



Ken Purdon's Quilt Story

I had a life altering experience in 1949 when I was eighteen years old. I had taken training to be a camp counselor, and was sent by the church, as a "caravaner" to Camp Lorraine, in Northern Ontario.

I was assigned to a cabin of boys between 10 and 12 years old. Four of the boys in my group were Métis, wards of the Children's Aid Society. They were in foster homes on farms, and were at camp for a much needed holiday.

On the first night as the boys were preparing for bed, I saw a boy's bare back which was covered in angry looking welts. To my dismay I learned he was regularly beaten, if the farmer was not satisfied with his work. He was also called a dirty half-breed.

That was my first experience of severe prejudice. I was unable to truly believe that there were people who could be so cruel to a child.

Ever since I have been learning about the experiences of Aboriginal People. I look for ways to confront and to overcome prejudice, and to make things better.