

**AN OLD
INDIAN VILLAGE**

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An Old Indian Village by Johan August Udden

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1900.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

In the fall of 1881, while engaged as instructor in Bethany Academy, now Bethany College, at Lindsborg, Kansas, one of my scholars called my attention to some mounds south of the Smoky Hill river, where various antiquities had been picked up by the settlers. I visited the locality and saw that it gave promise of interesting finds of aboriginal relics. Here was something worth taking care of. During the subsequent seven years I frequently went to the place, sometimes in company with fellow teachers and with students. The contents and the structure of the mounds were noted and their locations were marked on a small plot of the land. In course of time a collection of relics accumulated. This is yet intact in the possession of the institution in whose service I was then employed, and additions are still being made by my successor Professor J. E. Welin.

At the Emporia meeting of the Kansas Academy of Science in 1886 I made a brief report of my observations on these antiquities. But it was impracticable at that time to present the details. It seems that these mounds and their relics are of more than passing interest and in a way are representative of the archaeology of the state. Before I parted with the material which had been secured up to 1889, I concluded to write an account of the collections then on hand. This account has served as a basis for the present paper.

In preparing the following pages I have deliberately had two objects in view. I have sought to present some brief and correct descriptions of a collection strictly limited to one single locality. This is done in the hope that the descriptions together with the photographic reproductions presented in the figures and plates may prove serviceable to science. The author is, however, no archaeologist. This will be his last as well as his first paper bearing on topics of this kind, unless, perchance, he should again find his residence in the front yard of some prehistoric domicile. I have also sought to write these few pages in such a way that they may prove profitable reading to such of the general public as are interested in the study of Indian relics. It is believed that the material lends itself to such a double purpose.

The average American has a scientific instinct, which he is fond of cultivating wherever he be. Many farmers, merchants, and professional men in the West are making small collections of Indian relics. Should this paper come into the hands of collectors or students of this class, I hope that it may whet their appetite for once and better literature of the same kind. I also hope that it may aid and encourage them in their efforts to study and to take care of the antiquities found in their own immediate vicinity. To do this is at the same time their particular privilege and their special duty to the cause of science.

To former pupils, fellow teachers, and others who aided in making the explorations on Paint creek I extend my thanks and my greetings of most pleasant recollections. In particular I keep in grateful remembrance the kindly interest, aid, and valuable advice always freely bestowed by the venerable pioneer and scientist Dr. John Rumbold, formerly of McPherson county, Kansas. For special aid in preparing the paper I am under obligations to Dr. C. A. Sircusson, president of Bethany College, to Professor Frank Nelson, Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Kansas, and to Professor J. E. Welin of Bethany College.

The photographs for the illustrations were, with one exception, made by Mr. B. G. Gröndahl of Lindsborg, Kansas, and figures 6 and 27 were drawn by Professor Olof Gröndahl of Rock Island, Ill.

J. A. U.

Augustana College, May 1st, 1900.



INTRODUCTORY.

The monuments left by prehistoric races in the United States are much more numerous in the eastern part of the Mississippi valley than over the Western Plains. This is plainly shown on a map issued some years ago by the Bureau of Ethnology and prepared to exhibit the geographical distribution of prehistoric works east of the Rocky Mountains.* From the Mississippi river and eastward, the localities of mounds and other prehistoric works appear numerous and crowded, while westward from the great river they are few and scattered. Evidently in prehistoric times as at present the more fertile and more richly watered eastern plains afforded a more congenial environment to the inhabitants than the less favored western country. In another respect, also, the monuments of early man in America bear witness to a comparatively small population in prehistoric times westward from the great river. On the Western Plains we find none of those magnificent earthen structures, that were erected by the prehistoric people of the Ohio valley and by those who dwelled near the Mississippi. The conditions of existence in the west evidently did not result in the development of such powerful communities as could spare the energy needed for the construction of great mounds.

* Catalogue of Prehistoric Works east of the Rocky Mountains, by Cyrus Thomas, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., 1891.

But the greater observed frequency of antiquities east of the Mississippi river is to some extent due to a less complete knowledge of the western territory. A number of explorers have been at work in the eastern territory for more than three quarters of a century, while comparatively few have paid any attention to archæological explorations on the west slope of the great central valley, and this for only the last few decades. This region has only tardily received the attention it deserves. There can be no doubt that future work will bring to light many more localities in the west where prehistoric man has left traces of his existence. Some recently made discoveries give decided promise that this will be the case. In the last few years Mr. J. V. Brower has located some sixty hitherto unknown sites of aboriginal villages in the eastern part of the state of Kansas,* and others have reported similar localities from the region north of this state.

From such explorations in Kansas as are known to the author of this paper, it appears that the antiquities in this state are associated with two distinct types of mounds: burial mounds and elevated dwelling sites. Many of the latter, perhaps the greater number, are no mounds at all but merely the flat surface of the ground where the dwellings of an earlier race have once been standing. These would never be noticed, were it not for the relics of household art, chase, and warfare scattered about the place. But frequently there occur

* *Memoirs of Explorations in the Basin of the Mississippi*, Vol. II, Hensley, by J. V. Brower, p. V., St. Paul, 1899.

together with these relics heaps of earth a foot or two high and perhaps a rod wide. These village sites, as they have been called, do not occupy any conspicuously high places, but usually lie on or near some flat and fertile lowlands as on the border of an alluvial plain. The burial mounds are different. They are higher and somewhat less flat on top. Frequently there is a pile or a layer of rocks within them, and under this, some human remains. They are usually built on high bluffs or on upland hills overlooking some extensive lowlands. They can almost always be found on bluffs near the junction of larger streams and their size is somewhat proportionate to that of the confluent waters. Mounds of this kind have been reported from near the mouth of the Kansas,* near the junction of the Big Blue and the Kansas, and near the junction of the Republican and the Smoky Hill.** The author has seen some along the Smoky Hill river west of the latter locality and on several of the high buttes in Saline and McPherson counties, and he has opened two in the latter county. One of these is on the summit of the highest butte of the Smoky Hills and the other is west of Gypsum creek near the northeast corner of McPherson county. Both mounds were partly built of rocks, under which there were charred human bones and some roughly chipped flints. In the present state of our knowledge of the antiquities of Kansas we are hardly justified in making any conjectures as to whether these two types of mounds

* Traces of the Aborigines in Riley County. Prof. G. H. Failyer. Trans. of the Kansas Acad. of Sci., 1879-1880, p. 132.

** Kansas Mounds, F. G. Adams. Trans. of the Kansas Acad. of Sci., 1877-1878, p. 51.