

Interview of Ted Walker at his residence, Helena, Montana on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2001, the time is 4 PM.



Ted Walker's Great Grand Father

**Ted** what is your full name?

Theodore Joseph Walker.

**Is that your native name?**

My native name is, Gros Ventre, Westivia Doney (*correct spelling not sure in native Language, can click on to hear actual Words*) means **Big Bear Coat**

**What Date were you born on?**

May 23, 1933.

**Where were you born?**

Hays, Montana

**What is your mother's name?**

Her maiden name or? Teresa Walker.

**Ok, that's, Her maiden name?**

Teresa Challenger, White Weasel

**What is your fathers Name?**

John Walker.

**Your Grandparents names, do you remember them?**

OK, My grandparents on my fathers side, was George Walker, mother was Katherine Running Fisher.

**And what tribe do you belong to?**

Grove Von, Grove Von tribe originated from the Arapahoe tribe.

**OK, can you tell me a little more about your tribe heritage?**

The way they were separated, is that, they had two chiefs, kinda usual for a tribe to have two chiefs, well not unusual for a tribe to have two chiefs. One was a leading chief, other was an advising chief. When they had the Nez Perce, US Army war, half the people to fight for the Nez Perce because they were right there right there where they were camped. Other half left and went all the way North Dakota and stopped there by the government. That is how our tribe winded up here at by the Bear Paw Mountains because the people of, my people, you know were part of the tribe had separated by the other tribe, stayed there.

**Up around Hays.**

Yes Nez Perce, made reservation there. The way they were Arapahoe then, but they call them Grove Vons now. The two tribes were separated from the Arapahoe.

**What do you remember as child that your grandparents or parents taught you that was in the tribe that was special to you?**

There was like games, unusual games that you could play out of nature like rock game. You had the three rocks; they take them and drop them into the other one.

**Into the other hand?**

They would drop one or two into the other hand and had to guess how many rocks were in each hand. If you didn't guess, then you would have to do something that the guy had the rocks told you to do.

**Like to Truth or Dare, Similar to?**

Right, as bad as one to jump into cold water. Not necessary so, a lot of people didn't, unless they really didn't like the guy or jump on a horse that use to buck all the time or something like that. And the kid games you weren't aloud to do those kind of things. You just had to do little things like run around the teepee five times or run over, you could run through the creek and back across again, stuff like that they told you to do. Pick up a bunch of wood and bring it back stuff like that. Who every lost would do that, if the guy guessed how many had in there then you would have to go do that.

**Other wise the guy who held the rocks in his hands guess correctly. That is an interesting game.**

Yaa, you don't see that game too much also had the, with sticks, almost like baseball. But they bat, rocks towards each other not to hit each other. If the other guy hit him then he would have to give him something. You tried not to get hit, you seeing if you, the judge trying to get hit then they disqualify you.

**Then there would be teams on each side.**

Yes there would be teams on each side, they line up, in a row like that and play with the guy straight across from you.

**About how far apart?**

On the average of about maybe ten feet something likes that.

**How big were the rocks or the sticks?**

Just small rocks and pretty good size sticks you know, not.

**So you could just hit them with the stick.**

It got to be under hand with the stick but can't hit the guy.

**Got to get as close as possible.**

If the guy comes towards the guy then the guy doesn't want to duck then he doesn't have to. If you hit him then you were punished for it. Things you have to do to, Pretty severe things you.

**Like What?**

Go climb up a tree that was almost impossible to climb up or run up a mountain and come back and bring something they left up on the mountain. To make sure you really made it up that mountain. Either go catch a bird such as a hawk or eagle or prairie chicken. Have to catch a bird or you didn't come home.

**How often would this occur?**

It would occur too much because usually the guy would never want to hit the other guy. If he did then he got careless, then says like someone just started the game or something like that and didn't know how hard to hit then they made him practice for the game before to make sure he doesn't clobber someone.

**So, someone really doesn't get hurt. Just kinda of skill to see how close you can get.**

They had such a game such as football, not like touch football, tag football. They wouldn't go onto a ball field and they would hid and certain color trees in there pockets. Leaves, branches in there pockets, rare branch that they couldn't find around there. The other team would get so many branches and brought them back, they they were the winning team. They would have to find the other guys first.

**With the branches.**

There was less on the running team then the chasing team, more people on chasing team then the hiding team.

**So one side would have a larger number of people in which would be searching out.** If they didn't bring so many branches back then the running team would win.

**How large area would this be?**

Area of about two or three mile radius.

**Very large area.**

They would have to lay down and put there eyes to the ground until the guy told them to go and chase them and they would never know which way, direction they went.

They also had a game to catch fish, they would put there hand into the water and wait for a fish to come by. Then Pull it out just like that. In the rivers and creeks and who ever got the most fish won some kind of prize. Generally it was, beef jerky, dry meat or what ever. Buffalo meat more or less, or it was a horse, young horse. But they had some fantastic games that relate to games that, I see on TV now. A lot of those games are related to like Football, Baseball batting that rock towards that guy. I don't know about the fishing part, maybe me with the net. LOL. Other then that they really good games, guessing games with the rocks, they called that the hand game.

Then they would have there celebration like Pow-Wows and almost everyone danced. Certain dance for the ladies, only the ladies could dance. Certain dance for the men, only the men could dance.

**Which dances would you call those?**

Well there is Grass Dance, Honey where is that book at?  
I got all the dances in them, call the owl, ya that is them there.  
Kinda of dances, songs that they do. Let's see.

**These are recent events you attended?**

Yes

**What about the past? Were the they about same as they were in the past as they are now? Were the Pow-wows about the same?**

Pretty much the same, they changed a lot of things, but more and more less they the same. They have some of the same dances, a lot of different tribes had different dances. They should be in here.

**How often do they normally would they have these Pow Wows?**

Here up in at Hays, they have them every, like they have them in the summer time. What they call a national Pow Wows where people come from all over the nation up in the canyon for five days. They have sponsored by the, what they call it, the place in Washington, where they, can't think of it. Where they have Romney works there, Indian Bureau, Bureau of Indian Affairs, that who it is. They send grants for the drummers, winning singers, dancers on each of the days of the contests, events.

**What was it like when you were a kid, what was different?**

They had dances like that too but not like now days.

**Nothing like now?**

No. They had little prizes when I was a kid, nothing like they do now, Nothing big like now. Do you know what they pay now for winning, like winning senior dancer or winning senior women dancer or senior man dancer? The beginning prizes are a thousand dollars.

**That is quite a bit.**

This year they only had three senior dancers up there at the canyon, they all won. They only had three prizes in each event. Here they don't pay as much because they don't have quite the money here. What did they pay on the singer's honey? A thousand dollars, drummers, singers, leading got five hundred dollars, up there they pay fifteen or sixteen hundred dollars. Of course that is a national event they come from all over, and even the Aztec from Mexico. Little strange they dance a little different and dressed different dressed different, they really got some outfits. Have you ever seen them?

**No I haven't, I have seen variety of things at Pow Wow's they are something. I have never really been to one locally.**

One of these years we will have to go up there.

**OK**

Where they come from Canada , from New York, West Virginia, North Carolina, California and British Columbia, Alaska ,all over the country, they come from all over and each place you can see that they do dancing. Where most United People, well most of the people, most of the American Indians, Native Americans dance the same here in America, in the United States, like even from Florida like from "Alligator rocks "or something like that, but they come up here sometimes too, ----- but they dance like us to you know, pretty much so.

**So it's some kind of unity**

Ya Unity thing where everybody gets together and celebrates, like they have tents and campers and years ago they just had Teepee they bring a Teepee

**Teepee?**

But now they got tents and campers. They got everything camping trailers and you know how big the canyon is

**Yes it is a big canyon**

They got that all.

**Lined with people.**

Its really interesting ,cause they start out I think they start out at 11 o'clock in they afternoon down there on each day and than take my mother up there she won't leave you know she stays up to 2 o'clock in the morning, that's when they quit. They dance till 2 o'clock in the morning those people, wow I couldn't dance that long. Let me name you some of the dances that the have there, if I can find them I know there in here Here is an Indian Prayer, Oh that's Indian tribal events, that's for every dances, you know you have to have....you know what you call them, Regelia of the dance.

**Ok**

And see everyone is welcome to dance in the intertribal dance, even tourists.

**Ok**

There is a guy--- he danced in that, but he made a mistake by dancing in the other dance, but they didn't say nothing to him, I guess his wife told him when he came back, cause he was wondering why he was the only guy with no Regelia dancing barefooted. I don't know where he is from, he wasn't from around here, but I guess he And they got the Jingle dance dress and they got the Women's fancy shawl dance, Traditional women's dance, Men's fancy dance, boy that's a good one, man them guys are really colorful they have some great big turkey tales and nice headdresses, made out of porcupine and they got man's grass dance, Omaha dance what ever they call them, men's traditional dance that's the dances they have and all the kids have different dances too you know

**What do you normaly participate, which dance the men's and**

Ya just the tribal dance

**Tribal dance ,ok.**

I used to participate in the grass dance-----

**What is the meaning of the Grass Dance?**

Well the grass dance its like a hunting dance, much has been written about the Omaha dance, which is the grass dance. Borrowed from Omaha tribe perhaps in the 1960. The dance is very popular. Dancers outfits use a good deal of colorful fringe reflecting the grasses, dancers originally tucked into there belts, that's what they used to use, grass and stuff like that, flowers and stuff like that, they used to tie into there belts. Many dancers wear a hair loch, in which is a porcupine roach, in which hair is down to here and got this thing sticking out here, not like a war bonnet. That is for a more or less for a chief or head dancer. The basic step of the Omaha dance was ball on one foot being tapped on one beat and face down gradually down with the next. That is kind of dance they make a

little different step than regular fancy dance. The fancy dance here you can dance on one foot or backwards around this way, in a circle, way down and different things on a fancy dance and the traditional dance is straight up dance like a flag bearers, straight up dance. Beat of the drum and just like marching, do it like a two step, one two, just like that. Well these guys can take three or four steps that a fancy dancers can do, just like that, way out here, go way low, be suppressed how limber these guys are, I can't do that. If I get down there my back would be stuck. Then they would pull me out and look at me, I'll still be.

Anyway the drummers have a certain beat for each song, different type of songs, like the Grass dance. The Round dance where everyone dances, just like the two step. Then the fancy dance (3), you have to, seem have to hard and fast in which it is I guess, you really get a work out on that. Then the women's Grass dance is, different type of beats on that. I haven't much doing much my self, a lot of different types of beats with drums like that.

**Have you been taught to make a drum, bows, things like that?**

Well I went to a class in a Indian school I went to on how to make drums and really didn't pay much attention to it. I made a drum and I left it at the school in which I shouldn't have done but we real hide, real.

**What kind of Hide?**

I really don't know, Buffalo hide.

**Buffalo Hide.**

Buffalo hide, they soak it in some kind of solution and pull over a barrel, round boards they put on. They had holes in the hide, both sides they would tie them together, and tighten them.

**While they were still wet.**

Ya, while they were still wet they would get them real tight when they were dry they made a, that is where the sound comes from. Real tight hide, depends on kind of hide they used too. Like Cindy made hers and the kids with a cow hide. They got a different kind of sound, deer and buffalo hide stuff like that. The deer hide has a more of a high pitch sound because of the thinnest. The moose to has a different kind of sound, the Canadians make a lot of hides, made a lot of drums out of moose hides. It got a real base boom, boom, where the cow hide makes a mild kind of sound. There are allot different kind of drumming, different sound, different beats on the drums for different songs and dances.

**How do you learn these, is it just through.**



With the guys that have done it formally. Like a drummer, singer that will teach you and you can go do it.

**You just go and ask him?**

Yes, you can ask him, you got to, he says prayer stuff like that, and he blesses everything you have. If got a drum, you take him the drum, that you are going to use, can't use the drum unless it is blessed.

**You can't use the drum unless it is Blessed?**

The way they bless things is through, that they burn sweat grass smoke or sage brush smoke.

**Interesting, Everything is done that way?**

Yes, there is a kid that plays the flute. He can play six different tribes of, Drove Two Teeth, the guy that played, he played a Navaho song for us. I can't, I wish I could, He done it really good, the way he played certain sounds switched them over really good, He has been playing for about ten years I guess, since he was a kid. He is really from Canada I guess he wondered down to the Navaho Nations down there. That is where he learned to play the flute.

**Is there anything special that you learned from your heritage that?**

As far as Flute goes?

**Yes, Instruments something that you like?**

Yes, learned how to drum when I was little but just kind of forgot everything. Just started drumming again up here. With Some guys, just didn't keep it up. Learned how to ride horses everything, they taught me how bare back.

**Was this when you were little?**

When I was little, nine years old when I got on my first horse out in a plowed field. They said you were the boss and the horse was not the boss. Sometimes you get bucked off, that is when I started breaking horses when I was nine years old. I thought it was fun, this guy found out I could break horses. He kept me busy all summer.

**End of First Side A**

(Lost some conversation here tape stopped and I didn't catch it in time.)

It was a tame horse by the time you were done doing that. Allot of times it would take two guys to do that, because you got tied. Let the other guy have his turn pretty soon then the horse was getting tired.

**That was when you could ride the horse.**

Yes, then we had some pretty good horses, we had one horse. Where all the kids could get on him, be about seven or eight kids get on him ride him in the water then fall off him.

**Then a water slide then?**

Ya, a water slide then. Then branding time, we use to, the kids use to ride the calf's at, then they didn't castrate them, a heifer something like that, then they use to ride them. We had little rodeo then at branding time.

**Branding time in the fall or spring?**

Yes, Spring most time, June or July branding time, same token when the kids would learn to rope then too.

**Learned to be quite a bit a horseman then?**

Yes, to be quite a horseman then, my older brother use to be quite a horseman. He was brake horse all the time and ride the rodeo until he went into the Navy. They when he came back from the Navy he then after he came back he didn't. One of my Cousins was a champion of the world, Tony Longth.

**Oh really?**

You see his name at the what you call it, Hall of Fame, you go look at that. PRCA at Great Falls, 1951 & 52 world champion rider. Casey Tibs all around Cowboy good rider too.

**Is there something you would like to talk about that you witness first hand anything that, with your grandmother, grandfather?**

Ya, I learned how to speak the Grov Von language from my grandmother and spoke it almost fluently until I lost it before I went into the Service. I had no one to talk it to there. Funny how you loose a language like that. I still know how allot of words, I still go talk to somebody but I image it would sound terrible to somebody.

**Do you remember any stories from your grandma or grandpa that they use to tell you?**

Ya, They use to tell me, the early daze they use to go towards fall. They use to go hunt the Buffalo, the whole tribe would go until they seen a Buffalo. Then they, young men would surround the Buffalo, either that or they pick out a big cliff where they the knock the Buffalo fall over or run them off that cliff. Then the rest of the trip would come in butcher them and everything. They never wasted hardly any of the Buffalo, pretty all of it was used. In those days that was the main source of food, Buffalo and berries. I used to pick berries with my grandma and she made some really good soups. She used to pound the cherries, making little cherry patties and dry them. Keep them in the, winter time, take them in the pot make choke cherry soup and that was real good. But that was there main source of food, Buffalo and Berries in soups.

**What did your grandfather do?**

Well my Grandfather was a rancher too, as far as I remember as a boy. As far as I can remember both my grandfathers were ranchers when I was a boy. Was a farmer, My dads father was a farmer, used to raise big gardens, corn, wheat, barley.

**Up around Hays (Montana) then?**

Yes, had some good ground up there. Plenty of water, even in droughts there.

**Would you mind pronouncing some words in your native language for reference?**

For like animals?

Yes, Like

<u>Brother</u>	<u>Sister</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Buffalo</u>	<u>Chief</u>	<u>Cow</u>
<u>Brush</u>	<u>Dog</u>	<u>Friend</u>	<u>Grandpa</u>	<u>Doctor</u>	
<u>Hill</u>	<u>Horse</u>	<u>Moon</u>	<u>Water</u>		

**Anything that has lost it's meaning over time, example two bits?**

Really nothing I can think of off hand. I can't think of, I know there are words that they use to use in the Grov Von Language but I can't think of any that they would use it now.

Strange Man, Other words you be a stranger.

**Does that mean not to be trusted or somebody new?**

Somebody new from some place else, another tribe, or Soldier or somebody that you don't know and belongs to your group.

## **Animals**

**Wolf**

**Elk**

**Sheep**

**Horse**

**Wild Cat**

**Strange Man**

**Anything else you would like to add or mean for anyone interested in your heritage, for your grand children or something?**

Ya, My grandchildren I would to have names, but don't really know how to pronounce them. Cindy told me what her name was too, I was trying to say it but don't remember. I know Davids name.

**How do they get there names like that?**

They name them, the tribe, the older tribal members names them, They gave Monika name and she is not in it at all. But they gave her a name, her name is pretty women, Puzzle lady, Davids is Rolling Bear because he use to growl all the time. Christopher name is the same except for his is little bear. He knows how to say it but the first name is little and mine is big bear coat. He say's he wants to be called Bear Coat not little. That is what the elder gave him.

**Which elder would this be?**

His name is Elmer Main he is one of the only full blooded Grov Von left. Him and My mother talk all the time. The naming ceremony.

**Is this Formal or What?**

They have that for families like when they have a family reunion. They have there Children name or grand children original Grov Von, naming ceremony and big feed, give always too. That is what they do, naming ceremony, my name was given from my mother. The Give away, My sister died they give away stuff, blankets, horses, what ever the had.

**The Family?**

Not only there family, but friends she knew before, or relations but mainly family more or less. Tradition they had for years, they have sweats, cleans there spirit. They build little huts, all closed in except for a door. They build a fire and certain type rocks that smoke a lot, through fresh sage brush to smoke, a lot of smoke, gets hot, say prayers or sweat for your self, to cleans your spirit. Mostly by a river then you go into a river after sweating a lot. Can you image going in the river after sweating a lot. But that is what they do, isn't suppose to bother you and after you come out is suppose to cleanse you and do anything other words. Be able to jump into the cold water. Wonder why they didn't have a heart attach, I done that once and it was a hundred ten degrees. I seen this kid

jumping off the rock, it looked good as he jumped into the water. I used to do a lot of sports in school, basketball, track, box in school. Always a lot of sports, out of service boxed, and out of service boxed again.

**This pretty much concludes the interview, names "Thank you for that".**

1. Personnel Information.
  - a. What is your full name?
  - b. Is that your native name?
  - c. What Date were you born on?
  - d. Where were you born?
  
2. Family Information.
  - a. What is your mother's name?
  - b. Her maiden name?
  - c. What is your fathers Name?
  - d Grandparents names?
  
3. Tribal Information.
  - a. And what tribe do you belong to?
  - b. Can you tell me a little more about your tribe heritage?
  
4. Games Played as child.
  - a. Type of games Play.
  - b. How many played?
  - c. Similarities to games played now?
  
5. Pow Wow.
  - a. Which dances would you call those?
  - b. These are recent events you attended?
  - c. What about them in the past as they are now?
  - d. How often do they normally would they have these Pow Wows?
  - e. What is the meaning of some of the dances?
  
6. What was it like when you were a kid, what was different?
  - a. What have you been taught to make such as a drum, bows, things like that?
  - b. Materials used.
  - c. What type and how do you go about learning such things?
  - d. You can't use the drum unless it is Blessed?
  
7. Is there something you would like to talk about that you witness first hand anything that, with your grandmother, grandfather?
  - a. Do you remember any stories from your grandma or grandpa that they use to tell you?
  - b. What did your grandfather do?
  - c.
  
8. Would you mind pronouncing some words in your native language for reference?

9. Anything that has lost it's meaning over time, example two bits?
10. Anything else you would like to add or mean for anyone interested in your heritage, for your grand children or something?
11. How do people get there Indian names like that?
  - a. Is this Formal?
  - b. How is the name given?

## Outline for Interview

1. What is your full name?
  - a. Is that your native name?
  - b. Date you were born?
  - c. Location of your birth?
  - d. What is your Mothers Name?
  - e. What is your Fathers Name?
  - f. Your grandparent's names?
2. What tribe do you belong to?
  - a. What can you tell me about your tribe's Heritage?
3. What do you remember as a child that your parents or grandparent's taught you in the tribe that was unique and special to you?
4. What special events that occurred in the tribe do you remember watching or being involved in that occurred while you were younger.
5. What games do you remember playing in the tribe?
6. Is there something you would like to talk about that you witnessed first hand such as a religious ceremony and its impotent's to you. What ever you feel you can freely explain without offending anyone.
7. Can you tell me a story that you remember from your child hood that has made an impression on you even today?
8. Would you pronounce some names in your native language for me?

Brother	Sister	Father	Mother	Grandpa	Grandma
Uncle	Aunt	Teepee	Mountains	Valley	Water
Moon	Wolf	Tree	Dog	Forest	Hunting
Buffalo	Elk	Wife	Friend	Enemy	Medicine Man

9. Any other words that seems important that may loose its true meaning in your language since you were a child? Something you haven't heard for a long time. Example, Two Bits represents a quarter is an early American term.
10. Anything you would like to add or meaning for anyone that is interested in your heritage?