



**ALWAYS AN ADVENTURE:
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY**
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Glenbow-Alberta Institute

The early 1960s at Glenbow were a lot of fun, but with their own stresses and problems. If Eric Harvie chose – and he sometimes did – he could become involved in even the most minor decisions. When that happened, delays were interminable. This usually didn't affect me too much as far as collecting was concerned because most of the archival items were donated to us. But the poor Art Department sometimes had to wait for months for a decision to buy a painting. To make it worse, the object was often in our hands on approval and the owners were forced to be patient. It got to a point where some dealers refused to send the actual objects, but only photographs.

Also, the swinging doors for directors continued. Claude Humphreys, who had been supervising the collecting departments since 1960, was replaced in 1962 by G.B. Greene, who became Executive Director. I was sorry to see Claude go, as he was a thoughtful and considerate person, always weighing Harvie's demands against the Foundation's needs. Greene, on the other hand, was a retired colonel and everything had to go by the book. We usually got along pretty well as long as I followed the rules, but he wasn't a museum man. Then, in 1963, James Garner was hired as Technical Director, a term I never really understood. Thus we had a dual management situation lasted until early in 1964 when Greene finally resigned and later became a magistrate in Toronto.

Jim Garner was a different matter. He had a degree in anthropology and had reached a high degree of excellence in his knowledge of North American Indian artifacts. In some ways, he was like an avid amateur collector who had become a professional. He could identify objects as to tribe, date, and use, and was usually right. For example, one day a man came into Glenbow with a bone or ivory carving that was obviously bearing a Northwest Coast design. He had found this item half buried in the prairie sod on the Milk River Ridge in

southern Alberta. We all wondered how a Northwest Coast item could have wandered so far from home, but when Garner looked at it, he identified it immediately. He said it had been among the items made in Japan in the 1930s and shipped to Canada for the tourist trade. And he was right.

Jim was married to a Sioux woman named Bea Medicine and they had one son, Ted. Our families became friendly and we visited back and forth quite frequently. Bea was a brilliant woman, very outspoken, and deeply immersed both in Sioux culture and in the role of Native women.

Jim was a great storyteller and could keep us enthralled for hours. Personally, I liked him very much. He impressed Harvie with his knowledge and knew how to get his attention. I don't know if it was deliberate or not, but he had a canny way of capitalizing on his boss's personal interests. For example, he became aware of the fact that Harvie liked to think big, so he went to him with ideas for buying entire Indian museums that were for sale in the United States. Harvie loved it. In his three years at Glenbow, Garner arranged to buy the Roe Indian Museum in Pipestone, Minnesota, the Sioux Indian Museum in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and the Fort Cherokee Indian Museum in Oklahoma. From there, Garner promoted collections from other parts of the world. Some of us disagreed with this shotgun approach. Not only did it add to the workload but it got us far away from our original mandate. Until Garner arrived, the unwritten rule was that the staff collected Western Canadiana and Harvie collected whatever he wanted. As a result of this onslaught, there were rumblings that Harvie was finding the Foundation to be less of a pleasure and this gave rise to the rumour that he might give the whole thing away and we'd be out of our jobs.

I mentioned in my diary, "If this is true, we can thank Jim Garner for driving Glenbow into the ground. He has succeeded in talking ELH into the grandiose schemes of collecting in South America, Polynesia, etc., buying \$100,000 collections left and right and in general making a mockery out of what was once a well organized program concentrated on western Canadian history."⁷⁴

Things finally came to a head in 1966 when Garner made some demands on Glenbow and threatened to quit if he didn't get them. He thought he was irreplaceable, but much to his surprise, Harvie accepted his resignation and he was out. Later he joined up with a man named Crawford and they opened a primitive art store in Los Angeles. Apparently it didn't work out, for the next thing I heard he had become a schoolteacher. By then he had split with his

wife and Bea went on to become one of the leading ethnologists in the United States.

Meanwhile, some interesting things were happening to me. In 1960, arrangements were made by the Provincial Secretary's Department for me to examine any Alberta government records that were destined for destruction to see if they should be saved. There were plans on the books for a Provincial Archives, so when I looked at material that I thought should be kept, I made a recommendation and the items were supposed to be boxed and stored. Whether they were or not, I don't know, but I did recommend saving a whole range of collections in the early 1960s, including the Social Credit Board papers; some case files under William Aberhart's controversial Debt Reduction Act; early files relating to engineers' licences; and dozens of other departmental records. I also suggested keeping a massive file of questionnaires that had been filled out by people who came to Alberta prior to 1905 and were applying for pioneer scrolls; this was part of an Alberta Golden Jubilee project in 1955.

In 1962, Ray Harrison was commissioned by the Alberta government to design a Provincial Museum and Archives building. He came to see me and we worked together informally for a couple of years. Then, in 1964, the Provincial Secretary, Ambrose Holowach, officially asked Eric Harvie for my "services in a consulting capacity to assist our Museum Consultant."⁷⁵ When Harvie agreed, I suggested that I provide guidance along five lines: design of the building, conducting a survey of existing government records, establishing initial cataloguing procedures, recommending archival displays, and procedures for handling the Ernest Brown photo collection.⁷⁶ In the end, they opted for only the first suggestion and for job descriptions for various staff positions. We held a series of meetings over the next few months, both with Harrison and me, and sometimes with the architects.

I don't recall too many of the details but I do know that I made three major recommendations. The first was that the archives be in a separate building quite distinct from the museum; I believe that consideration had previously been given to providing the archives only with a floor in the museum itself. Anyway, they got a separate facility. The second was that the building be designed structurally so that it could expand upwards. I don't think I had any success with that one. The third was that the senior position be called the Provincial Archivist. I immediately ran into trouble with the Public Service Commission, which said that the Alberta government was discouraging the use of the word "Provincial" in its title designations, and suggested we find something else. I demonstrated that almost every other province in Canada

used “Provincial Archivist” and that Alberta would be out of step if it used anything else. I won that one, too.

One of the results of this collaboration was that in the spring of 1964, Ambrose Holowach offered me the position of Provincial Archivist while the building was still in the construction stage. After careful consideration I turned it down for a number of reasons, including the fact that the pay was far below what I was getting at Glenbow and that the archivist reported to the Director of the Provincial Museum. Ultimately I think Hugh Taylor got the job.

Another flattering incident occurred a couple of years later when I was offered the position of Director of the Montana Historical Society in Helena. I received the request from Merrill Burlingame and felt very complimented. But we had two sons and I had visions of raising them in the United States and then having to send them to one of the wars that the Americans always seemed to be fighting. Besides, I was too much of a Canadian nationalist to seriously consider the offer.

Early in January 1966, Doug Light passed along the rumour that Eric Harvie was going to give Glenbow to the Alberta government. The information wasn't entirely accurate, but it was near enough. Doug was very close to the Harvie people and a great one for picking up information. A month later, Neil Harvie called all the department heads together and made the news official. He informed us that the Harvie family was turning Glenbow over to the people of Alberta. This would be accomplished by the creation of a Glenbow-Alberta Institute Act. The shares of the Glenbow Foundation, plus \$5 million, would be given to the Institute by the Harvie family and \$5 million from the Alberta government, together with an annual grant of \$100,000. The Institute would be run by a Board of Governors, the chairman appointed by the government, three members each by the government and the Harvie family, and three named by the Institute. The Hon. N. Douglas McDermid, justice of the appellate division of the Supreme Court of Alberta, was to be the first Chairman of the Board, appointed for five years. Doug was a former law partner of Eric Harvie, and when he went into business for himself he represented the Harvie interests. He had been appointed to the Supreme Court in 1963.

The Act was passed on April 15, 1966, at which time I noted in my diary that the “Glenbow Foundation no longer exists.”⁷⁷ I was wrong, for the Foundation remained a legal entity and became the wholly owned subsidiary of the Institute. Its continued existence became a source of real problems. The Act provided that the Board of Governors of the Institute appoint a board of directors of the Foundation. I suspect that in deference to Eric Harvie, the

Board let him choose his own directors, thinking that this was a mere legal formality. In fact, the Foundation still controlled the collections, as well as the Glenbow Art Gallery, and all the employees. Harvie named himself as Chairman of the Foundation's Board, Hod Meech as President, Jim Fish as Comptroller, and Hugh Robinson as Treasurer. These were all on Harvie's staff. In addition, Meech became President of the Institute and Jim Fish the Treasurer.

Generally speaking, Harvie's people were a nice bunch. I liked Hugh Robinson the best; he was always approachable and forthright. Jim Fish was next. He had an excellent mind and was friendly and hospitable. As for Meech, his name was Horace Meech but everyone called him Hod. He was a highly intelligent man from Lethbridge who had been in Harvie's oil business for years. He was president of Managers Limited, the holding company that Harvie had established to run his various oil, mineral, and financial institutions. It was obvious that he was utterly devoted to his boss. At first I got along well with him, probably because as archivist I was in a position of no authority and Harvie was generally pleased with my work. As time went on, however, I crossed swords with Meech quite a few times and found him to be a very tough-minded individual. I also noticed that when Harvie was away for a few months in winter, Meech softened noticeably and became a very reasonable and approachable person. I guess that's because he was out from under the daily unpredictable onslaughts from his boss. But as soon as Harvie returned, Meech reverted to the role of a tough administrator.

He was very astute in giving directives, as one could never be sure if they came from Harvie or if they were his own idea. One time I said aloud, "There is no Hod Meech; he is only a figment of Eric Harvie's imagination." Unfortunately, this comment got back to Meech so it didn't improve our relations.

I should mention that a few noticeable changes were taking place in Eric Harvie by this time. Perhaps it was the first stages of the heart problems that later engulfed him before his death in 1975, but whatever it was, his unpredictable behaviour became much more pronounced as the years passed. It must have been difficult for those taking orders directly from him, for he could go from black to white without any apparent rhyme or reason. And as he was the Honorary President of the new Institute and Chairman of the Foundation, and with Hod Meech on the boards of both the Institute and the Foundation, it turned out that Harvie had just as much power as he had when he owned the place.

Here I must explain my philosophy regarding Eric Harvie. During all the years I worked for him at the Glenbow Foundation, I was always faithful to his trust. If he planned to do something with which I disagreed, I expressed my opinion, but once the decision was made, I carried it out honourably and to the best of my ability. I considered Harvie to be my boss and the man whom I admired and to whom I owed my allegiance. I was also very aware of the fact that he had given me my big chance in my career. However, once the Glenbow-Alberta Institute was formed, its Board of Governors became my new superiors, and I owed my allegiance to them. I still respected Harvie but if it came to a matter of choosing between him and the Board, I had no recourse but to choose the Board. It was sad in a way and sometimes placed me in an awkward position, but it was the only way that I could act in a responsible and honourable manner.

At the time the Institute was created, we still had a divided authority, with Jim Garner as Technical Director and Charlie Masur as Administrator, but with no overall director. In the summer of 1966, I told Meech that I was interested in the position of Executive Director, which would become the senior person at the new Institute. I learned shortly thereafter that Eric Harvie thought I should stay in the Archives while Meech thought I was too young (at thirty-six) for the job. I left it at that, but I learned later that Bill Fleming in our Pioneer & Agricultural Department, Doug Light in Ethnology, and Pat McCloy in the Library all went to Meech to speak in my favour. Dick Forbis also told me that the university people were pressing for my appointment.

It soon became clear that Eric Harvie wanted a “big name” to head the Institute. The first indication of this came in September 1966 when Mitchell A. Wilder, Director of the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, in Fort Worth, Texas, was invited to evaluate the effectiveness of Glenbow and to make recommendations on its future. After his tour, he was highly critical of the way Glenbow was being organized and run from the top down, but he did tell our Librarian, “If there are any two operations in the entire organization which receive unanimous approval, they are yours and Hugh Dempsey’s.”⁷⁸ When Wilder was offered the position of Executive Director, he was quick to turn it down. He was followed in the new year by George McBeath, Director of the New Brunswick Provincial Museum, who also turned it down.

While this was going on, Glenbow was apparently grooming me for something, for in January 1967 they sent me to the Amon Carter museum to look over their organizational structure, finances, programs, etc., and a month later I was sent to New York to study the Museum of the American Indian and

the American Museum of Natural History. From there I went to Washington to study the methods used by the Smithsonian Institution. In all, I was gone for almost four weeks and filled notebooks full of data on just about every aspect of museum management. But there was no job offer waiting for me on my return.

I had pretty well given up on the idea of promotion when on April 20, 1967 I was called to a meeting in Eric Harvie's office. Others there were Hod Meech and Harry Chritchley. Harvie told me that I had been appointed Acting Executive Director of the Institute while Harry became Business Manager. We were both transferred from the authority of the Glenbow Foundation to that of being employees of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute. Maybe it was only in an "acting" capacity and lasted for only a short time, but I still had the honour of being the Institute's first Executive Director. As I mentioned in my diary, "I had expected that the Board of Governors would be in control by this time, but it is obvious that Mr. Harvie is the only boss. As a result, things are going to be a lot tougher than I thought."⁷⁹

Immediately after the meeting, I settled down with Harry to plan a new organizational structure, based in part on what I had learned in my travels, as well from the experience at Glenbow in finding out the hard way what works and what doesn't. A short time later, I moved into the Administration Building and arranged for Sheilagh Jameson to be appointed archivist in my stead. Once we had something to work with, I had a meeting with the Executive Committee of the Institute and it soon became clear there were two entirely different agendas on the table. On one hand, Eric Harvie, as represented by Hod Meech, wanted the Institute and Foundation set up in such a way that he could retain full control. On the other side, some members of the Board of Governors, represented by Doug McDermid and Benton Mackid, wanted a clear chain of command that led straight to the Board.

The situation then became so fluid that it was hard to keep up with it. It appeared that Harvie and the Board were jockeying for position and I was caught in the middle. I think Meech and the others knew by this time that my allegiance was now with the Board. Early in May, I was informed that my title had been changed to Acting Technical Director and that Harry Chritchley had been moved over to Eric Harvie's new organization, the Riveredge Foundation. I was also informed that Dr. Jack Collett, the former principal of Mount Royal College, had been appointed Bursar of the Institute, a title that was changed a few weeks later to Director of Extension. It was apparent that they were still going to look for a "name" for the position of Executive

Director. The next candidates to come to town were Trevor Walden, Director of the Leicester Museums in England, followed by Don Crowdis, President of the Canadian Museums Association. The first was appalled by what he saw and rejected the offer, while Crowdis was not considered appropriate for the position.

Jack Collett proved to be a fine person to work with but he lasted only four months until September, when he resigned in disgust over the ongoing battle between the Board and Eric Harvie. Pat Thomson replaced him as Bursar so I was left in the only senior position at Glenbow. By this time the situation was so unsettled that when the position of Provincial Archivist became vacant again in Edmonton, I actually applied for it. Anything seemed better than the chaos at Glenbow, but when I went for my interview and was offered the job, I turned it down. I just didn't want to leave Glenbow, regardless of its problems.

For the rest of 1967 I did my best to put our house in order. I worked with Thomson in writing job descriptions and specifications, smoothing out organizational charts, working on accessioning and cataloguing procedures, setting up regular staff meetings, and visiting departments whenever possible. I was still firmly under the thumb of Hod Meech but I did as much as I could within these limitations. I managed to hire Lorne Render, fresh out of the museum program at Williamsburg, Virginia, to head up the art program, and Wes Mattie from Edmonton to look after our Cultural History Department. Then, in the topsy-turvy life of Glenbow, I was called into a meeting on December 8th with Doug McDermid, Hod Meech, and Benton Mackid, and told that the Board had approved my permanent appointment as Technical Director. As I mentioned in my diary, "Also, they implied Hod would be pulling out & leaving me to deal directly with the B of G. It took me completely by surprise."⁸⁰

For a while, this appointment seemed to clear the air, and I had hopes that at last we were out of the woods. I launched a little semi-monthly magazine called *Glenbow*, started a lecture series at the museum, and set up a series of weekly meetings at which time department heads explained their operations to the Board of Governors. During the early months of 1968 I was looking after everything from budgets to programs, and working well both with department heads and with the Board of Governors. At Meech's suggestion, I even wrote to Eric Harvie in the West Indies, telling him what was going on and at one point I said, "I'm still not sure just how much authority has been left in my hands, but I just keep sticking my neck out a little more each time and hope nobody cuts it off."⁸¹

As it turned out, the independence didn't last for long. In February 1968 I was told that in future I had to report to the Executive Committee instead of the Board; Hod Meech was Chairman of the Executive Committee. A short time later I was told to get approval on all financial matters from Jim Fish, Treasurer of the Institute and of Harvie's own organization. This put us right back to where we were months earlier. Then in June, the day before I left for a meeting of the Canadian Museums Association in Quebec, I was introduced to a man named Richard L. Gordon, and was told he was a candidate for Executive Director. By the time I got back to Calgary, he had already accepted the position. Dick Gordon had been a Rhodes Scholar and was headmaster of St. John's-Ravenscourt School for Boys in Winnipeg. Doug McDermid was on their board and he was the one who interviewed Dick and arranged for him to be hired.

When I learned that this was a Board appointment, rather than a Harvie one, I was a little more optimistic. Actually, I was ambivalent about not getting the job myself, as I knew that the war was still on and that the Executive Director would be a visible target. However, Gordon would not be starting until the beginning of 1969 so that left me with the whole can of worms for the next seven months.

At that time I was already committed to attending the six-week Seminar for Historical Administrators in Williamsburg, Virginia. It was an intensive and useful course and I met some very fine people from all across the continent. At one stage, students with any actual experience in museums (about a third of the class) were asked to describe the structure of the organization with which they were currently associated. This was to help determine which was more effective: a weak Board and strong Director, a strong Board and a weak Director, a weak Board and weak Director, or a strong Board and a strong Director. When I outlined the situation at Glenbow, the instructor simply shook his head and said ours was an impossible situation with no solution, and the only answer was for everyone involved to resign. The course was a good one and I came back with quite a few ideas that were later incorporated into Glenbow's programs. One of these was a series of school kits where artifacts were placed in suitcases together with teaching aids and loaned to schools. I designed some of these in 1975 and they became a successful part of our outreach program.

Pauline came to Williamsburg for the last several days of the session and then we spent a short time in New York. There we took in one of the first performances of "Hair," the stage production, and Pauline was more than a

little perturbed about the one nude scene. We also had a good chance to see the bright lights and the attractions of the Big Apple.

By the time we got back, Glenbow was well into the 1968 summer holiday season and so I took my holidays as well. It was September before I stepped back into my office, and when I did so, I saw the changes that had taken place. It had been previously agreed that Glenbow would sell its natural history collection to the new Riveredge Foundation for \$25,000. This money would be used for paying part of the costs of a new \$55,000 Glenbow Art Galley, with the rest coming from the Institute's budget. Harvie decided to personally call the shots for the entire gallery, including its design and installation.

Here is what I say as the project progressed: "We had a meeting with Meech, Render, Debnam [our building supervisor], Bill Robertson [of Managers Limited], and I. It turned out to be a knock down drag out battle with Meech unwilling to make any commitments and demanding that interior partitions, if needed at all, could be built in a 'temporary' manner [even though there was] no money was available for this. He also said that he was not prepared to accept any internal floor plan until the renovations were completed – even when it was explained that we had to know so that exhibits could be selected, catalogues written, and plans made for the opening."⁸² Later on, Meech told me that he was designing the art gallery as he went along.

Another idea that came from the Harvie people was to buy three huge trailers that had been used by the federal government during Canada's centennial in 1967 and turn them into travelling museums. I thought it was a good idea, although I favoured getting our own exhibitions in shape before we tackled such a major extension service. But I wasn't asked.

Then there was the problem of the Luxton Museum at Banff. When the Act was passed, this facility had remained with one of Harvie's other companies, Luxton Museum Ltd., and was not included in the deal. In the autumn of 1968 the Harvie people offered to sell the museum to the Institute for \$165,000, which was said to be its book value, and to return \$65,000 of it as a gift which would be spent under their direction. No one asked my opinion but as I wrote at the time, "Luxton is a simple static tourist attraction which offers nothing in the way of education service or scholarship. I would have suggested we get out of it & loan artifacts to Luxton Museum Ltd. so they can run the museum."⁸³ But Harvie offered only two alternatives: the Institute buy the building or sell the Luxton Indian collection to Luxton Museum Ltd. In the end he got his way. It wasn't until many years later that Glenbow got rid of this millstone and turned it over to a private agency.

When I spoke frankly to Doug McDermid about the many problems at Glenbow, arising mostly out of Eric Harvie's decisions, he was just as frank with me. He knew what was going on but he pointed out that no one wanted to confront Eric Harvie because, after all, it was his gift that made all this possible. Moreover, Doug had assurances from Meech that this was just temporary and as soon as Dick Gordon arrived on the scene, Meech and the Harvie people would pull out. He said that at the time of the appointment, there was a clear understanding that Gordon would report only to the Board and would be free of interference from the Harvie group. As McDermid later said,

At this time, the executive management of Glenbow Foundation was performed by Managers Limited, a management company owned by Mr. Harvie, for a fee of \$4,000 per month. The chief officer of Managers Limited under Mr. Harvie was Mr. Meech. Mr. Harvie stated he was anxious that Managers Limited be relieved of its managerial responsibilities as soon as possible and that Mr. Meech, who was extremely busy, be relieved of any responsibilities for the conduct of the affairs of the Institute, except those he had as a Governor.⁸⁴

Dick Gordon arrived for work on January 27, 1969, and for a while Glenbow felt like a different place. I liked Dick immediately, both for his candour and forthright manner. For example, he told me he had left St. Johns-Ravenscourt because he had done all he could do and now he wanted to give someone else a chance. He was that kind of person. As soon as he was in office, he informed me that I would continue in my role as Technical Director.

Dick had been assured by Doug McDermid that he had a free hand and he took him at his word. Within days of his arrival, he said he wanted to boost staff morale, so he cancelled the nominal charge being made for coffee and announced that parking in the lot beside the Administration Building would be free, rather than a charge being made as was previously announced. We learned later that this immediately annoyed the Harvie people and started things off on the wrong foot. But Dick was not swayed as he knew he had the support of his Chairman of the Board. As promised, the financial administration was turned over to us, and the reporting structure was changed so that Dick reported directly to the Chairman.

While Dick was receiving support from Doug McDermid, none of us knew that the Chairman of the Board was having his own problems with Eric Harvie. It all started when the Institute was formed and had \$10 million from the Harvie family and the government to invest. At one of the Institute's first meetings, Canada Trust was instructed that the funds be invested in short-term securities such as common shares and real estate. While the matter was being considered, McDermid had to go into hospital for an operation and when he returned early in 1967 he learned that the money had been invested in long-term bonds. These brought in a low rate of return at a time when common stocks were performing well. When McDermid looked into it, he found that Harvie had called a meeting of his own people, Meech and Fish, and they approved the investment. McDermid wanted to take legal action against Canada Trust but dropped the matter because of Harvie's involvement.

He then got into a dispute with Harvie over the Glenbow Art Gallery. Instead of using Institute money, McDermid suggested a fundraising campaign, and even found a prominent Calgarian who agreed to head the drive. But, as McDermid wrote, "When I suggested the matter to Mr. Harvie, his reaction was that I was trying to tell him how to spend his money. In view of his reaction, I abandoned the idea and never did raise the question with the Governors."⁸⁵

There undoubtedly were other disputes, all seeming to centre around who was running Glenbow – Eric Harvie or the Board of Governors. However, McDermid was so preoccupied with his own problems that he tended to leave Dick on his own, or at least made no attempt to intercede and further strain his relations with Harvie. By the summer of 1969, a frustrated McDermid told his fellow Board member, Benton Mackid, that he was thinking of resigning. Benton was a good friend of mine, past president of our local Historical Society. While begging McDermid not to leave, Mackid admitted that Harvie "intends to play a more dominant part in the affairs of Glenbow Foundation from here on in."⁸⁶ He went on to say that Harvie planned to operate the Glenbow Foundation himself in his role of Chairman and to establish committees in the fields of art, museums, public relations, finance, and education, that would report directly to him.

Rather than backing down, McDermid tried to take some direct action to clarify Dick Gordon's role and to place him back squarely under the Chairman of the Board. McDermid told a meeting of the Executive Committee on October 2nd that he planned to remove all non-corporate responsibilities from the Foundation and to centralize them under the Institute. This would remove

Harvie's people from all aspects of the day-to-day operations. Harvie, in his capacity as Chairman of the Glenbow Foundation, responded four days later with a scathing letter that was hand-delivered to McDermid. In it he complained of his "difficulty getting from the Institute and staff the co-operation and information required to effectively carry out the Foundation's obligations."⁸⁷ This was a direct slap at Dick Gordon. He also said that McDermid's proposal was "in direct violation of the Resolutions of the Governors passed in September 1968 and April 1969"⁸⁸ and demanded that the Chairman "immediately give the necessary instruction to rectify the situation and advise me that you have done so in such detail that will inform me of the exact situation."⁸⁹ Instead of replying, McDermid went to Edmonton a few days later to offer his resignation to the Alberta government.

In pondering the situation some years later, McDermid wrote,

I considered Mr. Gordon was doing a competent job, although Mr. Harvie had criticized several things he had done, mainly because he thought he was relegating to himself matters which Mr. Harvie thought should have been referred to the Board of Governors. In the fall of 1969, it was apparent to me that I was not successful, but to the contrary, was antagonizing Mr. Harvie.

In considering my position, it was evident to me that it was necessary that Mr. Harvie be satisfied with the administration of the Institute. The idea for the Glenbow-Alberta Institute had originated with Mr. Harvie; he was the founder and had given half of the seed money and invaluable collections of artifacts; many of these collections were native to Alberta and would have been lost if it had not been for him... However, I was in the position that I would lose the respect of and credibility with the staff and Mr. Gordon if I could not convince Mr. Harvie to discontinue the interference of his organization in the internal administration of the Institute and Foundation."⁹⁰

Neither Dick Gordon nor I knew that all this was going on but Gordon said he himself had "been subjected to almost continuous harassment and interference in the form of meddling in staff affairs, rude memos and criticisms."⁹¹ The whole debacle of 1969 reached its conclusion on November 7th – my

fortieth birthday – when Benton Mackid met Dick Gordon on the street and told him that Doug McDermid had been removed as Chairman of the Board and had been replaced by Jim Mahaffy. Dick was absolutely flabbergasted, as he had spoken to Doug only that morning and the subject was never mentioned. Because of the great admiration he had for McDermid, he could only conclude that the Harvie people had gone to the provincial government and got him fired. It was only later that we found out that he had voluntarily resigned. His resignation had sat in Edmonton for quite a while until a successor was chosen and an order-in-council passed. We knew nothing of this.

The great mystery is why McDermid didn't confide in Gordon as soon as he had resigned or why he never mentioned it to him when they met. I know they were great friends and McDermid felt very responsible for bringing Dick to Calgary. At this time I wrote in my diary, "Certainly if Doug goes Dick will not be far behind, for Harvie and Meech ... have said they are out to 'get' him at any cost. His crime is assuming full control of the administrative function, and turning down Harvie on such things as letting him pick what goes into the Art Gallery, letting him work over our art publications before sending them to the printers, etc. Most of the problems are so infantile that Dick still cannot understand why anyone would consider them important."⁹²

The next several days were ones of waiting for the next shoe to drop. The place was filled with rumours, some of them untrue or distorted. Dick Gordon "officially" heard about the changeover when Meech phoned our Business Manager, Allan Hammond, and gave him the news. No one ever did inform him directly. I mentioned in my diary for November 12th that by that time "all contact between Dick Gordon and his superiors has ceased entirely," and this was true. It was almost as if he was in isolation, and I spent many hours in his office as he fretted and worried about his future.

At that point I had a telephone call from Jack Herbert, who was now Director of the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, saying that his Assistant Director had resigned and wanted to know if I was interested in the job. Under the circumstances it would have been foolish of me not to consider it, so I agreed to travel to Winnipeg for an interview. I spent the entire day going through their museum and was very impressed with what I saw. But in the end I turned down the position because it was too far from the Blackfoot and besides, I remembered the Manitoba winters from my previous visits. But considering the situation at Glenbow, it was a hard decision for me to make.

When I returned after the weekend, I made this notation on the following Monday: "This was a tense and unsettling day as we waited for the Board

of Governors meeting tomorrow. Dick Gordon cannot learn what is on the agenda, even though it is usually prepared by us. The whole organization is full of rumours and work is at a standstill as all wait for the next move. There was even a rumour that Dick Gordon, Allan Hammond & I would all be fired tomorrow for opposing Eric Harvie.”⁹³

Dick attended the meeting on the following day and saw the worst. Resolutions were passed that arranged for Glenbow to provide consultation and technical service to Riveredge, and plans were approved for Ace Caravan Company to take over our travelling museum. These were both major moves that Dick Gordon and Doug McDermid had opposed. Two days later, Gordon submitted his resignation and the whole ugly episode was over. Dick left town after a few weeks and I never saw him again. In his retirement years he turned to writing, producing the novel *The River Gets Wider* in 1974. He died five years later.

Now that is the story as I saw it. Later, Meech and others expressed amazement that Dick had resigned and said the vendetta against him had been only in his imagination. They said he had become paranoid and had seen things that really weren't there. They were so convincing that for a time I believed them, but as time went on, I looked at all the indisputable facts – the almost daily interference in administrative matters, the anger at being denied the Riveredge and Ace deals, the comments by Mackid that Harvie was getting back into running things – and I came to the conclusion that it wasn't anyone's imagination. But I think it's true that Dick's resignation came as a surprise. With McDermid forced out (for that's what it was), I'm sure they believed that Dick would become more pliable and subject to their control. His resignation immediately after McDermid was an embarrassment and made the Harvie people look bad in the eyes of the government.

Strangely enough, Dick accomplished in leaving what he could not do while he was there. He had created a situation that forced the Harvie people to pull back and actually give the Glenbow administration a chance to do its job. It was just a tragedy that it couldn't have happened earlier and without the discord.

About a week after Dick's resignation, our new President, Bert Baker, returned from a holiday in the United States and learned for the first time what was going on. He called a meeting of the staff on December 9th and announced that I had been appointed Acting Executive Director. I also had a private meeting with Baker and Mahaffy and they asked me if I wanted to apply for the permanent position of Executive Director. I thanked them for

their consideration but turned it down. I felt that the lifespan of directors at Glenbow was too short. It was strange, but two years earlier I had been actively seeking the appointment, but now after this protracted power struggle I wouldn't have accepted it if it had been offered to me on a platter. I decided that I wanted to get out of full-time administration and devote as much time to public programming and research as possible.

Over the next few weeks I proceeded to carve a niche for myself. Bert Baker brought in Gordon Chandler to help us to reorganize the staff structure and I formed a committee of Chandler, Allan Hammond, and me to study the matter. Then I set up a budget committee consisting of Hammond, Sheilagh Jameson, and me to interview department heads and strike a budget for next year. I also set in motion actions to tackle other work that had remained in suspension during the previous months. In these first few weeks, Meech and others were entirely absent from the scene and we received absolutely no direct communications from them. I didn't know who was responsible for this, but I took full advantage of it in setting up the new structure.

I began attending the Executive and Board meetings, and held regular discussions with Bert Baker, whom I found to be a very pleasant and understanding person. Early in March, our committee came up with a new organizational chart which gave us an Executive Director, and divided Glenbow into three divisions. One was the History Division, of which I would be the Director. This would include the Library, Archives, and Extension departments. Then there was an Art Division, with Lorne Render as Director and consisting of the Art Department, Art Gallery, Display Department, and Glenbow Museum. The third was the Museum Division, with Doug Light in charge of Cultural History, Ethnology, Mineralogy, and Luxton Museum.

Bert Baker and I privately discussed the position of Executive Director. Again he offered it to me, and again I refused. We talked about going outside to find a suitable candidate but we had to face the reality that Glenbow's reputation was so bad in the museum field (everyone knew about the Dick Gordon debacle) that no professional person would apply. We finally concluded that the best candidate was Allan Hammond, our Business Manager.

Hammond had been an accountant at St. John's-Ravenscourt School under some deal that included the tuition of his boys. Dick Gordon had brought him to Calgary and although he was not a museum person he expressed a strong interest in the promotion. I didn't have any feelings about it one way or the other, except that I felt I could easily work with him. So the recommendation was made that he be the new Executive Director.

Bert Baker and I made a presentation to the Board late in April 1970, outlining the new staff reorganization, improved fringe benefits for the staff, new job descriptions, and pay increases. The only change made by the Board was that Hammond was to be appointed Executive Vice-President instead of Executive Director. This became effective on June 9th, at which time I wrote in my diary, "This is something I've been working towards for months. I'll admit it was a bit of a wrench to no longer head the organization but it just isn't my field. Besides, the mortality rate of Directors (or Vice-Presidents) is too high for me to want to fill that uneasy post. That is why I turned it down." So ended my second stint as head of Glenbow, this one having lasted for five months.

Now this is not intended to be a history of Glenbow. I have gone into great detail about the late 1960s because it had such an impact on me, both at the time and in the later directions of my career. Had Eric Harvie actually pulled out and left us to our own resources, I might have stayed in the senior role. But in retrospect I'm glad I didn't, for I had a much more rewarding career doing creative things, rather than simply pushing paper and bossing people around.



My life in the late 1960s wasn't all Glenbow-oriented. In fact, Pauline used to marvel at the way I could compartmentalize my life. I could have been facing the most horrendous problems at Glenbow during the day, but on the way home these slid off my back and by the time I parked the car I was thinking about family and domestic matters. I seldom, if ever, talked to Pauline about these daily problems unless she asked, for they were simply forgotten once I was in the door. On the other hand, my body was slower to forget. I first began to suffer from stomach cramps in the spring of 1967 while Acting Technical Director and they were soon diagnosed as stress-related. At times it was not unusual for me to come home with a king-sized lump in my stomach, and I would stretch out on the floor for about half an hour before it would disappear.

During the 1960s, we slipped into a nice, comfortable family situation. We now had five children, each with their own personalities and needs. The boys were into Cubs and hockey, while the girls paired up with their best friends and were often down at the playground. Dad and Mom were back and forth all the time, and one or more of our children often accompanied them to the Blood Reserve, especially on holidays. But Pauline wasn't entirely a home body. She was a board member of the YWCA, active in the local Progressive Conservative Association, and worked as an admitting clerk at the Grace Hospital for a couple of years.

Although my only foray into book publishing in the 1950s had been a failure, I was still actively interested in writing. Pauline called it my *grand passion*, and I suppose she was right. I know I was never far away from writing and publishing for very long during my entire career. And if I couldn't write books, at least I could do shorter articles for magazines and newspapers. Besides the *Alberta Historical Review*, I wrote for such publications as *Plains Anthropologist*, *Montana Magazine of History*, and the *Calgary Herald*. I also did a few specialty things, like a chapter for the book *The Lost Lemon Mine*, in 1960; an introduction to the book *The Nose Creek Story*, in 1961; an introduction to a reprint of Jim MacGregor's fine book, *North-West of Sixteen*, in 1968; and a chapter in the book *Masterpieces of Indian and Eskimo Art from Canada*, published by the Musée de l'Homme, Paris, in 1969.

I also launched Glenbow's publishing program in 1965 with the booklet *A Blackfoot Winter Count*, followed a year later with *Jerry Potts, Plainsman*. Then in 1968 I wrote *Blackfoot Ghost Dance* and in 1969, *Indian Names for Alberta Communities*. These were all twenty to thirty pages long and remained in print right through to the end of the century. They were joined by others as time went along, the most notable being the book *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, which was a compilation of articles I had written for *Glenbow* magazine in the 1960s and 1970s. The first edition came out in 1979 and went through at least ten editions and many updates.

Also, a labour of love for me was writing short articles for the *Sun Dance Echo*, a small hand-produced one-man newspaper created by Reggie Black Plume from the Blood Reserve. During its lifespan from 1964 to 1966 I contributed numerous articles, some appearing under my byline, but most of them not. This wasn't because I was shy, but it was just that Reggie kept forgetting to put my name on them. When the paper died, it was replaced in 1968 by the *Kainai News*, a much more professional newspaper that had some decent financing. I contributed to their pages over the years until it finally ceased publication in 1992. By that time, I had been named a gold card member and was given a lifetime membership in their parent group, Indian News Media.

During my involvement with *Kainai News*, I became good friends with Everett Soop, who was a cousin of Pauline's. If I have this right, Everett's grandfather, John Healy, was a brother of Pauline's mother, Janie. In the kind of extended family situation that exists on the Blood Reserve, it means that the two of us were more-or-less relatives. I don't know about him, but I was proud to have Everett as my cousin. I had known him since he was a teenager and from the time he was first diagnosed with muscular dystrophy. His interest

was in art and mine was in writing, so we got along very well together as we shared our creative interests.

In his drinking days, Everett and I used to have a friendly insulting relationship, which was part of traditional family practice. He would insult my inaccurate histories of the Bloods and I would insult his rotten writing and miserable disposition. After he stopped drinking, we both seemed to mellow somewhat and he just insulted me for ripping off the Indians by working for a museum while I could only point out that he was still a miserable person who was impossible to get along with. Both of us seem to be refreshed by our friendly dialogue and long discussions on such wide-ranging topics as reserve politics and the state of Indian art.

Everett was educated at St. Paul's Residential School and completed his secondary education at an integrated school in Cardston. During his school years, while his brothers and friends seemed to focus their attention on rodeo and hockey, Everett liked to read poetry, listen to fine music, and become acquainted with classical literature. After he graduated from high school Everett went to the Alberta College of Art in Calgary and a number of other institutions where he studied art and journalism. Coincidentally, he came back to the reserve just as the *Kainai News* was starting and was hired on staff. I remember his first cartoon, entitled "Me and My Shadow," which appeared on July 15, 1968. It showed a puzzled Indian whose shadow was cast in the shape of a Mounted Policeman. This was a not-so-subtle poke at the police for the way that they were dogging the Indians at pow-wows and other gatherings.

Within a short time, Everett was doing four or five cartoons an issue, poking fun at his own people as often as the government and white society. One cartoon showed an Indian in a downpour at the Sun Dance saying, "You t'ink maybe we did somet'ing wrong?" Another showed a hippie saying, "God is dead," and an Indian answering, "Sometimes ah thinks Great Spirit is very ill too."

His writing in the newspaper at first was sporadic, then in 1976 he began to write a regular column entitled "Gitskenip," meaning, "You know." Like his cartoons, these columns presented in the printed word the same kind of message he was offering in his political cartoons. There were no sacred cows; the tribal council, Sun Dance, Native culture, and Indian religion were treated just as irreverently as federal politicians, local bureaucrats, and avaricious businessmen.

So great was Soop's popularity that in 1979, the best of his cartoons were reprinted in a booklet, *Soop Take a Bow*, and I was honoured when asked to

write the introduction and to help put it together. Shortly after that, Everett was elected to the tribal council, served two terms, and never went back to writing. By then his muscular dystrophy had sent him from a cane to crutches to a wheelchair and he began devoting his time to the disabled.

I always considered Everett to be a true genius, so in 1990 I convinced him to let me edit a number of articles for publication. Before this, he would never let anyone touch his work but I knew that he trusted me completely. He approved the end result and we published the book at Glenbow as *I See My Tribe Is Still Behind Me*. This title relates to one of his cartoons that shows an Indian chief with arrows sticking out of his back.

In the professional field, I joined the Canadian Historical Association's Archives Section, serving as its vice-chairman in 1961 and 1962, and chairman during the next two years. I resigned from that position to start a magazine called *Canadian Archivist*. It was a one-man effort that lasted until 1967, when I was promoted out of the archives field and no successor to edit the magazine could be found. I also wrote two pamphlets for the Archives Section – *Survey of Archivists' Positions in Canada*, and *Genealogical Services of Canadian Archives*, both published in 1963.

The year 1967 was a big one in my life when I learned I was to be made an honorary chief of the Blood tribe and inducted into the Kainai Chieftainship. I had been interested in that group since 1951, when I wrote an article on them for *The Native Voice*. It was the only group of its kind in North America, an organization of people who had been made honorary chiefs of a tribe. Membership was limited to forty living persons. I found out later that George Gooderham suggested my name to the Blood Tribal Council and they readily agreed. When Dad heard about it he donated the headdress I would receive and the family agreed I should have the name of Pauline's grandfather, *Potaina*, or Flying Chief.

On July 21st Pauline went to the reserve with her sister Nora, husband Ed, and four of our five children. I kept Lloyd with me. The next morning the two of us went to the bus depot where we met my Mother and Dad who had just come from Edmonton for the occasion. As we drove south, Dad was travelling through country he'd never seen before; Mom, on the other hand, had already been to the Gladstone farm with Pauline and me. When we passed Standoff we could see about twenty-two tepees and a bunch of tents at the campgrounds for their Standoff Indian Days.

The next day we drove to the campground and pitched a tent next door to Aunt Suzette. When everything was set up, we went to Fort Macleod, where

Abs Swinarton had a garden party for the nominees. There were five of us: Hon. Arthur Laing, Minister of Indian Affairs; Lieutenant-Governor Grant MacEwan; local farmer Jim Blackmore; Calgary industrialist and millionaire Reg Jennings; and me. After a good supply of food and a plentiful supply of drinks, we went in a cavalcade to the Indian Days. It was an extremely hot and dusty day, but there was a very large turnout, including the press. Afterwards, I was told they did the best job of induction for me of the whole group because the people knew me and I seemed to have been treated as though I belonged.

I was escorted onto the stage where I was introduced by G. Rider Davis, the mayor of Fort Macleod. After that I was ordered to strip to the waist and as I sat cross-legged on a buffalo robe, Willie Scraping White went through a ceremony with me. I was painted, prayed over, and the headdress placed on my head. When I got up, Willie gave me a little push, and announced that I had received the name of Flying Chief. It was all very impressive and I was quite flattered and gratified by this recognition on the part of the Bloods. I had always admired them as a proud and independent people and it had been beyond my wildest dreams to think I would ever be made an honorary chief of their tribe. The ceremony ended after we had smoked a pipe and performed an honouring dance.

When our twins were born, Jim Low Horn had reserved the right to name them and according to custom we could not give that honour to anyone else. After the chieftainship ceremony was over, Jim said he wanted to see us in his tepee. Pauline and I took Leah and Lois over (they were now four years old) and they went through a ceremony of their own. Willie Eagle Plume took Leah, painted her, and gave her the name of *Akai-sumyaki*, or Many Headdress Woman, while Jim named Lois *Natoy-sumyaki*, or Holy Headdress Woman. That evening there was a pow-wow and both Pauline and Lloyd wore their costumes and danced, while I sat with Richard Lancaster, author of the book *Piegan*, and we visited. All in all, it had been a wonderful day.

At the Indian days, Aunt Suzette had mentioned that she was having trouble getting her new tepee painted. It contained the pictographs of many famous Bloods, all the way back to Red Crow and Seen From Afar. After last year's Sun Dance she had asked her son, Ed Spotted Bull, to put it away in the storage shed. Instead of properly folding it, he just tossed it inside so that half of it fell on the earthen floor where it lay frozen all winter. When Suzette found it in the spring, the whole upper portion was rotten but the part with the pictographs was still intact. She arranged to have a new tepee commercially made and Ed promised to paint it. He borrowed some money from her, bought a

few tiny bottles of oil paint, and had done only a few inches when he ran out of paint and wanted more money.

At this stage, Suzette didn't know what to do. I looked at the canvas and told her I would paint the new tepee in exchange for the old damaged one. When she agreed, I took both of them to Calgary and used the huge floor in one of our warehouses to lay them out. Then, using charcoal and lead pencils, I transferred the design to the new tepee, bought several cans of canvas paint, and started to work on it. As I was working, just for fun – and to confuse future anthropologists – I put in a few pictographs, such as pointed shoulder figures, that hadn't been seen on Blackfoot pictographs for a century or more. When I finally delivered the final result to Suzette, she was as pleased as I was with the final result.

A few weeks later, I was visiting the Provincial Museum when Bruce McCorquodale asked me if Suzette Eagle Ribs was a relative of mine. When I said she was Pauline's aunt, he gave me a sly smile and told me to follow him. When they got to the storage area, he said, "I guess you don't keep very good track of your aunt. Look what she sold us." And he pointed to the tepee that I had painted only a short time earlier. When I pressed him, he admitted that the tepee hadn't actually been bought from Suzette, but from her son, supposedly acting on her behalf. I knew, of course, that Ed had stolen it but that Suzette would never do anything about it.

With a bit of a grin, I told McCorquodale and his associates that what they had before them was a tepee that had been machine made by white people at a factory, and designs painted by a white man in Calgary! There was nothing "Indian" about the whole tepee. Their glee quickly turned to chagrin. Later, however, I discovered that they made no mention of this in their records. They showed it as a Blood tepee that had belonged to Suzette Eagle Ribs. When I heard about this, I wrote to them and gave the whole story, asking that my letter be placed in their accession file. It never was, and as late as 1999, my son James told me it was on display in the museum as an Indian artifact. To say the least, I was disgusted that they would never admit their mistake and would display the tepee under false pretenses.

A year after painting the tepee I had another adventure, but this had nothing to do with Indians. I had just returned from the museum course at Williamsburg in the summer of 1968 and was cleaning up around the office when I had a call from a Mr. Myers of Heiland Exploration Co. He said that his firm had been working on Melville Island, in the High Arctic, when they found a cache left by the explorer Sir Francis McClintock in 1852. He said that

oil crews were starting to loot it and offered to help if we wanted to recover the objects

I did some reading up on the subject and found that McClintock had made several trips into the Arctic, searching for the remains of the Franklin Expedition. In 1852 while his ship was locked in the ice at Melville Bay, he had sent an expedition north to explore St. Patrick's Island. On their way, the men dragged a two-wheeled cart loaded with supplies and left it at the northwest end of the island to use in an emergency on their return. It had remained on the permafrost ever since.

I knew I could never get into the area without the necessary permits, but when I checked with Ottawa, I was told that this would take months. I then spoke to Doug McDermid and he said that the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Justice Morrow, was a good friend of his and that he would contact him. He in turn got things moving and within hours of my departure I got the necessary clearance. I contacted Panarctic Oils, the main contractor on Melville Island, and they agreed to let me ride on their charter flight that was leaving Edmonton on the night of August 23rd. So I loaded my heavy clothing, cameras, and other items into my duffle bag, and caught an evening flight to Edmonton's municipal airport.

We arrived in Yellowknife at 4 a.m. just as dawn was breaking. After an hour's wait while the pilot tried unsuccessfully to get a weather report from Melville Island, we took off again. When we were barely airborne one of the engines set up a terrible howl and misfired a few times before settling down. It was daylight by this time and I noticed that it seemed to take us ages before we got to a reasonable flying altitude. I learned later that the plane was grossly overloaded and the pilot almost turned back to Yellowknife when he couldn't get any altitude because of bad sparks plugs on the one motor.

As we approached Sherard Bay on Melville Island the clouds closed in and it wasn't until the pilot dropped low over a sea of ice floes that we could see where we were going. A few seconds later, the plane landed on a barren airstrip on a broad beach. As we got off, the cold wind hit us and even though it was August I shivered until I could get my duffle bag and put on my heavy clothes. The area was quite desolate and shrouded in fog. In the distance were some high hills which could be barely seen, and the only signs of civilization were the graded strip, two villages of trailers (one for Panarctic and the other for United Geophysical), piles of gas cans, and a number of helicopters and small aircraft.

I was supposed to have been met by men from Heiland Exploration who were going to fly me inland to the McClintock site, but they were nowhere to be found. After a few enquiries, I learned that the whole crew was up in the hills and completely fogged in. One cheerful soul told me that the area could be fogged in for weeks at a time. So what was I to do? Here I was, a hitch-hiker stranded on an Arctic Island about two hundred miles from the magnetic North Pole!

But the fog had also trapped a crew heading for Rae Point, so when they put up two sleeping tents, each containing five double bunks, I quietly picked an upper and no one objected. I also followed them when they went to a cook trailer operated by Panarctic and had no problem in getting a fine meal. Nobody asked who I was or what I was doing there.

The next morning was a Sunday but you wouldn't know it. Business went on as usual. I was awakened by the cook's bell at 6 a.m. and when I looked outside, the camp was still fogged in. Mike McCombe of Roving Exploration Services, who was flying a single-engined Courier to geophysical sites, said he'd be glad to take me to the McClintock site. With navigator Tom Reynolds we flew about sixty-five miles northwest, passing over herds of caribou and muskox until we reached the general area of the site. But as we crossed a small bay filled with ice floes we came to a solid wall of fog that extended right down to the ground. McCombe pointed, shook his head, and turned back to the airstrip. There was no way he could approach the site.

Next morning, the sky around our camp was overcast, and soon it started to drizzle. By late afternoon, there were a few snow flurries and the hills were turning white, which was a dire sign of things to come. It was late August but almost the end of the summer season for the island.

The following day, Tuesday, was my fourth at Sherard Bay, and other than making a bunch of friends, I hadn't done much. Shortly before noon, I saw a long thin line of men walking towards the camp. They proved to be the Heiland crew, who had left everything behind. They had abandoned their camp two days earlier and travelled in two Bombardiers. One vehicle had broken down about twenty-five miles away, so the ten men had all piled into the last machine. It had run out of gas about eight miles away so they ended up making the final trek on foot. They hadn't eaten for two days, had no sleeping bags, and were a pretty tired bunch. Their arrival confirmed that I could expect no support from them.

On Wednesday, August 28th, I was told that Heiland had chartered a Fairchild and it would be arriving at 5 p.m. to pick up the crew. I was booked

on that flight and if I missed it there was no guarantee as to when I would get out. Then, at 3 p.m., Mike McCombe told me he was taking a load of dynamite to a seismic rig that was about thirty miles from the cairn, and if I wanted to go with him, he'd see if we could get to the site. I knew it would be cutting it fine, but the whole purpose of the trip had been to salvage the site, so I agreed. I took the place of the co-pilot and the plane taxied to the end of the runway. I discovered that this was where the dynamite was stored, far from the living quarters. Several boxes were loaded in our plane and we took off. It was a fine day and I saw the sun for the first time since my arrival. We had an easy flight to a seismic rig working on the edge of Eldridge Bay, and there Mike landed on the tundra and unloaded his supplies. From there we proceeded on to Sabine Bay, but all we had for guidance was an X marked on my map by one of the Heiland crew. When we could not see any signs of the cache the pilot spent half an hour making sweeps back and forth. At last he said he had only enough gas for one more sweep but, as luck would have it, we finally saw the two-wheeled cart that marked the site.

Here is what I wrote:

After circling the site, the pilot said the valley was too water logged for a safe landing, so he checked a hill about a mile away. It was strewn with small boulders and rocks but he picked a spot and brought us in for a perfect, although bone-shattering, landing. He taxied to a spot on a hill about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the cart and we walked down the rocky slope to the cache... As we approached the cart, we could see cans and rotten fabrics strewn around. The cart looked to be in perfect condition, with wheels about four feet high... Most of the objects were within 15 feet of the cart, although fragments of canvas were seen 50 to 100 feet away. On the cart itself were a few soggy and rotten fragments of clothing which fell to pieces when touched. A saw, some shot containers and a pemmican cutting board were among the mess. We carried two loads up the hill then found that a third trip was necessary, making $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles of walking for each of us. By this time it was 7:10 p.m. and we had been at the site for exactly two hours and ten minutes... Regretfully, and with a feeling that the job had not been fully completed, I helped the pilot to attach some seismograph ribbons to the cart and poles, to make it easier to see for the person who, hopefully, might pick up the cart for us."⁹⁴

We landed back at Sherard Bay at 8 p.m. and saw that the Fairchild sitting on the strip. I was thankful it was still there, for I had fully expected it would have left and I would have been stranded. At it happened, the Heiland crews had refused to board because two of their men still hadn't been brought out from their base camp. As a result, the departure had been postponed until the following day. That gave me time to scrounge boxes and twine and to pack the McClintock material for shipping. The objects included tin cans, crocks, shoes, coins, lead shot, tools, part of a tent, woollen stockings, sleigh runners, rope, shovel, and a host of other objects. I worked right through until midnight, then had a full meal at the United Geophysical camp before turning in for the night. I was completely exhausted but very satisfied.

Next morning, August 29th, I went to the Fairchild and was surprised to meet a *Calgary Herald* reporter who was in the north and had heard about my little expedition. Also, I met for the first time the field manager of Heiland who was supposed to have made all the arrangements for me at Sherard Bay. He had been told nothing about it.

When everyone was on board, the Fairchild tried to take off but got stuck in the muddy sand. We all got off and watched while the wheels were dug out and the plane moved to a harder surface. At last, at 11 a.m. we took off, made refuelling stops at Lady Franklin and Yellowknife, and got to Calgary at 8 p.m. It had been 29° on Melville Island and 70° in Calgary. I hadn't bathed for a week, had slept in my clothes, and Pauline said I smelled like a dead skunk. But the trip had been successful and we had salvaged some excellent items.

In the following spring, I had a phone call from the Edmonton airport saying that they had a cart there for me, and what should they do with it? I learned that just before Sherard Bay was closed for the winter, one of the helicopter pilots had flown out to the site and brought the cart back in a net. He had unloaded it at the airstrip and attached a tag to it, asking any aircraft deadheading back to Edmonton to take it with them and to call me. I arranged for a transport truck to pick it up and we soon had it safe and sound in our warehouse. All in all, it had been quite a trip. It had been the co-operation of the individual pilots that had made it a huge success. And it had cost Glenbow nothing but a week of my time and an airline ticket to Edmonton.



Perhaps I should end this chapter with a few comments and observations about people I knew during this period.

The first is Bill Marsden, who was one of my closest friends. We had known each other in Edmonton when I was a writer and he was a photographer and we went on many assignments together. Bill was a very talented and exuberant individual. He was a good photographer, had a good business head, and his enthusiasm knew no bounds. He was very unhappy with the government, so when I moved to Calgary I was glad we were able to hire him at Glenbow. He did some good things while he was with us, but he was too much of an entrepreneur to stay around for very long. When the chance arose he went into private business and started Canawest Films. He moved from still photography to movies and did some fine work, both creative and commercial. Finally, he was lured back to the Alberta government and ultimately became the Film Commissioner in Edmonton.

A completely different kind of person was Albert Lightning. He was from Hobbema and a successful farmer. He had become quite interested in the Indian Association of Alberta and was a good spokesman for his people, whether in English or Cree. He was elected President of the Association in 1955, lost to Dad in the following year, and was re-elected in 1957. He served one term and then decided that he would pursue other interests.

I got to know Albert quite well and had a lot of respect for him. He was a quiet person with a low sonorous voice and a fairly strong Cree accent. I don't know the level of his education, but he struck me as one of those people who had educated himself and had done a good job of it. He usually wore a business suit with vest but still looked like a farmer.

During the 1961 Calgary Stampede I met Albert and we had a long talk. I'd heard that he had moved from politics to religion but I didn't know any of the details. After some general chatter, he told me what had happened. About eight years earlier, while foreman of a road crew near Lake Louise, he saw a bright light overhead and a figure floated down to earth. He recognized it as the spirit of Hector Crawler, once a great chief of the Stoneys. He was dressed in Indian attire and had a robe wrapped around him. This spirit told Albert that he had been chosen to lead his people back to their old beliefs. This was the first of several meetings with Crawler, during which time Albert was taught a number of ceremonies. One time, he asked Crawler whether he should continue his work with the Indian Association. The spirit said that if the group ever spoke in favour of liquor, he should leave them. In 1959, when

the matter was discussed at the Hobbema conference, Albert gave up his membership and had nothing to do with them from that time onward. Instead, he began learning the curing ceremonies of his people and had a small group of followers at Hobbema, Sunchild, and other Cree reserves.

A year later when I was in Hobbema I dropped by Albert's house. He told me he'd made a lot of progress since the last time we met. He was now travelling around the West, and even into the United States, answering the calls from people who were ill and wanted to be treated. Sometime later he told me, "I've had quite a few blackouts lately. My trouble comes from helping people. You know that people are always coming to me to be cured. The way I help these people is to take their sickness into my own body. If I'm successful in doing that, then they are cured. Then I have to get rid of it. It's pretty hard on me sometimes, I suffer a lot. But that's what I have to do if I'm going to cure them."⁹⁵ I kept in touch with Albert over the years and he remained faithful to his calling until his death. He never was involved in politics again but devoted his life to ceremonialism and curing the sick.

Another person who impressed me was George Pocaterra. We invited him to be a speaker at our Historical Society meeting in 1963, and he showed up with his wife, Norma Piper. They had a fascinating history. George came to western Canada from Italy in 1903, was a trapper in the foothills, and then established the Buffalo Head Ranch. In the late 1930s, on a visit back to the Old Country, he met Norma, a Calgary girl, who was studying opera and had sung at a number of opera houses in Italy. They fell in love and were married. At the Historical Society meeting, George told about his early days in the West and his life with the Stoneys. It was a fascinating address and he agreed that we could publish it in *Alberta Historical Review*.⁹⁶

Pauline and I struck up an immediate friendship and we visited them on several occasions in their home just behind Viscount Bennett High School. One thing that impressed us was the fact that the two of them seemed to be as much in love then as when they were first married. They sat beside each other whenever possible, held hands, and were just like a couple of newlyweds. Yet they seemed such a contrast, for Norma was definitely elitist and refined while her husband was rough-hewn. We were usually invited for tea, and it was a formal affair in the old English tradition. George, with his gruff and slightly Italian accent, liked to talk about his experiences with the Indians. I think that's why we got together, for they both admired Pauline.

I met Norma a number of times after George died, and one day I asked her how she had been able to carry on when they had been so close. She replied

that there had been so much love between them that it would sustain her for the rest of her life. She missed him but she knew he was still with her in her heart. It was very touching.

Sometime later I had a phone call from Norma's brother. He had come from Montreal to put her in an extended care centre and was arranging to sell the house. Norma had told him to call me and for me to pick up a painting of George that I had admired. When I got to the house, I learned that the contents were going to be sold at auction. As I poked around, I found some wonderful stuff and asked if we could have it for Glenbow. The brother checked with Norma and she agreed. When Ron Getty and I went through the house, we were overwhelmed. In the basement we found a number of wardrobes containing the costumes that Norma had worn for her operatic roles in Italy. We also found some touching love letters in Italian when George was back at his ranch and Norma was singing opera. And there were many other ranching and pioneer objects which were a wonderful addition to Glenbow's collections. But the greatest, in my view, were the costumes that reflected Norma's role in opera and reminded me of her lifelong love affair with George.

I could go on and on, talking about the fine people I knew during this period. But there were others who weren't always so fine. Among them were the Europeans who had a very romantic idea about the Canadian Indians and in their own way were Indian wannabees.

Often these people turned up at the Calgary Stampede, where they wanted to see "real" Indians. Unfortunately, some thought they would be exactly like those painted by George Catlin in the 1830s and still lived in the same fashion. They had a hard job accepting the fact that they now lived in houses, not tepees; rode in cars and trucks, not horses; and wore jeans and jackets, not buckskins. The Germans were the most frequent visitors, having been influenced by the writings of novelist Karl May. One time, a German woman arrived at the village apparently with the idea that she would marry an Indian. And she did. She married Eddie One Spot from the Sarcee Reserve and they had a long life together. She donned a buckskin dress for pow-wows and presumably fulfilled her dream. As for Eddie, some years earlier he had taken my wife as his adopted daughter, so we knew him very well. He credited his German wife for saving his life. He said he probably would have drunk himself to death had she not come along, got him to stop drinking, and really looked after him. His was one of the happier stories.

Then there was Karl Mueller. He was a nice guy and was really taken up with Indian dancing and costumes. When he was dressed for a pow-wow he

outshone the real Indians with his outfit and danced with the best of them. When Indians asked him where he got his outfits, he told them that he had made them himself. As a result, several dancers ordered complete outfits from the German hobbyist. I knew Karl and liked him; he was living with Dora Plaited Hair, one of Pauline's old friends.

A slightly different situation evolved with an English woman named Gisela. According to a press report⁹⁷ she was an associate of the Royal College of Art who became enamoured with Indians after hearing a Grey Owl lecture in London. From Grey Owl she received the name of a "pen pal," Antoine Commanda from northern Ontario. She came to Canada after the war, married him, and thus legally became a registered Indian. They were together for eight years before splitting up, after which she seemed to have wandered around the Six Nations Reserve, then west to Hobbema. In the spring of 1964 she showed up in Cardston and pitched her tent at the south end of the Blood Reserve. There was a lot of gossip and speculation about her, and then one day one of the Blood chiefs came and took her home. She lived with him for a while, then just as suddenly disappeared, apparently to the West Coast. I met her once but I never did get the rest of the strange story.

A more complex person was a man named Adolf Hungry Wolf. He came to my office one day in the late 1960s and said that he was from California and that his grandmother was a Flathead Indian. I found him to be a very pleasant young man who seemed quite interested in learning about Blackfoot culture. Apparently he had stayed at the Indian Days in Browning and became friends with Jim White Calf, and then went to the Blood Reserve. He had a white wife named Carol and two small children.

A short time later, he moved to Golden, B.C., and I saw him fairly frequently as he came to Glenbow to study documents and books in our collections. Then in 1970 he produced his first local book, *Good Medicine: Life in Harmony with Nature*. He was a very good writer, something in the vein of James Willard Schultz, but more romantic and idealistic in nature, similar to the Good Earth and hippie authors of that time. He wrote of the true meaning of life, of spiritualism found in Nature, and of knowledge that came from the Old Ones. The rest of the book gave hobbyists instructions on how to do beadwork, make sweatlodges, make moccasins, and build cabins. It was obviously written as a guide and inspiration for the hippies and Indian wannabes. Adolf did not look Indian so I thought it was very nice that he was pursuing a study of his Native roots.

From 1970 to 1977 a veritable avalanche of Good Medicine books came off the press, at least fifteen of them. Gradually Hungry Wolf's emphasis shifted, or broadened, to include descriptions of Blackfoot life and religion, taken mostly from published sources and interviews. I was a little disturbed that some of these writings did not give credit to his sources, but I concluded that as he was writing for a popular market, he didn't consider it necessary.

During this time, most people accepted him for what he said he was – a part Native who was interested in Indians. In an interview in 1975, a Calgary newspaper described him as “a native of the Flathead Indian Reserve in Montana.”⁹⁸ By this time, his white wife had dropped out of the picture and he married a Blood girl, Beverly Little Bear. Her grandfather, Pat Weaselhead, was a senior adviser to the sacred Horn Society and deeply involved in Native religious life.

In the mid-1970s, rumours began to filter back to me from the reserve saying that Hungry Wolf was not an Indian at all but a German whose name was Schmidt, or something like that. Matters came to a head when the radical American Indian Movement put out a “wanted” poster with his picture on it and the inscription “Wanted – Adolph Hungry Wolf Schmidt for the exploitation of Indian People.”⁹⁹ Accompanying it was a letter from Nelson Small Legs, Jr., southern Alberta director of AIM. It called Hungry Wolf “a dishonest imposter [who is] disguised as an Indian person who is stealing our culture, taking our sacred pipe and setting himself as some kind of Messiah.”¹⁰⁰ It also contained the veiled threat that “Hungry Wolf's time is near.”

Shortly after it came out, Hungry Wolf came to see me. As I noted in my diary, “He is very concerned about a threat he received ... He has a book coming out on the Bloods in March & is also worried about repercussions, as he says it contains material on the Horns & Old Women's Societies. He is a strange person – sometimes I think he is a sincere & well meaning oddball, and at other times I feel it is a mask for a very shrewd and calculating person who is making a good living for himself under the guise of being a pseudo-Indian ‘holy man.’ I don't know which is right.”¹⁰¹

Then the proverbial hit the fan later in 1977 when his book, *The Blood People*, was released by a leading New York publisher, Harper and Row. Probably the most vociferous response to it came from the First Rider family. Some years earlier, George First Rider had made extensive tapes about his life that he sold to the Provincial Museum of Alberta. Hungry Wolf gained access to translations of these and used them extensively in such a manner that one might assume the interviews came from the writer himself. The only problem

was that First Rider had some derogatory things to say about people, including his own wife. First Rider's grandson was furious. "Who is this man Adolf Hungry Wolf who calls himself a Blood?" he asked. "He brings disrespect upon my family and above all my grandmother."¹⁰² Hungry Wolf apologized but the damage was done. This book, plus his earlier theft of a medicine bundle from the Provincial Museum while the Horn Society was in the process of trying to get it back legally, made him *persona non grata* on the reserve.

As for me, I was disappointed on two counts. First, Hungry Wolf continued to project the image that he was an Indian, using such terms as "our old people," "our medicine pipe bundles," and "our songs," even though by now it was common knowledge that his birth name was Adolf Gutohrlein. He had been born in Germany, came to California when he was nine, and attended California State University in Long Beach. Before coming to Canada he had published two books on railroads.

My second concern was that I had gone out of my way to help him, permitting him to get scores of photographs from Glenbow for study purposes. The arrangement was that if he published them, Glenbow was to collect its usual permissions fee. When the book came out, I was disturbed to see that he had credited Glenbow for only a few of the photos. Rather, he gave credit to the original photographer or the person who had donated the pictures to us, giving the impression that the Glenbow had not been his primary source. And, if I recall correctly, he never did pay the permission fees, even for the photos that were credited to us. At that point, my disillusionment with this Indian wannabee was complete.

After his sobering experience with the Bloods, Hungry Wolf began writing books in German for overseas sales and went back to his first love, railroads. He returned from time to time to attend medicine pipe ceremonies and pow-wows, and in 2006 produced a four-volume illustrated work entitled *The Blackfoot Papers*. By this time our friendship had come to an end.

Another immigrant from Europe was a Welshman named John Hellson. He arrived in Calgary about 1960, perhaps drawn here because of the Indians. He became an orderly at the Keith Sanatorium, where there were a number of Indian patients, and became friends with them. We met Hellson socially a number of times and found him to be a very pleasant man. Sometime later he married Diane Melting Tallow, whose father Dave worked for the Provincial Museum. Hellson received the Blackfoot name of Yellow Fly and was well known under that name. He described himself as an ethnologist when he

worked with botanist Morgan Gadd to produce the book *Ethnobotany of the Blackfoot Indians*.¹⁰³

Hellson gradually slipped into the professional museum business, first as a contractor and then as a dealer. He worked very briefly for the Provincial Museum of Alberta and the Museum of Man and Nature and was fired from Glenbow in 1976 after he got into a fist fight with our ethnology cataloguer. Later he brought in a “rare” pictograph robe containing the exploits of Charcoal, a famous Blood fugitive. As I examined it, I was convinced right away it was a fake, for Charcoal had depicted himself on the robe wearing a fringed jacket that could be seen in the only known photograph of him. However, the jacket had belonged to the photographer who took the picture, so there was no reason it should show up in such a robe. Also, Hellson brought in a collection of Iroquois silver and when we checked with museums in the East, we were told it had been floating around for years and was highly suspect.

In 1981 he was arrested in San Francisco and charged with stealing priceless artifacts from the R.H. Lowie Museum at the University of California. Some 250 artifacts valued at more than \$500,000 were stolen supposedly while he was doing research. According to the *Globe & Mail*,

When Mr. Hellson showed up at the Lowie last December, he said he was a field researcher with the anthropology department at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta. He said he had done extensive research work among more than a dozen Indian tribes in Canada and the United States and wanted access to the Lowie’s Plains Indian materials, particularly medicine bundles used by the shamans.¹⁰⁴

On gaining access to the museum, according to the newspaper report, he took a number of items, mostly netsuke, small Japanese carvings in ivory and wood. He was reportedly caught when a dealer tried to sell Bill Holm a Tlingit “soul catcher” that the anthropologist immediately recognized. The dealer said she had obtained it from Hellson. Shortly thereafter the “grey-bearded, blue-eyed, 49-year-old confidence man” was arrested but only 90 of the missing items were recovered.¹⁰⁵ He was sentenced to two years.

