



# Dakota Grammar, Texts, and Ethnography (Classic Reprint)

*Stephen Return Riggs*

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Excerpt from *Dakota Grammar, Texts, and Ethnography*

The author's life among the Indians was spent chiefly with a single division of the Dakota, known as the Santee or Mdewakantonwan. A few of the Teton words in his dictionary were furnished by one of his sons, Rev. T. L. Riggs, but most of them were obtained from Rev. W. J. Cleveland. The author, moreover, knew very little about the languages of those cognate tribes that are not Dakota, such as the Ponka, Omaha, Kausa, Winnebago, etc., while I have lived among many of these tribes and have devoted considerable time to the comparison of most of the Siouan languages, having engaged in original investigation from time to time, as late as February, 1893, when I visited the Biloxi Indians in Louisiana.

In order, therefore, to furnish the readers of this volume with the latest information, and to give more fully than was possible in those footnotes for which I am responsible my reasons for hesitating to accept some of the author's conclusions, as well as evidence confirmatory of some of the author's statements this preface has been written.

In my notation of Dakota words, both in this preface and in the footnotes, the author's alphabet has been used, except where additional characters were needed; and such characters are described in the following section of this preface. But in recording the corresponding words in the cognate languages the alphabet used is that of the Bureau of Ethnology.

All footnotes followed by "S. R. R." were contributed by the author. Those furnished by his son, Rev. Alfred L. Riggs, are signed "A. L. R." "T. L. R." stands for Rev. T. L. Riggs, and "J. P. W." for Rev. J. P. Williamson. "J. O. D." marks those footnotes for which I am responsible.

The alphabet given by the author on pages 3 and 4 has no characters representing certain sounds heard in the Teton dialect of the Dakota and in some of the cognate languages. Besides these, there are other sounds, unknown in Teton and the other dialects of the Dakota, but common to the other languages of the Siouan family. These peculiar sounds and some additional ones which are described are given in the characters adopted by the Bureau of Ethnology. The authority for the Hidatsa words is Dr. Washington Matthews, U. S. Army.

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