



MHA Women's History Month

2019

Catherine Medicine Stone-Fredericks



Catherine Medicine Stone-Fredericks's Indian name was Beaver. She was born to Addie (Huber) Medicine Stone and her father Medicine Stone on July 10, 1908. Medicine Stones's cousin, Bessie Boy Chief, asked to adopt and raise Catherine as her own. Catherine often told everyone, "I was raised by a very loving woman!"

Catherine was fluent in the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara languages. She was raised in an Arikara village with Bessie Boy Chief, who also spoke Mandan and Hidatsa in their home.

Catherine attended boarding school in Pipestone, Minnesota. The matrons and cooks noticed how lonely she was and had her come in the kitchen to help them. She learned how to cook, bake, and sew. She continued to be a great baker, cook, and seamstress throughout her life. After Pipestone, Catherine was excited to further her education at Flandreau Indian School for High School.

After her schooling, she met her husband John Fredericks, Sr. at a dance, and they married in 1926. They settled in the Little Missouri breaks on John's allotment, and soon built up a ranch consisting of hereford cattle, horses, pigs, and chickens. She made her own jellies, plum butter and canned the plums and juneberries. She planted a big garden, and canned hundreds of quarts of vegetables to sustain her large family through the winter months. She very much believed in being self-sufficient to the point where she raised everything she could on the ranch and only had to buy the staples needed such as flour and sugar.

She worked as a Census taker for the US Census Bureau in the early 50's, and was an aide for the first Headstart program at Twin Buttes. She also worked as a community health worker in the Twin Buttes area. She was named Fort Berthold Livestock operator of the year, which was pretty remarkable for a woman ranch operator! She was also named the Fort Berthold Mother of the Year in the late 50's. She also received the Woman in Christ award from the White Shield Catholic church.

She was a very religious woman. Very kind and generous. She tried to memorize every child in her church and made sure to have a gift for them every year for Christmas. Everyone in her church and community knew her as Grandma. She was even Grandma to the UPS Guy.

Catherine Medicine Stone Fredericks passed on in January, 1995, at the age of 86. She had over forty three grandkids and over forty great-grandkids. Catherine was loved by everyone that knew her. She was most definitely a remarkable woman!