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EARLY IOWA LOCALITY RECORDS.

BY B. SHIMEK.

Students of plant and animal distribution are naturally interested in exact geographic designation, and they frequently suffer inconvenience from the inaccuracy or misconception of locality names. Confusion in our western records sometimes arises because the earlier explorers worked in an unsettled wilderness in which accurate geographic designation was difficult or impossible, and again from the fact that names were often at first applied to larger areas than those to which the name is at present restricted.

Some such cases have come under the writer's notice recently in his effort to secure full records of Iowa plants and mollusks. The locality which attracted special attention is that which is designated as "Council Bluff," or "Council Bluffs," in various reports on plants, mollusks, insects, etc. This is the locality made memorable by the visit of Thomas Say, who spent parts of the years 1819 and 1820 at the Engineer Cantonment near Council Bluff, and who reported and described many species of mollusks, insects and vertebrates from this locality. Later, in 1839, the Nicollet Expedition visited the same locality and collected numerous plants which were submitted for determination to Dr. Torrey.

Say's "Council Bluff" is generally considered the same as the Council Bluffs, Iowa, of today, but this is clearly not correct. The present city of Council Bluffs, Iowa, is located on the east side of the Missouri river, and about 22 miles above the mouth of the Platte river in Nebraska. Naturally the references to Council Bluff or Council Bluffs would suggest the Iowa locality, but there can be no question that the locality to which Say and others refer is on the western, or Nebraska, side of the Missouri river, and more than 20 miles above the present city of Council Bluffs.

The name "Council Bluff" was originally applied to a locality at which Lewis and Clark held a council with the Otoe and Missouri Indians, August 3, 1804.*

Referring to this locality in his valuable edition of these Journals, Thwaites makes the following statement:**

"This is the origin of the name now applied to a city in Iowa opposite Omaha, Neb.; but Coues thinks—that the place of this council was higher up the river, on what was later the site of Ft. Calhoun, in the present Washington County, Nebraska. He also calls attention to the well known uncertainty and constant shifting of the Missouri's channels, rendering it difficult to identify historic points."

This cautious statement might give the impression that it is not quite certain that Coues' conclusion was right. The evidence that this point is some distance above the city of Council Bluffs, and that it is on the Nebraska side of the

*See Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806. (In full and exactly as written.) Edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, LLD., 1904, vol. I, p. 98; Coues, edition, vol. I, p. 66, 1893.

**See volume I, p. 98—footnote.

Missouri river, is clear and the place may be readily identified from the early descriptions of Lewis and Clark and those who followed them later. This evidence may be briefly stated as follows:

In the account of the journey up the Missouri river the Clark Journal states* that Camp No. 9 was located 10 miles above the "Platt River," and that in ascending the Missouri river from this point the party traveled 15 miles on July 27th (p. 91); 10¼ miles on July 28th (p. 93); 10 miles on July 29th (pp. 93, 94); and 3¼ miles on July 30th,—to Council Bluff,—making a total of 49 miles. This carries "Council Bluff" about 27 miles beyond the city of Council Bluffs (i.e., to the north). Some discrepancies occur in the distances reported in different parts of the Journals, but these do not materially affect the result. Thus in the Original Journal of Private Joseph Whitehouse** the distance from "the Great River Platt" to the first camp above (Camp 9) is given as 12 miles (p. 44); and the subsequent distances are given respectively as 15 miles (p. 46), 10 miles (p. 46), 11½ miles (p. 46), and 4 miles (p. 47),—making a total of 52½ miles. However, in his "Distances and Latitudes," p. 189, Whitehouse gives the distance along the river to the "Mouth of Plate River" as 632 miles, and to "Council Bluffs" as 682 miles, making the distance between these points 50 miles. The distances as given on the return trip, September 5th to 8th, 1806,*** will give 49½ miles as this distance if the "5th" is substituted for the "4th" (a manifest error) of August on page 379. As noted these slight variations do not affect the general conclusion, and it is evident that the Council Bluff was not located near the present city of Council Bluffs.

No fluctuations in the course of the Missouri could account for the great difference in distance, and moreover, the Lewis and Clark record of courses and distances has made it possible to retrace the old course of the river, and this further confirms the conclusion that in that part of the Missouri river here under discussion the changes have not been sufficient to account for the difference between the distance from Council Bluffs, Iowa, to the Platte river, and that from Council Bluff to the same point as recorded by Lewis and Clark.

Further corroboration is found in the fact that it is noted in the Original Journals**** that on the 29th of July it was observed that on the S. S. (i.e., the starboard side, here the east side) of the Missouri "a creek comes in called Boyers R.," and on the following page it is noted that at 1¼ miles from that day's starting point the party "passed Bowyers R."***** This is the Boyer river of today, and it now empties into the Missouri at a point about 12 miles above the city of Council Bluffs, but the Lewis and Clark record shows that the Boyer was then 37 miles from the Platte, hence beyond the site of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and that Council Bluff was about 12 miles still farther north. It is thus certain that the Council Bluff of Lewis and Clark is north of the Boyer, whereas Council Bluffs, Iowa, is several miles south of that stream. The

*See the Thwaites edition, volume I. Unless otherwise stated the quotations from the Lewis and Clark Journals are taken from the Thwaites edition as this is an exact copy. The editor of the Coues' edition took greater liberties with the original Journals, and that edition is therefore less reliable.

**Volume VII of the Original Journals.

***See Original Journals, volume V, 376-380.

****Volume I, p. 93.

*****This stream is also called Boyers River in the Original Journal of Sergeant Charles Floyd, Original Journals, Vol. VII, p. 22.

subsequent changes in the course of the Missouri have brought the mouth of the Boyer somewhat nearer to Council Bluffs, Iowa, but it is still clearly between the two points under discussion.

Another point of special importance in this connection is the record in the Clark Journal* that the landing place (at Council Bluff) was at "the lower part of a Bluff & High Prairie on L. S." "L. S." here means larboard side, as is clearly shown in many places in the Journals, "S. S.," which is also frequently used, meaning starboard side. The larboard side of a boat going north is the west side, hence the landing and camp at Council Bluff must have been on the west, or Nebraska, side of the Missouri river, whereas Council Bluffs, Iowa, is on the east side.

The distance of Council Bluff from the Platte, its distance and direction from the mouth of the Boyer, and its location on the west bank of the Missouri river seem to be sufficient to prove that the Council Bluff of Lewis and Clark was in Nebraska.

It is also evident that the Council Bluff of Lewis and Clark is the same as that of Say and Nicollet. Thirteen years after Lewis and Clark's return voyage, on which Council Bluff was again visited**, the Long Expedition established a winter camp "near the quarters of the troops at Council Bluffs (Camp Missouri.)"***

A military expedition, under the command of Col. Henry Atkinson, had preceded the scientific expedition under Maj. Long, and established Camp Missouri at Council Bluff in September, 1819. On the 19th of September of the same year the Long party, which had ascended the Missouri river in the steamer "Western Engineer," established a winter cantonment "on the west bank of the Missouri, about half a mile above Fort Lisa, five miles below Council Bluff, and three miles above the mouth of Boyer's river."****

This camp was named "Engineer Cantonment," and Say refers to it frequently in his papers under that name, or simply as "Cantonment." It is in Nebraska.

It is further stated (p. 222) that "cliffs of sparry limestone rise in the rear of the site we had selected, to an elevation of near three hundred feet. At times of low water strata of horizontal sandstone are disclosed in the bed of the Missouri. These pass under and support the limestone."

And still further it is stated (p. 229) that "the Council Bluff, so called by Lewis and Clarke, from a council with the Otoes and Missouries held there on the 3d of August, 1804, is a remarkable bank rising abruptly from the brink of the river, to an elevation of about one hundred and fifty feet."

These descriptions of topography and geologic formations are of especial interest because they do not at all apply to any part of the vicinity of Council Bluffs, Iowa, as any one familiar with the region under discussion will at once perceive.

*Original Journals, Vol. I, p. 94.

**Original Journals, volume V, p. 379.

***Account of an expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains performed in the years 1819, 1820—under the command of Major S. H. Long. Compiled from the notes of Major Long, Mr. T. Say, and other gentlemen of the party by Edwin James, botanist and geologist to the expedition. Published 1823. The original London edition, published in three volumes, was consulted by the writer, but the references herein given are to the Thwaites edition in four volumes published in 1905, as this is more accessible. The words quoted above appear in vol. I, p. 12.

****This very full designation of the locality appears on p. 221, vol. I, of the Thwaites edition of Long, and on p. 137 of the London edition.

It is evident that Long's party found the river and bluff at Council Bluff much as Lewis and Clark had described them. Long's map shows the great bend of the Missouri near Council Bluff, evidently about as it had appeared thirteen years before, and it also clearly shows the relative position of Boyer's River (so named on the map), Engineer Cantonment and Council Bluff.

The great bend of the Missouri river was still in existence in 1839 when Nicollet visited Council Bluff, and his map, compiled by Lieut. W. H. Emory,* shows the same relative position of Boyer River, Engineer Cantonment and Council Bluff as that indicated on Long's map. A great change, however, took place soon after as is shown by Nicollet's report, which, it should be remembered, was prepared two years after his observations at Council Bluffs were made, and was not published until two more years had elapsed. Referring to the unstable character of the Missouri channel he says (p. 22): "Thus we could not recognize many of the bends described by Lewis and Clarke; and most probably those determined by us in 1839, and laid down upon my map, will ere long have disappeared; such is the unsettled course of the river. Already have I been informed, in fact, that the great bend opposite Council Bluffs has disappeared since our visit; and that the Missouri, which then flowed at the foot of the bluff, is now further removed by several miles to the east of it." The extent of this change is indicated on the map of Harrison county, Iowa, published in the Reports of the Iowa Geological Survey, opposite p. 380, in vol. XX, 1910. In this map the writer published the results of the Lewis and Clark survey, 1804, the U. S. survey, 1853, and the Wattles survey, 1898. Council Bluff was a little south of the south line of Harrison county, and on the opposite side of the Missouri river. If the change reported by Nicollet brought the river to the position indicated by the U. S. survey of 1853, which is not materially different at this point from that shown by the Wattles survey of 1898, the shift eastward amounted to nearly five miles.**

The foregoing facts make it clear that the name Council Bluff was applied to the same locality by Lewis and Clark, Long and Nicollet, and that this locality is situated on the Nebraska side of the Missouri river more than 20 miles above the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa. The evidence is especially clear so far as it concerns the location of the Council Bluff of Say and Nicollet, and this is of greatest interest to students of distribution, for the reports of Say and Nicollet contain many references to this locality.

The term Council Bluffs was probably first publicly applied, at least in scientific literature, to hills on the Iowa side by D. D. Owen,** who refers to "Council Bluffs" on p. 132 of the Report, and marks the hills on the Iowa side, which extend from opposite the mouth of the Platte to northwestern Missouri, as "Council Bluffs."

*This map accompanies the report intended to illustrate A Map of the Hydrographic Basin of the Upper Mississippi River.—J. N. Nicollet.—1843. Submitted Feb. 16, 1841. Published as a Senat Document, 26th Congress, 2nd Session.

**The old channel of the Missouri, indicated by dotted lines on the map of Pottawattamie county opposite p. 266 in vol. XI, Iowa Geological Survey, 1901, was probably determined by the U. S. survey of 1853, though the report does not state this. Pottawattamie county lies just south of Harrison county.

***Report of a geological survey of Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota, etc., 1852. Also map in "Illustrations" in same—the one marked "Sections on the Missouri River from no. 20 M., to no. 40 M."

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that the Council Bluff of Say's and Nicollet's reports, and all others based upon them, is a Nebraska locality, and this is also true of the "Engineer Cantonment," or "Cantonment." Where reference is made to "Bowyer's Creek," "Boyers River," or Boyer river, the locality is on the Iowa side. It is not probable that Say made many excursions to the Iowa side of the Missouri river, the broad prairie bottom-lands of that side being less inviting than the wooded bluffs of the Nebraska side, and the difficulty of crossing the Missouri probably adding an obstacle. His journal, copied by James, shows that he did occasionally cross to the Iowa side, and a longer trip was taken along the Boyer to the present site of Logan, Iowa.*

It may seem that the exact location of Council Bluff is not a matter of serious moment, but this locality is cited in many scientific papers and is therefore of interest to students of plant and animal distribution. In addition to the general desirability of accuracy there are two reasons for correcting the impression that the Council Bluff of the earlier reports is Council Bluffs, Iowa. The two localities are on opposite sides of the Missouri river, and hence in different states, and the difference of about 27 miles between them is sufficiently great to be of interest in connection with the preparation of state lists. Say invariably wrote the name *Council Bluff*, and most of the authors who subsequently copied his record used the same form. But in some cases, particularly those of more recent date, an effort was made to supply the name of the state or territory, and an error has resulted. Thus Frank C. Baker, in a recent work,** cites "Council Bluffs, Iowa," as the type locality for *Lymnaea umbrosa* Say, a form of *Galba elodes* (p. 324), and among the localities for *Galba elodes* appears the following: "Iowa: Missouri River, in the vicinity of Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie county (Say)." Say's original record mentions neither county nor state. The only accurate reference of Council Bluff to Nebraska which the writer has seen in locality citations of this kind appears in W. G. Binney's report on Land Shells.

*Thwaites' edition of Long, vol. II, pp. 136-138; the London edition, vol. II, pp. 67-69. See also the writer's brief discussion in Iowa Geological Survey, vol. XX, p. 278.

**The Lymnaeidae of North and Middle America—Special Publication, No. 3, Chicago Academy of Sciences, 1911.