

white neighbors, deposited in mounds. Some of them tendered their services to guide me to works equally interesting to me, and less sacred to them. I accepted their offers on several occasions, and discovered that I gave no offence to any, in the excavation of such as they pointed out to me. After becoming somewhat familiar with some of them, I resolved to proceed up the river. Having provided myself with a small sail-boat and outfit for a tour through their territory, I set sail for the interior.

On my arrival at Cappili Bluff, I formed an acquaintance with a young chief of the De-co-ra family, who manifested some interest in my mission, and furnished me with an interpreter, and we proceeded on our way. On our arrival at Prairie la Cross, I learned that an aged Indian acquainted with the history of the mounds, whose name was De-coo-dah, a man of undoubted veracity, revered and respected by those that knew him, had arrived at the lodge of Wah-con De-co-ra, and would tarry some days to participate in the enjoyment of an annual festival. I resolved to seek an interview, and learning that the feast was to be held in the vicinity of Prairie la Cross, concluded to wait his arrival. I commenced the survey of some mounds in the neighborhood. De-coo-dah being informed that there was a white man making pictures of the mounds, immediately visited me, accompanied by Wah-con De-co-ra, whose curiosity became somewhat enlisted at seeing me survey, and delineate on paper, the mounds in their relative local position. From my notes, without the presence of the objects, I endeavored to convey to him an idea of the power of figures in giving distance, altitude, and position, but he did not seem to comprehend my meaning. De-coo-dah silently listened with deep and thoughtful interest, and soon realized their use and power. Addressing himself to De-co-ra, he remarked that those figures were signs that conveyed ideas in their various forms or shapes, designating difference in distance through their change in formation, and that their different significations could only be known by vocal instruction. He then gathered ten pebbles and laid them in a pile on the ground, and desired me to give the figure denoting 1. I did so. He laid one down, and called for the figure 2, and continued his line until he had laid all in a row, distant a few inches from each other. He then counted them, and beginning at the first, he pointed at the figure 1, and so continued to count, designating the figure that represented each number up to 10. He thus conveyed the idea of the use of figures