

Well, over there when they first start--on that right hand side, facing east--where they're camped, they don't close the circle right there (the camp circle) because the ceremonial dance is supposed to be left open. Some of them, they do something toward the east and nobody wants to be hit by something. They want to kind of keep it open. And so it starts from this other side--at the right hand side on the end. And they start singing there. And before they start singing, this man that is giving that--let's see--how would you say it? Well, he's the only one that's got a right to--to work on the drum. To prepare it for this all night dance. He gets down on his knees. Or he can just squat down. And he'll stand this drum over here. And right beside the drum he clears the ground with his hands. It's supposed to be bare ground. And he clears that ground. And after he clears that ground, well, he gets his hands flat on this where he's cleared it, and then he erases that drum maybe four times. See, this drum has been used in many different ways, and maybe ceremonial purposes. Maybe he's erasing everything on that. So maybe they're purifying it, for this clan. Well, he does it four times. And then he picks it up and these singers, they already be sitting in a circle. He'll pick it up and go give it to them, and then they'll start singing. That's the way it starts out. And it was my father that did that.

(Did he own the drum, too?)

No, he never did own a drum.

(Who owned the drum?)

Just whoever had money to buy a drum so that he would have a drum!

(Was it always some member of a clan that owned a drum?)

No. It wasn't like that. The Poncas have ways like that. Certain