**Janet Gahbow Traditions I Learned from My Grandparents**

I was born in Cloquet and grew up in Minneapolis.  We lived with my maternal grandparents, Florence and Tony Moose, who were very cultural people.  They attended the big drum ceremonies.  It was fun to watch them dance during the ceremonies, but sometimes the dances went all night long.

My grandma Florence’s stepfather was a medicine man, so she knew about some traditional medicines.  If we got hurt playing games in the summertime, she picked grapevine from the woods and boiled it.  She made us soak our ankle, knee, or whatever part was hurt in the grapevine.  It always worked.

My grandparents used to take us to powwows in the summer, and we traveled to Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Canada.  I did the jingle dance and wore the jingle dress made by my grandma.  We used to dance at the old trading post in the summertime too.  We danced all day long and took donations from museum visitors.  We split up all the money between the dancers and then bought all the candy we could with our nickels and dimes at the trading post.

During ricing season, my grandparents took us to East Lake and Mille Lacs.  They harvested the wild rice and we laid it out to dry before it was parched.  To parch rice, we put it in a big black kettle over the fire.  We had to turn the rice and parch it so the hull would come off the rice.  Then it had to be thrashed to remove the hulls.  My grandma put the rice in a birch bark basket and winnowed it to clean the rice.

My grandma always made bread to go with the wild rice.  She made what she called “gourmet rice,” which consisted of hamburger, onion, wild rice, and tomatoes.  She showed me how to make fry bread and her Indian biscuits too.  I like to cook, but I never wanted to cook duck.

Duck hunting season was right after ricing season, and my grandpa hunted ducks for us to eat.  We had to help clean them by plucking off the feathers, putting the ducks over the fire, and pulling off the remaining feathers.  It was an awful process, and it smelled terrible.  But the ducks tasted good.

Bullheads are the same way – they taste good, but are ugly.  Our family went bullhead fishing, which you have to do at dusk.  It was really fun, and we all had a good time.  I ate the bullhead meat if it was cleaned off for me, but I didn’t like the look of a whole fish on my plate.

My grandma Batiste Sam, on my dad’s side, was really good at crafts.  She showed me how to do beadwork.  There are different kinds, but she mostly did embroidery beadwork, in which she put the design on a cloth and sewed on the beads.  She also made traditional Ojibwe moccasins.

My grandparents always had a good work ethic.  They taught me that you can’t expect things to be given to you.  If you sit around and wait for someone to give it to you, you might be sitting around for the rest of your life.

I have learned many lessons and traditions from my grandparents that I still practice today.  I like to make the old traditional dishes that my grandma Florence used to cook.  I also try and do beadwork, although I can’t see the different colors anymore.  But it’s just like riding a bike – you never forget how to do it.