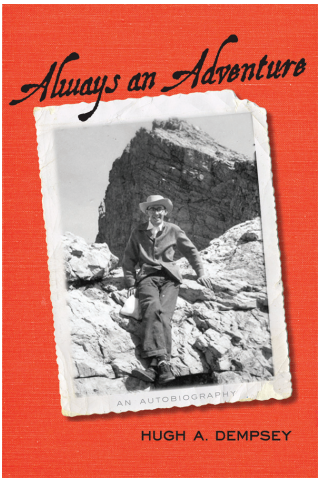


ALWAYS AN ADVENTURE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY
by Hugh A. Dempsey
ISBN 978-1-55238-568-5

Acknowledgement: *We acknowledge the wording around open access used by Australian publisher,* **re.press**, *and thank them for giving us permission to adapt their wording to our policy* http://www.re-press.org/content/view/17/33/

10

The Cameron Years

The appointment of Duncan Cameron as Executive Director of Glenbow in the fall of 1977 was like a breath of fresh air. Our whole world suddenly changed. As soon as he assumed complete control, he proved to be the finest CEO we ever had, before or since. He had been the director of the Brooklyn Museum and brought with him a level of professionalism previously unknown to the organization. The only person who might have come even close to him was Jack Herbert, but even he wasn't in the same league. I know some would disagree with my comments, as Duncan was a very controversial figure, but that's the way I saw it.

Duncan was appalled at what he found at Glenbow. Not only were we in financial turmoil, but the administrative structure was a mess. Although we had some fine collections and a few good staff, we had none of the systems in place that he felt were essential for the running of an efficient and successful museum. When he came, he had a mandate to change this. As he later said, the Board of Governors "wanted to turn Glenbow around and wanted to build a strong professional staff, raise the profile of Glenbow, and become a professional institution that was taken seriously not just in Canada, but elsewhere."[127] In the first few months, he did much to accomplish these goals. He had written policies developed for ethics, acquisitions, exhibitions, loans, staff development, etc. He also prepared the first list of goals which reinforced the principle of a western Canadian focus, but adding that it would be told in "an international context of human history, art and culture."[128]

Then he took the Ethnology Department out of mothballs, where it had languished for a year, and established Central Registration and Conservation departments. He also initiated a computerized cataloguing program which became part of a national registration system.

In addition, a considerable amount of reorganizing and new staffing took place. I was appointed Assistant Director (Collections) with the responsibility for the Library, Archives, Ethnology, Art, Cultural History, Military History, Conservation, and Education departments. I was also put in charge of several committees of the Board, including a new Acquisitions Committee which had monthly meetings to approve both accessions and de-accessions. The latter is an oxymoronic term for "getting rid of things." My other favourite oxymoron was "permanent loan."

When the new museum building was designed, I had carved out an office for myself on the sixth floor, beside the Library and Archives. I was part of the management team, but away from the rarefied atmosphere of the executive suite on the eighth floor. This way, I could spend less than half my time on administration and the rest working with historians and, admittedly, doing some of my own research. However, after my new appointment, Duncan moved me up to the executive suite. For years I had been able to avoid full administrative duties, leaving time for things that were important to me, but Duncan must have seen that, and located me next to his office where he could keep an eye on me. I guess it was a good idea, and although I managed to sneak in some research time, it was quite a change. Mind you, I didn't mind administration, as I had been doing it ever since I joined Glenbow, but I wanted to balance it with something more creative.

As Cameron brought in such professional people as Program Director Barbara Tyler and Registrar Annik-Louise Bawden, and encouraged existing staff, the face of the museum began to change. A year after his arrival, Glenbow had its first real international show, the art of Pablo Picasso. Admission was charged for the first time and the response was excellent. This was followed by the "Treasures of Ancient Nigeria," with Calgary being the only Canadian venue after showings in New York, Detroit, San Francisco, and Washington. At the same time, Duncan got the staff busy organizing its own travelling exhibitions, beginning with photographic presentations such as the Hutterites, Plains Indians, and Western Alienation. By 1981 we had twenty-two exhibitions "on the road."

This had a great impact on all of us. Departments that were accustomed to looking inwards to their own collections now were busily engaged in planning and fielding shows. As I mentioned in one report, "almost every curatorial department was heavily involved with exhibitions. Even the Library and Archives, which are normally considered to be concerned with reference

services to the public, devoted an extensive amount of time to the exhibitions aspect of Glenbow's operations."

During these years, I had a steady stream of visitors. Many were visiting professionals, local journalists, businessmen, etc., but many were Indians. Eleanor Brass, Louis Soop, Willie Big Bull, Rick Tailfeathers, and Russell Wright were just a few.

There were two particularly interesting visitors, or at least the outcome of their visits was interesting. The first was Adolphus Weasel Child, who had worked with me on the Sun Dance film. He was my wife's sister-in-law's brother-in-law. He came in one day just for a visit, and while he was there I showed him around our Ethnology storage area. As we passed by some new accessions he pointed to a roach dancing headdress and said, "Where in the hell did you get that?" I said we bought it the day before from a Blackfoot Indian. Adolphus' surprise was understandable when he explained that the headdress was his and that he had loaned it on Friday to a friend. The man was supposed to have worn it to a dance on Saturday and returned it to Adolphus. On Monday we bought it. I asked Adolphus if he wanted the headdress back. He said, "No, just tell me how much you paid him for it, and I'll get the money out of the other guy."

The other visitor was Peter Many Wounds, from the Sarcee Reserve. Pete and I had been great friends ever since Pauline and I moved to Calgary and we always had something to talk about. His wife, Muriel, was the daughter of Ralph and Isobel Steinhauer, and Pauline had gone to Alberta College with her.

Pete and Muriel were an odd couple. Pete was a big, gruff Sarcee with a limited education, while Muriel was a schoolteacher, and quite refined. Both were highly intelligent people in their own ways and Pete showed the potential of being a great leader if he could control his battle with liquor. Gradually, however, booze got the better of him, and he slipped out of his family situation and onto the streets of Calgary. Glenbow was located at the edge of a slum area and more than once when I came to work in the early morning I saw Pete among the homeless and unfortunates who had probably slept in neighbouring alleys. Pete sometimes saw me but deliberately never acknowledged my presence.

Then, one morning I had just entered my office when I had a call from the security person at the front desk. When he heard my voice, he asked me if Mr. Dempsey was there. This was a well-used code to indicate that there was a drunk or other undesirable asking for me, probably to borrow money. I

would ask the name, recognize one of the usual east Calgary crowd, and say I wasn't in. In this instance, the security person said the visitor was Pete Many Wounds. I said to send him up. The security person asked me if I was sure, and was obviously worried. Even if someone was a friend or relative coming to borrow money, I would usually go down to the front desk, not invite them upstairs to the executive suite. I insisted it was okay, and a short time later, Pete was delivered to my office under an escort, not left to come up on his own. I told the security person everything was okay and to leave us, and he did, the worry lines still in his brow.

Pete looked like death warmed over. His clothes were dirty and unkempt, and his face showed the ravages of alcohol and street life. While we had coffee, Pete told me that he had awakened in an alley a short time earlier, and as he lay there, he said to himself, "Pete, what are you trying to do? Kill yourself?" For the first time in almost ten years, he really looked at himself and his wasted life. As I said, he was highly intelligent, and when he faced up to his life, he didn't like what he saw. I was very flattered that the first person he wanted to see was his old friend – or perhaps it was just that I was the closest.

Pete and I spent a long time just talking. He didn't say much about his life on the streets, but rather, what he would like to do with his life. He knew he had to quit drinking, but now that he saw it as the pivotal point between life and death, he appeared ready to face it head-on. I gave Pete some money (which he returned within the month) and he headed for his reserve. He was not able to return to his family situation but lived nearby. Over the next few months, he had one more short binge and that was it. He stopped drinking. His old friends supported him and a position was found for him in the tribal administration. Most fittingly, it related to alcohol counselling work.

It could have been a story with a happy ending, but it wasn't. The ravages of liquor and street life were so disastrous that Pete died about a year later. I am saddened when I think of him; he was the perfect example of the fact that education and wisdom are not necessarily the same. Pete was wise but he never really had much of a chance to use his wisdom. But, as they say, blood will tell. His sons, Dean and Peter, have done very well for themselves. Peter is playing a prominent role in Sarcee economic development and in the delicate and sometimes thorny dealings with the adjacent City of Calgary.

Unfortunately, Pete wasn't the only tragedy I encountered. When speaking to a gathering of provincial judges in Lethbridge, I recall saying to them that many of my friends from my twenties were now dead, almost all due to alcohol. Even in our own family, the bottle became a disruptive force but there

was a strength of will among the Gladstones that enabled them to fight it and ultimately to overcome it.

When Duncan joined Glenbow, the initial relationship between him and the Board was quite positive. Some years earlier, when I had attended a seminar for historical administrators in Virginia, we were told that the best balance for a museum was to have a strong Board and a strong Director. I am sure this is true, but if both parties are too strong, it can lead to trouble. Duncan's approach to the Board was to be forthright. At times when he was instructed to do something he did not feel was right, he had no hesitation in saying no. Unfortunately, such occasions usually involved Don Harvie or Hod Meech, who were both powerful figures unto themselves. Neither side was afraid of a fight, nor of expressing their candid opinions.

My wife Pauline was quite active at this time. In 1975 she had helped organize an Anglican conference in Yellowknife, entitled "Women of Three Cultures." This referred to white, Native, and Inuit women. She took her fashion show of Blackfoot women's costumes with her where it was very well received. However, on the way home, Western Airlines forgot to take her stuff off the plane and it ended up in the United States. When the dresses were returned to Calgary, the Customs people at first refused to allow entry because of the existence of eagle feathers and other forbidden objects. Finally, they said they would allow the shipment in if was approved by someone from the National Appraisal Board in Calgary. One of the members' names they had on their list was Hugh Dempsey! Naturally, it was approved and logic prevailed over bureaucracy.

Three years later, the collection was southbound again when Pauline was invited to the first Plains Indian Seminar organized by the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody, Wyoming. Here she met collectors and Indian enthusiasts from all across the United States and felt very much at home when she saw Jack Ewers and his wife Marge. The seminar went on to become an important annual event and Pauline was lauded in later years for being on the initial program.

In 1977, our whole family world was turned upside down when our youngest daughter, twelve-year-old Lois, lost her fight with renal disease and had to be put on dialysis. Three times a week we had to take her to the hospital and

watched with aching hearts while she was hooked up to all the tubes and wires needed for the three-hour cleaning of her blood. In those times, she was of more help to us than we to her, as she was cheerful and upbeat to a point that made us both ashamed and proud.

The doctors said she was a good candidate for a transplant but we had to wait six months for the first attempt. Then, after two agonizing weeks, the kidney was rejected and she was back on dialysis. In the months that followed, Lois got on with her life, but in a different way than one might have expected. She began to devote her attention to other patients, assisting the nurses, and even helping new patients in getting started and allaying their fears about the process. As a result of her efforts she was named Renal Patient of the Year.

She had a second unsuccessful transplant in November 1982, a third in May 1983, and a fourth in October 1983. This was tragic enough, but it was worse to know that most, if not all, had been due to something euphemistically called surgical error. It meant simply that the doctor had screwed up. I know in one instance he attached the kidney to the wrong vein. In 1985, now twenty, she was thoroughly disillusioned with the surgeon in Calgary, particularly as there were some rumours circulating about his alcohol problem. So she contacted the renal people in Toronto but was told they had no room to dialyse her there, that she would have to stay in Calgary. However, she decided to go anyway, saying she would die on their doorstep if they turned her down. Of course, they had to accept her so she got on their transplant list and worked as a chef in that city.

At one point she returned to Calgary, and while here, she got word that they had a kidney for her in Toronto. We had her on an Air Canada flight within three hours. As soon as Duncan Cameron heard about it, he told me to go to Toronto as well, that Glenbow would pick up the tab for travel and expenses. I was never so grateful to anyone in my life. When I got there, I learned that the transplant itself had been successful, in spite of massive scar tissue from her previous failures, but the kidney itself had not yet started to function.

Then started the waiting game. After the kidney stabilized it began to work a little but not enough to be sure. Early signs of rejection followed so she was given a new drug to counteract it. However, she soon got into an argument with the doctors, saying she could feel that the drug was causing rejection, not stopping it. She insisted that they reduce the drug and increase her regular drug or she would refuse her medication. When the doctors reluctantly agreed, the rejection miraculously disappeared and the kidney began functioning. Sometime later, tests elsewhere did show that in some cases that drug in

question did cause rejection. Lois always said she knew her body better than the doctors did.

Shortly after my arrival, I loaned her my *iniskim* necklace that had been given to us by Bobtail Chief several years earlier. It had been owned by Red Crow's wife, Coming Singing, and was credited with providing spiritual protection to the user. This was the same *iniskim* that I had credited with saving Lois' life when her kidney first started to fail several years earlier. In Toronto, Lois was convinced that this played a major part in her kidney starting to function and when she told others about it, some patients even wanted to borrow it from her. I had stayed with Lois for the first couple of weeks and was relieved by Pauline, who came later. Finally, five months after her admission to hospital she was released with a fully functioning kidney.

Going back to publishing, I was pleased when my second major book, *Charcoal's World*, was published in 1978. This was the story of a Blood Indian who killed his wife's lover in 1896 and then became a fugitive, taking the persona of a rabid wolf. During the manhunt he killed a Mounted Policeman and finally was turned in by his own brothers. It was a well-known story on the reserve. I actually started my research in the early 1970s and picked away at it whenever I had the time. I interviewed a number of elders such as Willie Scraping White, George Calling Last, Jack Low Horn, John Yellow Horn, and Laurie Plume. I also learned that my wife's aunt had been with some girls who had discovered the lover's body and that others remembered seeing Charcoal's widow in later years when she visited the residential school.

The story of Charcoal was such a fascinating one that I felt it needed a dramatic treatment – but factual – rather than just a mere recitation of events. It was apparent to me that there were three major players in the drama – Charcoal, Indian agent James Wilson, and Mounted Police officer Samuel B. Steele. To me, Steele was such an Imperialist blowhard that he would make an ideal foil to the diminutive Charcoal. Agent Wilson was included in the story, but I placed the emphasis on the Mountie and contrasted him with Charcoal whenever possible. Also, I dealt with all the mystical elements in a straightforward way, treating them as facts in the way that the Bloods believed them.

When I included conversations in the book, I ran into critics who said I was fictionalizing the story. I explained that the conversations weren't mine; these were part of the story as told to me by the elders. The Bloods have no written language, so when an elder related an event, he was passing it down

word-for-word the way it had been told to him. Conversations were an integral part of the story, and so I included them.

When I was ready to start writing the book in the late 1970s I had a bit of trouble getting into the spirit of it. About that time I went on a business trip to New York, so I took along my little portable typewriter and notes with me and hoped I might have some spare time to work on it. That first night in New York, I was in my room when a huge thunderstorm rattled over Manhattan. Lightning was flashing through the skies and the thunder roared in sheets, seemingly echoing along the tops of the skyscrapers. It was such an awesome spectacle of nature that I suddenly felt akin with the natural world. I pulled out my typewriter and spent most of the night swinging into the rhythm of the book. From there I never looked back and a few weeks later the first draft of the manuscript was finished. I thought afterwards: what a strange place to feel close to nature, amid the steel and concrete of a faceless city.

My book was accepted for publication by Western Producer Prairie Books of Saskatoon, and its manager, Rob Sanders, became a good friend. Most publishers' contracts are pretty straightforward but in this instance I felt that the story was so good that I reserved all movie and television rights for myself, rather than turning them over to the publisher. It's a good thing I did, for I made far more money off movie options than I ever did on royalties. It's been optioned five times since it was published but a movie has never been made. I have read two movie scripts and a few story lines for the films that ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous and I collected annual option payments as long as the film makers thought there was a chance of getting it produced. But in all instances they just couldn't find the money. The big payout for me would have come if the movie had actually been made. But I didn't worry: my outlook from the beginning was that it would never come to fruition, and if it did, that would be an unexpected bonus.

As with most of my other Native books, I submitted *Charcoal's World* to the Blood tribal council before it was published to see if they had any objections. They didn't. Actually, the chief, Jim Shot Both Sides, had been most interested in the fact that I had been working on the story. Generally speaking, I really can't recall any major criticism coming to me from Native people about any of the books I have written. I was told a couple of times by white "do-gooders" that I should not write about Indians but leave that to the Indians themselves, but I never heard this from an Indian.

There was a full-page review of my book in the Blood newspaper, *Kainai News*. One comment was, "It is the author's sincere attempt to give the Indians'

point of view that humanizes the story, instead of projecting the usual stark raving mad, half-naked savage which some writers would have capitalized on for the sensationalism. Mr. Dempsey was careful not to offend the natives by using the word 'savage', unlike Pierre Berton who still uses the phrase freely."[129]

By the time this book came out, I was already working on another – the biography of Red Crow, head chief of the Bloods. Because of his position, there was quite a bit on him in the official records, but again it was the interviews with elders that gave me real insight into the career of the great chief. I had a chance to interview his son, Frank, and great grandson, Jim Shot Both Sides. I also spoke to a woman who hated him: she was descended from a part of the family that had feuded with the chief a hundred years earlier. After all those years, the resentment was still there.

If I had known Red Crow, I don't know whether I would have liked him or not. He was proud, independent, and with a lot of political savvy. But he also lacked vision and was very deep within himself. I don't know if any white man really got to know him. For quite some time I could not get started on the book because I really didn't understand him. On one hand, Red Crow had been a tough, merciless warrior, and a hard drinker who had killed his own brother in a quarrel. But he also was a respected leader who enabled the Bloods to maintain their pride and identity in the face of government bureaucracy and repression.

I always said to myself that I had to get into a person's head if I was to understand them. I think I was able to do it with others, but Red Crow was a real challenge. Finally, after speaking to a lot of people and analyzing my material, I came to the understanding that there had been massive changes in Red Crow's life. About 1870 his uncle and father had died of smallpox and he was thrust into the responsible position of head chief. This was followed immediately by the onset of the whisky trade, wherein Red Crow was powerless to halt the tragic destruction of his people. With the murder of his brother and the death of friends and relatives he became chastened and turned to a new pathway in life to guide and protect his people. When I gained this knowledge, I could see of the many parts of the story that seemed incompatible suddenly made sense. With this in mind, I launched into my book and saw it into print in 1980.

Shortly after it came out, I was approached by Don Peacock, Manager of Public Affairs for the Bank of Montreal, and Ruth Fraser, a freelance editor and a good friend of mine. I was told that the bank had acquired a number of works of art by Nicholas de Grandmaison, and they asked me if I would help

to prepare a coffee table book on the artist and his Indian portraits. I got the okay from Glenbow and started to work right away. I had two assignments. One was to write a biography of de Grandmaison, and the other was to help select the images and to write a short biography of each person. The latter was harder than it sounds, for many of the portraits were unidentified.

I knew Nick fairly well. He was a crazy old coot but a tremendous artist. I remember in the 1950s he had come to the Gladstone farm in a house trailer converted into a studio. His son was driving – I think it was Rick. I guess Nick had met my mother-in-law, Janie Gladstone, sometime before and now he wanted to paint her. "You've got a good squaw's face," he told her, apparently unaware that nobody used that term anymore. He jollied her into stopping whatever she was doing and to sit on a chair in the front yard while he did her portrait in pastels. He would not let any of us stand behind him to see what he was doing, and when it was finished he covered it with another piece of pastel paper and took it to his mobile studio.

In later years I asked him about the portrait to see if we could buy it. He said it hadn't worked out and he had destroyed it. However, in the 1990s we were at an art show in Lethbridge and there, big as life, was his portrait of my mother-in-law. It was beautiful.

When he finished the painting, Nick got into an argument with his son over something and refused to get into the trailer. Instead, he set off on foot towards Cardston, five miles away. I suppose this had happened before, as his son just followed a few dozen yards behind him in the trailer and when they were about half a mile away, Nick finally relented and got on board.

Another time, Nick contacted my father-in-law and invited him to his studio in the Palliser to sit for his portrait. I wasn't there so I don't know the details. But when my father-in-law was appointed to the Senate in 1958, Nick called me at my office and asked me when "Jim" was going to be in town. As it happened, he was coming from Ottawa in a day or so, so Nick told me he wanted to see him, that he had something for him. When Dad arrived, we went to the Palliser Hotel and upstairs to Nick's studio. What a mess! It was littered with paintings, paper, easels, paint supplies, and everything else one could imagine. I don't think the cleaning ladies ever had a chance to step inside the door.

Nick congratulated Dad on his appointment to the Senate and repeated what he told me, that he had something for him. He fished around and came up with a roll of pastel paper. When he unrolled it, there was a wonderful portrait of the Senator. Others had tried to paint him, but with his funny nose and

twinkle in his eye, no one had really succeeded. But Nick did: it was perfect. When Nick said that he wanted Dad to have it, the Senator was very flattered and accepted it. Nick then rolled it up, gave it to Dad and said, "That will be fifteen hundred dollars."

I just about dropped through the floor, but Dad was amused and gave him a cheque for the amount. He remarked later that it was one of the most expensive gifts he'd ever received.

When I started to work on the book, Nick's daughter, Sonia Szabados, kindly let me have access to her father's letters, files, and reminiscences. I was able to trace Nick from military college in Russia to the 1914 battle of Tannenberg, where he became one of the first officers captured by Germans. During his four years in prison camp he developed his art, painting portraits of German officers. Transferred to Britain after the war, he carried on with his work but was finally "encouraged" to go to Canada in 1923 after his undue attention to officers' wives, and other women, particularly Lady Dundas. He worked as a graphic artist in Winnipeg, then "discovered" the western Canadian Indians in 1930. From then on, he devoted the rest of his career to them. Over the years he produced fine portraits of Blackfoot, Blood, Stoney, Cree, and other Indians, and when he was short of money, he painted children's portraits for wealthy clients in Calgary and elsewhere.

The writing part of the book was fairly easy. My only problem was to keep it short, as the story was so fascinating that it could have filled the book without the use of the portraits.

Once the pictures had been selected, it was my task to get their biographies. Quite a number Pauline and I had known personally while in other instances I knew the family or had something in my research files about them. The problem was with those who were unidentified. Armed with colour prints, I toured the reserves and was surprised at how many names I got. Among those assisting me were Jim Small Legs, Vickie McHugh, Dave and Daisy Crowchild, John Samson, Jim Shot Both Sides, Eleanor Brass, John Yellowhorn, Eddie Bad Eagle, and others. But perhaps the most help came from my wife, who could look past the "prettiness" of Nick's portraits to see the real likenesses. Nick always made his subjects look handsome, sometimes sacrificing accuracy for art. One of the best examples of this is Shot Both Sides, a Blood chief, who was not the handsomest of men, but Nick made him look pretty good. Of the sixty-four portraits in the book, I was able to identify fifty-four and get their stories.

The book, *History in their Blood: The Indian Portraits of Nicholas de Grandmaison*, was published in 1982. It was a beautiful work, the bank sparing no expense in reproducing portraits in full colour, first class all the way.

During this same period, I saw an American coffee table book about Christmas produced by the *Saturday Evening Post*. I thought it would be great to do something on western Canada so I brought together a potpourri of data – historical events, stories, recipes, photographs, and poetry – all from the western prairies. It was published as *Christmas in the West* in 1982 but I was quite disappointed in the outcome. The first problem was that my publisher, Prairie Books, had made a good deal in buying a quality of matte finish book paper and decided to use it for all their books that year. Mine had a large number of photographs that should have been printed on semi-gloss paper where they would have looked good, but on the matte paper they were flat and unimpressive. The second problem was that I had planned the book so that it would be timeless, to be put in the book stores every September to take advantage of the Christmas trade, then stored away until next year. That is what the *Saturday Evening Post* was doing. Instead, the publisher carried it year round for a year or two and then dropped it. I still think it was a good book.

After the success of getting my various manuscripts into print through Hurtig and Prairie Books, my so-called leisure hours were spent in researching new books. I never did write my books on Glenbow time, and did very little on evenings or weekends. Rather, I waited for my holidays and tried to find a secluded place to work. I could not settle down to writing at home: there were just too many distractions and disruptions.

One year, I decided to use an abandoned house on the Gladstone farm. This was in the middle of summer, so I didn't need any heat. I went there with just my electric typewriter, research notes, sleeping bag, hot plate, and food. All the doors and windows were intact but there was nothing in the house except an old chair and table. When I checked for electricity, I found there was only one line into the house and no fuses in the box. However, with the use of a penny instead of a fuse I got one outlet working. That meant if I wanted to type, I couldn't have a lamp, so that confined me to the long daylight hours. And if I wanted to cook, everything else was shut off. Actually, this worked fine as most of my time was spent on the typewriter.

I noted my routine in my diary. What I said here was true of most of my writing:

> I always work in fits and starts which is why I have to be completely alone. I will stare at the typewriter for a while, shuffle my papers, and then perhaps type for 20 minutes. Then I'll get up, look out the window and wander back to the typewriter. Sometimes I'll stretch out on the bed for 10 minutes or at other times I might sleep for an hour. But always I gravitate back to the typewriter and work for another 20 minutes to half an hour – seldom any longer than that without a break.[130]

As I sat in the rickety chair in that old house, I could look through a window to see Chief Mountain, and I could hear meadowlarks, crows, bees, and other sounds of nature. I quite liked it. All I had for company was a huge spider in a corner near the ceiling. He was there when I came and there when I left. I figured he lived there and I was a guest, so I left him alone. Including his furry legs, he was about half the size of a saucer, but there was no red hourglass design on his body denoting a black widow, so I decided he was harmless.

When I was ready to do a book on Big Bear in the summer of 1982, I used my notes from his grandson Four Souls as a beginning point, supplemented with scads of material in the National Archives, old newspapers, diaries, trial documents, and other sources. Then I hit the trail to the Cree reserves to see what I could find. My first stop was Hobbema, where my old friend Johnny Samson explained the difference between the words for hanging, and for having a rope around one's neck, which was essential to the book. The first implies criminal behaviour and the latter the loss of freedom. In his 1876 speech, Big Bear was referring to the latter, but was accused of the former – a misunderstanding that dogged him for the rest of his life. Interestingly, when I was lecturing to Native inmates in Calgary, I was asked if it was true that under the treaty no Indian could be hanged for murder. I was puzzled by the question until I realized that it probably came from the misunderstanding with Big Bear. The mistranslation of Big Bear's words was published and the word must have spread about his request that he was asking never to be hanged. I was surprised that this story in a somewhat garbled form had filtered its way down to a young inmate a century later.

The next day I drove to the Poundmaker and Little Pine reserves. I knew John Tootoosis but when I stopped at the Poundmaker band office for directions I was given a very unfriendly reception. I then drove to Tootoosis' house and after I knocked on the door, it was opened an inch or two by a very suspicious woman who told me that Johnny was away. All this time the

sky was grey and moody, but when I crossed over onto the Little Pine reserve it suddenly became bright and sunny. I could feel the friendliness in the air. I went to the band office and there I met a bunch of young men. They were very interested in what I was doing and when I asked about an interpreter, one of the men, Gavin Baptiste, suggested his uncle, Joe Kennedy. The differences between the two reserves was as absolute as night and day.

Kennedy agreed to be my interpreter and so we toured the reserve. We saw Napachit, Allen Sapp, Alex Bonaise, and Lucy Favel, all of whom had good information. But the best interview of the day came from John Sokwapance. I made the following notation about our meeting: "Sokwapance is 97 years old and when we found him, it was a hot day. He had left his house and had gone down into the trees. He was sitting in the shade of his turkey house and we had the interview while turkeys gobbled and gobbled around."[131] John had a number of wonderful stories to tell about Big Bear, including his youth and his spiritual powers.

The following day I went to the Sweetgrass Reserve, where I met Alphonse Little Poplar and his wife. Alphonse not only had a lot of information for me, but it was the beginning of a good friendship. He had an avid interest in the past and was considered to be the historian of the band. He later wrote me a number of long letters about the history of the area and went out of his way to interview Mrs. Annie White Calf about Big Bear, after which he sent me a six-page letter of his findings.

Sometime later I was able to return his kindness when he told me he had been separated from his sister fifty years earlier and wanted to find her. They had been in Battleford Indian Residential School together and when she left he never heard from her again. All he knew was that her name was Marie Louise and that she had married someone named Ward. I made a number of calls to friends and when that produced no results I contacted the Indian Affairs Branch in Edmonton. They came up blank but passed my letter along to Hobbema, Battleford, and Lesser Slave Lake. I then wrote letters to the editor to *The Windspeaker* and other Native newspapers, asking if anyone knew the whereabouts of Marie Louise.

In April 1985 I got the following letter from Alphonse, "To day I am the happiest man around. It would take some doing to find a happier man. I have located Mary Louise. This morning I received in the mail a letter from her... Hugh, thank you again the part you played in making this happen. In fact if it wasn't for you it would not have happened."[132] He then attached the letter from Mary Louise, which said, in part, "My dear brother, It is so hard for me

and I don't know what to say. I am so happy to hear from you through the Native paper. I would be happy to see you. Yes, I am married to James Ward and we have been married 39 years now... Could you phone me. We live in Edmonton."[133] After that, Alphonse and I kept up our chatty correspondence until he passed away a few years later.

Returning to my research trip, I drove to Saskatoon, where I had a nice session with 93-year-old Joe Buller, grandson of Four Sky Thunder, who had played a prominent role in Big Bear's band. Joe met his grandfather for the first time in 1907. "He spoke Cree to me," he said, "and gave me a lot of information."[134] I also spoke briefly to Mary Pimee, Big Bear's daughter-in-law, but mentally she was pretty well out of it.

A couple of days later I was in Onion Lake where I looked up an old friend Wilfred Chocan. He had acted as interpreter some time earlier when I was on a Glenbow field trip. He suggested that we see ninety-four-year-old Jimmy Chief, both of whose grandfathers had died during the rebellion. One, a chief named Sakaskootch, was killed at the Battle of Loon Lake, and the other, Little Bear, was hanged for his part in the Frog Lake massacre.

When we arrived, Chief's granddaughter was just serving him lunch and asked us to come back in fifteen minutes. We learned later that she wanted the time to tidy up the house and set up chairs for her guests. Before the interview began, I learned that Chief was very deaf, and Wilfred suggested that we let him tell his whole story without interruption. He spoke for the better part of an hour, starting with the days before the Frog Lake massacre and following all the way through to the trials at Battleford. I considered myself a good interviewer but on this occasion Chief ran the show and told his story better than I could ever have obtained through questions. Along the way, I made side notes, and after the interview was over, I wrote questions on a piece of paper and passed them to him. It worked very well. I ended up with an interview that was a manuscript unto itself.

The only downside of the whole trip occurred when I stopped at a bar in Delmas for a couple of beers on my way home. I hadn't been there long before the chief of the Poundmaker band came in. He was a big gruff man and obviously had been drinking. He found out that I was the person who had been at the band office a few days earlier so he reeled over to my table and began shouting at me, saying that I had been trespassing on his reserve. I tried to argue with him but that only made him madder. At one point he threatened to take me outside and beat me up, or worse. He became so belligerent that the bartender finally said, "Henry, shut up or get out!" The man quieted down a

bit but still made loud derogatory remarks, so after my second beer I took off for more friendly domains.

When I was ready to write the book, I knew it would be a challenge because of all the one-sided government sources, the misinformation about Big Bear, the starvation years, and the Riel Rebellion. There was a need for a completely new interpretation of his life, based on both oral interviews and the documents. But to put it into some cohesive order would take more than just a three-week holiday. As a result, I spoke to Duncan Cameron and he very kindly gave me a sabbatical – not a new practice for some other museums but a complete innovation for Glenbow. It was part of his effort to encourage more research and academic activities among his staff.

The first two months were spent entirely on research, photocopying data, reading books in my own library, and organizing data. I knew I could not do the writing at home, so I searched for an alternative. Finally, I went out on the Trans-Canada Highway to a nest of motels on the edge of the city. It was off-season so I succeeded in renting a room in the Roman Anthony Motel for $80 a week. The first thing I asked them to do was to take the television set out of my room. They could hardly believe it: no one ever did that. I then gave myself a quota of fifteen typewritten pages a day, but what with rewriting, interruptions, etc. I wasn't always able to keep up that pace. With a bare room, there was nothing else to do. I went home a couple of times a week and Pauline brought me food once in a while, but mostly I was on my own.

My usual routine was to get up at 8 a.m., have breakfast, and work sporadically until noon. I then broke for lunch and could not really get going again until about 4 p.m. Then I typed steadily until 9 or 10 p.m., had supper and went to bed. Sometimes at night I went to a nearby strip bar for a couple of beers and watched the strippers at work. I was singularly unimpressed at their tired, tedious routines, but it was the closest thing I had to television.

By the middle of April I had the first draft done but I needed more information. As I was writing, I realized that I had missed something or needed to confirm a conclusion I was reaching. Instead of stopping work, I "wrote around" the subject, leaving a bunch of dotted lines as a reminder, and then carried on with the writing. When I was finished, I went to Glenbow to catch up on some business and then was on the road again. I drove to Montana to visit with Four Souls and then did research in the Indian Department microfilms at the University of Calgary. By the time I was finished, the manuscript was ready. It was published in 1984 by Douglas & McIntyre under the title *Big Bear:The End of Freedom*.

My next book to get into print was a biography of my father-in-law, James Gladstone. Even before his appointment to the Senate in 1958, I knew he had an important place in the history of Native people in Canada. As a result, I started to interview him any time there was an opportunity. His memory for details was phenomenal and he told stories the old way, complete with conversations that had taken place. Supplementing these extensive notes were records in the Blood Agency files and in recollections of other persons. All this material was important, not only for Dad's life but in placing it in context with the events taking place on the Blood Reserve.

Actually, I started writing this book in the summer of 1980 – two years before Big Bear – but it wasn't finished at that time. Back then, I had looked for another quiet secluded place to write, and found it in Water Valley, a remote area in the foothills. Our friends Harvey and Marg Buckmaster owned a cabin a few miles into the bush from the town and were willing to let me use it. In appreciation, I said I would cut down all the young saplings on the slope in front of the cabin that were obstructing the view of the foothills and mountains. Harvey was a physicist at the University of Calgary and still has an active interest in history and the environment.

When I got there, I noted, "It is a large log cabin on an 80-acre plot that has never been logged over. It is on the slope of a hill and from its picture window there is a superb view of the mountains."[135] I loved the isolation and right away I began turning out fifteen and twenty pages a day. I had to go into the city a couple of times for a birthday and more research but I stuck close to the cabin. I cut saplings as a break from writing, cut down dead trees for firewood, and constantly admired the view. Two weeks later, when I left the cabin, I had 222 pages done. But then it was back to work at Glenbow and the manuscript went on the shelf.

I still had some holidays coming, so I took these in late November 1980 and headed back to the cabin. The autumn had been lovely and there was practically no snow on the ground so I was optimistic about getting my work done in the next week or so.

A couple of days after my arrival it started to snow, and snow, and snow some more. In two days there was more than six inches on the ground with no letup in sight. However, I kept writing and hoping the good weather would return. No such luck. On the fourth day I noted in my diary:

> It turned very cold last night. I kept the stove going until about 6 am but gave up. It was warm under the blankets. The Franklin

> stove uses lots of wood – particularly poplar. The cabin is an open plan so I blocked off the stairwell to the second floor and strung blankets around the stove to form a partition. I also brought a bed down from upstairs as it is too cold to sleep on the floor. Now my rigged up room is nice and warm beside the fire.[136]

I managed to put in another two days of writing while wearing a coat and constantly feeding the fire. But the temperature continued to drop and the stove just couldn't keep up. On December 3rd I heard a radio report that another blizzard was on the way so I decided to leave. However, when I tried to drive out to the cutline road I immediately became stuck in the deep snow. Obviously I needed help, so I walked about a mile to the nearest neighbours, the Oldfields. The men were out with the cattle so I left a message about my plight and walked back. A little while later, Mr. Oldfield and his two big sons arrived with their truck and spent the next hour shovelling snow and pushing my unwilling car through the drifts. At last we got to the cutline and then it was downhill for the next half-mile. Once we reached the secondary highway, the Oldfields insisted on following me until we got to the village of Water Valley. I was very grateful.

It was now late afternoon and the town was virtually closed down. So I decided to head out to the main highway and get home as fast as I could. However, I had gone only a mile past the town when the motor started to act up. I nursed it along for another mile and then it died completely. When I raised the hood to check the problem, I found the motor well entirely clogged with snow and the fuel line frozen. As I looked around, I saw a small farmhouse and barn about two hundred yards away. I was poorly dressed, not expecting the storm, so I trudged over, but when I knocked at the back door there was no answer. I could see the lights were on so I tried the door and found it unlocked. It was so bitterly cold that I thought I would freeze to death on the doorstep so I went inside and called out hello. No one answered. The house was warm and comfortable but not a soul was in sight.

I thought it would be a good idea to phone Water Valley for a tow truck, but when I looked at the phone, I saw it was one of the old hand-cranked types. I fiddled around for a few minutes until something from my childhood memories reminded me that there was a little button under the unit that one had to push to make the connection. When I got it going, I phoned Water Valley but they had no truck and suggested I try Cremona. When I got them on the line, they at first refused but when I explained my plight they sent a truck. About

fifteen minutes later it arrived so I left a note of thanks and money and rushed back to the car. I never did find out who owned the house but I was thankful that it was warm and open. It was the only farm in sight and I don't know if I could have survived the two-mile walk to Water Valley. In retrospect it seemed almost like a spiritual occurrence, that the warm farmhouse had been put there just to protect or save me.

Once in Cremona, I asked them if they could thaw out the fuel line but they were just closing. I asked if the car could be put in their warm garage overnight but they said it was full with regular customers. With no options left, I phoned my wife and she came to pick me up. During the two-hour wait I went to the local beer parlour and – of all the coincidences – I met a son-in-law of Malcolm Norris, a leading Metis leader who had played a major role in the formation of the Indian Association of Alberta. I had just finished dealing with that subject in my manuscript.

I had to wait three days for the garage people to thaw out my car. All my papers were in the trunk, so my writing came to an abrupt halt. Months passed before I could get back to it and with other projects intervening, six years went by before it was published as *The Gentle Persuader.*

As the months passed at Glenbow, the combined efforts of Duncan and the Board became evident and started a positive momentum that carried on through the 1980s. Soon there was weekend music, art tours and lectures, and other activities for the public. We restarted the old *Glenbow* magazine, but this time it was a glossy full-colour production that was reaching eight thousand people on a semi-monthly basis. I began to write regular articles on such subjects as Indian games, early aviation, and Calgary-Edmonton rivalry. In 1981 the museum brought in a world class art exhibition, *Four Modern Masters: De Chirico, Ernest, Magrette, and Miró*, sponsored by the Royal Bank and Norcen Energy. The same year, we produced our first really big exhibition, *Pipes that Won't Smoke; Coal that Won't Burn*, dealing with West Coast argillite. A year later, my work on de Grandmaison resulted in the Bank of Montreal's exhibit *History in their Blood: Nicholas de Grandmaison*. The practice of finding major sponsors in the business community was quickly elevating Glenbow to international stature. In 1983, when we put on *The Dinner Party*, featuring the work of Judy Chicago, no fewer than 62,000 people showed up. Now here was a museum performing a function for which it was intended!

In the next three or four years there were exhibitions of gold and jade from Costa Rica, the life of the American cowboy, post-Impressionism, Carl Rungius, Japanese print making, and many more. Among the sponsors were TransCanada Pipelines, Esso, United Technologies, Texaco, and IBM.

Meanwhile, one of the problems that Duncan and the Board couldn't solve at Glenbow was its funding. In 1977, the museum had negotiated a five-year deal with the Alberta government to address its serious shortfall. Unfortunately, when it came up for renewal for 1983, the province had just experienced the collapse of oil prices so Glenbow's funding was frozen at $3.51 million. Also, the 10 per cent annual increase previously in effect – which had already been built into our 1983 balanced budget – was eliminated. In addition, the recession caused a dramatic drop in private sector donations. Just to maintain the status quo the museum would need to cut some $400,000 from our budget.

Word was received that the government's decision was firm and that it affected all groups in Alberta receiving cultural grants. To make an exception of Glenbow would have every cultural group on the government's back. There were several ways that Glenbow could have gone. It could have quietly trimmed the budget and downsized departments that did not have a public face. The matter could have been left to the Board to use its political influence to get more government money. Or it could have launched a last-minute public and corporate appeal for funds to carry it over for another year.

Duncan Cameron decided to do none of these. Instead, he launched a major power play against the government by holding the Library and Archives for ransom, so to speak. On July 22nd, he called an all-staff meeting and announced that effective August 22nd the Library and Archives would be shut down, the fourth floor exhibition area closed, Sunday programs and touring displays cancelled, school programs reduced, the museum closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, and twenty-seven people laid off. This news hit the staff like a bombshell; people were crying and others were in a state of shock.

The news made the headlines all across Canada. "Cameron denied the cutbacks were designed to put pressure on the provincial government," reported the *Calgary Herald*, "but he said some of the belt-tightening measures could be reversed or postponed if additional sources of income could be found."[137] There were cries of outrage from the public, angry editorials in the press, and expressions of disbelief from the academic community. Mary LeMessurier, the Minister of Culture, made a public statement that the matter would be reviewed, but we learned that she was furious at the Glenbow ploy. Apparently

she had asked Glenbow for detailed information to take to the cabinet but instead of an answer, she was hit with the public announcement.

In order to fight this closure a number of academics formed a "Save the Glenbow" committee, with my close friend Don Smith as head of the Calgary group and Rod Macleod for the Edmonton group. A petition with over a thousand names was sent to the government, letters were written to newspapers, and private meetings held with Ed Lewis, Chairman of the Board. Initially, everyone blamed the government for the upcoming closure of the Library and Archives. Then some doubts began to be expressed. The *Red Deer Advocate* commented that "The Glenbow ... cannot be absolved of guilt; museum management cut its most visible and most used sectors, likely in an attempt to spur public outcry directed at the government."[138] They were so right. Don Smith, in a letter to the editor, said that the decision of Glenbow's Board "reminds one of the old public school joke, 'Do you want to lose 25 pounds? We'll cut off your head.'"[139]

I had missed much of the prelude to the crisis because I had been on sabbatical, and did not return until a month before the drastic decision. Privately, I was shocked at the action that had been taken, even more so when I learned that the Minister of Culture had been stonewalled and embarrassed by our actions. Such a situation would not auger well for the future. On August 5, I wrote in my diary, "Meeting with Save the Glenbow Committee. Their attack is directed at us, not the government – with good reason. The historians feel that they are being held for ransom by Glenbow to force the government to give us more money."[140]

Shortly before the deadline, the Alberta government did come to Glenbow's rescue, but not in the way expected. On August 8th, acting deputy minister of culture, Frits Pannekoek, phoned me and asked a lot of questions about the budget for use by the cabinet. He called again the next day for more information but none of it did us much good. Instead of $500,000 to balance its budget, the government gave $150,000 specifically for the purpose of keeping the Library and Archives open. As I commented, "We are in a state of shock for we are now worse off than before."[141] The government had put in just enough money to placate the public and left us no further grounds to negotiate. The pressure play had backfired and we had made some pretty formidable enemies in the Alberta government.

At the same time, the Board members were busy during the crisis contacting corporations and individuals to seek contributions to meet our new shortfall. The Fund Raising Committee under John Porter raised an impressive

$500,000 by the end of the year. In the end, ten positions were lost, not the projected twenty-six. Duncan called it a "success story," but I wondered at the time, and still wonder today.

In spite of this crisis, and others to come, Glenbow was a very fine place to work. As I mentioned in my diary in 1981, "I am enjoying my work, even though it is becoming more and more administrative day by day. I am more relaxed and less concerned about minor problems."[142] There were a few internal discords as is common in any business, but the general atmosphere was convivial. My division, in particular, fared very well and my supervisory role was quite limited because of the quality of the department heads. I did not believe in a "hands on" approach. If a department was being well run, was kept within budget, and was meeting my expectations, I pretty well left it to its own resources. I did have meetings whenever required, but usually these were on a one-on-one basis where a department had a problem that needed solving.

Quite a bit of my time was taken up with committees and organizations outside of Glenbow. The latter was encouraged, as it helped identify Glenbow with public service and academic activities. The list is too long to recite but in the 1980s they included being chairman of the Alberta Geographical Names Committee, member of the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Scientific Advisory Committee, the federal Postage Stamp Advisory Committee of Canada Post, Alberta 75th Anniversary Advisory Committee, the National Archival Appraisal Board, and the Accreditation Committee, American Association of Museums. Also I was still very much involved with the Historical Society of Alberta and the Kainai Chieftainship.

In 1979 I had a call from Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Calgary, saying they wanted my help in designing a half-year course on the Indians of western Canada. Two or three of us had a meeting and put together something that was primarily historical but with aspects of anthropology and sociology added. The course went through all the university red tape and was listed in the catalogue for the 1980 fall semester. Then I had a call from Marsha Hanen saying they couldn't find anyone to teach the course. Would I do it? I got the approval from Duncan and agreed to teach three hours a week in the late afternoon. That way, I missed only an hour or two of work.

It was really very funny. Twenty-five years earlier I had contemplated trying to go to university as a student. But when I attempted to enrol at the

University of Alberta I was told that did not have the necessary qualifications. Now, here I was being accepted as a teacher!

I had fifteen students that year, two being from the Sarcee tribe. In addition Don Smith and Tony Harrison, both professors, audited the course. I had a ball. My initial course notes were on scraps of paper and covered such subjects as prehistory, social organization, treaties, religion, mythology, reservation life, political movements, and contemporary problems. I had one guest speaker, Russell Wright from the Blackfoot tribe. The session went off without a hitch. The class was responsive and I kept the lectures as informal as possible. By the time it was over, only two students had failed.

That set the pace. For the next fourteen years I taught the course using my basic outline but changing and updating it as needed. For most of my classes, I simply sat on the edge of a table and chatted, using my summary notes as a guide. But very early on, I learned that I had to be careful when telling jokes – which was quite often. The first time I tried it, I noticed that most of the students had their heads lowered. They were writing down the joke! I quickly discovered that they had a Pavlovian response to their teacher. He spoke: they wrote. As a result, I got into the practice of saying, "Don't write this down," before telling a joke or story. As I had no reference texts for the students to use, everything they learned was from their notes, so these stories gave them relief from writer's cramp.

I was pleased at the number of Native students who took the course and the interest they showed in their history and culture. At first there was a cap of thirty students on my class but this was later removed. By 1990 it had grown to the point where I could no longer handle it on an informal basis and it became less and less fun. Finally in 1994, when the class size surpassed a hundred, I said forget it and resigned. As a result, they dropped the course.

Because of my teaching, I was asked in 1983 if I would take on a half-year course for the Department of History. It was entitled "Writing Local and Regional History" and its purpose was to examine books to use as models for writing regional histories. This was right down my alley, and although it was a bit onerous, I thought I could handle it for the fall session in addition to my own history class. I prepared outlines for a series of lectures, designating two or three published regional histories for making comparisons and researching archival, library, and newspaper sources to substantiate or refute the findings of these books.

When I went to the first class, I saw expressions of confusion and doubt in the eyes of the students. We can compare two books, but how can we

research their backgrounds? How can we find such information? How can we tell what's reliable? After a few searching questions, I realized that these third- and fourth-year students knew nothing about research. If they couldn't find something in the university's computer bank, then to them it didn't exist.

Right there and then I decided to throw out the whole course and concentrate on writing skills generally and on researching history. The volume of unpublished materials at the university library was limited so I divided the course between the classroom and Glenbow. My new topics were on gathering oral history, how to do research, the use of folklore data, how to structure a history book or paper, how to improve writing skills, and in general how to do many of the things they should have learned in high school or their first years in university. When they came to Glenbow they were given practical assignments that required them to use finding aids, search newspaper files, and report on their findings. It went over very well and I think the students really learned something about research and effective writing.

A further teaching assignment came to me in 1984 when Mount Royal College asked if I would teach a course on Indians at Spy Hill Jail on the outskirts of town. I agreed provided that it could be taught jointly with my son James, a historian and graduate of the University of Calgary. I had been in the formidable Stony Mountain penitentiary in Manitoba when doing research on Big Bear so I was not too intimidated by the jail, but I think James was suitably impressed by the surroundings. Doors were unlocked in front of us and locked behind us as we made our way to the lecture room. The course was being offered to Indian inmates and about a dozen showed up. I knew the parents or grandparents of quite a few of them.

The lectures included some of the topics from my university course but James also had a responsibility for such subjects as pan-Indianism, treaties, etc. I included some subjects that were of special interest to the inmates – use of the pipe, incense, and the sweatlodge. Together we made a good team.

In addition to teaching, I was called upon to do a lot of public speaking and to act as chairman or master of ceremonies. As I never did have enough common sense to get nervous, I thoroughly enjoyed the tasks. I spoke to everything from service clubs and school groups to academic conferences and university classes. Because I knew my subject, these involved practically no preparation time. Then in 1980 I was flattered when the Smithsonian Institution invited me to give a paper at a symposium in Washington, D.C., in honour of Jack Ewers and Waldo Wedel. A year later I was chairman of a Plains Indian Seminar in Cody, Wyoming, again in honour of Ewers.

In some cases, my involvement in public speaking was much more personal. In 1980, for example, the Blood tribe asked me to be master of ceremonies at a program honouring Jim Shot Both Sides, who was retiring as head chief after twenty-four years in office. At that time I took the opportunity to present Jim with a first copy of my book on his great-grandfather Red Crow. Similarly, in 1985 I chaired a session in honour of my brother-in-law Fred, a national calf roping champion, and later another for Everett Soop, the gifted Blood artist. I wasn't bad as an MC but I could never hope to equal the excellence of such people as Rufus Goodstriker, his son Wilton, and Marvin Fox. Their mix of humour and eloquence could not be equalled. I recall one time when Rufus was master of ceremonies at a banquet for the Indian Rodeo Cowboys Association. He just about brought down the house when he started his speech, "Welcome cowboys and Indians..." Of course, they were one and the same.

Another time, Percy Creighton was chairing a session of the Indian Association of Alberta, being held on the Blood Reserve. Many of the delegates were hunters and trappers from the far north. Percy explained to them that the Bloods knew nothing about trapping, and said there was a little beaver on Bullhorn Coulee that kept damming up the creek. He wanted to know if the Crees could trap that little beaver for him. This started a running joke that continued through the entire three-day conference. Speaker after speaker brought the little beaver into discussions in ingenious ways, always causing gales of laughter. It was Indian humour at its best.

At another Indian Association meeting a chief from Saddle Lake arrived and, talking in Cree, he said he could not speak English and would have to use an interpreter. The next time he arose he would speak a sentence or two in Cree and the interpreter would translate into English. Then, so skilfully that at first it wasn't noticed, the chief began to speak in English and the interpreter in Cree. It took a few seconds before people were aware of the switch. The pair had successfully played a joke on the whole meeting and everyone roared when they realized that they had been taken.

Other matters were keeping me busy. In 1978 Glenbow got some outside funding to do a film on the Blackfoot treaty. Using still photos and maps I laid everything out, wrote a script, and got Canawest Films to do the production. We arranged for Marvin Fox, from the Blood Reserve, to do the narration, and all in all I thought it was a good educational film. Then, sometime later, the Department of Indian Affairs asked me to write a research paper on the 1877 treaty. The 107-page report was divided into five sections – historical

background, preparation for the treaty, Indian perception of the treaty, government perception of the treaty, and later events. Once it was done, it took two years to get it published, as government lawyers claimed it was too favourably inclined towards the Indians. I sure hope so.

About this same time, Glenbow Ethnologist Julia Harrison and I discussed what might be done to commemorate the anniversary of the Riel Rebellion of 1885. We thought of putting together an exhibition showing the events of the rebellion, but when we delved more into it, we changed course. As I said to a reporter, "As we continued our investigations, we determined there was a more important story – the historical development and culture of the Metis people themselves."[143] We asked ourselves, is there a distinct Metis culture? And if so, what is it?

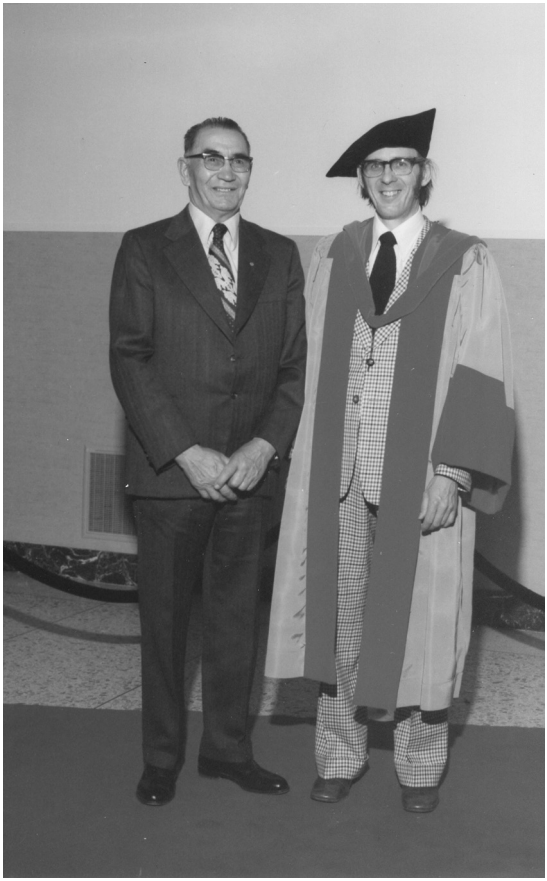
"The problem has been identifying what is distinctive about the culture," I told the reporter. "And the distinctive thing is what you find when you bring a body of artifacts together – Indian, French, Scottish and certain manufactured items." One of the things we wanted to find out was, were the Metis a third culture? The problem was that virtually every object we examined could be traced back to Indian or European cultures.

It took two years of research and travel, but the results were worth it. Julia and I made three field trips, one to St. Albert, another to Batoche, and a third to Manitoba, and we turned up a veritable gold mine of Metis-related artifacts. It seems that no one, not even the Metis themselves, had ever thought about preserving their material culture. Even Glenbow had only thirty Metis items in its collection before this project; when it finished it had three hundred. One particularly good source was the Rowland brothers who lived on the original family river lot in St. Albert. Their old house yielded such objects as an accordion, beadwork, and early photos. At the bottom of their river lot was an old shop that contained original tools for building log houses, as well as for logging and farming.

On our trip to Manitoba, we located a wooden travelling chest belonging to Ambroise Lepine, beaded clothing, a flintlock gun, l'Assomption sash, handmade rolling pin, and some fine early furniture. One item we looked at was the chain that was supposed to be the one that Louis Riel stepped on to prevent government surveyors from surveying Metis river lots into quarter sections. This was one of the actions that precipitated the Manitoba Rebellion of 1869–70. However, the owner, a member of the Lagimodarie family, refused to part with it, as he hoped it was going to be incorporated into a statue of Riel that was being made.

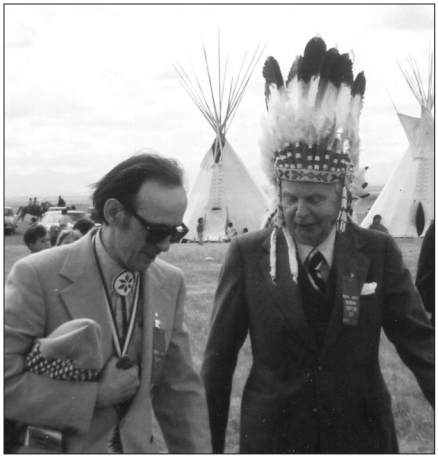
Julia was the curator for the show *Metis: People Between Two Worlds*, and she did a fine job. It was the first time any museum person had really looked at the subject and so the 1985 exhibition was a fitting tribute to a group she called "a forgotten people."[144]

Meanwhile, as we toddled on towards the 1988 Olympics, Glenbow seemed to be firmly in the "big league" as long as we had the money and the leadership we so desperately needed. With both in hand, we could do wonderful things.

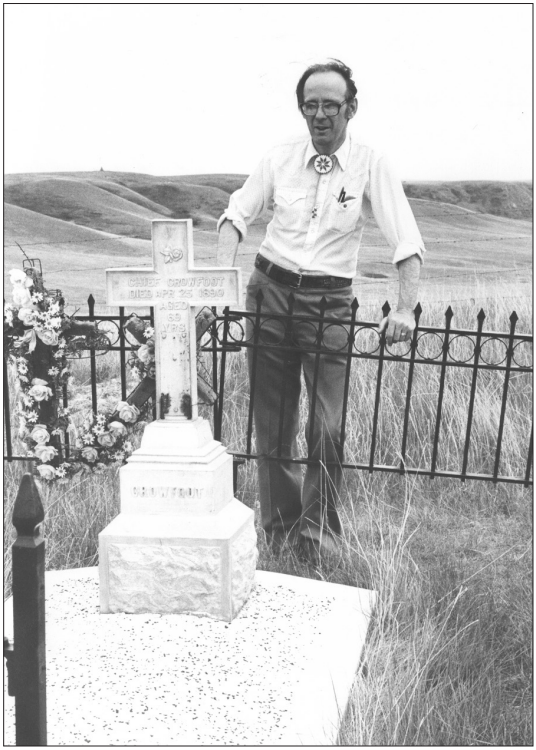


When the University of Calgary was conferring an honorary doctorate upon Hugh Dempsey in 1974, he invited his friend Ralph Steinhauer as his guest. When the announcement was made that Steinhauer was to be appointed Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, the university insisted that he join him on the platform. (Author's files)

In 1972, Dempsey was given the Alberta Non-Fiction Award for his book *Wit and Wisdom of Bob Edwards*. The award is presented here by the Hon. Horst Schmid, Alberta Minister of Culture. (Author's files)



John Diefenbaker, former prime minister, was escorted by Dempsey while attending the conferral of an honorary chieftainship by the Blood tribe upon Prince Charles in 1977. Both Dempsey and Diefenbaker had previously been made honorary chiefs. (Author's files)



As a historian, Dempsey gave many talks to academic organizations, clubs, and Native groups in the West. Seen here in 1979, he stands before the grave of Crowfoot and is giving a talk on this great man's life. (Author's files)

Dempsey was master of ceremonies at a tribal retirement ceremony for Blood head chief Jim Shot Both Sides in 1980. During the occasion, Dempsey presented the chief with the book *Red Crow*, the chief's great grandfather. (Author's files)

Four enthusiasts about history and Native peoples met at the Calgary Stampede in 1985. Left to right are: Donald B. Smith, University of Calgary historian; Colin Taylor, English authority on Plains Indians; Hugh Dempsey; and Fraser Pakes, school teacher and hobbyist. (Author's files)

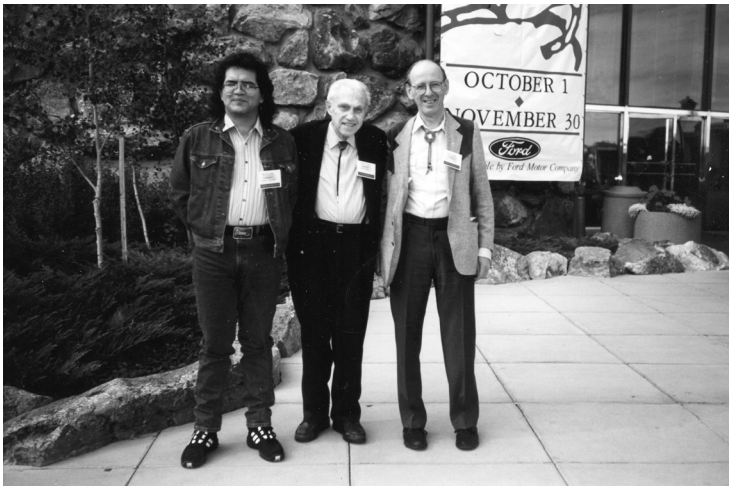
In 2001, Hugh and Pauline Dempsey were invited to join a parade on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana celebrating the preservation of the Blackfoot language. Standing left to right are Pete Standing Alone, Hugh, and Pauline. (Author's files)

When Dempsey and his senior staff returned to Glenbow after a business trip to Edmonton in 1989, this photo was on his desk. It is inscribed, "Nothing terribly exciting happened while you guys were gone on Friday." Left to right are Julia Harrison, Anthony Cooney, secretary Deb Green, Pete Eisenmenger, Fred Greene, and Barry Agnew. (Author's files)

Hugh and Pauline on the Blood Reserve, 2001. (Author's files)

In order to soak up some of the atmosphere, Dempsey positioned himself on the Montana plains while writing a book. (Pauline Dempsey photo)

These authors contributed to the book, *Centennial City: Calgary, 1894–1944*. Left to right, front row: Lynette Walton, Donald B. Smith, Grant MacEwan, Hugh Dempsey; middle row: Kathleen Snow, Maria Murray, Marianne Fedori, Catherine Mayhood; back: Max Foran, Roger Gibbins, Harry Sanders, Jennifer Bobrovitz, and Harry Hiller. (Author's files)



The American Indian Seminar, held annually at Cody, Wyoming, was a good time to meet old friends. Here, left to right in 1994 are Lloyd James Dempsey, John C. Ewers of the Smithsonian Institution, and Hugh Dempsey. (Pauline Dempsey photo)

image not available

In 1960, Dempsey arranged for the Weasel Moccasin family of the Blood tribe to repatriate a medicine pipe bundle for their use. Here, left to right, are Percy Old Shoes, Daniel Weasel Moccasin, his father Dan Weasel Moccasin, Hugh Dempsey, and Florence Weasel Moccasin. (Glenbow photo P-4150-5)

One of Dempsey's last acts before retiring from Glenbow was to write and design the coffee table book *Treasures of the Glenbow Museum*. He is seen here autographing the book at the museum. (Author's files)