

First, I must say that parting with this collection is likely the most difficult thing I have ever decided to do. The collection embodies more than the cultural history it represents. It has been part of my understandings of my father, my uncles, and my heritage throughout my life. I know that when I was about four years old, my dad showed me Fort Robinson, near Crawford, the next town over from Chadron. At that time he walked me to the place where Crazy Horse died and told me about that part of history. I know the collection was already familiar to me then, as was the history behind it.

As for the massacre-and what else could one call it-at Wounded Knee, the trauma and shock my grandfather experienced lasted throughout his life. I never met him, but I witnessed the intensity of those feelings first-hand. My father and his brothers would talk of the collection and the rifles their father gathered there. They would weep and sob, remembering Raymond's experiences and the way his visit to the site affected him. I have remarked many times that trauma can be generational, because I too become visibly shaken whenever I try to relate the story to anyone. My grandfather's feelings reside within me, and that is my heritage.

All the other pieces in the collection impact me emotionally. They testify to the connections between Raymond Woodard and the Oglala people. He loved them and they loved him. As he faded away at the end of his life, the yard filled with his life-long friends, they waited throughout the last several days.

Raymond's son Speed, my father, became a physician, despite a lifelong disability, and we moved to Crawford in 1960. His office was in our den, and the living room would fill with folks from the reservation; his services were offered freely. He did that to honor his father. In a similar manner I repeated that pattern in my own life. I somehow survived my twenties and then became a performer. My grandfather was a performer as well. He toured a horse-diving act in his 20s and 30s. He performed as an actor and comedian in community projects. With no plan to do so, I became a stage actor and singer. I worked my way through college and graduate school. My Master's thesis: "The Comfortable Subject: Scopic Regimes and Social Order in Sioux Massacre Panoramas." My Doctoral thesis: "American Indian Dramaturgy." My studies led me to become part of the large community of Native writers and scholars, I published a journal for American Indian theatre artists. I was keynote speaker at the World Literature Conference in 1998, and much more. My connection to my family history defined, to a large degree, who I became professionally and personally.

Red Cloud's pipe, included in gatherings and councils for decades, fires the imagination, shared in ceremony by some of the most notable of all Lakota chiefs. More important, the pipes, especially Red Cloud's pipe, led to many ceremonial visits where the pipe was special guest - I was along for the ride. I witnessed many spiritual events I would never have otherwise been able to see, some of which, from my rational point of view, I cannot explain. One, in Haystack NM, left me overwhelmed and emotionally drained. My friend Gomo asked me as we drove away, What did you think? I replied, That was really something. Gomo leaned toward me, Well, you got to see a God, not many people can say that. Gomo is a healer, a shaman, he married my wife to me and he is one of many blessings my heritage, and the physical fact of this collection, brought into my life.

The collection remained packed away from 1940 until Speed bequeathed it to me in 1994. [ HE NEVER considered himself a collector, and never attempted to add to the collection. ]Over the years he showed it occasionally, opening the large trunk and lifting out pieces for a friend or colleague to see. In 1994 I was teaching in Knoxville, and that summer the McClung Museum there included several pieces from the collection in a show they presented. At that time, the collection was inspected and reviewed by several scholars and experts. It remained packed away until February of 2011. I had 5 large glass display cases in my shop in Silverton, Colorado, and the week of my 60th birthday, the collection was displayed for the community. Everyone came to see it, the school brought students. It was 20 degrees below zero outside. One of the best experiences of my life.

I realized then that a collection hidden in trunks with mothballs hardly served any good purpose, spiritual or practical. These works of art and craft should be seen, and treasured as I have treasured them. Obviously, it has taken me years to act on that realization, and now the time has arrived. I ask that those who acquire these pieces keep in mind they represent not only the legacy of a great people, but of my father and his father as well. You will own a piece of me, as vital and real as any part of me, and may the presence of my family in your life bless you and your family as it has me and mine.