

It was in this vicinity early in the 18th century that the first fur traders and explorers found the Arikara Indian living a "quiet and peaceable life." Their numbers increased and other villages were established along the Missouri River, especially northward.

History tells us that some time about the middle of the 18th century the Sioux Indian came into South Dakota territory from the northeast, forced thither by the white man with his ever-craving desire for conquest. The Sioux liked the new country as it abounded with buffalo, and, having received his lesson of conquest from the white settlers, immediately declared war against the Arikaras. The latter were not prepared for warfare and began to fortify their villages, or at least part of them, with trenches and stockades, consisting of posts set close together on the inside of a deep trench and poles and brush fastened to them. For awhile this offered ample protection from the ordinary crude weapons of warfare, but the Sioux soon obtained firearms from the whites which were more effective, and after 40 years of continuous warfare the Arikaras were compelled to evacuate their old territory in the central part of the state. They moved north and about 1800 built a substantial village of over 100 lodges on the west side of the river in what is now Corson County, and known as the "Elk Creek" site.

This village was situated on both sides of Elk Creek and immediately on the bank of the Missouri River, which since then has changed its current and today is nearly one mile away. This is the first historical record of an Arikara Indian village that was established in territory that is now South Dakota.

Lewis and Clark visited these Indians and remained at the camp four or five days in 1804, giving them a sun-glass, some sugar and salt in exchange for corn, squashes and beans. In 1811 the Hunt-Astoria Expedition stopped at this village several days, purchasing in all eighty horses with which to enable them to proceed on their western journey overland. The purchase price of each horse was said to be about \$10 worth of merchandise, such as beads, pow-

THE ARIKARA INDIAN IN SOUTH DAKOTA.

By W. H. Over

The name Arikara is probably derived from the Pawnee word "arike," meaning a horn, with the plural suffix ra, as this tribe of Indians practiced a peculiar custom of arranging their hair in coils, one on each side of the head to resemble horns.

These Indians were considered northern members of the Caddo confederacy, which consisted of the Caddos of Louisiana, the Pawnees of Nebraska and the Arikaras of South Dakota. The parent stock or Caddos were supposed to have migrated many centuries before from Mexico, Central America or Peru and one fact that seems to substantiate this theory is, that these tribes have always cultivated the soil and raised, with other plants, corn, which is generally believed to have originated in tropical America.

Therefore, the Arikaras are of southern ancestry, descendants of a very early American race, in course of time have migrated nearly across the United States from south to north and likely introduced corn into territory that is now South Dakota.

The time of their arrival into Dakota territory is not known, but all existing evidence tends to show that it must have been early in the 17th century. Their first location in the state was probably near the present site of Running Water, but their stops were only temporary until they reached the mouth of Bad River about where Pierre is now located. Here they established permanent villages, built and lived in circular earth lodges, hunted buffalo, cultivated the soil, raising corn, squashes, beans and a species of tobacco.

der and bullets, knives, needles, fish-hooks and buttons. Up to this time the Arikara Indians had been favorably disposed toward the white explorers and fur traders and had shown a willingness to remain on peaceable terms in order that they might obtain goods in exchange for horses and furs.

But competition was becoming strong about this time and the Missouri Fur Company, of St. Louis, and the Hudson Bay Company of the North, had each been sending in unscrupulous agents to secure the fur trade. Each company tried to cite hostility toward the other. They usually secured valuable furs for a few trinkets costing but a trifle. An Indian or two was shot by the whites without any just cause. The Sioux continued their hostilities. All this in time aroused the bitterest feelings towards the whites so that instead of a quiet and peaceable tribe as we knew them a century before, they are now sullen and morose, particularly suspicious of the whites and easily provoked to warfare. A year or two later a party of eleven traders and hunters were all slain. The enmity of the Indians toward the whites had become so strong that it was not safe for voyagers to pass up or down the river.

In 1823 the government sent a company of soldiers up the river from the fort at Council Bluffs with orders to compel the Indians to agree to a treaty of peace or kill them. Lieutenant Leavenworth was in command and was accompanied by the president of the Missouri Fur Company, who had asked permission to join the expedition, claiming that he could be of great help in bringing about peace without bloodshed. Upon arriving at the village the soldiers began firing, but the Lieutenant ceased action, hoping to secure a treaty without further hostilities. But for some reason the meeting was postponed until morning and during the night the Indians escaped across the river in bullboats and hid in the hills. There was nothing for the soldiers to do but to return to Council Bluffs without accomplishing either demand of the government. It was learned later that this plan of procedure had been arranged by the president of the Fur Company, who hoping that without a

treaty the Indians would continue their warfare toward the whites and especially his competitive fur traders, and by his timely "tip" they would remain friendly to his Company, and enable them to secure the whole output of furs. This is only another illustration of the treachery perpetrated on the American Indian by the early whites.

Peace was finally restored, but later smallpox was introduced among the Indians by a traders boat from St. Louis. This raged in their villages for two years, decreasing their number to only a few hundred. The next year the remainder of the tribe paid a visit to their old ancestral abode among the Pawnees in Nebraska, probably with the intention of making it their future home, but owing to their ugly disposition towards the whites they were requested to return north on the Missouri River. This time they established their village further up the river, where they lived for a few years, but finally joined the Mandans and remained until the government removed both tribes to the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota. Here today lives the remnant of this once powerful tribe, diminished in numbers to only three or four hundred, broken in spirit, but staying out an existence as planned by the white man.

This in brief is the history of the Arikara Indians in South Dakota. However, there are some who differ with this account, particularly in regard to the origin and places of habitation previous to 1804. A more detail account is found in Volume III of the Publications of the State Historical Society, by Charles E. DeLand.

During the summers of 1915, 1915 and 1917, the writer, under the auspices of the State Geological and Natural History Survey, visited forty-five old village sites between the mouth of Chapelle Creek in Hughes County and Elk Creek, Corson County. The latter is twelve miles above the Milwaukee Railroad Bridge at Mobridge.

Ten of these old villages showed unmistakable evidence of being much older than the others. In nine of the ten villages mentioned above the Arikaras had built villages which showed plainly the two periods of habitation. It

is now known that these ten older villages were built and inhabited by the Mandan Indians, who migrated up the Missouri River many years before.

However, there were forty-four old villages along the river extending a distance of 160 miles, that were built and used by the Arikaras. It is true that a few do not show evidence of any extended period of habitation, yet there are seventeen that must have been inhabited many years, as indicated by the large refuse heaps of camp debris. According to historical accounts one is led to believe that the migration of these Indians was continuous from south to north, but with forty-four villages, it is more than probable that many of them were inhabited at one time, and that during the eighteenth century the land adjacent to the Missouri River in South Dakota was thickly populated by the Arikara Indians.

The seventeen larger sites mentioned above are designated as follows: McClure's, eight miles below Pierre; Pierre site, Ree Fort, Oahe, Fort Sulley, Cheyenne River, Fairbanks, Artichoke Creek, Four Bears (on map as Buffalo Skin Creek), Steamboat Creek, Swan Creek, Rosa's, Old Evarts, Larsons, Mobridge, Oak Creek and Elk Creek.

Of the forty-four villages surveyed twenty-four were fortified with trench and stockade for protection against the enemy. The earth lodges were built by digging down about 18 inches and throwing the dirt out to form a circular ridge around the outside. Forked posts five or six feet high were then set in the ground a few feet apart on the outer edge of this circular depression, but on the inside of the ridge. Poles were laid on these forks and extended around the outside. Four forked posts eight to ten feet high were set in the ground near, but at right angles to the center, and poles laid on these forming a square. In the larger lodges another row of poles would be set in midway between the center square and the outside circle, in height to form a slope to the roof. Cross poles were then extended from the outside rim or plate poles to the center square, but leaving an opening in the center for the smoke to escape. Fine brush or coarse grass was put on the poles and this

covered with sod and dirt. For the outer walls the posts were thatched with poles and brush which was filled in with mud and dirt piled against the outside. These lodges were from fifteen to seventy-five feet in diameter and when finished resembled an inverted kettle. For an entrance a hole was left in the wall, but there was usually an enclosed approach formed by building sod walls out a few feet and covered. Buffalo skins were hung at the entrance to take the place of a door. Bunks or sleeping places were arranged against the outside wall. The fireplace was in the center directly under the opening in the roof. According to Lewis & Clark, as many as three families occupied some of the larger lodges, and partitions were made by fastening up buffalo robes.

At the Elk Creek site when hostile tribes were known to be lurking in the neighborhood, ponies were also kept in the lodges during the night to prevent them from being stolen. A sod wall was built on either side of the space used for the horses and these walls or partitions can be identified in a number of old lodge circles at this site today.

Today the old village sites are determined by the circle ridges with depressions inside where each lodge stood, as well as by the refuse heaps of crushed bones and other camp debris. The bones of the buffalo and other large mammals were crushed and boiled to extract every particle of fat for food. This custom was practiced by most of the pre-historic people in North America and at the same time all wild game was increasing. The white man is responsible for the extermination of the game. It has been truthfully stated that "the white man literally trapped and hunted himself across the continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, using the fur for clothing and the meat for food."

On the outside of the old lodge circle and near the door, we usually observe a small depression, perhaps three feet across the top, reminding one of an old well that has been filled up. These were their "cache" holes or storing cellars where corn, meat and other valuables may be placed for safe keeping while the owners were off on a visit or hunting trip. The top was covered over with dirt and leaves

not to be distinguishable from the surrounding surface. These holes were five or six feet deep and flared out bell-shaped at the bottom. At the Elk Creek site several of these holes were dug into and in one a number of large bones were found showing that for some reason the meat stored had never been used. In another we found a metal ax head, in another a steel knife with a horn handle and stamped with Sheffield, England, as the place of manufacture.

In excavating for their lodges and also in cultivating their crops these Indians used two types of spades or hoes. One was made from the shoulder blade of a buffalo and a very common implement. Worn and discarded pieces are found at every old village site. The other is a smaller, but more substantial tool and was made from the horn core and part of the skull of the buffalo, the horn core answering for the handle, while the blade was made from the skull part. Only two of these have been found as far as known.

Another common tool is the spatula-shaped instrument also made from the shoulder blade of a buffalo, but smaller than the spade. From the appearance of several that have been found it is probable that rawhide was wrapped around part of it for a handle and they may have been used as we would a trowel in mixing clay and shaping earthen bowls or pottery. The shoulder blade of the buffalo furnished material for many implements. Three tools were found at different villages that very much resemble meat-cleavers. They are almost identical in shape. Only about one-half of the shoulder blade was used by cutting off half of the blade and sharpening the edge where it was cut.

The bone flesher or scraper that has been found at several places and made from the larger metacarpal bone of the hind leg of an elk, is an interesting tool and shows fine workmanship in shaping out the teeth with their crude instruments. This was used for scraping hides before tanning.

At all the older villages where excavating was done, many bone awls or perforators were found. These were made from splints of the smaller leg bones of the deer and elk, and were used for sewing skin clothing, moccasins and

perhaps in many other ways by these crude people. The ribs of the buffalo were used for making many different tools and instruments, the latter for playing games. However, the use of some of them are not known. Their paint brushes, for decorating robes, etc., were thin pieces of the soft part of the joint of the bone of a buffalo. A few have been found with the pigment still showing on the edge.

Bone arrow points were made and used, but are not common. These were cone-shaped and hollowed out at the base to slip over the point of the arrow shaft. One was taken from a grave with barbs on it. Bone splints that were used for chipping out new flint arrow points are frequently found in the refuse heaps. Several good bone fish hooks, associated with cat-fish bones have also been taken from their refuse heaps. Flint arrow points are common at the older villages. They are usually small and of two distinct types—the rather deep indented base and the triangular shape. It is supposed that the latter were used in warfare and when the shaft was withdrawn the point remained in the wound.

The manufacturing of pottery vessels was evidently one of the chief occupations of the Arikara Indians, probably of the squaws. Thousands of fragments of pots can be collected from any of the larger sites. During the field trip of 1917 a whole vessel was taken from a grave with six skeletons. As far as known this is the only perfect Indian pot found in the state. It is about seven inches high, symmetrical in shape and bowl larger than the opening, but with a contracted neck. It is decorated around the neck and above the bowl with crude lines made with a sharp pointed instrument of bone or wood. This bowl has attracted much attention and is prized very highly. In the fragments collected no two are decorated alike. However, some of the decorations show considerable skill and some little development in the art of drawing. In pipes only three have been found that can be attributed to the Arikaras. They are all of the large round bowl type, but small in size, and made from pipestone or catlinite. Two of these were found in a grave and the other taken from a refuse heap.

At the older villages beads and pendants or amulets were taken from the refuse heaps. These are made of clam shells, eagle claws, horse teeth, elk teeth and the large hollow leg bones of birds cut into sections.

"Ree" or "Squaw" corn, squashes and pumpkins were raised in all their larger villages and charred cobs, parched grains of corn and dry hulls of the squash and pumpkin seeds were frequently found in the refuse heaps. At the more recent village at "Elk Creek" many trinkets of copper, brass, glass beads, steel knives, buttons, bells, bullets and flints for flintlock guns were found, all showing the influence of civilization. According to Lewis & Clark, these Indians made glass beads by melting bottles and shaping the beads in clay moulds. Several of these have been found at this village site.

About thirty skeletons and the same number of skulls have been taken from Elk Creek, Mobridge, Swan Creek and the Oahe villages. At the Elk Creek site or burying ground, from one to three were buried in the same grave and were about three and one-half feet below surface. It was a common custom to place the body on the right side, head north, and the body folded up. This practice of "folding up" was no doubt due to a necessity on the part of the grave digger as the excavating was very difficult with the crude tools at his command. Usually about one foot above the body was found partially decayed cottonwood logs that had been placed there, probably as a prevention against digging out by wild animals.

In some instances, enough fragments of a buffalo robe could be detected to indicate that the body had been wrapped in one.

Very few articles were buried with the dead, and nearly everything found was obtained from the early trader or explorer, glass beads, an iron ring, copper bells, steel knives and copper ornaments being the most in evidence. With a female skeleton, one-half pint of *Thalictrum* or Meadow Rue seed was found. In another grave with a male was taken two elk teeth, a portion of tobacco and some Meadow

Rue seed. This seems to about complete the list of primitive articles found in graves at this village.

Two particularly interesting skeletons have been taken from the above site. One is a male about 35 years of age, who was evidently slain in battle by a Sioux Indian, as three steel arrowpoints of the type that the Sioux used, were found in the skeleton. Also several years previous this same Indian had had both lower limbs broken. The healed fractures plainly show. In the other skeleton there was a badly fractured femur, and under it was found the flattened bullet that caused it. This last accident may have happened during the encounter the soldiers had with these Indians in 1823 as previously mentioned in this article.

At the "Swan Creek" site seven graves were examined and from one to six skeletons taken from each. These were three and one-half to six feet below the surface. The cottonwood logs or willow branches were found here above the bodies as at the "Elk Creek" site. The "folding up" custom was not so evident, and while most of the bodies had been placed with the head north, a few had the head to the east. This village had been occupied before the advent of the white man so that we found no trinkets showing the influence of civilization.

In grave No. 1 five skeletons were found, most of them in a poor state of preservation, and nothing else except a large pebble showing some use.

In grave No. 2 six skeletons were taken and with these we found the whole pot, besides a clay duck image, a large shell bead, three flint and one bone arrow points, five flint knives, two pipes and one large flint scraper. In all our investigations to date this is the richest find we have ever made from a grave.

In grave No. 3 three skeletons were taken, all with the head north, but no articles.

Grave No. 4 yielded six skeletons. A lot of charcoal, ashes and charred wood were found near the head of one skeleton whose skull was covered with red pigment or paint. One flint arrow point was also found.

In grave No. 5 there was only one skeleton with the head north.

In No. 6 there were six skeletons, but apparently jumbled in together and so badly decayed that skulls only were saved. Two clam shells, with holes, probably used as pendants were found here.

Graves 7 and 8 yielded nine skulls, skeletons too badly decayed to save. No articles were found.

The "Mobridge" site is located on a high eminence about one-half miles east of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway bridge and two miles west of the town of Mobridge, Walworth County. This old village site was visited by the survey in 1917. Much excavation had been done in past years by relic hunters and by parties more or less interested.

The surface had the appearance of being much older than either the "Elk Creek" or the "Swan Creek" sites. This fact was also substantiated by the old and poorly preserved skeletons taken here. The burial ground was in a small natural mound on a sloping hill where but little moisture could remain and penetrate into the soil. With such conditions, even with an older burial, one would expect to find the skeletal remains in a good state of preservation. Four graves were excavated and five skeletons found. One contained the bodies of an adult and a very young child. With the latter we found a flint triangular-shaped spearhead. In another grave with an older child was found a small earthen vessel that would perhaps hold one-half pint of water, and shaped like the old war helmets of Europe. It has been suggested that it is a drinking cup. No other articles were found, but in each grave a large glacial boulder had been placed and the bodies apparently folded around them.

It will be noticed here that there was a difference in the burial customs from either of the others mentioned and is suggestive of an older tribe of Indians living here sometime, but after we have examined the old village site and refuse heaps, and find a striking similarity in the lodge sites and the pottery fragments, and can detect no differ-

ence in the flint, stone and bone implements from the other sites we are led to the conclusion that there is no question of its identity, but that it is one of the first villages occupied by the Arikaras north of the vicinity of Pierre.

It is possible that further investigation of the larger or more permanent villages will, at each one, show a difference in the burial customs, due to some ceremonial rite. Just as we find no two decorative designs alike on their pottery, so some of these Indians in building their earth lodges never used more than four upright posts in the center or around the fireplace, while other Indians who built similar lodges used six or more. All these customs may have had some ceremonial significance to the Arikara Indian.

We may conclude that the Arikara Indians were a semi-civilized tribe living in permanent villages and cultivating the soil quite extensively, and that they were not of a roaming nature and very unlike the Sioux in this respect. Their chief food supplies were of buffalo meat and corn. When first encountered by the whites they were peaceable and of kindly nature, only later aroused to a state of animosity by the ill treatment of the early traders and the continued hostility of the Sioux.

We found them three centuries ago strong in numbers, contented in spirit, entering the great panoramic activities of the discovery and settling up a new world by the Anglo-Saxon race. They have run the gauntlet of merciless warfare, withstood the wrong perpetrated by the early whites, fought the dread diseases introduced by civilization, and emerged from the struggle with only a remnant, too weak to demand their just rights of a nation that claims the highest standard of a Democratic government.