ALL MY RELATIVES: THE *HUNKA* ADOPTION OF JASPER MILK

by Dawn C. Stricklin, MA

ABSTRACT: This research article infuses anthropological kinship theory with knowledge of traditional Lakota Sioux culture to discover the complex relationships that existed between Jasper Milk, his wife, and his *Hunka* (adopted) sibling. Offering a critique of the current praxis existing among genealogists conducting research in Native American lineages, the author suggests that genealogical specialization in a single tribe—in contrast to the current practice of all-encompassing 'Native American research'—increases research success.

KEYWORDS: Lakota Sioux, theory, genealogy, kinship, South Dakota

Mitakuye Oyasin. Loosely translated from the Oglala Lakota Sioux Indian language into English as "All My Relatives," this simple term describes how the Lakota Sioux tribes of South Dakota remember their affinal, consanguineous, and adopted relatives, both living and deceased.[1] The adoption of consanguineously unrelated people into one's family, which anthropologists refer to as fictive kin,[2] continues among Lakota families and individuals to the present time. Although non-Native families in the United States also adopt unrelated individuals into their nuclear families, there are five significant differences between both cultures.

First, non-Native families generally limit adoption to minors under the age of eighteen years, while adoption among the Lakota can occur anywhere from infancy to old age.[3]

 Department of Anthropology; Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, 3525 Faner Hall-Mail Code 4502; Carbondale, IL 62901. Send comments to: dcstrick@siu.edu Ms. Stricklin is a doctoral student at Southern Illinois University- Carbondale in anthropology. Cite as: Dawn C. Stricklin, "All My Relatives: The Hunka Adoption of Jasper Milk," *Annals of Genealogical Research* Vol. 7, No. 1 (2011) at http://www.genlit.org/agr/viewarticle.php?id=36

[1] Kari Forbes-Byte, "Respecting Sacred Perceptions: The Lakotas, Bear Butte, and Land-Management Strategies," *The Public Historian* 18 (Autumn 1996): 103-104. Forbes-Byte succinctly describes the complex meaning of *mitakuye oyasin*, which not only links an individual to other humans, but also to all plant and animal life forms.

[2] Stanley A. Freed, "Fictive Kinship in a North Indian Village," *Ethnology* 2 (Jan. 1963): 86.

[3] American citizens have been able to legally adopt adults since at least the early twentieth century. However, Americans, by far, adopt more minor children than adults. Stolley reported that in 1988, 99.5% of all adoptions were of minors under the age of eighteen; less than one percent of people aged nineteen and over had finalized adoptions. No known study has been conducted on the Lakota Sioux *Hunka* adoptions. Since their confinement to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, however, tribal authorities have begun trying to regulate the adoptions of both minor children and adults. In 1937, the tribe wrote a constitution that named all legally adoptable minors as being under the age of eighteen years. In addition, the tribe also passed an ordinance stating that all traditional adoptions of adults were required to request an adoption, undergo an examination, and pay a fee of one dollar. Though the ordinance stated that all adult adoptions would be "...null and void..." unless they were renewed with

Second, American families typically restrict adoption to those individuals that they refer to as children. However, the Lakota adopt not only people into their nuclear family as children, but also mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins.[4] Third, the act of adoption in Lakota Sioux culture is primarily oral and leaves no written records. While some instances of adoption by American families may be unrecorded in the past, the vast majority of adoptions, especially those in the modern era, are regulated by law and recorded at courthouses. Fourth, American genealogy specifically identifies non-consanguineous relatives in genealogical compilations.[5] Individuals adopted by the Lakota Sioux, on the other hand, are submerged in the kinship system; there is rarely any reference, either orally or in writing, to adopted relatives—they are simply referred to as 'brother, 'mother', and etc.[6] Finally, the majority of American and European adoptions include the complete severance—legal and often physical and emotional—of an adopted child's ties to their consanguineous nuclear family.[7] However, among the Lakota Sioux, the adoption of an individual does not require the separation of the individual from their natal family.[8] Having an understanding of the differentiations in adoptions that exist is critical when conducting genealogical research into Lakota Sioux tribal genealogies, as the case of Jasper Milk illustrates.

BACKGROUND

During an oral history interview that occurred in 1997 on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, Goldie Lucy Little Crow asserted that a man by the name of Jasper Milk was her brother, and that he married a woman named Bernice Fire.[9] Several years later, as research continued on Goldie's genealogy, no evidence linking Jasper

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the court, Hunka adoptions were/are ceremonial and don't involve courts. Later, the constitution was amended and the fee increased to ten dollars. John Francis Brosnan, "The Law of Adoption," *Columbia Law Review* 22 (April 1922); Kathy S. Stolley, "Statistics on Adoption in the United States," *The Future of Children* 3 (Spring 1993): 35; Oglala Sioux Tribe: Law and Order Code, Section 113: Adult Indian Custom Adoption, http://www.narf.org/nill/Codes/oglalacode/chapter11-custadopt.htm Accessed 15 August 2011; Oglala Sioux Tribe: Law and Order Code, Subchapter VIII: Adoption, Section 8.02 Age Consideration, http://www.narf.org/nill/Codes/oglalacode/chapter05-juvenile.htm Accessed 15 August 2011; Oglala Sioux Tribe: Law and Order Code, Subchapter VIII: Adoption, Section 8.05 Custom and Tradition, http://www.narf.org/nill/Codes/oglalacode/chapter05-juvenile.htm Accessed 15 August 2011.

[4] George Sword, "The *Hunka*" In *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 199.

[5] Joan Ferris Curran, Madilyn Coen Crane, and John H.Wray, *Numbering Your Genealogy: Basic Systems, Complex Families, and International Kin* (Arlington, Va.: National Genealogical Society, 1999), 19-25.

[6] In some obituaries, some references to Hunka relatives can be found. However, there have been cases, like Goldie Little Crow's obituary, where at least one adopted relative is simply listed as a son.

[7] Barbara Yngvesson, "Refiguring Kinship in the Space of Adoption," *Anthropological Quarterly* (Spring 2007): 565.

[8] The difference in European-American and Lakota Sioux adoption is a direct result of the different kinship systems that these cultures operate within. In the Eskimo System utilized by Europeans and Americans, an individual can have only one female named 'mother'. The Lakota Sioux, who use a variation of the Iroquois System, have several women and men that are called 'mother' and 'father'.

[9] Interviews with the late Goldie Lucy Little Crow, conducted in Rushville, Neb., by Dawn C. Stricklin, June-August 1997. Original research notes in possession of the author.

consanguineously to the Little Crow family materialized, though exhaustive research into the Little Crow family was conducted.[10]

In 2006, I received a phone call from one of Goldie's children informing me that her Uncle Jasper had passed away. When asked, she could not explain how Goldie and Jasper were related; she simply did not know. Research into online obituaries revealed an obituary published by the *Rapid City Journal*. According to the obituary, Jasper was born about 1924, died 5 August 2006 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and was buried 16 August 2006 in the Black Hills National Cemetery near Sturgis, South Dakota.[11] Though the obituary names Jasper's wife and children, no data is provided for his siblings. The only other identifying information that was present was Jasper's Lakota name, "Mni Owicakte."

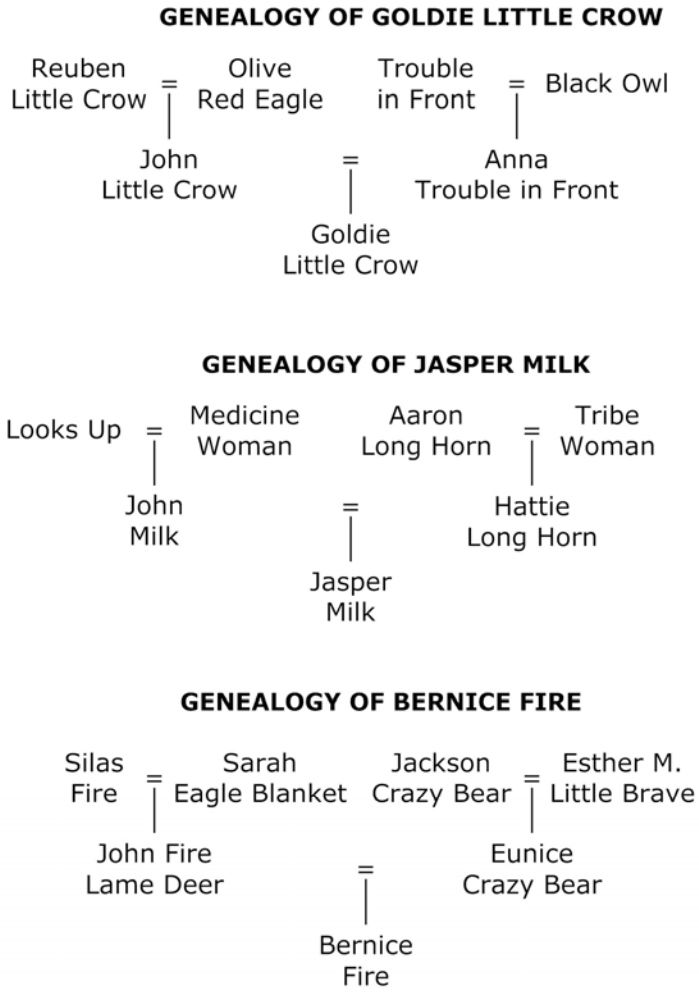

Figure 1

[10] Dawn C. Stricklin, "Namesakes, Name Changes, and Conflicting Evidence: The Search for the Mother of John Little Crow," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 94 (December 2006): 245-258.
[11] Jasper Milk obituary, Rapid City Journal, http://www.legacy.com/rapidcity/Obituaries.asp?Page=SearchResults, Accessed 15 August 2011.

Four possible scenarios existed: 1) Goldie was related to Jasper as a consanguineous sibling; 2) Goldie was related to Jasper's wife Bernice, making her Jasper's sister-in-law; 3) Goldie and Jasper were related through formal adoption; or 4) Goldie and Jasper were related through ceremonial adoption. The genealogies for all three subjects—Jasper, Goldie, and Bernice—were traced and none were consanguineously related to the third generation (see Figure 1). The only other possibility for a brother-sister relationship between Jasper and Goldie would be through adoption.

ADOPTION AMONG THE LAKOTA SIOUX

There are two forms of adoption used today by the Lakota of South Dakota, formal and ceremonial adoption. Formal adoption is the legal act of adopting a person through the tribal court, and this act produces written records. The second form of adoption, the *Hunka Lowanpi*, is a ceremonial adoption and leaves no written record. This second form of adoption would be the only viable explanation for the sibling relationship between Jasper and Goldie.

As early as 1937, the Lakota Sioux of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation attempted to regulate the traditional adoption of adults:

> "...Any Indian or Indians wishing to adopt an adult according to Indian custom (Waliyacinpi) shall appear before the Superior Court of the Oglala Sioux Tribe with the party to be adopted and all other parties concerned and declare their intentions. The Court, if after examination, finds the person or persons requesting the adoption be made, is of sound mind and that the request is free and voluntary, may authorize such adoption and make a record thereof upon the payment of a fee of one dollar ($1.00), which is to be deposited to the Court Funds. All adoptions made heretofore by Tribal custom shall be null and void unless they are renewed in the manner as above described..."[12]

Later, the constitution was amended, and the fee was increased to ten dollars.[13] It should be noted that while the above section refers to adult adoptions, the Lakota Sioux word chosen for the constitution text, *Waliyacinpi*, is translated by Buechel's *Lakota English Dictionary* in reference to the adoption of a child.[14] The adoption proceedings listed in the constitution appear to refer specifically to the adoption of an adult for inheritance purposes,[15] and do not include *Hunka* adoptions that are ceremonial and spritual in nature. Inheritance of another person's personal property after the death of that individual is neither an object nor a goal of the *Hunka.* This fixation on inheritance, a direct result of forced assimilation and the Anglo-American interference into tribal social relations, had no bearing on those individuals who lived traditional lifestyles. A Lakota Sioux man or woman living a traditional lifestyle owned little personal property; land was communally owned and excess wealth was not

[12] Oglala Sioux Tribe: Law and Order Code, Section 113: Adult Indian Custom Adoption, http://www.narf.org/nill/Codes/oglalacode/chapter11-custadopt.htm Accessed 15 August 2011.
[13] Oglala Sioux Tribe: Law and Order Code, Subchapter VIII: Adoption, Section 8.05 Custom and Tradition, http://www.narf.org/nill/Codes/oglalacode/chapter05-juvenile.htm Accessed 15 August 2011.
[14] Reverend Eugene Buechel, *A Dictionary- Oie Wowapi Wan of Teton Sioux, Lakota-English: English-Lakota* (Pine Ridge, South Dakota: Red Cloud Indian School, Inc., 1983), 661.
[15] Oglala Sioux Tribe: Law and Order Code, Subchapter VIII: Adoption, Section 8.25 Inheritance Rights, http://www.narf.org/nill/Codes/oglalacode/chapter05-juvenile.htm Accessed 15 August 2011.

accumulated, but was rather distrubuted to extended relatives throughout the reservation. Greed was shameful, and even today one of the greatest insults is to call someone "stingy." In modern times, though tribal members do own personal land on the reservation and elsewhere, communally-owned property continues to exist. However, the inheritance of personal property remains a thorny issue among some tribal members to this day.[16]

The *Hunka Lowanpi*, or The Making of Relatives,[17] is a ceremony that ritually unites two separate individuals—strangers, friends, or those already related but related beyond the nuclear family—as close relatives.[18] Ceremonial adoption was not limited to any particular ethnicity, gender, or age, and potential adoptees could either be Lakota or a member of any other ethnic group, male or female, adult or child.[19] Through *Hunka* adoption, the respective families, bands, or tribes associated with the two individuals could also come "...together as one..." as the result of that newly established relationship.[20]

According to Lakota Sioux oral history, the *Hunka* ceremony had been performed for generations prior to 1800 and, according to Afraid of Bear, "...anyone could perform the ceremony..."[21] However, in the year 1805 a being named "The Man from the Land of Pines" taught the tribe how to perform the ceremony properly.[22] In fact, the ritualization of the *Hunka* ceremony was so significant that Lakota tribal member No Ears recorded the visit in his winter count, naming the year 1805 as the year in which, "...they sang over each other using animal tails..."[23]

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[16] As late as 1997, one woman in her early twenties who came from a traditional family recalled the death of her favorite aunt. The deceased woman's belongings were piled up outside, and the woman's niece, wanting to retain a part of her aunt, refused to give up one of her aunt's personal belongings. The surviving family members informed the young woman that all the deceased woman's personal property had to be burnt; nothing was to remain. Eventually, the young woman was persuaded to place the object with the rest of her aunt's belongings and everything was destroyed. Though the complete destruction of one's personal property after death may seem radical, this act removed not only the authority of tribal jurisprudence from the matter, but also supported traditional Lakota Sioux values and beliefs regarding the accumulation of wealth. Of particular import, the entire destruction of an individual's personal property after their death eradicates the possibility of any arguments or fights that might ensue over the inheritance of property. In some cases, a small bundle of an individual's personal property is retained for one year, for ceremonial purposes, after which it is also disposed of.

[17] Reverend Eugene Buechel, *A Dictionary- Oie Wowapi Wan of Teton Sioux, Lakota-English: English-Lakota* (Pine Ridge, South Dakota: Red Cloud Indian School, Inc., 1983), 188.

[18] Lakota Sioux culture enables members of any age to adopt other people of any age as parents, siblings, or children, unlike American society who only allows adults to adopt minor children, though on rare occasions, adults have also been adopted by adults as their children. However, siblings and parents cannot be legally adopted.

[19] George Sword points out that before the ceremony takes place that permission is received from the individual being adopted, and in the case of infants or children, the permission is granted by the child's parents. *See* George Sword, "The *Hunka*" In *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 199.

[20] Raymond J. DeMallie, ed., *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984,: 82.

[21] Afraid of Bear. "Hunka and the White Man." In *Lakota Belief and Ritual* ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 201.

[22] Afraid of Bear. "Hunka and the White Man." In *Lakota Belief and Ritual* ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 201.

[23] James R. Walker, *Lakota Society*, Raymond J. DeMallie, ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 131. Lakota anthropologist Ella C. Deloria reported that the animal tails in the winter count referred to the buffalo tail hair attached to sticks of wood that were used in the *Hunka* ceremony.

Adopting a relative through this ceremony was not and is not an act to be taken lightly. The making of relatives carries with it considerable duties and obligations. Lakota elder George Sword explained some of the responsibilities that were expected from *Hunkas*:

> "…In old times when there were many wars, a *Hunka* was bound to help his *Hunka* kin in every way: in going on a war party, in a fight; and if he was a prisoner, his *Hunka* must not rest till he was released. If he took horses, he must help him. If he had horses taken, he must help him to get them back. If he took women he must help him to keep them, and if his women were taken he must help him to recover them. If he took children he must help him to recover them. If he gave a feast he must help him to provide for it. If he was sick he must help him to get the medicine men and to pay them. If he wished to steal a wife he must help him to do so and must be ready to fight for the wife. If he played games he must not play against him. If he was poor and hungry he must feed him and give him whatever he needed…"[24]

In addition to his or her obligations to their *Hunka* relative, those individuals who underwent this ceremony were also advised of their continuing responsibilities to other tribal members.[25] Although written evidence of *Hunka* ceremonies and relationships is rare to non-existent, some modern-day obituaries provide physical proof that this ceremony continues in the present.[26] Although traditions and ceremonies can, and frequently do, change over time, the making of *Hunka* relations are not based on monetary gain and remain honored relationships among the Lakota Sioux today.

Were Jasper and Goldie siblings through formal adoption or through *Hunka* ceremony? Though no evidence has been found to support a legal formal adoption, several indirect clues point to a ceremonial *Hunka* adoption:

1) Goldie was an active participant in Lakota Sioux ceremonies, including sweats and Sun Dances. Shortly before her death, Goldie attended a naming ceremony on her own behalf.[27]
2) Throughout her lifetime, Goldie adopted several other siblings, one of whom was a well-known and respected spiritual leader on the Pine Ridge Indian

[24] George Sword, "The *Hunka*" In *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 198-199.
[25] John Blunt Horn, "The Obligations of the Hunka" In *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 205-206.
[26] Generally, obituaries of Lakota Sioux tribal members will provide the names of relatives but will not distinguish if the individual was consanguineously related or ceremonially adopted. However, there are some cases where *Hunka* relatives are clearly identified in obituaries. One example from a 2011 obituary identified a 24 year-old woman's nuclear family members as well as her *Hunka* mother and *Hunka* sisters. *See* Tate Wakan Win [Holy Wind Woman] Little Elk obituary, *Lakota Country Times*, 13 April 2011, pg. C6, col. 1.
[27] Interviews with the late Goldie Lucy Little Crow, conducted in Rushville, Neb., by Dawn C. Stricklin, June-August 1997. Original research notes in possession of the author.

Reservation.[28] Goldie also adopted a son. In Goldie's obituary, one man who was listed as a son was unknown to author.[29] Being unaware of the relationship and asking about the young man, Goldie's daughter stated that he was Goldie's adopted son.

3) In addition to Euro-American church services, Goldie's funeral included traditional Lakota funeral services.[30]
4) Jasper Milk bore a traditional Lakota Sioux name, *Mni Owicakte* (Kills in Water).[31] Like Goldie and Bernice, Jasper was born into a family whose first language was Lakota Sioux.[32]
5) Jasper's wife Bernice (Fire) Milk was raised as a traditional Lakota Sioux; she was the daughter of the renowned *Heyoka* John Fire Lame Deer,[33] and her own funeral included traditional Lakota burial rites.[34]

AMERICAN GENEALOGY AND LAKOTA KINSHIP

American and European genealogy rigidly focuses on documenting consanguineous and affinal relationships, clearly distinguishing those adopted members who are not related by blood.[35] This emphasis is the result of the same kinship system that Americans and Europeans have shared for centuries. Although the Lakota Sioux today are American citizens, their genealogy continues to operate within a radically different kinship system. This kinship system, which existed before the European colonization of the United States, allows the unrestricted and undistinguished incorporation of non-related individuals into the nuclear family. According to American genealogy and kinship, Jasper and Goldie were not consanguineous or affinal relatives and American family law does not recognize Lakota

[28] Lena L. Bear Killer's obituary listed Goldie as one of her sisters, and John Around Him's death followed Goldie's so no mention of her was made in his obituary. However, Samuel John "John" Around Him, was called "uncle" by Goldie's children and "brother" by Goldie herself. No consanguineous relationship to the third generation was found between Goldie and either Lena or John. .Lena L. Bear Killer obituary, *Rapid City Journal*, http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/obituaries/article_dd3ab022-60aa-5d95-9299-3d2c6686edb5.html Accessed 15 August 2011; Samuel John Around Him, Jr. obituary, *Rapid City Journal*, 22 September 2006, pg. C2.

[29] Goldie L. Little Crow obituary, *Rapid City Journal*, http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/rapidcity/obituary.aspx?n=goldie-l-little-crow&pid=14590721, Accessed 15 August 2011.

[30] Goldie L. Little Crow obituary, *Rapid City Journal*, http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/rapidcity/obituary.aspx?n=goldie-l-little-crow&pid=14590721, Accessed 15 August 2011.

[31] Jasper Milk obituary, *Rapid City Journal*, http://www.legacy.com/rapidcity/Obituaries.asp?Page=SearchResults, Accessed 15 August 2011.

[32] None of Jasper's paternal or maternal grandparents could speak English. Though John's father was bilingual, his mother Hattie could only speak Lakota Sioux at the time of the 1900 census. With the exception of his grandparents, Jasper and his siblings learned English. However, Lakota Sioux remained their first language. Milk household, 1900 U.S. census, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota, pop. sch., ED 46, SD 1, sheet 163A [stamped], dw. 1548, fl. 1634; T623, roll 1556; Aaron Long Horn household, 1900 U.S. census, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota, pop. sch., ED 46, SD 1, sheet 163A [stamped], dw. 1590, fl. 1676; T623, roll 1556.

[33] Bernice Milk, "Lame Deer Descendant Tells another Side to Story," *The Lakota Times,* 18 September 1991, pg. A6.

[34] Bernice R. Milk obituary, *Lakota Country Times*, 8 June 2011, pg. D4, col. 1.

[35] Joan Ferris Curran, Madilyn Coen Crane, and John H.Wray, *Numbering Your Genealogy: Basic Systems, Complex Families, and International Kin* (Arlington, Va.: National Genealogical Society, 1999), 19-25.

Hunka ceremonies as legal acts of adoption. However, according to Lakota genealogy, culture, and kinship, Jasper Milk and Goldie Little Crow were brother and sister.

Kinship, or the "…totality of kin relations, kin groups, and terms for classifying kin in a society…"[36] is a set of relationships that are the result of blood ties (consanguineous kin), marriage (affinal kin), and through the incorporation of unrelated peoples (fictive kin). These relationships form a social bond that both influences and regulates behavior.[37] The purpose of kinship systems is to provide a framework for members of a particular culture to work within. In other words, kinship systems tell people who a person's relatives are and what their responsibilities and obligations are to other members of the family unit.

Anthropologists today recognize six separate kinship systems among the world's cultures. American and European genealogists typically study only one of those systems, called the Eskimo kinship system. However, Native people throughout the United States, including Hawaii and Alaska, do not rely on a single kinship system, but instead use five of the total six kinship systems. Due to the diversity of kinship systems found in North America, anthropologists named five of those kinship systems after Native American tribes in the United States: Eskimo, Hawaiian, Crow, Omaha, and Iroquois. The Lakota tribes use a variation of the Iroquois kinship system, and knowledge of how the Lakota view family and the terms that they use to describe family members is critical when conducting research into this tribe.

The Iroquois Kinship System is found among cultures that rely on double descent. Double descent is a system where descent is traced through both the maternal and paternal lines, but where each side serves different social functions. One of the key points to remember when conducting research into Native American tribes in general and the Lakota Sioux in particular, is that the terms that European-Americans use for family members, such as 'mother and 'father', are not always applied to a person's consanguineous relatives. For example, Figure 2 shows how the same family would operate within both the Eskimo and the Iroquois kinship systems. The Eskimo system used by Americans and Europeans only allow specific kinship terms for nuclear family members (i.e. 'mother', 'brother', and etc.) to be applied to consanguineous relatives or legally adopted fictive kin. The Iroquois kinship system used by the Lakota on the other hand, extends those nuclear kinship terms to include other people outside the nuclear family. For example, step-fathers and paternal uncles are called 'father'.

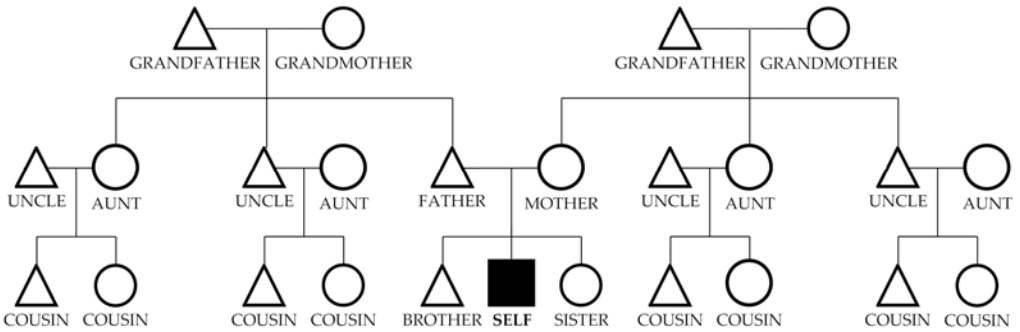
The fluid and flexible kinship system that the Lakota operate within enables the adoption of multiple non-related individuals into the Lakota nuclear family without distinguishing them from blood relatives creating the *tiyospaye*, or extended family/community. As a result, there were and are no orphans among the Lakota because even, "...the illegitimate [or orphaned] child finds a place within the society..."[38] through numerous consanguineous, affinal, and fictive mothers, fathers, siblings, and grandparents.

[36] Serena Nanda and Richard L. Warms, "Kinship" In *Cultural Anthropology*, 7th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002), 219.
[37] Serena Nanda and Richard L. Warms, "Kinship" In *Cultural Anthropology*, 7th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002), 219.
[38] Royal B. Hassrick, "Teton Dakota Kinship System," *American Anthropologist* 46 (Jul.-Sep. 1944):347.

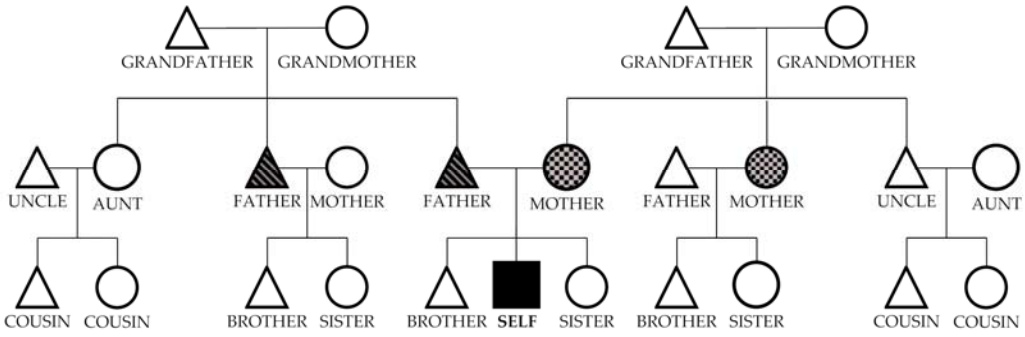
Figure 2[a]

Americans, Europeans, and some Native American tribes rely upon the Eskimo Kinship System. In this system, certain kinship terms reserved for the nuclear family—mother, father, brother, and sister—are not used to describe any other family member, and males and females use the same terms when referring to relatives. The Lakota Sioux tribes of North and South Dakota rely upon the Iroquois kinship system. This system is also used by the Native Americans such as the Six Nations (Onondaga, Mohawk, Seneca, Cayuga, Tuscarora, and Onondaga tribes), the Sioux tribes (Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota), Potawatomie Tribe, Algonquin Tribe, and the Ojibwa Tribe.

ESKIMO KINSHIP SYSTEM



IROQUOIS KINSHIP SYSTEM



[a] Materials extracted from Lewis Henry Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, [1870] 1997), 293-382; Oglala Lakota College, *Hecetu Yelo (The Way It Is) Student Manual* (Kyle, SD: Oglala Lakota College, 1989), 16-29; James R. Walker, "Oglala Kinship Terms," *American Anthropologist* 16 (Jan.-Mar. 1914): 96-109.

Jasper Milk, Goldie Little Crow, and Bernice (Fire) Milk were all born in South Dakota during the first half of the twentieth century.[39] This era witnessed the continuation of the United States Government's policy of forced assimilation,[40] which not only removed Native people from their land but also altered traditional kinship systems.[41] When Jasper and Goldie were born in the 1920s and 1930s, reservation officials had been actively engaged for at least fifty years in the use of American genealogy in order to determine heirs, especially regarding the probating of estates with allotted lands.[42] Determining who is and is not *legally* kin is still an area of contention, and has expanded to include all tribes of Native peoples today within the borders of the United States.[43] As a result, the federal government enumerated the Lakota in census records almost every single year, in addition to the decennial U.S. federal censuses and other records created by the government.

Though tribal members were burdened by excessive enumeration, these records enable modern genealogists to document Native families like Jaspers back to the early 1800s. However, it should be remembered that although government agents and tribal enrollment officers produced, produce, and will continue to produce "official" written records, oral history is, and will always remain, the foundation of all Lakota Sioux genealogies. Prior to European colonization, there were no known tribes present within the current boundaries of the United States who had a written language. As a result, when enumerating Native people, government officials were forced to interview Native people about whom their relatives were. In fact, research conducted today into any Lakota lineage relies in large part upon the work of government agents who, working with non-literate people, were required to rely on oral testimony, in addition to their own observations of tribal life, as a major source of information when determining who was and who was not a tribal member.[44]

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[39] John Milk household, 1937 Pine Ridge Indian census, pg. 412, fr. 417; NA microfilm M595, roll 383; Goldie Little Crow birth certificate, no. 481134, South Dakota Department of Health, Pierre; Aaron Long Horn household, 1900 U.S. Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota, pop. sch., ED 46, SD 1, sh. 159B, dw. 1590, fl. 1676; NA microfilm T623, roll 1556.

[40] Jasper and his wife Bernice were born during the Allotment and Assimilation Era (1887-1934) when the U.S. Government was actively engaged in forcibly assimilating Native American people in an effort to eradicate tribes. Goldie was born shortly after the passage of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. During the Indian Reorganization Era (1934-1953), the Act precipitated the reversal of allotting Indian land and preserving Native culture. Both eras preceded the infamous Termination Era (1953-1968) where Jasper, Bernice, Goldie, and their extended families were subjected, once again, to forced assimilation and the complete termination of Native tribes, culture, and kinship systems. *See* Steven L. Pevar, *Rights of Indians and Tribes: The Authoritative ACLU Guide to Indian and Tribal Rights*, 3d ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 8-12.

[41] Benjamin Grant Purzycki, "Comparison of the Traditional and Contemporary Extended Family Units of the Hopi and Lakota (Sioux): A Study of the Deterioration of Kinship Structures and Functions," *Nebraska Anthropologist*, Paper 68. http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebathro/68, Accessed 11 August 2011.

[42] Thomas Biolsi, "The Birth of the Reservation: Making the Modern Individual among the Lakota," *American Ethnologist* 22: 1 (February 1995): 42-43.

[43] Pauline Turner Strong and Barrik Van Winkle, "Indian Blood: Reflections on the Reckoning and Refiguring of Native North American Identity," *Cultural Anthropology* 11: 4 (November 1996): 547-576. Although some Lakota families today have written genealogies that extend back to the late 1700s, those records were gathered primarily via oral history from their own relatives or were harvested by United States agents who conducted oral history interviews with Lakota during the late 1800s.

[44] When discussing enrollment of the Colville Indians, Harmon states that the original enrollment records of this tribe (and many others) were based on "...incomplete mutual education and

Prior to Euro-American colonization, the Lakota Sioux and all other Native peoples now situated within the boundaries of the United States produced no written records other than Winter Counts. In their efforts to enumerate Native tribes and to document kin relations, the U.S. government was required to conduct oral history interviews throughout the nineteenth century.[45] Because the Lakota Sioux were at the time a non-literate people, oral history became diffused in government records created by the agents working at the Red Cloud and Pine Ridge Agencies—forming what would become the bedrock for Lakota Sioux genealogical research. The inclusion of oral history in the government records dealing with the Lakota Sioux continues to provide sometimes complex challenges to genealogists researching the tribe.[46] Irvine noted that,

> "...a genealogy that is orally reported, as genealogy in a nonliterate society must be, is not a primary document from the past. It must reflect the uses that the present society has for its own history. Disentangling historical facts from socially motivated distortion in genealogies and other oral history is now a familiar problem [*in ethnohistorical research*]..."[47]

When conducting genealogical research into Lakota Sioux families, the Genealogical Proof Standard by itself is not enough. It must, in fact, be tendered with sufficient cultural knowledge to enable one to apply the Standard adequately. In order to do so, a metamorphosis from that of a "Native American Researcher" to a tribal-specific genealogist is suggested.

LUMPERS VS. SPLITTERS

In all fields, it is common for professionals to concentrate their efforts in a single or a few subject areas. Professional genealogy is no stranger to specializations. However, in regards to genealogical research into tribal lineages, there is a tendency for authors to encourage the lumping of tribes into an all-encompassing 'Native American Research' methodology rather than to encourage specialization in a single or a few tribal genealogies.[48] The reasoning is

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accommodation..." in which Anglo American ideas about "race" melded with Native notions of kinship. Throughout this process, government agents asked the Colville Indians, "...questions about kin ties, social relations, personal histories, and other matters bearing on enrollment decisions. Because the government relied on Indians' answers, its final [enrollment] roll embodied Indians' thinking about tribal relations..." *See* Alexandra Harmon, "Tribal Enrollment Councils: Lessons on Law and Indian Identity," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32 (Summer 2001): 179.

[45] These oral history interviews usually consisted of applications for enrollment after the passage of several different acts and mandates, usually in response to allotting or selling land. *See* Edward E. Hill, *Guide to Records in the National Archives of the United States Relating to Indians*, (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1981), 29; Alexandra Harmon, "Tribal Enrollment Councils: Lessons on Law and Indian Identity," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32 (Summer 2001): 179-180; 183.

[46] For an example of how oral history permeated government records and how it affected tribal censuses, see Dawn C. Stricklin, "Namesakes, Name Changes, and Conflicting Evidence: The Search for the Mother of John Little Crow," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 94 (December 2006): 245-258.

[47] Judith T. Irvine, "When is Genealogy History? Wolof Genealogies in Comparative Perspective," *American Ethnologist* 5 (November 1978): 651.

[48] The terms "lumpers" and "splitters" are borrowed from Biological Anthropology. In that field, the terms are used when discussing human evolutionary theory and whether or not scientists should lump

simple— most tribes (those that are still in existence) have been under some sort of federal jurisdiction since the founding of the country. Consequently, researchers can gain access to records that are all similarly structured. Certainly, basic research in a Native American tribe can be, and continues to be, successfully conducted by researchers who possess requisite knowledge of federal government records. However, basic 'Native American Research' knowledge coupled with the Genealogical Proof Standard is not enough in itself to enable a researcher to effectively work through complex brick-wall research problems in Native lineages without cultural knowledge about the specific tribe—knowledge that may take years to accumulate.

Specializing in Lakota Sioux genealogy and culture enabled me to successfully apply the Genealogical Proof Standard. Without knowledge of this tribe's culture—their kinship system, the language, beliefs, and values—the investigation into the relationship between Jasper Milk and Goldie Little Crow would have remained a mystery.

CONCLUSION

Jasper Milk was born 27 March 1924,[49] and died 5 August 2006 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.[50] He was buried 11 August 2006 at the Black Hills National Cemetery near Sturgis, South Dakota.[51] He was most likely the *Hunka* brother of Goldie Little Crow. Though no written evidence exists for this relationship, several details point to this line of reasoning:

- *Oral History*. Goldie orally stated to the author of this paper that Jasper was her brother. Goldie's daughter affirmed that Jasper was indeed her uncle, though she could not explain how both had different surnames.

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species such as *Australopithecus* and *Homo sapiens* together in a single line of descent, or if one should split the species into different lines of descent. Though the terms are used heavily in evolutionary theory, the terms are appropriate for discerning whether or not professional genealogists should lump all tribes in Native American Research or split research specialties into tribal-specific fields. Although authors of in-print books continue to 'lump' Native tribes together (for example, see E. Barrie Kavasch, *A Student's Guide to Native American Genealogy* (Phoenix, Arizona: Oryx Press, 1996), most examples can be seen online. For example, the Association of Professional Genealogists online directory lumps the 500 plus Native tribes in North America as "American Indian," "First Nations (Canada)" and "Native Alaskans" research specialties while other ethnic groups such as German Americans and the Huguenots are listed as separate discreet categories. Association of Professional Genealogists website, http://www.apgen.org/directory/search.html?type=specialty &new_search=true, accessed 17 October 2011.

To date, there have been some concerted efforts to split research specialties into a single or a few tribes, though much of that effort is centered on the Southeastern United States. For some examples of this development, see Tony Mack McClure, *Cherokee Proud: A Guide for Tracing and Honoring Your Cherokee Ancestors*, 2d ed (Somerville, Tennessee: Chunannee Books, 2002), and Rachal Mills Lennon, *Tracing Ancestors Among the Five Civilized Tribes* (Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2002).

[49] John Milk household, 1937 Pine Ridge Indian census, page 412, fr. 417; NA microfilm M595, roll 383.

[50] Jasper Milk obituary, *Rapid City Journal*, http://www.legacy.com/rapidcity/Obituaries.asp?Page= SearchResults, Accessed 15 August 2011.

[51] Jasper Milk obituary, *Rapid City Journal*, http://www.legacy.com/rapidcity/Obituaries.asp?Page= SearchResults, Accessed 15 August 2011.

- *Cultural Evidence*. The U.S. government's plan to assimilate the Lakota in order to, "...teach them how to speak, think, and work like other Americans..." failed.[52] Though Goldie, Jasper, and Bernice were acculturated into American society, they never assimilated. Throughout her lifetime, Goldie participated in traditional Lakota ceremonies, from infancy to just before her death, which not only served as healing, but also refocused Goldie's relationship to other human beings, and particularly among her own tribe.[53] In addition, Goldie had several other known adopted relatives, including brothers, sisters, and an adopted son. Jasper and his wife also participated in traditional Lakota Sioux ceremonies. Jasper Milk bore the Lakota name *Mni Wicakte*; Bernice (Fire) Milk was the daughter of the renowned *Heyoka* John Fire Lame Deer, and her own funeral included traditional Lakota burial rites.[54]
- *Genealogical Evidence*. Goldie Little Crow was not consanguineously related to Jasper Milk or Jasper's wife Bernice Fire through at least the third generation. Goldie was the daughter of John Little Crow and Anna Trouble in Front.[55] Her paternal grandparents were Rueben Little Crow and Olive Red Eagle,[56] and her maternal grandparents were Trouble in Front aka Charles Trouble in Front and Black Owl aka Annie Black Owl.[57] Jasper Milk was the son of John Milk and Hattie Long Horn.[58] His paternal grandparents were Looks Up and Medicine Woman aka Dreamer aka Dreams Jealous,[59] and his maternal grandparents were Long Lone Horn aka Aaron Long Horn and Tribe Woman.[60] Bernice Fire was the daughter of John Fire Lame Deer aka John Fire aka John Let Them Have Enough and Eunice Crazy Bear.[61] Her maternal grandparents were Jackson Crazy Bear aka White Man's Voice and Esther Mary Little Brave,[62] and her

[52] Thomas G. Andrews, "Turning the Tables on Assimilation: Oglala Lakotas and the Pine Ridge Day Schools, 1889-1920s," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 33 (Winter 2002): 410.
[53] Luis S. Kemnitzer, "Structure, Content, and Cultural Meaning of "yuwipi": A Modern Lakota Healing Ritual," *American Ethnologist* 3 (May 1976): 261.
[54] Bernice R. Milk obituary, *Lakota Country Times*, 8 June 2011, pg. D4, col. 1.
[55] For detailed information and a case study on Goldie's paternal grandparents, see Dawn C. Stricklin, "Namesakes, Name Changes, and Conflicting Evidence: The Search for the Mother of John Little Crow," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 94 (December 2006): 245-258.
[56] For detailed information and a case study on Goldie's paternal grandparents, see Dawn C. Stricklin, "Namesakes, Name Changes, and Conflicting Evidence: The Search for the Mother of John Little Crow," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 94 (December 2006): 245-258.
[57] Annie Little Crow death certificate, no. 306274 (1958), South Dakota Department of Health, Pierre.
[58] John Milk household, 1937 Pine Ridge Indian census, page 412, frame 417; NA microfilm M595, roll 383.
[59] John Milk aka John Kills in Water aka No Horses aka Without Horses was located in several households in the Pine Ridge Indian census records. At various times he lived with his uncle James Kills in Water and his step-father Milk aka Jasper Milk. The first roll John appears in is the Looks Up household, 1886 Pine Ridge census, pg. 114; NA microfilm M595, roll 362.
[60] Aaron Long Horn household, 1900 U.S. census, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota, pop. sch., ED 46, SD 1, sheet 163A [stamped], dw. 1590, fl. 1676; T623, roll 1556.
[61] Bernice Milk, "Lame Deer Descendant Tells Another Side to Story," *The Lakota Times,* 18 September 1991, pg. A6.
[62] Jackson Crazy Bear household, 1931 Rosebud Sioux Indian census, fr. 99; NA microfilm M595, roll 441.

paternal grandparents were Silas Fire aka Let Them Have Enough and Sarah "Sallie" Eagle Blanket.[63]

[63] Let Them Have Enough household, 1900 U.S. census, Rosebud Indian Reservation, ED 45, SD 1, sh. 6B, dw. 59, fl. 59; NA microfilm T623, roll 1556.; Let Them Have Enough Household, 1910 U.S. census, Rosebud Indian Reservation, Todd Co., SD, pop. sch., ED 125, SD 2, sh. 35A/319, dw. 266, fl. 266; NA microfilm T624, roll 1475; Bernice Milk, "Lame Deer Descendant Tells Another Side to Story," *The Lakota Times,* 18 September 1991, pg. A6.