

Unfortunately, like most Indian tribes of North America, these Indians have kept no written history of past events. Hence, tradition to a large degree offers the only avenue of information upon the past.

Sia ia ha, in the estimation of the Pima, was the great dominating spirit. They called him, Earth Doctor, for they believed that Sia ia ha was the creator of earth and man. From the depths of the mighty blue waters, Sia ia ha brought forth clay and formed it into the image of his likeness. This image he imbued with a portion of his own powers, hence came the red man and commenced his existence — so runs the Pima Indian myth. The medicine man with his power of mystery was a connecting link between the Indians and the great and wonderful hereafter, and he with the sway of his sacred feathers ruled the Indian mind.

No forest surrounded the Pima homestead; no wild game could be found; nothing but the sage-brush, the cactus, the scorching desert sands and rugged soaring mountains upon whose tops the dead Gods long since forgotten now lay in silence. But Sia ia ha the creator had provided the Pima with fertile lands in abundance and the Gila River which furnished an unlimited flow of water and what is more, he gave to the Pima a hand that possessed a willingness to work.

So in the beginning the Pimas planned and constructed canals, many miles in length for irrigating purposes. With wooden shovels they filled large baskets with dirt; these they carried on their backs to the banks. The river's high bank further necessitated the construction of a dam, made up of brush and wooden posts. This undertaking took many years and tradition says that when these had been accomplished, the water failed to enter the canals. Then the toilers appealed to Sia ia ha, the creator. Sia ia ha appeared on the scene. Through songs and incantations he made magic, performing this ceremony four times. Each time he sang the water rose in height and increased its flow and the fields received the much needed water. So for many years the Pimas, following methods primitive in form, were skilled, industrious farmers and were an independent tribe.

In this legend of Sia ia ha, the Pima rather than saying that he rolled up his sleeves and forced the water to enter his canals, which he did, modestly attributes such accomplishment to the power of his benefactor.

In 1872 the westward encroachment of a mightier race with a motto upon a banner inscribed, "The Survival of the Fittest," began folding its wings round about the Indian home. In a few years they took that water which had for ages served as a life-giver and it at once ceased to flow. Then the poor Indians were left below like dying fish in a drying stream.

Heretofore the Pimas had not refused food and shelter to many a discouraged pioneer. They had willingly helped the government in sub-