



Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk-Tales: with Notes on The Origin, Customs and Characters of the Pawnee People (Bison Book S)

George Bird Grinnell

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In the late 1880s the ethnologist and writer George Bird Grinnell visited the Pawnee Agency in Indian Territory. To Eagle Chief, whom he had known for many years, he explained the object of his visit: "Father, we have come down here to . . . ask the people about how things used to be in the olden times, to hear their stories, to get their history, and then to put all these things down in a book." The chief meditated for a time and then said: "It is good and it is time. Already the old things are being lost, and those who know the secrets are many of them dead. . . . The old men told their grandchildren, and they told their grandchildren, and so the secrets and the stories and the doings of long ago have been handed down."

The result of Grinnell's field work was *Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk-Tales*, first published in 1899. Here are stories about a Pawnee youth who serves as a peacemaker and a warrior's quest for lost joy, and such tales as "The Dun Horse," "The Bear man," "The Snake Brother," and "The Ghost Wife." Extended notes describe the origins and migrations of the Pawnees, their customs, methods of warfare, and later history.

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