

Joanne Lethbridge Pompana

Interviewer Don Bouzek

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*[Please note that Joanne Lethbridge Pompana edited this transcript of her interview to correct spellings and dates and to add clarifying information]*

Q: Where were you born?

JP: Edmonton on 149<sup>th</sup> Street and 91<sup>st</sup> Avenue when it was a gravel road with ditches on either side, and farms across the way, and Tooke's Grocery. I remember running across the road to get cigarettes for my mom and dad, 35 cents. I never drank pop, but sometimes chips, popsicles rarely... stuff like that. We were all reminded daily of a kid across the lane who had black teeth from drinking so much pop...probably has diabetes now.

Q: Tell me about your family.

JP: My dad, his dad was from Wood Mountain in Saskatchewan, which is a Lakota reserve ten miles north of the American border. His mother is from New Brunswick; she was a schoolteacher. She's Seneca Iroquois and Welsh. They were not doing very well down there. She was not with the Lethbridge for very long. My dad's dad, were Lakota cowboys and they rode in the rodeo. There's a picture of his dad (or uncle) standing and riding two horses at once, Roman riding they called it; and they made saddles. Our understanding is that our grandmother, my dad's mother, Bessie Pearl Flewelling from New Brunswick who came west to be a one-room schoolteacher thought, "Okay, well I don't know if this Lakota fella is a very stable man," and she instead married a man from Bad Axe, Michigan. He'd come up north to farm, and they tried that out. They had a farm around Golden Prairie, and it wasn't doing so well. They heard about land up north near TeePee Creek, and they went up there; a year before their farm near Golden Prairie was buried in the dust bowl of the 1920's. She made a mistake on my dad's age at that time. My dad was illegitimate, and told he was "a bastard" by his

stepfather. He was out of the house by the time he was 12. Before then, they trapped for food and had a very tough life. His mother, my grandmother, from New Brunswick, was Welsh and Native American – Seneca, Iroquois. Her father was an RCMP, a Flewelling; her mother was a Boone from Rochester, New York. Richard Boone, Paladin, of *Have Gun Will Travel* is my dad's cousin. They met each other in Las Vegas, both drunk of course. And they traded black cowboy hats; that was the big story for us, as we all watched *Have Gun Will Travel* religiously. There were only three channels back then.

My mother, her parents, Gillies (Galbreath) is like a Passchendaele story. Her father was from Mull, he grew up with 13 other kids in a peat hut. His wife MacLean died very young after her 13<sup>th</sup> child! Her mother, Great –Great-Granny Ross, raised all the children. She came from the Inverness area – Ross Shire – when the clearances happened and her people fled to Mull. There's more stories to all of that; however, I won't get into that right now. Grandpa Gillies was in WWI with the Highland Regiment, and was left for dead in Spain somewhere – I'm not up on all the World War history. My grandmother, Mary Galbreath, became a Red Cross nurse, and was an ambulance driver in WW I. She found my grandfather laying on the plain dying and used maggots to clean his shrapnel wounds. She came from a wealthy family, where they had bells for servants. A feminist in her own time, she wasn't having any of that kind of lifestyle while war was on their doorstep. That was it; they were a done deal, married in Greenock after the war. Then Grandpa Gillies came over to Canada to the Sexsmith-Grande Prairie area of Alberta and built Grandma Gillies a house. She then came over and they farmed up there for many years. My mom was born there and she met my dad, whose family farmed in the TeePee Creek area, on the train after WW II. She knew him when he was younger because they went to the same school. I'm trying to think of that school, it's such a beautiful name, like Northstar, or something like that. He used to go out with my mom's sister, Rita Gillies, who died very young of leukemia – the first leukemia case in Canada I believe – a very strange illness. Her older sister, Wilhelmina (aka Billie), my Dad – Laurence (aka Larry) Flewelling Grumbly (Lethbridge) – and his step-brother, Frederick Grumbly, all went into the military. Dad went into the RCAF. And somehow, they're all on the train after WW II coming to Edmonton: Billie, Mom's sister,

with her husband, Jack Hall, who were also RCAF; Mom, Maisie Gillies; and Larry; that's when Mom met Dad again more formally. After the train trip, they got married. They first lived in Calgary and then they came up to Edmonton. He went into the U of A program for veterans – in the old Arts buildings back then – and became an engineer. Mom worked through that time – at Eaton's downtown then – to pay for them to live and have children. I believe I have the best of both worlds, and that's what Sitting Bull said, "Take the best of both worlds." When I came home from school in Grade 1, the time when the teachers asked you to find out about your background, my mom said, "You're Scottish and all Scottish, never mind about anything else." My dad who never spoke much about those things, or anything, said, "You're half Indian and half Mounted Police." I went back to school, and in Grade 1 the first day of school, I had a tough time. I had Cowboy King jeans, Oxford shoes (because they're good for your feet), and a little Edmonton beaded belt. I was sent home because I was supposed to wear a dress. So, unconsciously, you're already kind of in a position for battling things, but not knowing why you're battling things.

You're thinking in a different way. For our Sioux people, we had 'open plain' thinking from living in the grasslands. We never had the idea that "over there something's going to happen to you" kind of thing. It was that long view of life, so you're looking at everything as a whole, how it all works. One of the traditions our people brought back in the last 30 years is our moss bags and cradle boards. It was really important that babies started incorporating how the camp circle worked into their psyche, even though they couldn't talk. One of the stories is baby never touched the ground for two years. Baby was either on a horse, on the mother, in a sling between trees or poles in the tipi, always observing how everything worked. We realized that our children lost that. In a way it was a blessing because, in the last hundred or so years, there was a lot of chaos in our families. So it was probably a good thing that baby was lying down looking up rather than at all the chaos surrounding baby. However, as we continue to revitalize, reconcile – and from what we were talking about earlier, a deep reconciliation is being found now, synergistically, for our people – we say that's the way we used to live in that it wasn't a big deal for synergy to happen. It wasn't considered a miracle or a coincidence. That's the way

life was – *hetchetu welo* – when you were in balance with yourself, the earth, the sky, all those good things. I’m part of a lot of different committees now, and the reason I’m a part of them is because I like what I’m hearing, I like what I’m seeing. There is that deep respect and belief in *transformative reconciliation*, and that’s always what I wanted to see. I don’t want to be a token in some conversation. I want to see the *collective reasoning and understanding and thinking as we go forward as all peoples*, so that we have that *reconciliation with the earth, the sky, and what we are doing on a daily basis as earth people*.

Q: Is it Lakota or Lakoda?

JP: Only with Nakoda and Nakota is there a separation and a representation of two different peoples and linguistic dialects. Lakota – or sometimes spelled Lahcotah or Teton – always represents our Lakota people, even though it’s been spelled so many different ways on historical maps and archival documents. For our group as Siouan peoples, we never called ourselves that, of course. That was an abbreviation of what the Anishinaabe – or the Ojibway, another western term – called us. We call each other Pte Oyate, which is the female buffalo people or Tatanka Oyate, the male buffalo. We’re the buffalo people. We shared that understanding that comes with the buffalo culture, which of course is all about White Buffalo Calf Woman, who brought our sacred pipe and the seven sacred ceremonies that came with our sacred pipe. This has been shared through the centuries amongst our buffalo people through our *making of relatives* ceremony.

There’s more people in Germany practising our ceremonies than there are here, it seemed at one time, though maybe not now. But we shared that way of life with many different nations. This was a task given to us. We have a deep psychological sociological sociocultural understanding such that we always married outside of the tribe. We knew about incest, we knew what could happen to children that are born from incestuous relationships. We knew we always needed to marry outside the camp circle. So when *we made relatives* either in a marriage, or when we adopted a relative from another band – which usually was both – we

shared our pipe and our seven ceremonies *that help our people live in a good way*, whatever generation they're in. There was no hocus pocus or woo-woo going on with what she gave us. Everything was for healing, for positive relationships, for renewal from one generation to another.

Therefore, returning to the group that's in Wood Mountain area – my dad's father's family, the Hunkpapa Lakota, or Pte Oyate – the Hunkpapa were camped at the ends of the horseshoe ceremonial circle that happened years ago as protectors. It would generally be at a sun dance; but all the other six ceremonies could take place there at that time, usually somewhere in the Black Hills. Our people – as we've talked about before – in our oral history, roamed three provinces and ten states. When we were very in tune, and at this time of year, some would be dreaming of the little plants coming out of the ground. Or someone would dream of the buffalo being in a certain place, so we would go hunt buffalo. Or we would need some plants that you need to get when they're very young so we would migrate over there to pick those plants. Later in the summer, it would be bitterroot, and we'd go to a place in Montana – that's now called Bitterroot – to pick bitterroot. We'd go to another place someone dreamed about to harvest buffalo. Not all dreams were acted upon, the dream had to come from a reliable dreamer. That relationship with the above and below was there, whether we were dreaming or we knew of different star clusters that went overhead at a certain time of year, and we would do something on the earth at that time of year – maybe we'd have a ceremony or maybe we'd be migrating to another spot to do something for our livelihood. So when a great gathering would happen, like for a Sundance – there were times when there would be up to 10,000 people – our Hunkpapa Lakota would be on the ends of that horseshoe, then your Oglala, your Miniconjou, your Brulé. There are seven campfires to our Teton – another descriptor – Lakota group, seven councils, seven nations. So that was something that was done then, but there were no telephones.

The group in Wood Mountain, where my Dad's family is from, came up with Sitting Bull after the "Bighorn Massacre". It's debatable whether it was a massacre. But anyway, they came up actually first to southern Alberta with Sitting Bull himself. He had, I can't remember, five or

seven wives. He really had unfortunate incidents with wives; his wives died. It was pretty hard living back then. So he married someone with the Blackfoot, she died. Then they started moving further east and he had wives along the way. His last wife he married was Hehaka Sapa, Black Elk's granddaughter or daughter – I have it written down somewhere because it pertains to my husband's family – Lucy. She had a daughter who married a Harrison, and Cliff's – Clifford Pompana, my husband – mom is the daughter from those two. Harrison was an RCMP. Sitting Bull and Black Elk's granddaughter were Lakota. Cliff's mom had Sitting Bull's pipe and Sitting Bull's bundle. All of their family back then *were holy people* and they carried the culture. His dad was connected to the Eastman's and Crazy Horse's family and Gall. Together, his mom and dad had incredible historical artifacts; they had pictures, they had regalia. They had it all in a trunk in their house in Rivers, Manitoba. Lots of people did not like living on reserve back then – and even today – because there's lots of trauma still there and lots of pain, and pain that's projected. Anyway, his mother, Mary, always worked with women; she helped women. She knew all the ceremonies and did the ceremonies with women. A little while ago, when I was doing 'healing within the ball' here at the Hub – the concept comes from the seventh ceremony of throwing the ball – my husband, Cliff, remembers his mom going outside and getting his sisters. He remembers because he wasn't included. He could not be part of it; it was a women's ceremony, throwing the ball and the stories that went with it. One of the last things that people remember about Cliff's Mom is her helping a woman whose husband had put her hand on a cook stove and burned her hand severely. She'd come to Mary Harrison to get help. Of course everyone's really concerned, all the women are very concerned, and they managed to get this woman down to Minnesota away from this guy that was doing this. It's thought that, at that time when their house was burned down, this guy may have done it. They thought the trunk would survive, but someone had taken an axe or something to the trunk so that all those relics were either pilfered, taken, or burned.

I have so much respect for my husband because he has been a model of resiliency. He's had his trauma – boatloads of it. He was in Brandon residential school for ten years. He was in the military shortly thereafter when it was not cool to be in the military, and subsequently went all

over the world. Holy people all over the world, whether it was in Ireland, or Zimbabwe back then, where the Zulus picked him out to come into ceremony, or Australia with the Aborigines – he was always singled out to go into ceremony with the local people of the land. He’s not really visible as he’s not running around with regalia on or his military outfit. So his family has that moral compass; he didn’t succumb to the pain and suffering of the past. He just kept going. Today, he does have a compromised immune system: asthma, blood pressure problems; however, he manages. He was singled out by Black Elk when he was nine to carry the culture. That would’ve been 1949, and he remembers it vividly because he said it was really creepy. This old guy comes up – because Black Elk was in his 90s by then – and these bony hands clamp on his head, to bless Cliff to carry the culture for his generation. And he did, despite and in spite of everything that was going on at that time. When he was 12 he was put on a hill for vision seeking, so that would’ve been 1952. [.....] Aside from all this, he also knew my dad before my dad passed away. It was my dad who said to him, “We are not like these people. We’re Sioux, we have that broad vision. We don’t think the same way.” Cliff was in Edmonton at that time and having a hard time because he’s trying to blend in with all the Indigenous people here, and it wasn’t working for him. After he heard that said, then he was okay with thinking in a different way.

We say there’s four parts to our being, we have 16 mysteries – I digress, I can’t help it – that make up our hoop of life, which is our 16 poles in our sweat lodge. We talk about our mysteries that are way out there in the universe; then those mysteries between the sun and the earth; then those mysteries on the earth, and what’s in our immediate families; and, finally, those mysteries that are within us. The last four within us are our breath, our soul, our spirit, and our *intelligence*. So it was very important, kind of like a Sherlock Holmes thing – data, data, data – we need to be continually learning. We didn’t have this idea that, when we were 65 (thank god, being in my 67<sup>th</sup> year), that we retired. We were libraries for the people, we were always learning. You never stopped learning. Life is so beautiful if we take the time to respect and enjoy life, pay attention to what we’re doing, and how we are conducting ourselves on a daily basis. So the one-day-at-a-time framework was commonplace for our Indigenous people. When

our people come into struggling with addiction and co-addiction, and we go into 12-step programs, some of us, (if we stay in it), really get it. All we have is today. The pain of the past, the fear of the future – those are concepts that people have come up with. The whole idea of *time* is a concept that is not necessarily a part of life. We can be in that world, but most of us as Indigenous people have a really difficult time when we're scheduled and we're locked into a linear mindset. It doesn't work for us.

We need to *be present* every day. For the work that I do at Red Road, that is imperative. I just had a conversation about a new model from the government for services. They've designed a system of hub and spokes for Children's Services, which can be very helpful in that the circular part has multifaceted spokes. However, *the initial contact* with our Indigenous people was first conceived as a receptionist that kind of scans, screens, guards the gate into other services – a clearing house of sorts – in the western format of dealing with people... intake and refer out *somewhere*. For us, that first contact with a person is everything. We need our skilled, trained, resilient, ceremonial, therapeutic people at that front line. If we can't engage a person's spirit, we can't do anything with them. We need to be able to connect to them. People who do not understand therapy or Jungian archetypes or the grandmothers and grandfathers, will not understand why that's so important. I'm going to digress again, but it does link to my dad and what my dad went through in life, (and who lived and played in Jasper Place). He was an engineer, he was brilliant and very world and spirit savvy. He was well known in Edmonton in the 50's and 60's for taking lawyers, judges, other engineers, people, *out onto the land*. Not for money, it was to get them out there hunting, fishing, whatever. He built a boat in our back yard on 149<sup>th</sup> Street, a wooden 20-foot boat that had an outboard motor on the back. We piled in our camping gear and we went up the Athabasca, the Smoky, the McLeod, the beautiful rivers that Alberta has. We went up the river and we camped. He knew all the trappers along the way and we stopped; of course, they were all drinking. But I loved it and I thought, "Didn't every child do this?" Anyway, he had an alcohol problem from a very young age. When he went into the military he had lung problems. He told fibs so he could get into the air force – I think he was underage too, only 17. He grew up in absolute poverty. He didn't look like his brothers and



sisters. They were all blond and blue-eyed, and he's got black hair and darker skin. He knew unconsciously... well, his mother helped him; they died one after the other in 1988. Anyway, their secret – they thought it was a secret – she instilled in him not to ever talk about being native or about his dad or things like that. She would not have anything to do with people saying “half breed” – you say “Metis”. Of course it was part of her Seneca, Iroquois (Haudonasaunee) background too, but because of all the things that were going on at that time, it was shameful to be native. If you could somehow hide it, you did. And she did. He kind of did. He instilled in us values, definitely, “You're honest, you do this, you do that,” and the relationship we had to the land. However, I think, as he went further in petroleum engineering – and, of course, the way the oil business was at that time – hiding things became more the norm, and drinking was a way of hiding things. So he tried treatment around Edmonton, and it didn't work; he was struggling with something that nobody understood at the time. Then he heard about a place down south, and so he went to this place – Keystone Treatment Centre in Canton, South Dakota – where they incorporated Sioux culture into the program – this would've been in the late '70s – and he finally got his sobriety, and he also started getting other things. That's when he met Cliff (my husband), and told him we see things differently than a lot of folks here. Anyway, the Keystone Treatment Centre [...] was a treatment place built on top of the Canton Insane Asylum for Indians, a place that actually existed. If someone came in to a western therapist back then – and even now sometimes – and they started talking about visions and dreams, grandmothers and grandfathers, “Okay, you're schizophrenic, you're going to be locked up.”

That's why I can't stress enough *that our frontline people need to be deeply trained, ceremonial, have gone through their own experience, sensitive, compassionate, willing to take the time to help that person find the direction, guidance, knowledge and wisdom that they need to start going forward in their lives, put one foot in front of the other and realize that actually, as a native person, you've got a lot going for you.* We talked about prophecy 30 years ago. We are the gatekeepers on Mother Earth to bring people back into balance with Mother Earth through those seven ceremonies. Black Elk's vision was that our sacred tree would flower for all races

and nations. Not for people to become Lakota, for people to *become themselves* wherever they come from. We are all connected to some part of the Earth. We are all indigenous in some form or another and need to connect to that part of the earth; then to understand who they are in relationship to that part of the earth. Our Celtic peoples... when Cliff was in Ireland with the military, he went to a ceremony that was in a cave. It was like a sweat lodge, but not; I don't know if they use coal or peat to heat the rocks, and they use a pine tar on the rocks as smudge for healing instead of sweetgrass and sage and things like that. So all Indigenous peoples have a gift of relationship with the Earth – whether understood is not known. Of course the U.N. Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples magnifies that concept.

There are drawings in Brittany, France, where there's a buffalo woman, a woman with a buffalo headdress. And then we have *Mahpia*, the Lakota word for "above" that is also the Gaelic word for "above". So there is definitely relationships between and amongst our global Indigenous. I do a lot of different things, I'm trained in a lot of different areas. Someone mentioned a book called *The Rainbow Bridge*, which is about the Celtic and the indigenous people on the eastern seaboard, going back to first contact even before Leif Erickson. I haven't had a chance to look it up but it sounds very interesting.

Q: When your parents moved here, do you know why they chose Jasper Place?

JP: Good question. It was on the border of Jasper Place and Edmonton, 149<sup>th</sup> Street. I think they were just war-torn people who were exhausted. They're glad the war was over, but how did they put their lives together? What can they do in the north, what can they do down here? Of course, there was OPPORTUNITY, the university was opening up for veterans, and there was work in the city...there was a way to live. I think that was the main thing. Plus being on the outskirts, they still had a connection to the country. There were many visible Indigenous people in Jasper Place and the western part of Edmonton. Jasper Place was like a town-camp when I was young, and there were lots of Metis, if not First Nations; it just was not talked about –

Lehru's, LaBranches, Laboucanes and, of course, STONE Indians. We didn't question or think about it; we just took this as 'a matter of fact'; took this way of life in stride.

When we went on our vacations, whether it's camping, going up the river camping somewhere, or we went to my mom's dad's (my grandpa's) farm up around Sexsmith, we always picked up the people hitchhiking. They were usually from Sturgeon Lake and they were all Indigenous people. They'd always ask my dad what tribe he's from, and it was just accepted as a way of life. When he was younger I'd hear stories about Sitting Bull and Wood Mountain, and then it all stopped. Whether that was the oil industry or the drinking, or both, I don't know, but I tend to believe now that it was a form of shame-based behaviour. It wasn't a relaxed conversation anymore, and those things weren't talked about; other things were talked about.

I think, personally, it was hard. I highland danced when I was younger and my mom wanted me to be Scottish, Scottish, and more Scottish. I danced at the football games at half time, I wore the big buzzbees. I enjoyed it, but I came to a point in my life where something was definitely missing, and I did not know what it was. It took a long, long time for me to get sorted. As I said, in Keystone, which is in Canton, South Dakota, that's where my dad got his healing. Then I found out approximately 15 years after he died... someone came through Red Road, and talked about my Dad putting prayer ties on a sun dance tree for our family. I just mentioned before about Black Elk having that vision that that tree would flower for all races and nations; that tree, that sun dance tree, is flowering everywhere. Black Elk is being beatified along with Juan Diego, who was the Aztec Indian who saw Guadalupe, who is also our White Buffalo Calf Woman (WBCW) to the people. There are those 'tie-ins', but that came much later in life. I struggled for many years until I put those pieces back together.

Now looking at the history of Jasper Place, and when you first broached the subject about history being the first step for developing community – if the *history is right* the community will gather, the community *will be engaged*. When I heard you were looking at Jasper Place and I became all excited because I grew up on 149<sup>th</sup> Street, and Stony Plain and Stony Plain Rd. were

the initial artery to the City of Edmonton to me – this area – I immediately thought about the word “Stony Plain” and, of course, “stone,” the word. And, still, when you go to Enoch on Hwy 60, it’s the Stone Indian reserve. I was talking to Cliff, my husband, the other day, and he said, “Well it was never Stony, it was Stone.” When you look on those historical maps of John Arrowsmith, the cartographer for the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) from 1820 when he recorded them for the HBC, you have Stone Indians, you have Lakota and Dakota (spelled different ways), you have Teton. That’s another pet peeve of mine, our Lakota should have the Teton Mountains in Wyoming – Teton is another name for Lakota. Hence, why would they be called Teton if our people were not there? Thus, our oral history of our Siouan peoples is actually being depicted on those maps when one knows what to look for. Until you know what to look for it’s like, “Oh well, so what?” The same applies to the Haudenosaunee, the Iroquois people being guides in southern Alberta and traversing the river systems in the west; it’s depicted on those maps at the turn of the century. From some of the text that I came across quite by chance – I was studying something else at UBC – they’re talking about the longhouses that were from southern Alberta right up to Peace River. A real cross-section of people were here back in the time when rivers systems were highways.

I worked at Fort Edmonton for a couple of summers in the tipi village with two older Cree ladies – beautiful Cree ladies – Mariah Whitehead and Alice Harkin. They have both since gone to the spirit world. They gave me my first dancing shawl. I started dreaming there, *really dreaming*, which took me to different places. But again, if I’d gone to a western therapist, I’d be in serious trouble now. I would not have been able to put myself together, not without the help of a lot of Indigenous peoples from many nations. Then in the Rowland House, or whatever the name that the Chief Factor was in Fort Edmonton at that time, it was pointed out to me as I became an interpreter there, that those were Sioux arrows on the wall, that there were Navajo blankets, and that there were Inuit carvings. That the trade... people coming down the Slave and Athabasca river to the Saskatchewan River, coming into Fort Edmonton and trading. And the same from the south from the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, and then up to the South Saskatchewan River, and then to the North Saskatchewan River. Trade was coming from

everywhere and, with it, brought that hub of Indigenous people from everywhere. I don't believe that there were big skirmishes or battles between the Blackfoot and the Cree. I think that was a strategy played upon by other nations so as to distract the tribes in order to get after their local natural resources, whatever they were. They had skirmishes, they stole horses from each other, maybe women, cattle, food, or whatever. And I don't say women in a derogatory sense. But from what our Elders have told us, these things happened. However, again for our people *here* in Jasper Place, for the Stone, Enoch – that's Nakoda, Assiniboine Sioux; Nakota – northern Sioux – is what's out at Alexis; however, many are here today. *And*, with YTC (Yellowhead Tribal College) on the second floor of TOH (The Orange Hub), there are Cree, Stone, Dene, Nakota, Blackfoot, Nakoda, Iroquois, Ojibway, Saulteaux and more; First Nations, Metis and Inuit. Alexis was one of our stops on our way up north with my Dad.

From the understanding of our traditional oral history, we roamed 10 States and 3 Provinces. In the written history, you had the friendlies and the hostile Indians. The friendlies were the *hang-around-the-fort* Indians. Those were not our Siouan peoples. The hostiles *had dreamers* within their camp circle. They knew if they went over there, they were going to get sick, so they stayed away from the forts. They eventually got sick too, not to the extent however, of those hanging around the fort. [...] I'm thinking that's why Enoch initially was further removed from general habitation; the Stone people were thus further removed – and still are – from the urban centres. However, today there's all kinds of a mix of everyone everywhere because of the times we are in.

For our Wood Mountain people, which I found out later on – it took me 33 years to find my Dad's family, the Lethbridge family at Wood Mountain – turns out they are all cowboys. They had rodeo for many years, and they have just started introducing powwows and the seven sacred ceremonies with the revitalization that began in the seventies with the American Indian Movement (AIM). But they had rodeo; it was called Sitting Bull's Rodeo. Wood Mountain was never treated; I remember when I was at UBC doing First Nations Law, they didn't believe that. It was assumed that any prairie first nation was within the numbered treaties going east from

B.C. Wood Mountain had tried to treaty but they couldn't get treaty. Right now, they are in a comprehensive land claims framework. From oral history, and HBC maps, and RCMP reports, their roaming territory was from Moosejaw, Saskatchewan to Standing Rock, North and South Dakota, and throughout that region. Since they could not be recognized as a distinct group by government, they just went ahead and worked with local farmers so they could feed their kids. That's what it was coming down to for many of the local first nations. They had to eat, they had to feed their families so they did whatever they could. A lot of our women were domestics and our men worked in the fields so that our children would be fed. Hence, our mindset – again – is different. We didn't expect things to be given to us; we went ahead and did whatever we could. Today it has shifted – that expectation to be given things is there, like land and resources. However, back then – and that was my Dad's time – he never was given anything or recognized as a Siouan. History recorded made sure of that. He was working on getting his status and all that kind of stuff for us, and he just got too sick. As I look at all these things today, I'm grateful that my life has been the way it has been because it allows me to encompass all sorts of things. I'm not held back. Both my husband and I believe the Creator puts us in a place for a reason. We're both involved in helping each other, helping family, helping community so that our people can live *in a good way, and a healthy way, and have that relationship to everything that brings life and renewal of life*. Here we are in this western part of Edmonton, with our Lakota and Nakota (northern Sioux). There's Lakota, Nakota, Nakoda; Nakoda are around Morley. Nakota are Alexis, northern Sioux; Lakota are western Sioux, and Dakota are eastern Sioux. My husband is Dakota mostly, so he's very connected to Manitoba and the Shakopee of Minnesota. He was born in Minnesota.

I'm trying to piece together all these different stories and what's going on in the western part of Edmonton and western nations. For a long time, yes, there was only one group identified. Everybody was Cree and they were even going to make the third language of Canada Cree. Our Cree in the 1800s were around the Hudson's Bay and then they moved west. They became the guides and traders after the Iroquois. We have Woodlands, Swampy, Stony and Plains Cree, and they are very different. The Alberta Cree are different from the Saskatchewan Cree, and both

are different from the Manitoba Cree. For whatever reason, the other groups – Iroquois, Ojibway, Sioux – weren't recognized or put into any of the history books in many parts of Canada. This became so much of an issue that when we started Red Road, I began to give historical lessons to the Indigenous people surrounding Edmonton, with regard to what was *actually* recorded on these John Arrowsmith HBC maps of the 1800's. Quite by happenstance, I found these maps of the *Indians of North America*, recorded in 1820, during a four-month directed study at UBC when I was researching soils in the Kamloops area. I put these historical maps up at Red Road when we were in the east end – Beverly area – and I also took them to South Dakota. Dwayne Alexis and some others from Alexis that used to come out and drum at that time were shown these maps. I said, "You have to see this because you are Nakota, you are northern Sioux." I showed them where the North Saskatchewan starts turning south, which is right around Edmonton, and then it goes up a little ways north again, and then starts going south. That's where it shows our Stone Indians, our Dakota, and other Sioux *being here*. Of course, when colonization took place, people came and stayed, rather than migrating all over the place. They are in one place now. Dwayne then took a copy of that map to Alexis, where there were lots of older people who knew that history; so it was revitalizing. Then one of their members did a PhD on that history and clearly identified the Nakota as being there.

I strongly believe that what helps the most is a people recognizing who they are, where they come from, and why they collectively think the way they do. Open *Plains People* think differently. A lot of our dances you see at the powwow are from our Siouan peoples. As buffalo people, our understanding is that we always *give way* to others so that they can *live in a good way*. Not to remove us from the historical picture because we think differently, but to *share* those things that help people live in *a good way*. So we had the hostiles, we had the friendlies, and it's been a long slow process to reconcile these misgivings, these misunderstandings. It is the reason why I'm so enthused about the concept transformative reconciliation, because this is taking a deep dive into what really needs to be reconciled. Who people are and where they come from is really important. We use the term *Mitakuye Oyasin* all the time. It is a prayer in itself. It means we are all related. When you asked about the tobacco offering, we have

tobacco, sage, cedar, sweetgrass. For some of us that's part of another story, another wheel. Tobacco – I know this is a totally different segment to our conversation – can be like a contract. It's more serious for some people than others. Our eastern peoples have more structured ways because they had contact earlier, and they knew they had to develop certain understandings so that their next generation would know how to have *real* relationships with other people. For us – and no Sioux or Indigenous person talks for the whole group – we can share in some areas, but in other areas it is, in my understanding, personal. I can't tell my husband what to believe. He has his own relationship to Wakan Tanka and Mother Earth. So my concern always is to strive for good relationships with all people if I'm going to share with them. When they give me tobacco, a pipe, sage, cedar, sweetgrass, *those are objects*. The most important part is the spiritual interest. That's why I enjoy talking to Colette, and both of you a lot, because your spirit is already grounded in that understanding. If it wasn't, I wouldn't bother. It's not that important. It's important for historical accuracy, but it's not important like social media can make it important. One of the ideas we talked about at the *healing within the ball* event is, there would come a time that's been written about by our Elders – Hyemeyohsts Storm was one of them, who was laughed at and teased about what he was doing. As he was recording stories – and one of them was South Horse who is speaking to him; she is an older woman in the Plains area; Storm is Cree, Sioux, Cheyenne and German – South Horse is saying, "You know, there will come a time when people will believe that this bundle over here is all-powerful, but none of them will know the stories behind the bundle or, let's say, the objects in the bundle. So they would be fooling themselves." We have our contraries at powwows. We say that's a good powwow when you see the contraries dancing backwards at the powwows -- not stepping backwards – they are literally going the opposite way around from everyone else, and they usually have their faces painted in really neat designs of black and white. They are shaking things up to raise the awareness of the people. If we're stuck in thinking something has power and we don't, we've got a problem. We've got to look within ourselves, find those kernels of truth and understanding, and build on those. If someone has passed on a bundle... like, for Cliff's family, they knew what Sitting Bull's bundle was about, they knew what Sitting Bull's pipe was about. They knew Crazy Horse, they were related to those Chiefs, so that would



be powerful for them to share within their community group. But if somebody else gets that bundle or artefact – whoever stole those things back then in the earlier part of our conversation – it's nothing. Like our rocks when they go into the sweat lodge, after they have been used in the sweat lodge, they have no energy; the rocks have expired. They are animate when they come in and when that steam is released, the rock is no longer useful – Grandfather Rock. So it is the same with these kinds of things. Some of our people have decided that there's protocols around everything. I just shudder when I hear that word because it's a western term. I know they mean well; however, if we start getting into rules and regulations about everything, what has happened to us? I see residential schools happening all over again with our people, pedagogy of the oppressed. We start shaming people if they're not doing things a certain way. I really guard against that kind of thing. Another instance was there was an Ojibwa person that was studying something in a school here, and he could not graduate because he was wasn't learning Cree. I'm thinking, "Okay, someone has not healed from residential schools, because they're making that child, that Anishinaabe, learn a language that's not familiar to them." So there's that push-pull with everything. Again, *the relationship is all-important*. I understand tobacco, I always appreciate tobacco, but I don't demand these things, partly because. . . now this is a different digression and maybe I'll save it for another time because it's not part of our Jasper Place conversation here.

Q: Let's talk a bit about the presence of people from the north in Jasper Place.

JP: There was a road coming right from Edson I believe, and there's stories that my grandpa actually walked into Edmonton at one time, walked all over the place. Not that he didn't have a horse, not that he didn't do very well with farming. I think these were the early days before my grandmother came over. People came in, they had to get supplies. At one point I lived in Rocky Mountain House; I was living in a tipi west and north of O'Chiese. You went into Rocky, you went into Edmonton, you went into places to get supplies. Some people stayed. Again, you've got the different groups – the ones that are going to stay in the area and camp – and lots of people did camp in the river valley. There were tipis in the river valley going right up to where

the Quesnel Bridge is now; that wasn't there for years and years. And coming in, of course, to the Charles Camsell, and the TB epidemic in the North, Indigenous people coming in for all those reasons, and maybe not going back. So they're here, they will stay here. I know one woman that came from Aklavik. She'd been in residential school up there in Aklavik. [...] She had got sick, she had polio, and was in the Charles Camsell and removed from her family. And then she stayed in Edmonton – a fantastic beader and embroiderer. What happened with lots of the people [...], they just integrated into the western culture and have slowly been – through the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission), in particular – Remembering, Restoring, Renewing, coming back to who they are and where they've come from. Talking about the pain of residential schools, I worked with a couple of women. One was from Kugluktuk, which is Coppermine, and for years she said she learned so much from the nuns. She married a Scottish man, and her domestic skills were unparalleled, beautiful work. She talked about all the things she learned in residential schools. Well, her friend – the other one I just mentioned who'd been in hospital with polio, who was also a very good embroiderer; she did embroidery so fast, it was just amazing – her friend was going to this TRC in Edmonton and she dragged the other woman to the TRC. The false bubble of nuns teaching her skills burst as she heard the many stories of Indigenous people in the north at residential school, and she finally spoke her truth and shared all the other things that had happened to her. That's the *deep reconciliation*, that's the *truth* about what happened. Unfortunately, it opened a can of worms for many people and they have trouble, still reconciling, tapping into their resiliency, and their memory, simultaneously [...].

So you have your Inuit people, you have your Dene, you have your Northern Cree, you have Iroquois – the Calihoo. There's even a town called Calihoo near Onoway. A lot of those people came into Edmonton. They are Courtoreilles, L'Hirondelles – those are all Iroquois and Cree people. Marlboro is another Iroquois Cree land base in Alberta. So you have Indigenous Iroquois in Jasper Place – now west Edmonton – as well as your Sioux, your Cree, your Dene and Beaver. It's a very rich tapestry, especially with Enoch now as a part of west Edmonton. Calgary also has the Tsuutina First Nation in Okotoks; that is part of Calgary. I believe it was 10

or 15 years ago that they did a study on the number of indigenous people in Edmonton, which is very high. We're almost neck-to-neck with Winnipeg. We will be the dominant population in a few years, according to that study. I think touching base with some of the Morins and the Calling Bull families in Enoch is another way to gather that deep history of the west end of Edmonton – then Jasper Place.

Q: Colette had a whole bunch of pictures of Muk-Luk Mardi Gras.

JP: Oh neat, yes, Muk-Luk Mardi Gras. Wow. I told you about our neighbours across the lane.

Q: Tell me that story.

JP: We had lanes back then, gravel lanes. The milkman used to have a horse and draw the milk cart, and we'd get our milk. Anyway, our neighbours across the lane were from Yellowknife. They were wild kids, and I'm sure they were part native when I look back. Anyway, they had a dog that was like a wolf, probably was a wolf. He was about this big and he howled when it was the full moon, which should be right about now. We'd go for dogsled rides. Back then it was when everybody had those gray moccasins that slid really well, and we'd bumper ride. My brother and his friends were a little more risqué than myself, but boy it was fun if you got a chance to do that.

Q: What is bumper riding?

JP: Of course the roads weren't cleared as well as they are now, and the snow would pile up. I believe... being born in Edmonton, I personally know that there was a lot more snow when I was a kid. This is back in the '50s and '60s. I remember high drifts of snow in the back yard. Anyway, the snow was packed down on some of the roads; and, if a car was going not too fast, we'd get on the bumper. Most of them only had one exhaust pipe back then. Those gray moccasins – we got them from Kmart or Army and Navy, I can't remember – everybody had

them, and they slid really well. It was just wonderful. So was Muk-Luk Mardi Gras, which was down in the zoo parking lot. There were hay bales put together and there were all kinds of little activities. It was, I'm thinking, in February, and there was hot chocolate. When I grew up on 149 Street, just over here, it was very community orientated, that west part of Edmonton-Jasper Place. I'm thinking most of the kids I was around were all Metis or Native. We all enjoyed the same things, and that was being *outside all the time*. When supper was ready, a mom just opened up the back door and yelled for Johnny or Jill or whoever to come home for supper. No fences, nobody locked their doors. It was a community. My brother and I used to go down to the zoo... that is, walk from 149<sup>th</sup> Street, down to the zoo. It was the only hill in Edmonton, so we could skateboard down there; well you made your own skateboards. Muk-Luk Mardi Gras was a way of breaking up all that winter, because winters were long back then, oh man they were long. Is this just from a child's view, that winters seemed longer than they are now?

Here are pictures, and I'm going to really enjoy myself here. That's huge. Isn't that something? That's a thunderbird. The Thunderbird is still the team for Ross Shep, and they have the totem pole in front of their school. We always had the thunderbird, not necessarily looking like this. I believe it was on one of the shields when the old museum was around and they had artifacts there from all over Alberta. I believe thunderbird came from when there was a tornado, because they show the design on the shield like that. It's a different colour, it's coming like that, and then you've got your other colour down here. Wakinyan is our Lakota word for thunder. Wakinyan again works with our contraries to shake things up, to bring in new energy and new awareness. [Looking at more pictures]...that looks like somebody skateboarding but it also looks like some of those old sci-fi movies with the head. Maybe it's a bear. Okay, I'm not looking at this right – a big polar bear. You were bundled up so much in winter; I used to wear my brother's long johns because they didn't have female long underwear then. Then your snow pants on top of your jeans, on top of long underwear or tights. There's another one, yes. You've got your sea lion and your igloo. Some of the people that came down from Aklavik into Charles Camsell had been born in igloos. Oh, look at that dog racing, aren't they beautiful. I'm thinking

the people that were neighbours to us that were from Yellowknife were in these races. It looks so different, wow.

Q: Can you tell where they were racing?

JP: I think they're right on the Saskatchewan getting close to where the ski hill is.

Q: You said the Mardi Gras was down towards the river.

JP: Yes. There was a boat launch right along the road from the zoo parking lot; it's still there. If you go through Laurier Park that's right next to the zoo, it used to be all gravel too and lots of paths around there to walk. You could launch your boats. My dad launched his boat at that boat launch lots of times. Wow, and there they come. The Yellowknife family were called the Ralstons then MacAvoy's then Kirkpatrick's. They went back and forth. Their dad had been – Chuck MacAvoy – had been a bush pilot in Yellowknife that was later lost. His plane was found just a few years ago. He was so great. He had amazing fireworks in their back yard, and all the kids in the neighbourhood went to their yard. The Donalds were in Jasper Place then, and are still there, I believe. Dene from Fort Chip and North Dakota Sioux; they still have the Metis Dancers jigging today at The Orange Hub; and the Continental Inn and Treaty 8 offices are still there, though that came later.

Q: Were the dogs for the teams kept in Jasper place?

JP: I'm thinking they would've been in Jasper Place. Jasper Place was still farms and cabins. I'm sure there were people in Jasper Place that kept dogs. But don't quote me, I don't know the facts on that. This might be a different festival, the dog racing. Oh it is [reads from back of photo], "Muk-Luk Mardi Gras, dogsled races, 1963." I would've been 10. This looks a bit different so I'm wondering if it moved. This doesn't look like the zoo area. Of course, it's not going to look like the zoo area as it is now. I thought the zoo was there then, but it doesn't look like it. There's a house there and I'm thinking that was the Tillington's house. They had horses down there right close to the riverbank.

Q: Tillingtons were a family?

JP: Yes, they had a ranch and horses. That's all I remember. I think maybe my parents knew them. [On reviewing more pictures] Where's this? This must be Jasper Place AGT, Imperial Lumber, WW Arcade. That's right on Stony Plain Rd. Wow, look at the cars. That's the AGT building I believe and that's where the buses are now; and the fire hall, wow. The corner of 149 St. and Stony Plain Rd, I remember there being a big sign "Welcome to Edmonton" as you crossed 149<sup>th</sup> St from west to east. The population was up there, and it would be changed every now and then. Then on the other side, on the Jasper Place side, or south-west corner of that intersection, there was a pond. There was a big dip there where London Drugs and TD Bank and Safeway are now. I'm not sure on some of these pictures. It didn't take long to be out of Jasper Place back then. [.....] Then you started seeing heavy equipment and the hatchery on Stony Plain Road.

Q: Can you talk a bit about the hatchery?

JP: It was the Lilydale Hatchery hen place. You could smell it, and it was also a field trip from school. Then you had, besides your native people coming in to shop, get supplies and so forth, they were also coming in to work on the farms, unfortunately, often for slave wages. They worked for next to nothing, they needed to feed their families. And the Mennonites came in.

Q: Was there a farmers market in the area?

JP: I don't recall, there probably was. I remember being able to get eggs from the Mennonites; I'm trying to remember where. I remember the Starlite Drive-in Theatre at the end of 149<sup>th</sup> St. That was considered still Jasper Place, because there was no Whitemud Freeway or anything like that then. We'd all pile into my mom's station wagon; she had a Ford Falcon '63 or something vehicle. It was a big deal, we drove to see her sister in Ontario in it. When we came

back my dad insisted on going through the northern States, so we saw our Sioux territory – not talking about it, just going through it. Anyway, I remember seeing Ben Hur at the Starlite. Of course, I fell asleep, because I was just a little kid. [Looks at another photo] There's even a nun in here [reads caption], "Jasper Place group visits legislative assembly, Art Dixon." Is that me? I don't remember having a haircut like that. There's someone in a highland-dancing outfit. I wonder what year it is, I'd be able to tell then. Back then, you used to be able to go right up to the bells at the very top of the legislature. Always, if any relation came to visit, we all went to the legislative building and the grounds. That's when the fountain was there. It was so beautiful then, possibly because it was so tidy and clean. I don't know what this is, the Legion. My dad probably knew what it was, he was part of the Legion. [...]

Q: Talk about what it was like as a child to try to conform to some idea of what a North American family was, and the gap when you have a father who comes from a very different tradition but actively discouraging any acknowledgement of that history.

JP: I'm thinking of a number of things. My dad, after WW II in the Air Force, was in the oil industry and had graduated at U of A. He was with Midwestern Oil and Gas years ago, which is now the Girl Guide building. In pictures of adults having parties and how they're all acting, it was very obvious that my dad didn't look like all the rest of them. But people loved my dad. He knew how to party, or get people to relax. There was in his early years, I think, some acceptance and some enthusiasm to be who he was. But gradually as life went on, it changed. Where did it change? I'm thinking after I was a little kid. In the 70's, Dad was up around the Eagle Plains, Old Crow area, where he was supervising drilling; that's what engineers did. He used to go see Edie [...] Josie. She used to write for the Edmonton Journal, "News from Old Crow". He spent time with her family. We have some pictures. That would be very natural for him, and he would feel very comfortable. It's funny, years later, I'm at a law conference in Victoria, BC, and I'm sitting with Edie Josie's nephew at a table – unbeknownst to me till he said his last name and that he was from Old Crow. I ended up sending him pictures of her and her dogs, and my dad. You make these connections so much later in life. Anyway, back then, he

would bring home beaded belts and moccasins – beautiful work. As kids – other than my older sister – we were just thrilled; we were so excited to wear them. I remember wearing things like that right up until grade 9. I loved them. I remember my grandmother saying when I lived in a tipi in 1975, “Your grandpa would have loved that.” We all knew she loved nature – that was her church, nature. But I’m thinking back then, “How could my step-grandpa,” –whom I did not know was my step grandpa – “have wanted that?” I couldn’t put it together back then, how he would like that kind of thing. But of course, she was talking about my dad’s real father, who would’ve been very comfortable that way. Deep reconciliation. Forgiving the shame of our ancestors; that clouded the truth. When he went further in engineering, he was all over the world with his work. He was considered one of the top engineers in Canada. Safety was a huge concern for him always. He always hired native people to be roughnecks on the rigs – and before this became more of a cliché. A great big native guy came into his trailer office, I think he was Dene, and said, “I’m with the FBI.” My dad laughed and he said, “Okay what is this?” He said, “I’m an efff’in big Indian.” Now, they say “full-blooded Indian”, (or “fry bread Indian”), in the movies since then. But anyway, he had this life when he was out *on the land drilling*, and then he had the Derrick Club life in Edmonton, where people came up from Texas, and they had these parties and gatherings to talk about oil. Don Getty was one of the men he supervised with Midwestern Oil and Gas, and Getty, Guthrie and McLaren went with him on different river trips. Oil was huge, oil was a money-maker. This was post-war, this was going to bring the economy up; it was a big deal. So him and others did a round-the-world trip [...]. They went to Hong Kong, Australia, Hawaii – the ring of fire now – New Zealand, Fiji. This is in the early ‘60s, where those were still very pristine environments. However, it was also a very different environment for my dad. I could sense that. He was a gunner in WWII, he was all over the world with the RCAF, but it was in a different capacity again. I never did see an episode of *Pan Am*, but when I saw the vignettes of the show, I sensed it was like that – a ‘jet set’, very different lifestyle, a very decadent lifestyle, though we were never decadent. He used to say to us when he first got recovery, he said, “Do you want to move into a big house?” We’re like, “No, we want to be where we are and live as we do.” Unconsciously, there was such a comfort in our family. My mom was probably, unconsciously, tying into her highland blood memory; and my dad,



unknowingly, was tying into his Siouan and Iroquois blood memory. Not until much later in life, I believe, they really understood their worth of who they were, how they looked at life, how they conducted themselves, why they *were set apart*.

Those barriers that we speak of today, I think started coming up in the '60s. I didn't help at that time. I was against *the establishment*, as it then was, and a hippie. Not so much drug addled, but one for protection of the environment, green earth and all those *good things – for life, life and the renewal of life*. My dad was the one who was always very proud of me, no matter what I was understanding at the time. Whatever I did he said – and showed a picture to my husband back then – and said, “This is my daughter, the hippie.” Then he would talk about how I lived in a tipi, and that I found those things very important. So, with Jasper Place, my sister – who is six years older than me and her older cousins – knew all the boys that lived in the engineered homes across 149 street that came after the farms. It went from a farm – and I used to know the name of the people that had the farm there – they had a farmhouse, and they seemed like very interesting kids. However, thinking back, there was something, can't put my finger on it right now. We'd have mud fights – not snow fights – no, we'd have mud fights across 149<sup>th</sup> St. because there were ditches of mud. You'd find those big June bugs. I was like, wow. You don't see them much anymore, though my son saw one a few years back, and took a picture; I have the picture; this was on 186 St. where his work is. Anyway, yeah, so we were sheltered from the world in many ways. I was in Brownies, then Guides, but I had difficulty in transitioning to an independent self. I did *a lot of* searching to make sense of my *whole* background that was not an acceptable background back then – native and highlander. The farmhouse was there, then those engineered homes moved in – I believe I have a picture showing the farmhouse still there, with the newly built engineered homes. My sister and cousin [were involved with those people – I think the names of two of the boys were Warren and Wayne Snyder – and style and getting your hair done or doing it yourself was a major issue. She married an engineer. Then they took out all those houses and it became apartments like it is today. But Tooke's Grocery building is still there, where Lori Sigurdson has her office. I still mean to stop and talk to her; she actually taught me ethics and values in social work. I'm a social worker as well. We had

some great talks. I want to tell her what that place used to be for me when I was a kid. Mr. Tooke had his whole family working there. He's just a lovely man. They were Chinese. They always asked us how we were doing. Then, as you went further west from that area, it was all gravel roads, with ditches. People had little boardwalks and houses like I would say still exist in Robb, if you know where Robb is in Alberta.

Robb and Cadomin areas is a place where I have often gone to camp. My mom's sister actually went to school in Cadomin years ago. Anyway, Jasper Place was just like cabin type houses, outhouses at one time, some engineered housing. There was another friend of my dad's, Charlie Laboucan, who had a garage. He was a Metis man. So I think what happened with my dad – as life was evolving back then – is he stayed in touch with native people in an unconscious way. I think he was always struggling in an unconscious way, with the shame of being native, until he got his recovery at Keystone Treatment Center in Canton, South Dakota where his traditional Sioux culture was incorporated into that recovery program. Then he's like, "Okay, I'm complete now," and he put those prayer ties on the sun dance tree. That was one of the first things I did after he died, I had this pull to go to South Dakota, to go to Keystone, and I ended up in a completely different area... however, an area that I needed to be in. I had many visions then that became realities, and I wanted to sun dance; that's one of the first things I wanted to do. My Dad recovering his blood memory and my mom recovering her blood memory have created and completed a circle in my life that I never expected to integrate. I have no trouble with the concept of a higher power. Mind you, back when I was in my 20s and started to vision and dream, I didn't understand what was happening to me. I needed to have it proven, I couldn't just take it on faith. I had to have proof. The first time I went down to South Dakota, that's when it started; and it just kept growing and growing from there. I met my husband Cliff a few years later, and he completed further so much that I did not understand about myself as a Hunkpapa Lakota Sioux woman. He's a therapist, so that helps; however, he is also a ceremonial leader who went through his own recovery as a Sioux man and understood visions and dreams very well. It's all-important in our recovery as Indigenous people *to acknowledge their dreams and visions* and get help with that; because it was – and still is – our

way of life. The same with our highlanders – they had that way of thinking and understanding. I told you what happened when I went to Glencoe. It was amazing. I never expected any of those things, just knew I wanted to be on the land there. I wanted to go to Mull, I wanted to touch the earth, I wanted to feel what it was that speaks to my spirit. Of course, I'd move there in a heartbeat, I love it. I also love the plains; I love South Dakota, Wyoming, the Grand Teton Mountains, and all the things that go on in those states. We have lots of relatives down there, and we go for horse dances, sun dances and vision seeking and spend time there whenever we can. I know my dad was with me the first time I went down there. That's a long story. However, I felt bad that he never got a chance to see the movies like *Thunderheart* or *Dances with Wolves*, or go to ceremony and participate in ceremony later in life, and really be proud of who he was and where he came from. He did understand our values: love, courage, honesty, generosity, chastity, silence, respect. He passed on those values – not talking about them – just in the way he conducted his life when he wasn't drinking. He had visions, he had dreams, and he strongly believed in a higher power. There was something else and I lost it for a moment when I said when he wasn't drinking. This is not a nice thing to say, because he was a functioning alcoholic, very much so. He was so close to doing ceremony before he died; that maybe he might have lived longer if he had got there. He died at 67. All of us kids – I'm the last one to approach 67 – we all kind of wonder if that will be when we go. He passed in 1988 just prior to so much enthusiasm and joy being celebrated for being native. Oh, I remember what I was coming to. He stressed *using your intelligence*. He didn't go in for shutting down spirit or not using your mind. It was very important to him *to always be thinking about something, doing something, conceptualizing something*. When I think back, he was very intelligent and one of our first Indigenous veterans; I think also one of our first Indigenous engineers. He was celebrated ten years after he passed away. In 1998, there was a second annual white buffalo calf education conference in Rapid City, South Dakota. I was conversing with a woman named Elaine Quiver, who was part of the group that was organizing this conference. It happened to be that November 11<sup>th</sup> was coming up; the conference was in December. I said, "Oh, you know my dad was a RCAF Pilot Officer in WW II from Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan." She said, "Well, can you send something down? We'll pray for him." I did, I sent down a picture. Mind

you, we only had fax machines back then, so it was just black and white. When I went down for the conference, I showed her the picture and she said, "I want you to sing for our veterans now." It was quite a big deal down there. They had a powwow, and the women and the men were in their military outfits. They dance proudly and shoot off guns; the veterans are really appreciated. So I asked her when I brought the color picture of my dad, "When you prayed," – they prayed on the Pine Ridge radio station and sang – "did you point the pipe stem at my dad's picture?" They said, "Yes." I said, "Did you sing, *hey cheeann ish na na na jayea heyya e*", and I sang a song that I was given the first time I went down to Bear Butte by myself because of a vision. She said, "Yes." Then she said, "Will you sing for us now?" So that concept we say is *hetchetu welo*, "the way it is." That's the way it is when we're in touch with the Creator. We have that connection with the above and the below. We're in sync, we're on time, we're connecting with the people we need to connect with. When we're not that way, we're out of balance, so basically the world is out of balance. However, we do not have to worry about the whole world, just ourselves. The world will follow. We have to work hard to be in balance, to spiritually connect and understand and believe; *that is the richness of life*, that is the *priceless gift of serenity*, that is worth doing everything in your power to have in your life and to share with others.

*Mitakuye Oyasin.*

Q: For quite some time the sun dance was illegal.

JP: That was felt in this area and the north, very much so. People hid away, our Siouan peoples hid away. Not all of them, though. Cliff's family was one of the families that continually held the sun dance; it never died; they kept going. They went underground with the ceremony; sort of speak. They brought ceremony from South Dakota. He was born in Minnesota, and his family lived for a while at Sioux Valley, which was the Oak Lake Indian reserve. The great ones – Black Elk's nephew, Fool's Crow – came up for those sun dances and they passed on the history and stories and songs to the Pompana family. There's Calvin Pompana, Alden Pompana and Cliff

Pompana. They're all sun dance chiefs and intercessors for ceremony. However, there was a time when a priest came to cut down the sun dance tree. He brought an axe and he was freaking out, and he went to cut down the sun dance tree. People chased him out of there; he did go crazy. He just could not reconcile Catholicism with our Lakota teachings and understandings, but Black Elk could. The seven sacred ceremonies are the same as the seven sacraments. They're parallel – not necessarily exactly the same – but the same way of conducting yourself to perform that ritual. Then around here, it was the people in the Rocky area I believe that kept the sun dance going, but it was different – not like our plains sun dance, which is open. You have your arbour and your tree in the centre, and it's open. In this area, it was more what I've heard called *a thirst dance* in a closed lodge. They kept it going, up in the Kootenay Plains; I know it existed up there in the '70s. But I don't know – and Cliff would know – what it was like in the '50s and '60s in this area. His family moved around a lot. His dad was with the military too, so he did different work. They lived in Vancouver for a year, maybe longer. Cliff and his brothers went fishing with David Suzuki and their brothers, because David Suzuki's family had boats and fished a lot. This was when they were all boys. I have a picture when David Suzuki came up and Arvol Looking Horse of our Sioux nation came here for the sustainable development conference in 2005. Cliff went up to him and told him that story, and David Suzuki couldn't remember. Then he remembered, and they took pictures together of them.

I do have a picture of me when I'm this high, and it shows all the mud and stuff on 149th Street. And I had my little Scottish sweater on, because I was in Scotland when I was two. We went on the Cunard line. We went from Edmonton to Montreal on the train that had sleeping cars, which I thought were great; then we got on the boat and went to Liverpool from Montreal and we saw a blue whale. I was only two. They had to lift me up to look out the portal.

[Looks at another photo] I remember it looking like this. There were paved roads then but this was just really a messy area. This is the one I remember, when that sign was there and 149<sup>th</sup> was right around here. There was a grocery store as well. I actually went to Camrose College later on with the son of that grocer there. There was a pond in there where it's all dug up. It

stayed like this for a long time. Other things were built up, but this big dip, I think they were trying to figure out what to do with it. On the other side of the dip is a ravine, people go sledding down there still, and it goes right to the river.

[Looks at the *Aboriginal Map of North America*] On the map it says Sioux or Dakota. But then, even when you go into other areas, you'll see Teton and... I want a copy of it – beautiful, very nice.

[Looks at another photo] It looks very different there. I remember all those little paths. That's what I loved about Jasper Place, you had those *grass paths*. There's one just on the northeast corner of the Hub, there's a little area that's a footpath. I'm thinking, "How can I get a picture of that without the building?" It just reminds me of a time when my brother and I were always walking around those places. We used to go to St. Andrews Sunday school. Sometimes my mom would drop us off and we'd walk back. We always liked walking through the ravines. My brother convinced me to throw my little pink purse – they used to call them dusters, those little coats with the bows on the back and the pink bonnet and a little puffy pink purse – he told me to throw it over this pond, because I was trying to step over it and not get my shoes muddy. It fell in the pond and we came back up from church all muddy. He got it, I hid; my dad was really mad at us. Yeah, lots of places to play and do things in that area. You just could not get enough fresh air. Of course, now when you look back, you realize how important that was for your health. I'm very lucky to have good health today. I recognize when I've been inside too much, I just want to be outside. I don't care if I'm shovelling snow or putting up Christmas lights or whatever, I want to be outside and get some air.

[END]

Joanne Lethbridge (Grumbly) Pompana