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Interviewer: Kim Taylor
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Kim Taylor: This is Kim Taylor interviewing Rae Jean Walking Eagle at her home in Brockton, Montana, July 17, 1992. I'd like to start with just a little bit of background information about you—where you were born and raised.

Rae Jean Walking Eagle: I was born in Wolf Point and raised on the reservation. The majority of my life, I've lived here all but some of it. The other part we moved on a relocation program. The relocation was started by the B.I.A. My folks went on that, and we went to Indiana and California and back here. It was in the late '50s, or early '60s. I was about 16 when we moved back here.

KT: And you're married?

RJWE: Yeah.

KT: And you have children?

RJWE: One daughter. She'll be going to Missoula this year.

KT: Oh, she will? And your religious affiliation?

RJWE: Christianity.

KT: Christianity, just in general?

RJWE: Yeah.

KT: So when did you begin quilting?

RJWE: Actually, when I first started, I was in the fifth grade. My mother used to do a lot of quilting and my mother was the sole supporter. My dad died in '64, so she was left to support me and my sister. She used to do a lot of sewing. Everything was by hand, and she used to sew the whole star by hand. Everything was done by hand. That's how we paid our rent. We didn't have all the general assistance and the welfare programs and all that then. She used to work hard to provide so that's when I learned how to quilt first. I used to want to help so bad, so she used to say, "Go ahead, quilt the little circles." Sometimes when I'd get through she'd take it apart and redo it. Other times she'd be scrubbing the quilt because my hands would be so dirty.

KT: It was pretty good practice.

RJWE: Good practice. That's how I started and then finally, let's see, that must have been about in '69. It was about '66 when I started quilting. Then in the mid-'70s I went to Bozeman. My mother always went to a store where they sold fabrics. It was just a ritual that you go a store where there's fabric and you buy colors that you don't see anywhere else. You walked into the store, and you were just awed at the choice of fabrics, the colors. So I asked her, "Can I borrow some money."

She said, "What for?"

And I said, "I want to buy some material."

"What for?"

"I don't know. Just loan me some money, and then I'll make a quilt. I'll make a star quilt." This was probably in '74, '75. She gave me \$15, \$20. So I bought as many colors as I could. Came home and I did, I made my first star quilt. Quilted it, and she still has it.

KT: She showed it to me.

RJWE: Oh, did she! Oh god! I found out about a week ago that she still had it. I was shocked because you know how long ago that was?

KT: It would be 25 years ago. Wow.

RJWE: So I just kept it up and that was the first one.

KT: How long did it take you to make your first one?

RJWE: It must have took me about a month, maybe longer because I always watched my mother sew and the little points where the diamonds connected had to be just right. And I could not do that, and she finally told me there's a trick to it. Or if they didn't lie flat there's a trick to that too. So I had to learn all the old tricks from her.

KT: Were you using a sewing machine then?

RJWE: Yes, I used a sewing machine; I didn't do nothing by hand except quilt them.

KT: Why did you want to be a quilter?

RJWE: I don't know. I guess it was just something I grew up with. I saw my mother do all of it and I was just part of it. It was just almost innate that I had to do it too.

KT: And your sister quilts too. So she was a strong stimulus, your mother.

RJWE: I'm glad it was something constructive.

KT: Does your daughter quilt too?

RJWE: No.

KT: Not yet.

RJWE: No. I don't think she will.

KT: She's not interested?

RJWE: My daughter grew up with me trying to go to school. So that was a part of me that was stressed all the time. She's doing it.

KT: It's hard to say. It could be something that she discovers in her old age.

RJWE: Yeah, right.

KT: When you're making a quilt, do you work by yourself or do you get help from others?

RJWE: No. I work by myself from start to finish.

KT: And how long does it take you to make a quilt now?

RJWE: I can make a quilt in...I can make a good quilt top in 6 hours.

KT: That's amazing!

RJWE: That's just sitting down and cutting it out. I've picked up some good techniques. I finally got myself a cutting wheel and a cutting board which I'm trying to help my mother use. She still cuts hers with the scissors. The cutting board makes it a lot faster, quicker. She says she'll just stick to her old way.

KT: She mentioned that when I talked to her.

RJWE: Am I telling you anything that she didn't tell you?

KT: I'm getting your perspective.

RJWE: It'll take you a good four or five hours to cut a quilt up doing it that way. I can cut the same size quilt out in less than an hour on that cutting board. The time that she's still cutting I can have a whole star done.

KT: But she does use a sewing machine now?

RJWE: Yes, she does.

KT: What is the status of quilters in the community?

RJWE: What is the status? Can you be more specific?

KT: Well, I'll tell you what I'm looking for. Is the quilter respected for the craft that she does, within the community, by people in the community? Will they say, "oh yeah, she's a good quilter"? Is it a craft that is valued?

RJWE: Yes. Yes, it is. I think the finer the job you do the more you can get competitive about it. You can just do quilts and you'll always be able to sell them or somebody will always buy them. Or you can be competitive and try to do better. The whole star you could do better and always have that in your hand.

KT: You find there's a pretty big demand for quilts?

RJWE: No. Not really. Myself, I don't think so. It's just that like all the quilts I make, they're always ordered. And I always have so many orders that sometimes it's hard to keep up. Most of the time, I usually work with my mother and my sister and a couple of times we've gotten orders for like 30 quilts at a certain price for memorial dinners. It's usually just for the traditional things that we make them for. I sold maybe one or two to non-Indians, and that's it. All the rest of them are, you know, like everybody says, 'you charge too little, you charge too little.' I know some people, that's the other part you can be competitive on is some people will charge, like for instance, I can make a regular size quilt and charge a \$175. And somebody else can make the same size quilt and charge \$300. Some of the people that give them away can barely afford anything and yet they'll give everything to give one away. So I don't want to charge.

KT: It's really this whole separate thing from this idea of marketing your quilts, right? Because of the need for the quilts right in the community for the giveaways.

RJWE: Yeah. It's mostly for dinners. Dinners, wakes feasts, gifts. A lot of times we have physicians, non-tribal members that come in, and when they leave, they don't ever leave here without a star quilt.

KT: I saw Doctor Jones got one. That happened while I was here.

RJWE: Judy, my sister made that one. It's just kind of right here. It's like we all...More so I think dinners. People collect them all the time for dinners. A lot of times Judy and mom will make one and they'll just go around, and someone says, yeah, they'll buy it. "I've got this coming up" or "graduation coming up."

KT: So they try to make them up ahead of time?

RJWE: Oh yeah.

KT: Do you work full-time at the tribal office?

RJWE: Yes, I work full-time.

KT: So how much time do you actually spend quilting?

RJWE: It used to be too much. I've probably cut my quilting in half. A lot of times I'll say yes to the offers, and I know who I can give the order to who will do a good job. I'm not trying to be boastful or anything and I don't like to brag about it, but I try to do a really good job and that's how I get my orders. I try to make sure that the work is good, and the quilting is fine. In fact, there's this, maybe she told you this about the...I got a magazine from a friend of mine in Denver. The Smithsonian magazine and then she also sent me another one. There's the Smithsonian and then there's another magazine. It was like 4 or 5 years ago and they were talking about quilts. How quilts are coming back in quality and workmanship are so critical to that, right? And in there they said that—they were talking about the quilting shows, the prizes that are given and the qualifications that must be met—the fine quilters do 18 to 24 stitches per inch. So when we're quilting that's always my joke. 'All right now, are there 18 to 24 in there?'. They kick me out real fast.

KT: Yeah, I think they're using different criteria for their quilts too. So what kind of materials do you use?

RJWE: Cotton-poly. Cotton polyester combinations. But right now—

[interruption by little girl] Rae Jean, look at my mommy give me.

RJWE: I don't think she gave that to you. I think you stole it. I know what it is. You need to take it back.

Right now, my sister-in-law and I there's a...She's enrolled here, but she grew up in Arizona.

[speaks to dog] King, King, go lay down! Go lay down, King.

They have a quilt show and sale at the Heard Museum there. She's told me and we've heard the prices. She came back up here, and she said, "Rae Jean, you know I saw some quilts not half as nice as what you do. They're getting \$500, \$600, \$700 for them. We ought to make some and let's go down." So we thought we'd do it but it's been too busy to sew. Our plan is, this coming spring, we're going to try and get in it, but we need an artist to get us in. You can't get in there unless you get an artist to invite you. So I've been thinking of all of these quilts and the quilting designs that I want to use. We want to do 100 percent cotton quilts right. We've already got this all figured out because it's hot down there and the cotton lets you breathe, right? Natural.

KT: It's kind of what people expect, and that's what they want—100 percent cotton.

RJWE: She bought material so she's going to start learning and she would come up here and do little sections of quilting. Just like I said I did. You got to go interview her because she'll tell you the same story. You can get it from a beginner.

KT: How many quilts do you think you'll make to take down there?

RJWE: Oh, I don't know. We said that we had to make one to pay for our expenses down there and back. From there we didn't care. Her mom is there, and she hasn't seen her mom in, what? She hasn't seen her dad going on 7 years. She hasn't seen her mom for 3. I hope it works. Just the excitement. Her brother-in-law gets in the museum, gets an invitation to go every year, and he makes jewelry.

KT: Maybe he can find you a way in.

RJWE: Yeah, yeah. We're hoping so. You enjoy it though. I wouldn't do it. I don't think a person could do it if you didn't enjoy it. I love to sew. I like to be creative. In fact, you know, when I was growing up I used to sew a lot of my own clothes. That was how I learned to sew in the first place was when I was in the fourth grade, I loved to play with dolls, and I loved to sew. So my uncle bought me my first sewing machine when I was in the fourth grade, and little sections of fabric, so that's how I got started sewing. Then as I grew older, I started sewing my own clothes. Then I always wanted to be into fashion. I wanted to be a fashion designer so bad. Before the silk...satin jackets came out, I had that idea in my head about 2 years before they came out, of course they [unintelligible], you know. When that happened, I said, "I have it!" But I never ever got there so the quilting part, that's where I think it comes out. I love to play with the colors, and you can make satin quilts, you can make taffeta quilts, and then you can make the poly and cottons. The cottons are the easiest to work with. They're so easy.

KT: You use all the materials?

RJWE: Yes. Right, that's nice. I love it.

KT: How do you pick your colors?

RJWE: I only sew with the colors I like. I shouldn't say only because people order something in certain colors then I'll go and buy the different shades or tones in those colors and I'll go from there.

KT: You start with one color and then you try to match it up with colors that go with it? That's how you do it?

RJWE: Yeah. Or sometimes when I make a quilt on my own, I just pick a couple of colors from...I'll look at something. Like I made one just off of a coaster that I had in my kitchen window. I took the colors off of the ceiling on a bright day. I made it identical. I didn't really find the colors exactly, but I did.

KT: That was your inspiration.

RJWE: Yes. One day I was sitting there working just staring out in the middle of nowhere and I saw this really deep forest green color against brown dirt. I loved it and I said, "That would be a good quilt color." So I did. It's really hard to find forest green in fabric but you can always find brown. And it was, it was a beautiful quilt. In fact, I think I sold that to a guy that came here from Denver who was going to do some gas exploration. His wife wanted a quilt in those colors because his wife had just recarpeted their house. They got in some dark green carpet and that's what she wanted. I mailed it to her.

KT: Do you use any prints?

RJWE: I've never used prints. If somebody asked me I would but nobody has ever asked me to use prints.

KT: So you usually just use solid colors. Do the colors have any particular meaning to you?

RJWE: No. Nope, just that I like them. I like the browns, greens, peach colors. The earthy tones.

KT: What do you think the star symbol means?

RJWE: I don't know. I don't know how the star ever...We never ever asked.

KT: The reason I ask is because there's a lot of different styles of quilts, but in this area it's definitely the star.

RJWE: Yes, it is. I don't know. I've often wondered about that.

KT: How many quilts do you make in a month?

RJWE: Right now, probably just one. I've got one to make by the end of the month here. A satin one though. It's for a wedding gift. And we did star jackets. We made just like a regular small star, with very small diamonds. Then filled it in just like you do with a regular quilt and then cut the back of a jacket out. Those were really popular.

KT: So you sewed them.

RJWE: Yes. We did that. What else. I never did ask them how that came about. In fact, this is really neat, just a few months ago, a lady...My mother and them used to live on the other end of the reservation. This lady came to me one day and she says, my cousin married her brother, and she says, "I was digging in all of my old trunks, and I found this quilt that your cousin or grandmother or somebody made. When so and so got married, she gave it to me." I got it back, and it turns out that my mother made that. It has some really nice handwork on it. It's just all kinds of pieces just put together. A real patchwork but it has all of the embroidery stitches around every piece. It's got a canvas cotton back. It's never been finished, but I still haven't decided what I want to do with it. But I want to quilt it or something. Or I can even leave it like that, but I want to put it on a frame and hang it in my house.

KT: What kind of materials is it made out of?

RJWE: It's all different...I should show it to you. Do you want to go inside?

KT: Yeah.

[Break in audio]

So within the family, what kind of occasions would you make a star quilt for a gift?

RJWE: I think within the family, I don't think any of us have one. They're all given to us. Even my daughter doesn't have one. She got hers from basketball tournaments. You know how they go and giveaway at the basketball tournaments. She got both of them. She's got two of them and she got them both at basketball tournaments. That's about it. Eugene, my nephew, my sister's son, he got one from a basketball tournament. That's about it.

KT: How about for babies?

RJWE: Oh the babies always get a star quilt, yes. They always get one.

KT: They come home in a star quilt?

RJWE: That's the tradition. We're doing a tribal history booklet because there's always so many letters or phone calls. People want to know about the reservation and so we're doing a booklet. Our ex-planner got a photo and it's called *ishugay*(?). Where the Assiniboine and it's got all

these ladies walking up to the building to get their rations. They all, everybody wore a blanket. I was just sitting there looking at that picture and I thought, 'this is why the blanket means so much,' because nobody thought about something with sleeves on. It was a blanket, and what's a cloak?

KT: It's basically a blanket.

RJWE: A blanket, right. And I picked that up from the Bible, you know, when it talks about the cloak. Then I see these women, this is in 1911, when I saw these women wearing these blankets. See, then before that, it was what? Hides, robes. See, it just got more sophisticated as we went along, and so I figured out my own meaning of why the quilt.

KT: So how is it used, how is the quilt used today? It's not always something you put on the bed, right?

RJWE: It's something you keep locked up in a trunk. If you get one you would hang on to it.

KT: So it's quite an honor to receive one?

RJWE: Yes. Yes, it is. Yeah, it is because I seldom ever see them. I seldom ever see a quilt just lying around somewhere. It's just something that you don't go into a house see tossed around either. You're making me think about it.

KT: These are the kinds of things that I'm interested in too especially when you're comparing these to the quilt shows and the prices of quilts. There's just something different that's going on here. That's what interests me. It's not the same as the quilts that are going on in Missoula, Montana. That's what brought me here was that I was interested in what was going on here with the quilt.

RJWE: Yeah, that's it. There's just something about a quilt.

KT: Are they used for ceremonial purposes?

RJWE: I don't know about that. I've never been involved in that part.

KT: But funerals, they're used in funerals.

RJWE: Yeah. You always have to have a star quilt at a funeral. You definitely have to have star quilts at the feasts.

KT: Is it used like a backdrop, or how is it used?

RJWE: It's used to cover the casket.

KT: At the feasts?

RJWE: At the funeral. And at the feasts they give them away.

KT: This is a feast at a funeral?

RJWE: There are two separate things. The Sioux have one year from the death they have a feast, a memorial feast. You have to give away star quilts. The more the better. I guess the more you can give away, the more you love somebody. Someone that's real important to them, it's got to be star quilts.

KT: At the funeral itself, they'll use a star quilt to drape over the casket?

RJWE: Yeah.

KT: Then what will they do with that star quilt?

RJWE: I've seen some of them just leave them on top and they'll just fold them up and put them inside. She wants them out of old cotton and something bright, something cheery—peach colors and whites and greens and things like this. If you asked her, I don't have the slightest idea what she would say except that she grew up with this. She'll probably say, "I don't know. I just got to have one." It's so strange. That's what I mean by you just grow up with it, you do it and I never even thought about it. It's something you don't think about.

KT: It's part of your culture, you don't have to think about it.

RJWE: The only thing my sister-in-law told me was, "Rae Jean, you're going to have to get a real mean tan before we go to Arizona." [laughs] She said, "You'll be sitting there selling Sioux star quilts with no hair and real pale face." [laughs]

KT: It doesn't quite fit the image?

RJWE: No, it doesn't. She's half Sioux and half Papago. She's real dark, you know, and black hair. Her hair's growing out now. There's so many things to do there. Her name is Ruth Walking Eagle, right. [unintelligible] for a little while. We laugh about it. Anyway, we were talking about our ideas the other day, just yesterday when I came home from work, we were talking about it. What I want to do is, I know there are some really good artist there, and if I can get somebody to draw me templates, I mean, real pictures. I'll quilt them on the quilts.

KT: Pictures of what?

RJWE: Whatever you want. Like horses, teepees. I want that kind of and quilt them on. Not on

the star itself, but when you fill the star in you have these big white corners or these corners just plain. One of these halves.

KT: So your thinking about doing applique in these corners?

RJWE: Not applique, quilt.

KT: Oh, quilt, the stitching.

RJWE: Yes. Yes.

KT: That's what I didn't understand. I get it now.

RJWE: We were talking about that. I know there are some boys in Fort Kipp who even in elementary school used to be really outstanding artists. Just sit there and it was like nothing to just sit there and draw these beautiful pictures of Indians and teepees. They live in Fort Kipp and just sit there all day. I thought I could pay them. They'd make a little bit of money and I could quilt their work. Give them some credit and try to include everybody in there. It's just something fun. It sounds like fun.

KT: It sounds like a good idea. Do you normally use the fan stitch?

RJWE: I started out using the fan stitch and then, to me, when you do the fan stitch you cover up the star. You don't get to see the star. It just does something. The way the light hits it, you don't see the star. So what I started doing was, I started quilting around the star and inside of each diamond. It's a lot of work but it accents into the quilt.

KT: You quilt right down the seam then, where the stitching is?

RJWE: Yes. Like you have your big diamond, your point, that's what we call it, right, the point. We have all the little diamonds in there. Well, you quilt around each diamond. If you look at any other pattern quilt, they're all stitched around the pattern of the quilt. The star quilt, they are just so pretty and yet you don't get to see the full star by quilting over it. It helps it to stand out a little more.

KT: So then what do you put in the corners now?

RJWE: Whatever you want. That's where I'm trying to be creative. I usually use straight lines. Sometimes diagonally. Sometimes flowers. Sometimes a smaller star inside of each of those. Whatever you feel like doing. You get bored doing the same thing all the time.

KT: Where do you set up your quilt?

RJWE: I usually set it up...That's the other thing. Whenever you quilt, you have to move everybody out.

KT: You need a massive space to set it up.

RJWE: Yes. I usually set mine up in the dining room. That means that everybody has to crawl around. It's just something that, like husband doesn't even think about it. You just crawl around. Crawl over it or under it or on the side of it. It's something he got used to.

KT: Once you have it set up, do you try to get it quilted as quick as you can?

RJWE: Yeah, usually the way we do is we all help one another. If one is quilting everybody comes over. All they ask for is a meal. You just kind of just cook up something or have something going while everybody's quilting, and then you take a break and you eat. If they want to go, that's fine. It takes off a couple hours. You just try to get it up and down as fast as you can so it doesn't disrupt everybody. There are kids around. Most of the time I think most of mine I just do on a hoop. I use a quilting hoop. It allows me just a little more freedom to sit where I want and quilt.

KT: Do you start in the center?

RJWE: I start in the center and work out. I like that way better because when you're quilting around those little stars and you're using that pattern stuff then it's so much easier. To me it's so much easier to do it that way. You can get up closer to it and see where you go and what you're doing rather than having to quilt at a distance. I prefer the hoop.

KT: That's what I use too. I have a really small house too. Do you think that there is a greater demand for the star quilt now than there was 10 years ago?

RJWE: Right now, I would say that...I read the Smithsonian, but as for Indians, there's a lot of people that just want a quilt made by an Indian. When people have that motive behind, I always somehow know, and I'll have my mother make it. I always think that if they want a quilt made by an Indian, they can buy it from her. If you want me to explain that, I think...I didn't, you know, most all my life when my mother's mother and father when they first started bringing Christianity here—there's a church in Fort Kipp named after her uncle, Red Eagle Memorial. She was a Red Eagle. There was always Christianity in my family. We just never ever...you know, like some kids, every time there's a powwow, some kids are always there because that's just how their folks are. I didn't grow up like that. My mother did but when she got married, after she grew up, she just...she goes to all the powwows now. She probably hasn't missed one yet. But one time I took my mother a couple years ago. To me, it really didn't matter. I enjoy going and everything, but it was no big deal. But one summer I took her out there to the Badlands—

[unknown speaker; unintelligible]

KT: I'm going to turn this off.

RJWE: No. All I have is white [unintelligible].

[calls to children] Don't run. People's kids around here.

One time I took her out here and when we got there, when we got to the grounds, when she heard the music, her whole countenance changed. I could just see this really warm happy feeling and look come over her. It seemed like all the worries and everything that were here just didn't count—were just gone. I just seen her whole personality change. She felt so comfortable and then she'd started about, 'my mother and my dad and auntie so-and-so and grandma so-and-so.' She just shifted back. It just amazed me. This was only like two years ago. It made me really think about her. Where she's come from. Another story I'll tell you, they had a reunion for the Brockton Highschool about three years ago. It was the first reunion they ever had. Brockton used to be 99 percent white and at that time when they were first...I think the school was built in 1913. My mom was one of the first Indian students. When we went into this reunion it was all white that came. It was all white there were a few Indians. My mother got these letters. I had read these letters for this whole year previous to this reunion. All of her classmates wrote her letters and she had to respond. Everybody wrote these letters to her. All of these other classmates wrote to her. They all graduated, and she graduated and they left. They were doctors and lawyers. It was just awesome what they became. Their kids were all doctors and lawyers and engineer. We're not talking schoolteachers and nurses. They had such prosperous lives and she felt so low because...She laughed, her and I we talked about it and I said...I was trying to make her feel really good about this. I was getting all excited for her and I couldn't make that excitement come. I finally said, "How come you're not excited?"

And she said. "Rae, we were just starting to go to school. Indians were just starting to go to school," she said. "These people wouldn't even talk to me." In the letters they described her as being real quiet and shy. 'You were always so quiet and shy and always to yourself.' That's because there was that division there between two cultures. It just wasn't accepted yet. And she said, "Why should I go?" And then finally she overcame that. Then she said, "Well, I don't know what to write back. Shall I write back and tell them that, 'yeah, my husband and son were stabbed to death and one's sitting in prison?'" She had all these real negative things. She had nothing to be really proud of.

I said, "Oh, Mom, I went to school for a couple of years in Butte at Montana School of Mines and then the Colorado School of Mines. One thing I learned was that some of those degrees are hard earned. You have to give a lot to be where they're at. You have so many other things that are so much more important. You have all of us here. You have your children here. You have your grandchildren and even some good friendship. We're all right here. We're all looking out for one another. There's so much more than that, having a \$500,000 home or a Mercedes in your lot. You got to worry about paying for that stuff. You've got your house. You've got a lot of

things that you can be proud of.”

KT: There's even a lot of people with those high-powered jobs that don't even like their jobs. But they have to go to work to keep up their style of living.

RJWE: Exactly. Sure. So I was able to tell her all of that. So she went.

KT: Did she have a good time?

RJWE: Yeah, she did. I learned some real respect, I guess.

KT: Well, she's a pretty interesting woman. She was the first one that I spoke with. So, do you have any funny stories related to star quilting?

RJWE: Yes. I have one. She probably told you this. After I made my first one, within that next year or so I was going to go to Alaska. I was going to make quilts to pay for my airline ticket. I had a couple of friends that said, 'Yeah, you can make me one and me one and me one,' so I was busy trying to make these quilts. Well, I didn't know all these tricks she had about filling them in. You have to fill them in, and you have to cut the fabric up just the right way and put them in the right way. I wanted these little things to match. They weren't matching. I finally got passed that, and then she showed me how to fill them in. I couldn't put it up on a quilting frame and I couldn't make it lie flat. I was so disgusted. Finally, I took it off like this and I said, "That's it, I'm through with this," and I threw it in the garbage.

KT: Oh no!

RJWE: Humphrey could sleep on it. Humphrey was our cat. I walked out of the door. This is taffeta, right. I walked out the door. When I came home, this was real late in the evening. I got up the next morning and I went to work. When I came home, her and my aunt, her sister, they were sitting there, and they just about had it quilted. They were almost done with it. They did it. They took it out of the garbage. I didn't even know how to put a quilt up. That was my problem. There's a certain way you put it up too. So they just about had it quilted. When I walked in the door she said, "We just about have Humphrey's quilt done."

KT: So after that you learned how to set it up?

RJWE: Yes, yes. But she reminded me that we just about had Humphrey's quilt done. I didn't laugh because first of all I was kind of surprised that they had it done. We put it up and it was perfect. There was nothing wrong with it. It was just learning how to do it.

KT: At this point in time you probably don't even think about the little tricks because you've been doing it for so long. But you had to learn to do those at one time.

RJWE: Yeah. And now I've had a couple of ladies come and say, "I bought one of your quilt tops and it lied so flat when I went to quilt it. How do you do that?" And my mother gets mad at me when I give her secrets away. There was a lady in Wolf Point here not too long ago, about a year ago. Then just recently another lady came, and she said, "I'm trying to make a star quilt, and I just can't make it come out. It's just driving me crazy. Can you come up to Wolf Point?" So I went up to Wolf Point. She said, "I'll pay you."

I said, "Well, just put the gas in for me. Give me the gas money, and I'll come up." So I got up there, and she had this book. She had a quilter's book, and it showed you how to make a star quilt. I looked at her quilt at first, before I looked at the book. I looked at her quilt, and I said, "Oh, no. I can see that you've got this all wrong."

And she said, "That's the way so-and-so told me down at the store." There was another union lady in Wolf Point that she had asked, and she told her this and the book kind of showed them. So while she gave me this book she said, "The book kind of showed it too."

I looked at this book, and I thought, 'gosh, you mean I've been doing my quilts wrong all these years?'

KT: No, I don't think so!

RJWE: It is not at all what the book says.

KT: But you do what works.

RJWE: Mine works. Now I have people that come up to my mother. That was something that her mother showed her. It's kind of our secret.

KT: The family secret. Those are really all the questions that I have. Is there anything else that you would like to say about quilting?

RJWE: No. There isn't anything else.

KT: I'd like to thank you for speaking with me.

[End of Interview]