

LETTER FROM REV. M. A. SHINE ON

THE MASSACRE OF THE SPANISH EXPEDITION

Plattsmouth, Nebr., July 5, 1923.

Dear Mr. Sheldon:

Being somewhat pressed for time, it has been impossible for me to give as much attention to Baron de Villiers Article, as I would wish.

However, having read the original French article, and your excellent and substantial translation of the same, I most certainly agree with you, that this article on the Villasur Expedition of 1720, is of great historical importance to Nebraska.

The three new documents, namely, the Leaf from the Spanish journal of the expedition; the letter of Governor Boisbriant, dated November 22, 1720; and the Mining Engineer Lallemand's letter of April 5, 1721, give us some new and contemporaneous evidence of the expedition.

Hitherto, the reports have been very conflicting and confusing, and the scene of the massacre has been variously located.

While I was inclined to follow the opinions of Prof. John B. Dunbar, and William Dunn, in favor of the North Platte location, after reading that Spanish Leaf, I am now convinced that the Baron de Villier's location conforms more closely to the Leaf's description, than does the North Platte, and consequently the scene of the massacre would be somewhere in the vicinity of the present Linwood, Nebr.

Various dates are given for the occurrence, and we know that Felipe de Tamaris, one of the soldiers that escaped the massacre, brought the news of the Spanish defeat to Santa Fe, on September 6, 1720. There were a few other survivors.

The Chaplain, who was slain, was Father Juan Minguetz, a Franciscan, who was stationed in Santa Fe in 1705; at Zuni, in 1706 and later at Nambe, Santa Cruz, and Santa Clara Missions in New Mexico.

The route of the expedition, was generally northeast, from Santa Fe to Jicarilla, (now in Conejos County, Colorado,) then to Cuartelejo, in Scott County, Kansas, and from there to the Jesus-Maria, or Platte river, a little southwest of the mouth of Prairie Creek.

It now appears that it was the Loup river that was named St. Lawrence in honor of that famous martyr, whose feast day falls on August tenth. Undoubtedly some Spanish documents will be found, that will throw more light on the event.

MICHAEL A. SHINE.