MR. A. T. HILL'S OWN STORY

Re. HILL SITE

In response to the request of Superintendent Sheldon of the Nebraska Historical Society to tell the story of my connection with the Pawnee Village Site on the Republican river, on Nebraska soil, between Guide Rock and Red Cloud, I give with pleasure the following brief account:

My former home was in Kansas, and being a lover of history and greatly interested in historical events and in the marking and preservation of the places where they occurred I was present in 1906 at the unveiling of the Pike monument in Republic County, Kansas. This meeting and celebration greatly stimulated my interest in this particular event. I had read before the account of Pike's explorations and had admired his attitude and method in dealing with the Indians at the Pawnee village, but I now began the real study of the site visited by Pike.

I read the publications of the Kansas and Nebraska Historical Societies and many other books and writings on early western history. The numerous suggestions by the early authorities that Pike's Pawnee Village was located in Nebraska, somewhere in the vicinity of Red Cloud, and their final conclusion, when no appropriate village site could be located there, that the one in Kansas must be the village Pike visited, caused me to wonder if the true spot had really been found. I secured and read the Expeditions of Pike by Elliott Coues. A careful study of his line of march from the journal and map, and the description of the village by both Pike and Wilkinson, when compared with the topography of the surrounding country, the geographical location and extent of the village, where the monument was placed,

led me to believe that the Pawnees with whom Pike councilled must have been some distance north and west of the site marked by the Kansas monument.

During this time I had moved to Hastings, Nebraska, and engaged in the business of marketing cars. My work now carried me over the terrotory where I thought the lost Indian village had been and I kept up a constant inquiry in search of such an Indian Village site. It was difficult to obtain information of the people living in this neighborhood locating such a village site. In 1921 myself and three friends spent a week end in camp about a mile and a half from this site. We fished a part of the time and devoted the rest of the time to searching for Indian arrow-heads, pottery or whatever relics might be available, but with very little success. Among those of whom we enquired was a man who had farmed the land for eleven years, on which a part of this site was located, but his answer was the same as that of others. He knew of no such a village.

In november of 1923, while working along White Rock Creek, in Kansas, directly south of this village, I called on Mr. Redden, who lives there on the creek. During our conversation he mentioned an Indian skeleton and an old Spanish saddle that he had dug up on the old DeWitt farm, some four or five years previous to that time. He very gladly showed me the relics and consented to my request to direct me to the site. We drove up there and by inquiring of Mr. George DeWitt, who was living on the farm at that time we obtained the following information: When his father, who homesteaded the land in 1872, broke the land it was covered with these lodge rings, fortification walls, caches, etc. They gathered

great numbers of stone mauls, axes, war clubs and such like, threw them in the holes and plowed over them. He stated that the land was literally covered with such relics of Indian life.

The following Sunday Mr. A. L. Dougherty, Mr. George DeWitt and myself opened a grave on the hill overlooking the village and discovered the remains of an adult Indian. In addition to things of Indian design buried with the skeleton we found a Spanish bridle bit and spur. I then wrote to Superintendent Sheldon of the Nebraska Historical Society giving a general description of the village site discovered and the things taken from the grave we had opened. Delighted with the village I had found I surveyed and comparedit with Pike's description.

It was directly at the base of a considerable hill. Across the river was another large and commanding hill, such as the one described as being occupied by Pike's camp. After driving to this hill we found the gun pits and other evidence of a camp. While waiting for a reply from Mr. Sheldon a holiday was enjoyed in driving from this place, following as nearly as possible the route outlined by Pike, to the Arkansas river. Many of the land marks mentioned by him were recognized on this trip. (given in Munday's account)

The following spring (May 18, 1924) Superintendent Sheldon and myself with a number of others present opened a number of the graves. In the grave of a child of eight or ten years was found a beautiful pipe of the rarest workmanship, beads made from the bones of animals and from the shells of mussels found in the Nebraska rivers. The complete skeleton of an eagle rested upon the child's breast, showing how high was the esteem

of this little one and how deep the love of those who laid the child away. But not one article in this grave was found which had come from the white traders. Fifty feet from this grave was found the skeleton of a woman and singularly enough beads of European manufacture, a hair comb, a steel rifle barrell used in weaving, and other articles which showed the white traders had reached the village before this burial. In another grave was the skeleton of a large man with numerous articles of both Indian and white manufacture and the fragments of a box containing parts of a printed document.

These lodge circles, these graves and their contents, proved beyond a doubt that here was the site of an important Indian village, occupied for a period covering many years. After observing well the topography of the surrounding country, Superintendent Sheldon accepted my invitation to accompany me on a subsequent trip from the Indian village site to the big bend of the Arkansas river. This trip we made in November of 1924. We returned from it driving eastward to the approximate point of Pike's route as shown on his map. We followed his route northwest toward the Pawnee village. We carefully noted, both going and returning, the topography of the country, the distances described by Pike, the camping ground, the location and the directions of the streams. We drove then to the location of the Kansas Historical Monument in Republic county, Kansas. We studied the relation of this site to the route described by Pike, with the location of the Indian village described by him, with the camping ground on the north side of the Republican river as described by him. We then turned westward and drove to the Indian village site in Nebraska, between Red Cloud and Guide Rock.

Again we studied and compared the country, and location of the village with each detail as given by Pike. We reached the conclusion that the site of the Kansas Historical Monument was an impossible one, either by Pike's map or his narrative or by the combined use of both. We reached the further conclusion that the Indian village site in Nebraska filled all the requirements of Pike's narrative and map, and filled them especially well at the points where the Kansas Historical Monument site totally failed to fill them.

I became more deeply interested than ever in this Pawnee Indian village site on the Republican in Nebraska. In order to carry out my desire for investigation and for the preservation of this Indian village site for future historical use I determined to buy the land, which I did in March, 1925. The village site and the large graveyard on the hill were on different quarter sections and I, therefore, purchased both farms, making me 320 acres. Since the purchase of the land I have continued to farm it, but I have made special arrangements for a complete survey of the site, for the marking of all the earth lodge sites upon it, for the exploration of the Indian graveyard and the preservation of the historical material found there.

Explorations have been carried on continuously under my supervision since the purchase of the land up to the present time. Most of my spare time and holidays have been enjoyed in the work of surveying, mapping, making drawings of and excavating the caches, graves and house sites at this Indian village. The pottery work, flint and stone implements, bone awls, picks, and hide tanning tools, etc., are unquestionably of the same design and workmanship as that of the Pawnees on the Platte and Loup rivers.

A great wealth of this kind of material has been taken from this site, but sufficient quantity of it remains in the undisturbed graves and house sites to satisfy the minds of any who wish to make arrangements for guidance and visit the site. A large room in the Hastings Museum is filled with this material, where it has been well labeled and catalogued and beautifully arranged in glass cases by Mr. A. M. Brooking. The important articles foreigh to Indian workmanship are Spanish bridle bits, and spurs, United States, British and Spanish peace medals, coins, soldiers' buttons and two brass medallions. On the buttons and medallions are fifteen stars, and on one is the raised figure "1", the number of Pike's infantry. The importance of many of these finds will be shown elsewhere in this number.

As a result of conversations with Superintendent Sheldon of the Nebraska Historical Society invitations were sent out to all the Historical Societies and to the Bureau of Ethnology at Washington endeavoring to arrange a convenient time for a visit to the Republican Valley by the leading scholars in the field of Western History and a determination, if possible, of the true site of the Pike-Pawnee Village. Special invitations were sent to the Kansas Historical Society at Topeka, urging it to send as many representatives as possible.

Many responses were received to this invitation. In most cases the Societies expressed their interest, but felt doubtful that they could undertake the time and expense required. The date of the investigation was _____. The day before that date a telegram was sent to Secretary William E. Connelley of the Kansas Historical Society at Topeka expressing the hope that representatives of that Society would join with

us in the investigation. Upon the date a party of Kansas and Nebraska citizens, including Mrs. M. O. Kamp, a member of the Kansas Historical Society, examined the surroundings of the Nebraska Indian village and camp, compared it with the one described by Pike. The party then drove some forty miles south and east and made a similar survey of the Historical Monument Site near Republic, Kansas. It was the unanimous opinion of those present that the Nebraska site filled the requirements of Pike's narrative and map and that the Kansas site did not fill its conditions.

It has been my plan in the purchase and in the exploration of this ancient Pawnee village to preserve the evidences of its occupation, to make the site available for the public under conditions which would retain its important features, to arrange and preserve the historical material found upon the site and to secure the erection of a suitable monument which should commemorate this village and the events taking place there. It is my belief that this site marks the Pike-Pawnee Council which resulted in the hauling down of the Spanish flag and raising of the Stars and Stripes on the Nebraska-Kansas plains, constitution an important patriotic event in American history, which together with stories of the Pawnee people on the Republican river should be marked and preserved for future historical records of the great plains.