



*Inside **The Christmas Coat: Memories of My Sioux Childhood**—
A Conversation with
Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve*

A member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve spent her childhood on a reservation in South Dakota, the inspiration behind this book.

Q: When did you realize you wanted to be an author?

A: When I was in college, one of my English professors encouraged me to write for publication. Up until then I had not thought that I could write for others to read.

Q: What was the most difficult part of writing this book?

A: The most difficult part was keeping the text to picture book length.

Q: This story takes place on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. You now live in Rapid City. How does life differ from living on the reservation to living in Rapid City?

A: Life on the Rosebud Reservation or any reservation, for that matter, was totally different from what it is today—even for those who still live there. During my childhood, there were still a few elders who remembered how it was before reservations, and not many adults had ever left the reservation. It was a poor place to live, but I didn't realize that because I was rich with a loving family. Most families had small farms and still lived in extended family groups.

Q: Do you miss it?

A: I miss my family who are no longer living.

Q: Do many of your family members live there still?

A: I have an aunt and several cousins who still live there.

Q: *What sorts of books did you enjoy reading when you were young?*

A: I read stories from the encyclopedia *The Book of Knowledge*. It wasn't until I started school that I was aware that there were books for children. My teacher, Mr. Miller, encouraged my reading and loaned me books of his own.

Q: *What was your favorite book?*

A: I loved all of Louisa Mae Alcott's books, especially *Little Women*.

Q: *What is another favorite memory from your Christmas past?*

A: Another memory of my Christmas past was of coming home from boarding school for celebrations at home with my family. It was a happy time, but it was always sad to have to go back to school. But it had to be if I was to have a high school education.

The Christmas Coat: Memories of My Sioux Childhood

by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve

illustrated by Ellen Beier

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