

Standing Bear

Standing Bear was born in 1829 within the Ponca homeland at the confluence of the Missouri and Niobrara Rivers in Nebraska. In 1858, the Ponca sold their land to the federal government and were relegated to a small reservation along Ponca Creek. In 1868, the Ponca reservation was absorbed into the larger Great Sioux Reservation and they lost the title to their land. In 1877, the Ponca were forcibly removed to Indian Territory in modern-day Oklahoma. The move was protested by many, including Chief Standing Bear who was imprisoned. As a result of the move, a third of the tribe died, including two of Standing Bear's children. In January of 1879, thirty Ponca returned to Nebraska where Standing Bear buried his son. They were arrested and imprisoned at Fort Omaha. After court proceedings, their detention was ruled illegal and they were released. The trial (*Standing Bear v Crook*) determined that Native Americans were people under the law and entitled to all of the right to self-determination. Standing Bear continued advocacy for Native American rights after his release. In the 1880s, he established the Northern Ponca tribe along the Niobrara. He died in 1908 in the Ponca's newly won homeland.



Primary Source

<https://history.nebraska.gov/collections/standing-bear-ca-1834-1908-rg1429am>

Secondary Source

<http://www.nebraskalife.com/Standing-Bear-and-the-Poncas-Journey/>