

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

1990

Coronado, Quivira, and Kansas: An Archeologist's View

Waldo R. Weldel

National Museum of Natural History

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Weldel, Waldo R., "Coronado, Quivira, and Kansas: An Archeologist's View" (1990). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 501.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/501>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

CORONADO, QUIVIRA, AND KANSAS

AN ARCHEOLOGIST'S VIEW

WALDO R. WEDEL

Four hundred and forty-nine years ago this summer, the Kansas prairies were visited for the first time by white men. These were a select group of Spanish adventurers from Mexico led by a thirty-year-old nobleman by the name of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado. Francisco was a lad of eleven years when Hernando Cortez looted the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, now Mexico City, and sent back to Spain a vast treasure in gold, silver, and precious stones. One of several younger sons, and thus denied by the rule of primogeniture from inheriting any significant share of the family patrimony, Francisco followed the example of many of his contemporaries and headed for the land of promise—the New World. He arrived in Mexico City with the viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza,

Waldo R. Wedel, archeologist emeritus at the National Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution, is widely recognized as the dean of plains archaeologists. His distinguished list of publications includes coverage of almost every facet of early plains societies.

[GPQ 10 (Summer 1990): 139-151]

a year or two after Francisco Pizarro, a cousin of Cortez, plundered the Inca capital of Cuzco in Peru, greatly enriching himself and returning another fabulous fortune to Spain. Within two years of his coming, Don Francisco married a beautiful, wealthy, and well-connected heiress. By 1538, three years after his arrival in Mexico and while he was still only twenty-eight years old, Coronado was appointed to the governorship of New Galicia on the northwestern frontier of New Spain. The record, to quote the historian Herbert E. Bolton, strongly suggests that Coronado had what it takes (Bolton 1949; Udall 1987).

CORONADO'S EXPEDITION

Along with the sixteenth-century treasure seekers and soul savers from Spain, there came to the New World rumors of the legendary Seven Cities, a long-lived and widely traveled European tradition. An interesting constellation of circumstances eventually located these so-called mythical cities some forty or fifty days' travel north of Mexico City. They were reportedly as large as, or larger than, the Mexico City of the Aztecs and at least as wealthy. To an ambitious and driven man on his way up, one undoubtedly

well aware of the recent feats of Pizarro, Cortez, and others, the challenge was clear and irresistible. In the race that developed to establish dominion over these fabled lands and their riches, the viceroy Mendoza was in the forefront and so his protegee, Coronado, at age twenty-nine, was appointed to organize, lead, and help finance the enterprise.

At the head of a large and well-equipped army of fellow adventurers from Spain, numerous Indian allies and camp followers, and with a commissary herd of cattle, sheep, and swine, Don Francisco set out from Culiacan, Mexico, in 1540.

Disappointed, but not disheartened, when the Seven Cities of Cibola turned out to be the stone and mud pueblos of the Zuni Indians, the expedition moved again in the spring of 1541 from winter quarters at Tiguex near present Bernalillo on the Rio Grande in search of the gold in Quivira (Fig. 1), about which they had learned more from two Plains Indians, the Turk and Isopete, at the frontier pueblo of Cícúye (Pecos) during the winter. By the end of summer, that dream too had faded and the disillusioned conquistadors were on their way back to Mexico.

From its winter quarters at Tiguex, the Coronado expedition had traveled east and southeast on the Llano Estacado with the Turk as guide. Coronado decided, under pressure from Isopete, that he was being misled by the Turk. This has been questioned in recent years (M. Wedel 1982), but it was too late to help the Turk. Somewhere along the deeply indented eastern edge of the Llano, the Spaniards came upon a maze of canyons and re-planned their strategy. Jaramillo noted that the place was a *barranca* or ravine "like those of Colima," and Bolton identified it with Tule Canyon. From here the army was sent back while Coronado and a party of thirty horsemen, six foot soldiers, servants, and Friar Juan de Padilla, in all perhaps about forty persons, headed "north by the needle" in a speeded up search for Quivira. The reduced party started about 1 June 1541, now under the guidance of the Quiviran Indian Isopete with the Turk along in chains.

On the feast day of Saint Peter and Saint

Paul, 29 June, Coronado's party crossed a river that they named after the saints and also called the River of Quivira, clearly the Arkansas River near Ford, Kansas. Here they turned to the right, proceeding downstream toward the northeast on its north bank. This was familiar country to Isopete who calmed several startled hunters they met by calling to them in their own tongue. These Quivirans were encountered two- or three-days' march downstream from the crossing. Three or four days later on about 6 July the Spaniards came to their village.

LOCATING QUIVIRA

Despite some very good clues in the Coronado documents, the identification and location of the Quivira sought by the Spaniards has been a subject of lively discussion for well over a century. It has been located in many places—in New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, and even across the Missouri River in Iowa. Many of these identifications rest on an amazing disregard of the information that can be ferreted out of the Coronado documents—the distances and directions reportedly traveled, the number of days spent, the terrain traversed, and other details. One constellation of mid-nineteenth-century writers argued that the ruins of Gran Quivira less than a hundred miles south of Santa Fe were the settlements reached by Coronado. Why seventy-seven days were required for such a relatively short trip is not clear. Before Bolton in 1940, no one had troubled to retrace the route of the conquistadors from Compostela to Quivira on the ground. Writers worked instead with maps and drew mainly on personal familiarity with certain segments of the route, leaving further correlations and integration for the future.

The better informed and more competent scholars of the late nineteenth century, such as H. H. Bancroft (1893), A. F. Bandelier (1893), George P. Winship (1895), and Frederick Webb Hodge (1899) had settled on a Kansas location as the most likely (Brower 1898, 1899). Of these men, Hodge came closest when he argued that

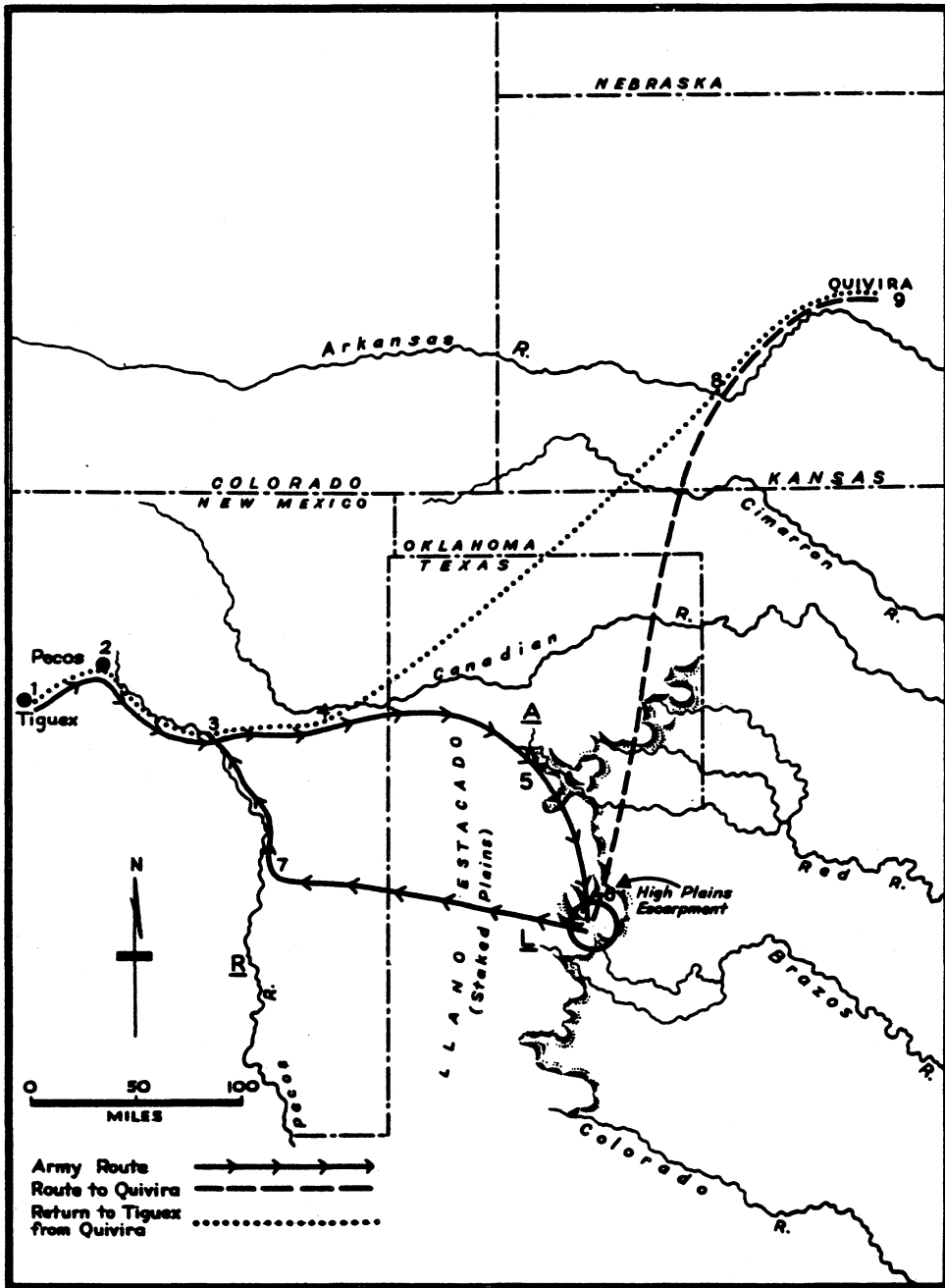


FIG. 1. Probable route of Coronado march from Tiguex to Quivira, 1541. Numbers correspond to the following: 1. Tiguex (near present Bernalillo, New Mexico); 2. Cicuye (Pecos ruins); 3. Pecos River Bridge; 4. Querrecho settlement; 5. Large barranca "like those of Colima" (Tule Canyon); 6. Last barranca, where Coronado and his army separated; 7. Point on Pecos River, thirty leagues below bridge, reached by the army on its return; 8. Crossing of Arkansas River below Quivira on Sts. Peter and Paul's Day, 29 June 1541; 9. Settlements of Quivira, thirty leagues beyond the Arkansas crossing. Point A is Amarillo, Texas; point L is Lubbock, Texas; and point R is Roswell, New Mexico. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

the first settlements of Quivira reported by Coronado were only a short distance east of the city of Great Bend, Kansas (Hodge 1899). By 1900, a young Swedish-born instructor at Bethany Academy in Lindsborg, Kansas, Johan August Udden, had witnessed the unearthing of a piece of chain mail in an Indian trash mound on Paint Creek in McPherson County, and in a scholarly report that earned him high praise in a review by Hodge, had suggested the possibility of a visit from the Spaniards into the region (Udden 1900).

Udden's report of the chain mail was followed in 1902 by Minnesotan Jacob V. Brower's decision to have monuments erected to record "for all time the discovery of Quivira by Coronado in 1541 and its rediscovery in 1896 by Brower" (Brower 1899, 1903). The energetic and highly motivated Brower erected a Minnesota granite shaft in Logan Grove, Kansas, two miles south of Junction City, Geary County, and placed three smaller ones in three adjoining county seats that he said were also in Quivira—Alma, Wabaunsee County; Manhattan, Riley County; and Herington, Dickinson County (Martin 1910). It was a good try and not more than a hundred miles wide of the mark. Thanks to the historical writings of Paul Wellman in the *Wichita Beacon*, we native Kansans learned early about Coronado and his visit to the state.

Shortly after my official entry on duty at the U.S. National Museum in mid-August 1936, I was instructed by my administrative superiors to set up a research program in archeology in an area of my own choosing. My response was a four-year project aimed at reexamination of the scattered, often promising, but generally unintegrated field work and digging that had been carried on at various times in Kansas. Central Kansas—the Quivira problem—was set for attention in 1940, the fourth summer. This would be the four-hundredth anniversary of Coronado's departure from Mexico and also the summer in which Bolton was retracing the route of the Spanish march from Mexico to Quivira. In Lyons, Kansas, meanwhile, the search for Quivira had been under way since 1927. In that year, Paul and Horace Jones, owners and op-

erators of the *Lyons Daily News*, jointly with the Lyons Commercial Club, had staged a "mystery window" night. When the *Daily News* window was unveiled it featured the Jones collections of Indian artifacts that had been found on various farms in the Lyons area. Thereafter, Indian relics from this locality, looked upon as Quivira, began accumulating and kept alive the steadily growing interest in local antiquities.

DIGGING IN CENTRAL KANSAS

My proposal for the Kansas survey was approved in due course. I was told to plan on field funds approximating \$1,200 per annum; if I could return five to ten percent of that unspent, my chances for another season in the field would be enhanced. I had some idea as to what I might be getting into because six years earlier I had been a member of a summer field party from the Nebraska State Historical Society that dug for four days at the Paint Creek site and thereby drew a rather unflattering news note from the Kansas State Historical Society about the trespassing diggers who were "said" to be from Nebraska. Happily, however, I have had only beneficial cooperation with Kansas State Historical Society officials in connection with my Smithsonian explorations (Wedel 1935).

With one assistant, I arrived in Lyons in early June 1940. We contacted Horace Jones at the *Lyons Daily News* and then tried unsuccessfully to acquire digging privileges at the Tobias and C. F. Thompson sites some eight miles north and east of the city. The next morning, armed with a letter of introduction from Horace, we secured permission from Mr. and Mrs. John Malone to work at the Malone site four miles west of Lyons, most of which was in cultivation. Cache pit depressions and two larger basins that we thought might be house sites were visible in a small piece of unbroken prairie pasture at the edge of the upland terrace on which the site lay. Mrs. Malone strongly believed that dead Indians, which abounded on her farm, should not be disturbed. Accordingly, she stipulated that we could not dig in more than two mounds and only in a short trench along the fence line

where no crops would be damaged. Since no mounds were visible, we persuaded her that we should be allowed to open two cache pits without disturbing more than ten square feet of pasture around each pit. Our trench was to be not more than 30 feet long by three feet wide. And, of course, all the earth that was removed had to be replaced on completion of our tests.

Before starting to dig, and in hopes of doing better elsewhere, we proceeded to Lindsborg and sought permission to dig at Paint Creek or at nearby Sharps Creek. Sharps Creek was unavailable because the owner's son was planning to continue digging there himself and outsiders were not welcome, even as nonworking observers. At Paint Creek, where Udden had worked intermittently from 1881 to 1888, Ed Nelson was willing to let us dig but only after harvest a week or ten days hence. So it was back to Rice County to set up camp near Buffalo Bill's well on the Malone property and go to work. It was not a very rewarding dig, but we were greatly impressed when Malone's son who was cultivating the adjoining field called our attention to potsherds, worked flints, ash, charcoal, and quantities of animal bones being turned up at many points by his plow. Cache pits were evidently present by the score, but Mrs. Malone remained adamant and we could only look across the fence and wonder what we were missing.

Three days after we began operations at the Malone site, Horace Jones came out with word that he had gotten us permission to dig at the Tobias site and that he had written C. F. Thompson in Indiana for approval of limited testing of the Thompson site across the Little Arkansas River, which first developed a permanent flow less than a half mile upstream. These permissions were forthcoming and our Rice County program for the summer was assured. Later we moved south to Cowley County to work at the Arkansas City Country Club site and other nearby sites that were clearly closely related to the Rice County materials. This is the area to which I now think Juan de Oñate came in 1601.

From that first summer, thanks in considerable part to Horace Jones and the *Lyons Daily*

News, doors began to open to us everywhere in Rice County. The *Daily News* carried a story about the dig every day. We came back in 1965, 1966, and 1971. We were granted access and excavation privileges at sites we were warned would be forever closed to us because the owner intended to work the site himself. We opened cache-trash pits, trenched rubbish heaps, tested three "council circles," and searched with little success for lodge sites and house floors. Much of the first season's work has been reported in detail (W. Wedel 1935, 1942, 1950, 1959, 1967, 1968, 1970, 1975).

Since 1940 it has been my conviction that the Quivira visited by Coronado in 1541 (Fig. 2) lay generally between the Smoky Hill River and the big bend of the Arkansas River, extending eastward to include the Walnut River and the headwaters of the Cottonwood River around Marion, and west to include Barton County. In all probability, many more sites remain to be recorded within the geographical limits here suggested and also beyond those boundaries.

Prior to the beginning of intensive agriculture, these sites were marked by low mounds on and in which there were a good many artifacts of stone, bone, shell, pottery, and other evidence of former human domestic activity. Long regarded as house ruins, the mounds are now known to mark one-time trash heaps. Scattered among the middens are innumerable erstwhile storage pits last used as trash pits. Some of these measure up to six and eight feet deep, are of equal diameter, and can be entered only with a step ladder; their capacity may be calculated at one hundred to two hundred bushels. From these have been taken quantities of broken pottery and numerous lost and discarded stone objects, worked and unworked animal and bird bone, charred corn, beans, sunflower seeds, and a wide range of other items. There is some evidence, too, of former shallow house floors 15 to 20 inches deep and perhaps 25 to 30 feet in diameter. The Wichita Indians, who were probably the natives visited by Coronado (M. Wedel 1988, 14-15) and other early European explorers, were reported to be living in grass-

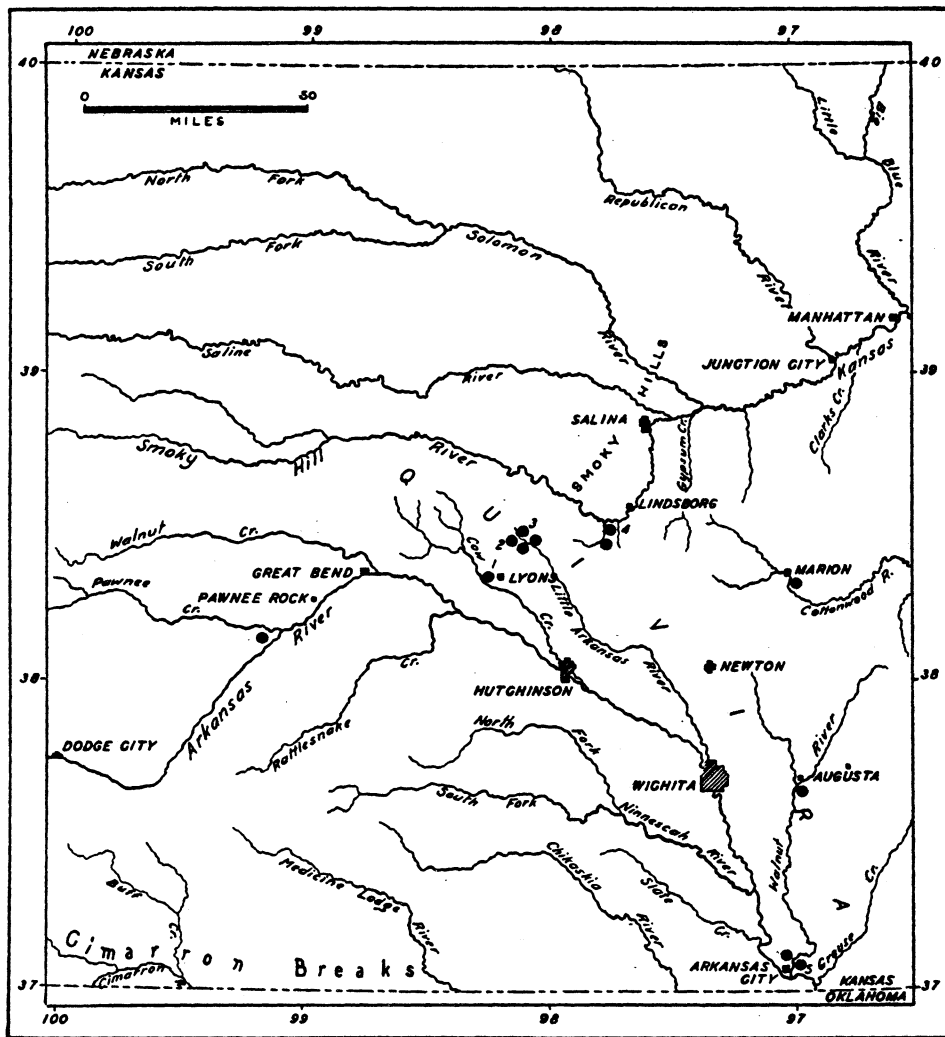


FIG. 2. Probable location of the province of Quivira during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Solid circles indicate sites visited or partially excavated by the United States National Museum in 1940. Numbers indicate the following sites: 1. Malone site; 2. Tobias site; 3. Thompson site; 4. Udden site; 5. Arkansas City Country Club site. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

covered houses of this general type and size.

At three sites in Rice County and two in McPherson County, there are, or formerly were, large ditched circles with mounded centers. No site has more than one such circle and not all sites have one. These curious and enigmatic circles have long been termed "council circles" locally, but this term is without any real basis

and has no grounding in ethnohistory (W. Wedel 1959, 1967). At least two of these are elliptical rather than circular. From one of these circles were taken several charred ears of choice seed corn that had evidently been stored within a shallow coiled basketry tray, and nearby, freshwater mussel shells contained small quantities of red ochre. Another circle yielded a necklace

of pale blue pea-size glass trade beads separated by bird bone spacers, with turquoise beads and a pendant at the lower end (W. Wedel 1959, pl. 46; 1942, pl. 9). Still another produced an iron ax head (Wedel 1959, pl. 36, k). Well-made red stone pipes were taken from several of the basins in which these materials were recovered. Otherwise the artifact inventory from the basins and the caches in them paralleled those taken from trash pits elsewhere in the sites.

The three council circles in which we made subsurface tests must, I think, be regarded as special purpose structures, perhaps men's lodges or their equivalent. Each had a large central fireplace. Our investigations have provided at least a partial answer to the riddle of the circles. On 21-22 December 1965 two groups of local observers stationed themselves at my suggestion on the Hayes and Thompson council circle line and verified the alignment of the circles with the winter solstice sunrise horizon points (W. Wedel 1967).

The fourscore interested observers who were present and looking west at the Hayes council circle on 22 June 1978 at summer solstice time will recall how the sun, two or three minutes before setting, slipped out from behind a thick cloud bank and then dipped beneath the horizon between the Thompson and Tobias circles, in full view and dead centered on our line of sight from the Hayes council circle. This was exactly where Dr. John A. Eddy of the High Altitude Observatory, Boulder, Colorado, also present, had predicted it would set. That was, I think, the most dramatic moment in our five seasons' work in Rice County, and for me personally, a highlight of a half century of archeological research on the Great Plains.

In addition to the Indian artifacts of local manufacture, which can be duplicated in other central Kansas sites, excavation at the Quivira sites has yielded notable imported objects whose time of manufacture and general use has been established elsewhere. Especially noteworthy are the glaze-paint decorated potsherds that recur again and again (W. Wedel 1959, 49). Originating among the Pueblo Indians of the Rio

Grande valley and the Galisteo basin, these include the following named potterywares: Pojoaque polychrome, Tewa polychrome, Koryiti glaze polychrome, Puaray glaze polychrome, and Espinosa glaze polychrome (W. Wedel 1982, 145-50). Most of these belong to the glaze-paint wares that date from the early fifteenth to the middle eighteenth centuries and thus bracket the period of intensive Spanish exploration and expansion. They provide a most helpful means of crossdating between the Pueblo and the Plains areas.

Of no less interest are the rare items of metal and glass that have come to light in the central Kansas sites. They are far less common than are the products of local Indian manufacture and suggest that European traders had not yet become established among these Indians. The pieces have all been found (Fig. 3) within twenty miles of the later Santa Fe trail, which may well have followed an old Indian trail along which native trader-entrepreneurs had walked for decades.

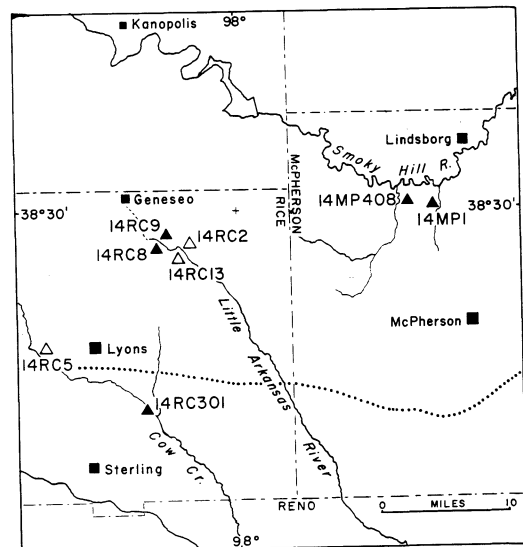


FIG. 3. Archeological finds of chain mail (solid triangles) in central Kansas. Dotted line is Santa Fe Trail route. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

CHAIN MAIL IN KANSAS

Of particular interest are the fragments of chain mail that have been found in no fewer than six sites in undisturbed context (W. Wedel 1975). The first piece was found on the Paint Creek site (14MP1) between 1881 and 1889, and Udden reported it as probably a fragment of chain mail (1900, 66, 73-78). Lost for many decades, it was acquired some years ago by the Kansas State Historical Society. At Paint Creek, two collectors from Salina found additional bits of mail, identified by Randolph Bullock, curator of arms and armor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. A badly rusted mass and several free rings were found at the C. F. Thompson site (14RC9), and these were examined by Stephen V. Grancsay, also of the Metropolitan. A member of my 1971 field party

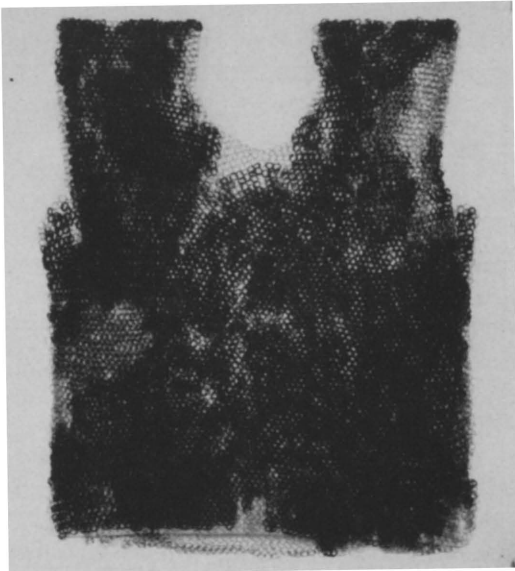


FIG. 4. Mail shirt said to have belonged to Aleksandr Baranov, ca. 1800. Open at sides and bottom. Light-colored portions are stainless steel restorations. Photo courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution. (USNM 237848).

found another small mass at the Tobias site (14RC8) near the floor of an 81-inch deep cache pit. Two large masses that are possibly two separate garments were found (Terry and Terry 1961) near the bottoms of two cache pits otherwise mostly destroyed by floods in Cow Creek at the Saxman site (14RC301), and sample rings were examined by Grancsay and his Metropolitan colleague Helmut Nickel (W. Wedel 1975). Another specimen was excavated recently at the Majors site (14RC2). In addition to Grancsay, Bullock, and Nickel, Harold Peterson of the National Park Service examined most of these specimens at my request and expressed the opinion that there was nothing inconsistent with the view that all were from the general Coronado period although their precise date and place of manufacture unfortunately cannot be ascertained (Demmin 1870; Peterson 1956; Schmidt 1967).

Chain mail is a flexible fabric of interlaced metal links. It is designed for protection against piercing weapons—arrows, darts, spears, and the like (Fig. 4). It is much better ventilated and thus more comfortable than the plate armor that eventually superceded it in general use. Its popularity peaked in Europe in the tenth to thirteenth centuries, a period sometimes called the “Age of Mail” (Stone 1934, 24). By 1600, mail was declining in popularity in western Europe, though its manufacture was never discontinued entirely. Explorers and adventurers from western Europe found mail garments satisfactory in their encounters abroad with less well armed native peoples during the golden half century of Spanish and Portuguese exploration from 1492 to 1542 (Udall 1987). Mail was also worn by horses. According to Peterson (1956, 106) “the Spanish who made the long treks with De Vaca, Coronado, and De Soto, and who founded the first permanent settlements in Florida, were the most heavily armored group ever to come to America.”

The methods of manufacturing chain mail varied from place to place and also from time to time (Smith 1959). According to Peterson (1956, 107; Fig. 5), the usual method during the period here involved:

was to wind a wire tightly about an iron rod and then cut it off in rings. The ends of each ring were then flattened and punched for a rivet. Garments were constructed from these rings by linking them together and then riveting the individual rings. Occasionally, European mail is found in which the ends of alternating rows of rings were welded instead of riveted, but the latter were more common. Normally, each ring was linked with four others. An ordinary shirt of mail would weigh from 14 to 30 pounds (6.5 to 13.5 kgs.) depending upon the size of the rings and the overall size of the garment.

Flat or half-round stock was commonly used after the invention of drawn wire but was superseded by round wire after the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, neither the date nor place of manufacture can be established for individual pieces when they do not bear a maker's tag.

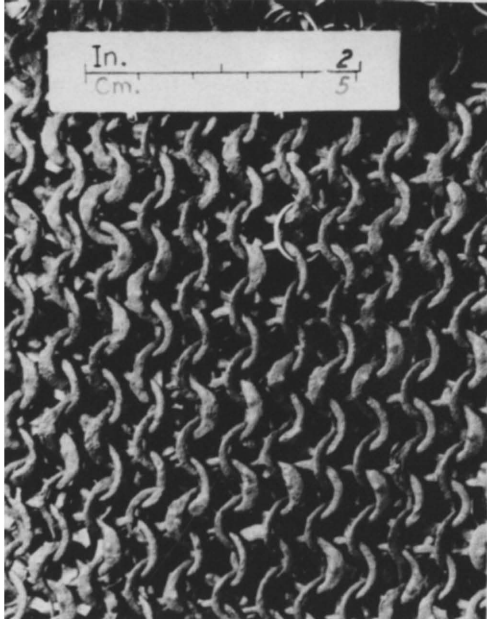


FIG. 5. Detail of Baranov mail shirt fabric. Note flattened and widened segments of links closed by riveting and visible rivet ends. Photo courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

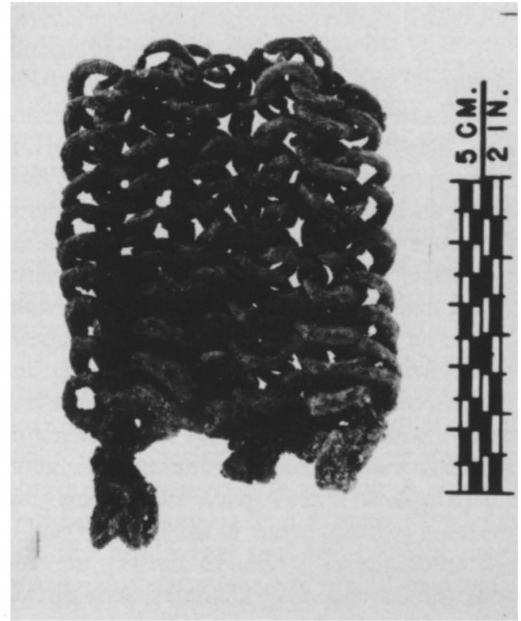


FIG. 6. Chain mail fragment (Kansas State Historical Society 74.70) from the Paint Creek site, 14MPI, McPherson County, Kansas, found between 1881 and 1889. Photo courtesy of Smithsonian Institution.

Rings in the Kansas pieces are mostly about eight to eleven millimeters in diameter and include both half-round and round stock (Fig. 6), and riveted and unriveted links.

To the best of my knowledge, archeological finds of chain mail in the Great Plains have been made only in Kansas, where they have been found in context with a native material culture complex also associated with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and apparently contemporary with sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Spanish explorations northward from Mexico. So far as I know, no chain mail has yet turned up in Pawnee sites in Nebraska, nor in Oklahoma, Colorado, Missouri, or elsewhere in the Great Plains. (But see Ellis 1955.)

Attempts to pinpoint the source of the chain mail garments and fragments found in central Kansas revolve around the Coronado entrada of 1541. The muster roll (Aiton 1939; Hammond and Rey 1940, 87-108), which includes

the names of most participants and identifies the sort of equipment they were carrying as of the 22 February 1540 inspection at Compostela, Mexico, suggests some support for the possibility. Thus we learn, for example, that in the troop of 227 (or "230-odd") horsemen, there were 552 horses, 56 coats of mail (Fig. 7), three pairs of mail leggings, two pairs of mail sleeves, and three loin guards and skirts of mail. Some people took several pieces of chain mail along. There is no information that any of these were lost during the expedition.

For the next official expedition, that of Juan de Oñate in 1601, we have the inspection record made by Juan de Frias Salazar before it left Mexico. A number of participants were provided with coats of mail (Hammond and Rey 1953, 1:228ff.). At least twelve men who accompanied Oñate to Quivira reported one or

more pieces, and he himself claimed ten. Vicente de Zaldivar, Oñate's *maese de campo* on the Quivira trip, had three "plus one fine coat of mail." Gaspar Lopez claimed three coats of mail, including "one of fine quality," plus two cuisses (thigh guards) of "coarse mail." There is apparently no record as to how many of these pieces of arms and armor returned to Mexico with the Oñate expedition.

Between Coronado's time in 1541-42 and that of Oñate in 1601, there was at least one other expedition that reached Quivira and might well have been the source of the mail. This was unauthorized and under the leadership of Captains Francisco de Leyva (Leyba) y Bonilla and Gutierrez de Jumana (Umana). Apparently no journal survives. The party was eventually wiped out almost to a man, probably somewhere between the Arkansas and Smoky Hill rivers in

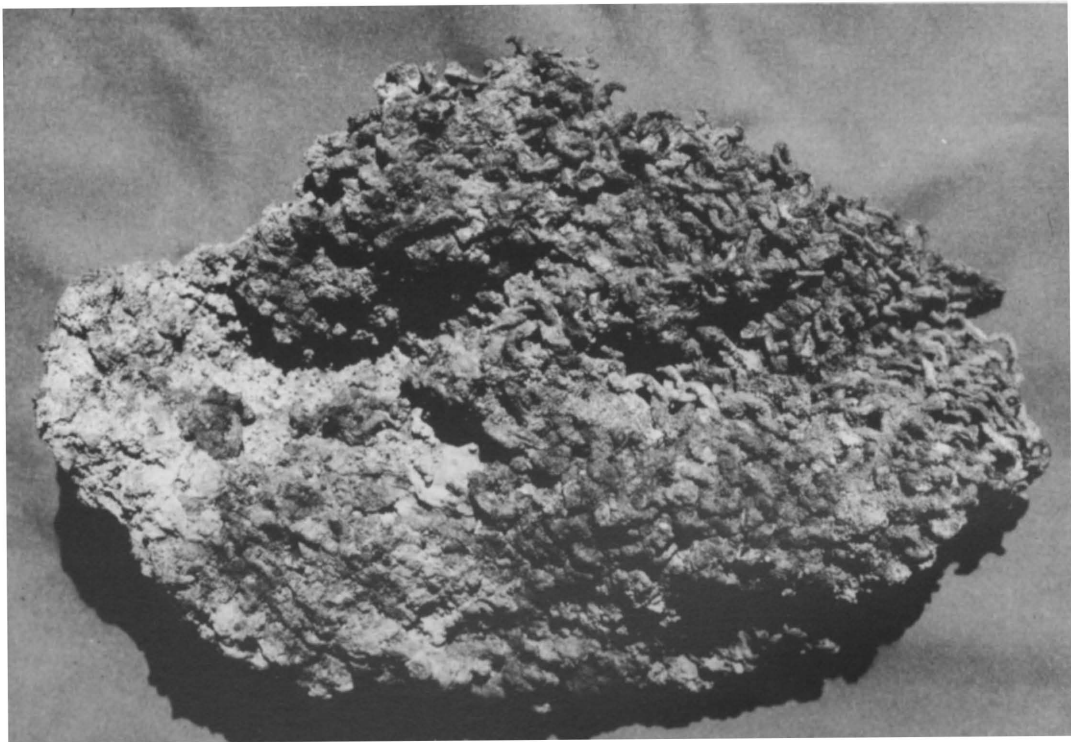


FIG. 7. Chain mail en bloc from Saxman site, 14RC301, found 1974 and now in Rice County Historical Museum, Lyons, Kansas. Maximum dimension 7.5 inches (19 cm). Photo courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

Kansas. If this party was equipped and armed along the lines of the Coronado and Oñate expeditions and was essentially destroyed, such arms and metal armor as its members carried were probably readily available to the Indians to be divided up as trophies of their warlike prowess.

THE CASE FOR KANSAS AS QUIVIRA

The summer of 1940, when my Rice County investigations for the Smithsonian Institution began, was also, as I said, the summer in which Bolton completed his field work on Coronado and the Quivira problem. Alone among the many who have worked or toyed with these matters, Bolton followed by horse, mule, auto, and on foot the route of Coronado's march, with documents in hand. He had also done much archival research in unpublished documents in Mexico and in Spain, thus acquiring insights and new information to which his predecessors had had no access. He and I missed contact by a few weeks that summer in Lyons, but he wrote me shortly after field work ended to inquire about the archeological evidence we had turned up. It is personally most gratifying to know that Bolton accepted the Rice-McPherson counties locality and adjacent central Kansas as Coronado's province of Quivira (Bolton 1949, 291-95).

Unlike the majority of those who have traveled this fascinating road before, and armed with archeological evidence that none of them had, I am persuaded that the location of Coronado's province of Quivira in central Kansas is now firmly established. I am not arguing the infallibility of archeology or of archaeologists. I cheerfully concede that no matter how flowery the rhetoric or how snowy the beard, our pronouncements are based on possibly fallible interpretations of imperfect and incomplete data. That said, to the best of my knowledge no other section of the interior United States fits the geographical, historical, and archeological requirements of the Coronado documents so well as does the Rice-McPherson counties locale. Nowhere else on the Plains does datable Rio

Grande glaze-paint decorated pottery assignable to the Coronado period recur at site after site. Nowhere else does chain mail occur repeatedly with that pottery and with potterywares, stone, and bonework of clearly local manufacture, and with only limited quantities of European trade or gift materials. To the prehistorian these points are significant because they provide him with glimpses of a native Indian society pursuing a lifeway uncontaminated by European influences, datable with some degree of precision, and thus a sound starting point on which to anchor further research into the prehistoric past.

Viewing that evidence again in recent days, I hold to the position I reached more than four decades ago (W. Wedel 1942), namely, that:

(1) the Quivira of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish documents and the central Kansas archeological sites were the habitat of one and the same native people,

(2) Coronado's 1541 entrada into the province of Quivira in all likelihood took place in the present Rice-McPherson counties locality, and

(3) such of the larger sites as Malone, Saxman, Tobias, and Paint Creek were very likely among the grass house villages whose Wichita-speaking inhabitants greeted the bearded and travel-worn strangers from the south on that memorable day in early July of 1541.

Hodge, Bolton, Swanton (my 1970 colleague), and a few others about whose work I am perhaps less well informed were on the right track. Once these scholars had accepted that the Quivira River, which Coronado had named the River of Saints Peter and Paul, was the Arkansas River, they could not easily come to any other conclusion. The Spaniards had crossed this northeast flowing river six or seven days below Quivira and had proceeded downstream along its north bank until they reached their destination. The archeological evidence that would clinch the case that Quivira was in Central Kansas came later, thanks to Paul and Horace Jones, the two self-styled country editors who for more than four decades so doggedly utilized the influence of the local press in attracting serious institutional investigations.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

By no means all of the questions about Quivira have been answered, not even the major ones. Of these, one of the most intriguing involves an intaglio figure located about one and a half miles south of the Hayes and Tobias council circles atop a prairie bluff, overlooking a small intermittent creek (Mallam, n.d.). This figure is of serpentine form, about 160 feet long. At the south end, what might be taken for a curled up tail balances two faintly marked open jaws at the north end that hold between them an oval elevation suggesting an egg. This intaglio is scarcely six inches deep and is further set apart by a short-grass cover contrasting sharply with the surrounding mid-grass prairie sod. The acuteness with which this apparent serpent figure can be seen depends rather strongly upon the angle at which the sun strikes it to somewhat shadow the figure, which suggests the Great Serpent Mound in Ohio. A nighttime test several years ago suggested that the open jaws appear to line up with two council circles—the left one with the Tobias circle and the right one with the Hayes circle. Not all observers have accepted the reality of this intaglio or of its orientation. Having seen it in short and tall grass and having seen its apparent correlation with two of the three council circles, I am strongly inclined to believe that it was made by the Quiviran natives, and further, that it had some esoteric connection with the council circles.

One wonders, too, whether Friar Juan de Padilla, had he escaped early martyrdom at the hands of unfriendly Indian neighbors of the Quivirans, could have left us further enlightening details regarding some rituals of the people and their special religious observances.

NOTE

An earlier version of this paper was read on 27 April 1985 at a symposium for the dedication of the Coronado-Quivira Museum in Lyons, Kansas.

WORKS CITED

- Aiton, A. S. 1939. Coronado's muster roll. *American Historical Review* 44 (no. 3): 556-70.
- . 1939. The muster roll and equipment of the expedition of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado. *Bulletin* 30, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor.
- Bancroft, Hubert H. 1889. *History of Arizona and New Mexico, 1530-1888*. San Francisco, CA: The History Company.
- Bandelier, Adolph F. 1893. *The Gilded Man*. New York.
- Bolton, Herbert E. 1949. *CORONADO Knight of Pueblos and Plains*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co. and Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Brower, J. V. 1898. *Quivira. Memoirs of explorations in the basin of the Mississippi*, vol. 1. St. Paul, MN.
- . 1899. *Harahey. Memoirs of explorations in the basin of the Mississippi*, vol. 2. St. Paul, MN.
- . 1903. *Kansas. Memoirs of explorations in the basin of the Mississippi*, Vol. 7. St. Paul, MN. (sub-titled: *Monumental perpetuation of its earliest History 1541-1896*.)
- Demmin, A. 1870. *Weapons of War, being a history of arms and armor from the earliest period to the present time*. London.
- Ellis, B. T. 1955. A possible chain mail fragment from Pottery Mound. *El Palacio* 62:181-84.
- Hammond, G. P., and A. Rey. 1940. Narratives of the Coronado Expedition. *Coronado Historical Series*, vol. 2. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- . 1953. Don Juan de Oñate, colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628. *Coronado Historical Series*, vols. 5-6. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Hodge, F. W. 1899. Coronado's march to Quivira, an historical sketch. In Brower 1899, pp. 29-73.
- Mallam, R. Clark. n. d. Site of the serpent: a prehistoric life-metaphor in south central Kansas. *Occasional Publications of the Coronado-Quivira Museum*, no. 1. Lyons, KS.
- Martin, George W. 1910. Memorial monuments and tablets in Kansas. *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, 11 (1909-1910): 253-81. Topeka, KS.
- Peterson, H. L. 1956. *Arms and armor in colonial America, 1526-1783*. New York: Bramhall House.
- Schmidt, Ernst. *Kunstgewerbliche Werkstätten 1967 Arms (and) Armor from the atelier of Ernst Schmidt, Munich* [Catalog, edited by] E. Andrew Mowbray. Providence, RI.
- Smith, C. S. 1959. Methods of making chain mail (14th to 18th centuries). *Technology and Culture* 1:60-67, 289-91.

- Stone, G. C. 1934. *A glossary of the construction, decoration, and use of arms and armor in all countries and in all times*. Portland, ME.
- Terry, Kenneth, and Ina Terry. 1961. Chain mail and other exotic materials from south central Kansas. *Plains Anthropologist* 6 (no. 12, pt. 2): 126-29.
- Udall, Stewart L. 1987. *To the Inland Empire: Coronado and our Spanish Legacy*. Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc.
- Udden, J. A. 1900. An old Indian village. *Augustana Library Publication*, no. 2. Rock Island, IL.
- Wedel, Mildred Mott. 1982. The Indian they called Turco. In *Pathways to Plains Prehistory*, pp. 153-62.
- 1988. *The Wichita Indians 1541-1750: Ethno-historical essays*. Reprints in *Anthropology*, vol. 38. Lincoln, NE.: J & L Reprint Company.
- Wedel, Waldo R. 1935. Salina 1: a protohistoric village site in McPherson County, Kansas. *Nebraska History Magazine* 15 (no. 3): 238-50. Lincoln, NE.
- 1942. Archeological remains in central Kansas and their possible bearing on the location of Quivira. *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections* 101 (no. 2): 1-24. Washington, D.C.
- 1950. Notes on Some Plains-Southwestern contacts in the light of archeology. In *For the Dean: Essays in Anthropology in Honor of Byron Cummings on his 89th Birthday, September 20, 1950*, edited by Erik K. Reed and Dale S. King, pp. 99-116. Tucson, AZ: Hohokam Museums Association, and Santa Fe, NM: the Southwestern Monuments Association.
- 1959. An introduction to Kansas archeology. *Bulletin* 174, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- 1967. The council circles of central Kansas: Were they solstice registers? *American Antiquity* 32 (no. 1): 54-63.
- 1968. After Coronado in Quivira. *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 34 (no. 4): 369-85. Topeka, KS.
- 1970. Coronado's route to Quivira 1541. *Plains Anthropologist* 15 (no. 49): 161-68.
- 1975. Chain mail in Plains archeology. *Plains Anthropologist* 20 (no. 69): 187-96.
- 1982. Further notes on Puebloan-Central Plains contacts in light of archaeology. In *Pathways to Plains Prehistory*, pp. 145-52.
- Winship, G. P. 1896. The Coronado Expedition. *14th Annual Report Bureau of American Ethnology*, pt. 1, 339-598.
- Wyckoff, Don G. and Jack L. Hofman, eds. 1982. *Pathways to Plains Prehistory*. Oklahoma Anthropological Society, Memoir 3. Cross Timbers Heritage Association, Contributions 1.