

Reclaimed Heritage

by
Pauline Jensen

This is the true story of Francis Jensen and his early years of growing up on the Pottawatomie Indian Reservation. I have written it as it was related to me, his wife Pauline. It is written in first person as if Francis, Kitch-kommie, were writing the story.

U ntil I was sixteen years old, I lived on the Pottawatomie Indian Reservation, an area eleven miles square, lying four miles southwest of Holton, Kansas, and one-half mile west of Mayetta, Kansas. I was born on December 29, 1923, in the house on the land belonging to my grandmother O-zoush-quah (Maggie Hale). My Indian name is Kitch-kommie-Francis, in English.

My mother, a full blood Pottawatomie Indian, had sold the land granted to her by the United States government to Francis Slatery, a white man. I have my mother's original land grant written to Pah-kish-ko-quah (or Mary Hale) and signed by President Benjamin Harrison on November 23, 1892. Many Indians sold their land just as soon as the twenty-five year trust period had expired. Probably the reason Grandmother's land was not sold was that she had been sent back East to a mental institution. She is, therefore, not as clear in my memory as Grandpa's (Na-see-kah) common-law wife Viola.

Actually my memory of Grandmother O-zoush-quah is a large oval painted picture of a pretty lady with her dark hair parted slightly to the right and brushed neatly behind her ears. From the picture, her deep brown eyes look at me winsomely and the suggestion of a smile curves her lips. A white brooch rimmed with silver holds the high collar of her white blouse. A long narrow sash embroidered with beads in a geometric design circles her neck. She had been sent "back East" in 1908 to a government institution for the mentally incompetent. I think "back East" was a hospital in or near Washington, D.C. Grandmother died there in 1942 already forgotten since mental patients were never visited or ever recovered from their illness. She was sent "back home" when she died; and since her

religion was the Drum religion, she was given a Drum funeral service. Grandmother was buried on the Hale family burial ground in a wooded area about an eighth of a mile from her home. The Drum service lasted all night and until the late afternoon of the next day. A sadness I had experienced at Grandpa's funeral a year prior to this time was missing at Grandmother's funeral. The only feeling I had for the person in the casket was one of curiosity. She was dressed in her native Indian dress so her clothes looked like the picture, but her face was foreign. I only glanced at her one time, because I did not want my oval, painted picture destroyed.

The Drum service was held at the home on the land adjoining Grandmother's. It was about 300 yards from the house Grandmother owned, where I lived. This land, adjoining my home, was owned by my mother's sister Julia who had also been sent "back East" to a sanitarium. Aunt Julia's brother Jack was living in the small, square house on her land, because he had sold his land to a white man. The house sits one-fourth of a mile inland from the road and is approached by a wide path running along the edge of a cornfield. Many relatives gathered at this home for the funeral service for Grandmother. I was intrigued by the drumbeats and the songs of the chanters until my eyes grew heavy. Mom told me I didn't have to stay for the entire service. It was so close, I could hear from my house. At home I lay in my bed with my head in the window listening to the hypnotic drumbeats and wondering what Grandmother had done to be sent away. I question the mental condition of my grandmother and my aunt, but I am certain their being declared mentally incompetent and incapable of signing papers was the factor that saved their land from being sold to whites for what must have seemed easy money.

My mother helped care for Aunt Julia's two sons--Marcell and Rex Darling--after Aunt Julia was sent away. When school started they were registered in the Genoa Indian School, a boarding school in Genoa, Nebraska. Later they were transported to the Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kansas, but they came to our house for many summer vacations. Marcell liked to embarrass me by telling he had to change my diapers. Marcell did have a talent for intricate work and became a recognized painter. He signed his paintings "MDarling/Wasconabie." His paintings were always faithful to Indian traditions. I have tinted pictures of Grandpa, but I don't think Marcell did them because there is no name on the pictures.

It is more pleasant for me to remember my grandpa than my grandmother. Grandpa Na-see-kah (William Hale) was mild man-

nered unless he had been drinking. My mother respected her father, but she also feared him when she was a child. She has told me that many times when she was growing up, she and her brothers and sisters would run outside the house and hide in the snow when Grandpa came home after a trip to town.

Grandpa died on January 17, 1941, when I was seventeen and working in a CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) camp at Seneca, Kansas. I came home for the funeral. Grandpa also was a member of the Drum religion. His Drum service was held at Bill Evans' house at the Indian Fairgrounds. Although it was cold, the drumming was done in the yard after the drum had been warmed by the fire. Relatives and friends gathered in the yard around the funeral drum and the drummers. There were benches provided for the attendants, but many sought the warmth of the house or warmed their bodies in the yard by the huge cookfire which bubbled the contents of the black kettles hung by chains over the fire. There was visiting and a relaxed, informal atmosphere--with no tears--but I was sad. I had never seen my Grandpa drunk and my memories of him included plump, round pancakes.

When Grandpa lived in Aunt Julia's house, I went to visit often and he always asked me if I had had any pancakes that day. If I had not, he reached for his mixing bowl. His pleasure of making the pancakes was exceeded only by my pleasure of eating Grandpa's pancakes. He also told me endless tales, but my favorite was the one that really frightened me because Grandpa said it actually happened to him. Therefore, it did. He told me that he was hauling a corpse in a roughbox in his wagon to the place of the funeral. The deceased had been a mean man. As Grandpa traveled, a great ball of fire appeared and pursued the wagon. Grandpa ran his ponies as fast as he could and was finally able to escape. Of course he was not afraid for himself because he knew the ball of fire was not after him, but after the mean man who had died. Perhaps this did happen to him, or perhaps he was teaching me the benefits of escaping the fire ball by being good.

The site of Grandpa's funeral was appropriate because it was here that he had spent so many days and nights dancing and attending the Indian Rodeo held each August. My pride in Grandpa swelled when he led the grand entry. The mane of his horse was decorated with colored pieces of cloth tied into the mane. The man riding beside Grandpa was named Woodchuck. Grandpa carried the United States flag and Woodchuck carried a staff with feathers on the end. Grandpa was dressed in the traditional Pottawatomie

regalia. Bead and quill embroidery adorned his pants and long-sleeved shirt and a strip of embroidery extended down the outside of the legs of his pants and the sleeves of his shirt. He pushed silver armbands high on his arms. Beadwork pouches hung from either side of his beaded belt, and his neck was encircled by a six-inch wide bead and quill bandolier with a repeated pattern of eight-pointed stars. (This handmade beadwork was given to Rev. Alex Eckert when he admired it while he was assigned to the Pottawatomie Mission Church. I have asked Rev. Eckert what happened to the beadwork and he said he gave it to Baker University.) Grandpa's animal-skin moccasins were also decorated with quills and colored beads. He carried a fan of Eagle feathers, and his headdress was a roach made from quills and held to his head by pulling hair through an opening in the top of the roach and by laees which tied under his chin. The roach stretched from his forehead to the back of his neck. One Eagle feather extended horizontally from the top of the headpiece. His face was painted with diagonal colored lines. He was a grand warrior.

Behind Grandpa and Woodchuck followed all the Indian dancers (men and women) who danced before the rodeo started. My mother danced, but I was content to be a spectator until the rodeo was over. Then I bounded into action picking up pop bottles and selling them for one penny each. A good night of dextrous eyes, arms, and legs coined twenty-five cents.

An added attraction at the rodeo was peeking up through the plank stands and watching the handiness of a cowboy caressing his Indian maiden. I had never before witnessed such a display of emotion between the sexes.

The rodeo lasted for one week and many people camped at the fairgrounds the entire week. My parents went home because it was only a short distance from our house. Some of the campers lived in oval-shaped bark houses, made from bark stripped from trees in the timber and laced together with supple branches from young trees. The bark houses were left as permanent dwellings for the builders when they returned year after year. Other campers slept in teepees which they folded and took with them when the rodeo was over.

One summer when I was eight-years-old, I asked Grandpa if I could stay with him the entire week of the rodeo and sleep in his tent instead of going home with my parents at night. I liked to be at the racetrack early in the morning because that's when the boys unofficially raced their ponies. My bay Indian pony, named Pony, was a fast runner. I always won the race although there was a big horse

with a longer stride that incited me to whip Pony more than I was comfortable doing since I, too, had felt the whip lash my body.

Still another advantage in staying with Grandpa was that I could stay up as late as I wanted and no one came looking for me. The disadvantage of my late hours trapped me when I was finally ready to lift the flap of the tent and crawl inside to find my sleeping place. I was always afraid I would crawl over Grandpa, or worse yet, his common-law wife Viola. I don't know why I didn't like Viola. She was short, fat, and very quiet. Probably I thought her quietness was a sign of disapproval of me, because it was a non-smiling quiet. On the other hand, maybe I resented Viola because she wasn't really my Grandma and her face wasn't pretty like my picture of my real Grandmother. Viola always talked in Pottawatomie to Grandpa, and this also excluded me. I had not learned enough of the language to understand or to speak it fluently.

All of these rodeo memories kept interrupting Grandpa's funeral and ricocheted my sense of loss as the singers chanted song after song that, according to the Drnm religion, must be sung before Grandpa could be buried. At intervals, hungry persons sat cross-legged on the floor of the house and ate fried bread, Indian dried corn, dried apples and boiled meat. I wasn't hungry.

Grandpa was buried in the Shisheo Cemetery. I don't know why he was not buried in the Hale family burial ground near my home unless it was because he was a member of the Pottawatomie Citizens Band and Grandma was a member of the Prairie Band.

The home on Grandma's land where I was born and lived my first sixteen years was a two-story six room frame house. This was larger than other houses on the reservation. I don't know who built it or who "added on." The house can not be seen from the road. One must enter a gate, cross a pasture and a small bridge, and then go back to the wooded area sheltering my home.

I have an older brother Ed and a sister Marie, six years younger than I. Marie was a pretty, shy little girl who stayed close to Mom instead of sharing escapades with Ed and me. My father Viggo was a white man. I thought he was a hard worker, but I don't remember his ever playing with his children except an occasional checker game. I learned to respect his command, however, for it was from his hand that I felt the lash of the blacksnake whip. I tried to outrun him after I had hit my brother with a rock and accented the blow with a round of cussin'. Dad saw and heard. When he grabbed his whip, I started to run but stumbled in the plowed ground of the potato patch. The whip descended on my rooted body again and

again. The incident was never mentioned afterwards by my dad, but I had been severely taught not to cuss--when he was near. Although I am sure Mom witnessed the whipping from the kitchen window, she displayed no empathy.

I started to Miller School one-half mile south and one mile west of my home when I was four-years-old. Ed, three years older, refused to go to school. Mom threatened to whip him and sometimes he went down the road, but the whip incentive did not always get him all the way to the school. Consequently, he failed first grade. When school started the next September, the solution seemed to be to start me to school so Ed did not have to walk alone. We were both in the first grade. Ed was seven, and I was four, and would not be five until Dec. 29th. Sometimes we rode our pony, and sometimes we rode with Amos Chase, our neighbor classmate, on his pony. This not only kept Ed in school most of the time, but he also stepped into the role of big brother and arranged fights for me in the pony barn--out of the range of the teacher's eyes--at recess. We also had boxing matches in the barn. The boxers wore three pairs of shucking mittens for boxing gloves. Shucking mittens are those mittens used to protect the hands when harvesting corn. There was a thumb on either side of the mitten. When the mitten wore thin on one side, it could be reversed and the other thumb used.

By the time I was in third grade I was beginning to demonstrate the ego of a champion fighter, but my brother and Amos humbled me by rubbing my nose in horse manure. If Dad had been there then I would have been whipped again for cussin'.

Miller School was a one-room wooden frame rectangular building. The school bell was a small hand bell swung up and down by the teacher. About forty students attended this school, and the teacher taught all eight grades. I had five different teachers in the eight years I attended Miller. The absentee record was high and I expect the teacher was grateful. Her full schedule spared me from having any homework to carry home with my lunch bucket.

We lined our lunch buckets on the floor of the entry into the schoolhouse. The contents of the lunch buckets seldom varied. We usually had biscuits with jelly. In the fall, pears were added. One variety in our lunch time was extra-curricular when an epidemic of ringworm invaded our school. After a health lesson, the teacher ruled that every one had to wash his hands before lunch. A washpan with a single accompanying towel equipped the hygiene center. The donor who contributed the ringworm was not identified, but every person was soon itching and exhibiting an angry sore. The county

health nurse was summoned to the school. She examined the infected areas and prescribed a salve to be mixed by Mr. Mulryn, the druggist in Mayetta.

During school time we were permitted to listen to other classes recite if we behaved. One time I was listening and the teacher came down the aisle and caught me hard on the side of the head. I didn't ask her why, although I considered the blow to be undeserved. I do know it could not compare to the cuffing delivered to Ed by this teacher because he wouldn't sing. We didn't have music in the regular schedule, but this teacher liked to play the piano so singing was a fringe-benefit.

One day my brother, two other boys, and I elected to sacrifice school in favor of fishing. We had a fine day. We had already hidden fishing poles down by the bridge for furtive evacuation when opportunity nodded. The poles were swiftly recovered, baited, and cast into the water. The fish were biting, and by the time the sun was overhead we had fresh meat to complement our lunch pail biscuits. We had cooked our catch in the coals of an open fire, but the fish didn't taste too good since our foresight of hiding poles did not include a knife to gut entrails. In the afternoon we treed a groundhog and our excited yells exceeded the bounds of secrecy for playing hooky. When the sun began to lower, we kept climbing the hill to peek down to the school to see if kids were leaving--the signal for us to start home.

That night when Dad and I took Pony to haul the two five-gallon eans of separated milk from Grover Chase's house to ours to feed our hogs, Grover started telling Dad that there had been a lot of noise down in the timber that afternoon. I strapped the cans onto Pony as fast as I could and headed home without waiting for the analysis of the timber noise. I was sure Grover would tell Dad the truant story and I wanted to out distance the consequences. I appeared to be home safe, however, because when Dad came home he didn't take advantage of his knowledge. I did hasten to accept extra tasks for a few days, just in case.

Clothes were no problem since I grew up believing their only purpose was to keep the body covered and warm and to fit well enough to permit movement. We had two sources of clothing supply. The Mission Church dispensed clothes sent to the church because it was a missionary station. These clothes were varied in colors, sizes, and usefulness. Some of them had had the wear well extracted before they were sent to us.

The other supply station was the Indian Agency. The Agency clothes were new, never worn by a previous owner. This was monotonous, however, because they were always the same pattern, always wool, and always scratchy. They were army clothes complete with O.D. (olive drab) hats. I thought those clothes must have been sent by the Chinese army. What other army would enlist soldiers small enough to wear these scratchy wool overcoats with large black buttons? We were also issued army blankets that were warm and wool and scratchy. Probably there had been government army material in surplus after World War I and it was serviced into clothing for government-supported project. In our newly acquired uniform, a squadron of us marching down the road must have been an impressive Pottawatomie Army for our Indian Nation.

The Pottawatomie Mission Church was a mile south of our house. The mission minister and his wife lived in a white, green-trimmed, two-story house right by the church. I rode Pony down there a few times to attend Sunday School, and my mother's social life was the Ladies' Aid meetings assembled there on Thursday afternoons. But the principle reason for the existence of the church was surely Christmas Eve when my entire family attended. Every seat in the church was filled then by eager people who came, not to worship, but to receive a gift from the decorated Christmas tree. I always liked my new game and the tingle of excitement of opening and disclosing the mystery of the ribboned package. Package-opening or Christmas was never observed in my own home. I remember one time Dad handed me a three-bladed, white-handled jack knife and he said it was for Christmas. I fared better than Mom. Dad told her to hang up her stocking and there would be something in it. There was--one biscuit.

The Indian Agency was on the edge of the reservation one-half mile from Mayetta. The Agency comprised six identical square one-story houses painted white and peaked with a green pointed roof. The houses stood in a row like rigid sentinels. The first house was the office for conducting Indian matters. The second house was the home of the superintendent responsible for the safekeeping of the Indians. His importance was emphasized by a screened-in front porch. The third house lodged the law officer. The fourth house was designated for the land agent whose duties included renting Indian land to white men to farm. The fifth house was the health clinic, and the resident nurse lived in the sixth house. Wednesday was Agency Day. A long hitching rack across the road from the Agency secured teams and wagons, and the grassy lawns invited visiting and

playing. The Agency was open every day, but Wednesday was the traditional day of meeting friends there.

Periodically a doctor came to the clinic and diagnosed Indian patients. The resident nurse assisted him. Once a year a doctor was sent to remove tonsils. The waiting room converted into a hospital and six single cots rowed the stone-hearted clinic. Indian parents were told to round up their children and bring them to the clinic to have their tonsils removed. There was no question about whether or not the tonsils were guilty of any offense which justified their extraction. The children were left at the clinic in the morning and then picked up the following day. At that time I would do almost anything for ice cream and I had heard that tonsil patients were given ice cream.

When Ed and I were hauled to the clinic to be de-tonsiled, I kept the vision of ice cream uppermost in my mind; but Ed, sitting on the bed next to mine, listened wide-eyed to the screams of Kelly, the first martyr to be taken into the doctor's surgery. As Kelly's screams reduced to moans, we reasoned that he was getting weaker. When the sounds stopped completely, we were convinced that Kelly had died. This was enough of the tonsil business for Ed, so while the doctor and nurse were busy, Ed jumped up, dressed, and ran home. I was in a quandry. I was scared to run home as Ed had done, and I was scared to stay there and die. I'm not sure which scare was the stronger, but I think it was the ice cream lure that kept me in the clinic bed. After they had killed Kelly and carried him back to his bed, they wanted to know "Where's that other boy?" The remaining patients stared at Kelly with his life's blood drying on his mouth volunteered no information. Finally they asked someone outside the building who told them Ed had made a hasty retreat across the field. Ed's exit moved me up in the line, and I was summoned to be next and to climb up onto the table. I was told to count and I knew how, but when I got to twenty there was a roaring in my head and the doctor, nurse, and table started going around and around. When I woke up I was in my bed and my throat was dry and raw as if it had been lashed by a blacksnake whip. I tried to swallow to ease my thirst and this caused an eruption of the contents of my stomach. I looked around the room. The occupants of the other four beds were anguishing in the same discomfort and groaning to the unsympathizing walls. I wondered about Ed and wished I could run as fast as he did. I suffered silently all afternoon and that night we did get ice cream. It wasn't as flavorful as I thought it would be, but I clos-

ed my mouth tightly and refused to vomit mine--the sole logic for submitting to the ordeal of the tonsils.

I cannot recall one individual feature of the doctor or the nurse. I think they looked just alike in their white clothes, and the sterility of their instruments had surely penetrated their whiteness and sterilized them from all humanness.

My hunger for ice cream also induced me to rain dance. The neighbors were putting up hay in our hay meadow and I went over to watch. One neighbor, Bill Tweedy, said he would buy me an ice cream cone if I would dance for them. I considered the proposition and decided that the audience was too large, so I proposed a compromise. I would dance if Bill would come around to the other side of the haystack for a one-man show. He accepted my proposal and after the performance, before the rain clouds broke, he said he would buy me an ice cream cone the first time he saw me in town. He kept his promise. It was a double-dip strawberry cone.

My first job with a regular salary was working for the government. When I was twelve-years-old, I was hired to hoe weeds in the shelter belt. The shelter belt was government-planted trees planted ten rows deep. The length of the rows varied from one-fourth to one-half mile. The shelter belt was planted only on land still belonging to Indians living on the east-west roads. The trees were seedlings, so to permit their growth the weeds had to be cut away from them. This government project offered employment for school children, but the same person could only work for three weeks. I worked an eight-hour day for a dollar, but at the end of the three weeks I was fifteen dollars richer.

This money was harder earned than the money Ed and I collected for selling home brew. We were cutting across the timber and cornfield to the fairgrounds (only one-half mile by short cut) when we found a cache with a gunny sack half full of bottles of home brew. We knew we had discovered treasure, so we removed the sack from its hiding place and carried it to a new hiding place. That night at the dance held in the big fair pavillion, we began to look for prospective buyers for our loot. We spotted Uncle Joe, who was always in the market for brew and willing to pay a dollar for the contents of our sack. Ed and I felt no compulsion to boast of our exploit to our parents, and we knew Joe wouldn't tell. He had made a good buy, not to be discussed further.

Another money-making scheme was not so successful and distressed me with much anxiety. I read in a magazine that a salve company needed salesmen. For each 65¢ worth of salve sold, only

35¢ had to be mailed to the company. I walked down the road to the home of the three maiden Hoggins sisters and sold an order for salve. Then I spent my 30¢. But alas, my power of salesmanship, also, had been spent with the money from my first and last sale. Now my problem was how to make up the money I had spent and return it to the ladies. Fortunately my birthday arrived and I received a windfall of a dollar from my Aunt Anna who was employed as a matron in an Indian boarding school in Arizona. I hurried the two and one-half miles to the home of the Hoggins sisters to return their money. The Hoggins joined in giving me a sound lecture for not delivering the salve and for being tardy in returning their money. They instilled enough fear into me that I dropped private enterprise in favor of working for the government.

My second government job was working with adults helping to build check dams to prevent erosion. My job was mixing cement with a hoe in a wooden box.

Next, I helped to build the stone community building by the Agency houses. At first I was assigned to shovel rock into the mixer. Then they decided that was too hard for a thirteen-year-old, so I was allotted the job of hauling the cement in the wheelbarrow. After I dumped a few heavy loads, the foreman gave instructions to quit filling the wheelbarrow so full. My wages were still a dollar a day.

Prior to my working days, there was plenty of leisure time and I never lacked for entertainment. By 1934 we had a radio in our house, but only two sets of earphones. If four people wanted to listen, we took the earphones apart and each one held one earphone to his ear. We did not listen too long at one time, because we did not want to run the battery down. I don't remember that Mom ever took her turn.

Another diversion was the cool, shady creek just one hundred yards away from my house. It provided fishing, a swimming hole, and banks for building mud slides and lodging snakes. We had two scary snake encounters, and Ed and I both housed a smoldering fear of snakes. (I nearly went into a frenzy when two older boys pushed fishworms down my back and told me they were snakes.)

One day we made a seine for fish with ten feet of chicken-mesh wire. Our seine was successful, and we started to pull up the fish when we discovered a brown water snake had invited himself into the fish seine. With no hesitation, we dropped the seine and ran to the safety of the house.

Another time we dared to try the boat Unele Jaek had just built. He was busy elsewhere and wouldn't know his boat had been leased

if we were cautious to return it to the same mooring. The boat's length was only about eight feet, and we were moving nicely when two long tree roots on the bank turned into two long water snakes. They slithered down the bank and swam into the water toward our boat. Ed jumped right out of the boat, ran through the water, clambered up the bank on the other side and headed home. I approved his move and jumped out of the boat, too, but I was so scared I couldn't run. I stood in the water and yelled for help, but Ed deafened himself to any danger other than his own. It seemed like a long time before my legs would carry their burden out of the water to safety. I don't know what happened to the snakes, but it was a satisfaction to me to report to Mom that Ed had refused to help me.

Besides the water excursions, the hay in the barn allowed a maze of tunnels that required hours of digging. We had one barn catastrophe. I was visiting a friend, George Tork, who had matches and tested the inflammableness of the leaves. The leaves burst into flames and we fought to keep the flames from spreading. All of the grounded leaves were drier than George had considered, so we had to draft the use of my new jacket to hit the burning leaves to smother the fire. The fire, however, continued to stretch until it caught the barn which was also prime firewood. I was quick to confess to George's parents that it was George who started it. I didn't worry nearly as much about George's consequences as I did about the hole in my new blanket-lined denim jacket.

Still another entertainment was the pony races and our own private rodeos. Ed didn't care much about riding the pony, so Pony was available to me whenever I felt the desire to ride. During the bad drought years of 1934 and 1935, Dad changed the team often because they soon overheated in the field. To make this change he had to use my pony. I did not voice my resentment, but I regretted the collar marks on Pony's neck.

Mom never raised her voice to us and we had no fear of reprisal from her, so it was fortunate that it was she who discovered the chicken cook-out. We borrowed her teakettle from the kitchen and a chicken from the barn. We were careful to borrow a chicken that did not belong to us, but to a neighbor whose chickens roosted in our barn. We had heard Dad complain about having to feed these chickens as well as ours, so it seemed justifiable for us to eat one that was fattened with our feed. We carried the teakettle and the chicken to the timber and built a fire. We had seen Mom immerse a chicken in hot water before plucking the feathers. Since we had no pan, we tried stuffing the chicken into the teakettle. It was then that one tell-

tale feather roosted inside the teakettle. It was just that Mom accepted our answers to her query about the white feather in the kettle (our chickens were red) and dismissed the ease, because that old hen was so tough we could hardly eat it. It certainly was not worth additional punishment.

All the years I was growing up on the reservation, I did not realize that being Indian was an undesirable difference until I started to high school in Mayetta. I had been to town many times with my parents in the wagon. In the winter we had to lie in the back completely submerged in blankets to keep from freezing. Later we had a Model T Ford touring car big enough to seat our entire family. Now, however, it was different. I walked the three and one-half miles to town every day and stayed all day. I began to notice that not only did the school house have bathroom facilities, but also the houses in the town. The reservation began to seem degraded in its plumbingless state, and I soon learned that there was discrimination against the Indians. A friend and I sneaked into the tavern to buy beer. The tavern keeper said to my white friend, "I'll sell you one, but not him. He's an Indian." The idea of buying a beer was a status symbol of being in high school. I don't think I really wanted the beer until I knew I could not have it because I was an Indian.

An irrepressible urge to leave the reservation began to gnaw inside of me. When I was sixteen I graduated from high school and joined the CCC. I was sent to Seneca, Kansas, to work for the government rebuilding the area around the lake. That ended the days of a permanent residence on the reservation for me, and I didn't take any notice of anything that happened on the reservation until after I was married and had three sons who continually wanted me to tell about when I was a little Indian boy. One night when I had business in Mayetta, my wife and sons rode in the car with me. While I was in the house visiting with the man I came to see, my wife was telling the boys about the town and where Daddy had gone to school. My second son Howard, then age six said, "I can just see him now with his little black hair standing up." I expect that was an accurate description of my appearance at the time I attended Mayetta high school.

My sons did not grow up on the reservation, but rather in Holton, Kansas. Still they have an insatiable yen for information about the reservation. They are proud of their Indian heritage, and I wish Mom could know that. My first born, Jack, now an orthopedic surgeon, collects Indian relics. Howard, now a veterinary, keeps a picture of Grandpa Na-see-kah hanging in his study. My

third son Michael, a junior at Kansas State University, reveals his Indian blood more than his brother. Michael's hair is a dark brown, and the first few days of the summer sun turns his skin a golden brown that deepens as the summer progresses. He looks very much like the picture in our family room of Grandpa Na-see-kah.

My sons all relish the outdoors and they are avid hunters. My wife and I, and our sons when they are home, go to the Indian Pow Wows on the Pottawatomie Reservation and the Kickapoo Reservation near Horton, Kansas. We attend the Drum funeral services of relatives and friends, and Michael and I are relearning the Pottawatomie language. We drive down to the home place and take pics to Ed, who lives alone in the big house.

The title to the land is confused beyond disentangling. I inherited a third of my mother's share and all of Aunt Anna's share, but there are other heirs who have passed their shares to their children and grandchildren. The land is rented for farming through the Indian Agency (now located at Horton), and since it would be almost impossible to get a clear title, I guess that my first home is at least one of the plots of land on the reservation that cannot be sold to the white man.

(Author's note: I have spelled Pottawatomie as it was spelled at the time my husband lived on the reservation. It is now being changed to Potawatomic.)