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Six Pawnee Crania: Historical and Contemporary Issues Associated with the Massacre and Decapitation of Pawnee Indians in 1869

JAMES RIDING IN

INTRODUCTION

Gaining equal burial protection under the law is a great concern of American Indians. The loss of this fundamental human right and the theft of tens of thousands, if not millions, of native bodies comprise only one segment of a larger pattern of mistreatment that has occurred simultaneously with forced removals, coercive assimilation, and genocide. While depriving Indians of burial rights, white society has jealously guarded its own dead through the statutory process. Until the 1970s, when growing opposition among Indians and other concerned individuals began to curb grave desecrations through the enactment of laws, many non-Indians saw nothing wrong with the practice of taking bodies and burial offerings from Indian cemeteries for scholarly study and museum display. This attitude was deeply rooted in the American past, a residual from an era of racial arrogance and ruthless territorial expansion.[1] Yet a life story—complete with birth, kinship ties, societal roles, individual aspirations, and death—is connected with each Indian remain, regardless of whether it has been disinterred or lies within the earth. This is one of the reasons

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why most Indians view deceased bodies as representing human life, not as scientific data to be exploited for profit and professional development.

This study emanates from the Pawnee reburial movement, a very successful grass-roots initiative aimed at retrieving the remains of hundreds of tribal ancestors taken without permission. Its intentions are several and varied but closely interrelated. It takes a broad look at the nature of Indian-white relations in the late 1860s in the Central Plains and the nation as a whole in an attempt to understand why United States soldiers and Kansas settlers attacked, killed, and decapitated six Pawnee in 1869 near Mulberry Creek. It also probes the changing intellectual and racial temperament of the country, showing that a correlation exists between public perception and social policy. Rather than focusing narrowly on just the six crania and specific points of ethics, morality, and law, it strives to show what the deaths of these individuals mean to the Pawnee, both then and now. Finally, it introduces some of the historical and contemporary actors in the unfolding chain of events related to the Mulberry Creek Massacre and other infringements against deceased Pawnee Indians. Although the information presented here pertains primarily to one tribe, this paper illuminates further the nature of Indian-white relations from the 1860s to the present.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY INDIAN-WHITE RELATIONS

Racism

To understand the milieu in which the killings and decapitations occurred, we need to discuss the context of nineteenth-century Indian-white relations. The issues that precipitated the attack—land, native rights, and cultural diversity—first surfaced during the mid-1850s, shortly after white settlers moved into the Central Plains, a geographical region that encompassed the ancestral Pawnee homeland. On 29 January 1869, a party of fourteen Pawnee men were attacked and slaughtered while traveling through Ellsworth County, an area that had formerly belonged to their people. Animosity, bigotry, and racism toward Indians thrived among the incoming white settlers who were occupying Indian land. Kansas newspaper editors, politicians, and settlers viewed

Indians as subhuman creatures who not only deterred larger numbers of homesteaders from entering the state but endangered the lives of those who were already there as well. Most Kansans wanted to create an environment free of Indians. To achieve this objective, they developed two fundamental strategies. They launched a massive propaganda campaign in newspapers and public addresses depicting Indians as murderous, barbaric, and untrustworthy savages. They also acted out their aggression, using violence to drive Indians from the state.[2]

Some Kansans endorsed removal as a means of resolving the "Indian problem," while others advocated a military solution. In August 1868, the *Kansas State Record* expressed this latter sentiment: "We only hope that Governor [Samuel] Crawford will put himself at the head of a band of our western men, follow the Indians to their homes, and do his work *à la Chivington*."[3] Several years earlier, the *Junction City Union*, seeing extermination as a viable option to ending the "Indian problem," had advised Major General [W. F.] Cloud, the commander of the state militia, not to fear criticism for giving "wild" Indians in the state a "Sand Creek whipping."[4]

State politicians generally shared the attitudes and opinions of their constituents. Crawford's Indian policy from 1865 to 1868 reflected elements of both perspectives. He advocated the suppression of Indian uprisings with military force, the creation of a state militia to fight Indians, the driving of "wild" Indians from the state, and the removal of reservation tribes in eastern Kansas (who had been located there with the promise that the land would be theirs forever). The Republican state convention issued a similar proclamation in 1868: "We demand in the name of our frontier settlers, that the uncivilized Indians be driven from the state, and the civilized tribes be speedily removed to the Indian country."[5] Not only did state legislators memorialize Congress for the removal of Indians and more military protection, but Kansas delegates in both houses of Congress also introduced measures calling for the same ends.[6]

White Kansans did have a need for protection. Indians fought defensive wars to preserve their way of life and territorial holdings, but whites generally distorted the picture, casting themselves as the innocent victims of uncontrollable native aggression. Numerous clashes between them and the Cheyenne, Kiowa, Comanche, Sioux, and Pawnee had erupted in the 1860s. Some bloody interracial encounters had occurred in 1868 near the site of the Mulberry Creek Massacre, in Ellsworth County, where the six

Pawnee crania were obtained. In 1869, the Kansas legislature awarded several citizens a total of $58,944.34 in damages perpetrated by Indians in 1867–68. During this period, the Pawnee allegedly committed at least fifteen acts of aggression against white property. This violence heightened white anxiety, fear, and hatred of Indians.[7]

Blending Scientific Racism and the Frontier Mentality

Convinced of the correctness of their position, some settlers applauded the findings of research in human intelligence. During the early 1800s, phrenologists and craniologists conducted studies using human crania. After pouring sand into skulls, taking measurements, and noting the angle of facial bone structures, they offered conclusions grounded in racist stereotypes that Indians were mentally and culturally inferior to whites. These assertions had profound implications affecting federal and state Indian policy. In 1854, J. C. Nott used political terms to summarize the latest theories advanced by his colleagues: "Certain savage types can neither be civilized or domesticated. The *Barbarous* races of America (excluding the Toltecs) although nearly as low in intellect as the Negro races, are essentially untameable. Not merely have all attempts to civilize them failed, but also every endeavor to enslave them. Our Indian tribes submit to extermination, rather than wear the yoke under which our Negro slaves fatten and multiply."[8]

It should not come as a surprise that contemporaneous newspapers echoed identical themes.[9] An 1873 edition of the *Omaha Republican* reported to its readers that "[i]t is this savage, beastly spirit that always remains in an Indian's breast that so discourages the influence of civilization and Christianity."[10] Several weeks later, a published letter proclaimed that "[i]nstances are recorded where the most careful attention had been paid to the education of both males and females, and a single day's contact with the wild tribes seemed to destroy the whole influence as dew before the sun. The best educated Indians, as a rule, are the lowest, dirtiest, filthiest of the band. There may be, and are, exceptions, but this is the established rule."[11]

In this intellectual and social atmosphere, the surgeon general's office issued, in 1868, a memorandum ordering army field surgeons to collect Indian crania for scientific study. It noted that "a craniological collection was commenced last year at the Army

Medical Museum, and that it already has 143 specimens of skulls . . . to aid the progress of anthropological science by obtaining measurements of a large number of skulls of the aboriginal races of North America." The memorandum particularly urged "medical officers stationed in the Indian country or in the vicinity of ancient Indian mounds or cemeteries in the Mississippi Valley or the Atlantic region" to become involved in gathering human remains.[12] In the past, such noted civilian phrenologists as Samuel G. Morton, regarded as the father of physical anthropology in America, had used military personnel to acquire Indian remains because of the geographic proximity of army posts to Indian battle sites and cemeteries. In fact, army skull collecting had begun in 1864 at the Sand Creek Massacre, when soldiers beheaded a number of Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa corpses. The 1868 memorandum led to the decapitation of six of the men killed at Mulberry Creek.[13]

Although craniometry ultimately failed to achieve its objective, studies of this type stimulated and gave rise to the development of physical anthropology, a discipline that has thrived on accumulating and retaining large inventories of human remains.[14] Since white society had deemed that burial protection laws excluded natives, scholars soon perceived Indian bodies as empirical data belonging exclusively to the realm of science, rather than to the tribes and next of kin.[15]

THE MULBERRY CREEK KILLINGS AND DECAPITATIONS

The Massacre

If the Mulberry Creek Massacre victims followed the usual Pawnee route, they probably departed their Nebraska reservation on foot about 20 January, entered Kansas in Jewel County, and proceeded southward. Pawnee parties of this nature customarily traveled light, carrying bows and arrows, light rifles, extra moccasins, lariats, and packs containing dried meat. Besides eating provisions brought from home, they hunted game or asked white homesteaders along the way for food.[16] The attack occurred nine days later, during a visitation at a farm near Mulberry Creek in Ellsworth County.

Pawnee and white representatives offered conflicting versions

of the massacre. While the latter claimed that the deaths were justifiable, the former charged that the men had been attacked without provocation. The Pawnee asserted that a party of fourteen Pawnee had set out from the Nebraska reservation to trade with southern tribes. The army and settlers said that the Pawnee had entered Kansas to raid, loot, and plunder. The Indians claimed that the soldiers opened fire on them without provocation; the army countered that the victims had shot the first rounds. About the only thing that is certain is that two soldiers were wounded and eight or nine Pawnee died in a hail of bullets on that cold January day, including one who had been captured by the settlers and killed while "trying to escape." Settlers transported another wounded Pawnee to Fort Harker, where he was placed under the medical care of surgeon B. E. Fryer, an active procurer of Indian crania. The wounded man recovered, but, for fear that local settlers would kill him, army authorities recommended that he be transferred to and freed from another post. When and where this release occurred remains uncertain.[17]

Ethics, Decapitations, and Skull Doctors

Five men apparently survived the carnage and escaped, losing their winter clothing in the process. Traveling about for several days in freezing temperatures to protect and hide the bodies of their fallen friends from the soldiers, they received severe cases of frostbite. After burying all but one of their dead over a wide area in central Kansas, the survivors returned home and told their leaders about the massacre. Three of them apparently died from the effects of exposure within a short period of time.[18] Counting these deaths, possibly twelve Pawnee men died as a result of the attack.

Fryer dispatched a civilian from Fort Harker to the massacre scene on 30 January to sever the victims' heads. He found only one of the corpses and took its cranium, but Pawnee survivors in the area prevented him from obtaining the others. A blizzard set in that day, enabling the survivors to scatter the other remains over a wide area. As temperatures warmed, Fryer resumed the search. Fryer's apologetic correspondence of 12 February to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel George A. Otis, an Army Medical Museum (AMM) curator, explains the reasons for the delay in procuring the Pawnee skulls:

> I had already obtained for the [Army Medical] museum the skull of one of the Pawnees killed in the fight you speak of, [and] would have had all had it not been that immediately after the engagement, the Indians lurked about their dead [and] watched them so closely that the guide I sent out was unable to secure but the one. Until within a day or two the snow has prevented a further attempt. Yesterday I sent a scout who knows the spot and [I] think I can get at least two more crania—that number being reported to me as left unburied by the Pawnees, and it may be that if the remaining five (eight not seven were killed) are buried or have been hid near where the fight took place—about twenty miles from here, I can, after a time, obtain all. I shall certainly use every effort.[19]

Either Fryer or civilian surrogates scoured the countryside over the next several weeks looking for the hidden bodies. On 11 March, Fryer shipped twenty-six Indian crania to Washington, including six Pawnee from the Mulberry Creek Massacre, three Cheyenne, one Towantkeys [*sic*], two Kechi [*sic*], one Seneca, one unknown, one Kaw, three Caddo, six Wichita, and two Osage. Gloating over his contributions to science, he praised the condition of the skulls: "[S]ix [are] Pawnees four of them excellent specimens, two were injured a good deal by the soldiers, who shot into the bodies and heads several times after the fight in which these Indians were killed, was ended."[20]

Processing "fresh" Indian remains for shipment to Washington required a considerable amount of expertise and work. One contributor described his method of treating the head of a recently slain Kiowa Indian: "[H]is scalp and the soft parts of the face and neck were carefully dissected up from the skull, atlas and axis, and these were subsequently boiled and cleaned for the Army Medical Museum. The skull was carefully cleaned and then steeped in solution of lime for 36 hours."[21] Fryer must have used a similar technique to prepare the six Pawnee crania.

Evidence shows no sign of collusion between Fryer and the soldiers. Rather, Fryer simply functioned as an independent conduit of Indian heads; apparently, he followed the surgeon general's order for professional reasons. That is, promotion in the post-Civil War era came slowly for most officers. His self-congratulatory correspondence draws a portrait of him as an indefatigable and fearless collector of Indian remains. About a year before the Mulberry Creek Massacre, on 5 February 1868, Fryer reported to Otis that he had spent six weeks searching for a Kaw (Kansa)

TABLE 1

B. E. Fryer's Record of Sites Where Army Personnel Found and Decapitated Six Pawnee Bodies in the Winter of 1869

Fryer's Number	Site of Decapitation
21	Ascher Creek, near Solomon River
22	Bank of Salina River, 21 miles northwest of Fort Harker
23	Near Fort Harker
24	From same place (near Fort Harker)
25	Mulberry Creek, Kansas, 20 miles northwest of Fort Harker
26	Killed in same action (20 miles northwest of Fort Harker)

Source: SI, NMNH, NAA, AMM, B2, F509-31, Fryer to Otis, 11 February 1869.

Indian grave. In another letter, Fryer presented himself as a man who was willing to risk instigating an Indian war if it would benefit scientific inquiry:

> A good deal of caution is required in obtaining anything from the graves of Indians, and it will have to be managed very carefully to prevent the Indians from finding out that the graves of their people have been disturbed—as this might be offered as an excuse (of course, a trifling one) for taking the "War Path" again—which is always *walked* each year, however, as soon as the grass is high enough for the ponies.[22]

Nonetheless, Fryer hired a scout to go among the Cheyenne and

Arapaho for the purpose of acquiring "the cranium—possibly the whole skeleton of one of the greatest Indian Warriors of the Plains, who died last Fall."[23] This was apparently a reference to Roman Nose, a famous Cheyenne war leader who was killed at Beecher's Island on 25 September 1868.[24] In Fryer's way of thinking, uncovering the remains of an important Indian figure, or at least promising to do so, might give him a competitive edge over others vying for rank.

Operating under military authority and without moral or ethical constraints, Fryer and many of his competitors aggressively collected Indian crania. From 1868 to 1872, Fryer shipped Otis at least forty-two human remains belonging to the Cheyenne, Wichita, Caddo, Osage, and Kansa tribes, among others.[25] Fryer obtained two more Pawnee skulls, sending the last one, a warrior killed on the Solomon River by local citizens, to the AMM in April 1872. Overall, AMM curators received several thousand Indian skulls.[26]

By the early 1870s, Otis had measured over eight hundred Indian crania. Reporting his findings to the National Academy of Sciences, he stated "[t]hat, judging from the capacity of the cranium, the American Indians must be assigned a lower position in the human scale than has been believed heretofore."[27] Subsequent craneometric research by other AMM curators, however, challenged Otis's work, placing Indians once again above African-Americans on the intelligence ladder.[28]

The Victims, Their Families, Their Tribe

Very little is known about the six Pawnee men whose lifeless bodies were beheaded in 1869. Apparently, no one recorded their names. Treating the remains as specimens of a lower life form, AMM personnel assigned each cranium an identification number—529, 530, 531, 550, 5550, and 555—and estimated their ages at 25, 20, 30, 35, 25, and 45, respectively. When the AMM transferred the first four remains to the Smithsonian Institution in 1898, Smithsonian curators gave them new numbers.[29]

AMM accession records, Pawnee agency correspondence, and Fort Harker reports contain the key for establishing the tribal affiliation of the deceased, but ethnohistorical sources provide a means for understanding the ramifications of the massacre in a Pawnee context. Unlike the whites, who saw the deaths of the men as a benefit to humankind, the chiefs expressed grief and outrage

TABLE 2

Numbers Used by B. E. Fryer, the AMM, and the NMNH to Identify the Six Pawnee Crania Severed by Army Personnel in the Winter of 1869

Fryer	Army Medical Museum/National Museum of Health and Medicine	National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian)
21	529	225092
22	5550	–
23	530	243537
24	531	225292
25	550	225291
26	5551	–

Sources:
Column 1: SI, NAA, NMNH, AMM, B2, F509-31, Fryer to Otis, 11 March 1869.
Column 2: George A. Otis, List of the Specimens in the Anatomical Section of the United States Army Medical Museum (Washington, DC: Army Medical Museum, 1880), p. 122.
Column 3: Douglas H. Ubelaker to Roger Echo-Hawk and James Riding In, 5 December 1989.

at the loss of their friends and relatives, who probably belonged to the Pitahawirata band, one of the four Pawnee subdivisions.[30]

We can assume that immediate family members and friends of the deceased expressed sorrow through mourning. Each family had lost a key provider, a young man at the prime of his life. This means that the victims' dependents—including widows, grand

parents, children, and other relatives—suffered economic hardship, possibly becoming the objects of charity. With white hunters on the brink of exterminating the buffalo and grasshoppers destroying crops periodically, the Pawnee suffered many economic hardships during the 1870s.[31] Tribal values stressed sharing and giving to the needy, but those families without male providers were especially at risk to deprivation.

These concerns prompted the chiefs to demand justice. They wanted compensation for the victims and punishment for the killers. Had other Indians committed the act, the Pawnee would have retaliated, but since the crime had been committed by United States soldiers, they refrained from seeking retribution. Given the racial climate of the time, the Pawnee could not risk killing whites, for fear of giving the settlers an excuse to start a racial war. Such an act could have resulted in the indiscriminate slaughter of Pawnee men, women, and children by soldiers and settlers.[32]

To understand the impact of these deaths on the Pawnee as a whole in social, political, and economic terms, we need briefly to consider the customary role of adult males. Pawnee culture held men in high esteem. As sons, brothers, fathers, uncles, and friends, they had a responsibility to provide for the welfare of family members, relatives, and the poor. Individuals who lived up to these ideals were elevated to the status of warriors. Some of the older victims of the massacre may have achieved this rank, meaning that through acts of bravery, wisdom, piety, and generosity, they had earned a right to participate in tribal council meetings. Within Pawnee culture, only men of proven ability, experience, and wisdom commanded enough respect to lead others. The forty-five-year-old man killed at Mulberry Creek may have served as the *kahiki*, or the leader of the expedition.[33]

Not only did Pawnee men have an obligation to protect their homeland, but they also had a spiritual mandate to risk their lives in defense of the Pawnee way of life. Statements given by the chiefs after the attack indicate that the Mulberry Creek victims previously had gone to war against their most troublesome enemies, the Sioux, in alliance with the United States government. Shortly before the attack, the Pawnee victims had shown a soldier some papers indicating that they had been discharged from the United States Army on 1 January, less than a month before.[34]

The Mulberry Creek Massacre is indicative of the peculiar relationship the Pawnee had with the United States. The tribe was trapped between Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho raiders on one

side and a tide of white American settlement on the other. In fact, by the late 1860s, homesteads surrounded their remaining lands, a small reservation situated on the Loup River. Unable to resolve the intertribal conflicts with diplomacy, they linked up militarily with the whites to fight foes who had disrupted their lives since the 1830s. Organized under white officers in special units called Pawnee Scouts, Pawnee men performed a variety of invaluable military duties, including guarding Union Pacific track layers, tracking enemy forces, and serving in combat.[35] George B. Grinnell, a student of Plains Indian warfare and culture, summed up the scouts' contributions: "They saved hundreds of lives and millions of dollars' worth of property, and in their campaigns wiped out in blood the memory of many an injury done to their race by the Sioux, the Cheyennes, the Arapahoes, and the Kiowas."[36]

After white authorities refused to compensate the Pawnee for the Mulberry Creek victims and to punish the killers, the chiefs had to weigh the benefits of the alliance. As a result, they stopped plans to recruit a company of scouts that summer. However, the chiefs allowed men to join in 1870 and 1876.[37]

The Legacy of Scientific Racism

Racist research, government-sponsored headhunting operations, and other acts of arrogance fostered a climate that encouraged many white citizens to commit inhumane acts against dead Indians, including grave robbing and body snatching. With Indians viewed as subhumans, whites rarely considered issues of ethics and fairness when it came to Indian rights. In the eyes of many whites, the desecration of Indian graves was not considered a legal or moral wrong. After the Pawnee fled Nebraska in the mid-1870s to escape growing white pressure, relic hunters, followed by amateur and professional archaeologists, descended on every Pawnee grave they could find, removing highly prized physical remains and burial objects, especially skulls and peace medals.[38]

In one instance occurring several years after removal, Art Jewell, from Wheaton College at Wheaton, Illinois, offered John Williamson ten dollars to show him the location of former head chief Pita Resaru's grave. Williamson refused, because Pita Resaru had been his friend. Jewel returned in a wagon several days later and told Williamson that he had located the burial site and taken a body, along with a Buchanan peace medal. Some fifty years later, however,

another grave looter found a peace medal and other burial objects that Williamson identified as having been buried with the chief.[39]

Grave desecrations and body thefts continued into the present century. B. E. Bengston, an amateur archaeologist, reported an incident involving the desecration of a Pawnee cemetery:

> One farmer told about a party of men who had opened some of the graves, that, on leaving in an automobile, they had exhibited an Indian skull on a stick at the same time yelling at the top of their voices so that they might be noticed at the places they passed. This must have been a party of "Smart Alecks" as no archaeologist would have acted in such a rude and undignified manner.[40]

Despite this assertion about respectability, grave desecrations, by Pawnee standards, were never dignified affairs. For the Pawnee, a grave could be opened only for "compelling religious purposes."[41] Asa T. Hill, a noted amateur archaeologist who excavated several Pawnee burial sites, once boasted that digging up Indian bodies on Sunday was his form of golf. In another incident, a Kansas farmer satisfied the public's morbid curiosity by charging tourists a fee to see the unearthed bodies of 146 Indians who were ancestral to the Pawnee, Wichita, and Arikara.[42]

From the 1930s to the 1960s, federally funded work relief programs and archaeological salvage expeditions disinterred more Pawnee bodies and innumerable burial objects. During the Great Depression, Work Projects Administration funds put thousands of unemployed Americans to work, including some who helped archaeologists dig up Indian village and burial sites in Nebraska. The River Basin Survey, a massive federally funded "salvage" operation, disrupted other Pawnee graves.[43]

THE PRESENT

Changing Racial Attitudes and Repatriation

Today, many Americans have become more attuned to living in a culturally diverse society, meaning that some of the old racial attitudes have been supplanted with more enlightened ideals and values. The shift from racist dogma proclaiming the innate superiority of Anglo-Saxon people to increased sensitivity has enabled

Indians to seek redress within the American political structure for some past wrongs. Equal burial protection under the law for Indians has been one area in which public perspectives have changed. Utilizing the mass media for communication, Indians have begun to educate the public about the abuses committed against Indians in the name of science. Newspapers demonstrate the transformation that has occurred in the public consciousness concerning the dead. Once a force used to mobilize opposition to native interests, editorialists more recently have written many position statements supporting Indian views regarding reburial and grave desecration. A Nebraska survey in 1989 shows the impact of these efforts. In that year, 69 percent of the people polled supported Pawnee efforts to recover tribal remains held by the Nebraska State Historical Society.[44]

Overwhelming public support encouraged the Nebraska legislature to enact Legislative Bill 340 (1989), enabling the Pawnee to recover and rebury nearly five hundred remains, along with associated burial objects, dug up by Asa Hill and others. In Kansas, state legislators assisted the Pawnee, Arikara, and Wichita tribes in closing down a burial pit that had become a tourist attraction.[45]

Contemporary Significance of the Six Crania

The six crania in Washington are important spiritual and historical symbols to the Pawnee. At the time of these men's deaths, they belonged to a cadre of men—Pawnee Scouts—who have emerged as important cultural figures for modern-day tribal members. Virtually every living Pawnee traces his or her ancestry back to at least one of the hundreds of men who served as scouts from 1864 to 1876. Drum groups sing specially composed songs at tribal war dances that honor the memory of the scouts. Many editions of the brochure that is published about the Pawnee Indian Homecoming, an annual gathering of the Pawnee and their friends during the first week in July, contain pictures of scouts and accounts of their deeds. During the 1970s, tribal veterans organized a heritage organization to carry out social and civic functions in the spirit of the scouts.

Furthermore, the scouts established a tradition of military service that continues today. Hundreds of Pawnee men and women, following in the footsteps of their ancestors, have served during the United States' times of need. Proudly wearing army,

navy, air force, coast guard, and marine uniforms, they have fought bravely in the Gulf War, Vietnam, Korea, World War II, World War I, and the Spanish-American War. Some never returned. Chief Petty Officer Martin Moshier, Jr. perished at sea on 4 November 1970 during the Vietnam conflict, while on a secret mission for the United States Navy. Marine PFC Thomas E. Littlesun died on 6 December 1968 in Vietnam. Five were fatally wounded during World War II. Others suffered grievously: Army sergeant Philip Gover lost an arm in Europe, and Alexander Mathews endured the Bataan Death March and several years of captivity. One Pawnee died during World War I. In all, Pawnee warriors have received numerous combat awards, including purple hearts, bronze stars, and distinguished service medals. A war mothers' association honors sons who served in the military.[46]

Status of the Six Remains

Ongoing attempts to secure the remains of military personnel left in Vietnam attests to the value American society places on recovering its fallen warriors. Persons involved in this effort only want to give the dead a proper burial and the families peace of mind. The same situation is true for the Pawnee. They want to bury the six crania, which have been in Washington since 1869, in the ancestral tribal homeland. Four of them now are at the Smithsonian Institution, while the other two are at the National Museum of Health and Medicine (NMHM), formerly the Army Medical Museum. In 1989, Congress passed the National Museum of the American Indian Act, enabling tribes such as the Pawnee to reclaim those remains in cases where a "preponderance of available evidence" exists.[47]

When tribal representatives and researchers asked for information regarding the Pawnee remains stored at the Smithsonian, Douglas H. Ubelaker, the head of the National Museum of Natural History's physical anthropology division, provided a listing but called into question the reliability of AMM documentation. Referring to the AMM records as sketchy, ambiguous, and leaving many questions unanswered, Ubelaker stated, "The remains sent in by B. E. Fryer are from south-central Kansas and were obtained in 1869. They are inferred to be Pawnee, but according to historic documents, the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Sioux were also raiding in the area."[48] The part about Indian activities in Kansas is

true, but Ubelaker in this instance took a stance that seems to violate the spirit of the 1989 federal legislation. Essentially, by dismissing records left by the person responsible for the decapitations or disinterments and for the identification of the deceased, Ubelaker makes it extremely difficult for the Pawnee and other tribes to reclaim their dead without expending large amounts of money for research. However, subsequent inquiry conducted on behalf of the Pawnee tribe by Native American Rights Fund (NARF) researchers found a substantial amount of evidence demonstrating that the Pawnee chiefs, army officials, Fryer, and others knew that soldiers and settlers had massacred a party of Pawnee in January 1869.[49]

Unlike the Smithsonian's stonewalling, NMHM personnel have taken a forthright position. Readily accepting the validity of AMM accession records and the right of the Pawnee to reclaim their dead, curators Gloria y Edynak and Paul S. Sledzik agreed to repatriate the two remains stored at the NMHM to the Pawnee tribe upon official request and to coordinate activities with the Smithsonian so that the other four scout remains, along with two others acquired by Fryer, would be returned together.[50] Although the six crania have not been returned yet, NMHM's cooperation is indicative of growing receptiveness among some elements of the scientific community to the notion that Indians should have the final say in the disposition of their dead. This is all that the Pawnee want.

CONCLUSION

Racial attitudes in the Central and Southern Plains and in academic circles have changed since the six Pawnee Scouts were gunned down and decapitated in 1869. Today, public opinion supports the Pawnee efforts to recover and properly rebury all remains, along with associated grave items, taken from them without permission. When the six Pawnee crania are put to rest in the ancestral Pawnee homeland, a sordid chapter in the history of Pawnee-white relations will come to a close. Unburied, these crania are powerful icons of the violent interracial history of this country and the abuses committed for the sake of national expansion and research. Buried, they will show that the people of this country have accepted responsibility for their past wrongs.

NOTES

1. See James Riding In, "Without Ethics and Morality: A Historical Overview of Imperial Archaeology and American Indians," *Arizona State Law Journal* 24 (Spring 1992): 11–34.
2. Marvin H. Garfield, "The Indian Question in Congress and Kansas," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 2 (February 1932): 37, 40–44.
3. Quoted in Garfield, "The Indian Question," 43.
4. Ibid., 40.
5. Ibid., 44.
6. Ibid., 42–44.
7. Idem, "The Military Posts as a Factor in the Frontier Defense of Kansas 1865-1869," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 1 (November 1931): 50–62.
8. Quoted in Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 58.
9. Alvin Josephy, *Now That the Buffalo Are Gone: A Study of Today's American Indians* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 31–34.
10. *Omaha Daily Republican*, 23 April 1873.
11. Ibid., 8 May 1873.
12. Memorandum for the information of medical office, 1 September 1868, quoted in D. S. Lamb, *The Army Medical Museum in American Anthropology* (Washington, DC: n.p., 1917), 626.
13. Robert E. Bieder, "A Brief Historical Survey of the Expropriation of American Indian Remains" (Unpublished ms., n.d.), 7–8.
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