

**Bruce Braden Pashe  
Narrator**

**Deborah Locke  
Minnesota Historical Society  
Interviewer**

**Dakota Tipi First Nation,  
Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Canada  
January 19, 2012**

**DL = Deborah Locke  
Minnesota Historical Society**

**BP = Bruce Pashe**

DL: Bruce, thank you for being with us today. When and where were you born?

BP: I was born November 14, 1966 in Portage la Prairie.

DL: Who are your parents?

BP: My parents are Bruce Gerald Pashe and Dolores Merrick.

DL: And your grandparents on both sides?

BP: Were John Pashe and Laura Pashe, and Angus Merrick and Flora Merrick.

DL: How long have you lived here?

BP: All my life.

DL: Do you have family members at other reserves?

BP: Some in Long Plain from my mom's side, and then some in Sioux Valley, Pipestone; old relatives.

DL: Which relative had the most influence on you?

BP: Probably the ones from here, from my own reserve.

DL: Which ones; who were they?

BP: My mom had influence on me.

DL: Were you at home as a little child, or were you in a school, a boarding school?

BP: I was at home.

DL: And what was it about your mom that you remember the best.

BP: How she never gave up in life.

DL: Give me an example of that.

BP: She lost four kids in a house fire and my dad's dad told her that we have a lot of struggles in life, and no matter what happens in life we can do it. She said the Pashes never give up. And after she lost those four kids she continued to move on because she had other kids to raise. But she was told by my dad's dad never to give up, and she said Pashes never give up, so she's always been that way.

DL: You escaped that fire. How was it that you weren't there?

BP: I wasn't born.

DL: Let me back up a little bit: You were not born yet; she had you after...

BP: Yes, she had four more.

DL: Four more. How many siblings did you have all together?

BP: Twelve.

DL: How many are still alive?

BP: Seven.

DL: Who taught you the most about being Dakota?

BP: It would probably be my parents.

DL: Do you remember some of the things they told you?

BP: I come from a long history of medicine men and chiefs, but they were on both sides.

DL: Did you learn traditional ways, then?

BP: Oh yes. The only thing, though, was alcohol had come to the community and was disruptive to everybody. So my mom just packed us all up and left one day and moved us to town and we were raised in town. So I kind of feel bad about it because when you're raised in town, you lose your language. You only talked the English language and that's all you know. You lose all your history when you're living in town. My mom talked Dakota and Ojibwe, and my dad talked Dakota, and I wish we would have learned that; I wish we were able to pick it up, but it wasn't fluent in the home because we were too busy learning English.

DL: Do you have a Dakota name?

BP: Yes, I do.

DL: What is it?

BP: It's- I can't pronounce it- like I say, I forgot my words, but it's Lone Soldier.

DL: Did you learn anything about Dakota history while you were growing up? Stories from the old days.

BP: Most of what I know, like I said, I was told that we were part of Sitting Bull's descendants that came here. He set up camp and then we were left here.

DL: Were you part of the group that came here with Sitting Bull?

BP: That's what I was told, that we were descendants, yes.

DL: I see. He brought you up here for safety and then he left.

BP: Yes.

DL: He brought your family up here.

BP: My relatives, yes.

DL: Are you related to any of the chiefs from that time?

BP: I don't know if they were chiefs, but they were medicine people, and they were John and George Pashe.

DL: Have you ever been to Minnesota?

BP: Just once, to go get pipestone.

DL: Oh, so you drove down there.

BP: No, twice, I should say, because I went to get pipestone one time, and then I went to Sundance one time.

DL: What did it feel like driving into the state? Did it feel like a foreign country?

BP: Nope. When I went to the Sundance, I was actually welcomed and got to meet gentlemen that were part of the AIM movement; the original members of AIM.

DL: What's your opinion of that war?

BP: It's kind of sad in a way, because we were brought over here and we were left here, and now we have nothing. It's like we have no rights, or no treaties, no nothing. The government doesn't want to acknowledge us. We're just fighting for survival in Canada.

DL: If you had a magic wand, what would you wish for Dakota people today?

BP: To be united and to be back on their own land, which I hate to say, is the USA. To be back home, I guess. For my family to be back home.

DL: Okay, Bruce, thank you for your time.

U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 Oral History Project  
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