



Musicians of the Midnight Sun

Thank you for visiting the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website. Even though these blogs are being posted many weeks after the launch of the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website, my hope is that they will remain as a document along with the website itself with the intention to give a little bit more of a personal story of my relationships with these featured artists.

Elsie Justus-Burger

I first met Elsie a few years back through her daughter and my dear friend Joanne Barnaby. We instantly found our common ground as musicians and as Bass players so it felt like I was talking to a sister. Elsie played in the mining town of Pine Point, NT, a town that does not exist since the mine closed down and all of the houses there were sold off. They even moved the beautiful, all wood arena 70 km. down the road to Fort Resolution! Elsie played in the Pine Point Hotel through the 1970s with her band, "The Pine Tones". A young, aspiring musician from Fort Resolution, Tony Buggins and a few others played with Elsie there.



Elsie Justus (Burger) with Tony Buggins. (photo © 2018 Elsie Justus (Burger))

When I was starting the production of this website, I was talking to a friend who challenged me to find some of the women who played music up here in those years. I immediately thought of Elsie and started to set up a time and place to interview her. That turned out to be in her home in Nipawin, SK in October of 2018. I was in Edmonton, just off a tour, booked a flight to Saskatoon and rented a truck for the drive to Nipawin. Looking at the map to get there, I realized that I would be driving right past my hometown of Rosthern, SK on the Louis Riel Trail.



Elsie Justus (Burger), Kevin Woodgate (drums), other musicians unknown. Pine point Hotel, Pine Point, NT (photo courtesy of Elsie Justus (Burger))

The next day, I met up with Elsie and her daughter, Elsie Jr. and over the next 4 hours, got pretty much her life story. Elsie was 83 when I interviewed her and she was telling me about learning to play from her father when she was 12 years old in the early 1940s in High Prairie, AB. I was fascinated with those early years, during and post second world war with what songs they were playing, what venues they played at and how they got their instruments. Elsie started out playing guitar then moved onto the "Bull Fiddle" as she calls it and as my step Grandmother used to call it. She picked up the electric Bass later on to keep up to the new Rock and Roll music that was popular. Later on, she returned to her first instrument, the guitar, to play and record her favorite guitar instrumental songs by artists such as "The Ventures", "The Fireballs" and "Duane Eddy".



Elsie Burger (Beaudry), Peter Lafferty
 Elsie has been playing music since she was twelve years old. Since then she has continually tried to arouse interest in others to form a steady band. She plays anything from Old Time Country and Western to Rock and Roll. She lives in Pine Point at this time where she is still trying to keep a band going.
 Peter Lafferty has become quite well known for his musical talents. He was born and raised in the north and learned to play his music here before leaving. He has now become famous in the south as well as in the north.
 Photo credit: Morris Lafferty

Elsie Justus (Burger) with Peter Lafferty, Fort Providence, 1963. (Photo by Morris Lafferty, publication unknown, courtesy of Elsie Justus (Burger))