

# Example of research paper on pawnee indians

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



## **Introduction**

The Pawnee Indians is a group of people belonging to the Caddoan family. Before coming into contact with the Europeans, these people are said to have resided in what is currently Texas. However, when the Spanish came to North America, the Pawnees had settled in what is now Nebraska, in Platte River. Contrary to other Indians who lived in Plains, who were wanderers, the Pawnees Indians lived in fixed villages. These people did not engage in fighting with the United States army in the course of the 19th century invasion of the Great Plains but rather, they worked together with the U. S soldiers. Working together with the U. S army enabled them to contribute significantly towards realization of peace. Moreover, the Pawnee Indians played a very important role of contributing towards the growth of social institutions and religious rituals which formed a quite significant part in the Plains Indians' life. In addition, through their farming activities, they were able to supply the surrounding communities with various essential commodities including food to sustain them. To this day, the Pawnee Indians are still united and proud of their past and they engage in holding various celebrations each year in remembrance of their past. At some point in time the population of these people decreased to almost 600 people at the start of the 20th century but in the current day, their numbers have increased substantially. This paper is going to look at the history of Pawnees Indians. Despite the fact that the Pawnee Indians have a history that seem to be one of failure, through their unity and working together, they made important contributions in history and those living in the current day are proud of their past.

## **The History of the Pawnees Indians**

Hyde points out that, looking at the history of the Pawnees as well as that of their Caddoan kindred that lived in the South; one is amazed with the broad divergence of these people from the “ type, spirit and lifestyle of such northern Plains tribes like the Cheyennes and Teton Sioux” 1. Even if there is evidence that the Cheyennes as well as the Sioux lived a life in which they were settled before they moved to the Plains, beginning from the time they appeared in that area, they were nomads; engaging in war as a way of life, and generally attaining success from it, holding their people together, going through over two hundred years of battling with their spirit and their population possibly increased<sup>2</sup>.

The Pawnee Indians usually lived a “ semi-sedentary” life, living in fixed villages and farming. Basing on culture, these people had, in all aspects, approached a development stage that was higher as compared to the Cheyennes; “ yet in the same centuries and in the same region that witnessed the growing strength of these tribes, the Caddoans lost their people and their land” 3. A large number of their tribes became extinct. The relatively highly-developed religious as well as political organization of the Caddoans was clearly not a source of power at the time they engaged in any war, but it was instead a source of weakness and division among them. Living in the permanent villages and growing crops, the Caddoans had turned out to be accustomed to a living standard that was higher than anything else that was known among the nomadic tribes that lived in the Plains; but at the time of war, the Caddoan villages in most cases proved to be just death-traps for those who lived there. These villages were fixed

targets and were areas of which the nomadic tribes were aware that they would hit upon the Caddoans at particular seasons in the course of the year when they were not prepared<sup>4</sup>.

The Pawnees learned at an early time the knowledge of making powerful villages on high ground which could be protected and in the current day, the Pawnees groups are the only remarkable groups of the Caddoan Indians that are still there<sup>5</sup>. It is pointed out that the introduction of such diseases as small pox and cholera among other diseases by the white people, in the latter part of the 18th century, brought in terrible devastation in the Pawnees villages; however, these tribes were in a position to maintain togetherness among their people and they were able to hold against all the efforts undertaken by enemies to ensure their destruction<sup>6</sup>.

The Pawnees engaged in the destruction of the Spanish expedition which was undertaken in their lands in Nebraska in the year 1720; and later in time, they engaged in sending a war party in to New Mexico once in a while and came home with rich loot that was seized from the Spanish caravan they had taken into custody while on their way. However, this tribe did not have much success in its efforts to stage resistance against the Americans to the extent of open battle. In the course of the 1860s, their fighters devotedly enrolled in the Pawnee Scouts in order to help the troops in battling with the Cheyennes and Sioux; and having suitable arms and the right leadership, they did not lose in a battle and built up a good reputation for skill and bravery. Through this, they played a great role in bringing peace. It is only unfortunate that after bringing peace, they were abandoned by the

government and were killed by the Sioux who were given the firearms that they received as peace gifts from the government. The firearms were given to be used in hunting buffalo but they were instead utilized in fighting against other tribes and among these were the Pawnees who, unlucky enough, were not similarly armed. However, the Pawnees warriors were very courageous men and had great endurance. Even if their enemies outnumbered them and had superior weapons, they fought them fearlessly. This tribe remained united and has been able to still exist to this day<sup>7</sup>. The Pawnee Indians reluctantly gave up their lands to the U. S Government within the period starting from 1833 up to the year 1872. The shifting from Nebraska to what, in the present day, is Pawnee County was concluded in the year 1875.

It is pointed out that the Pawnees' story may look as if it is one of failure following several battles that they lost; however, there are various aspects in the history of this tribe which make up for this perceptible defeat. In any case, each and every Indian tribe eventually faced defeat, and in summing up, other issues must be put into consideration other than plain fighting. For instance, it should be pointed out that it was the Pawnees who offered to the Indian race " that beautiful ceremony of the Calumet of Peace, and this tribe contributed abundantly to the growth of social institutions and religious rituals that formed so important a part in the life of the Indians of the Plains"

8. Moving in the northern direction through the " slow-moving" centuries, these people cultivated land and set up big settlements, beginning from the eastern Oklahoma all the way to Dakota through Nebraska as well as Kansas. The Pawnees engaged in supplying the nomadic tribes as well as pioneer

settlers and white traders, with such commodities as tobacco, vegetables and maize. Even to this day, some of the “hardy Pawnee’ seed varieties that are suitable for planting in the semi-arid areas, are still used by farmers. Today, the ‘Pawnees Nation’ has set up the seed project known as the “Pawnee Seed Preservation Project” 9. This project is a “grassroots effort designed to bring back the ancestral and historic seeds for a future ‘Traditional Food Economy Impact’ on the local community” 10. These people currently engage in holding various ceremonies in the course of the year meant to remember their past. This is an indication that the Pawnee are proud of their past.

## **Conclusion**

The history of the Pawnees Indians can be traced back before the 17th century. This is an important group of people of the Caddoan family, basing on the activities they engaged in. They were different from other tribes in that they lived in fixed villages and did not lead a nomadic life. They maintained togetherness and took pride in this since this enabled them not to be destroyed completely and they are still there to this day. The Pawnees warriors were courageous people and fought fearlessly regardless of the number and strength of the enemies attacking them. This was a source of pride for the people of this tribe. Pawnees groups are the only remarkable groups of the Caddoan Indians that still exist. Working together with the U. S forces enabled them to build up a good reputation for skill and bravery and contributed towards realization of peace. These people played a very important role in that they are the ones who greatly made contribution to the growth and development of social institutions and religious rituals that made

up a very vital part in the Plains Indians' life. They supplied the wandering tribes as well as pioneer settlers and white traders, with various commodities. To this day, the Pawnee Indians are still united and proud of their past and they engage in holding various celebrations each year in remembrance of their past. These people serve as a role model to any small tribe that is prone to extinction and they have shown that working together and remaining united is a great source of strength and can enable any group of people to continue existing.

Chaticks Si Chaticks, Pawnee Indian Veterans 64th Annual homecoming.

Official Publication of the Pawnee Nation, August 2010.

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