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Shifting Power on the Plains: Fort Robinson and the American West Workshop

June 2010

The content objectives of my lesson are

1. Children will be able to identify Chief Standing Bear and recognize how he became a leader of the Ponca Nation.
2. Children will be able to recognize and accept cultural and individual differences.

After hearing Joe Starita speak at the Shifting Power on the Plains workshop it inspired me to create a lesson about a Native American and their role in “Shifting Power on the Plains”. I have created other lessons that focus on the homes of Native Nebraskans, and Notable Nebraska Natives like Chief Red Cloud and Crazy Horse but I hadn’t yet focused on just one particular person in one particular tribe. After my experience at Fort Robinson I chose to do a lesson on Chief Standing Bear. The perspective that I hope to reflect in this lesson is, during the nineteenth century the Great Plains saw a massive shift in power. The United States, while forcing most Indian groups onto reservations started a new era of colonialism.

Chief Standing Bear

Objective:

Children will be able to identify Chief Standing Bear and recognize how he became a leader of the Ponca Nation.

Background:

Tell children that Chief Standing Bear was a great leader of the Ponca tribe. In 1877, his tribe was moved to Indian Territory in Oklahoma but he always wanted to return to his homeland in Nebraska. When trying to return to Nebraska the United States Army arrested him. So he took his case to court. The judge ruled that “an Indian is a person within the meaning of the law.” This judgement meant that Standing Bear and all Indians had rights under the constitution, just as did whites.

Lesson:

Talk about how in his 1879 court case, Standing Bear spoke these words to Judge Elmer Dundy:

“That hand is not the color of yours, but if I pierce it, I shall feel pain. If you pierce your hand, you also feel pain. The blood that will flow from mine will be the same color as yours. I am a man. God made us both.”

Activity:

1. Have students help you create a list of facts about Standing Bear. Make a chart and list them. Have students fill out the Chief Study worksheet (worksheet A). It is attached to the end of this lesson.
2. Read The Rough-Faced Girl by Rafe Martin and David Shannon. Talk about this book relates to the words that Standing Bear spoke to Judge Dundy. Talk about the Golden Rule, and how you should treat others as you want to be treated.

Closing:

Have children sit in a circle. Go around the circle and have children give a compliment to the child sitting next to them.

Objective:

Children will be able to recognize and accept cultural and individual differences.

Background:

Re-read the words that Standing Bear spoke to Judge Elmer Dundy.

“That hand is not the color of yours, but if I pierce it, I shall feel pain. If you pierce your hand, you also feel pain. The blood that will flow from mine will be the same color as yours. I am a man. God made us both.”

Lesson:

Read The Skin You Live In By aMichael Tyler



Lesson:

Talk about how skin color does not matter.

Name _____

Worksheet A

Chief Study

1. I learned about _____ .

2. He is a member of the _____ tribe.

3. Write an interesting fact about this person.
