

# ANNALS OF IOWA.

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## EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

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### THE GROUND BEAN AND BEAN MOUSE

We are publishing in this issue an unusually interesting article on "The Ground Bean and the Bean Mouse," by Dr. Melvin Randolph Gilmore, of the State Historical Society of North Dakota. It relates to a kind of vegetable food used by the Indians before the coming of the white people, to their manner of procuring the food, and to their mystical beliefs concerning a supreme power supplying their needs. It affords a glimpse into conditions here, especially along our wooded streams, in what was then an uncharted region, but a part of which is now our own Iowa. In a letter to the editor of the ANNALS Dr. Gilmore says "Strange that our people should have been in occupation of America for 300 years and never tried to even become acquainted with America, but on the contrary tried every way to thoroughly eradicate everything American until just recently, and most people are still trying to do that." Dr. Gilmore is doing much to help the new America to become better acquainted with the real America, the America as nature had fashioned it when it was found by our race a few short generations ago. His work on "Uses of Plants by Indians of the Missouri River Region," published in the Thirty-third Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, is a distinct contribution to that information.

As to the geographical distribution of the ground bean Dr. Gilmore says, "The range of the ground bean, and of its use for food by Indians, is from New Brunswick to Florida at the east, and from Manitoba to Louisiana on the west," and again, "the ground bean is native over all Iowa, \* \* \* \*. And wherever the plant was found it was used for food; so it was used over all Iowa. Every tribe having access to the ground beans used them, and that would be all the tribes in the plant's range." And again, "I think that the ground bean ought to be experimented with to find what possibilities it may have for cultivation."

Young Bear of the Musquakies, of Tama, tells us he is acquainted with the bean Doctor Gilmore describes, with the uses he imputes to it and with the practice of taking the beans from the winter store of the mice. He says also that his people never failed to substitute for the bean something to maintain mouse life.

Apropos of this subject we quote from "The History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition," by Elliott Coues, Vol. I, page 161, as follows: "We visited both the villages, and sat conversing with the chiefs for some time, during which they presented us with a bread made of corn and beans, also corn and beans boiled; and a large rich bean which they take from the mice of the prairie, which discover and collect it." This is in the language of Lewis and Clark, written under date of October 11, 1804, on page 103 of their original journal. Their camp that day was on the east side of the Missouri River, about twelve miles above where the Grand River empties into the Missouri from the west, or in the southwest part of what is now Campbell County, South Dakota.

#### J. D. EDMUNDSON CALLS ATTENTION TO INACCURACIES

Our friend, J. D. Edmundson, has called our attention to an apparent error in the January, 1921, edition of the ANNALS, in connection with our reprint of "Galland's Iowa Emigrant." Toward the end of that reprint there is included "An Act now in force in Iowa," (the date of publishing the Galland book was 1840) and at the end of the act occur the words, "Approved January 19, 1838." Now the first Territorial Assembly of Iowa Territory did not convene until November 12, 1838, so how could the act have been approved before the convening of the assembly? On investigation we find this particular act was enacted by the Territorial Legislature of Wisconsin, being cited as "Act No. 97, of the Territorial Legislature of 1837-38," and "received the governor's approval January 19, 1838." What afterward became Iowa was then a part of Wisconsin Territory, so that act became "in force" in what afterwards was Iowa. When Iowa Territory was formed the laws of Wisconsin Territory prevailed in Iowa so far as applicable, but when the first legislative as-

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