

every thing embraced in the field of inquiry. We hold that whoever was of Iowa birth or worked in Iowa was an Iowa worker and without a record of him and his work our account with Iowa effort is not closed.

So "feeling our way by a series of tentatives" to a sound and comprehensive foundation, we present Miss Marple's "Iowa Authors and Their Works; a Contribution toward a Bibliography." Through this warp the hands of others may weave the mass and color of a tapestry of Iowa Letters.

COALS THAT WERE FRANCE'S.

Of the cardinal tenets which modern civilizations hold, that which makes nations rank in power in accordance with their relative fuel reserves is nowhere so well exemplified as by some of the countries of Europe. France in particular has long felt the telling force of this great economic law. A hundred years after the momentous event she still publicly bemoans her separation from her distant, inaccessible wilderness on the North American continent west of the Mississippi river. For this act she still bitterly berates the great Napoleon for something he could in no way possibly have avoided. What is true today was not so evident a century before. What might be inexcusable folly now, then might have been, and indeed was, a bit of supreme wisdom.

A number of French journals have copied from the ANNALS a recent article on the discovery of coal in America and the Mississippi valley. One comment which appears in *La Chronique Industrielle*¹, one of the leading economic periodicals of the Old World, is of special interest, because of the fact that it reflects even to this late day the temper of the French people on their great loss. The article is sadly headed "We Have Had Great Coal Wealth."

The translation of this article based upon the one appearing a few months ago in the ANNALS is as follows:

We have spoken of the possibility of discovering in America coal supplies in which we are so deficient. We had them, alas;

¹Thirty-fifth Annee, No. 102, pp. 1-2, Paris, 1912.

for the gifts by Napoleon to America deprive us of inexhaustible coal deposits discovered by the French.

On this point in our colonial history little is known to us. In the valley of the Upper Mississippi the first positive mention of a combustible mineral in the form of coal appears to be that made by the French missionary Jesuits of the Assiniboine (Minnesota). In 1659, on the subject of the Poulak Tribes of the Assiniboine they make the following remark: "As wood is very small and scarce with them, nature has taught them to substitute coal and to cover their wigwams with skins." It is quite possible also that the Iowa Indians of the northern prairies, early made use of the deposits of lignite of the regions such as are found, for example, in Boone county, near the headwaters of the Des Moines river.

When La Salle, a Frenchman, established in 1680 Fort Crevecoeur on the Illinois river in the neighborhood where the present city of Peoria is located there were found and used large deposits of coal. Father Hennepin, another Frenchman, who was associated with La Salle, mentions in the journal of his times, the existence of coal at the same places. In an English edition of this map of the Upper Mississippi region the location of these deposits is clearly represented. That he was not in any way mistaken is amply demonstrated by subsequent developments.

In his letters relating to the natural productions found along the Illinois river, written several years later, La Salle also mentions the fact that coal exists at Creve-coeur. These letters were recently reprinted in Paris by Margry.

One other very early mention of coal in the Upper Mississippi valley is that of Le Gardeur de l' Isle, another Frenchman, who, in 1722 writes from Fort Chartres, near Kaskaskia, that he accompanied a Mister Renault to the Illinois river in order to search for mines of copper and coal.

The French early knew of the existence of coal which outcrops near the mouth of the Missouri river at a point called La Charbonniere. Nearly a century later, in 1805, Pike, when he commenced his famous trip to the sources of the Arkansas river passed by this place. He says: "Six miles below St. Charles, on the south side, in front of a village called Florissant is a hill of coal named by the French La Charbonniere. This is one solid formation which probably affords enough coal for the entire population of Louisiana."

Finally, in order to be complete, in Pennsylvania, about 1704, twenty years after the privilege of colonization was granted by Charles II to William Penn, anthracite was discovered in the Wyoming district. In 1766, twenty-five years later it was also found in the Lehigh valley. Coal in Virginia appears to have been

exploited for the first time near Richmond about 1750. From there it was shipped to Philadelphia, New York and Boston.

In conclusion, is it not curious to think that we have possessed all these great deposits of coal in the Upper Mississippi? Bonaparte dreamed of establishing a vast colonial empire, but the failure of the expedition to St. Domingo changed his plan, and he settled by selling Louisiana to the United States for 60 million francs (1803). The territory then ceded extended from the Mississippi river to the Pacific ocean; it comprises the states and territories of Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, Colorado, the Dakotas, Idaho, Utah, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming. Thus vanished all of the Congo, all of Morocco, all of the Tonkins of the world.

One does not doubt at this time the tremendous importance of the question of coal especially in a country where timber has been abundant.

We learn today of these facts from our colleague, Mr. Keyes, engineer of Des Moines, Iowa, and we tender him our sincere thanks for the interesting communication.

HOW LE MARS WAS NAMED.

Through the kindness of my wife's mother, Mrs. W. W. Walker, who was one of the party from whom the city of LeMars obtained its name, I am enabled to round out into completeness the story of the naming of that city, as given in that valuable work, "A History of the Origin of the Place Names connected with the Chicago & North Western and Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railways."

LeMars was platted in 1869. Its first railroad connection was built eastward from Sioux City to connect with the Iowa Falls and Sioux City Railroad, now part of the Illinois Central system. When the road was completed to the point above-mentioned, in June, 1870, its promoter, John I. Blair, arranged an excursion party which included a number of ladies.

On arriving at the eastern terminus of the road, Mr. Blair gallantly offered to let the ladies name the new town. The ladies caucused and were unable to agree upon a name. Mrs. Ford, a member of the party, then suggested that one be made from the initial letters of the ladies' Christian names. This was done, and from the jumble of initials two names were

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