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## The direct-historical approach in Pawnee archeology (with six plates)

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THE DIRECT-HISTORICAL APPROACH IN  
PAWNEE ARCHEOLOGY

(WITH SIX PLATES)

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# THE DIRECT-HISTORICAL APPROACH IN PAWNEE ARCHEOLOGY

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(WITH SIX PLATES)

When the University of Nebraska Archeological Survey was established in 1929, its then director, Dr. W. D. Strong, envisaged two primary objectives. The first was a preliminary survey of the State, including both surface reconnaissance and sampling excavations, designed to give a general bird's-eye view of the area as a whole. With this was combined a second aim, namely, an effort to locate and work such sites as could be definitely identified with villages visited and recorded by the early white explorers in eastern Nebraska. It was believed that by isolating and clearly defining the archeological characteristics of the historic peoples a whole series of sites could soon be removed from the category of unknowns; and furthermore, that a comparison of materials so identified with earlier remains in the region might open lines of attack which would permit the establishing of a time sequence extending "from the known historic into the unknown prehistoric." Toward this second objective a serious beginning had already been made by A. T. Hill, of Hastings, Nebr., who since 1922 had accumulated a considerable quantity of archeological materials from sites identified as Pawnee through critical study of early nineteenth century maps and narratives. This collection, as well as numerous valuable historical leads, was promptly made available to Dr. Strong and his coworkers, and it became the starting point for the study of Pawnee archeology. In this paper it is proposed to review very briefly the methods and some results of this approach to prehistory in the Pawnee area.

It was not chance alone that prompted selection of the Pawnee for the first systematic attempt at isolating a historic archeological complex in Nebraska. Aside from Hill's pioneer labors, consideration was given to the fact that this tribe was one of the largest, best known, and most powerful in the entire Plains area. Among the semi-sedentary so-called village tribes of the Missouri valley, including both Caddoan and Siouan groups, probably none shows evidence

for a longer occupancy of its historic locale than the Pawnee. Furthermore, of all the Nebraska peoples, the Pawnee appear to have offered the most effective and prolonged resistance to the host of alien practices introduced by the whites and to have retained longest their own customs. As to documentation, allusions to the Pawnee may be found from almost the very beginnings of recorded European penetration into the interior United States, although it is true that many of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century sources of information leave much to be desired. Prior to about 1800, hazy geographical concepts, occasional tribal shiftings, and the often hearsay origin of the explorer's observations made impossible the recording of village locations with the exactness necessary to permit their individual identification today. After that date, thanks to the lucid narratives and excellent maps of such men as Dulac, Pike, Lewis and Clark, Long, and others, the historical record has enabled us to correlate with reasonable certainty the native towns with known archeological sites. Excavations in sites so identified have revealed the distinguishing characteristics of historic Pawnee culture, insofar as these include nonperishable material traits. As the term is now used in Nebraska prehistory and in this paper, historic Pawnee archeology refers to the antiquities from documented village sites where the Pawnee are known to have been living in or after circa 1800.<sup>1</sup> Needless to say, throughout this period the archeological picture can be greatly enriched through the ethnographic observations of many of the white travelers.

During the nineteenth century, the Pawnee villages with but two or three apparent exceptions were centered about the confluence of the Loup with the Platte River. Both of these streams flow in a general easterly direction through broad flat-floored valleys inclosed on either side by lofty bluffs. Above the mouth of Shell Creek the native towns stood on terraces or second bottoms well out of reach of floods; below this point suitable terraces are mostly lacking and the sites are situated on the bluffs with the river sweeping past their bases. The tree-fringed watercourses are in marked contrast to the dry rolling, formerly grass-covered, uplands which lie beyond the valley margins. To the natives the latter were suited only for hunting and it was the fertile river bottoms, with an abundance of wood, water, arable ground, and shelter, that determined the location of their villages.

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of historic Pawnee archeological remains see Wedel, 1936, and Strong, 1935, pp. 55-61.

The extreme limits of the known Pawnee settlements were, to the west, near St. Paul on the Loup and Central City on the Platte; to the east, downriver, they ran to Leshara or Yutan on the Platte (see fig. 1 for location of all sites discussed herein). Within this 120-mile stretch of river valley they shifted back and forth as fancy or circumstance dictated, leaving it only for their seasonal hunting excursions. The exceptions, it may be noted, included two sites on the Republican near the Kansas-Nebraska line and one on the Blue near Blue Springs, Nebr. That this nineteenth century restriction of habitat was in effect long before will become apparent presently when certain additional historical and ethnographic facts are considered. Here it is desired to add only the observation that all of these village sites, in addition to a somewhat decadent aboriginal material culture, yield also many articles of iron, copper, brass, and glassware.

Within this same area, but of even more limited distribution, are found other sites whereon the native remains are far more abundant, of superior quality, and associated with much smaller quantities of white contact material. These sites extend along the Platte-Loup riverway from Schuyler on the east to the vicinity of Genoa on the west, a distance of approximately 50 miles; they are mostly on the north bank, but one is also known on the south side. Generally, the sites are large (from 15 to 100 acres or more) and compactly arranged; not infrequently they seem to have been located on bluffs or hilltops with an eye to defensibility and in a few instances they were further protected by earth walls and ditches. To date about a dozen have been placed on record. The sites are particularly abundant from Monroe westward, where for more than 8 miles remains occur almost continuously along the Loup and on the lower portion of Beaver Creek. In the aggregate these antiquities cover many hundreds of acres, and prior to introduction of modern farming operations, innumerable house circles, middens, and artifacts were to be found. Because of their occurrence in the very heart of the historic Pawnee habitat and since they yielded smaller amounts of contact material than the identified nineteenth century Pawnee sites while exhibiting many similarities to the latter, it was thought that they might prove to be an earlier, if still post-European, phase of Pawnee culture. Consequently, in 1931, as a sequel to the study of the historic Pawnee, two of these protohistoric<sup>2</sup> sites were partially

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<sup>2</sup> Protohistoric sites yield limited amounts of glass and metal trade wares, indicating their occupancy, at least in part, since the arrival of Europeans. They

examined by parties from the University of Nebraska. About 8 weeks were devoted to excavation of houses and middens at the Burkett site near Genoa and at the Gray-Wolfe site north of Schuyler. All but one week of this field-work was in direct charge of the present writer, under the supervision of Dr. Strong and with much active assistance in the field from Mr. Hill. A detailed description of the findings has been published recently by the University, and the remains have been assigned to the "Lower Loup Focus of an unnamed aspect of the Upper Mississippi Phase."<sup>3</sup> A wealth of additional information has since been gathered by Mr. Hill for the Nebraska Historical Society at three other protohistoric sites near Genoa. This latest work, completed in 1936 and as yet unpublished, included the opening of 10 houses, a number of large and prolific caches, and the collecting of several thousand artifacts, all at sites lying within 4 or 5 miles of the Burkett site. Pending future analysis and detailed comparison, it must suffice to say that preliminary examinations indicate a close similarity between this material and that already described in print from the Burkett and Gray-Wolfe sites. In passing it may be noted also that extensive surface collections from most of the other protohistoric sites in the immediate locality diverge in no significant respect. In short, a fairly uniform and consistent cultural complex seems to be manifested at the sites designated on the map as belonging to the Lower Loup Focus.

Historic archeology in Nebraska received added stimulus in the summer of 1935, when Hill explored the large protohistoric Leary site on the Nemaha River in the extreme southeastern corner of the State. This has been elsewhere described and identified as Oneota. Midwestern archeologists are inclined to view the Oneota culture in Iowa and adjacent States as possibly early Siouan.<sup>4</sup> There are indications that the Leary site was inhabited contemporaneously with or possibly slightly earlier than the known sites of the Lower Loup

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differ from historic sites in that the written records are too general to permit their individual identification with villages actually visited by white men. In time they antedate 1800.

<sup>3</sup> Dunlevy, 1936, pp. 147-248 (quot. p. 216). A discussion of the placing of the Lower Loup Focus in the McKern taxonomic system is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it may be pointed out that at least four of the nine Upper Mississippi Phase determinants listed by Deuel (F. C. Cole and T. Deuel, *Rediscovering Illinois*, table 2, p. 214, 1936) are unreported from the Lower Loup Focus and incidentally from the historic Pawnee as well. The present writer regards as debatable the assignment of either complex, or of a hypothetical aspect which might include both, to the Upper Mississippi Phase.

<sup>4</sup> Hill and Wedel, 1936; Griffin, 1937.

Focus but no documentary record exists as to the tribe which inhabited it. It definitely antedates the historic Pawnee sites of the nineteenth century. This is of some interest because there are Pawnee traditions pointing to early residence of the tribe somewhere in this section of southeastern Nebraska, suggesting the possibility of a generic connection with the Oneota.

As regards the relation of these three postcontact archeological complexes to one another, dissimilar conclusions have been reached by different field and laboratory workers. Strong expressed the belief that the sites now labeled collectively as the Lower Loup Focus probably represented a very early historic horizon directly ancestral to the somewhat simpler and decadent Pawnee culture of the nineteenth century. His use of the term "protohistoric Pawnee" in speaking of these remains reflects a view with which the present writer has elsewhere indicated his general agreement.<sup>5</sup> Dunlevy, on the other hand, dissenting after her detailed analysis of material from two of these sites, was persuaded that the Lower Loup Focus is more closely related to the Oneota than to the historic Pawnee.<sup>6</sup> Since these differences of viewpoint occur among individuals dealing with substantially the same materials, it seems worthwhile to re-examine the data on which they rest.

In the accompanying table the presence or apparent absence of traits has been indicated for each of the three cultural complexes above mentioned. The traits, totaling 120, have been grouped in seven categories which, with exception of ceramics and miscellaneous items, are based upon function rather than on form or substance. Traits for the historic Pawnee and the Lower Loup Focus have been compiled largely but not exclusively from published sources. In the absence of complete analyses for the recently worked sites, the data therefrom have been incorporated in and added to a check list based on the published studies. Actually, this somewhat superficial treatment involved no changes in the list other than its slight expansion to include a larger number of traits. Data on the Oneota Aspect, including three Wisconsin variants or foci, have been drawn from a list furnished by W. C. McKern, of the Milwaukee Public Museum, which has been supplemented by the published report on the Leary site in Nebraska. No attempt has been made to weight the various elements or to determine the degree to which a particular trait may be present in one or another of the groups. It has not always been

<sup>5</sup> Strong, *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 297; Wedel, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-42, 74.

<sup>6</sup> Dunlevy, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

possible to refine the traits as fully as desired, owing to differences in terminology in the sources used and to inability to examine all the material at first hand. It is believed, however, that the data are sufficiently extensive and representative to be strongly indicative of trends, at least.

TABLE I.—*Presence or Absence of Traits in the Historic Pawnee, the Lower Loup Focus, and the Oneota Aspect*

|   | A<br>Historic<br>Pawnee | B<br>Lower<br>Loup<br>Focus | C<br>Oneota<br>Aspect |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| I. ARCHITECTURE AND VILLAGE COMPLEX                         |                         |                             |                       |
| Villages  |                         |                             |                       |
| 1. Large, intensively occupied sites.....                   | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 2. Walled or defensively located.....                       | x                       | x                           |                       |
| 3. Numerous outside caches.....                             |                         |                             | x                     |
| Houses  |                         |                             |                       |
| 4. Shallow semisubterranean circular earth-covered... x     |                         | x                           |                       |
| 5. Vestibule entrance in east or south..... x               |                         | x                           |                       |
| 6. Unlined central firepit..... x                           |                         | x                           |                       |
| 7. Bison-skull shrine opposite door..... x                  |                         | x                           |                       |
| 8. Four main central posts..... x                           |                         | x                           |                       |
| 9. More than four central posts..... x                      |                         | x                           |                       |
| 10. One or two rows of widely spaced outer posts..... x     |                         | x                           |                       |
| 11. Inside caches ..... x                                   |                         | x                           |                       |
| 12. Numerous small, closely set, slanting wall posts..... x |                         | x                           |                       |
| II. CERAMIC COMPLEX   |                         |                             |                       |
| Temper  |                         |                             |                       |
| 13. Grit ..... x  |                         | x                           |                       |
| 14. Shell ..... x   |                         | x                           | x                     |
| Texture   |                         |                             |                       |
| 15. Fine to medium coarse..... x                            |                         | x                           | x                     |
| Structure   |                         |                             |                       |
| 16. Flaky ..... x   |                         | x                           | x                     |
| 17. Granular ..... x  |                         |                             |                       |
| Hardness  |                         |                             |                       |
| 18. 1-4, softer predominating.....                          |                         |                             | x                     |
| 19. 3-6, 4-5 predominating..... x                           |                         | x                           |                       |
| Surface finish  |                         |                             |                       |
| 20. Irregularly smoothed ..... x                            |                         | x                           | x                     |
| 21. Polished (imperfectly) ..... x                          |                         | x                           | x                     |
| 22. Marked by grooved paddle..... x                         |                         | x                           |                       |
| Color   |                         |                             |                       |
| 23. Light to dark gray and buff, dull terra cotta..... x    |                         | x                           | x                     |
| Thickness   |                         |                             |                       |
| 24. $\frac{3}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch range..... x         |                         | x                           | x                     |
| Lip form  |                         |                             |                       |
| 25. Squared ..... x   |                         | x                           | x                     |
| 26. Rounded ..... x   |                         | x                           | x                     |

TABLE I.—*Presence or Absence of Traits in the Historic Pawnee, the Lower Loup Focus, and the Oneota Aspect (continued)*

|   | A<br>Historic<br>Pawnee | B<br>Lower<br>Loup<br>Focus | C<br>Oneota<br>Aspect |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Rim form  |                         |                             |                       |
| 27. Plain high direct flaring.....                          | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 28. Collar or braced.....                                   | x                       | x                           |                       |
| 29. Cloistered .....  |                         | x                           |                       |
| Neck form   |                         |                             |                       |
| 30. Line of juncture between rim and body.....              | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 31. More pronounced .....                                   | x                       | x                           |                       |
| Orifice   |                         |                             |                       |
| 32. Broad .....   | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 33. Round .....   | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 34. Oval .....  |                         | x                           | x                     |
| Shoulder form   |                         |                             |                       |
| 35. Round .....   | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| Basal form  |                         |                             |                       |
| 36. Rounding .....  | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 37. Subconical .....  | x                       | x                           |                       |
| Handles   |                         |                             |                       |
| 38. Narrow to broad, flat, straplike, paired.....           |                         | x                           | x                     |
| 39. Loop .....  |                         | x                           | x                     |
| 40. Alternate collar tabs form handles.....                 | x                       |                             |                       |
| 41. Multiple .....  | x                       | x                           |                       |
| Decoration  |                         |                             |                       |
| 42. Lip .....   | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 43. Shoulder area to lip, neck plain.....                   | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 44. Incised rectilinear parallel line motifs.....           | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 45. Opposed series of parallel lines.....                   | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 46. Herringbone and chevron on rim.....                     | x                       | x                           |                       |
| 47. Concentric pendent chevrons inside rim.....             |                         |                             | x                     |
| 48. Concentric circle motif and/or cross.....               |                         |                             | x                     |
| 49. Geometric series of lines and dots.....                 |                         |                             | x                     |
| 50. Trailed or fluted decoration.....                       |                         |                             | x                     |
| Miscellaneous   |                         |                             |                       |
| 51. Small bowls .....                                       | x                       | x                           |                       |
| 52. Small decorated "fishtail" figurines.....               | x                       | x                           |                       |
| 53. Use of red wash or pseudo-slip.....                     | x                       | x                           |                       |
| 54. Perforated pottery disks.....                           |                         | x                           | x                     |
| 55. Pot lids with handles.....                              | x                       |                             |                       |
| 56. Cut sherds and bisected vessels.....                    |                         |                             | x                     |
| III. HORTICULTURE AND FOOD-GATHERING                        |                         |                             |                       |
| 57. Intensive horticulture, with maize, beans, etc.....     | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 58. Hoes made of bison scapulae.....                        | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 59. Wooden mortar .....                                     | x                       |                             |                       |
| 60. Stone mortar: irregular, shaped, flattened surface... x | x                       | x                           | x                     |

TABLE I.—*Presence or Absence of Traits in the Historic Pawnee, the Lower Loup Focus, and the Oneota Aspect (continued)*

|  | A<br>Historic<br>Pawnee | B<br>Lower<br>Loup<br>Focus | C<br>Oneota<br>Aspect |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| IV. MILITARY AND HUNTING COMPLEX                           |                         |                             |                       |
| 61. Arrowpoints, small triangular unnotched.....           | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 62. Knives: diamond-shaped, beveled.....                   |                         | x                           | x                     |
| 63. Knives: oval and/or flake.....                         | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 64. Scrapers: small to medium planoconvex.....             | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 65. Scrapers: large elliptical quartzite or sandstone....  | x                       | x                           |                       |
| 66. Drills .....   | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 67. Abraders: paired longitudinally grooved sandstone..    | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 68. Abraders: amorphous pumice lumps.....                  |                         |                             | x                     |
| 69. Mauls: grooved .....                                   | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 70. Axes: grooved .....                                    | ?                       |                             | x <sup>a</sup>        |
| 71. Celts: polished diorite or hematite.....               | x                       |                             | x                     |
| 72. Hammerstones, pitted .....                             | x                       | x                           |                       |
| 73. Adz-shaped elkhorn hide scrapers.....                  |                         |                             | x                     |
| 74. Deerhorn "cylinders" or tapping tools.....             |                         |                             | x                     |
| 75. Deerhorn tip flakers.....                              |                         | x                           | x                     |
| 76. Deerhorn projectile points, conical, socketed.....     |                         |                             | x                     |
| 77. Bone projectile points, socketed, square or conical... |                         | x                           |                       |
| 78. Bone projectile points, stemmed.....                   |                         | x                           |                       |
| 79. Bundles of cane (arrowshafts?).....                    |                         | x                           |                       |
| 80. Perforated ribs (arrowshaft straighteners).....        | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 81. Notched fleshing tools or grainers.....                | x                       | x                           |                       |
| 82. Shoulder blade scrapers.....                           |                         |                             | x                     |
| 83. Celtlike antler scrapers.....                          |                         |                             | x                     |
| 84. Metapodial beamers .....                               |                         |                             | x                     |
| 85. Bone fishhooks .....                                   |                         |                             | x                     |
| V. DRESS, TEXTILES, AND ADORNMENT                          |                         |                             |                       |
| 86. Bison-hair cloth and/or cordage.....                   | x                       |                             | x                     |
| 87. Awls .....   | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 88. Eyeleted needles .....                                 |                         |                             | x                     |
| 89. Plume holder .....                                     | x                       |                             |                       |
| 90. Roach spreader .....                                   | x                       |                             |                       |
| 91. Combs .....  |                         | x                           |                       |
| 92. Bracelets and/or gorgets.....                          | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 93. Paint bones ("brushes").....                           | x                       | x                           |                       |
| 94. Polished bone tubes.....                               | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 95. Rush matting .....                                     | x                       |                             |                       |
| 96. Flat polished-bone mat needles.....                    |                         |                             | x                     |
| 97. Twined bags of vegetal material.....                   |                         | x                           |                       |
| 98. Shell ornaments, variously shaped.....                 | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| VI. CEREMONIAL COMPLEX                                     |                         |                             |                       |
| 99. Primary extended burials.....                          |                         |                             | x                     |
| 100. Primary flexed burials.....                           | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 101. Secondary bundle burials.....                         |                         |                             | x <sup>a</sup>        |

<sup>a</sup> Rare, probably atypical.

TABLE I.—*Presence or Absence of Traits in the Historic Pawnee, the Lower Loup Focus, and the Oneota Aspect* (continued)

|   | A<br>Historic<br>Pawnee | B<br>Lower<br>Loup<br>Focus | C<br>Oneota<br>Aspect |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| VI. CEREMONIAL COMPLEX— <i>Continued</i>                  |                         |                             |                       |
| 102. Grave furniture .....                                | x                       |                             | x                     |
| 103. Burial in dug pits or caches.....                    | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 104. Burial in or under mounds.....                       |                         |                             | x                     |
| 105. Gaming stones ?; bun-shaped, flat pitted face.....   |                         |                             | x                     |
| 106. Gypsum crystals, worked.....                         |                         | x                           |                       |
| 107. Shaped balls of crystalline stone (grave finds)..... | x                       |                             |                       |
| 108. "Whetstones" (grave finds).....                      | x                       |                             |                       |
| 109. Pipes of polished stone.....                         | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 110. Pipes of clay.....                                   |                         | x                           |                       |
| 111. Pipes: elbow-shaped or equal-armed.....              | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 112. Pipes: "Siouan" type, stem projects beyond bowl....  | x                       |                             |                       |
| 113. Pipes: disk bowl.....                                |                         | x                           | x                     |
| 114. Pipes: "Micmac" .....                                | x                       |                             |                       |
| 115. Ornamented animal skulls.....                        | x                       | x                           |                       |
| VII. MISCELLANEOUS  |                         |                             |                       |
| 116. Incised stone tablets.....                           | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 117. Bison horn spoons.....                               | x                       |                             |                       |
| 118. Tanged mussel shell spoons.....                      |                         |                             | x                     |
| 119. Ulna "picks" .....                                   | x                       | x                           | x                     |
| 120. Tally bones (scored ribs).....                       |                         | x                           | x                     |
|   | —                       | —                           | —                     |
|   | 80                      | 82                          | 74                    |

## ANALYSIS OF TABLE: SUMMARY

Total number of traits—120

Historic Pawnee has 80, or 66.6 percent of total

Lower Loup Focus has 82, or 68.3 percent of total

Oneota Aspect has 74, or 61.6 percent of total

"Universal" traits—39, or 32.5 percent of total

39 universals in 80 historic Pawnee elements..... 48.8 percent

39 universals in 82 Lower Loup Focus elements..... 47.6 percent

39 universals in 74 Oneota Aspect elements..... 52.7 percent

Out of total of 120 traits—

26 occur only in historic Pawnee and Lower Loup Focus..... 21.7 percent

9 occur only in Lower Loup Focus and Oneota Aspect..... 7.5 percent

3 occur only in historic Pawnee and Oneota Aspect..... 2.5 percent

On basis of 81 nonuniversal traits these percentages become  
respectively 32, 11, and 3.7.

Traits occurring in only one complex—

Historic Pawnee .....

Lower Loup Focus.....

Oneota Aspect .....

Analysis of the table shows first that out of the total of 120 different elements the historic Pawnee and the Lower Loup Focus have, respectively, 80 and 82 (66.6 and 68.3 percent), and the Oneota Aspect has 74 (or 61.6 percent). Of the 120 traits, furthermore, 39 are common to all three culture complexes. Since this represents, respectively, 48.8, 47.6, and 52.7 percent of those found in each complex, it is evident that there is a strong underlying relationship. These "universals" include elements in practically all of the categories, but occur least commonly under the "Architecture and Villages" heading.<sup>7</sup> As regards specific relationships between any two of the three complexes, we find that 26 traits, or 21.7 percent, occur only in historic Pawnee and the Lower Loup Focus;<sup>8</sup> 9, or approximately 7.5 percent, only in the Lower Loup Focus and the Oneota;<sup>9</sup> and 3, or 2.5 percent, only in historic Pawnee and Oneota. Since it is these relationships within the defined universe of three which are the principal concern here, we may reduce our totals and sharpen the above differentiations by omitting the "universal" traits. Thus, using the 81 nonuniversals as our basis, the percentages become, respectively, 32, 11, and 3.7. Whichever set of figures is taken, it is apparent that the table indicates very nearly three times as many traits in common between the historic Pawnee and the Lower Loup Focus (and in no other) as in the Lower Loup Focus and the Oneota.<sup>10</sup> Evidently the suggested connection between the first two complexes, considered on purely archeological grounds alone, is considerably closer than that between the second pair. This is the more striking in view of the previously indicated fact that the Lower Loup Focus flourished at the very beginning of European contact and approximately con-

<sup>7</sup> The single rectangular earthlodge floor found at the Leary site has not been included in the present table since there seems to be general agreement among field workers that this type of structure is not characteristic of the Oneota. I am inclined to agree with McKern's suggestion that the occurrence of earthlodges in the western Oneota sites "may be due to the taking on of foreign traits after leaving the area of earlier occupation." (Letter of Oct. 28, 1937.)

<sup>8</sup> Including among others nine in architecture, besides such elements as decided predominance of grit tempering, use of grooved paddle in surfacing pottery, small decorated "fishtail" figurines of clay, large elliptical quartzite hide scrapers, bone paint "brushes," notched fleshers, ornamented animal skulls (rare), etc. In the trait list these are Nos. 2, 4-13, 19, 22, 28, 31, 37, 41, 46, 51-53, 65, 72, 81, 93, 115.

<sup>9</sup> Including five in ceramics, besides diamond-shaped beveled knives, platform disk pipes, scored ribs (tallies?), and antler tip flakers, Nos. 14, 34, 38, 39, 54, 62, 75, 113, 120.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Dunlevy, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

temporarily with the Oneota, whereas the Pawnee traits are based on sites inhabited one or more centuries later toward the close of the tribe's residence in Nebraska. The conclusion seems inescapable that the Lower Loup Focus stands in very much closer and more direct relationship genetically to the later historic Pawnee than to the contemporaneous Oneota peoples.<sup>11</sup>

With the Oneota culture and its probable Siouan connections we shall not further concern ourselves here. Its rôle in the development of later native civilization west of the Missouri is not yet clear, although it probably introduced into the Pawnee area various innovations in ceramics, pipe-making, stone-working, and certain other fields of activity. At the moment, there is no reason to regard it as in any sense basic to historic Pawnee culture, since its contributions seem to have been rather in matters of detail.

Bearing directly on the question of the nineteenth century Pawnee and their postulated descent from the Lower Loup Focus are certain noteworthy nonarcheological considerations. These seem to have been generally overlooked by those who challenge such a correlation on grounds (1) that the Pawnee have no legends concerning the sites, and (2) that the recent occupancy of the region by that tribe proves nothing as to its connection with the older remains. Both points can be met squarely with recorded data. Thus, to take up the first,

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<sup>11</sup> The kinds of traits comprising similarities and dissimilarities in the respective pairings is perhaps of as much significance as the absolute numbers. For example, while many of the hunting and skin-dressing practices were similar throughout, important differences are probably implied in the presence of fish-hooks and metapodial (split leg bone type) beamers in the Oneota. Both the latter items are widespread throughout the eastern United States, incidentally occurring also in prehistoric cultures in the Plains. The Pawnee and Lower Loup peoples apparently did not fish, and the outstanding feature of their skin-working industry was its distinctly Plains character; e. g., large elliptical quartzite scrapers, the notched flesher, bone paint "brushes," and probably the adzlike elkhorn hide scraper. At least a part of the subsistence economy of the Oneota, as well as the supposed bark or thatch house type, mound burials, extended use of woven mats, and a number of other items which this group alone of the three possesses, all tend to link them with eastern peoples and stamp them as comparatively recent arrivals west of the Missouri. The Pawnee and Lower Loup Focus peoples, on the other hand, resemble each other closely in virtually every fundamental respect and such common elements among them as the earth-ledge, pottery, horticulture, and other less distinctive items clearly have considerable historic depth in the eastern Plains. Onto this horticultural base they had grafted a hunting complex of western type, differing considerably but evidently well attuned to the peculiarities of the former. The successful integration of the two modes of life, both involving local ingredients, would in itself suggest a considerable period of adjustment *in loco*.

on at least two occasions, Pawnee Indians have claimed certain of the protohistoric sites as the former dwelling places of their tribe. In 1867 Hayden collected a number of potsherds from "a Pawnee village site on Beaver Creek, Nebraska . . . ," some of which were subsequently figured by Holmes.<sup>12</sup> Hayden nowhere records the exact location of his finds, but Hill has since shown that two very large and almost contiguous protohistoric sites occur on the right bank of Beaver Creek a short distance above its mouth, while 2 or 3 miles to the southwest is the Burkett site (fig. 1, nos. 16-18). The ceramic and other remains from the three are very similar, and they were undoubtedly inhabited by the same people and at about the same time. In all probability Hayden's specimens which are of Lower Loup Focus type were picked up on one of these locations. It is, therefore, noteworthy that he says:

No Pawnee Indian now living knows of the time when this village was inhabited. Thirty years ago [i. e., about 1837] an old chief told a missionary that his tribe dwelt there before his birth, but he knew nothing of the use of stone arrowheads, though, he said, his people used them before the production of iron.

When the "production of iron" here began is not known, but the old chief's story tends to imply habitation of the site in question prior to the middle of the eighteenth century. The claim gains support from another tradition recorded by Bruce in his account of the North brothers and their Pawnee scouts.<sup>13</sup> This is much more explicit and telling. It alludes to a battle which took place long ago between the Pawnees and the Poncas, when 500 of the latter made a treacherous but unsuccessful attack on a Skidi Pawnee village on Shell Creek north of Schuyler. The time of this alleged raid is wholly unknown, but it could not have taken place recently because there is no historic record to indicate that the Skidi, or for that matter any other Pawnee band, dwelt on Shell Creek as late as 1775 or after. Interestingly enough, at the precise locality where the old Skidi village is said to have stood, is the Gray-Wolfe site, one of the first of the Lower Loup Focus to be intensively studied and also one of the two on which the complex as defined is based. (See fig. 1, nos. 24 and 25.) Finally, in a myth explaining the formation of the Skidi federation, Murie locates by streams two of the ancient villages. One of these was on the Elkhorn River, the other on Looking Glass Creek.<sup>14</sup> This, if far less definitive, is still suggestive, since the lower course of the latter is sprinkled with not one but several related protohistoric sites.

<sup>12</sup> Holmes, 1903, pp. 200-201 and pl. 177; Hayden, 1872, pp. 411-412.

<sup>13</sup> Bruce, 1932, pp. 42-43.

<sup>14</sup> Murie, 1914, p. 554.

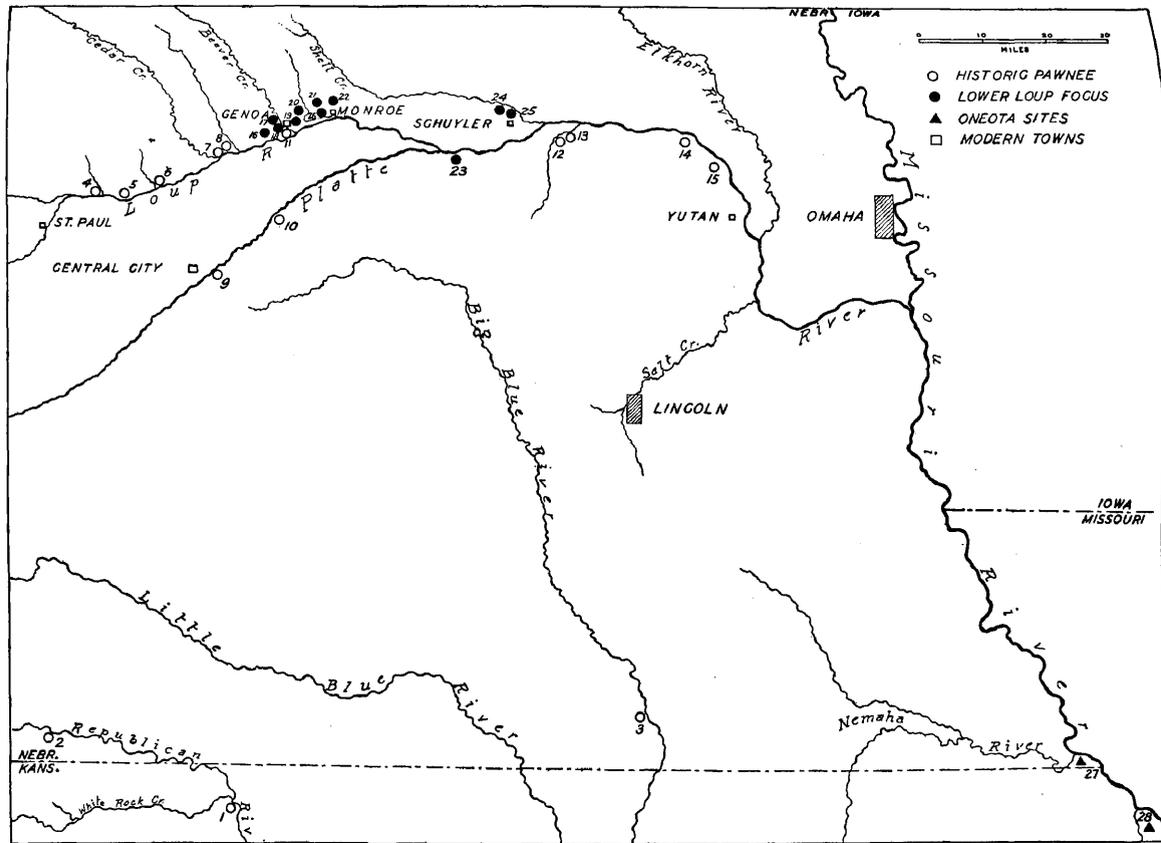


FIG. I.—List of sites: numbers correspond to sites on map.

|                              |                     |                               |              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| <i>Historic Pawnee sites</i> | 5. Cottonwood Creek | 12-13. Linwood                | 17. Umbargar | 24. Wolfe           |
| 1. Kansas Monument           | 6. Horse Creek      | 14. McClaine                  | 18. Wright   | 25. Gray            |
| 2. Hill                      | 7. Fullerton        | 15. Leshara                   | 19. Coffin   | 26. Foley           |
| 3. Blue Springs              | 8. Plum Creek       | <i>Lower Loup Focus sites</i> | 20. Larsen   | <i>Oneota sites</i> |
| 4. Palmer                    | 9. Hordville        | 16. Burkett                   | 21. Lightner | 27. Leary           |
|                              | 10. Clarks          |                               | 22. Monroe   | 28. Fanning         |
|                              | 11. Genoa           |                               | 23. Bellwood |                     |

Insofar as they are any clue, legends are thus seen to point toward a Pawnee authorship for at least some of the sites.

It is unnecessary to stress the fact that mere areal concurrence of a nineteenth century tribe and a certain archeological complex is, *per se*, no proof of direct relationship. In the case of the Pawnee this particular argument has never been used except as a possible corroborative circumstance. However, a careful study of the documentary history of the tribe tends to strengthen rather than weaken its force. Here it is possible to pass in review only a few of the more significant points; for further details the reader is referred to recent publications on the Pawnee and citations therein. Prior to the last quarter of the seventeenth century the sources are inconclusive as to the location of the tribe. Coronado, in 1541, places the province of Harahey, tentatively identified as Pawnee territory, north of Quivira. Later Spanish documents locate Quivira somewhere in central Kansas and its people are believed to have been the Wichita. If these identifications are correct, they suggest the presence of the Pawnee in southern or central Nebraska at this early date. A century and a quarter after, in 1666, Perrot mentions the Panys but without defining their habitat.<sup>15</sup> Bandelier notes their presence as captives in New Mexico in the seventeenth century observing that they were not uncommonly ransomed from the Yutes and Apaches.<sup>16</sup> By 1673, however, they had become sufficiently well known to be shown on Marquette's map, as also on that of Hennepin in 1678. Before 1680 the Spanish in New Mexico heard rumors of Frenchmen among the Pawnees, and, wherever the location is given, subsequent narratives consistently place the Pawnee on the Rio Jesus Maria, north of Quivira. This stream is identified by historians with the Platte.<sup>17</sup> For the eighteenth century there are many more records, as well as numerous maps showing ethnic distributions in the Missouri drainage. Curiously enough, with all the unrest and tribal movements manifested therein from time to time, the Pawnee are almost always shown as a relatively stable group localized west of the Missouri on streams identifiable with the Loup, Platte, and possibly Republican Rivers. Particularly interesting in this connection is the 1718 Delisle map of Louisiana and the Mississippi River,<sup>18</sup> because it depicts with remarkable accuracy the geographical details of the present Nebraska region (fig. 2). It shows the Pani (Pawnee) in 12 villages

<sup>15</sup> Wisconsin Hist. Soc., Coll., vol. 16, pp. 15, 27, 1902.

<sup>16</sup> Bandelier, 1890, p. 185, n. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas, 1935, pp. 12, 37.

<sup>18</sup> Delisle, G., *Carte de la Louisiane et du Cours du Mississippi*. Paris, 1718.

on the "Riv des Panis," unquestionably the Platte, about the mouth of a large unnamed tributary entering from the north. Comparison with modern maps leaves little room for doubt that this tributary denotes the Loup, on whose banks the Panimaha (Skidi Pawnee) are represented, also with 12 villages. This is the first really convincing cartographic evidence that the Pawnee were established in

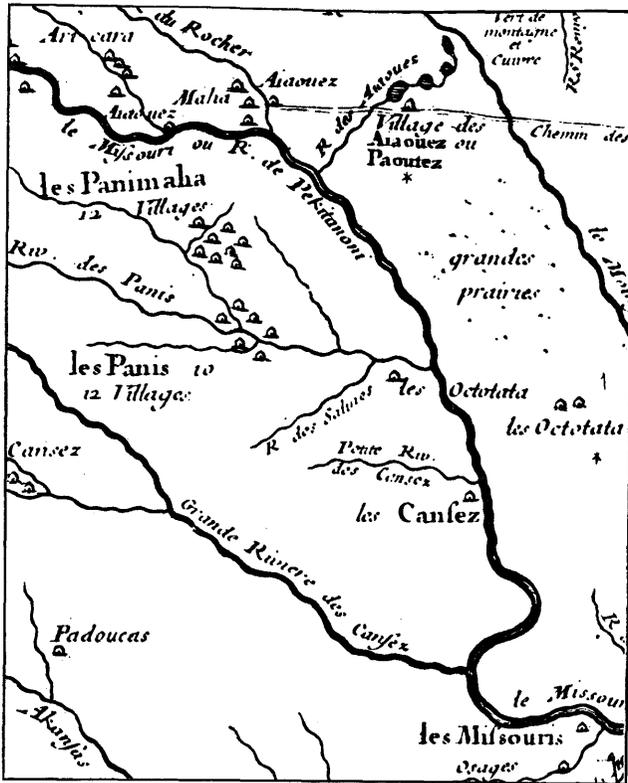


FIG. 2.—Portion of the Delisle map (1718) showing the Pawnee towns on the Loup and Platte Rivers in east-central Nebraska.

the Loup-Platte region in considerable numbers in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Taken in conjunction with the data gleaned from earlier narratives, it adds strength to the view that this tribe has occupied its historic nineteenth century locale since the very beginning of white explorations.

Of much concern to the archeologist using the so-called direct historical approach is the question of when European manufactures

first began to reach his area. The discovery of such materials may offer an opportunity to determine approximately the time of occupancy of the sites or levels in which they occurred. Sometimes it is possible to identify beads or other trinkets with types known to have been made at certain stated periods in Europe. There are, of course, limitations to the method, and it must be used with due caution. Such objects as glass beads, copper bells or ornaments, and other small trinkets may have, and probably very often did, spread from village to village and from tribe to tribe, wholly independent of the trader after their original acquisition by the natives. They might thus precede the white man by several years. Also it is possible that the earliest traders left no written records, or that such as they may have left were lost or for other reasons remain unknown today. Still, where trade goods occur in small but consistent amounts in several related and neighboring sites, it seems reasonable to believe that a steady and direct, if perhaps limited, traffic had been established, and that historical records may offer valid clues as to the approximate time involved. It is theoretically possible that stray pieces reached the central Plains indirectly from New Mexico through the expeditions of Coronado (1541), Bonilla and Humana (1594), Oñate (1601), and others, or as a result of raids against the Spanish settlements or their Apache and puebloan proteges. These, however, must have been of minor consequence. As a matter of fact, the Spaniards credit the rival French from Canada with introducing firearms, metal kettles, axes, and the like to the Pawnee,<sup>19</sup> but it is not certain just how early this trade began. The first Frenchman to penetrate the region west and south of the Great Lakes is generally believed to have been Nicolet, who in 1634 visited the Winnebago and Illinois in what is now southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.<sup>20</sup> Owing to the hostility of the Iroquois and for other reasons, this voyage of exploration was not immediately followed up. It seems extremely doubtful that there was any appreciable commerce with tribes west of the Missouri prior to about 1650. By 1680 the Spanish had reports of French trade goods among the Pawnee on the Platte and in 1706 their Apache allies killed a French couple somewhere in what is now northeastern Colorado. All this leads to the inference that regular trade was established in the central Plains region sometime between 1650 and 1700. It is worth noting that from the first the Spanish records relating to French activities in this area uniformly link with

<sup>19</sup> Thomas, 1935, pp. 12ff.

<sup>20</sup> Butterfield, 1881.

them the Pawnee who seem to have been in firm possession of the Platte valley.

Archeological findings leave no room for doubt that some at least of the sites belonging to the Lower Loup Focus were inhabited during a period when commercial intercourse was still comparatively limited in volume. Moreover, the European beads and other materials so far studied from these sites, insofar as they can be dated, appear to be of types used in the Indian trade not prior to the latter seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. Finally, no early contact sites have been found in the region, other than those belonging to this complex, which could possibly be connected with the Pawnee or which can be viewed as the residence of settled Indians in contact with early traders.

The historical background as here reviewed sheds significant light on the contention that the Lower Loup Focus may represent some group other than the Pawnee, not necessarily ancestral or even related to them. In the latest published work on this complex, it is suggested that "possible migration could account for the settling of different peoples in the same locality."<sup>21</sup> Early in this discussion it was pointed out that the village sites of the Lower Loup Focus, although of comparatively restricted distribution, are both numerous and very large. Moreover, since all those so far excavated have consistently yielded limited quantities of copper, glass beads, and (rarely) iron, it follows that they must have flourished for a time after white influences had penetrated into their locality. Even granting that all were not inhabited simultaneously, they undoubtedly indicate the presence here in protohistoric times of a populous, firmly established, and presumably potent ethnic group. Let us assume for the moment that this group was not ancestral nor even related to the Pawnee. We then have the somewhat difficult situation of a numerous and powerful tribe, resident for many years (witness the innumerable middens, earthlodge sites, etc.) in the very heart of the Pawnee territory, clinging to it until after trade contacts had been established with Europeans (circa 1650 or later), and then emigrating so unobtrusively and so completely that the Pawnee, who must have followed closely on their heels so as to be firmly settled in the region by Delisle's time (1718), retained no tradition of their existence. This would not only do violence to Pawnee traditions linking that group with the protohistoric Lower Loup Focus, but would also require an explanation for the apparent absence of any legends of

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<sup>21</sup> Dunlevy, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

an earlier tribe, unrelated but with very similar culture, whom the Pawnee could reasonably be thought to have displaced since establishment of European contacts. Such a theory, furthermore, would presumably postulate a comparatively late incursion for the Pawnee, which is at variance with the ethnographic indications. Pawnee material culture of the nineteenth century, as has been stated, is pretty clearly a composite based essentially on two distinct and fundamentally divergent economies—one horticultural and sedentary, the other hunting and nomadic. The significant constituents of the former, irrespective of their ultimate origin, are now known to have been well established west of the Missouri in prehistoric times. Those of the latter, in part rooted in the very remote past, were shared with numerous other historic tribes of the Plains and particularly with the western bison hunters. The Pawnee seem to have combined the two in harmonious fashion, and so far as adjustment to environmental and ethnic conditions goes, give no evidence whatever of having been recent arrivals in the Nebraska region.

There are other clues. Dunbar has shown how the placement of villages relative to one another has modified certain linguistic usages in accord with local geography.<sup>22</sup> During the later years of their residence in Nebraska there were seldom more than three or four villages—in other words, usually one for each of the four bands. At times two or more bands might occupy a single town, but the Skidi seem always to have remained more or less aloof. Both Murie and Grinnell present evidence supporting the view that subgroups within each of the main bands formerly constituted separate villages.<sup>23</sup> Murie credits the Skidi with 13 of these originally. This interesting observation may partially explain the general tendency of the early explorers to assign, usually from hearsay, as many as a score or more towns to the Pawnee nation. Incidentally, too, it may have archeological implications since the Pawnee locality abounds with small and widely scattered precontact earthlodge villages which appear to have a number of features in common with the later ones. The sudden disappearance of the many small prehistoric villages and the presence of a few very large fortified towns in protohistoric times is an archeological puzzle which still awaits solution. Finally, the mythology of the Pawnee is replete with local Nebraska place names such as the Platte, the Loup, the Republican, Nemaha, and others.<sup>24</sup> There are migration legends, to be sure, but none which afford any

<sup>22</sup> Dunbar, 1880, p. 251.

<sup>23</sup> Murie, 1914, pp. 549-556; Grinnell, 1893, pp. 231-239.

<sup>24</sup> Dorsey, 1906.

proof of recent arrival. Three of the five "sacred places" of the tribe were on the Loup and Platte within 50 miles of their junction; the other two were in southern Nebraska and northern Kansas<sup>25</sup>; and a number of their myths and tales relate directly to this neighborhood.

It must be apparent by this time that there exists little else than academic grounds for questioning the presence of the Pawnee as a firmly ensconced tribe in the Platte-Loup region since at least the coming of the whites. The data of tradition, history, ethnography, and mythology all support this inference. Moreover, the numerous archeological similarities between the historic Pawnee and the earlier Lower Loup Focus reflect essentially the same dual mode of life. Viewed in the light of history, the differences in materials from the two complexes are not so great as to strain the probability of a common authorship. They involve details rather than fundamentals. The greater richness, abundance, and variety of remains on the protohistoric sites indicate a general level of cultural achievement far above that of the historic Pawnee. If, as is very probable, this superiority extends to the nonmaterial side of life as well, then the protohistoric period may be regarded as the climax of social, ceremonial, and political development in the Pawnee area. The culmination must have been reached before 1750. Thereafter came a steady decline which left the nineteenth century peoples in possession of a much simpler and clearly decadent cultural heritage, though the recorded myths as well as many political and ceremonial survivals hark back to the older and better days. Such a regression is perfectly in keeping with the contemporary history of the area: increased pressure from hostile tribes, growing commercial intercourse and territorial quarrels with the whites, new diseases, and a generally more desperate struggle for sheer existence, all of which left scant leisure for cultural advancement.

The leads for future research on this problem are very clear. It is imperative first of all that thorough analyses be made of all available archeological materials from sites of the Lower Loup Focus. These should be carefully compared with similarly detailed studies of collections and data from documented sites of the nineteenth century. Needless to say, identities are not to be expected in all details, since individual, village, and probably band preferences were undoubtedly active factors. The element of time, too, must ever be borne in mind, for over a period of two or three centuries considerable changes are expectable. Another line of attack which has so far been totally

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<sup>25</sup> Grinnell, *op. cit.*, pp. 358-359.

neglected in this connection is physical anthropology. Skeletal remains either supposedly or certainly attributable to the Pawnee are by no means plentiful, as the early cemeteries remain undiscovered, and the later ones have suffered woefully at the hands of vandals. There is a disturbing possibility that scaffold burial and subsequent dismemberment may have been practised in the early period. Still, careful examination of the material thus far recovered might further illuminate the issue. For obvious reasons, it will probably never be possible to prove empirically that the inhabitants of any one of the Lower Loup Focus sites spoke a Pawnee dialect, since the individual sites cannot be linked with recorded towns. Thus the identification made on other grounds must remain a probability—a very high one, it is true, but still a probability. To maintain from this that the sites are not Pawnee, however, seems a captious argument, particularly in face of the very strong circumstantial evidence in every other respect. On the whole, it may be soundest and perhaps least confusing to retain a nonlinguistic designation for these protohistoric remains, at any rate for the present. For this purpose the term suggested by Dunlevy and used in this paper is as appropriate as any.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing pages the relationships between one historic and two protohistoric archeological complexes in Nebraska have been briefly discussed. These are respectively the Pawnee of the nineteenth century, the Lower Loup Focus, and the Oneota Aspect. From the evidence of archeology, history, tradition, mythology, and ethnography, as outlined herein, the following major facts emerge:

(1) Village sites assignable to the Lower Loup Focus, 10 or more in number, occur only in the very heart of the historic Pawnee region about the confluence of the Loup and Platte Rivers.

(2) These sites nearly all yield limited amounts of historical materials, indicating their occupancy at least into very early contact times.

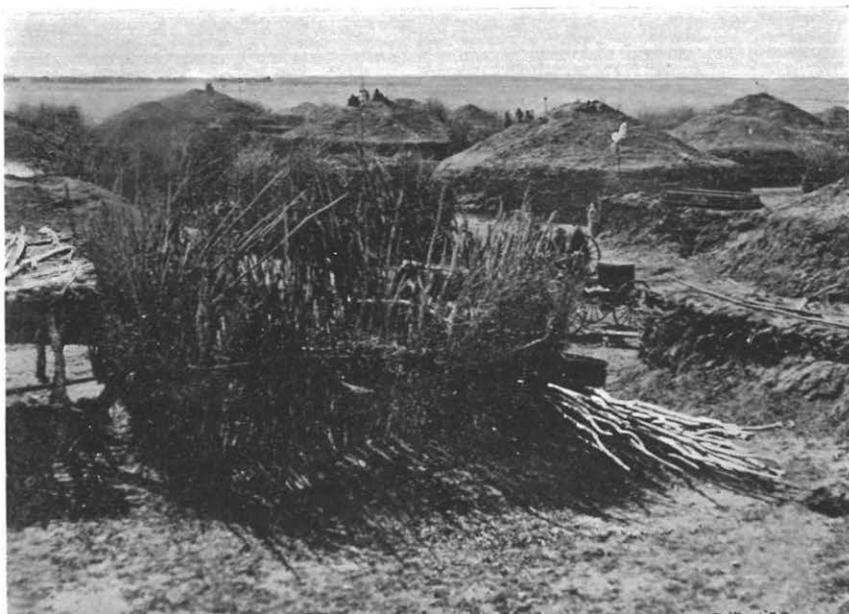
(3) Historic maps and documents show that the Pawnee villages since virtually the earliest contact times were localized in and about this region.

(4) On the basis of available archeological evidence alone, sites of the Lower Loup Focus show a much closer relationship to the later historic Pawnee culture than they do to the contemporaneous Oneota sites.

(5) Pawnee traditions link that tribe directly with several of the protohistoric Lower Loup Focus sites.



1



2

Scenes in the Pawnee village on the Loup River near Genoa, Nebr., in 1871. This was the last northern settlement of the tribe prior to its final removal to the Indian Territory circa 1875. (Photographs by W. H. Jackson.)



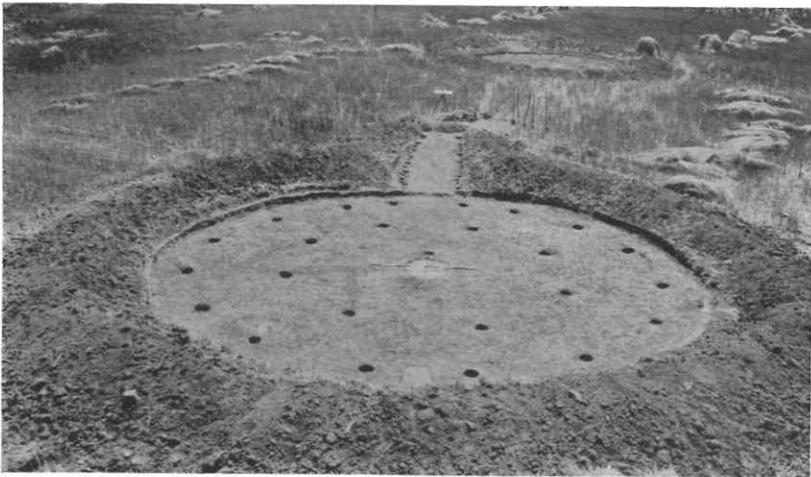
1. The Wright site near Genoa, Nebr., showing type of bluff top village location preferred by the Pawnee in protohistoric times; Beaver Creek valley at right. (Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.)



2. Excavated floor of protohistoric Pawnee earthlodge showing circular outline, central firepit, postholes, and short vestibule doorway; Wright site. (Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.)



1. Excavated floor of protohistoric Pawnee earthlodge at Larsen site, on Looking-glass Creek; showing central firepit, surrounded by four primary and three circles of secondary post molds. Note the peculiar arrangement of postholes at the rear of the floor, opposite the entrance, where the family shrine was traditionally placed. (Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.)



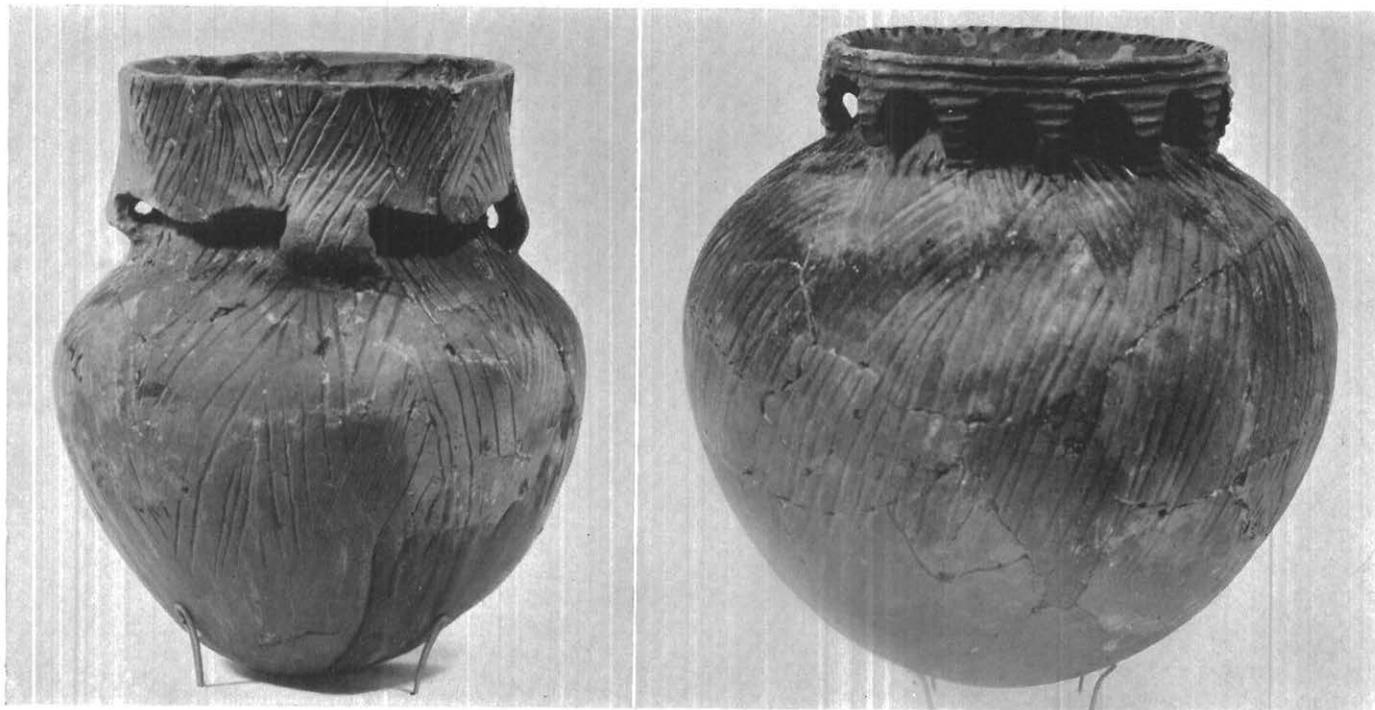
2. Excavated floor of late historical Pawnee earthlodge near Leshara, occupied probably after 1850. This lodge had eight central roof supports, a raised altar platform at the rear directly opposite the doorway, and a sill of baked clay across the inner end of the entrance passage. Another house floor may be seen in the background. (Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.)



1. Restored pot of late Pawnee type from Archer, Nebr.; height 9 inches. (Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.)



2. Restored vessel of protohistoric Pawnee type from the Wolfe site near Schuyler; height  $4\frac{5}{8}$  inches. (Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.)



1

2

Restored pottery vessels from the Bellwood site, occupied prior to 1800. Fig. 1 is characteristic of the ware made by the Pawnee during the nineteenth century. Fig. 2 illustrates the cloistered rim frequently found on the better grade of pottery produced in the earlier period. (Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.)



1

2

Restored vessels of late Pawnee type. Fig. 1, 11½ inches high, is from the Bellwood site: Fig. 2 is from Horse Creek site. (Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.)