

ADAM LE CLAIR, STORIESSUN DANCE CENTER POST (taped by Sylvester Warrior)

The story I am going to tell is a hand me down story. The story relates to the sun dance. This concerns a tree which had supernatural powers. A young man was out alone in a wooded area and came upon a tree that had four paths leading to it, north, south, east and west. There were carcasses of animals all dead at the paths of this tree, animals, birds and even bugs. So he went back to his people and elders and reported his findings. The people had some members to go see this great tree. They figured that God made this tree possible and have had the sun dance since. No matter whether on a hunt or any time when the blue plant or foliage of a certain plant turns blue, the time is ripe to put on the sun dance. When the Poncas were first brought down from their Quawpaw reservation they had dances at various places with no special name as the Allotment Act was not in force. During one of these dances a group of older members of the tribe gathered at the present tribal grounds north of the present town of Bliss or Marland, Oklahoma. The old men selected two young men to go in search of a tree to be used in the sun dance ceremony. One of the boys or a scout was sent in search of a certain tree about 20 feet in height. He ran to the timber dodging, falling and stalking as if looking for an enemy. When he found the tree he marked it with his hatchet or war club and returned to his elders to report that a suitable tree had been found. He comes back staggering and completely exhausted, falls down, and when he revives the men praise him and said it is well done. Which way is the tree facing and he said it is facing north. Then we will attack it from the south side to catch him unaware. We must treat it as a human being because it has miraculous powers. Then the tree was cut down and taken back to the camp.