

WOOLSEY WALKING SKY STORY (EARLY WANDERINGS OF PONCA)

What I am going to tell, is a hand me down story of my people--the Poncas. In 1908 an old Ponca man by the name of Standing Elk told me this story: Someday you may want to tell a story so in their wanderings they came to the Ohio River and through pipestone quarries of Minnesota. Then to the start of the Missouri River where the river starts and can be crossed, by stepping over it without wading. Then on west to the Rocky Mountains where they met the Arapahoes, then south till they came to a mountain that was so high that it seemed to reach the sky, which must have been Pike's Peak. Then on east into the plains where they met and saw a tribe of Indians which they surrounded and was going to wipe out but after consultation they decided to stop their slaughter and let live. Then they came back to the Missouri and met another bunch which were the Omahas. They made them move to another part of the Country as the land suited their needs--with plenty of game and good soil for cultivation. The Ponca Tribe was very large at this time, there were three rings in a circle. There were so many people, that sometimes the people did not know the other half of the tribe like the white men of today. They were a powerful tribe in combat or war. They had their own police force and the people listened to what the leaders said and lived by rules. The people lived and let live. Black measles and cholera hit the people and they died like flies, nearly wiping out the whole tribe. This is what was told to me as a young boy by an elder member of the tribe.