

**Trudy Pashe
Narrator**

**Deborah Locke
Interviewer**

**Dakota Tipi First Nation
Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Canada
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**DL = Deborah Locke
Minnesota Historical Society**

TP = Trudy Pashe

DL: This is Deborah Locke on January 19, 2012. I'm at Dakota Tipi in Manitoba, Canada. I am interviewing Trudy Pashe. Could you spell your name please?

TP: T-R-U-D-Y P-A-S-H-E

DL: Thanks, when and where were you born?

TP: I was born at Dakota Tipi December 11, 1961.

DL: Who were your parents?

TP: My mother is Dolly Pashe her maiden name was Merrick. My father was Bruce Pashe.

DL: Spell Merrick for me please.

TP: M-E-R-R-I-C-K.

DL: Thank you. How many siblings do you have?

TP: Eight.

DL: Who were your grandparents on both sides?

TP: My grandparents on my dad's side were Laura Pashe and Tom Myren. On my mother's side was Angus Merrick and Jean Hockson.

DL: Angus, how do you spell Angus?

TP: A-N-G-U-S.

DL: Which relative would you say had the most influence on you?

TP: My dad.

DL: Tell me more about your dad.

TP: As I was growing up, I would always have to hang around my dad. [Laughter] If anything was... My dad would take me for walks. When we were walking, or sitting outside, cutting wood, whatever we were doing at the time, he would tell me stories about the grandparents, his great grandparents, his grandpa John and Pasiapa. He would be talking about them. I guess I was kind of forced to listen because I would always have to be listening. Today I remember all the stories that were told to me by my dad in terms of history. I always think I'm glad I sat there and I was forced to sit there because I know what I know today because of my father.

DL: Someone probably passed that on to him as well.

TP: Yes.

DL: Perhaps his father did the same thing.

TP: No. My dad was raised by my grandfather. His name was John Pashe and George Pashe. My father was raised by those two old men.

DL: I see.

TP: That's where his stories came from because he was raised by them.

DL: Would you say then, if you had to answer this question it would be your dad: Who taught you the most about being Dakota?

TP: My father.

DL: Did you learn about Dakota spirituality as a child or as an adult?

TP: As a child, I grew up with it.

DL: Was your family also Christian?

TP: No.

DL: Do you have a Dakota name and who gave it to you?

TP: I have a Dakota name and I'm not sure who gave it to me because as a child my Dakota name was Spotted Dear Woman.

DL: How do you say it in Dakota?

TP: No idea.

DL: Did you ever hear of the US/Dakota war during your growing up years?

TP: Yes.

DL: What do you remember hearing about that? What was your family connection?

TP: My family connection is my grandfather John Pashe's father's name was Pazoiyopa OK? And how they spread... How they moved around the United States... They moved around and then they came into Canada with Sitting Bull. Then they were left here. They wanted to stay because they didn't want to go back. They were wanted over there. Maybe they were, I don't know but they were wanted in the United States. I was told all these stories like how grandpa Pazoiyopa hid in Canada and stayed in Canada for fear of going back to be hung.

DL: Would he have had that fear because he was... Did he actually do any of the fighting in the battles?

TP: Yes.

DL: Which one, do you know?

TP: The Minnesota Uprising. He was involved in it from what I understand from my dad was grandpa Pazoiyopa was involved in a lot of battles.

DL: There were a few. There was the battle against the city of New Ulm. There was the battle against Fort Ridgely. There was Birch Coulee which was the site of some cavalry members who were burying the dead.

TP: Well what my dad said was that Grandpa Pazoiyopa -- as it was told to my dad -- was part of the start of the Uprising. They killed some guys and they stuck grass in his mouth.

DL: That would have happened at [what is] the Lower Sioux Agency today.

TP: Um hum.

DL: Did your grandfather have anything to do with the actual killing of Andrew Myrick?

TP: Well they say he was part of it. He was the one who stuck the grass in his mouth or something. That's what I understood.

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

TP: I'm not sure.

DL: Did the war have a direct impact on you and your family? You had this grandfather who had to flee to Canada to save his life. Anybody else in your family who started in Minnesota that had to leave? Perhaps went somewhere else?

TP: There was once a story about a baby which was Pazoiyopa's daughter maybe. There was this lady, her name... They talked a girl that came... That took off from the concentration camp and came here. My dad said that we have an aunt and she was close by us but he never ever said who she was.

DL: Are you talking about a girl who was at Fort Snelling at that prison camp.

TP: And she took off from there and came this way.

DL: She escaped.

TP: Yeah.

DL: And came up north to Canada.

TP: Yeah

DL: All by herself?

TP: I don't know. I think there were others.

DL: Did you hear her name?

TP: All he said was doctor auntie. But he never said too much after that because he kept quiet. He went into a quiet mode and didn't talk for a long time. But all he talked was about was a woman needing the camp.

DL: You have been to Minnesota.

TP: Yeah.

DL: Name some of the places you've been to.

TP: In Minnesota or in the United States?

DL: In Minnesota.

TP: Oh I just came to the Kellogg [Avenue] [Minnesota History] Center. It was my first time there.

DL: So you didn't go to Fort Snelling or to Birch Coulee or any of those places.

TP: No, I plan to.

DL: What is your opinion of the war?

TP: My opinion of the war is it shouldn't have happened. It disgraced everyone wherever they are today.

DL: How could it have been avoided?

TP: Well there's lots of ways it could have been avoided but I think it was greed.

DL: That certainly is one of the reasons.

TP: It could have been avoided; there was too much greed and taking advantage of. But how you stop that? You can't.

DL: Is it a good idea to commemorate the events?

TP: Yes.

DL: What's the best way to do that?

TP: I think that we get together and start and... Have get togethers and realize these are our grandfathers. Some people don't even know their grandfathers. They don't even know they come from there. But to commemorate and have a celebration in honor of them, even a feast like feed the people in honor of our grandfathers who went down, who fought for us. Some of them had to flee for us and changed their lives for us.

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

TP: To be at peace with each other.

DL: Do you think that will happen in your lifetime?

TP: No but I hope it happens in my children's lifetime.

DL: How do the Dakota people go about starting to find peace with each other?

TP: Getting to know their relatives and their history, who their people are, who they come from. Nobody knows that honestly. They think but they don't know. They don't realize there's more Dakota people out there than what they know. They think there's only 22. There were more than 500 camps at one time. They kept coming and going in and out of the United States. There's a lot of Dakota in Manitoba than what people realize and I want them to be found and I want the families to be connected and I want the true history to come out. If it doesn't come out in my time I hope it comes out in my children's because what I've collected, I'm going to leave those for my children to read too. If I miss something they're going to pick it up.

DL: Is there anything in that packet that you have in front of you that would be of special interest?

TP: The Merrick's history, the Battle of the Little Bighorn. This was by my grandpa.

DL: This is a different war though isn't it, what you're talking about?

TP: Yeah.

DL: Oh but this name Merrick is historically significant because it was Andrew Myrick who had his mouth stuffed. Are you related to him in some way?

TP: I don't think so because this was a Dakota Merrick and Andrew Myrick wasn't Dakota. I want to research the Merricks. I have the names of the 22 that bought their own land [in Canada]. These 22, David Ross, Pazoiyopa, James Dahl, Peter Ross, Chaske, James Esesutatanka, all these men just to name a few, they bought their own land. They bought this land themselves OK. They were never allocated land by any government from anywhere. They bought the land at lot 99 and they traded to the person the location for housing and the church and the community hall. So the Sioux here like us [who are] part of this Reserve, the grandfathers bought the land.

DL: It was not deeded to you by the government.

TP: No, they bought the land. They were never given land. I want to tell you... This story is told by Mr. Donald Daniels and he wrote a book about the history of the Ojibwa and the Sioux.

DL: Does this have to do with the 1862 war?

TP: These are after they came here, I'm pretty sure. There was this man; his name was Chief Short Bear back in 18... Yikes, now I forget. It was back in the 1860's, around there. He was Chief Short Bear at that time but his Indian name was Stony Sioux.

DL: Was he up here?

TP: Yeah, he became chief of the...

DL: OK, I'm going to pause here while you're looking through your papers.

DL: We're back, I was looking through some of the papers that Trudy brought and I just have a question for you. Is this just your family that you're researching? What are you doing with the information?

TP: I'm doing it for the people, not myself, the people, and not only Dakota Tipi. I am doing it for all the people, all the other Reserves that have Dakota relatives that came here. I'm doing it for them. I'm researching all the names out to put the families together.

DL: Have you told any of them yet that you're finding this information?

TP: Yes, I've talked to people and I said, "I found your grandmother." I told them your grandmother was Dakota. They said, "We always knew that but we didn't know how." "My grandmother talked Dakota." Some of them said, "But we didn't know the Dakota language but we knew we were part Dakota somehow."

DL: Aren't you something like a detective?

TP: Yeah. [Laughter] I found so much stuff but things that I found, I give it to the families and I tell them here is some of your grandmother or your grandfather. I found some information on them. Then I said if you have any information would you give me a picture of your Dakota grandmother. Can you give me a picture of her because it would be really good to have her picture? A lot of people are willing to give me a picture.

DL: I don't have any more questions. Is there anything you'd like to add?

TP: I'd just like to add that like some of the information that people come in with is wrong, might be wrong. I'm not saying they're wrong, I'm not saying they're right. But we also got to come together and work together not against each other. This is not about land, it's about getting people to understand our Dakota history. It's nothing wrong with being a Dakota and we got to find our history. And you know I say when we find our history, this is going to heal the people. They're going to know where they came from. I never knew where I come from all my life. I just knew I was a Sioux and that was it. Then when my kids grew up, I went and started the searching where I actually came from. A lot of times I kind of cried. I put stuff away from the stuff I heard and the stuff I remembered from my dad. My dad shared a lot of stories with me. He said how Grandpa Pazoiyopa got away from the Minnesota Uprising. But he called it the Big War. He said Grandpa Pazoiyopa used to turn into an owl and that's how he got away.

DL: That's one way to get away.

TP: [Laughter] Yeah -- with the traditional ways there were shift changes back in those days. It is there in history that they [the Dakota] used to change [form]. My grandfathers were all medicine people, same as with the grandmothers. And I found my grandmothers. But like I said, this is for all the people. It's not just about me anymore.

DL: All right, thanks for your time.

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