brings them to me to explain; with the assistance of the University professors, I satisfy the boy's curiosity and his interest grows apace. He did not appreciate the fact that his find is an important one in archaeology and two or three weeks elapsed before he brought the specimen to me.

In the meantime Hon. J. V. Brower, whose valuable work in the Kansas field has been mentioned in these papers, was working out the northern limit of Coronado's Quivera in Kansas. With the assistance of Judge Keagy of Alma, Kansas, we induced him to come to Nebraska and give us the benefit of his experience and forty years of study in western archaeology, in identifying this Roca site.

Some of our readers seem to think we are visionary in our theory of the Indian remains in this state, because we contend that a race of beings superior to the present lazy Indian, once roamed these fertile plains. They seem to think that the Indian came but little in advance of the white man, and do not explain when or how; but a little thought will convince any one that he must have brought his customs here or else evolved them while he lived here and in either case it took time. Our Indian did not spring, mushroom fashion, from these smiling valleys in one night—he came from an ancestry, who, in turn, sprang from an ancestry, and the mind grows dizzy in contemplating where they came from; only these little threads of evidence, woven carefully into a strong chain of circumstantial evidence, will ever establish the identity of the ancestors of the American Indian.

I am aware that "distance lends enchantment" and old trappers and scouts who visited the primitive red man have not the appreciation of him that has the student who has never come into actual contact with a "painted savage," but who has studied the archaeology of other bands and realizes the vast antiquity of beings in human form. Most of us can remember when six thousand years was "in the beginning" now the date line is pushed back to one hundred thousand and at the present rate of progress the

day is not far off when it will be as many more. All these things come into account in the study of the American aborigine. If our knowledge of the Indian is derived wholly from the present, if our contact with him has been during the past fifty years only, we can form but a narrow conception of his archaeology, and we know the American Indian, not as a primitive aborigine, but as a product evolved by contact with the whites. This contact may have been at second hand—the specimen which you have studied, may never have seen a white man before, but the influence of the white man may still be very marked and he is really a new creature so far as ethnology is concerned.

These adverse criticisms made me anxious to get the opinion of someone who had a wide experience and established reputation. Nothing is farther from my intention than to mislead. I wish these papers to form a basis of future study and I wish to chronicle only that which will bear the closest investigation.



Mr. Brower came to Roca on March 16, and we explored the Roca site together. Under date of March 21, 1901, he wrote me as follows:

"I have entered in my journal a description of the Roca village site, referring to the same, as a general midway camping-ground, half way between the waters of the Blue River region, or divide, and the Platte river. On examination, you will surely find two considerable village sites: one near the mouth of the creek up which the railroad runs from Blue River to your Roca region [Indian creek] and the other somewhere near the mouth of Salt Creek. Both sites will be found on ground, high enough to avoid freshets and floods, but at places desirable for water, wood, small cornfields and shelter. Each site will yield prehistoric Gwas implements and potshards of Harahey type. I shall not be surprised if you find six or eight nice village sites, commencing at Beatrice and ending at Ashland. That was a thoroughfare for ancient man. The identity of the Roca site is beyond any question whatever, Harahey."

This statement, coming from such eminent authority, justifies me in all I have written. He informed me, while here, that the Roca site was occupied from 300 to 800 years ago. His visit convinces me that "the half has not been told."

The foregoing taken in connection with the articles which have appeared in THE CONSERVATIVE, descriptive of the Roca site, gives you a fair idea of the place where this bust was found; the identification of the site as Harahey (or Pawnee from reasonable deduction as shown in a prior article) gives tenable ground for supposing this bust to be of Pawnee origin. I consider the artist did much better than you or I could in depicting a typical Pawnee.

Copies of the photograph were sent to many parts of the west, and we have comments from people who are best qualified to enlighten us, with reference to this bust.

The bust is "in the round" and is about one and a half inches high. It is made of hematite, which is a kind of iron ore.

The material is not found in any quantity nearer than the Black Hills, according to Professor Barbour of the geology department, of the University of Nebraska. He showed me a piece as large as a man's head which came from the Black Hills. The color is near enough like the bust to be of the same block, but the specimen of which the bust is made, is quite hard and is a very dark purplish-red on the outside, but if scratched with a knife it is found to be blood-red at no great depth.

The geological formation is not known to exist in Nebraska in a pure state; but here at the quarries we find a streak of very soft sandstone which is colored with hematite. The specimen of which the bust is made has no sand grains in it and has every appearance of pipestone, until the tests are applied, except color which is too dark for pipestone. It is about as hard as well-seasoned pipestone.

The specimen was found on high ground, nearly a mile from the banks of Salt Creek. The prairie had never been broken and many flint-chips may be found near. It was partly covered with earth; only a small corner of the top of the head was visible and the side was uppermost; one side shows deterioration—presumably the side which was uppermost, but this is uncertain as the sides are so nearly alike that the boy could not be certain. The glass reveals a faint tracing of feathers on the side, not shown in the view presented, and the marks around the eye are nearly obliterated, but the dot made for the eye-centre is plain.

The indentation, shown in the side of the head, as though the sculptor had intended to make a hole that it might be suspended as a charm, leads one naturally to conclude that this bust was made for