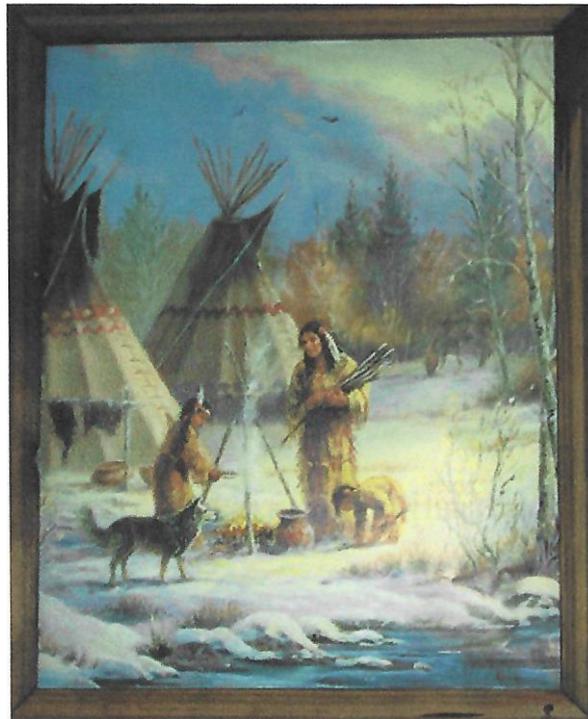


# THE MYSTERY OF THE PAST

FOR YOUTHFUL READERS



THE NATIVE AMERICANS

THE BIRD CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

All rights reserved

Volume I    October 2011    Issue I

A Painting by Moira Cappell

Of the way of life of the

Native American Women

# The Mystery of the Past (for Youthful Readers)

## Introduction

- Out of the Past - Dorothy L. Mast P .1
- The Craft Corner - Dorothy L. Mast & Wanda Dowdy p. 2
- The Photo Place - Connie Rooney and Wanda Dowdy p. 3 - 4
- The Mystery Sleuth - Linda (Beeson) Carroll p. 5
- The Keepsake –Linda (Beeson) Carroll p . 6
- The Map Quest - Helene Landenburger p . 7
- Poetry of the Land -Helene Landenburger p. 8
- The Book Corner - Marsha Magley and Shirley Watson p. 9 - 10
- Items of Historical Interest -Rosemary Powell p. 11

The Bird City Historical Association, Inc. Officers and Members

# OUT OF THE PAST

When the settlers came to America they consisted of many different ethnic groups. They brought with them the skills, traditions and culture of their ethnic origin.

The adjustment to a different way of life with no real understanding of the presence and way of life of the Native Americans became a harsh reality.

The Native Americans felt their presence upon the land as their hunting grounds was given by the Great Spirit. There were many different tribes across the land, each tribe having their own skills, traditions and culture – depending upon the environment where they lived. The tribes were very territorial and this often had led to conflict (fight) over territory which led to designated (certain land areas) for tribes friendly to each other such as the Plains Indians. The Southern and Northern Cheyenne, Arapahoe and Sioux were a part of their group.

Cheyenne County as we know it today, was part of the hunting grounds of the Southern Cheyenne, where large herds of buffalo grazed.

The French and English traders and trappers intermingled with the Indians, often marrying into a tribe.

After 1826, the American Fur Company obtained a monopoly and controlled the trade, so Indian hunters could not count on a liberal distribution of gifts or good prices for pelts and hides.

The buffalo were gradually being pushed westward. The Indians became more dependent on the traders.

There were over 20 different tribes classed as plains Indians, the name Indian came from the white man.

The Federal Government began attempting to push the Indian tribes from the east to the west and those from the south to the north.

One Indian Chief exclaimed in his native tongue at a council fire, "What gives the white man the authority to tell us where we may live or hunt?"

This resistance led to many years of war between the Federal Government and the Indian tribes.

Dorthy L. Mast

Next Issue: Treaties

Sources: Cheyenne Autumn, by Mari Sandoz

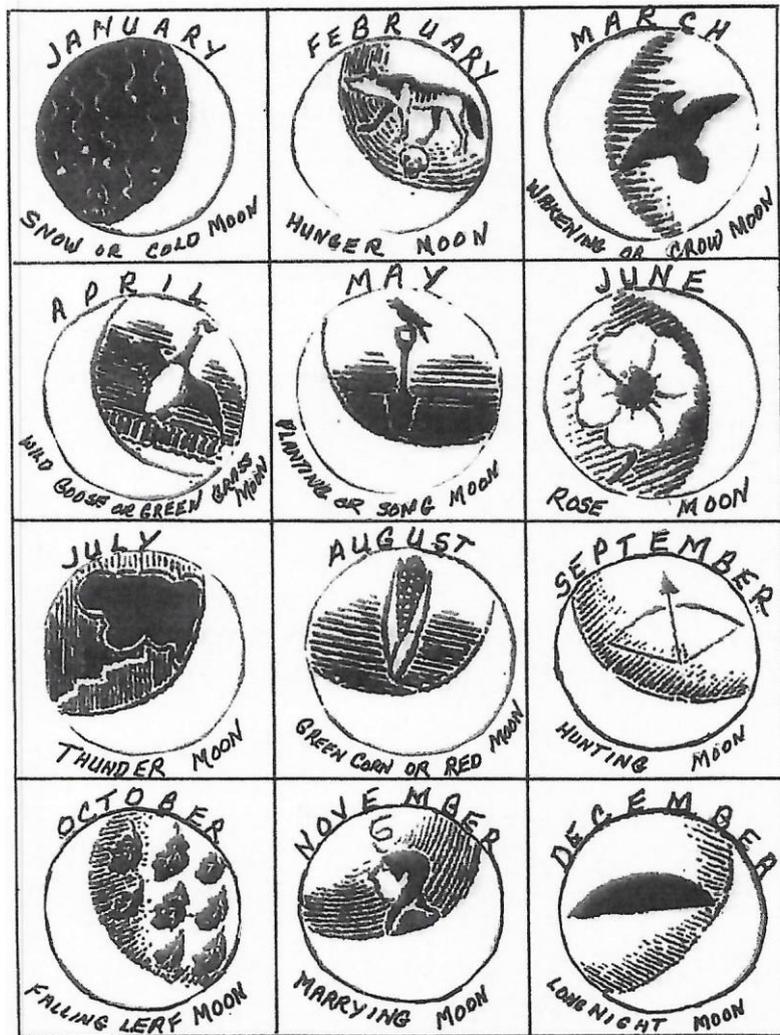
The Buffalo Hunters, by Mari Sandoz

A Columbia Guide to the American Indian of the Great Plains, by

Loretta Fowler

# Craft Corner

p. 2



## The Native American Calendar

- Draw 12-3" squares
- Place a 2" circle centered inside each square.
- Print in block letters the name of each moon (month).
- Draw each symbol for each moon (month) as shown. Observe the symbol closely for its meaning.

The English words of these symbols were interpreted from the original language of the Southern Cheyenne's through the development of sign language.

Keep in mind that the Native Americans had an unusual wisdom and a keen insight to the laws of nature. That wisdom and knowledge would be a great asset to our youth in today's scientific and technical world today.

Dorothy L. Mast and Wanda Dowdy

# THE PHOTO PLACE

## NATIVE AMERICAN TOMAHAWK

Perhaps the most familiar symbol associated with the Native Americans is the tomahawk ....

The term "tomahawk" is a derivation of the Algonquian words "tamahak" or "tamahakan." The earliest definitions of these words (early 1600's) applied to stone-headed implements used as tools and as weapons. They referred to all manner of striking weapons: wood clubs, stone-headed axes, metal trade hatchets etc... As the years passed a tomahawk was thought of as any Indian-owned hatchet-type instrument. That association changed somewhat as white frontiersmen came to rely on the tomahawk as standard equipment.

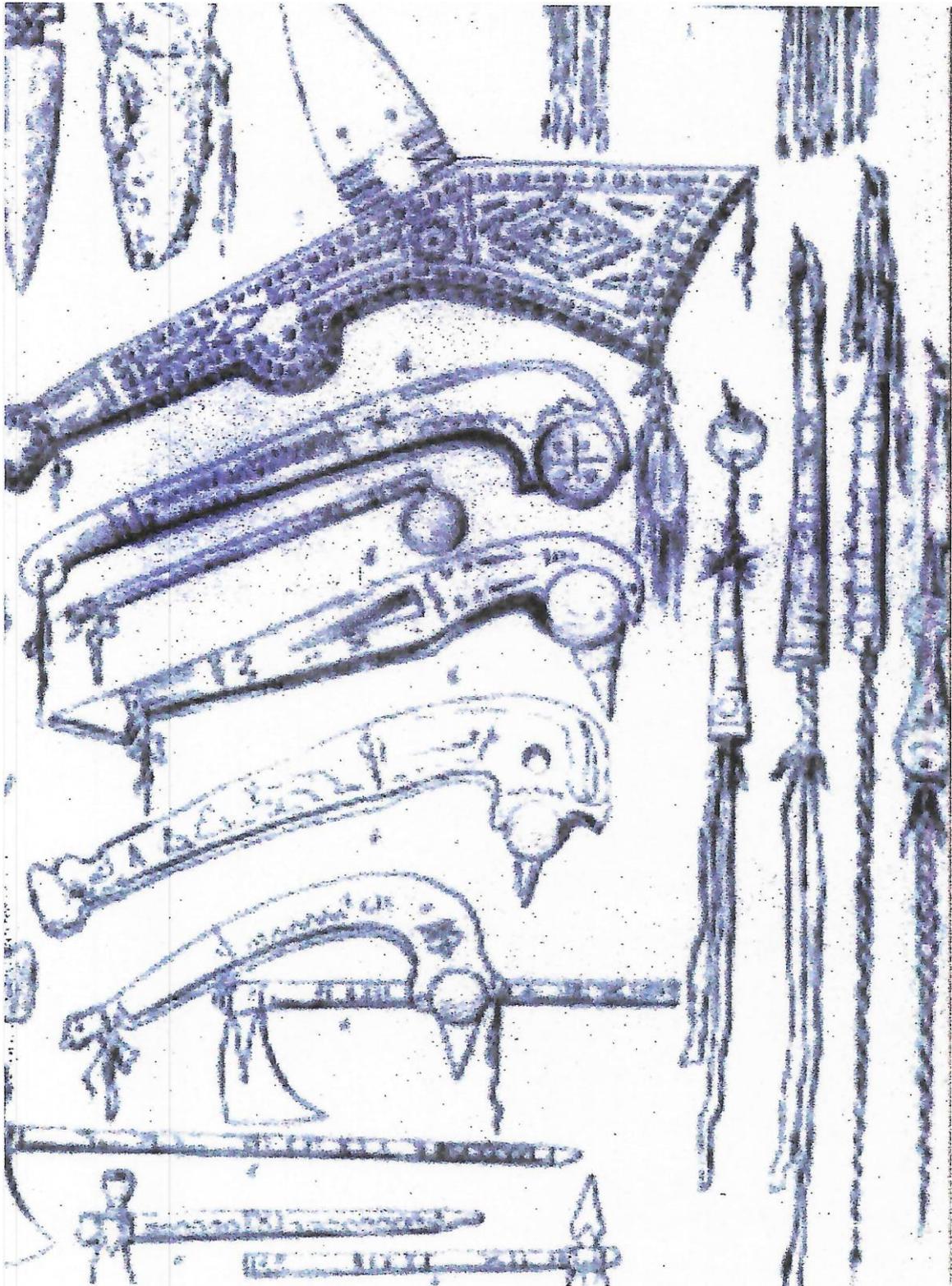
The popular perception of a tomahawk has become that of a lightweight metal head on a wood handle. With the exception of a relative few made by Indian blacksmiths, tomahawks were manufactured on a large scale in Europe or created by individual makers in America. Some were crafted in a most elaborate manner, with fancy engraving and pewter or silver inlaid blades and handles, for presentation to important chiefs in order to commemorate treaties and seal friendships. The majority of them though were personalized by their owners. Vastly different methods of adornment abounded – according to materials available and the customs and styles of time and region. Hafts were polished, smooth, carved, scalloped, inlaid branded with hot files, tacked, wrapped with copper or brass wire, covered with rawhide, leather or cloth, stained, painted and hung with every type of ornament imaginable.

Metals used were solid iron, iron with a welded steel bit, brass with steel bit and solid brass (which diminished its usefulness as a wood-chopping tool). The end of the head opposite the cutting edge provided a place for a spike, hammer poll, or even ...a pipe bowl.

With a smoking pipe bowl and a drilled or hollowed handle, the pipe tomahawk became the most popular "hawk" of them all. It developed as a trade, good by Euro-Americans for trade with native peoples. Iroquois men traded furs for these sought-after tomahawks. Ornate examples were presented at treaty signings as diplomatic gifts to Indian leaders, who carried them as a sign of their prestige. It was at once a weapon and a symbol of peace for over 200 years and was carried scepter-like, in the majority of photographic portraits of prominent Indian Chiefs.

Source: "Calument History," by Toinette Trahan from the Internet.  
Connie Gene Rooney and Wanda J. Dowdy

# THE PHOTO PLACE



# THE MYSTERY SLEUTH

p. 5

Did you know that the Indians used different smoke signals to designate their tribe?

They smothered the smoke quickly with a blanket that released single puffs of smoke. Some were large puffs and some were small ones.

They also used hand signals on top of a ridge that could be seen at great distances. They always studied the direction of the wind, because sound and scent could be carried on the wind.

Linda (Beeson) Carroll

## THE KEEPSAKES - ARTIFACTS

These fragments of Indian pottery (pictured on the back) were found on an island in the OP (Missouri River) near South Whitlock Bay, Dodge Draw, East and West Whitlock, South Dakota. These could be Lakota Sioux, Arikaree, or Mandan (less likely Mandan).

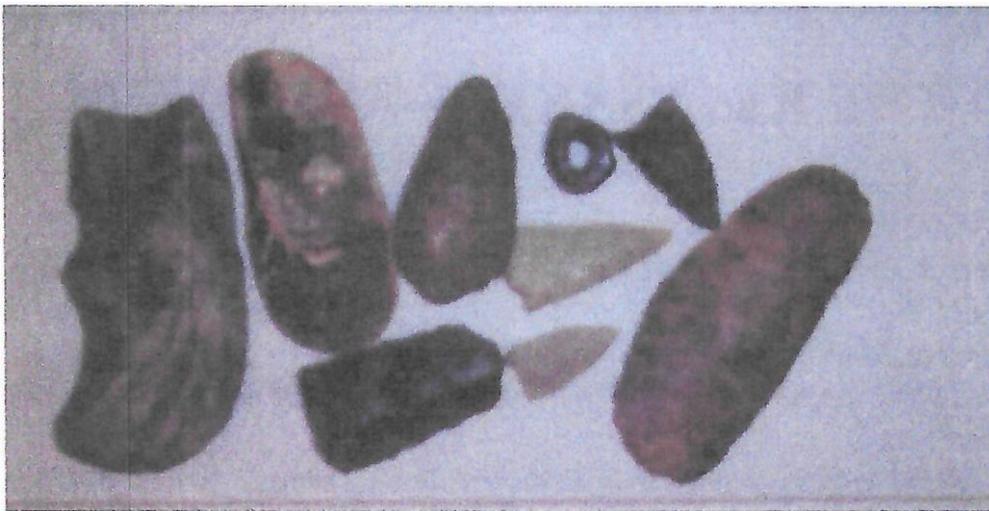
Due to the recent flood, the island is underwater again which happens periodically.

The island is strewn with skulls, human bones, animal bones, artifacts and pottery fragments. Over the years artifact hunters have taken the "complete" items.

Linda (Beeson) Carroll

# CLAY POTTERY FRAGMENTS

p. 6



Linda (Beeson) Carroll

## **The Way West L&PP Cheyenne County**

When northwest Kansas was still Kansas Territory, extending clear to the Rocky Mountains, it was wide open spaces and literally a sea of grass. Various tribes of what we now refer to as Native Americans (Indians) roamed the High Plains utilizing the land and wildlife in their own cultures. Our area was a favorite spot of the Cheyenne. With the discovery of Gold near Denver City, Kansas, new modes of travel by the white men began to evolve. A company called the Pike's Peak and Leavenworth Express, owned by Jones and Russell, started a stage route across the northern part of Kansas. They had fifty Concord coaches and used mules to traverse the sandy river bottoms that they tended to follow for the most part. The route lay between Leavenworth and Denver. The trip took nine to twelve days, one way. They drove the route with short stops for the fee of \$125.00. They carried passengers, mail, and small amounts of freight

Stage stations were located approximately 25 miles apart. Two stations were located in present day Cheyenne County. Station 19 was located 14 miles northwest of present day Bird City, and station 20 was located some 12 miles southwest of present day St. Francis, both stations being on the south side of the Republican River. At this time the river did not have trees along it as it does today and the miles probably seemed endless. The route was operated only a few months in the year of 1859, and was then bought out by Hockaday Express and moved north to the Platte River Valley.

Helene Landenberger

# POETRY OF THE LAND

p. 8

The following is a poem describing these historical events by The Wild Rose Poet, Helene Landenberger.

## L&PP Stage Line-1859

When the shiny new coaches rolled across the plains,  
They rocked in the sunshine, wind or heavy rain.  
The Concords were crafted in the East, so fine,  
Then hitched up to the mules and put out on the line.

An eleven day trip, stations every 20 miles  
When one came into view, I bet there were smiles.  
For there, was a drink of water, or maybe a meal.  
Then back into the Stagecoach, what a slick new deal.

They carried passengers, freight and mail,  
And left their stations on time, without fail.  
The going could be tough along the river sands,  
And at times there were Indians, that traveled in bands.

In our own home territory, two stations were found.  
On the south side of the river, Denver City bound.  
What became Cheyenne County in 1873,  
In the northwest region was station 19.

Then in the southwest, station 20 comes into sight.  
Westward ever westward, the desolation is a :fright.  
A time of jubilation, when the mountains come into view,  
That's when Kansas Territory's Denver City was quite new.

For just a few months Russell and Jones ran this line,  
Then the whole route was changed with the times.  
But for that era, it was a going concern,  
And our Republican River was seen, at many a turn.

Poem written 2002

Recorded on CD: © 2006

Published: 7/1/2011 in a Book entitled, "Bloomin' Prairie Poetry"

ISBN: 978-1-4634-006 1-3(sc) This article 9/9/11

# THE BOOK CORNER

p. 9

## MARI SANDOZ

Marie/Mari Sandoz was born (May 11, 1896) near Hay Springs, Nebraska, the eldest of six children born to Swiss immigrants, Jules and Mary FEHR Sandoz. Her childhood was spent in hard labor on the home farm.

She graduated from eighth grade at age 17, passed the rural teachers' exam, then taught in nearby country schools without ever having attended high school. At age 18, she married a neighboring rancher, Wray Macumber, but the marriage ended, in 1919, and Mari moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, where she held a variety of jobs and attended the University of Nebraska. During those years, she claimed she received over a thousand rejection slips for short stories she had written.

In 1928, her father, Jules, nearing death, she visited her home and was stunned by his last request-that she write his life story. She began extensive research on his life, documenting his decision to become a pioneer, his hard work, chiseling out a life on the prairie, his leadership within the pioneer community, and his friendship with Indians.

The resulting book was *Old Jules*. But success did not come easily to Sandoz. In 1933, in poor health, she moved back to her mother's home in the Sand-hills. Every major publishing house in the United States had rejected *Old Jules*.

By January 1934, Mari had returned to Lincoln, and gotten a job at the Nebraska State Historical Society, where she became Associate Editor of Nebraska History Magazine. In 1935, her revised version of *Old Jules*, won a non-fiction contest held by Atlantic Press and was finally going to be published.

The book, well-received critically and commercially, became a Book of the Month Club selection. Some readers, however, were shocked at her unromantic depiction of the Old West, as well as her strong language and realistic portrayal of the hardships of frontier life. Her meticulous attention to detail, in-depth research and admiration of the Plains Indian culture is quite evident in all of her other non-fiction works as well, such as *Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas* (1942); *Cheyenne Autumn* (1953); *The Buffalo Hunters* (1954); *The Horsecatcher* (1957); *The Cattlemen* (1958); *Love Song to the Plains* (1961); *The Story Catcher* (1963); *The Brave Men* (1964) and others.

Mari Sandoz received many awards, among them an honorary Doctorate of Literature from the University of Nebraska (1950). She was a college professor, taught Creative Writing, was a guest speaker at writing workshops, and was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame (1975).

By request, at her death (March 10, 1966) she was buried south of Gordon, Nebraska, on a hill overlooking her family's ranch.

Abstracted/Paraphrased from Wikipedia  
by Marsh C. SQUIRES Magley & Shirley Watson

A passage in Mari Sandoz's *Love Song to the Plains* reads, "Back in the hard times of 1857-58 there were stories of a flying serpent that hovered over a Missouri River steamboat slowing for a landing. It was like a great undulating serpent, in and out of the lowering clouds, breathing fire; it seemed, with lighted streaks around the sides."

Sandoz also recounts a folk song attributed to 1860's railroad workers: "'Twas a dark night in Sixty-six when we was layin' steel, we seen a flyin' engine come without no wing or wheel. It came a-roarin' in the sky, with lights along the side and scales like a serpent's hide."

In 1884, the sky belonged to the clouds, birds and stars. So, when a metallic object crashed to earth near Benkelman on June 6 of that year, it was a shock to the cowboys who witnessed it.

The Nebraska State Journal reported that ranchman John W. Ellis and several of his hands were rounding up cattle when they heard a roaring sound overhead. They looked up just before "a blazing meteor of immense size" struck the ground and slid into a draw.

Investigating, the horsemen saw metallic fragments--cogs and gears strewn about, each one glowing and surrounded by a radius of charred grass. The 60-foot long, 12-foot radius cylindrical object scoured the ground, leaving molten sand in an area 20-by-80 feet. One of the cowboys, Alf Williamson, peered over the draw's rim. He was blinded in seconds; his hair singed and face blistered. By evening, many visitors had come to view the object, but its light, said by many to be as bright as the sun, remained too intense to bear.

With the fragments still glowing two days later, a brief but heavy rainstorm filled the draw with a violent torrent of water. As the rain subsided, several witnesses, including an Omaha Bee reporter, observed that the craft, which some called an aerolite, had dissolved "like a spoonful of salt in water." A greenish jelly-like substance covered the ground and dissipated into nothing before their eyes, a sweet smell filling the air. The next day a newspaper headline read: "The Magical Meteor, It Dissolves Like a Drop of Dew Before the Morning Sun."

From a story by Alan J. Bartels, originally appearing in the JL/AG 2010 issue of Nebraska Life Magazine.

Abstracted/Edited by Marsha C. SQUIRES Magley and Shirley Watson

## ITEMS OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

Have you ever wondered How deep was the ocean that once covered the area we now know as Cheyenne County, Kansas?

The soil here is made up of a thick alluvium dominated by a conglomerate of sands, gravel, clays and calcareous deposits. The Breaks of Northern Cheyenne County are made up of loess (luss), the result of erosion from the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

When did the first people arrive in this area? We do not know, but we are beginning to have an indication from historical sites being located. Artifacts are starting to tell Cheyenne County's story. Paleo-Indian occupation is beginning to tell us there were people here before current knowledge gives us proof.

Clovis points and pre-Clovis points have been found where they were not known in Cheyenne County. Clovis period occupation has been dated between 11,200 and 10,900 B. P. (date before present)

Remains from the Clovis sites include extinct horse, camel, bison antiquus and many smaller species. Animals were known to congregate in marshy areas.

During an extremely wet spring unusual grass circles were found in a pasture. These circles were measured from 6 feet to 35 feet in diameter. On the east side of each of the circles were two short lines of grass about the width of an entry way, facing east. Each grass circle was about 12 inches broad. The center of each of these was buffalo grass. What can these circles be? ”

After much inquiry, they were identified as creeping red fescue grass which was not known to grow at this altitude or climatic conditions in this area. At that period the climate was much different from today with running water and fir trees.

Jack Hoffman, Kansas University Anthropology Professor was contacted. He visited the site and saw the circles immediately. He believed this was a habitation site from 10,100 to 20,000 years ago. The lodges represented by the grass circles were probably built of mammoth bones or branches covered with hides or willow branches.

Who knows what is still to be found in Cheyenne County?

Rosemary Powell