

and legends perfectly, exactly as they had been told to him. Then he was ready to tell his grandchildren and other young people about the history of their people. The history of the Indian peoples, then, was a history preserved as stories and traditions, and memorized and handed down from generation to generation. This kind of history is quite different from the kind of history recorded in books and other writings. Nevertheless the Indian kind of history, which we might call oral history, was as satisfactory to the Indian peoples as the European kind of history, which we might call written history, was to the white people. Both kinds of history call



Storytelling: The Indian kind of history, or oral history. Young people learn the history of their tribe through stories told by the elders.

attention to the past. Both kinds of history point out certain people and certain events as being somehow important and significant. Both kinds of history are interpretations of the past--not complete records of everything that ever happened. And both kinds of history have been used to instruct the younger generation, on the principle that by knowing something about the past, it is possible to know better what to do in the future.

There is one important difference between the Indian's oral history and the European's written history which should be pointed out. The Indian kind of history was not much concerned with exact time. The Indian storytellers talked about things that happened long ago, or way back, or in the beginning. There was no attention paid to keeping track of how many years ago things happened. In this way the Indian stories of their past are similar to many of the stories in the Old Testament. The