

# bud mcarthur

Bud McArthur is a negotiator for Pheasant Rump Nakota First Nations on Treaty 4 territory and co-author of the White Bear internal settlement agreement. He currently resides there and remains an active force in the ongoing disputes over land claims.

Bud has collaborated with us to re-evaluate historic and current events by focusing on Indigenous peoples’ perspectives and how they were impacted. To accomplish this goal, an ethnohistorical approach is utilized. Ethnohistory is a historical approach that “incorporates Indigenous voices into the historical narrative, using oral history, artwork, material, cultural, archeological evidence, and etymology as source material.” Through this partnership, Bud has provided us with an oral history of familial ties to the NWMP, treaties and land claims, the residential school system, and the ongoing systemic colonial oppression.



*Shoot's Alone and his Wife - Bud's Grandfather's Uncle: cousin to Pheasant Rump (She-ho-nee-tay Oyate).*

## ancestry

In 1873, Arthur McArthur, Bud’s great-grandfather, joined the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) in Barrie, Ontario. Shortly after joining the force, he was transferred to a post in Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan - now a historic and archeological site - to monitor the whiskey trade and establish relations with First Nations people. Arthur held the position of Wagon Master; delivering groceries and rations to the Indian bands as the buffalo, a significant resource for their livelihood had been eliminated by settlers.

In 1873, Pheasant Rump (She-ho-nee-tay Oyate), Bud’s great, great grandfather, was leading many Sioux people into Canada as a result of the betrayal of the Treaty of Fort Laramie and the impending violence of General Custer’s 7th Cavalry. The first stop they made on their migratory trail from South Dakota was to Roche Percee due to the fresh spring water source nearby. Their food supply had begun to run low and shortly after, the NWMP found them and provided them with food and other resources. It was here, at Roche Percee, that Arthur met Marie (Sitting Stone Woman), Pheasant Rump’s daughter. The NWMP determined the Sioux people be moved to Wood Mountain to provide them with rations. Arthur and Marie married that same year in 1874, at Wood Mountain and welcomed their first son Xavier, the following year.

In 1875, Arthur and Marie moved to Milk River near Fort Walsh, an early NWMP post constructed in 1875 under Inspector James Walsh’s command. They moved in anticipation of Sitting Bull’s (Tatanka Iyotake) arrival into Canada. Sitting Bull (Tatanka Iyotake), a Hunkpapa Lakota Leader, led his people into Canada following the Battle at Little Bighorn (1876). While residing there, Marie and Arthur had their first daughter, Florence. Due to the mounting conflict between the whiskey traders coming up from the United States and the Indigenous bands in the Cypress Hills, the NWMP moved Pheasant Rump (She-ho-nee-tay Oyate) and his people, including Arthur and Marie, back to Wood Mountain to avoid further conflict. In an effort to force Sitting Bull (Tatanka Iyotake) and his people out of Canada, the NWMP refused to supply him with provisions and threatened any of the tribes that helped them by revoking their food rations and goods necessary for survival.

Defeated, Sitting Bull (Tatanka Iyotake) and a small number of followers including Pheasant Rump (She-ho-nee-tay Oyate) travelled back across the border as far as Scobey, Montana. However, on account of Marie’s pleas for her father to return to Canada, Pheasant Rump (She-ho-nee-tay Oyate) and many other Sioux people moved back into Canada. Due to the Yankton Sioux residing too far south near the Nebraska border, the Canadian government would not grant Pheasant Rump (She-ho-nee-tay Oyate) a reserve. Arthur suggested they claim to be Assiniboiné in order to take reserve. Under the security of this identity, the Indian Agents told Pheasant Rump (She-ho-nee-tay Oyate) he had to take his reserve up in Moose Mountain. In 1885, Arthur and Marie moved their expanding family to Warmley, where Bud’s grandfather, John was born. Arthur became the farm instructor for the area but several years later in 1889, a dispute occurred causing Arthur to lose his position and leave his wife. Marie moved her family and cattle to her father’s and shortly after Andrew Big Eagle (Echaytanká), the hired farm hand, stepped in to take care of Marie and her family.

In 1901, the federal government forced three Saskatchewan First Nations to amalgamate: Pheasant Rump Nakota First Nation and Ocean Man First Nation were subsumed by White Bear First Nation resulting in the loss of their lands. In 1906, John McArthur and Philomene Rosette, Bud’s grandparents, married and began their large family of eleven children. Three of their children, Edward, Stephen, and Danny, were enlisted in the military and fought in the Second World War. Stephen was the only son to “return to Canada on his feet”. Upon returning, he suffered from the atrocities witnessed at war and like most veterans at the time, treatment was not offered nor sought. Bud McArthur was born of Stephen’s first marriage. He was born with lactose intolerance and left by his parents to be cared for by his grandfather. Bud lived in the hospital for the first six months of his life with the help of the Indian Agent’s wife, Mrs. Morrison to ensure he received treatment. Mrs. Morrison registered his birth on October 15th, 1941, but Bud had been born a number of months prior, which he believes to be between January and March, and received a Catholic baptism on September 12, 1941. The delayed birth registration and Christian baptism ensured that Bud would be cared for in the healthcare system due to systemic racism.

## career

John McArthur, Bud’s grandfather, had a wealth of knowledge that he passed down to Bud. He taught him practical skills such as how to trap and sell pelts, train and breed horses, and work as a farm hand. He also taught him the value of a strong work ethic that Bud demonstrated throughout his many occupations. Bud began his working career at the very young age of ten, learning how to trap and hunt in the Moose Mountain area from his grandfather, John and father, Stephen. He made a good livelihood selling the pelts he trapped from the lands around White Bear and Kenosee. This intimate knowledge of the land earned him the role of President in the Native Hunter’s Association and he became the first registered hunting guide in Moose Mountain park.

Bud developed lifelong relationships around southeast Saskatchewan, training horses around the area and working as a farmhand to neighbouring communities. Often without means of transportation, he would walk to the farms and ranches he was working on; at times, he would travel up to 30 miles to towns like Kipling and Kennedy, Saskatchewan. His reputation and career continued to grow when he began breeding Quarter Horses for the American Quarter Horse Association. His breed continues to earn a profit for Diamond King Ranch.



*Bud and his son, Levi, pitchforking hay in front of their barn (2016).*





Bud receives a gold lifetime membership card from the rodeo contractor, Carl Barrett, of the Canadian Cowboys Association (CCA) in 2014.



Bud with Ken Sayer, the ranch manager in Cut Knife to film a documentary for PFRA (1969).



Three of Bud's grandchildren, Kincaid (left), Lorian (middle), Dugrey (middle), behind the saddles in the riding stables.

## rodeo

The Rodeo was a place of refuge for the very few First Nations people that entered the rodeo circuit. In this arena, they were able to maintain and express their connection to the animals through participation in rodeos in Western Canada. "These rodeos were realms in which First Nations men could interact in an area that was not outright political, nor was it dedicated to dealing with the struggle of Indigenous people".

As a child, Bud started out riding thoroughbred horses that his neighbour, McCrae and grandfather, John were raising; riding in small-town tracks and county fairs. At 14, Bud began riding saddle bronc, launching his career as a professional cowboy in the Western Agribition. A few years later at just 17, he was invited to ride in Helledorado Days, a festival created in celebration of the construction of the Hoover Dam in Las Vegas. In the same year, he worked for Gene Autry in the *Wild West Show*, travelling from Texas all along the Eastern coastline to rodeos in major cities like New York and Chicago. His talent did not go unnoticed and he rode in several Western films; one in South Dakota called *Born to Buck*, *Circle of the Sun*, filmed in Alberta and performed stunts for *Here Come the Canadians*, a Western film based on the Sioux people's movement into Canada and the formation of the North West Mounted Police.

Upon returning to Canada from travelling in the *Wild West Show*, Bud obtained a diploma in Range Management and a diploma in Agriculture and First Aid for Animals. He began his 32-year position within the PFRA (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration) in 1969 as the only First Nation descent to be employed by the PFRA and to graduate from their Federal Pasture Program. During this time he balanced raising a family, breeding horses, managing his riding stables, Elk Hill Riding Stables, and organizing rodeos across Western Canada and parts of America. At the end of his career, Bud's hard work was recognized with a gold buckle and a gold lifetime membership card from the Canadian Cowboy's Association. He was also the first Indigenous person to be awarded the *Tiny Simpson Memorial Working Cowboy Award* in 2014.

The EAGM presents this biography as part of an ongoing oral history project. We recognize that this is one story among many intangible histories. To honour the nature of an oral history project, many phrases have been pulled directly from the interviews to ensure Bud's perspective is respected and that we remain true to the words and meanings offered.

Interviews with Bud were conducted at the Estevan Art Gallery & Museum by Amber Andersen on December 9, 2019, December 11, 2019, December 18, 2019, and by Chantel Schultz on January 11, 2021, March 4, 2021, March 8, 2021, March 15, 2021, March 16, 2021.

The full document with in-text citations and bibliography can be found online at [www.estevanartgallery.org](http://www.estevanartgallery.org)

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Re-evaluating Canada's  
history with a focus on  
Indigenous perspectives

The EAGM would like to thank the following organizations for their support:

