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Oral History Report
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COLLEGE COLLECTION



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Harold Michael Brown Bear Luxon, a special and cooperative education teacher in Lander, was born on the fifth day of November, 1926 in Youngstown Ohio. He likes to stress the importance of education through close communication, friendship and understanding between himself and his students. Because the old strict disciplining system did not enlighten students interest in education. Luxon feels that today's living society is far more different than the 1930's. The educational system is also different than the old days. Luxon's own educational study before moving to Lander was far more difficult than one can imagine. To Luxon's, remembrance of the celebration of July 4, Christmas and his birthday are the most joyful days of his life.

Luxon was raised up with his younger brother Douglas by his mother and father in Youngstown Ohio. He attended Pinesville grade and high schools. He enjoyed playing many games such as; kick the can, red rover, football, basketball and baseball. While Luxon was in grade school, he learned very fast to enjoy reading. Because his sixth grade teacher was very strict in disciplining students who were unwilling to read. Luxon enjoyed many books such as; Huckleberry Finn, Tom Swift series, and any other books his teacher would assign. During Luxon's

school days, he was often punished for misbehavior in the strict class room. Luxon recalls getting his hands slapped and his bottom spanked for lying and cheating. Luxon told his teacher that he did copy test answers from his friend. He did copy those answer. After being spanked at school Luxon parents were notified. When he got home from school his dad would again punish him by whipping him in the woodshed for misbehaving in school. Luxon graduated out of Pinesville High School in June 1944. He remembered, when he was still going to high school, boys and girls started dating around the ages of fourteen and fifteen. He said, "No boys or girls dated the same person more than once. There were always things to do and dances to attend, but hardly anyone ever went steady. We were all good friends who like to go out and have a good times. Luxon recalled only one couple who went out together through their high school together. They are married to each other now.

After graduating from high school, Luxon spent three years in the U.S Army, two and half of which were spent over-seas. He then returned to Youngstown in 1947 and worked in the steel mill. After working in the steel mill for six months, he saved enough money to attend Kent State University. There Luxon got his bacheor's degree in Education. He then chose to study to become a priest. He studied at Saint Mary Seminary. To become a priest one must commit himself to God and to serve people. Luxon remembered his last sixteen days of hard finals before

he was officially announced as a priest. He said, "I had to take eight hours of written test for eight consecutive days. Then I had a day break. After a day break, I had to come and take eight hours of oral test for another eight consecutive days." Luxon also said, "I would never do it again." In December 1953, Luxon was stationed at Saint Micheal in Ethette, Wyoming on the Wind River Indian Reservation. where he was an ordained priest. Luxon decided to stay in Wyoming to be close to the Indians because he found them very interesting. At that time, he took on the position as an assistance priest at Saint Michael Mission. He said, "Duties of an assistance priest can be alot of fun. While I was an assistance priest, I got to coached football, basketbäll, drive school bus, and teach grade school students." Thirteen years later, Luxon took a leave of absence from the priest hood, and became a teacher at Lander Valley High School. He has been teaching at Lander for twelve years now, and plans to retire in three year. After retirement, he plans to ^{continue} his priest hood practice.

Luxon first came to Lander in June 1953. Luxon recalls that the roads were bare, and there was no pavement on any roads except the Main Street and the highway of Lander. At Saint Micheal Mission, Luxon lived in a three bedroom apartment. The apartment had indoor plumbing in which the water would travel through wooden pipes. The pipes would often freeze in the winter and ~~and~~ leave Luxon without plumbing. Saint Micheal's Mission is in the Wind River Indian Reservation. The reservation consists of Shoshone and

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sisted of Shoshonie and Arapaho Indians and a few of other mixes such as Apache, and combination of Mexican Indians and white Indians. The Shoshonie Indians families scattered about the Fort Washakie, and the Arapaho Indians families spreaded out from Ethette to Arapaho. There were not many stores or main shopping areas for the Indians before then nor now. They have to travel to ^{the} nearest town. For Shoshonie Indians, they have to travel to Lander, which ^{is} about fourteen miles away, for shopping. And for Arapaho Indians, they have to travel to Riverton to go shopping. which is about ten miles away. Luxon recalls there were many bars and brothles in the Freemont county for mens entertainment. The most famous brothle was in Hudson because it was in the center of the areas. There was also a brothle in Thermopolis, Lander, and Shoshonie. Men were so involved with the entertainment that was offered to them, ~~that they~~ did not cause any trouble. At that time, Indians were not allow^{ed} in bars or legally ^{allowed to} buy liquor. Booze was sold for high prices to the Indians out of the bars back doors. Luxon noticed in 1955, the medical attention given to Indians was very poor. The Indians had a very poor clinic hospital on the reservation because ^{of} the lack of medical doctors, nurses, and medical equipment. The Indians were not permitted to enter the town hospitals. The white prejudices to Indians were very high at that time. Three years later, a woman doctor named Mary moved to Lander and set up a clinic for both Indians and the whites.

Maple
Leaf

"Doctor Mary was very kind to everyone and when one was in need, she was always there to help out," said Luxon. Doctor Mary was one of the few white doctors who would accept Indians patients.

Luxon was asked about his memorable moments and he replied, "My most memorable moments were those of my sixth birthday, Christmas, ~~and dancing at the~~ Indian dances. Luxon remembered that on his six birthday, his family could not afford to buy presents for him due to the depression of 1930. Without Luxon knowing, his father arranged for Luxon favorite song to be played on the radio. On the morning of Luxon birthday, The KDK early morning radio station in Pittsburg dedicated the song called The Wall Bash Cannonball to Luxon from his father. Luxon said, "This was the best birthday present I ever had." Christmas in Ohio to Luxon was more enjoyable than the Christmas he celebrated here. This occasion was celebrated for over a period of two months. It started in December and continued through January. On the sixth days of December, Saint Nicholas came to visit the children and gave them small gifts and candies. "Saint Nicholas was much different compared to our own Santa Claus," said Luxon. A man dressed up as a bishop pretending to be Saint Nicholas teaches the town's childrens to say their prayers before going to bed. On the twenty fifth of December, the family reunited together to celebrate the birth of Christ. The family would open their ~~each~~ individual presents before enjoying a big dinner. On the sixth days of January, people in the community

would exchange gifts and bid each other happy New Year. Luxon also recalls that there were two to three families enjoying each other companies by riding sleigh and singing carols. Luxon had always like to involve in Indian spiritual events. The event take place on the Arapaho Sundance ground once a year in June. In spiritual event, Luxon mostly enjoys the Indian dance styles. The dance is perform to worship the deceased and the ill. There are two types of spiritual dance. Traditional dance is commonly dance where Arapaho Indians taps their heel first on the floor then the toe follow up. Fancy dance is the dance where the Arapaho Indians constantly bouncing and twisting their body in circular motion. Luxon's prefers the Traditional dance over the Fancy dance.

I have known Luxon for six years, but I never really knew anything about his personal life than I learned in this report. I envied for the way he encouraged many young students to grow up and take the responsibility of finishing their education. Luxon's long endurance of studies accomplish priesthood goals. As he said, "I would never go through the process again." And for myself, I would not attempt this task. Celebration according to Luxon is for the united of families and friends together to have a good time. I not only learn about Luxon's personal life but I also learned

about the cruelty from the white people to the Indians.
According to U.S. constitution "People are created equal," and
I feel that Indians were socially abused.

The End

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Wheat