

Title: Glenn Wyatt Interview

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Interviewer: Alex Miller

Participants: Glenn and Jeanine Wyatt

[Jeanine Wyatt]: And he did homestead around Rushville. Do you know where Rushville is?

[Alex Miller]: Oh yeah, I lived in Rushville.

[JW]: Okay. He came out from Pennsylvania and I think he walked or came on a wagon train or whatever met my grandmother in Rushville. She was a Millner, she...

[AM]: Yeah, I know the Millner's.

[JW]: And, did that.

[AM]: Oh, you mean Millner as a trade?

[JW]: Yeah.

[AM]: There's a Millner family around there, too.

[JW]: She rode the train out from Baraboo, WI and he was 42 when they got married, and had my mother and two other girls. But anyway, I know Rushville is near some of the areas.

[AM]: Yes, it is.

[JW]: So I have several copies so I would just turn this over I don't know I don't want to answer questions with an oral history but if you want to take any of these parts of it.

[AM]: Well, what we've done in the past this be okay with you, we're going to put you on the spot. Last week we had a lady come in, and her family had homesteaded near Whitney, NE, north of Whitney. She read a family history, just like this, that had been recorded in 1937, and someone had written it down. And we just had her read it and we recorded it, and we will put it on the website.

[JW]: Wow

[AM]: She gave us a copy of it, so there will be a copy, but it was pretty neat when she read her great-great grandma's reflection. So you would like to do something like that. I'm not sure how long it will take to record it.

[JW]: You would want to edit because it's long.

[AM]: Well we can edit. But it would be great to have you read at least some of it.

[AM]: Yeah, if a part...Well, maybe you can do the... we can do this another time and do the one with Glenn today and you want to chime in.

[JW]: Yeah that would be good.

[AM]: But we would love to have a recording of you.

[JW]: Oh, okay.

[AM]: To be honest, the last one we did is pretty emotional. The lady broke down and she was crying. It was pretty interesting.

[JW]: I never did know my grandfather, he died in April and I was born in August. But it's an amazing story

[AM]: The one last weekend, when we did this, it was pretty cool. Her great-great grandmother was a Swedish immigrant and she came over here during her teenage year. Came to Chicago, she survived the great Chicago fire. So here we are doing a grasslands oral history, talked about the great Chicago fire. Was pretty amazing. They survived the fire. They took a wagon out to the White River Valley. The wildest thing was she described seeing the procession of red cloud and although the Ogallala line, is now Highway 24. She gave that story on her deathbed in 1937 and she would have been around 80-some years old. Isn't that wild?

[JW]: Wow

[AM]: I'm sure your story is all sorts of interesting things. It's just kind of neat when a family member reads it. If you're okay with it.

[JW]: And I can go through and pick out parts.

[AM]: But I think Glenn has an amazing story. He has all sorts of things. Don't feel the pressure. **We can do it.** Do you have another person coming in?

>>We do.

>>We'll go and see where we are and make up the rest later. Thanks a lot for coming in and I'm sorry for talking so much.

[AM]: Well thank you for participating in this project. We are doing these Great Plains histories for the website and for using this as a tool for people to have information on these. They can be used generationally. So we are interested in histories of Homestead's, history of their activities. I'm getting some of some very interesting and different stories. So anything that you have to say, we would like to hear. I'll introduce myself, my name is Alex Miller and I work for the Forest Service, out of Wall South Dakota, the national grassland visitor center. I used to work on Ogallala national grasslands in Nebraska which is where I'm from. And it sounds like you spent quite a bit time in Nebraska, as well, is that correct?

[JW]: Grew up in Nebraska.

[AM]: Can I have you state your names, both of you, please.

[JW]: I'm Jeannie Wyatt.

[Glenn Wyatt]: And I am Glenn Wyatt.

[AM]: Okay. And you both grew up in Nebraska, is that right?

[GW]: No. I was born and raised on the Pineridge reservation.

[AM]: Okay.

[GW]: Born on Pineridge. So... I really can't tell you much about this area, I'm more familiar with Pineridge and the surrounding area there.

[AM]: Excellent. We've done some of those interviews before. So we would be happy to hear about those areas around Buffalo Gap and Ogallala between South Dakota reservation and Nebraska.

[GW]: My dad went to Pineridge as a carpenter after WWI and grew up with all the things, that go with modernization, so he had the responsibility for the entire reservation he lights water to her

[AM]: Okay

[GM]: So, I spent a lot of time riding over to the reservation visiting with traders down there like the Gildersleeves, to me, lost their museum, in burned amount. I can't remember the name of all Malone out at porcupine, out at Kyle (6min 42sec)

[AM]: Yeah

[GM]: Spent a lot of time running over there as a baby. Dad a lot of people that worked for him and this is something we found in his materials. And if you look at the last page this was evidently dictated to dad by being afraid of ox. He was more of the major interpreters there on the reservation as it started out. This document is in my dad's handwriting, and it's my guess that he visited with ...ox?? Whether he worked for dad, or under dad, I have no idea. This is the making of the century. I think you will find this interesting if you can read cursive.

[AM]: Yeah

[GW]: My grandson said "I can't read this!"

[AM]: So we've got a picture of a water bag and in the making of the Sioux Chief, so this is essentially, I guess you could call it part of the educational system.

[GW]: Goes to, I don't know how many different steps from the water bag where they had to keep the fighters hydrated, I guess.

[AM]: Right.

[GW]: Then they graduate from the water bag into other steps. Uh...I don't know what this one is, I can't read it upside down.

[AM]: Exhibit B is a headdress.

[GW]: They had to go through various steps. And only could become a chief.

[AM]: Was that something that was open to everyone? Or to only a certain group of people?

[GW]: They have got to be friendly with all the reservation. At one point, and I think it at that time is one of the few white people that was invited to one of their major ceremonies. And if I had just been smart enough to pick his brain about all of that, unreal.

[AM]: What were some of those ceremonies, are you meaning...sort of naming ceremonies or kind of all of them?

[GW]: Evidently, this goes through several different ones. One of the major ones was the Sundance.

[AM]: Yeah.

[GW]: I, uh, let's see Monday's was agency there on the reservation 9min 48sec. And Indians would walk in from miles to pick up a check. They would sit down on the steps of the agency and tell stories. And once in a while, you could pick up a word that the Indians had no name for. So you kind of figured out what they were talking about.

[AM]: So did your dad work for...

[GW]: BIA.

[AM]: The BIA. He was a carpenter for the BIA.

[GW]: Well he started out as a carpenter and wound up, probably would have the title of maintenance engineer now.

[AM]: Okay, and he had a number of people that worked for him, but they were all people on the reservation, they weren't...

[GW]: Most of them were Indians, there were a few white people, but for the most part they were Indian.

[AM]: So did he get a chance, you know to see some of these in action? What it sounds like that he was able to observe, not only write down this, making of a chief, but to see those processes.

[GW]: He had plenty of opportunities, but we didn't, that I know of, take advantage of very much of it.

[AM]: Okay.

[GW]: I can remember as a kid, down at White Clay, just to the east of White Clay there was big wide area. The Indians going in there a week ahead of time. And the morning after it was over, there wasn't an Indian left there. They packed up and they were gone. My first job was working for the horse barn there at Pineridge. One of the superintendents decided that the way to improve the Indians life was to give them better horses. So they had five or six times Indians could bring their bears in. 12min 6sec One was great. I can remember one was a great big Spanish Moroccan, Anto. That's the one they wanted to read to me. 12min 16sec We had to go down and ride through the big encampment find the ID branded horses. Indian.....brand??, but the horses kept disappearing.

[AM]: Oh, wow.

[GW]: So, we ride through and if we spotted an ID horse. They say “were did you get that?”

[AM]: To bring it back...

[GW]: Well that was the theory...

[AM]: That was the idea.

[GW]: We identified, we never did try to take anything. One of the neatest things, they had quite a buffalo herd. Dad was the shooter for the agency. The boss farmer would say “okay, ...pile of coal... 13min 14sec the Indians want a buffalo.” We would go out and Dad would shoot the and couple of Indians would help take care of it. They had a big tripod that they strung him up on and load him in the truck. Very often they would take everything, but the inners. And as part of their ceremonies, they continue the butchering and dispense the meat. One of my first recollections working on a bison 13min 45sec and these guys would take a small intestine and pull it through their hand/ham???, chop off about an inch of it, put a little salt on it and go to chew it. Raw liver, they always sprinkled bile on their liver, before they’d eat it

[AM]: Not sure how many people today could handle that food.

[GW]: There were some interesting things. They had two big pastures they kept...(inaudible 14min 17sec)... and to move them one place to another, the Indians would do it all on foot. There would be a couple of horses around, and they said “we don’t take our horses close because the buffalo will come out and take a horse.” And I watched the roundup at Custer State Park, all these guys on horses. They never would have handled them, buffalo that way then.

[AM]: And that’s interesting that they did it by foot. That’s a very old practice, of herding buffalo that way. So the tribe managed the herd? Or was it the BIA?

[GW]: The BIA managed, but they used a lot of Indians. There was an Indian that rode the pastures, checking on things. Bandoleria (not quite sure how to spell the name 15min 10sec) was his name. He always wore big, big round spurs. Dad shot a buffalo one time that was laying on the side of the hill. Joe 15 min 18sec went to cut its throat, he grabbed a front leg and the buffalo rolled over on him. He thought ...(inaudible 15mine 25sec)... get up. Ended up rolling down the hill. He thought he had been hit.

[AM]: That’s a terrifying moment. What happened to that herd, do you know?

[GW]: Not exactly sure of the timeline, early forty’s I think was they sold the entire herd to a fellow in Wisconsin. That was another one. They were going to butcher half of them on site and take the rest of them back alive. Dad of course couldn’t help himself, he had to be there. This guy brought a shooter with him. He shot that buffalo 17 times before they finally got it down. And John, the boss farmer, went to the guy and said “I think you better talk to that man standing over there.” So Dad took, I don’t know how many days of annual leave, and shot buffalo.

[AM]: I didn't realize that the tribe had a herd back then. Did they sell it off, I guess as part of an agreement?

[GW]: It was owned by BIA.

[AM]: Owned by BIA, yeah.

[GW]: And why they decided to dispense the herd, I have no idea. And I doubt there was any record back, that would tell you why. They brought those bison from Yellowstone Park.

[AM]: Okay.

[GW]: Dad went with them, one of the truck drivers that bought the initial band from Yellowstone.

[AM]: Okay.

[GW]: I don't know how they made it with the trucks they had, but they did.

[AM]: It's hard to imagine that. So, you probably know of quite a few places, like the artifact sites.

[GW]: The only artifact I ever found, and we hiked all over that country. You'd find an anthill and often times you'd find trade beads. And I remember up on one big bluff anthill and found an incisor tooth, a human tooth. And I'm watching, and I cannot find an arrowhead.

[AM]: Were there people who have had collections left over that you saw? Like some family heirlooms and things like that?

[GW]: The Indians would never talk about that sort of thing. The Gildersleeves had a tremendous collection of materials. Indians would come in to pay their bill. Relics 18min 35sec. He had a tremendous museum and burned it down.

[AM]: And that was in 1970...?

[GW]: I don't remember when it was.

[AM]: '73-'75? Somewhere in there I think. Were you there when that happened?

[GW]: No, by that time I was away at high school.

>>(Woman speaking): So how did you from there to here?

[GW]: Met Jeanine at Chadron college. We talked two years at Quinn.

[AM]: Okay.

[GW]: We came up here in 1957.

[AM]: Did you ranch while you were out here? Did you buy land?

[GW]: We bought a little place in 1964. I was a wannabe cowboy. I rode all over the country, down there on the reservation. We got all this as the ranch and it got some tipi rings on it. That was my summer job from teaching. ... (inaudible 19min 45sec) ... string horses out of there.

[AM]: Do you know of any locations of homesteads on the land you guys have now?

[GW]: The only thing we can tell you about it, is the original house that was there. Horrible wasn't it? The original house, the gal said, and I don't what her name was, that someone came in and scratched their names with her diamond ring, on one of the window panes, which was still there when we got the place. 20min 15sec

[AM]: Do you know what year it was homesteaded about?

[GW]: Well we could go back in the deeds and find out. That place was made up of three homesteads.

[AM]: Oh, okay.

[GW]: By the time they left, somebody took it over.

[AM]: Do you happen to have a water source on the land?

[GW]: There had been live water at times just off our place, in the spring, there is a water hole that runs part of the year. And down the valley on our place where the tipi rings are, I'm sure there had been water there. We never really done a lot of exploration on it. I would hope someday they would say "we want to excavate." Find a...the rings are almost totally out of sight now that the grass has grown up. If you didn't know they were there, you wouldn't know they were tipi rings there. I was down there with a little kid/camp???, 21min 50sec couple of years ago, and happened to make a turn, kicked up a bunch of those rocks. So we know where they are. As far as being the newcomers in the area. We came here in '57 and we're still newcomers.

>>(Woman speaking): So have you, I guess since you are newcomers to the area, I'm sure you've take time to learn some of the histories of the area?

[GW]: It's accidental.

>>(Woman speaking): Accidental?!?!

[GW]: Something will come up. My grandmother...North of our place, the first white girl baby born, in what was then Wyoming.

[AM]: Okay.

[GW]: And the family is still living there.

[AM]: I think we've marked her as Marjorie Goodson (not sure on the spelling) 22min 50sec She told us a story that she went skydiving for her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

[GW]: She's quite a gal.

[AM]: Indeed. So you're neighbors with her then? Or close?

[GW]: Sort of. One of the first surveyors in the area has a place between us and a ...(inaudible 23min 14sec)... place. And I think all of the Coles are gone now. Comes out of Augate canyon and there used to

be quite a **gold** mine up there. I'd take dudes, we wind up on the old trail where they haul the gold out. There is an old steam tractor laying down at the bottom, that rolled off the edge at some point.

[AM]: Yeah. You always wonder when you see abandoned vehicles like that too. How did that get out there? What's the exact story? How did it get there? Are there any structures that are left over from the homesteading days?

[GW]: **...(inaudible 24min 00sec)...** has their own cabin, but I have...I don't the history of it. Pretty well fallen in by now.

[AM]: Well, if you don't mind, can I ask you to read this? Would you be willing to do this?

[GW]: I'll try.

[AM]: I mean, if you are willing to, it would be interesting to have read aloud. To have this as an oral history as well, because this is just fascinating. This is truly one-of-a-kind; I would have to think. So if there's anything that you can't get through, that's fine. If you'd be willing to.

[GW]: Wait, we have the original this is all was found, that was scanned and printed.

[AM]: So, it's the making of a Sioux chief.

[GW]: The Water Bag. This water bag, or water container, was in use in the early days by the Ogallala Sioux Indian. It is merely the bladder off a buffalo. Blew it up to any size they desired, then dry it in the sun. That holds water for a long time. When a war party was on this bag, it was given to some young boy. **Sort of an appointment 25min 25sec** to take charge and must **furnish** water at all times to achieve "**warrior**". Young boys who were appointed to do this position are honored and respected because the Chief purposely sends them out at dark night to find water, at the same time he is testing the boys' nerves. If the boy brings good fresh and clean water, they know he will make a brave man in the future.

Exhibit B the Headdress. After the boy passes the degree of carrying water, he joins the scouting crew and when he returns home with some good news, he is then allowed to wear the headdress. This is a single feather. If the boy returns three or four times from scouting, he is allowed to wear that many feathers on his head, so that others can distinguish him and respect him.

Exhibit C the Four Horse Tracks. These horse tracks mean that a young boy must bring in at least four horses from a raid or capture them during a battle. After he has proven this to the tribe, they rank him with others, who passes this degree. I might add that my dad and several people, there on the reservation, were Masons and I would suspect the same **fastest 27min 00sec** degree that probably came from that Masonic background.

Four Slanting Strokes. These strokes mean that the young man is required to prove four **coos. 27min 10sec** He must show the warriors that he has struck four enemies during a battle. He is now ranked with other warriors who pass this degree.



Four Wounds of a Pony **27min 30sec**. In all of Sioux battles with other enemies, the ponies get wounded first because the riders **being skilled on their mounts**. Sorry about that. **When hanging on the side of their ponies**, so the pony is always to receive the wound first. The young man is required to prove four of these pony wounds, in order to pass this degree.

Wounds on a Human. This illustration means that the wounds on a human being. Thus, the young man must show four of these wounds to the tribe, in order to pass this degree.

The Four X's. This means to rescue during battle when one's pony is shot down. **And it awards 28min 35sec** that are required for any of the warriors are required to rescue that man that was left on foot. So the young man or warrior must show four proofs of this degree, in order to be considered.

The Ash Tree. By this time, the young warrior is obliged to court girls. He can get married and in that case, if he marries is advised to have a strong heart towards his friends and relatives like that of a strong ash tree. The ash tree is very useful to the Sioux people. They counted over 30 different ways than **its useful. 29min 25sec** So then the young man passes another degree to become a chief someday.

The Peace Pipe. The young warrior now reaches to this degree where it is obliged to smoke from now on. The Chief gives him a pipe to own and he is now a candidate to be a chief very soon. He must use the pipe during ceremonial gatherings, during the time of bereavement, and **he is banned by soul and offering smoke to them 29min 43sec**. And during conflicts among his people, he should settle all disputes and or fights by using the pipe. He is now strictly under oath after he has smoked through the **straight stem of the pipe**. His words must be honest and keeps it straight as a stem of a pipe.

The Hornet. The hornet means jealousy. So naturally this happens among the Sioux people. The old chief gives advice to the young candidate for chief and tells him not to pay any attention to the gossip. And criticism may go against him because they're only like hornets that sting, but last for a little while. He must not talk or fight back because those ways are contrary to the life of a good chief.

The Calumet Staff. This ornament is used in one of the sacred ceremonies called "Calumet Dance."

**Hunkpaw (have no clue how to spell) 31min 00sec**. In the ceremony, a beloved child of the family was placed in the dance lodge and the dancers dance and swing the staff over the honored ones and also towards the four corners of the Earth, praying. Singing and for better prosperity for the child and also to the whole tribe. Resemblance, adoption, friendship, newly married couples, **young girl reaches more 31min 35sec** are usually honored through this kind of dance and are blessed. Thus, they are initiated into a better class of individuals. So they will show refinement to the rest of the people.

**The War Bonnet**. The young candidate who has passed all the degrees, as mentioned, is now called to the ceremony to be initiated in the fire, to be chief of the tribe. The candidate was required to make a pledge to the great mystery that he will take the position as given to him. He smokes a pipe and is now the chief. The war bonnet was then placed on his head.

The Punch Pot. The newly appointed chief must be liberal with his food, he must share with his chair and his games that he brings the older poor people. He must be alert at all times and should any visitors come to his village he must invite them and feed them. He must see into no one is hungry, because

famine is the most terrible thing to happen or been experienced by the Sioux people. The young chief is to fulfill all that was required of him to do.

The War Coat. In another ceremony, the young chief is honored and wore a scalped shirt??? was presented to him to wear. The shirt was decorated with human hair on a very white buckskin. In previous wars this young chief brought scalps and the hair was used to decorate the shirt. A short shirt like this was one worn by only those warriors that passed all the degrees ...(inaudible)....

The White and Red Eagle Tail Feathers. These two feathers are headwear for only those who passed all the required degrees. These eagle feathers are picked among many birds because the Eagle can fly higher than any other bird on the Earth. Therefore, the Sioux people chose this bird for their emblem, and they must keep their minds and thoughts for the great mystery as high as the Eagle flies. The red feather represents a wound. So only those chiefs, who were wounded four times or more, are allowed to wear this on their head. When the war bonnet is not in use, the red and white feathers are worn.

The Cane. It is a privilege that young chief was required to make his mission in exhibit L, promised to live up to his pledge, even if he does live to an old age. They can take the place of other old chiefs that were taken by death. It was their duty to sing for the younger people, encouraging them to be skilled hunters and warriors, as they had women and children to protect and so all the Sioux people once used to live in a democracy. In those days, when there was no poverty, no slavery, no feeble minded, no fear, no insane, no prisons, no poor house, no orphans, no (inaudible 35min 10sec) no deaths, no taxes, no atheists, no drunkards, no dopebags???, no homeless, no illegitimate children, and no contagious diseases. They were practically free from all diseases. They were free and they were happy. They had an honest god and an unerring confidence and in the great mystery. ...(inaudible)...

[AM]: Thank you.

>>(Woman speaking): Yeah, thank you so much for reading that. Just that document alone is a wealth of knowledge.

[GW]: I will give you a copy if you would like.

[AM]: Thank you, thank you.

[GW]: Growing up on the reservation, it was interesting. There was a picture of first, second, and third graders at Pineridge.

[AM]:1939. So was this the school in the town of Pineridge?

[GW]: It was above ...(inaudible 36min 18sec). The agency had, the Indian school. There are a lot of Indians in that picture. And I'm not sure how they decided which school to go to. Most of the kids that went there were the kids of the employees, traders, a few farmers and ranchers from around the area.

[AM]: Sure because there were the boarding schools.

[GW]: The boarding school was the government school (36min 45sec). They ran at that time, about the only ones who boarded there were the high school students. They ran buses out, and if they were lucky,

they picked up the kids. If they didn't, they'd come back empty handed, they'd send somebody out and either bring the parents and the kids or have someone to get their kids to school.

[AM]: Did you dad help build the school house, then?

[GW]: No because that was Shannon county's school house. He had only to do with the agency with the area. He did visit all the buildings, several of the day schools and actually help construct the hospital at Pineridge, where I was born. It was a two-store building, a typical hospital.

[AM]: This is a great photo. Do you know all the names by chance?

[GW]: No, I can remember a couple of them, but the Ogle/Oval??? 38min 16sec family had homesteaded out towards Ogallala. And then the...I'm not exactly sure when they moved to town, he became the postmaster. My sis, eight years old when I worked at the drugstore there. At the time of Pearl Harbor, her financial husband was stationed on Treasure Island in San Francisco. So she and her mother-in-law went out and they were married. She worked for the drugstore, VanSkykes 39min 04sec. They were the people who owned the drug store. Got out to San Francisco and somehow or another, Madeline VanSkyke, had moved to San Francisco and made connections after all those years.

[AM]: So parts of the reservation were homesteaded right?

[GW]: There were several white families, ranchers on the reservation. And I'm not sure whether or not if they got it as homesteads. And then most of them had a relatively small plot of ground. But leased land around. And most generally, they paid the lease with steer.

[AM]: That lease would have been through the BIA then.

[GW]: The agency handled all of that. And supposedly don't let money out??? 40min 10sec. And I think they are still finding that. There's one girl in the picture, she and I started to school together at Pineridge. And I went to Chadron to high school, the Ogle's/Oval's??? moved over there, and ran the camper shop. And if anybody around Chadron talks about the camper shop, that was the place. We wound up, then, going all the way through high school. From first grade to senior, we were classmates, with a small area in between. This boy's folks had a hotel, there in Pineridge. Gerber was their name. There are a couple of grocery stores, Hagel's 42min 02sec was one of them. ...(inaudible 42min 10min)... there is a really interesting family. Can you tell me the name of the people?

[JW]: Was it Jones?

[GW]: No, do you have the book?

[JW]: No.

[GW]: He was a real friend of the Indians. He said "I never had any of them ever stick me." He would charge them, groceries, and they would come in and pay their bill, in full. Start over. He told one time about a knock at the door in the middle of the night, and the Indians said "my son was just in a wreck down here and was killed, would you help us?" So he was the unofficial undertaker at that time. Those

traders on the reservation, the Indians really thought a lot of them. They wouldn't do anything to harm them. ...(inaudible→porcupine??? 42min 46 sec)...

[AM]: Out of curiosity, because Porcupine is where the radio station is located. And I'm sure how long Keeley has been there, but I love Keeley radio.

[GW]: It's really young.

[AM]: Yeah, I think it was the 80s.

[GW]: It was one of the places that had a phone line to. They had a fire hookup 43min 13sec. fire was bad on the reservation. Long ways from no place.

[AM]: Sure, well... fires are a natural part of the Plains, too.

[GW]: They tried to protect structures.

[AM]: Thank you for coming in to read this. This is a really interesting set of stories because you're almost the opposite. The BIA the federal government was running the land as opposed to coming in and buying it back. It was managed, essentially, by the BIA which is really interesting. I had not ever that the BIA, on Pineridge ran a buffalo herd. That was a really fascinating story, and they used it as a food source, it sounds like. Thank you.