



## **Oral History Project at Little Big Horn College of the Apsaalooke Nation**

**A presentation to the ATALM 2019**

**By LBHC Library Director Tim Bernardis, M. Ed.**

**And LBHC Faculty in Humanities/Social Science Janine Pease, D. Ed.**

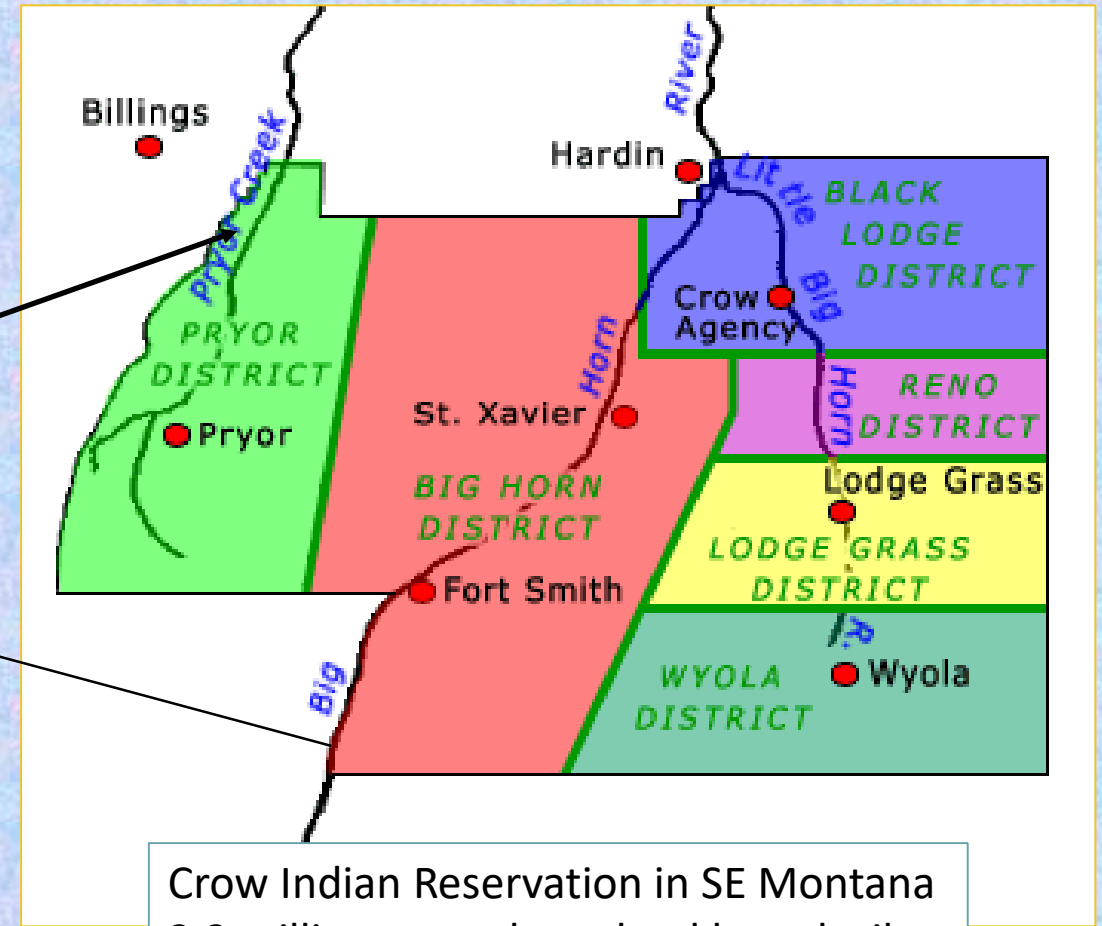
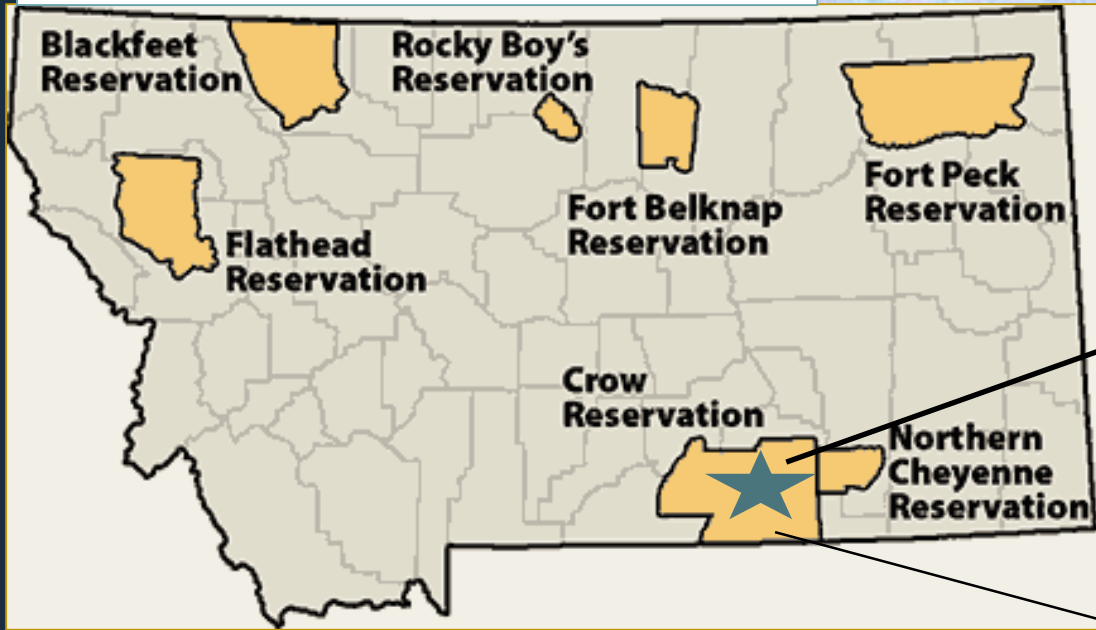


# LBHC Oral History Project Presentation Overview

- **Library Director Tim Bernardis**
- The Library And Archives
- Original Proposal to NEH
- Successful NEH Proposal
- Treaty Symposium
- Cultural Enrichment Presenters
- Crow History Book Project
- Oral History Student Training

- **Faculty Member Janine Pease**
- Montana and Crow Country
- Apsaalooke Cultural Renaissance
- Little Big Horn College of the Crow Nation
- Oral History Project Faculty Participants
- Glimpse of the Oral History Topics
- Crow Oral History Topics on the Horizon
- Teaching Module Components

# State of Montana, Seven Tribal Nations



- Big Horn River
- Little Big Horn River
- Big Horn Mountains
- Pryor Mountains
- Wolf Mountains

Crow Indian Reservation in SE Montana  
2.2 million acres, large land based tribe

13,700 Crow Tribal members

Plains Indian Tribe, Siouan Language

# Apsaalooke Cultural Life



**Crow Fair – Third Weekend in August, Biggest Family Reunion  
1,200 Tipi Encampment, Morning Parades, Afternoon Rodeos  
and Race Meets, Indian Relay Racing, Intertribal Powwow**



# Apsaalooke Contemporary Artists



Jared Stewart, Blues Singer



Kevin Red Star, Artist



Ben Pease, Multi-media Artist



Allen Knowsgun, Artist

Supaman, Christian Parrish  
Rap Singer, Fancy Dancer



Hank Real Bird,  
Poet



Della Big Hair Stump,  
fashion designer



Bethany Yellowtail, Fashion Designer

# Little Big Horn College of the Crow Nation

Little Big Horn College is located in Crow Agency, Montana (65 miles SE of Billings)



Culture Center



Health and Wellness Center



LBHC Central Arbor



Driftwood Lodges Classroom Building



LBHC Library



LBHC Library and Admin Bldg

Delegation to International Indigenous Games 2017



Rocket Club



**Little Big Horn College:  
Chartered 1980  
NWCCU Accredited 1990  
350 Students, ISC/FTE  
9 Associate Degrees  
7 One-Year Certificates**



Graduation 2017 at Little Big Horn College

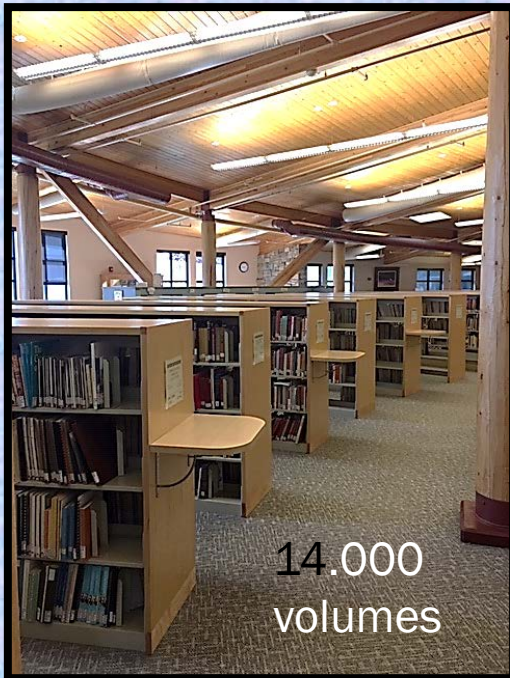


LBHC Staff/Faculty Fall Orientation and Retreat 2018,  
Black Canyon Youth Camp in the Big Horn Mountains

# Little Big Horn College Library



**Tim Bernardis, Library  
Director**  
**Edwin Springfield,  
Assistant Librarian**





# LBHC Archives Updated Work Area

**Jon Ille, Archivist  
Jane Holds The Enemy  
– Digization Specialist**



Treaties That Live: Symposium on the Sesquicentennial of the Crow (Apsaalooke) Indian Treaties of 1868 at Little Big Horn College, Support from Humanities Montana, Foundation for Community Vitality, Montana History Foundation, and Custer Battlefield Trading Post, Sept. 2018



The Warriors' Entry



Dale Old Horn, MC



Traditional Honors to Montana Humanities Director Ken Egan & Speaker Adrian Heidenreich, LBHC Cultural Center



Tim Bernardis, LBHC Library



Speaker Dale Old Horn, Apsaalooke Territory in 1868



LBHC President David Yarlott



Speaker Alden Big Man on the Fort Hawley Treaty, with Jon Ille-Archivist and NEH Chairman Peede



Speaker Sharon Peregoy on Treaty Impact Today

Little Big Horn College Presents

Open to the Public  
Everyone is Invited to Participate in This Event as Our Ancestors Participated in the Making of These Treaties



Co-Sponsored by the Friends of Chief Plenty Coups



**TREATIES THAT LIVE:**  
HISTORICAL SYMPOSIUM FOR THE SESQUICENTENNIAL (150 YEARS) OF THE CROW (APSAALOOKE) TREATIES OF 1868 AT FORT LARAMIE, WYOMING AND FORT HAWLEY, MONTANA

Little Big Horn College Health & Wellness Center (Gym)  
Crow Agency, Montana  
September 14th - 15th, 2018—9am-4pm both days

For More Information and to Register, visit [www.treatiesthatlive.com](http://www.treatiesthatlive.com). Registration form can be found under the More tab, then RSVP/ Registration

You can also register at the LBHC Library in person, registration preferred but not required

Event Cost: FREE  
Event Address: 8645 S Weaver Dr., Crow Agency, MT 59022  
Contact us at (406) 638-3113 or [tim@lbhc.edu](mailto:tim@lbhc.edu)



Generous support for this symposium provided by Humanities Montana, The Foundation for Community Vitality and The Montana History Foundation



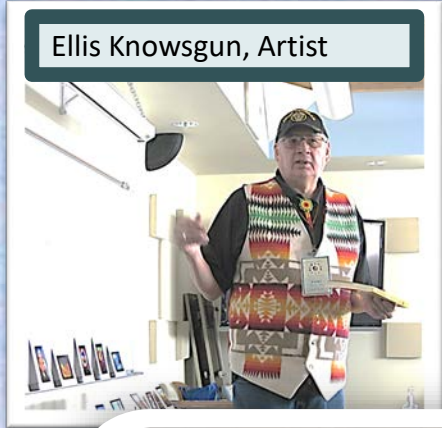
Mardell Plainfeather and Winona Plenty Hoops, Crow women's arts



Louella Johnson, Crow Lullabies Singer



Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow, WWII Veteran, Crow historian, Centenarian, Presidential Medal Winner



Ellis Knowsgun, Artist



John Pretty on Top and Larsen Medicine Horse, Crow Sun Dance Leaders

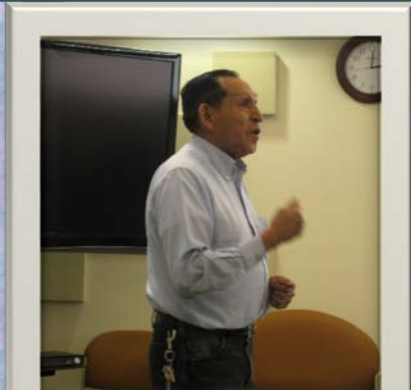
**LBHC Library Cultural Enrichment Lectures, Thursdays at 12 noon to 1 12 years, 25 presenters per year, now being digitized, soon online.**



Barney Old Coyote Battlefields of the Crow Indians



Janine Pease, Voting Rights, Board Schools History



Jerome Whitehip, Crow Fair History Arrow Games in the Districts



Dale Old Horn, Warrior Societies, Personal Songs



Sharon Peregoy, Crow Weddings



Hank Realbird, Poet Laureate



Lydia Falls Down, Beadworker, Horse Trappings, Crow woman's regalia

# The Crow History Book Project

Ten Eras Assigned to Ten Historians



Dr. Timothy  
McCleary



Dr. Emerson  
Bull Chief



Tim  
Bernardis



Mardell Plainfeather



Dr. Janine  
Pease, Lead



Dr. Adrian  
Heidenreich



Sharon Peregoy,



Dr. Alden Big Man



Jon Ille



Burdick Two Leggins

# LBHC Oral History Project






# Oral History Project

- The Archives Holds Lots of Oral Histories
- There Are Gaps in Our Holdings, Post WWII Histories
- The Librarian and Archivist Met with the Library Committee Regarding this and after this we decided to apply for an NEH Humanities Initiatives at Tribal Colleges and Universities grant.
- Once again, we were successful in getting the grant.
- A Key Part of the Project is Partnering With College Faculty



## How The Project Functions (Year One)

- Faculty Picked Important Subjects From Post-WWII Crow History: The Big Horn River Case, Relocation, The Crow Bilingual Program, Coal Development, Arrow Throwing Tournaments, Midwifery, Community Action Programs, The Creation of Plenty Coups High School, etc.
- Faculty Conducted Oral History Interviews That Were Taped Both in Audio and Video.
- Faculty Conducted 36 of 40 Interviews Planned This Summer
- Transcripts and Translations Produced For Each Interview.



# How The Project Functions (Year Two and Three)

- During the Summer of 2018, Faculty Will Continue Conducting Oral Histories. The Project Will Produce A Total of 80 Oral Histories. Not Quite Reached But Accomplished During the Summer, 2019.
- Faculty Will Begin to Take the Oral Histories and Create Course Modules. These Will Be Integrated Into the Humanities Curriculum at the College. August 2019
- There Will Also Be an Oral History Course Taught at the College. This Will Train Community Members to Conduct Oral Histories.
- All Interviews Will Be Saved in the Same Manner as Described in the Digitization Project



Oral History Manual – Authored by Dr. Timothy McCleary, LBHC Department Head  
 Oral History Training – By Jon Ille, LBHC Archivist

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# Post WWII Oral History Project at Little Big Horn College

**Dr. Tim McCleary**, Native American and Crow Studies, History and Anthropology Faculty



- **Crow Midwifery** – interviews were conducted with daughters and granddaughters of the Crow midwives, from treatment of mothers to delivery of Crow babies.
- **Colic Doctoring** - this involved the traditions of Crow Indian doctoring of baby colic in the Crow Indian community
- **Crow Tribal Government**, under the 1948 Constitution
- The **Crow Fair** – interviews were conducted on the history of the **Crow Fair**

**Raphaelle Realbird**, Crow Studies and Education Faculty



- **Yellowtail Dam** – Interviews conducted were with Mountain Crows, those opposed to the construction of the Yellowtail Dam. The division of the Nation on this issue, 2 Crow Fairs.
- **Big Horn River Case** – Interviews were done with individuals who worked on the federal case that took control of the Big Horn River. The effects of the river loss was discussed.
- **Crow Language Revitalization** – the interviews were about language revitalization on the Crow reservation, with a view on programs from the 1970's, their philosophy and politics.

# Post WWII Oral History Project at Little Big Horn College

**Sharon Stewart Peregoy**, Crow Studies and Education Faculty



- **Coal Development** on the Ceded Strip and Impact of the Nation, the interview discussed negotiations with corporations, environmental and concerns.
- **Crow Indians in the Montana Legislature** – and their draft legislation, experiences with non-Indian counterparts.
- **The Crow Water Compact** – interview from both those who supported the compact those opposed.

**Janine Pease**, Humanities, Social Science & Education Faculty



- **Relocation** to Urban America – Interviewees shared their experiences on Relocation in the cities of Cleveland, Los Angeles and Denver.
- The Crow's **War on Poverty** Programs, 1960's and 1970's – interviewees discussed the Community Action Program, the Crow Head Start and the expansion of the Crow Fair facilities.
- **American Indian Voting Rights litigation** in the 1980's changed election schemes for the legislative districts, the county commission and the school district
- **Education Experience** - Crow students bussed to Edgar High School; then a new **Plenty Coups High School**, was opened.

## **Midwifery and Women's Health.**

**Presentation by Tim McCleary, Ph.D.**

**Crow midwives attended the birth of their tribal children**, in respective districts of the reservation. The knowledge of treating women's illnesses and conditions was a well-developed specialty with sacred elements within the tradition. Robert Lowie's research at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century found midwives used baneberry root and ground up horned toad, that were taken by the birthing mother in a tea. These were in imitation of the expectant cow buffalo. Crows placed a beaded fish in the bed of the expectant mother and sometimes placed a live small fish in the palm of the mother's hand. Midwives medicine bags contained nodding onion, red baneberry, porcelain doll and chewing tobacco. The nodding onion was beaded on an aphrodisiac bag. Mothers were instructed to eat chokecherries while pregnant to promote black shiny eyes in their babies, and to avoid facing the fire.

**Midwives were trained by their mothers and grandmothers.** Midwifery started through observations, listening, and assisting with the delivery. A special lodge was prepared for the birth and the floor was lined with the grass that buffalo do not eat. The expectant mother refrained from eating as her time approached, and she walked in all four directions. Pretty Shield, Medicine Woman of the Crow, was a midwife, as was her daughter Pine Woman. (McCleary, T. 2004).

# American Indian Plaintiffs Issues Leading to the Voting Rights Case

## Big Horn County Services

5 Indian employees of 205 total County Employees – Affirmative Action

Hypertechnical Voter Registration

Few Indian Poll workers, disallowed Crow and Cheyenne language in polls

Sheriff's Arrest Rate 89% Indian

Roads Department plowed non-Indian lanes, plowed in Indian lanes

## Hardin School District

Few if any Indian teachers in the Middle and High School

Teachers who graded Indians with a C or below

Hardin School buses would not pick up students who lived outside of Busby

School District refused to serve some Indian students

## Historic Discrimination

Signs in Hardin up to the 1950's "No Indians or Dogs Allowed"

Unemployment consistently high; poverty rate higher than state rate

Educational achievement lower than state rates of achievement

Businesses withheld services to Indian customers

# 1986 – Windy Boy v. Big Horn County et.al. Findings

## Election Scheme

- **Election Scheme Dilutes Indian Voting.** County Commission and School Board Elections Scheme, at-large elections denied plaintiffs equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect representative of their choice.

## Whites into One Party

- **Bipartisans united whites.** The white Republicans and Democrats united and formed a political party called the Bipartisans, they had only white candidates. Under oath, the Bipartisans president stated the Indian candidates were not qualified.

## Racial Block Voting

- **Block voting.** Big Horn County showed a 80% rate of racial block voting; white voters voted for white candidates and Indian voters voted for Indian candidates or Pro-Indian candidates. This was proved through a study of every election, all precincts for a 10 year period (study done by the plaintiffs and Indian advocates).

## County Employment

- **County Services and Racial Discrimination.** Big Horn County had 205 employees, just 5 American Indians. The County had 100 persons appointed to committees, just 1 person was Indian – Joe Medicine Crow on the Big Horn County Historical Society Board. The County plowed out white ranchers' lanes and driveways, but plowed in Indian lanes, keeping Indian people from getting to work and health services. **Hardin was 19% white in residents, but the arrest record was 89% Indian arrests.**

# 1986 – Windy Boy v. Big Horn County Federal District Court Order

Zone Based Elections

**County Commissioner Elections:** The Court ordered the county to establish a zone based election scheme with one Indian majority zone, one White majority zone and one swing zone. This order was completed by the County Clerk's Office in 1987, and special elections were held in 1987.

School Board - Residence Based Elections

**Hardin School District:** The Court ordered the Hardin School District to establish an election scheme that is residence based for candidates, with two Indian majority districts and three white majority districts. This order was completed by the School District in 1987, and special elections were held in 1987.

US Dept of Justice to Supervise County & School Board

**Big Horn County and Hardin School District** are under on-going supervision by the Department of Justice, for protection of American Indian voting rights.

**INDIAN RELOCATION  
A FEDERAL TERMINATION POLICY,  
1950 - 1975**  
**& the Crow Indian Relocation Experience**

**A Presentation by Janine Pease, D. Ed.  
LBHC Faculty in Humanities and Social Science  
NEH Oral History Project at Little Big Horn College  
Sept 13, 2018**



# What was the first person experience for relocated Crow Indians?

- Mardell Hogan Plainfeather is the daughter of Lillian Bullshows and George Washington Hogan. She was born in Billings and raised in Crow Agency. Their main district was Reno, but her mother was from Pryor. She graduated high school in Hardin HS. She heard of the BIA Relocation Program through her sister Lorena Mae Walks Over Ice, who worked at the BIA Crow Indian Agency. “My sister pushed my sister Mary and I to do things.” Once they learned of the program, they were totally ready to go and completed applications. The chance to get training and to get out of the reservation, appealed to Mardell the most.
- Ms. Plainfeather checked business administration as a first choice for training, because she had high school business courses. In 1963, upon arrival at the Butte Business School she chose medical stenography with an expectation it would be useful at home. She took the associate of arts degree program in medical records. This included OJT in the medical lab, both sisters went with the medical technology medical records part. Butte was a good choice because it was near home. “We were attached to our mother, and we went home as often as we could.” She got good grades, met positive teachers. Several other Indians were there, too.
- The pale blonde woman BIA officer showed them a residence, “a rat-infested dump”. “Our mother insisted on cleanliness, and we dusted and polished our home. This rat-trap house was appalling and unsafe. We refused to live there and took a motel instead.” The corner drugstore owner overheard the sisters discussing their housing dilemma and offered them a small rental house he owned. The house had two bedrooms and a small yard; it was an answer to their prayers.
- The BIA officer visited Mardell and Mary periodically. She admonished them not to speak Crow, to cut her hair to be more professional, and not to socialize with cowboys. She was hired at IHS in Crow Agency. (Hogan-Plainfeather, Interview, 2017)



*Minnie at Carlisle Indian School*

# THE LIFE OF MINNIE REED WILLIAMS (ENCHOFF)

A presentation by  
Janine Pease, D. Ed.

Cultural Enrichment Lectures April 11, 2019

# Minnie Reed Williams, Tribal Secretary & Crow Federation Women's Club 1931-1961

- The Club took up for two young boys, Crow Agency Elementary students whose parents took them out of school, Grandmother passed away, burial at Black Canyon, took family two weeks. Upon boys return to school teachers beat the boys with hoses and expelled them. Club petitioned the Office of Public Instruction. The teachers were fired for their severe punishments and the boys returned to school. A new discipline policy had to be formed and enacted. They enlisted the GFWC in Yellowstone County and the Billings Gazette in this issue.
- The women **formed a PTA** at the Crow Agency School for the first time.
- The Club members **visited rural Crow families** to address and document dire health conditions, and the rising incidence of tuberculosis. They worked with the BIA Field Matrons.
- **Poor water quality** was contributing to the serious health issues
- **Maternal and Children's issues** of child birthing, whooping cough, measles and infections were a focus of the club services in the community
- The Club held **weekly meetings** on hygiene, nutrition, home economics skills; they documented the need for Indian nurses.
- The petitioned the filthy conditions in **the Crow Agency Jail**, the conditions that addicts of alcohol faced in the jail. They petitioned for an added police woman for service among youth.

### **Crow Federated Women's Club and Women's Activism.**

Minnie Williams, Katie Stewart and Cordelia Big Man and several other Crow women organized a Federated Women's Club in 1931. The General Federation of Women's clubs was a national women's organization, part of the nation's Progressive Movement. During the 1930's the national Club had 850,000 members. The GFW was granted a national charter from the US Congress in 1901, the club motto was unity in diversity, and the purpose was to be municipal housekeepers, to clean up politics, cities, health and well-being of their neighbors. The Club emphasized "maternal expertise" to lobby and investigate community needs. Nationally, the Club had a Division of Indian Welfare and an alliance with the American Indian Defense Association.



*Minnie Reed Williams (front with hat) and the Federated Women's Club (1930s)*

The Women's Club was registered by the national organization in 1932. The club preamble gave the foci of the Crow women:

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*"to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Crow Indians; to preserve our cultural values; to endeavor fair adjustment of our tribal affairs; to obtain and preserve our rights under the Crow Indian treaties with the United States; to also promote our common welfare."* (Matthews

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# Oral History Topics on the Horizon

Topics for This Year 2019-2020	Topics for This Year 2019-2020
Edgar High School Transition to Plenty Coups HS	Crow Indian State Legislators 1982 to present
Experience at Bacone College in Muskogee OK	Crow Language Orthography Development – Joe Reed
Attending Haskell Institute in the 1960's	St. Xavier Catholic School to Pretty Eagle School
Sheridan Indian Days and Miss Indian America Pageant	Tribal Chairmanship – Richard Real Bird
Crow Central Education Commission, Inc.1972	Life of Minnie Reed Williams, daughter Laura Lee
Research and Writing “Counting Coups” – Larry Colton	Collection Narrative of Stu Conners, Archaeologist
Crow Museum Holdings – Richard Edwards	Relocation & Teaching at Crow Agency School-Bev Big Man

# LBHC Oral History – Teaching Module Components

## Presentations

PowerPoint

Chalk Talk

Lecture

## Written Assignments

Key Word List

Reflection to Connect

Research Paper on Topic

## Class Discussion

Word Association

Roundtable Discussion

Quotes from Transcript to discuss

## Handouts

Interview Transcript

Transcript Exerpts

Related clippings

Bibliography

## Visit Archives

View digitized Interview

Visit Collection on Topic

Special Collections in Library

# LBHC Students Oral History Training - Options

Oral History  
Course

Oral History  
Seminar

In-Class  
Training &  
Assignment

Family Story-  
telling Event

Community  
Training,  
Event

# NEH Oral History Project at Little Big Horn College

## Benefits and Results

- Recorded on video, audio and transcribed – interviews with the movers and shakers of the Post WWII Era on the Crow Indian Reservation - Archives
- First person accounts of the events, activities, achievements of the Crow People; Voice of the persons
- Reading lists provide bibliographies related to each topic – FACULTY USE THE LIBRARY!
- Topics have connections to unexpected and related topics
- Partnerships and community of historians generate broader look at the topics, interviewee selection – AND WITH THE LIBRARIAN AND ARCHIVIST
- Course content, expanded to the Post WWII, an era outside most history works
- LBHC Students bring the discussions home, to learn from their family elders
- Capacity to have women and children's voices and experience known and recorded
- Publication of research in a collaboration – The Crow History Book Project
- Expansion of the Cultural Enrichment presentations into the Post WWII Era





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