

Transcribed from volume II of *Kansas: a cyclopedia of state history, embracing events, institutions, industries, counties, cities, towns, prominent persons, etc.* ... / with a supplementary volume devoted to selected personal history and reminiscence. Standard Pub. Co. Chicago : 1912. 3 v. in 4. : front., ill., ports.; 28 cm. Vols. I-II edited by Frank W. Blackmar. Transcribed July 2002 by Carolyn Ward.

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**Quivira.**—As early as 1530 the Spanish authorities in Mexico heard reports of the "Seven Cities of Cibola," which were reputed to be exceedingly opulent, but it was not until ten years later that any systematic attempt was made to find them and exploit their wealth. The Coronado expedition (q. v.) was sent out from New Spain for that purpose in 1540, and while in winter quarters near the present city of Albuquerque, N. M., Coronado learned from an Indian slave of a province teeming with wealth somewhere in the interior. This province subsequently became known as Quivira. There is some question as to whether the name "Quivira" is of Indian origin. Shea suggests that the original name might have been "Quebira," from the Arabic word "quebir"—meaning great—and that it was probably first used by the survivors of the Narvaez expedition who found their way to Mexico in the spring of 1536.

The province of Quivira has been claimed by nearly every state in the Missouri valley, and it is only within the last twenty-five years that it has been given anything like a definite location by archaeologists. Acting upon the information received from the Indian, Coronado set out in April, 1541, for the province, which he finally reached after wandering over the plains for more than two months. As the season began to wane he returned to his quarters of the preceding winter, where on Oct. 20 he wrote to the king of Spain a letter, in which he said:

"The province of Quivira is 950 leagues from Mexico. Where I reached it is in the 40th degree. The country itself is the best I have ever seen for producing all the products of Spain, for besides the land itself being very fat and black and being well watered by the rivulets and springs and rivers, I found prunes like those of Spain, and nuts, and very good sweet grapes and mulberries. . . . I had been told that the houses were made of stone and were several storied; they are only of straw, and the inhabitants are as savage as any that I have seen. They have no clothes, nor cotton to make them of; they simply tan the hides of the cows which they hunt, and which pasture around their village and in the neighborhood of a large river. They eat their meat raw like the Querechos and Tejas, and are enemies to one another and war among one another. All these men look alike. The inhabitants of Quivira are the best of hunters and they plant maize."

Jaramillo's account confirms the description given by Coronado and says the only metal found in Quivira consisted of some iron pyrites and a few pieces of copper. As the main object of the visit was to find gold and silver, the disappointment of the Spaniards can be readily imagined.

The "prunes" mentioned by Coronado were no doubt the wild plums that abound along the streams in central and western Kansas; the "fat," black and well watered land answers the description of the soil about the junction of the Smoky Hill and Republican rivers; and the statement that Quivira was in the 40th degree bears out the belief that the ancient province was somewhere in central or northeastern Kansas, as the northern boundary of the state is the 40th parallel of north latitude. Castaneda, the historian of the expedition, bears out the description of the houses given by Coronado. He says: "The houses are round, without a wall, and they have one story like a loft, under the roof, where they sleep and keep their belongings. The roofs are of straw."

From the fact that the people lived in straw houses, or at least in huts with roofs of straw, Hodge identifies the inhabitants of Quivira as the Wichita Indians, which tribe, of all the plains Indians, were

accustomed to thatch their huts with straw.

Bandelier, in his "Gilded Man," after a careful analysis of the various accounts of Quivira, sums up the results of his research as follows: "I have shown that Quivira was in central Kansas, in the region of Great Bend and Newton, and a little north of there. It is also clear that the name appertained to a roving Indian tribe, and not to a geographical district. Hence, when I say that Coronado's Quivira was there, the identification is good for the year 1541, and not for a later time. The tribe wandered with the bison, and with the tribe the name also went hither and thither."

If Bandelier is correct in his deductions, as he probably is, the fact that the name wandered with the tribe may account for the various locations of the province of Quivira, though, as he shows, the Quivira visited by Coronado in 1541 was unquestionably somewhere within the present limits of the State of Kansas. Bandelier also says: "With the return to Mexico of the little army that Coronado commanded, the name of Cibola lost its fascination. But Quivira continued to exercise an unperceived influence on the imagination of men. Notwithstanding, or perhaps because Coronado had told the unadorned truth concerning the situation and conditions of the place, the world presumed that he was mistaken, and insisted on continuing the search for it."

Although many of the Spaniards in Mexico held to the view that vast wealth was to be found in Quivira, no attempt was made to visit the province for more than half a century after the expedition of Coronado. Then came the expedition of Bonilla in 1595 and Oñate in 1601 (q. v.), but both these were undertaken without adequate preparations and conducted in such a lax and desultory manner that nothing was accomplished.

After the insurrection of 1680 and the reconquest of New Mexico by Diego de Vargas in 1692-94 the name Quivira, as applied to an interior province or the tribe inhabiting it, seems to have been lost. But the recollection of the golden stories was not allowed to perish, and the myth was transferred to some ruins in what is now Socorro county, N. M., about 150 miles south of Santa Fe, which ruins became popularly known as "La Gran Quivira." To quote again from Bandelier: "The treasure city had lain in ruins since the insurrection of 1680; but its treasures were supposed to be buried in the neighborhood, for it was said there had once been a wealthy mission there, and the priests had buried and hidden the vessels of the church. Thus the Indian kingdom of Quivira of 'the Turk' was metamorphosed in the course of two centuries into an opulent Indian mission, and its vessels of gold and silver into a church service. But where Quivira should be looked for was forgotten."

As previously stated it is only within comparative recent years that efforts have been made to ascertain the location of the lost Quivira. The translation of Castaneda's narrative of the Coronado expedition by Winship; the work of the Hemenway archaeological expedition; the investigations and researches of Simpson, Hodge and others, who have studied and carefully compared the directions and distances given in the relations concerning the movements of Coronado, all point to the region between the Arkansas and Kansas rivers as the site of the ancient Indian province.

Jacob V. Brower, an archaeologist of St. Paul, Minn., made three trips to Kansas for the purpose of determining if possible the location of the original Quivira. The first of these trips was made in Nov., 1896, the second in March, 1897, and the third in March, 1898. Mr. Brower explored the valleys of the Kansas and Smoky Hill rivers from the mouth of Mill creek in Wabaunsee county to Lyon creek in Dickinson county, and also the valleys of the Arkansas in the vicinity of Great Bend. Through the testimony of stone implements—a method that has been criticised as untrustworthy—he determined the location of 6 ancient villages. Of these 11 were in Pottawatomie county, 10 in Wabaunsee, 11 in Riley, 20 in Geary, 4 in Dickinson, 6 in McPherson, and 1 each in Marion, Rice and Barton. On Oct. 29, 1901, the Quivira Historical society was organized at Alma, the county seat of Wabaunsee county, with the

following officers: President, Jacob V. Brower of St. Paul, Minn.; vice-president, Elmer E. Blackman of Lincoln, Neb.; secretary, Edward A. Kilian of Alma; chairman of the executive committee, John T. Keagy of Alma. One of the principal objects of the society was to erect monuments marking certain historical sites, and on Aug. 12, 1902, the first of these monuments was unveiled at Logan Grove, near Junction City. The monument was in the form of an obelisk, some 17 feet in height, and bore the inscription: "Quivira and Harahey, discovered by Coronado 1541, Jaramillo, Padilla, Tatarax. Rediscovered by J. V. Brower 1896. Erected for Quivira Historical Society by Robert Henderson 1902. John T. Keagy, Chairman, Edward A. Kihan, Secretary. Kansas, U. S. A." The unveiling as attended by appropriate ceremonies, the Sixth field battery, K. N. G., firing a salute, and the Ninth artillery band furnishing the music. Monuments have also been erected in Dickinson, Riley and Wabaunsee counties.

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