

Grandpa was a Cowboy and an Indian

-by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve

Grandpa was a cowboy and an Indian
And he would often be confused,
'Cause he didn't look like either one,
A fact he often mused.
His pa was a white freighter
Who drove mule-pulled wagon trains.
His ma, a Lakota maid,
A nomad of the plains.
Grandpa did a fancy jig
While his fiddle played along,
Or he'd croon the long, sad verses
To old-time cowboy songs.
Still, he sang Lakota chants
O proud lost warrior days,
Stepped high in bells and moccasins
To the beat of Indian ways.
Grandpa wrangled for white ranchers
From the Keyapaha to the Jim,
'Til he wed a Santee maiden
Then on his allotment, his own spread did begin.
Grandpa raised horses and cattle
That thrived on prairie grass.
Nine children grew strong and healthy
Working at the ranch's tasks.
He struggled, but never prospered,
Watching the years and children go,
'Til the ranch died with the cattle
And the Keyapaha ceased to flow.
Grandpa was still an Indian
When his cowboy days were done,
Then he rode the range of memories
Of ways forever gone.
Tiyospaye mourned his passing
And the drum beat at his wake,
While gospel hymns were harmonized,
Beseeching God his soul to take.
Grandpa's a cowboy and an Indian
In God's eternal band
Where he'll ride forever
In heaven's prairie land.