



Nebraska History posts materials online for your personal use. Please remember that the contents of *Nebraska History* are copyrighted by the Nebraska State Historical Society (except for materials credited to other institutions). The NSHS retains its copyrights even to materials it posts on the web.

For permission to re-use materials or for photo ordering information, please see:

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/magazine/permission.htm>

Nebraska State Historical Society members receive four issues of *Nebraska History* and four issues of *Nebraska History News* annually. For membership information, see:

<http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/members/index.htm>

Article Title: Removal of Pawnee and Peace with Their Neighbors

Full Citation: Charles Chapin, "Removal of Pawnee and Peace with Their Neighbors," *Nebraska History* 26 (1945): 43-48

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1945Pawnee.pdf>

Date: 7/21/2017

Article Summary: Chapin was one of a group of Columbus, Nebraska, men who made arrangements to move the Pawnee from Nance County to a reservation in the Indian Territory. He describes two incidents in which the Pawnee interacted with members of other tribes.

Scroll Down for complete article.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Charles Chapin, William M. Burgess, Little Robe, Ade-kot-toose (Prong Horned Antelope)

Nebraska Place Names: Genoa, Nance County

Indians: Pawnee, Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Osage

Keywords: Charles Chapin, Mourning Party, Indian Territory

Photographs / Images: Pawnee village on the Loup, 1871

Removal of Pawnee and Peace With Their Neighbors

A MEMOIR OF CHARLES CHAPIN

Following the treaty of 1857, the Pawnee Indians lived on their reservation on the Loup River in Nance County, Nebraska.

Congress passed an Act creating the Indian Territory in order that the Government's plan to give permanent homes to several scattered Indian Tribes might be carried out.

The Government officials urged the Pawnee to exchange their fine land in Nebraska for a reservation in the Indian Territory. Our Red friends were undecided about making this change. One of their number, Peta-lesharo, led the fight against giving up their land in Nebraska. The Government sent out Quakers as special emissaries and they succeeded in convincing the Pawnee of the advantages of this change. Their Indian Agent, Major William Burgess, began to make arrangements for removal of the tribe to their new home.

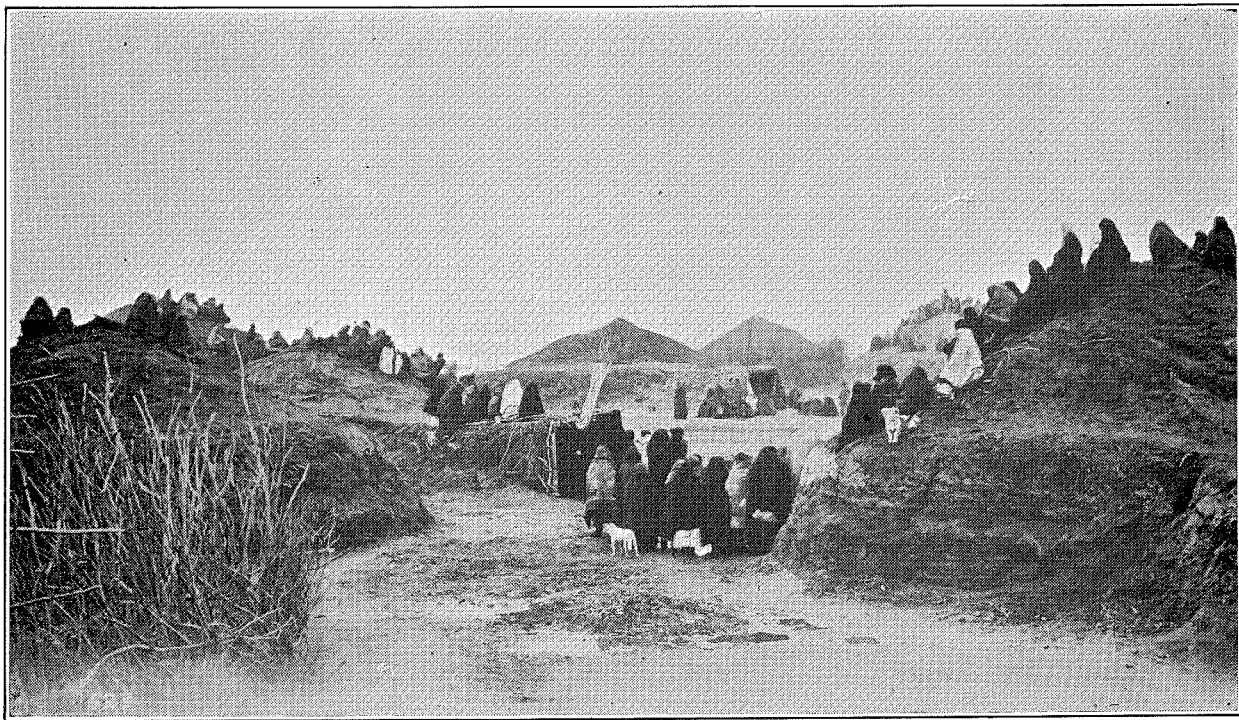
One might wonder how the location of the new reservation was established. Major Burgess and a committee made a trip in 1874, and after covering the territory available, decided on the new location. In those days it was referred to as located west of the Arkansas River, directly on a small stream known as Black Bear River. John Williamson, foreman at the Genoa, Nance County, Agency and Cal Shaw stayed on through the winter, housing themselves as best they could. In the following spring, Major Burgess made up a party of Columbus, Nebraska, men to go to the new reservation and assist in making necessary preparations for moving the tribe and Agency. The late George Scott was foreman or manager. There were six or eight men in the party including myself.

We went straight south until we reached Arkansas City. This was the last out-post. Following down the Arkansas River without roads or bridges was slow, but after several days of travel we arrived at the new location without the loss of any of our wagons or supplies. We were busy for the next few months preparing to receive the Pawnee who arrived late that summer.

For many years before the Pawnee moved to the Indian Territory, they were not on friendly terms with the Cheyenne and Arapaho. Many disputes over hunting buffalo made bad feeling and some fighting between these tribes. The new reservation of the Pawnee in the Indian Territory, was perhaps one hundred miles from that of the Cheyenne and Arapaho.

In the summer of 1876 an unusual ceremony took place at the Pawnee Agency. Three representatives of the Cheyenne tribe rode in to the Pawnee village and informed the Chief of the Pawnee, that Chief Little Robe of the Cheyenne had sent them on a friendly mission. Chief Little Robe's message was "We are living close together, we want to be friendly and we want to pay you a visit." The response was "Come, we will be pleased to see you." The three men were entertained and went home the following day.

About two weeks later a party of about a hundred Cheyenne and Arapaho arrived, dressed in their finest and mounted on good horses. A small valley lay about a mile from the village. Here the visitors dismounted and rested while two of their number rode into the village to announce their arrival and request the Pawnee to come out to meet them. Then news was spread quickly and the Pawnee gathered on a hill about one half mile from where their visitors were waiting. I was told Chief Little Robe and his men had arrived, so with Watts Burgess and Alexander, the general foreman, I rode out to witness the meeting. The Pawnee Chief waited until about two hundred or more of his men assembled, and then, raising his hand in the air, he called in a loud tone, "Now." At this signal they rode toward the Cheyenne as fast as their horses



PAWNEE VILLAGE ON THE LOUP, 1871

Photo by W. H. Jackson

could run. Encircling the Cheyenne, they rode round and round, firing their pistols into the air over the heads of their new friends. In due time they came to a halt and gifts were given the visitors by the Pawnee. Then they were escorted to the village and distributed among the Pawnee according to room available in their teepees. That evening they were fed, after which the merry making began. Singing and dancing to the strains of the tom tom lasted throughout the night.

One of the incidents I remember well, was a young Indian who was taken to a teepee where he saw a scalp hanging in a very prominent place. He asked what tribe it had come from. Upon being told it had come from the Sioux, he turned and went out. The Sioux were friendly with the Cheyenne which accounted for this young fellow refusing to spend the night in the lodge with the scalp which might once have belonged to one of his friends.

The following day they held an outdoor meeting. Chief Little Robe was a fine looking, intelligent man, a wonderful speaker and a natural born leader. He had arranged this visit and was the "speaker of the day." He spoke to them as follows:

"To the Great Spirit, Chiefs, Soldiers and Medicine Men of the Pawnee Tribe. A great many years ago our people had plenty of buffalo meat but the white men insisted on coming into our country with their good horses and cartridge guns. They killed many buffaloes and we thought our buffaloes would all be killed off and our women and children would starve. For this reason we thought it would be necessary to kill off or drive out the white man, but we found the white man was like the blades of grass and kept coming and coming. We kept on fighting the white man until the Great White Father at Washington sent us a treaty, agreeing to give us land, money, blankets and food. But the Great White Father said, first you must dig a hole and bury the tomahawk so deep that it can never be found.

"We counselled over this many times and at last decided to

sign the peace treaty. We are pleased we did so. We have been given schools and our children are learning to write just like the white man's children.

"As you are now our neighbors, we want to be friends. There should be no more fighting between us."

All seemed greatly impressed by Chief Little Robe's speech and considering the Indian's nature, were enthusiastic in voicing agreement with his proposal. The peace pipe was passed around and as far as I know, there was no further trouble between these tribes.

I talked to many people and all agreed this was the only instance they had heard of, where two tribes had made their own peace without the supervision or aid of the white man.

Shortly after the Pawnee Indians were removed from what is now Nance County, Nebraska, to their new reservation in the Indian Territory, Major William M. Burgess, their Agent, decided to take a vacation. He and his wife and his daughter left the Agency to attend the Exposition held in Philadelphia in 1876.

The nearest railroad station was at Coffeetown, Kansas, approximately 125 miles from the Agency. The only manner of transportation was by wagon or horseback. The Major, his wife and daughter occupied an old army ambulance driven by a young Pawnee Indian whose name was Ade-kot-toose, interpreted "Prong Horned Antelope." His English name was David.

Ade-kot-toose was a fine looking, intelligent young man, about twenty years old, and had attended the Indian School. He was very proud of his beautiful long hair which reached almost to his waist.

In addition to the old army ambulance, a lumber wagon drawn by a span of mules and driven by another Pawnee Indian, carried the camping equipment, rations, trunks, valises

and personal property of the travelers. As it was necessary to ford streams, there being no bridges in the territory at that time, I accompanied the party on horseback acting as an escort and to test the depth of streams before fording. We were obliged to cross the Indian Reservation which was about fifty miles wide.

At that time there was a custom among the Osage Indians, upon the death of a male member of their tribe, for the friends of the deceased to form a "Mourning Party." The original custom was for the "Mourning Party" to secure a scalp, which they buried with the body of their deceased friend, but the white man's law forced them to modify this custom to the extent of taking only the hair which they cut from their victim's head. By 1875, the custom had been further modified to the extent that the "Mourning Party" was permitted to buy their victim's hair instead of taking it by force. They usually insisted on one of their party cutting off the hair.

The "Mourning Party" would start out, each mounted on a good horse and leading a good horse, obligating themselves not to return until they had secured the hair from some person, other than one of their tribe or a friendly tribe. We met such a party, numbering about thirty Osage. As they approached us they saw Ade-kot-toose, "We want to buy that hair." Ade-kot-toose said, "I do not want to sell it." Nevertheless the Osage proceeded to prepare to cut off his hair. They spread a new blanket on the ground and commanded him to get off the wagon and sit on the blanket. This was a great insult to Ade-kot-toose. Notwithstanding their threatening attitude, Ade-kot-toose was unafraid and, in sign language told them he would not allow them to cut his hair off and before they could do it they would have to cut it off here; indicating by drawing his hand across his throat. The Osage then pointed to their horses and told him he could take any one of them in payment for his hair provided they were allowed to cut it off.

It seemed there would be serious trouble and Major Burgess talked to Ade-kot-toose, advising him to sell his hair as he would receive a good horse and his hair would soon grow out again. Finally Ade-kot-toose agreed to allow them to have his hair but insisted that he cut it off himself. The Osage debated. We did not understand their language so we could not tell what they were saying. After much deliberation they consented to Ade-kot-toose cutting off his own hair. Whereupon two buckskin strings were tied around his hair about four inches apart. I tied one of these strings. As soon as this had been done, he whipped out a butcher knife and with a quick stroke, cut off his hair and threw it on the blanket.

The Osage considered this an insult and there was much angry talk among them about it for some time. Finally their leader picked up the hair, put it in his blanket, and then told Ade-kot-toose to choose the horse he wanted. Ade-kot-toose selected one of the horses and tied it to the rear of the wagon. The Osage rode away and we were very happy that serious trouble had been avoided and that we were able to continue our journey in peace.

Upon our return to the Pawnee Agency several days later, Ade-kot-toose recounted the incident to the other members of the tribe. They were highly incensed over the matter and wanted to immediately go on the war-path against the Osage. At that time the Pawnee were not in any too good physical condition and certainly were not fit to go on the war-path against the Osage. The Chief Clerk, Mr. George Howell, was able to persuade them to await the return of Major Burgess before taking such action. The wrath of the Pawnee however abated before the Major's return and the incident was forgotten.