

Informants: Mr. & Mrs. Sam Osborne, Pawnee

Interviewed by: Ramona Osborne

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(This is Ramona Osborne of the American Indian Institute. I am again talking with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Osborne. The area of discussion for this particular tape will evolve around the subject that I have heard quite often, in that the Pawnee Tribe were considered to be a very religious tribe. As a preliminary to this, my father will give just a brief run-down on the Pawnee Tribe, how at one time they were a very numerous tribe, bringing them right on down to the Pawnee Tribe as a whole, as it is today.)

PAWNEES A RELIGIOUS PEOPLE

The Pawnee Tribe consists of four confederated bands, namely Chaui, Kitkehahki, Pitahauerat, Skidi. The Pawnees were once a great people. They were very numerous. They were undisputed masters of a vast territory. To prove this, the Claims Commission of the United States Government recently, restored 23 million acres of land to the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma for a final settlement. This was for land ceded to the Government in the state of Nebraska. The Pawnees, in the early days, had everything the heart could desire. Their corn and their buffalo supplied them food, clothing, and shelter. They had weapons for war. They roamed over the country without hindrance. In peace, they were light-hearted and contented. In war, they were cunning, fierce and successful. Their name was a terror to their enemies. All this was in the past. Today, there are few in number and so, with new modes of living come new views of life, new motives, new sympathies, in a word, civilization. To earn a living by toil, to wrest subsistence from the earth is a problem confronting the Pawnees today. The memories of other days, of old ceremonies and of old heroes is with the elders of the tribe, those ancient braves whose lives bring together the past and the present. The Pawnees were always a religious tribe. Prayers were first in every act or deed. Prayer was first offered before going on a warpath.