

1) So how did you get your start in photography?

Back in high school. That's when I got my first SLR camera. I traded some babysitting for it. Then, because I owned a 35mm camera and was comfortable in a darkroom, one of my first jobs was working as a photographer for a radical underground newspaper. At that time I didn't realize that there were other jobs within the photo industry so I went to a technical college in Vancouver to learn filmmaking and television broadcast. After moving to the states, I partnered up as a videographer with a well-known Idaho photographer, Jack Williams, who became my mentor. We both liked to cross over switching from still and moving pictures so we traded off quite often during jobs. National publishers like National Geographic would call up looking for stock images. One day NGS called up looking for a hard to find location. So the next morning at 3 AM, I set out on spec in the hopes to get what they might need. National Geographic purchased the use of one I got of running horses. Within a few weeks 2 other of my images were licensed for book covers with Simon and Schuster and Time Life. By those first image sales, I was hooked! Back then I didn't even know the difference between an aperture or shutter speed.

2) When did you realize that you wanted to make Native American culture your photographic specialty?

All through my life I've had a great appreciation for Native culture. I grew up on Vancouver Island. In a rain forest! Most of my best friends were Coastal Salish, Cowichan and Tsimshian. Very different than the Hollywood stereotype. I thought that all Indians lived in longhouses and dressed in carved cedar masks and button blankets. My dad, as a boy, collected arrowheads and stone tools that he found on the Saskatchewan prairies. As kids we used his artifact hammer stones to crack open our Christmas nuts. During my teenage years the popular book "Seven Arrows" came out. Inside the pages were historic photographs taken by Edward Curtis around the turn of the century. Those photographic images really made an impression on me. He captured the American Indian's beauty yet at the same time his images were so haunting. It wasn't until I was diagnosed with cancer 15 years ago that I thought to make my interest of Native American cultures a photographic specialty. Nothing like a kick in the ass when your life is threatened and you get another chance. I listened to my heart and that was the beginning of my journey to photograph tribal cultures.

3) How long have you been photographing First Nations?

As a teenager, I photographed my girlfriends and their families. But all photographs were everyday. They were not dressed in traditional regalia. My real passion and focus began back in 1996. I had to take on shooting weddings and corporate events in Sun Valley resort to support my travel and film expenses. I

was more on a spiritual journey than a mission. I never dreamed that I could actually make a career of my 2 loves- photography and Native cultures. But early on I created my mission statement, "To become the worlds' leading supplier of Native American Indian pictures". Boy, talk about the power of intention! Since then I've contributed thousands of photos that have been used to illustrate hundreds of educational books, websites, posters, DVD's and brochures. All my photo trips and expenses are self funded, but I get to travel to tribal communities throughout US and Canada. I've met incredible people such as traditionalists, artists, activists, professionals and entertainers across Indian Country. Many of the homelands I've visited are still untouched and remain the same as 100 years ago.

4) Where are some of these locations and what tribal communities have you documented?

Everywhere, the southwest, northwest, northeast, southeast, midwest, lower arctic regions, great plains, basin and plateau. At first I photographed the Nez Perce and Shoshone Bannock both tribes are located near my home in Idaho. Then I started to travel to Montana and South Dakota. My first real self assignment was a trip to Arizona. One of my publishers called who were doing a book on the Apache. So I took a chance. They purchased quite a few of the photos for the book so I asked what other titles were coming up in the future. I took the initiative to set out and document other well known tribes such as the Crow, Seminole, Powhatan, Lakota Sioux, Chumash, Navajo, Blackfeet and Shawnee. My image collection has just exploded. There's over 500 nations and I've only photographed maybe 200. Because my career began with educational publishers, there was a definite concentration on the traditional culture such as food, clothing, crafts, dwellings. Documenting sacred sites such as Medicine Wheel in Wyoming, Bear Butte in South Dakota, Spiderwoman Rock in Arizona, Enchanted Mesa in New Mexico and many more locations. Many of these sites are so spiritually powerful that while visiting I have to take it slow and sit down, it's emotional and I sometimes cry, you just have to take it all in at your own pace.

5) How do you go about planning for these photo shoots?

Google is the best place to start searching for information and to locate tribal websites. I subscribe to Native People Magazine and Indian Country Newspapers. My road atlas along with personal library collection of books to read up on a tribe and their history of both their traditional homelands and their reservations location today. Each tribe has their own unique creation story. I look for museums, cultural centers, reenactments, festivals, pow wows, traditional villages and art shows. While visiting a reservation I look for economic development, tribal buildings, education facilities, landmarks, tribally owned

businesses and artists. For instance, this summer I was on the Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon. Their tribe runs a hydro power plant, hot springs and resort. When I was on the Zuni Pueblo I found a bakery and furniture factory. There's just so much activity and business going on today in tribal communities that you just don't hear about.

6) Any favorite adventures you'd like to share?

While in Florida on the Miccosukee Rez I went on an airboat tour through the Everglades. My guide had me drive the airboat and then pet a wild alligators head. There's no rules on a rez.

One time I was on a cow round-up on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation with my Sho-Ban friends. Me and another rider had to bring a few cows down and found dozens of horn sheds left by moose, deer and elk. We collected as many as we could carry on our horses. When we came out of the sagebrush carrying all these antlers our Native cowboys named us "Two Horny White Women. One of my all time favorite reenactments is the Indian version of Custer's Last Stand on the Little Big Horn battle field. The event is held every year in June on the Crow Agency in Montana. Those guys can ride!

7) What are your top 3 Reservations you can recommend for others to visit and why?

That's hard as there are so many for different reasons that I like. But here goes. The Disneyland of Reservations is by far on the Seminole's Big Cypress. They have swamp safari tours on airboats, you can stay overnight in a traditional Chickee dwelling, see an awesome museum and explore a living history village. The Seminole also operate several casinos including the Hard Rock Casino and they also have an airplane manufacturing company called Micco Air.

In Cherokee North Carolina there is a large traditional village with dozens of artisans, a live theatre drama, delicious traditional foods of nut bread, acorn squash and mustard greens. You can purchase high quality traditional Cherokee arts and crafts at the Qualla Arts Co-op, drive the scenic Blue Ridge Highway for fall colors, there's a short hike to a water fall, a quaint touristy town with a chair-lift to the top of their mountain.

Visiting Monument Valley and Canyon d'Chelly is magical inside the Navajo lands. Collectors are drawn to Navajo silverwork with turquoise and traditionally woven rugs and blankets. My favorite food choice is a Navajo taco on the lightest frybread I've ever had. Many Dineh people still live in the traditional Hogan dwellings which dot the landscape. Churro sheep continue to be raised for their wool and on occasion you can see the children herding their flocks. All Navajo speak Dineh as their first language with English being their second. A true cultural experience.

8) Your photographs have been published in magazines such as National Geographic. Could you explain a little about Stock photography and how these images are used?

Stock photography is the supply of photographs licensed for specific uses. It is used to fill the needs of magazines and book publishers instead of hiring a photographer. Photos that you see on websites, brochures, advertising, magazine and in books are mainly purchased as stock photography. It's a market so there are no set fees or pricing involved. As a photographer I try to get paid the highest fee possible. Image buyers try to get images at the lowest fee they can. It's all in the art of negotiating. Like playing the game Monopoly. It really pays to have a unique and specialized image collection like I have. Also having extensive knowledge and fast personalized service helps. Through the year I market my images through lots of promotion, a good website, so people can find me easily on a google search and of course lots of email promotions. You have to keep your photographs in front of image buyers all the time or they will forget about you.

9) As an artist, have you ever had a gallery show or used your photos in other mediums?

Oh yeah! I've done a few gallery exhibits but there's lots of expense for printing and framing. I'm focused on a world market and gallery shows are very local. So you get to hear good comments and get the occasional pat on the back and maybe make a few sales of the artwork. All images found on my website at www.nativestock.com are available as gallery prints or canvas. But I do have what I consider my very best on my websites Gallery Page. I'm always open for bookings if any galleries are interested. I've also self published my favorite photos into a book titled "Voice of the Spirit: Words of Wisdom from Indian Country USA". It's a compilation of inspirational quotes from tribal members past present that accompany my photographs. I also have a wholesale postcard line that are available at tribal museums, trading posts, cultural centers, here and there. I also have a deck of playing cards with 52 different colorful photographs with specific tribal location and a historic image for each.

10) How do you find Native American models?

No experience necessary!

After researching a target area where I plan to travel to, I then start to make phone calls to culture centers, dance groups and tribal offices trying to find leads on members who have posed for pictures in the past or might be interested now. I've found many models and business people to pose for me on networks such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and Linked In. While on location, I go to pow wows, reenactments, meet family members. I'm looking for all sorts of people

and age groups to photograph. For instance, I was looking for a group of lacrosse players while I was in Buffalo New York last summer. I kept calling around and asking everyone until I located a few guys that were a team. We set up the shoot in a city park and I got some incredible action shots. Since it wasn't a real game, I could set up anywhere on the field and the players would play with the ball running towards the camera. I still need to get around to editing those images. By the way I pay models a small fee for working with me and also split any earned fees. Indian Country is relatively small and you are always crossing paths again with people you've met in the past. I have a good reputation.

11) Could you explain more about your 50/50 partnership with people willing to pose for you?

I started this very early on in my career. When I photograph tribal members, whether at a pow wow or at their house, I always get their contact info. Sometimes it will take years before an image is licensed. But it's a great surprise to the recipient when I get to send them a check. People images that are licensed the most are children in traditional clothing, families and contemporary people at work. I now have several agents throughout the world selling these images with high restrictions. Images can only be used where it shows tribal people in positive perspectives. Many of my models have signed releases. Here is where we enter a partnership, splitting any fees earned 50/50. Sales average anywhere from \$50 up to \$600 depending on where the image will be placed.

12) Where haven't you been yet that might be locations you are considering for the near future?

There are so many places that I want to visit. For years I've wanted to visit Minnesota and Michigan to photograph the Ojibwe/Chippewa culture. Then in Northern Canada there's the Inuit in Nunavut. An easy drive, where I can load up my truck and camper, is to the grasslands of Kansas and Iowa. Hard to get to but I always enjoy my time traveling on the east coast. So this coming April I plan to fly to Boston and rent a car for photo shoots in Nova Scotia Canada and the state of Maine to document the Micmac and Pennobscot tribes. This winter I'll be setting up my studio and office down in sunny Arizona. There's lots of photo opportunities in the Southwest. I've been invited by tribal members and organizers to special events such as the Canoe Journeys on Westcoast, Pow wows, art festivals, commemorative horse rides, along with special occasions like weddings. I encourage anyone to contact me with upcoming events or ideas.

13) Are you of Native American ethnicity?

My heart is Native American. I've been called the name "Snow Bunny", White on the outside but Red on the inside. I like that.