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M E M O I R E S   O R I G I N A U X

The Relations between the Kiowa and the Crow Indians.

by Robert H. LOWIE (Berkeley).

The Kiowa, a Plains tribe intimately associated with the Comanche in historic times, have demonstrably occupied "contiguous parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas". Long considered a distinct stock, they have been plausibly connected with the Tanoan family by J.P. Harrington and grouped by Sapir with not only the Tanoans, but the Uto-Aztecs as well, forming with the Tanoans a branch of his "Aztec-Tanoan" stock. By these tokens, then, the Kiowa appear as a distinctly Southern Plains tribe (1).

However, a pioneer in Plains Indian ethnography, the late James Mooney, on the basis of Kiowa traditions recorded by him about sixty years ago, has advanced the view that the Kiowa originally dwelt in western Montana, near the Flathead Indians; that subsequently they moved east, encountering the Crow "probably about or before 1700"; that a very close intimacy was established by these two tribes and continued even "after the Kiowa had entirely removed from the north and established themselves on the Arkansas" (2). These views have been widely accepted by responsible ethnographers. Swanton and Hoxby (3), e.g., write as though the northern derivation of the Kiowa and their specifically close association with the Crow were firmly established.

To this crystallization of Mooney's conceptions into a dogma I take exception. If the traditions he reports have historic validity, I incline to Wissler's and Kroeber's interpretation that they refer to a temporary northward migration, preceded by southern residence and followed by a return to the south (4). Conversations with Professor Leslie Spier suggest that he essentially concurs in this interpretation. I should like to present some evidence derived mainly from my studies of the Crow.

If the intertribal bond was at one time as close as Mooney