

Weekly Chemawa American

VOL. 10.

MARCH 6, 1908.

NO. 37

Americas' Old Churches

Have Withstood the Ravages of Centuries.

A news item from Sante Fe says: The ancient Sante Fe Church, as it is called, is the oldest house of worship in the United States, according to the claim of the Christian Brothers, the Catholic order which has charge of the edifice. Brother David, who looks after the spiritual welfare of the parish, says that the records of the Christian Brothers show that the foundation of the Sante Fe church was laid in 1541. The next oldest church building in this country is the mission of San Xavier situated near Tucson, Ariz., in a Papago Indian settlement. There is a dispute as to whether the San Xavier mission was started in 1547, as is asserted by some, or at a later time. Coronado, who is said to have laid the cornerstone of the mission building was in Spain in 1547, and it is believed by those who have investigated the facts bearing on the subject that the

Sante Fe Church is ten or fifteen years older than the San Xavier mission building.

The construction of the Sante Fe edifice was slow work. The more expert artisans had to be brought all the way from Spain. Indians were forced to perform the hard manual labor of making the adobe bricks or blocks which were originally used in the walls and in carrying them to the places where laid. The walls of the building are three to five feet thick and that the sun-dried clay blocks were strong and serviceable is attested by the fact that they have withstood the ravages of the elements for nearly 400 years and are still in apparently as good condition as when they were placed in position.

The Supreme Court of the United States has taken a hand in the "selling-whiskey-to-Indians" industry, and decided that the laws of the United States take precedence over those of any State. Prior to this decision laws in a number of states in which Indian reservations were located have held that Indians on allotted lands were citizens and as such could not have their rights abridged. The Supreme Court decision takes the ground that an Indian is an Indian and as the unfavorable effects of the firewater on his constitution are proverbial, he will not be allowed to indulge.—Oregonian Editorial.