



2014 Chief Standing Bear Essay Winner

"There is a road in the hearts of all of us, hidden and seldom traveled." – Chief Standing Bear

Chief Standing Bear was a great individual. He was born in 1829 and died in 1908. He became a great leader for the Ponca tribe. Sadly he went through the terrible death of his son, due to harsh weather and his burial became an adventure.

Ensuring his burial was in his homeland was important to him. In January 1879, Standing Bear and his followers abandoned the Indian Territory to accomplish it. Oh the way to their ancestral homeland, Standing Bear and his followers got captured and taken to Fort Omaha, Nebraska.

In the spring of 1879, a journalist interviewed him and published a story that grasped many of the public's attention. Because of this, many lawyers tried to prevent Standing Bear from going back to Indian Territory.

It is said the story explained why the tribe was divided. The majority of the Southern Ponca went to the Indian Territory, but Chief Standing Bear and his followers returned to Nebraska and became the Northern Ponca. 88 years after his death, a tall bronze statute reminds us of this leader today.

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