

Indian bones in Kansas reburied after 'display'

BOULDER, COLO. — The deceased ancestors of the three Indian tribes who have been on public display in Kansas over the last 50 years were finally put to rest in a tribal reburial ceremony conducted by the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, according to the Native American Rights Fund.

The reburial ceremony for the 146 ancestors of the Pawnee, Arikara and Wichita Tribes was undertaken earlier this month. Because of the sensitive nature of the ceremony, the event was closed to the general public.

The tribal reburial ceremony marked the end of a three-year struggle to close the so-called "Salina Burial Pit" that offered tourists for \$3.50 a view of the bodies contained in the burial ground that was opened to the public in 1935.

The bodies were estimated to be around 600 years old. Strong tribal op-

position and public outcry led to the pit's eventual closing in 1989.

The reburial effort, spearheaded by NARF, ended in the signing of a treaty which provided for the reburial of the bodies and compensation for the owners of the land. The Kansas Legislature passed necessary enabling legislation for the treaty last spring. The legislature also enacted a law which bans unregulated public displays of human remains and protects unmarked graves from unnecessary disturbances.

"I hope that the rest of the country will be as sensitive as the people of Kansas in helping Indian people to rebury their dead relatives that are presently warehoused in museums, federal agencies and universities," said Walter Echo-Hawk, the tribes' attorney.