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Cutline for Legacy of Black Elk

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MEDIA RELEASE

10/4/84

CUTLINE FOR LEGACY OF BLACK ELK

Joseph Epes Brown at age 24 with Black Elk in 1947. (Photo courtesy

Joseph Epes Brown)

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black elk--add three

is completing a life history of an old Crow woman. But Brown no longer spends as much time on reservations as he once did.

"Keeping contacts alive takes enormous amounts of time," he says. "You don't just breeze in and say 'Hi.' You have to settle in for a few weeks so that things unfold easily."

Brown believes deeply that Native American traditions will endure. Increasing interest and participation by young Indians buoy his optimism. For years many Indian practices and traditions persisted underground in the face of active proscription by the government. "Native Americans," he says, "have great skill in accommodating two worlds."

It is a skill Brown shares. For years he has successfully bridged the chasms between the world of formal academics and the worlds of many tribes. That there are bridges at all is a tribute to Brown and a vindication of his conviction as a young man that in the traditions and beliefs of the Native American peoples "there was something important, something relevant to our world."

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