Albina Redner: A Shoshone Life

Interviewee: Albina Redner
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Description

Albina Redner is a Shoshone Indian from central Nevada. Mrs. Redner's mother, grandfather, and uncles were Indian healers, and in this oral history she describes many of their practices and ceremonies. Her grandfather, "Bronco Jim," was an influential Shoshone leader and was a contemporary of Chief Toi-Toi, who was leader to four hundred Newe ["the people" in Shoshone]. Both Toi-Toi and Bronco Jim were pivotal figures during the treaty era when reservations were set aside for Nevada Indians. Mrs. Redner recalls the stories of wisdom that Bronco Jim passed on to her and her brothers. She also recounts what it was like to live off the land as a child, hunting, trapping, and foraging for their daily meals. She describes several typical Shoshone foods, such as yomba, a carrot-like root; sego lily bulbs; sippe, ground squirrels; wild onion grass; tules; pinenuts; rabbits; prairie dogs, and many others.

In the mid-1930s, Mrs. Redner was sent to Stewart Indian School by her concerned uncles, when they thought she needed a more permanent place to live. There, she saw her first swimming pool and green grass. However, the vocational education did not appeal to her, and she found that she needed more challenge. She enrolled at Carson City High School, where she graduated in 1944. While attending Carson High, Mrs. Redner lived in Governor Edward P. Carville's mansion and worked as a maid. Carville owned a ranch in Elko and had learned to speak fluent Shoshone from his ranch hands, much to Mrs. Redner's surprise and delight. She recalls a time when she was reluctant to go into a restaurant to eat with the governor and his chauffeur, as Indians were not allowed. Governor Carville told her that she was as good as any white person, and this ultimately fueled her determination to make her own way through life without relying on others, and without losing her Indian ways.

Through the years, Mrs. Redner recognized that her mother's healing abilities had been passed on to her, and upon graduating from high school, she enlisted in the Army Medical Corps during World War II. Before the war ended, she married a Chilula Indian from California, and had ten children. A contemporary "Indian doctor," she worked for many subsequent years in hospitals and nursing homes, where she says she learned from the elderly. Mrs. Redner's oral history is the first interview to be conducted with a Shoshone Indian, and is part of the Oral History Program's ongoing effort to expand its collection on Great Basin Indians.

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An Oral History Conducted by Helen M. Blue
Edited by Helen M. Blue and R. T. King

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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Preface to the Digital Edition

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the "uhs," "ahs," and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete…or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at http://oralhistory.unr.edu/.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber
Director, UNOHP
July 2012

Original Preface

Since 1965 the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) has produced over 200 works similar to the one at hand. Following the precedent established by Allan Nevins at Columbia University in 1948 (and perpetuated since by academic programs such as ours throughout the English-speaking world) these manuscripts are called oral histories. Unfortunately, some confusion surrounds the meaning of the term. To the extent that these 'oral' histories can be read, they are not oral, and while they are useful historical sources, they are not themselves history. Still, custom is a powerful force; historical and cultural records that originate in tape-recorded interviews are almost uniformly labeled 'oral histories', and our program follows that usage.

Among oral history programs, differences abound in the way information is collected, processed and presented. At one end of a spectrum are some that claim to find scholarly value in interviews which more closely resemble spontaneous encounters than they do organized efforts to collect information. For those programs, any preparation is too much. The interviewer operates the recording equipment and serves as the immediate audience, but does not actively participate beyond encouraging the chronicler to keep talking. Serendipity is the principal determinant of the historical worth of information thus collected.

The University of Nevada's program strives to be considerably more rigorous in selecting chroniclers, and in preparing for and focusing interviews. When done by the UNOHP, these firsthand accounts are meant to serve the function of primary source documents, as valuable in the process of historiography as the written records with which historians customarily work. However, while the properly conducted oral history is a reliable source, verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the UNOHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, and that the chronicler has approved the edited manuscript, but it does not assert

that all are entirely free of error. Accordingly, our oral histories should be approached with the same caution that the prudent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries and other sources of historical information.

Each finished manuscript is the product of a collaboration—its structure influenced by the directed questioning of an informed, well-prepared interviewer, and its articulation refined through editing. While the words in this published oral history are essentially those of Mrs. Redner, the text is not a *verbatim* transcription of the interview as it occurred. In producing a manuscript, it is the practice of the UNOHP to employ the language of the chronicler, but to edit for clarity and readability. By shifting text when necessary, by polishing syntax, and by deleting or subsuming the questions of the interviewer, a first-person narrative with chronological and topical order is created. Mrs. Redner has reviewed the finished manuscript of her oral history and affirmed in writing that it is an accurate representation of her statements.

The UNOHP realizes that there will be some researchers who prefer to take their oral history straight, without the editing that was necessary to produce this text; they are directed to the tape recording. Copies of all or part of this work and the tapes from which it is derived are available from:

The University of Nevada
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Introduction

Albina Redner's life history is a unique document. Not only is it unique in the sense that each person's life is like no other's, but it is also unique in a broader sense. Mrs. Redner is an American Indian woman who has lived through and been a participant in a period of transition for her people about which little is known. Hers is not a story—such as Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins's—of pre-contact lifeways and post-contact disruption, but rather one of continual adjustment to a rapidly changing and expanding post-twentieth century frontier. In that sense, her story is similar to those of Elizabeth White and Helen Sekaquaptewa, both of whom were born during the period of mandatory school education, religious conversions, repression of language and native culture, economic depression, and much more. But unlike White and Sekaquaptewa, both of whom are Hopis of Arizona, Mrs. Redner is of a different tribal background: Western Shoshone of Nevada. Hers is the first account by a Nevada Indian person of these years and circumstances, and as such it offers some unique insights into life during that era.*

Mrs. Redner was born in the mining town of Austin, in central Nevada, around 1924. She recalls much of life in the town, of her mother's employment in wage work and her father's (Japanese) laundry business. After her early years in Austin, she moved with her mother, stepfather and siblings to a ranch where her stepfather was employed as a buckaroo, a time-honored profession of many Western Shoshone and Northern Paiute men of that period and still today. Her memories of central Nevada ranch life are clear, as are those of her early family life—relatives of a generation before whose names also come down to us in other historical accounts, such as newspapers and ethnographies. She speaks as well of persons of her own generation, including some, like her, who became part of two worlds.

When Mrs. Redner was about thirteen, she attended Stewart Indian School in Carson City, a boarding school whose history and

impact on the Indian people of Nevada and the West has yet to be fully explored. Mrs. Redner is one of the many supporters of Stewart, in spite of its rigid discipline and regimentation. Many Indian people feel positively about the educations they received there, and the friends they made. After three years at Stewart she went on to finish high school in Carson City while working and living in the Nevada governor's mansion, also a unique experience. From there she married and went into the military, training as a health worker and serving in military hospitals in various parts of the United States. Once discharged, she and her husband settled in northern California and began to have and raise their ten children. During some of those difficult years she also continued with her profession to help support her family. Many years later she returned to Nevada and settled on the Fallon Reservation where she is surrounded by family and friends, many from the early days of her youth.

Again, Mrs. Redner recounts all of these events clearly and with feeling. She has obviously reflected upon many of the aspects of her life, including what it has meant through the years to be Indian and to think and feel as an Indian person. She has wrestled with rejection of her Indian heritage by others, and even by herself on occasion. But she tells throughout of the importance of this heritage and especially of the values it fosters in children and adults. She sees a positive role for these values today, if only people can somehow come to them. She speaks several times of the importance of retaining her native Shoshone language and how crucial it is for young people today to think and feel as Indians.

Mrs. Redner's account also contains many memories of the way her people did things in the past—how they gathered and prepared foods, how they made baskets, their religious and philosophical ideas and ideals. She speaks of the importance of maintaining continual respect for the land and all that it contains. She recalls her mother's gift of the ability to doctor, and of some of the patients that she helped or cured. She feels that at least in one sense, her life as a health worker has followed that of her mother's and other relatives before her who were also doctors, but in a modern setting.

Throughout all, Mrs. Redner's personality shines through. Although her life has often been difficult, she has retained a sense of humor about it all. She emerges as a person proud of her accomplishments, but not too proud to laugh at many aspects. She is a person well worth knowing, if only through the pages of her story as presented to us here.

Catherine S. Fowler
Department of Anthropology
University of Nevada, Reno
1990

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*References cited: Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*, ed. Mrs. Horace Mann (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1883); Polingaysi Qoyawayma (Elizabeth Q. White), as told to Vada F. Carlson, *No Turning Back: A True Account of a Hopi Indian Girl's Struggle to Bridge the Gap between the World of Her People and the World of the White Man* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1964); Helen Sekaquaptewa, as told to Louise Udall, *Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1969).

Albina Redner
1990

1

Memories of Childhood and Family

My maternal grandpa's name was Jim Birchum. His nickname was Bronco Jim. Someone said his nickname was Bronco because he was a horse thief. [laughs] We called him *doguh*, which means "grandpa" in Shoshone. I think Grandpa married a Smith woman from Pyramid Lake. This was in his later years when he lived with us in Austin after his wives had died. I don't know too much about his history before that.

My grandpa was with us a lot when we were growing up. Grandpa always seemed to have money hid in baking powder cans in the hillsides, but he didn't pass out money like that's what was supposed to please us. It was for food. We'd go to the grocery store and get some bread or whatever we needed. We only spoke the Shoshone Indian language, but the clerks knew what we were naming and wanted, so we always got what we went after.

Grandpa used to sing a song that went, "One, two, three white men." I don't know whether they saw the first white men coming down Reese River canyon or Dixie Valley, but my mother told me her relatives saw the covered wagons coming down, and they made that song, "One, two, three white men." They still sing that song at circle dances. It's one of their anthems, I guess. Most little children can still sing it today.

I don't remember my maternal grandmother, because nobody talked about her too much, but I would like to know more about her. I think she was Shoshone. There were rumors that she was killed by white settlers, but we don't know for sure. That was between the time of the silver ore rush and the rounding up of Indian people. A little after that, Indians were placed on reservations.[1] Our group would have been sent to Owyhee, but my grandpa and some other relatives got away and hid out at Alpine with another family, the Byers family. Alpine is east of Dixie Valley on the mountain side. That's where my mother and her brothers grew up.[2] They also spent time near Birch Creek, near Austin. My grandpa worked for a family named Birch there, so he started calling himself Birchum. That's how we got our name.

My mother's name was Birdie Birchum, and her nickname was *Mah'dahnee*. That means sort of like patty-cake. You know how you pat bread to flatten it? She was always doing that when she was little, and that name stuck on her. So through the years when I was growing up, that's what everybody knew her as, rather than Birdie.

My mother went to school for a very short time in Austin. She was dressed with bark shoes, the Indian way, and people made fun of her. She got ashamed and ran away, and she never went back. She never learned to read or write, so in later years when I was away from home, we were not in contact. (Some of my uncles went either to the Stewart Indian School in Carson City, Nevada, or to the Sherman Indian School near San Bernardino, California; so they could read.)

I guess my mother was the oldest of eight or so in the family. Because they didn't have a mother, she had to rear them; she took care of her brothers and sister. My mother married a Shoshone of the Charlie family, and they had one boy, Leon.[3] Later my mother met Archie Hooper, of the Shoshone tribe, and they had one daughter, Barbara Jean. Leon Charlie was my oldest brother. He was born at Eastgate, Nevada, about fifty miles to the east of Fallon. I don't know exactly when he was born, because we don't have any birth certificates. Bert was born after Leon. Bert lives at Meadow Vista near Sacramento. Then I was born, they say in 1924, and Bobby came after me. Then there was Barbara Jean. Bobby lives in Las Vegas now. He went down there when he finished school at Stewart. Bobby was Golden Gloves boxing champion, and he's in the Stewart Hall of Fame. Yes, he was quite an athlete. He had several state trophies for football, baseball, and basketball. He was an all-around athlete in his day.

Bobby's first wife was Joanne Smokey. She's from that big Washo family in Dresslerville.[4] They're a nice-looking family. She had been married before and had a son who Bobby helped raise. Joanne and Bobby didn't stay together, though.

Later, Bobby married Leona Jones from Owyhee.[5] She had been married to Eddie Molina from Fallon and had several children, so Bobby helped raise those kids, too. They supported several families during their crises.

Bobby doesn't have any children of his own, but he's really adopted a lot of children close to his heart—the ones he helped raise. I guess that's how Indians are with children—it doesn't really matter whether the kids are your own or not. If I really wanted to investigate all the people that Bobby has helped or raised, I think he would have a very, very, very large family today. [laughs] Those kids come and see Bobby every now and then, and he goes to see them, too.

All of my brothers are alive, except for Leon. He was working on a dam in Yerington in 1937. I was going to school in Schurz at the time. Around Thanksgiving, he picked up some young guys and they came to Fallon. They got someone to buy them liquor. (In those days, you paid a heavy price if you got caught selling liquor to or buying liquor for Indians. It was a felony, and you'd get sent to prison for a year.)[6] On the way back to Schurz, somebody hit Leon from behind with a crank...in those days, you cranked your car to start it. I guess that gave him a severe concussion and he was thrown out of the car or something. They took his money, his belongings, and his car. He staggered to the canal, and somebody found him frozen there. That's when they told me my brother was met with death. They couldn't put their finger on who did it, and they never did investigate to find out what happened.

My mother worked in a laundry in Austin. She was always washing clothes in a big steam vat. Most of us were born around the laundry, one place or another—in the back or somewhere around there. I remember that several ladies worked in the laundry. They ironed with the old irons that you heat on the stove. They used to have the sheets on great big circular tables. I had to iron sheets, too. It was the silver ore rush days. I don't know what the population in Austin was, but it was a busy town, because they always had to have those sheets for the hotels.

We were known as Charlie when we were kids, until my aunt insisted that we change our name. She heard that Leon's father wasn't our father, and she never did care for my mother. They were talking about us not really being Charlies. I would hear them talk, but I didn't know exactly what they meant. I didn't know who my father was.

My mom told me one time. She said, "You know, you never will be real, real happy because you're of two worlds, and that's the way half-breeds are. That's why you have to go out; you have to go out and get away. You have to go out and make your own living and be spared from being brought up with the Indian people." She knew that being a half-breed would be confusing. But I think because I spoke my language and my thoughts were Indian thoughts, that I always thought there were more peaceful ways in the Indian culture.

When I was a child in Austin, I was helping a lady, Mrs. Walters, around her motel quite a bit. She was a deaf lady, and I think she was German. She built the two motels and a big garage in Austin that are still there today. I remember helping her paint them. After a while I got so that I could clean them. At first I did errands for her. If she needed extra supplies, I'd run up to the garage, which was about half a block. A lot of times after school I'd stop by and she'd have supper pretty well cleaned up, and she'd save some food for me. Then I'd do her dishes. A lot of my aunts and cousins were working for the deaf lady, too, and a lot of us kept house for her as well as cleaning her motels. She hired quite a few of our family members.

My mother also washed dishes at one time in Chinese and Japanese restaurants. She washed dishes at a restaurant that was run by Lee Kee, a Chinese cook. He was kind to a lot of Indian families at that time—they worked for him and he fed them. Lee Kee was as kind and generous as Harry Nakishima was to us. We were always down at the restaurant with Harry helping do dishes and setting table, because he fed us. He also gave us ten cents to go to the movies once in a while, or to go to a carnival that came to town. He had an adopted daughter, Hazel Woods, and I spent a lot of time with her. I think she died here in Fallon.

Between Harry and Mrs. Walters teaching us kids, we learned a lot. She was very particular. I used to have to go down on my hands and knees to scrub her kitchen floor. I had to do that very carefully, and the same way with polishing her furniture. I had to be sure not to get any furniture polish on her cushions. She taught me how to work, and she was used to the best of things. She taught me a lot of basics. She even showed me how to wave her hair, so I used to like to give hairdos at an early age. I think she was a Christian Scientist. When she was ill and in bed, she'd have those little Mary Baker Eddy books by her bedside.

After I worked for Mrs. Walters for a while, she started saving my pay. It was about fifteen cents an evening. Then when she went to San Francisco on a buying trip, she'd get me

shoes—three or four pairs from Summer and Kaufmann's. So that's how she supported me.

I did a lot of work like this in my grammar school days. I think I was in about the first grade when I was helping this lady. But it seems I was always in the first grade, because I think I flunked a couple of times. Maybe I spent too much time on the playground. [laughs]

Sometimes my cousins and I would go around town to clean some of the bigger mansions, like the one owned by the Hiskeys. They owned the Hiskey Stage Company that went from that area to Fallon to Ely. (It would be like the Greyhound now.) They had a beautiful home, and we used to do their dinners at that house on the top of the hill. When I think back about those early homes of the different business people, I remember some of their antique furniture. I remember some of their Irish linens, beautiful cut glass, and other things that they owned, because they were tops—they were from the old country. It's much like a lot of these old bars and mirrors that they've pulled out of the old casinos in the state. Some are in museums now. Those old bars had beautiful wood, too, and they had old organs and roller pianos.

At one time, Austin was thickly populated with a lot more Indians than there are now, but they had all moved away by the time I got into the first grade. Some went to Eureka; some went to Ely. Most of the Indians lived in the Reese River Valley [which divides Lander County, north to south] on various ranches, like the Dory ranch, Callahan ranch, and Dry Creek ranch. They came to town to buy groceries. Some Indians came into Austin from Smoky Valley and Grass Valley, too. There were the Dyers, the Hoopers, the Franks, the Burtons—Burton was a sheepherder. They were among the Indians who used to come to town to shop. Sometimes we met them at pow-wows in Smoky Valley.[7] (There's a lot of families I remember from Austin that are living here in Fallon today: Joe and Mike McGinness's families. Then there's the King family, too, and the Dorys and the Gallaghers.)

There was a division between Indians and whites in Austin. There was segregation at that time. We had to eat in back of the restaurants. We couldn't eat in front, but we didn't care if we ate in the back or the front. That's why when you think about those times now, you just automatically don't want to sit in the front of the restaurant. You get so used to sitting in the back part, where you can really enjoy your food the way you want to and not have people looking at you! [laughs]

They might have had curfews for Indians in town, but I don't know. I was too young. In Austin, the power company was downtown; it was a small plant. So naturally, when that power plant shut at night and there wasn't any electricity in town—and there were few people who even had electricity—there weren't very many people to notice. It's something we weren't used to: a night life. We got up with the sun and went down with the sun, and that's about the way we lived. So what you don't have, you don't miss.

We lived around sheepherders, the Basque people. They had a lot of say-so in the city, and most of them were Catholics. Some of the well-to-do families were Catholics, too. We were just people who lived in town, because there wasn't a place for Indian colonies. Austin is in a canyon, so you either lived on the west side or the east side. You lived either at the top of the mountain or you lived down in the canyon, so there wasn't any division in that small town. Those things weren't noticeable.

The population was pretty high at times in Austin. It was like Virginia City during its

silver ore days. At one time, a large number of the population was Chinese. There was a place in Austin called China Ridge where all the Chinese from San Francisco came and stayed, but they were pretty much gone by the time I was born.

Some dances were held in Austin, and some Fourth of July celebrations. That's the time of year we got free ice cream. Otherwise we went into the gambling parlors to buy some. We used to whirl around on the high stools that they had parked around the bars.

I remember Stokes Castle in Austin. Mr. Stokes, I guess, built that castle down the road maybe two miles from where we lived.[8] It overlooked the ridge where there used to be a little train depot and a little baseball field. The Standard Oil tanks were down there, too.

I remember Mr. Stokes from when I was a little girl. He used to come walking down the street on his way home. He reminded me of Abraham Lincoln. I used to watch him. He had this big, tall hat; he *walked* like Abraham Lincoln, and he had a nose like him. He wore some kind a of tail coat, what they call a tuxedo nowadays. I don't know what he did, but he was a rich man of some kind. That's all we knew about him. "Oh, that's Mr. Stokes," people would say. I didn't realize until years and years later that he's the man that built that castle in Austin. People still go out there. It reminds me of King Arthur's court—it's made out of big rocks. It's about four stories high and there's a stair that goes around and around and around like the staircases you read about in books. It's a real castle.

Sometimes people who couldn't afford to pay a little money for tickets to the ball game would go up on top of the castle. We used to sit on top, and we used to play up there a lot. We would imagine there were witches and things like that. Since Austin was a mining town, we were also used to seeing lots of mine shafts and ore-hauling carts from the tunnels. We used to play on those.

There's a different feeling that I grew up with about Austin—different than people who grew up on the reservation, I imagine. Even though as Indians we had to eat out back, I never felt they ever rubbed our noses in it, like they did on reservations. We were people who got away from being driven to live on the reservation. So that's how come I feel different about Austin. We didn't have all the regimented life that people on these different reservations have today.

My mother met Archie Hooper in Austin. After that, she would go to Potts, Nevada, because he was one of the cowboys over there that tended John and George Potts's ranch in Monitor Valley. It's one valley east of Smoky Valley. That was around 1931. When my mother and Archie were going together, they would go back and forth to Potts and to Austin, or sometimes to Fallon. They just traveled to visit relations from time to time, so we lived wherever we were temporarily at. We were scattered—like we went up to Uncle Bill's place and over to Uncle Richard's place. We lived with different families. There were rumors at that time about the possibility of settlers along the Reese River having to give up their ranches so that the Yomba reservation would be made for the Shoshones.[9]

While my mother was traveling back and forth to Potts, Bert was working for Harry Nakishima at the restaurant. He milked cows and delivered the milk to the citizens of Austin before he went to school in the morning. He worked for Harry all the time until he got married and went in the service. He didn't finish high school. At that time, Leon was working on the ranch at Potts. He was milking cows. I was about eleven or twelve, and Bobby was living with Uncle

Charlie at the Fallon Colony. He was about nine. Uncle Charlie and Aunt Iola really loved children, so we all stayed with them at one time or another.

I used to sit on the ridge and watch Archie and the other ranch hands drive in the cattle. That valley looked like it was just a dust bowl. When it was round-up time, they would come in and brand all the cattle. They would have to count them, too; but because the Indians couldn't count much past ten in English, they had to use pebbles. For each cow that went through the chute, as they branded them or whatever, they dropped a pebble. Then the bosses would count the rocks and see how many they had.

Archie used to break horses for them, too. I would sit up on a haystack and watch him. He'd get on those wild horses and ride them and get throwed off. He'd get up, shake the dust off, get back on the wild broncos again. I used to bury my eyes in the hay so I wouldn't see him get throwed off again. I would see him on the ground, and he'd be shaking off his chaps, getting right back on again. [laughs] He also used to train team horses. I used to see him train them in groups of two and four to pull hay wagons. That was tough, because he was trying to train two horses to think like one.

I remember one time when a hay wagon ran away with him. They went zipping right past us, right down the back of the furthest field, way down where no men traveled. He just took off towards the sunset and he was gone. His horse was just a'running away with the hay wagon, and we were all petrified because we thought sure enough, they would turn the hay wagon over and just throw him off. But no, there he came back up that road again shaking the dust off again. He did this all by himself. That was a delightful experience, living on a big ranch. A lot of Indian men worked on the ranches, and the women kept house for the whites. The whites would give them clothes and furnishings in return.

I wasn't very close to Archie, but I respected him. He was very good to us. They used to have wholesale trucks that basically brought the store to the different ranches in Nevada. Everything they sold was wholesale. They had all kinds of cases of vegetables, all canned goods, and candies, threads, medicines—like Mentholatum—and so many other things. Archie used to load us down with sufficient amounts of goodies—he bought us boxes of Babe Ruth or Oh Henry! or Hershey bars...the whole carton. And he bought all other kinds of food by the cases, too, when we were eating better. This is about in the middle 1930s. My mother would tell him not to do that, because we didn't deserve it. She told him it wasn't his place to take care of her children, and she told us children not to ask. Maybe it was her way of saying, "Don't bother me." I don't know, but I got the message. I got the message that it wasn't proper to ask your stepfather for anything, and it didn't bother me. It was just the way she taught us. She would say, "No, you don't ask." It was like her way of saying, "I have a new life started for myself, and you kids find your own now. You're on your own. Make it the best way you know how."

My mother and Archie finally went to make their abode with one another, and Bobby and I stayed with them in intervals. They moved to Yomba reservation in the 1940s. I think they were each given ten acres, and they raised their own hay as part of their allotment agreement. I don't really know how big Yomba is, because I've never lived there. I just went to visit there. It's in a very barren place, very isolated. There aren't any modern conveniences. Maybe there's a little bit more

now, but my goodness, that's been over fifty years!

The county has never agreed with the tribe to put a decent road in there, so you have these old country washboard roads. It's so hard on the cars and travelers. I have yet to see an improvement after so many years, and yet there's a lot of hunters who go out there. It's a hunting land to me, because in back of my mother's place are very ideal mountains to go deer hunting in. That's where the deer pass every year. My mother and Archie rented a lot of horses to the hunters—they made a little money that way. It's a very virgin country, and is a good place to go and rest from the world. [laughs]

My mother started sending us away kind of like most confused people when they meet their second husband—they don't know what to do with their first children. We knew we just had to take wings and fly, so we usually went to our uncles. But they always said, "Your mom doesn't want you...your mom's crazy," or something like that. But deep in my heart I didn't believe that, because I could feel how much she loved us. We were her children. But if you look around today, there are so many second and third marriages. Parents are afraid to tell their children to make it on their own. They're afraid to tell their children the truth. But my mother told us from the very start that Archie wasn't our father and we shouldn't ask him for anything.

My mother taught me to never be demanding, to want many things. She had always been just that way. Even when we went to the grocery store, instead of saying, "No, no," to me and trying to embarrass me in front of the whole public, or trying to show what a disciplinarian she was, my mother never raised her voice. If I reached for cinnamon rolls on the bakery counter, she would just brush my hand down. That was a signal and I didn't stand there and have a tantrum and scream and yell at her. Of course, it's way different with kids now. I'm glad my mother raised me like that. You always remember the closeness that was there, the kindness, rather than the sad times. I think my mother was very truthful with us, so there hasn't been bitterness as far as my relationship with her is concerned. She still is the best mother, not because she got me everything and not because I got my own way, but because she told me the truth. People can accept the truth when they are young, and, therefore, they can live with it and not feel rejected.

When we were kids, we used to travel around a lot between Austin, Fallon, and Schurz. Sometimes we moved if it got too cold or we didn't have enough wood or something. We came to Fallon in wintertime because it was hard to get wood near Austin. We'd come in a Model T, and we'd eat dust all the way. Nothing's difficult after living in the olden days. It took us all day to get to Fallon from Austin, and probably the same from the Potts ranch to Austin—it was all day. Horseback riding was not an unusual thing to see; it was the style of living. Kids would be out socializing, riding horses. But nowadays everybody has cars—what a luxury. [laughs]

When we were in Fallon, sometimes we traded with Mr. Kent. He often worked with the Indians in the earlier days. He took a lot of their grain and stuff in exchange for food for them in the winter. He traded a lot with them. I really think he had an open hand to them, and because of this, he's still in business today. He has a grain, feed, and farm equipment store, as well as a grocery store. He still trades a lot with the Indians from the reservation. He ships their hay out by the lot. He's always been the center of their business, and is to this day.[10]

We used to come to Kent's and hook our horse and buggy in the back of the store. My aunt would get Green Stamps for everything that she bought. Then that would buy our goodies, like material, shoes, and things like that. I really think Mr. Kent helped a lot of Indian families. In fact, he still hires them. It was always a trade situation: "I'll trade you this for that."

Indians are real lost because they don't understand the power of money; they don't care about money because they have nothing to accumulate money for. They either spend it fast or they live on credit, like the Indians in Fallon who do business at Kent's. The Kents always let the Indians charge, knowing that their grain crops would pay them back. This helped the Indians, but it also meant that the Indians could never build up a reserve of money.

But one thing that has changed the Indians' idea about money is per capita payments. The Paiutes got theirs; the Shoshones got theirs; the Washos got theirs. So their attitudes temporarily changed and they thought money was a good thing—until it was all gone....

Basically, Fallon hasn't changed too much through time. At one time, many people raised sugarcane in the country outside of Fallon, and it was hauled on a railroad to a sugar refinery in town. I don't know where the building was located exactly, but a picture of it is on one of the new Fallon phone books.

There was a lot of wheat that grew in Fallon. It was milled in an orange building in town by the railroad tracks. They also raised a lot of turkeys here, too, at one time. Minnie Blair's ranch raised turkeys and chickens. Of course, *everybody* on the reservation that I can think of raised and slaughtered turkeys right before Thanksgiving. They were just as popular in New York City and San Francisco as our Hearts of Gold cantaloupes.

I remember a time when Indians used to sit along the curbs of the street. It was OK to sit on the edge of the curb if you were tired, because Indian people like to sit wherever they can. They used to sit on the streets down here at Kent's, and it was OK. One time in the late 1940s when my mom and I were in Fallon, we stopped to sit and rest. Some tourists came up and took our picture! I thought, "This beats all." They wanted to make us be an object of Indianness. They must have thought, "I've got a good picture of American Indians."

I thought, "Well, I certainly wouldn't go up and take a picture of *your* pale faces and say, 'Ha! Ha! I've got a couple of pictures of some tourists.'" [laughs]

We traveled around quite a bit and visited other towns with Indian communities, but I've never gone to Yerington for some reason. That's one town that I never spent any time at, even though there's an Indian colony there, and quite a few Indian kids I met at Stewart were from Yerington. There wasn't a big population of Shoshones at Battle Mountain; just a few filtered down to Battle Mountain from Reese River and Austin. After the mines closed, they filtered into different areas, but most of them are here in Fallon.

I remember going to the Reno Indian Colony when I was a child. The city finally reached to the colony after so many years because it has grown. I remember walking through there on a dirt road; I felt like we walked thirty miles when we were kids. It was way out in the sagebrush. But look at it today!

Gardnerville is a Washo district. My aunt was married to a Washo for a little while. They had their ceremony of getting a girl ready to get married and they had a giveaway. But they're a different-speaking tribe, and there's no linkage or closeness to the Paiutes

or Shoshones in the language. A lot of their country is centered around Tahoe and near Genoa, the oldest city in Nevada. Emigrant Gap is located over there, I think, so they traveled that-a-way a lot.

Schurz was interesting. There aren't any stores there, just a grocery store and a post office. They had a lot more Indian doings there. Of course, everything was based upon some feast or festivity—like now, they have the pinenut celebration. But they used to have others, because we used to have pretty good fandangos there where people danced all night and sang Indian songs until the sun came up. We used to be right there. [laughs] That was fun. There were a lot of Indians that came from all over to the fandangos. It was just a place where you went to see everybody. Indians like to keep in touch with one another, I notice. I guess they're the type of people that are called groupies, because they like to be in groups. [laughs]

When I was growing up, I lived with many different relatives. I remember my uncles: Uncle Bill was my oldest uncle, and then there was Uncle Charlie, Richard, and Casey-those are my main uncles, though there were others, too. My Aunt Dorothy died of tuberculosis.

My Uncle Bill married his first wife's sister to take care of the children. The Indian belief is like that. I lived with him quite a bit of the time. He lived to be 112 or older. Some students at the university [University of Nevada, Reno] went and did a portrait of him that's hanging somewhere on the campus.

My Uncle Richard was an auto mechanic. He went to school at Sherman. From what I've heard, several of my relatives had gone to Stewart and Sherman schools and died there. I've heard them mention Dave, who died at Stewart. And then I heard of George, who died at Sherman. They may have died of TB, which was in our family.

Uncle Casey was a quiet man. His daughters live around Fallon today and they're married to Austins. They're very much like their dad: they're very quiet, very shy people. My grandson, Larry, is like his great-uncle Casey. Uncle Casey married Irene Jimmy, who was related to Basil and the other Jimmys from Fallon reservation. The Jimmys originally came from Austin.

My Uncle Charlie was married to Iola, who was a Paiute. I remember a lot of good things that my Aunt Iola did. She was always busy planting flowers, and she had a nice vegetable garden. We could get all the melons we wanted to eat during the summer. I used to help her feed the baby turkeys and chickens. She used an old apron made out of bits of Levis. She'd be out there chopping eggs and alfalfa. My aunt was a hard worker—she was a farmer. She set the hens for hatching, and the turkeys—marked and dated all of them—and took care of them and the rabbits. She was always out in the yard.

My Uncle Charlie would be plowing the fields with the horses and the old plow. They worked hard. My uncle would plow that twenty acres and there'd be no weeds in his alfalfa. He'd be out there singing songs. He was another one like my grandpa, because he sang songs early in the morning and late at night. I'd like to know what was in the words. (They say Marge, my Aunt Iola's daughter, taped a lot of his songs. I hear they sent the tapes to the Smithsonian Institute.) One thing I remember is that when they would sing, they would repeat the chants over and over again.

We used to go on outings to go pick wild grass that tasted like something between chives and green onions. I think they called it *wah'sa*. (In fact, some ladies I know told me

that they went and got some at this certain place on Carroll Summit recently.)[11]

Uncle Charlie and my Aunt Iola were the stronger people in my life. They gave me approval over good things I did, and certainly knew the things I did that wasn't so good. Uncle Charlie told me in no uncertain terms that it was a woman's job to do dishes, that we look ahead and prepare things before somebody tells us to do it. We don't have somebody come and say, "Do the dishes," or "Cook!" We have those things ready, because we know these things are a woman's job. And Uncle Charlie said it in a way that I knew he meant business, not, "Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays we do dishes, and we loaf on Tuesdays and Sundays." This work is just an everyday thing.

There were a few times I remember coming to Fallon from Stillwater in a horse and buggy. My Aunt Iola would get up early in the morning and find Molly and harness her up to the buggy. We'd sit in back and Molly would bring us. It took us almost half a day to get to Fallon—6:00 in the morning to maybe 11:00 or so.

We used to look forward to seeing our uncles coming, and we were just *delighted* that we were visiting our elderly people! My grandfather's sister, Mary Birchum, lived back of the house in her own little tent. She was over a hundred years old. I remember them taking food to her tent and feeding her three times a day. We respected her and never went around her tent, because she was holy. Nobody ever threw rocks at her tent or anything...not Mary! She was up in years, a holy woman. They say when you reach a certain age you become a holy woman, like when my cousin, Dolly Birchum (her married name was Silver), died here a couple of years ago. They said she was an Indian doctor. A lot of my other relatives also lived to be 100 years old or more, and some are pretty close to that age now. The rest fell to alcohol, more or less.

Everyone had Indian names. My mother's Indian name was *Mah'dahnee*, which was sort of like playing patty-cake, because she did that a lot when she was little. My Uncle Bill's name was *Bahnwahntze*. It means "smoke" or "smoker." My Uncle Charlie's Indian name was kind of funny. I think it had two meanings. Some people used to have lice, and they said his was so dazzling and shiny, like the stars. [laughs] So they used to call him *Dazee'*, "sparkling and shining brilliantly like the stars in heaven at night." I hate to think it's related to lice, but that's their interpretation, anyway. [laughs]

I remember a time when they used to tell me my uncles came across from Austin to Fallon on horseback to deliver messages. My uncles were riders, and they knew about the different natural springs where they stopped overnight with their bedrolls. They would take messages of death or whatever to relations, like in Fallon or southern Nevada. When they rode south, Tonopah was one of those stopping places. *Tono* in Shoshone means a type of thorny plant; *pah* is water. There was a natural springs there, so that was one of their stopping places. That's how I come to know there are certain stops that we don't know about, that early horse riders who traveled only on horseback know about today. Maybe the sheepherders or old buckaroos know—the riders of the purple sage.

I have a lot of relatives in Battle Mountain and Austin. Some of my relations are married into the Blossoms and the Jacksons. Then there's the Gilberts, the Roberts, and the Burton families, too. I think they're all related to my Uncle Bill, so we've got a big family. But sometimes you can't tell, because Indians used

to adopt the name of the people that they were working for.

I think Hattie Dyer was my grandfather's sister. That's what they say. She was married to Frank Dyer. They also say my mom looked a lot like Frank Dyer. (He lives here at Fallon Colony. His granddaughter, Leanne, was married to my son, Russ.) Indians would claim anybody for a cousin. [laughs] That's just their way, because they're so close to their relations. But sometimes you get so worried when your children marry into certain families. You think, "Oh, dear! Are they cousins?" You trace back, and sure enough! But since a lot of the history is hearsay, you can never really tell. In one of the books I read, it said my grandfather attended the meeting where the treaty was signed setting aside land for the Duck Valley reservation for the Shoshones. I heard the original copy of that treaty was lost when the courthouse in Austin burned down. There were some others that were there, too. There was Chief Toi-Toi and my grandfather, who was also a chief. I think Chief Wash'akie might have been there, but I don't know for sure.[12] My grandpa used to talk often about Chief Wash'akie. (Some people called him Washa'kie, but it's Wash'akie.)

Walter Maine's daughters and son are descendants of Chief Toi-Toi. Walter Maine himself is a white man, but he married this Indian lady who's a descendant of Chief Toi-Toi. Their children are Walter, Irene, and Gladys. They're my relations, too. Walter has another daughter, Mary, who has a different mother. Mary is now married to Manny McCloud in Schurz. She used to take care of my Uncle Bill in his later years.

The Maines live in Dayton now, but Walter Maine raised his family at Grass Valley.[13] There's a big loop going down the other side of Austin Summit, and then you turn to the left and you go over the hills. Down in that pretty valley is where Walter Maine was a ranch hand in the earlier days.

My earliest calling to go to church came when I lived in Austin. I used to sit on a hilltop there, called a *moozah*. *Moozah* in Shoshone means a ridge or a high point. Anyway, I used to see these Catholic sisters come to the big Catholic church in Austin. It was the only kind of church in town, because there were a lot of Basques. You couldn't help but become Catholic-oriented in Austin, just because that's all you had around you. People were always celebrating one kind of mass after another.

One time I went to church. Here I was, a little Indian girl, going to church by myself. It was Easter Sunday, and I put a hat on. I knew they took money, because I had heard some Basque children talking in school. So as I went in the church, I put my pennies in the holy water. [laughs]

I regularly went to church later on the Stillwater reservation. There were two missionaries there. Those were the days when everybody went to church down there. I was about six or seven then. My Aunt Iola would scrub us up in the galvanized washtub and just vaseline our arms and elbows and knees. She sent us to church every Sunday, and I thought it was great. I mean, everybody went to church, so it was just the proper thing to do. That's where I first found a way of life that was pleasing—where people went and learned how to worship their Lord. The missionaries were good to us; they always gave the children some toys for Christmas. The church was a social place, too: we had dinners there.

We used to see all the families heading to church in wagons. I can remember seeing *everybody* at one time or another at church when I was a child. The Hicks family was so big that they took up the whole row. The Graham family had ten children, and

they all went to church. Then there was the Williamses, the Allens, the Austins, and many others. Our church was the center for getting together on holidays, and then for baptisms and funerals, too.

The old mission church at Stillwater is a senior center today. It still has the same little, old bell that called people to church on Sunday. It hasn't changed at all. I'm even going to take a picture of it so I can show my grandchildren and great-grandchildren that's the same place where I went to church when I was a little girl.

The reservation life in Fallon and Stillwater was all right. At Stillwater, we went to a day school. We ate our lunch there every day. We were always washing our hands, and we always had to brush our teeth—kind of like Head Start is today.[14] We went there because it was compulsory. I mean, our teachers made all kinds of appointments for us. It seems like we were always being herded continually to different clinics in the day school. I was about seven or eight at this time.

Day school is where I got acquainted with all the kids on the reservation. I got to know *all* the people on the reservation. Everybody knew everybody, or tried to know everybody. I always made it a point to find out if I didn't know who a certain person was. It was just in us to know everybody, but nowadays, it's none of your business. You don't need to know everybody, because the less you know, the less trouble you're going to have. It's a different time and place.

Before the Indian hospitals got started on the reservations, the farm agents for the BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] were there. When the Indian farm agents were on the reservation, they were sort of like the White House: you took all your orders from them and you did things for them. I remember people used to putter around that Indian agency office. They would do their painting, trim their trees, water their lawns—the agency had the Indians doing everything for them. The agency operated like a big task-master.

I think the whole reservation idea was a scheme. But we made the idea work. The government thought if they sent us out into the sticks, we eventually would destroy one another...we would be annihilated. But there was unity between the tribes, and the great distances between them only meant they were drawn closer together. The Indians already knew how to live in the wild, so actually the government did them a favor by giving them the reservations, because they had to live up to what they set down in their treaties. They thought they were hurting the families and the tribes, but they just couldn't break an Indian's will. Then when they put him way out in the sticks, they put him on top of oil fields, never realizing the treasure. [laughs] Now it hurts the heck out of the politicians, because the Indians live tax-free, they've got a place to live, and that's the way it's going to be. The Indians have always said that a white man speaks with a forked tongue, and all of his schemes will backfire on him. So, what seemed like a long struggle for the Indians looks like victory at last. But it's not over yet.

I only hope that the Indians don't destroy themselves on the reservations with all these intermarriages and schemes where the land is taken by anyone who claims it. Like having somebody say, "Oh, well, you know, that big hunk of property in back of the cemetery, nobody's used that. Why don't we sell that to the Reno Air Base," or whatever. There's a good chance that that might happen. Then what will they do with it? The whites will start building houses on the reservation and they'll take a little land, then a little more. They assume they own the land and pretty

soon it's theirs because they've assumed it. Then they try to be bosses over the people. If the Indians want to keep the reservations, they better not ever allow that to happen. I think as Shoshones we see that, and we're sticking to our treaty. Even if whites aren't trying to take something away from the Indians, the Indians don't cooperate, because they're fearful of accepting friendship. They distrust people because they think they're going to get taken, because nobody gives an Indian anything. They think they're trying to be stripped of whatever they have.

After the BIA came to the reservation, then they started having the doctors come in. The word would get out that this doctor was good or this one was bad. The news got around that they fixed stomachs and bones and whatever. We had to be checked to see if we had good tonsils or not. Whether they bothered us or not, we had to get them out. [laughs]

They also had dentists on the reservation. At one time we all were hauled right into the dentist's office whether we had a toothache or not. I just wanted to crawl through the smallest crack in the wall to get away from that dentist. That's why I hesitated for *years* before finally getting my teeth fixed. They put such a scare in me because they come at you with all those tools. [laughs] You don't know where they're going to poke you! Oh, they used to frighten me just terribly bad. They were scaring us away from health into suicide. [laughs]

Many Indians today carry sicknesses that they have inherited, like tuberculosis and diabetes. But some of these people aren't full-blooded Indians, so the diseases might have come from the other side, like the Basque side, because there's a lot of Basques that have married Shoshones or had children with them.

All I can say is I don't care how *modern* the Indian health care is today. If the Indians don't believe in what our Indian doctors did before these other doctors started arriving, then they can't see that a lot of the elders are outliving the young people. For instance, Pug Ike—his real name is Pugmore—here at Fallon Colony is close to 100 years old. He was in and out of the convalescent center, but his wife has him home now. It's amazing that he's home, because so many elderly stay for years at the rest homes. Very few get to go home.

We picked up the Paiute language from my Aunt Iola when we were kids, because she was Paiute. It's a lot like the Shoshone language. Uncle Charlie used to talk to Aunt Iola in Shoshone and she talked to him in Paiute. We could figure out what they were talking about, and eventually the Paiute language just came to us. It was natural to know both languages. But I don't speak it now. There aren't many Paiutes who speak the language, anyway.

The only Paiute I hear is from the Indian newspapers, like *Numa News*. Shoshones say *newe* for "Indians," or for "our people," and Paiutes say *numa*, which is similar. Their language is similar in a lot of ways, it's just that they have a different chant. That's what's so interesting about Indian languages: the different chants and ways that they speak.

I've been told many times that there's no such tribe as the Paiutes, because *pai* in Shoshone means "half." But I also heard that the Paiutes were never given a song. Lots of people say that the songs they sing are from the Shoshones. Maybe they're half Shoshone and half Ute! [laughs] There are different types of Shoshones. We happen to be a little bit mixed with the Ute, I believe, because a lot of our words are the ways that the Utes speak. So we're from Elko on up into Utah.

Though my family spoke a mixture of both Paiute and Shoshone—the language was mixed in this area—we all understood each other. But in Austin we spoke Shoshone. If it weren't for knowing the Shoshone language, I know a lot of us wouldn't survive.

It's marvelous to hear the Shoshone language being spoken fluently, like when Glen Holly from Battle Mountain speaks. I used to enjoy going to Shoshone meetings in Austin the first Saturday of each month. I don't know if they have them anymore. It was good to be among fluent Shoshone speakers, not just hear a few words here and there, like *uddui*, "it's too hot," or *ughui*, "it's too cold." They were speaking the *whole* language. That's when the language comes back to me, when I listen to it for two or three hours.

My mother used to talk Indian to her dogs, and they understood her. That was so funny. Here, she'd call out these Indian names and they would understand what she was saying. So even dogs understand Shoshone.

The Indian language is very precise and meaningful. Even simple statements have a lot to them. There's always more to words when the old people pass it down through generations. So when I hear someone say that Indian culture is based upon superstition, we mustn't believe that. Just because one group of people say it's superstition to them, it isn't so to the people who live it. That's what I can't understand about the people who only have *one* basis to base their authority on—and that's their English language. It's way different from ours, but someday in the future they're going to turn around and learn *our* language.

They're swinging back into it a little now, but I think the Indian people have allowed the whites to rule us with their language. The white people think they're right, that their language as it is is right and correct and precise. I don't think it is. I can't *say* it is, because there are a lot of things that I haven't analyzed. But I know it's not that precise. And through their language, they try to define other cultures. But they don't really know. They *couldn't* know, because they don't know our language, so they can't reach the true meaning.

2

Some Customs, Ceremonies, and Beliefs

I remember the things we used to do when I was a child, like when we all sat down to eat fried rabbit, biscuits, and potatoes. We ate lots of pinenuts and pinenut soup. When we went pinenutting, we played in the hills and just knocked a few pinenuts off the tree and cooked them there. The earliest pinenuts have a different taste than the others. They're sweeter. Those are the ones we used to knock down and cook and eat. Pinenuts are a rich, tasty food.

Gathering and preparing pinenuts is hard work. First of all, you got to pick a spot in the mountain or hillside or whatever. You hope it'll be worth your time, because the pinenuts might be scarce. The hill might be steep, and there may not be any water close by. So you have all these challenges when you get there. Your sticks may not be long enough to reach the top, and you don't want to break the trees down. So there's a lot of things to consider when you go pinenutting, plus there's the pitch from the trees. It's not dirty, but it's difficult. I mean, who likes to tangle with glue?

A hundred pounds of pinenuts today is worth almost a thousand dollars. It used to be a dollar to five dollars a sack when I was a child, because a dollar was pretty lengthy-a dollar was a dollar. But today it's not, so pinenuts have gone way up in price. When we went out, we could've gotten three gunnysacks, but we would've had to work at it. We would've had to let our jobs go, our home work, our kids, everything, to get that done. Plus, there's a lot of work even after you've gathered the pinenuts. You have to separate them by size, roast them, or if you're going to keep them raw, you have to do certain things to them. Virgin pinenuts have a different taste than ripe ones. If you're going to make pinenut soup you got to do *a lot* of things to them.

The Indians could roast the nuts so expertly that they would put hot coals over them and roast them without burning the basket. Then they'd take the hot coals off and they'd mash all the shells with a rock. Then they would throw the pinenuts up in the air to separate the hull from the meat. The pinenuts

were darkened by the hot coals and the real pinenut soup is always just a little gray from the charcoal, which also flavors it. That's the way the true pinenut soup is made. Some people who don't know how to do this grind the nuts through a hand grinder because they don't know how the Indians really make it. Pinenuts is hard work; I never attempt to take on too much-you just have to get your fill and be satisfied. (My daughter, Norene, and her husband, Eddie Gonzalez, got a lot of pinenuts last fall-I think more than they could handle-but I couldn't help them too much. I couldn't break those pinenut cones, because my thumbs don't close tight enough. Even Eddie's thumbs wore out.)

The thing about pinenuts and our other foods is you could never eat too much, because the minute you're satisfied, you basically quit eating. It's not like drinking Cokes and some of the synthetic foods of this generation, which make you want more.

I heard if your body gets the right nutrition, you automatically quit eating. With synthetic foods, there is no button for that in your mind, so you just go overboard and overdrink or overeat. I notice there are a lot of foods that Indians eat that aren't even mentioned in the best nutritional books, because other people don't know about them, like the sego lilies. They're sweet and milky; they're like little bulbs underneath a stem that looks similar to an onion plant.

As children, we ate a lot of deer meat and deer jerky. During the winter months, the Indians prepared from the deer hides the different things that they needed. The deer was a survival animal to them. The deer brought you through a long, cold winter's ordeal because you could live on the deer jerky. There are a lot of things that they made out of the deer just from the deer hides alone. Everybody knew the deer trails, so they knew where they were going to cross, and they'd wait to hunt them there. They weren't hunters who just went and parked their car by the side of the road and all scattered in different directions. I remember hearing them talking, "Now at a certain time of the year, the deers will cross this trail or that trail." A lot of them in the old days had to carry the deer home, so their backs had to be pretty strong. They had to carry it until they got on horseback. That was a lot of manual labor.

Then later on in the 1940s there were white headhunters [trophy hunters] from California who would just go get the deer horns and leave the deer meat there. But the people in the valley would watch them, and when they left in their cars, they'd go up on horseback to get the meat while it was still fresh.

We always had fresh meat by somebody getting a rabbit or sage hen every day. Whatever kind of animal was in season was our fresh meat for the day. We ate a lot of sage hens, squirrels, ducks, and ground hogs. We call prairie dogs *goom*. We used to get them near the Humboldt River. They try to drown them, and that's how they catch them. The *goom* stand by the hole to their homes and they squeak or whistle. When they see you coming, they dash down inside. Then you get two or three buckets of water and pour them down the hole. When they try to come up out of their little hole in the ground, you guard your hand over it like this [demonstrates] and then you snap their neck. That's how you gather them. After we gathered them, we'd roast them under a big fire in the hot coals, and that would singe their fur and bake them in their own skin. Then we cooled them off, and we'd have cold *goom* served with watermelon and potato salad. In those days, the Indians had their iceboxes under the trees in the cool places. Later on, they got chunks of ice and put them on top.

When somebody killed a cow, they ate all parts of the cow. I remember they baked the hooves over a campfire and then they shook the hooves off and they would boil the rest, which would be a lot of gelatin-like gristle. That made good stew with cabbage and turnips.

They had cellars where they stored winter foods: apples, cabbage, turnips, rutabagas, parsnips, carrots, potatoes, pumpkin. I think they sometimes even dried their corn. Indians ate tules, too. At the bottom of the stem it looks like giant celery. Down in the heart of that is a potato-like fruit. The Indians used to take that heart of the tules and put it in their stew. So every part of all the seed-bearing plants is food-every one of them. I mean, there's a lot of merchandise out there. It just takes one to go out there and get their groceries free, off the land. The only thing that I know the Indians *didn't* eat were the scavengers-hawks and coyotes and things like that.

I think rabbits are better to eat than chickens, because they eat only fine grass. We call rabbits *gummow*. (There's a road west of Fallon called Gummow Drive.) The Shoshones might call it *gummow* because it's like a bigger prairie dog. We used to eat a lot of *gummow*. We'd boil them, fry them, or cook them under the ground. You can do anything to rabbit, just like you can with hamburger, but you can only fry them when they're fresh. If they get older, you can boil them. Rabbits are very particular about what they eat, they don't scavenge for food. They're not like rodents, which eat anything. The rabbits we raise today are called sweet rabbits, because they're cooped up like chickens.

My mom used to point out some Indian foods in the ground to me that you just pick up and eat, like we used to chase beetles and eat them, too. [laughs] One time my mom came to this anthill and it was full of little tiny twigs that the ants had built so professionally. She took the top half and laid it aside. Right in the middle were all the white ant eggs; they looked like rice. Indians ate that, too. I don't know if they still do. Some do, I imagine, but lots of them probably don't even have time to walk around on the flats anymore.

We drank a lot of water from natural springs in the mountains by Austin. This was pure water! We would lay on our stomachs and cup up with our hands to get a fresh drink of water. Indians didn't drink coffee until later, when they got it through rations or at the store. Then they drank it only for breakfast. Mostly they drank the Indian tea, which grew wild in the hillsides. I've never heard the true name for Indian tea. The bush doesn't have any leaves on it, just a lot of straight twigs. Maybe there's a certain time of the year that the twigs blossom just a little bit, but it's a leafless bush that can be spotted on the hillsides in Nevada. Everybody knows what it is-it's Indian tea.

In the early spring, we used to get the little balls from cottonwood trees and open them and eat the inside and make gum. That was our gum. That's why I always eyeball these trees around Fallon to see which trees shall I attempt.... [laughs] The balls look like little grapes, actually.

The early animals were God-given. Each one of them ate their own special way, and they served as provisions for the Indian people to eat, clothe, and even heal them. Animals were their transportation, too. They were all special to the Indians, even the fish. See, those *cui-uis* out there at Pyramid Lake are special. Why they ever did grow there at Pyramid Lake nobody can explain. They're prehistoric fish, and same thing with Walker Lake down here: they had some pretty big trouts down there.

I like the seasons. There's a reason for the seasons, I think. You have something to look forward to. You can't get pinenuts all year; you can't get chokecherries; you can't get *wium* nine months of the year. *Wium* is a type of currant. It only comes at just a certain time, and they would dry them to eat in the winter. Things just blossom at a certain time, and you eat the fruit then. That's the way you live-by the fruits of the land, the fruits of the season, the fruits of knowledge, the fruits of every culture. Everything else is just temporal.

There's a lot of other good Indian foods that I remember. We used to eat the watercress that grew in little streams. Then there's *wah'sa*, a grass that tastes like something between chives and onions. It grows in lots of places between Fallon and Austin, especially in Frenchman Creek. You can put a little salt on it and it's just delicious.

Somebody always had a potato garden; potatoes were always in the garden, whether it was here in Fallon or on the Yomba reservation. Potatoes are the main food. I think we had potatoes three times a day. Sometimes over the campfire; sometimes over the cooking stove. Indians still eat a lot of potatoes. Last year alone, I peeled four or five hundred pounds to feed the family. I'm always glad, because I know it's fresh food. God wrapped it in a certain way, in a certain type of skin that lasts, and can be served a hundred ways. It has more potassium than bananas. I call it the pearl of Nevada.

Most Indians were hunters, and they stored other foods like apples, potatoes, carrots and other things underground in cellars. They ate turnips and things during the winter, and they dried their berries, like chokecherries, and made jelly and jam. Indians got ready for the winter one way or another by fixing their pinenuts and drying berries and other fruits. They knew how to do all that.

I miss the Indian foods. I wish that I could go out there and dig a sego lily and eat it right now! But it's nothing that I could get. It only grows in a certain spot, like I've seen them growing by the mountains near Austin. They grow in spring, and they're delicious. The sego lily has certain types of minerals in it that you don't get from all other kinds of foods.

Basically, we always ate the freshest food, seasonal food. I miss these foods, and the way they were cooked over the bonfire. I'm always trying to figure out where to put my bonfire in back of the house. One time when our electric range went out, I cooked for the kids four layers of food in the hot coals. In the bottom layer I put my potatoes that were rolled in tinfoil. The second row was bread in a baking dish with tinfoil on top. On the third layer were steaks. Then we had corn wrapped up in tinfoil. We covered it all with hot coals with a little sand over it. At the end of the day when we served dinner, the kids were really surprised. The potatoes were so fluffy and they weren't rubbery like the ones that you bake in the oven. Everything was so good. The Indians have a knack of working with hot coals and sand. If a little sand gets on the food, you can just pat it off. I've done that a lot of times.

We didn't have any commodity foods when I was growing up. I never saw commodity foods until I was in California and my kids were little. I guess my aunts once in a while got some flour, but I don't remember any commodity foods-not around Austin, at least. We just lived by the different seasons and prepared certain things for the next.

We always had oatmeal; we never had dry cereals. Stewart was the only place I ever saw corn flakes. We were raised on hot cereal, whether it was oatmeal, Cream of Wheat, wheat, and even sometimes a broth made out

of flour and water and a little bit of sugar. So our cupboards weren't stacked with food. That came later, when we started buying things like that. But there's an old traditional belief that if you stock your cupboards, that was bad; you mustn't stock your cupboards. I always wondered about that-maybe it was because they thought you shouldn't hoard food. They only fixed enough food each season for the next season. It's funny because I've heard that the mortality rate of Indian people was higher then-maybe because of wars and disease. But I know there's a lot of old Indians here today that were here when I was a child.

Our foods have always been fresh and always hard to get. That was the challenge. If you went to get deer or rabbit you'd have to go in the snow. At the same time, it's good for you; it's good to get climatized. It's good to be strong, and our bodies were made perfect, able to overcome any illness. It was made to be so strong.

My mom and family continued to eat their Indian foods up until they died in the 1970s. In fact, Uncle Charlie didn't want to stay in the Washoe Medical hospital because he couldn't stand that white food. He said it didn't have any taste and it's cooked to death, because he was used to eating fresh foods. He said, "I want to go home. I want to go home. I want to eat my own Indian bread and Indian food." Oh, I tell you, some of those Indian ladies wouldn't even put baking powder in their flour, and they made the fluffiest Indian bread I ever tasted. They had that certain touch...the real Indian bread. Ruth Bill from Fallon Colony knows how to make bread the way my mom used to make it. Many Indians have retained the skills their ancestors passed on to them because it's still their way of life.

There are always things on my mind that I'm always debating or sizing up with what I've been taught by my mother. One thing was we always had our meals together in the morning. We sat on the ground because we didn't have tables and chairs in those days. No matter where we ate or what time of the day, they always put a tablecloth on the ground, or a blanket or canvas. Pie pans and baking dishes were our dishes. Our cooking place was just a regular open pit or a fire on the ground where they cooked our breakfast, lunch, and supper, and our coffee. We drank coffee from old tin cans.

We were taught different. Nowadays, people believe that children should have everything first. Well, I notice that children will always just bulldoze to get the chair that belongs to maybe the father at the house or the grandfather. But in those days we didn't come to that eating place until *after* our elders came first. That is, our grandfather had to eat first, and maybe our grandmother, aunts, and then the kids last.

While we ate, Grandpa would start telling us stories in the animal fashion, much like they do in kindergarten today-the bunny rabbits and all those different animals that they have. Our old-timers used animals to tell stories of wisdom. They told us about the raccoon and why its little feet are black. The raccoon was told *not* to run through the burning forest up in Montana because he would burn his little paws. But he didn't listen. The raccoon went through the fire anyway and burned his little paws. The raccoon's little paws have been black ever since.

Grandpa told us a lot of stories like that. There was one about one of the animals having an earache, and would you believe it was the rabbit? [laughs] The rabbit's got the biggest ears, so he must have had a bad earache. He wanted somebody to doctor him, so he went over to visit some animals. They couldn't help him, so finally he went to see the

groundhog. The groundhog was the only one that could help him, and he gave him some oil to put in his ear. [laughs]

There are a lot of stories of this nature that they would tell us about. They also told us about *ijap*, the coyote. The coyote was a wicked thief. A lot of Indians use the idea of snake, like, "He's got a snake"-he's got blood on his hands. They would tell us stories to teach us lessons. I suppose they used the coyote as an example since coyotes are all we have in this desert country.

Sometimes they'd tell us other kinds of stories kind of similar to the scriptures-like, you always feed a stranger and you send him away with a gift. Never turn a stranger away without offering him a meal. And by the same token, never visit anybody unless you have a bag of groceries with you. They're similar to Proverbs, I guess you might say. The Proverbs have double messages in one sentence. When I read Proverbs, a lot of times I think of the way that the Indian people spoke to us. I always remember to feed anybody that comes to visit. If you visit someone and they don't offer you a meal, they're not good people; they're stingy and selfish. I see a lot of that today. They're afraid that if you eat a little bit of their goodies that *you* are greedy, when really they're being stingy. But it's not so, because in your life you might be hungry one of these days, and the way you treat other people is the way they're going to treat you.

There's a time when everybody's up and there's a time when everybody's down. Our elders used to talk to us like that early in the morning while we were eating, and we didn't interrupt. We always sat and listened. We were taught respect like this. Somebody recently told me about seeing a down-and-out inebriated person. He said, "He was lower than a grasshopper's knees and I just lost respect for him." Well, respect is one thing that a person never loses. You can't lose what you never had. That's the way, I guess, they taught us how to respect people.

One thing I remember is that the old people eat slow. That's why it's hard to sit down to eat with some people. I *cannot* sit and eat with people when they don't pass food to one another and show kindness. They don't sit down and chew their food well, and they come to the table with rejection: "What is that?!" or "That don't taste good." They look at their food with disgust rather than as a blessing, and I can't sit at a table like that. I always excuse myself if it's like that, because it's against the way we were raised. We may have had one or two different diets, but that was all we had as kids. We didn't have a deli on one payday and McDonald's on another payday. We didn't live that way. Of course, during fruitful seasons we had a few extra goodies. In springtime we had all the spring vegetables and berries and deer meat and groundhogs, prairie dogs, fish, and birds. We had all those kinds of delicacies.

Another thing the elders did was to always leave a little bit of food on their plates instead of eating it all. Then they'd put it outside for the spirits. Eddie, my son-in-law, is like that. He always leaves a small portion on his plate. But I've also been taught to clean everything on your plate and don't ask for any more! So that might account for my tribe, the Hungry Tribe. [laughs]

Our folks had to do things manually. They didn't have modern conveniences, and they worked hard! They used to go each morning for a clean bucket of water; they saved some for drinking and some for washing. They weren't any less clean than people today, plus they had stronger immune systems. But today's world is one of lack of work and obesity. Many Indians have been forced to

live what you call the modern way. They think they have to live in the city because of running water and other modern conveniences. Some Indians, though, are returning to the reservations to come back to their old ways. They don't want to live in cities, where the way of living is so corrupt.

Our ancestors worked from sunrise to sunset, whatever they did, and they lived by the seasons. Oh, you didn't see people keeping house when it was time to be planting a garden or harvesting berries or picking pinenuts. The housework came second or third until the harvest was done. Everyone worked hard. If they worked with the pinenuts, they worked all day; if they tanned a deer hide, they worked for months. They were always busy from sunrise to sunset. A few people still have these old skills; they still do it the old way. There's some people who use modern ways, but their leather is not as soft as the way the old people used to soften their buckskin.

Families would get together to do this kind of work, but it wasn't something where several families got together. I never used to see them socialize around tanning deer hides, because a family in those days was already a big family. They lived together: uncles, aunts, grandparents, and children. It was a party within a family to begin with, so you couldn't very well invite another party. The grandfather would soak the deer hide for many days and sharpen his deer ribs. Then they'd start scraping the fur off and soaking it in some strong compound-I think they used brains. I used to see this year after year when I was little, but I didn't really pay any attention. I just knew it was a matter-of-fact thing that they did every year. It was a family affair.

The ladies took over then, and after the hide was tanned they would soften it with their hands. All the ladies would work on that. During their leisure time in the winter, the ladies made gloves, moccasins and stuff like that to exchange; some were as gifts with other tribes. They also beaded. They also made a lot of belts, too, I remember.

I remember when a tribe came from Arizona with some mutton and they traded it for some deer hides or baskets. There was some trading like this, but the travel was very slow. Of course, after cars came, the tribes had pow-wows and they all sold their arts and crafts to everyone. Some have made a good living doing this.

Indians could *see* in those days. I never saw Indians wear glasses way back then like they do now. [laughs] It seems like they had good vision. I think they were used to looking out and exercising their eyes. They could look over the prairies and look over the mountain ranges for great distances, looking for animals or plants. They could spot things with telescope eyes. But nowadays it's different. I don't know how they did it. Of course, they put that stuff away as they got real old, but how they made all that intricate beadwork and stuff...it just takes a lot of eye work. And yet, after all the work and time they put into sitting around and doing their beading and things, I noticed that their posture was very straight. They didn't have humped backs. They gave their work their all.

Indians lived by the seasons, and each season they looked to different signs, like the squirrels do. They gathered food for the winter, and dried berries and things. One who lived that way so much I noticed was my Uncle Charlie. He lived for the seasons: "Now, this is the time to go start looking for that delicacy," or "You start looking for that grass," and then, "Sego lilies are going to be coming through between April and May." We were out there for that reason and that reason only. This was a *special* thing to do.

White people have gotten inquisitive about the Indian foods, language, and especially arts and crafts. Maybe this is why there's a lot of white people now today who have adopted a lot of the Indian's ways. Indians have some outstanding arts and crafts, and they *last*... we have some lasting qualities. I think that our arts and crafts will outdo any other race. We're like any other people. Some people take to beading, and some to doing the basketry or other things. We didn't run to the store for everything we wanted-we had to make it ourselves.

Today, not everybody has the same talent. I don't do beadwork and I don't do buckskin work, because I saw it night and day, and when I grew up I said I didn't want to do the same thing. I rebelled against it, because my ma would never spend any time with me. I didn't have any sisters to play with, and I wanted her attention! But there she'd be, fussing with her buckskin needles because they weren't sharp enough. I didn't care if they were sharp or dull, but she *had* to! She had to make a set of buckskin gloves, because they outlast any other gloves. Of course, I didn't know how important they were at that time-I wanted my mother to spend some time with me. But all she would let me do was brush her hair when she washed it. (All the Indian women then had beautiful hair. It was shiny and really healthy looking, compared to how these women look today with all the pollution, lack of sleep, and stress.)

My mother worked with leather, and she also wove baskets. She made a lot of laundry baskets and the big fan-like baskets that they fixed their pinenuts, berries and other things in. (They always sorted their fruit in the fan-like baskets.) It took a lot of hunting and rooting around out by the creeks in the mountains to go get the materials in the first place. I didn't realize she was probably too tired to even look at me. I mean, the way they worked those days, it took all their energy.

When Indian women make Indian baskets, they sing and pray. I really believe this, because this is the same thing Indians do when they dance. They're saying some words to the Great Spirit when they're dancing or celebrating or having a feast of some kind. But these other kind of dances that they have today don't have this meaning. There is respect in Indian culture that you don't find in other cultures; that's why we're different from Anglo people. The Indians always pray and are thankful for everything.

Certain people in Austin knew that my mother made baskets, and they put their order in or requested it as a favor. Today we would call them customers, but in those days it was a favor to a friend. They also sold gloves, because buckskin gloves were the toughest gloves known. The cowboys handled ropes a lot, and their gloves had to be tough. She also made moccasins nd boleros and things like that, which took a lot of work.

The Indians planned things for months to come. It was a whole year by the time they got their gloves and buckskin jackets, their rugs and blankets made. It was a year's project. But I didn't care for any of that. I didn't hate it, really. I decided if I got good and ready, because I was Indian, I could sit down and do these things. [laughs] I just thought I could just naturally do anything like that, because I'd seen it all my life, and therefore, when I got good and ready to do it, I would. But I found out it wasn't that easy. [laughs] You either get started or you don't learn, and I didn't get started. But I suppose I don't really need that stuff today. It would've been fun, I guess. I could've been a Francis Hooper or one of those ladies sitting behind a table selling a lot of my handiwork and making a little money, but I wasn't geared to, though.

At Stillwater in the 1930s, everybody went straight to the gambling hall after church. The old gambling hall still stands midway between the tribal offices and the cemetery turnoff, but it's dilapidated now. People used to gather there to sell fish from Pyramid Lake. They would sell three great big *cui-uis* for a dollar! Others sold foods like hot lunches, pies, and I don't know what all else. It was like a Mardi Gras. In fact, people would say, "Are you going to the gambling house?" And of course, everybody was! People gambled at that gambling house like it was headquarters! The kids went out to play and the folks sat down to hand games. They had sticks the size of fingers, and one side of each stick was painted red. They would put about ten of them in a pinenut basket and toss them into the air. They would bet that a certain number of them would land with the red side up, and whoever bet right won the pot in the middle. Of course, when they got cards later, they played something like poker.

The missionaries never objected to the gambling. I never knew that gambling was a sin, because church and gambling seemed to go right along together. [laughs] They didn't teach us that it was wrong. I guess they couldn't, because it was part of our culture or something. Or it might have been part of *their* culture. [laughs] All the Indians gambled, but they didn't call it gambling as to be a swindler or to gain power. It was just a thing they did for social activity. Certainly the big winners never got robbed or things like that. It wasn't like that.

I remember my mother would sit there and gamble. I'd be so tired after everybody went home that I'd be leaning up against her as she sat down on the ground, gambling. I'd just wish we'd go home because I'd be so tired. And she'd just tell me to be quiet and tolerate it. She tested my endurance. I could have gone into it, too, but most always we just gambled for just fun.

One time they were gambling by this little creek on the other side of the bridge at J.R.'s market in Schurz, and they were having a gathering. It might have been one of the Labor Day celebrations or something like that. We were barefooted, running around in the creek, and my mother said to a bunch of us young girls, "You see those little tiny fish?" She meant the minnows. She said, "If you swallow them alive you'll have babies easy." To this day I believe that she was right. I must have swallowed ten of them! [laughs] But I guess that's what the elders told them when they were young girls. Some just joshed at it and said, "Oh, that's for the funnies."

Other than gambling and church, when I was young, people gathered to attend fandangos, feasts, weddings, and funerals. They traveled for miles to attend a funeral, and everybody that could go usually did; they made it a point to go. One of the things we *didn't* do that is very prominent today is we didn't know what Christmas was. We didn't celebrate Christmas as children. That was a new thing that we picked up on the way, like these other holidays.

When you go to church to a funeral, you're kind of formal. You don't mourn audibly, the way the Indians mourn their dead. They mourn all during the night, and they mourn at the graveyard audibly. A lot of Indian people think that when somebody passes away, you should weep. They believe that's the best way to get it all out of your system, to cry it all out. Then you won't be keeping your sorrow inside forever. The Indian women used to sit around at funerals with their shawls on. (They dressed more like Indians then.) They did a lot of weeping and mourning. But of course, if it was a funeral in the church-that kind of

funeral-they kept it down a little bit, though the ministers were always understanding and let them mourn. But the Indians don't mourn like they used to.

At the fandangos, someone would start singing and everybody made a circle and they'd slide one foot to the other as they went around. Sometimes they had fast songs and sometimes they had slow songs. Some fandangos were ceremonial, and some were for fun. It depended if it was a feast date, like to offer thanks for food like pinenuts, berries and game. If it was, then the Indian doctors would be there. They called this "gathering in." If a gathering was more or less just a get-together, it would be more social. You could meet up with relatives and friends and see who's dating who and who's leaving who and all the latest happenings.

They also got together to dance for rain or snow. One year my grandpa saw that the mountains were red and he knew the drought would continue. So they danced and prayed for snow, and they got eight feet of snow that winter. That was about 1930 when I was five or six. Grandpa was chief then.

I was born during this age of people gathering, and rodeos were also becoming popular-what they generally call the good times. A lot of problems were caused for families by all of these festivities. Some husbands went astray and some wives, too. It seems like there was always some sort of marital problems right after a big rodeo or fandango. People who got involved with this kind of thing brought dishonor on themselves because they had broken the circle. Sometimes in the old days people would just leave the tribe if they did something really wrong.

Pow-wows today have changed. Of course, today it's quite modern. The Native Americans have regular booths that they rent when they sell their arts and crafts. They used to have pow-wows to give thanks and offer blessings. In those days, they exchanged their crafts as a token of friendship. They weren't antique collectors or people looking for collector's items. They were just exchanging things in friendship. You go to a pow-wow nowadays, and if you don't have ten dollars, you might as well not stay, because it's a pow-wow only to the people that are running it. It's all a big money scene today. There was more friendship during the early ceremonies. You went there to see people; you went there to see friends; you went to see the talents of the other tribes; and you felt good about being Indian. But today it isn't like that. They're out to sell things, and if you're not out to buy things you don't feel like you're a part of the show. [laughs] Another thing is the styles of dancing have changed. The costumes have changed, so a lot of it isn't really authentic anymore.

There are times now when the younger Indians get involved with Native American festivities, but mostly they're more into this modern-day culture. They'll never know fully why an Indian lived the way they did, because they didn't speak the language. They can sing Indian songs, but they don't know the whole meaning behind it; they don't know the spiritual side. They still have a lot of the spiritual meetings, but it's not quite like in the olden days, because they still go out and drink and it's not really as sacred as they try to impress upon the young. They don't live it, but you can't blame them, because we were forced to speak a second language. I watch them around me and they're not Indian-oriented. But there has been an increase in the Indian population, and I think some reservations are still with their language.

There's some things you don't talk about. Some things are very sacred. One is the ritual

of a young woman into womanhood, and another is birth. These things are all sacred things, and there are a lot of the details I don't know about. It's just things I've heard.

We had a ceremony that we girls went through when we had our change and went into womanhood. It was a long session. I wasn't with my mother when my first one happened, but I knew I had to tell somebody. I wasn't supposed to cry or be upset. Any way that I behaved during this time would mark me for life. If I was angry, crying, or if I was fearful or had any marks of emotion, it would stamp me for most of my adult life. So I kept it pretty much to myself, and then I went and told my Uncle Bill's wife, Mamie.

She made me sit on a pile of sagebrush that she picked. You're supposed to sit on there nude. Then she took water and sprinkled it all over me. That didn't last long, and I guess she prayed over me and blessed me. I already knew that I had to isolate myself from the main part of the house. You have to live away from everybody for a while.

It seemed like this was a holy time, a special time. That's the way I felt. It was a time to have respect for all the menfolk of the house, and you didn't go near them or around them. You isolated yourself away from the family. You didn't drink out of their cup, and they didn't drink out of yours. You didn't eat meat and you fasted. I knew those things already, because that was the thing that all the women did in the family. During a certain time of the month, they went to their own room and stayed there. They ate their own food, and stayed by themselves for a week.

I took the stage to Austin to see my mother. When I got there, I told my mother about my change, but she seemed to already know. There was a tent outside, so she gave me instructions and I went out there. When you're being given instructions, you listen to all of your orders so you'll know how to take orders during your lifetime. I was supposed to go the first morning and make a sagebrush pile as high as I could and bring a little home to my tent for my fire. I was supposed to get up before sunrise and go to bed at a certain time in the evening, after sundown. I was supposed to cook all of my food with no grease. That meant I baked my potatoes under the ground and I baked my bread instead of frying it. I think I also had hot cereal.

I had to keep my camp real neat and clean. I had a place for all my dishes and pots and pans and my bed in the tent, and my clothes were supposed to be neat and folded. Everything that I did as a woman at that time was like a transition from childhood to adult. It was a transition house, you might call it, where you give up your toys and childish things and you embark into womanhood.

I went up the same trail every morning before sunrise by myself. It was a good walk. I made a second pile of sagebrush and I brought a little back to cook my food with. In the meantime, I was not to stop once I started. Once I found a bush, I was to work at it without grumbling, moaning, and I wasn't supposed to give up. I was supposed to conquer that bush, to pull it out by the roots or whatever, and stick with it until the job was done. That would show me that if I ever had any problems in my lifetime, that if I stood there and cried or moaned and groaned about it, that's the way I would be with all the problems in my life. So I made seven sagebrush piles, one for each day of the week. You had to do everything for yourself. You couldn't go around people to visit. If you did, you'd be like that for the rest of this life. To this day, I don't go around. I don't go out of one location very easy.

It seems strange, because at that age, you don't have any thoughts about what people did during the course of a day, and how they worked. I think we take our parents for granted when we're teenagers, and we don't care for their efforts, whatever they do for us. But living this way every month stresses that more and more: you have to have respect for your menfolks. Some of that belief is so the men will be good hunters, to bless whatever they do. Women show this honor to their menfolks. Even if they were married, they did this. There's so many reasons today why girls have no idea what's going on. It's just another day to them. But there's a lot that goes into becoming a woman as far as your problems in life are concerned, because that's all you have is problems. This time is meant to teach strength so you can get through them.

So you stay out for a full month the first time you have a period. Then chances are you will have another one by the end of the month, and when that's finished-it's usually at the full moon-you take a bath and clean up and then you go back to the house. That's the way their belief is. Some other tribes do other things. I know the Washos have giveaways and they give gifts to people. We didn't have giveaways; we just fasted at times and stayed out away from the family. But because we grew up with it when we were little kids, we took it in stride, though to some it was kind of strange.

My Uncle Bill's girls were faithful to him and honored him like they were taught this way. I wonder sometimes if that's why he lived such a long time. Those girls were raised that way and they always respected him. I have seen some other ladies, like my Uncle Richard's wife, who honored their men, too. But unfortunately Uncle Richard's wife ended up leaving him. It might have been because she was a lot younger than he was. Or maybe because he ignored his calling to be an Indian doctor.

I don't know what the Indian marriage ceremony's composed of. It was just if someone found a person they liked, they just went to live together and it was an understood thing. I don't know if marriage was even talked about, or if couples were matched up by parents, like in some other cultures. It seemed for a long time to me that marriage wasn't a real necessary thing. A woman learned respect not just for one special man, like her husband, but for all the men in the family. It was respect to uncles, brothers, grandfathers.... Your brothers had a big meaning to you, and your uncles and grandpas, too. Just men in general. That's the way we were raised. Some might carry that through today; I don't know.

Another sacred time for a woman, other than going through her change, is when she gives birth. When a woman is going to give birth, they dig a pit in an isolated place. Then the sand is heated to make a warm bed. Then they put sagebrush down, and put a blanket or canvas on it, or even a rabbit-skin blanket. The midwife, I guess, sits there and rubs the woman's stomach the way the contractions go. Now, how they knew which way to rub, only God knows.

Most of the active laboring was done on hands and knees. That's the way horses give birth: standing. The midwife rubbed across the woman's hip while she stood, and she usually delivered very easily, within fifteen minutes. I had seen a little colt being born and I could see why it was very easy, but I don't think anybody else knows that except the Shoshone people. Maybe other Indians do, too, but I've never heard them talk about it. I met a Shoshone woman, Alice Hooper, who had thirteen children this way, and she

said she never felt any pain. She said her births were very easy because it was easy for her to dilate. My mother was a midwife, and so was my Uncle Bill's wife, Mamie.

I don't remember naming ceremonies. That was strange to me. The only way I can say we were named was from certain little habits we had, or maybe how we looked, like my Uncle Charlie with his dazzling lice. Or if a name just came to someone, they would probably give the child that name. Some tribes wait until the child is maybe six or seven. Some do it right from birth or before birth. They don't like to do a lot of things before birth, though, because pregnancy is a sacred time.

One thing the Indians don't believe in is girls doing men things like hunting and lifting things and playing ball. I believe this, too. Women aren't supposed to do men's work. That's what my mom said, because they don't have the same physical build as a man. Enough heavy work can be very dangerous to a woman, because of her weak organs. My mom said men are meant to be able to lift a lot more than women. I think there's something to that, because now that I'm getting older, I know the first aches and pains you have is around your hips. But there's a lot of things that's changed today that Indian ladies don't believe in. With women's lib, women feel they have to do everything.

Shoshone fathers weren't taught much to be fathers and be responsible that way. They were more responsible to the tribe being medicine men, warriors, hunters and fishermen and things of that nature. That's the way they made a living for their families, so naturally they had to go by their skills. We were taught to respect the men. The men ate first; the children ate *after*, and they were not to be seen or heard. We loved showing our respect, and when the women had their periods, they isolated themselves from the men. They did not eat with the hunters because that would ruin their hunting. Indians go by the maternal authority in a lot of the tribes. It's the woman that is the boss, but you still have to respect the grandfathers and uncles. Sometimes the women were bosses of the family *and* tribe. Some people say the woman who rocks the cradle rules the world.

The Seminole Indians believe that the woman that carries the fire rules her family. Some tribes are like that. But the woman that does everything *but* work in the home-her family might fall apart. But it's true that some women have to go out and work to help their families, say if her husband is an invalid or got hurt. That woman must hold the fire, and her family is blessed.

There's a meaning to that, because I remember when our aunts used to get up early in the morning and make a fire before sunrise. In the winter, they got up around 4:00 to heat the house. On a nice summer day, they were up first in the morning to make fire and cook breakfast. They always carried the fire. They never let it go out. These were strong women with good families, like the Williams's grandmother, and the Allen's, and the Graham's. Then there's also Sadie Austin, who is the grandmother of my granddaughter, Raylene. They have pretty good families today.

Indians are real gentle with their newborns. I still chant to my little great-granddaughter when I rock her. I have real good luck with that. When you chant to a little baby, it stills their brain waves to where they go into slumber when you rock them. So Indians rock their babies a lot. I've also heard some people say that a child loves to hear water running because they were carried

in water for nine months. My mom used to wash the clothes with baby on her back in a cradleboard. A lot of Indian women did. They scrubbed the clothes on a scrub board in a big tub. They would stop long enough to nurse their babies and then they would park them against a log or hang them in a little tree. The babies always seemed to be contented.

Indians have a different way of seeing things than white people. White people allow their children to be led to their own doom. We respect our children and we love them when they're little. We like to baby our babies. Maybe that's why they always say that Indians are so immature. [laughs] But it's better than being rejected and being sent to school and say, "Now, learn your ABCs and your numbers and you got it made." I like our way of life, because I think a lot of the Anglo-American people raise their children kind of harsh. (I know at one time I changed from our way of thinking to their way, and my kids tell me today that I was rather harsh on them-that they didn't like to be spanked and put in a corner. They thought it was very abusive at times. But then again, you're dealing with children, so who can say what really works?)

Indians are family-oriented people. They honor all their relations. But as time has gone on, many of them have gotten away from their beliefs, except for the old people.

The most important people, I think, were the grandmothers and the grandfathers. I think children have to keep in close contact with their families if it's at all possible. Their grandmothers should live right there with them, because there are times when the mother or father is sick, or they have a disagreement. The children need someone to fall back on, and who's always there? Grandma! There has to be a standby. That's why I think families are important. Otherwise, the kids are going out all the time to the baby-sitter, a friend's, anywhere....

I notice the old people always rested every day from 2:00 to 4:00. They had always made it a point to rest, even when they were young. They always went to bed early, too, because they didn't have electricity. That's why people were basically in better health than they are today; they don't get enough sleep or enough rest, because their mind doesn't rest.

They did their work a certain way according to the season. In the summertime, they knocked off their work earlier because it got too hot. That kept their blood pressure down. It seems like they lived a suitable, balanced life. If anybody at this day and age wanted to follow that pattern, they would be healthier, like their ancestors. I do it all the time. I go to bed early; I get up early. I do those things basically the way my parents did. If I wash clothes and it's a good day, I hang them outside. I in turn get fresh air and exercise. I can also watch the things that are going on around the house, like a guard or a sentinel. You can take care of more things when you're out in the open; you can watch more things.

As far as the way the old Indians think and act, it's basically the way that a good, sound person should act-not to be blowing their mouth all the time or insulting people, putting them down and thinking they're better than each other. The real Indian is not raised that way, because why? It reflects back on you later on in life. Chances are you're not big enough to admit that you had evil thoughts and they just came back on you later on in your life. So they guard their mouths and a lot of their thinking.

There's one important word to the Shoshone Indians: *muhguhwah*. That means

your conscience, your common sense. It's like an inner holy seed, I guess like the Holy Spirit. There seemed to always be in this *muhguhwah* the sacredness of the *Newe*, the Indian people. They were motivated by these common sense instructions. A lot of times our elders scolded us when we were little and did something wrong. They would say, "Haven't you got any *muhguhwah*?" -or in other words, "Where is your common sense?" or "Where is your judgment?"

That's what people lack today: *muhguhwah*. Common sense is a sense that does things with good judgment, the one that does things without harming other people. That's all we heard when we were little kids and we did something wrong, we'd see the Indian ladies shake their heads and hear them say, "He just hasn't got any *muhguhwah*." I guess everybody's supposed to have good *muhguhwah*. They made us believe we were all born with one, but maybe some weren't born with any! [laughs] But they always asked you to use your good sense when you got scolded, and that made you think. And that's what a lot of kids don't do nowadays: they don't think.

We call the evil spirit *uhnut*. The evil spirit is going to get you. My granddaughter Shawnee used to say to her son, "The *uhnut* is coming," and he would run and hide under the covers! This is their type of training that they give their kids when they are little: there is evil and there is good. We were raised with a lot of it, it seems like. *Newe* means "people"-people with good conscience. Many people still teach this today, even those who don't know the whole language.

My grandpa was an Indian doctor and later, so was my mother. At times, there were a lot of people who came to doctors for one thing or another. Spiritual things are usually passed down from person to person-either through parents or some other relative.

I understand my grandpa had three brothers. One brother was wicked-they would say devil-and they always talk about having put him to death, because he was the evil one. Another one of his brothers had a family in Battle Mountain, so we have a lot of relations in Battle Mountain and Elko. Somehow this brother went by the name of Jackson. But your name depended on who you lived with and who you ranched for. Some Indians didn't have last names.

We used to go to Smoky Valley when I was little with my grandpa. We stopped frequently to visit Pug Ike, who lived there. He was an Indian doctor, too, so he and my grandpa would stop and discuss things a lot. Oh, they acted like they owed it to each other to visit. I don't know whether it was a brotherhood or something.

When somebody was ill they would go out away from the house and they'd make a wall with piled-up sagebrush to make a little hollow place. Then they would build a fire in the middle, and the sick person would lay on the ground on a bunch of sagebrush. Then they would sort of meditate and sing, meditate and sing, and then they'd go over to the sick one and they would place their mouth where the illness was and draw out the pain.

The Indian doctors knew the land. They knew where to go after sacred stuff, like the chalky white diatomaceous rock, the *abve*. They used that to draw lines on their wrists and on their forehead, or wherever the doctor told them to put the marks. After the treatment, you would go to the river or creek early in the morning. You sprinkled water and then the Indian doctor would tell you to pray, to make a sacrifice of something. Sometimes they used feathers-eagle feathers or whatever.

There are different types of Indian doctoring. Some treated illnesses that weren't serious. In illnesses that are more serious, they used a bit more treatment. Maybe they'd use the sacred rock to make lines on their wrist or on their forehead, or wherever the doctor tells them to make them. If mothers were having problems nursing their babies they would use a milk plant for a blessing, and then the milk would come in. I can't remember what they called it in Shoshone, but the plant grew along the canal.

If someone was gravely ill, the Indian doctor gave a *longer* treatment-more sacrifices were made, and they used eagle feathers. They also did a lot of fasting. The more sick a person was, the longer the doctor meditated and prayed over them. That was the procedure they used a lot. They'd all sit around and sing and chant. People would show their thanks by giving them something valuable, like a rug, some buckskin gloves, a hide, or some money. My grandpa probably got his healing gift from his mother or father.

A lot of times, Indian doctors were able to save their own people without going to or seeking a white doctor. They treated their own sick. They went by when the sun came up and went down. Everything was on the land. *Everything*. Everything revolved around our earth, even the early morning rituals. That's what it's all based on.

Grandpa would always consult with the people if he thought there was a need to. Then they would make preparations for their sacred dances. He had to oversee the tribe's needs, because he was the one that had the dreams. He was a leader to Shoshones in central Nevada. When he died, no one followed him; he was the last chief. But since my mother was an Indian doctor, she was important. No one distinguished between the men and the women when it came to their powers. They looked at an Indian doctor as the sacred person who is spiritual and knows their needs. Basically, it's the women that hold the place of honor more than men.

When there's a ceremony, the news just goes around that there's going to be a healing service or a feast of one kind or another. The message would just go around and people would come. But it seems like on the reservations the elders got together. Sometimes the Indian doctors also counseled people. If people had mental problems, they counseled them about bad, evil thoughts, and depression. That's what I grew up around.

Grandpa used to sing early in the morning and late at night. He always started with a chant early before the family got up and late at night. This was always a must, blessing his family before they got up and at nighttime for protection. We were prayed-for children. I feel this today.

Grandpa died in the early 1930s when I was about seven or eight. He came down to Fallon to Uncle Charlie's on the Stillwater reservation. He was very sick...gravely ill. He was about in his early nineties, because I think he was born around 1840 or so. We sat up with him while he was passing away, and they lit candles and they had him in the middle of the room, sort of like on a bed, because the thing he was lying on was built up on a stand.

A funny thing had happened before Grandpa got sick, and I knew that was a sign of the end, because I'd never seen him do this before. As a little child, I saw them taking a picture of him, and Indians don't like to take pictures. That's against their belief, or it's one of the things that they don't like to do. The picture was taken in Austin and Grandpa was standing in the road. Two of my uncles were holding his headdress. They stretched it in back of him as he stood in front of it, posing. Then someone took the picture. When they

laid the headdress down, it was pointing to the graveyard above him. I knew that was a sign, and I thought that was the end of the road for him. I *felt* that that was the finality of his life, because his feathers would never have come out any other time, unless he wore it in war or ceremonies. It just came out at that one time that I saw.

They lit candles where he was laying at night as he was expiring, and we sat around because he was comatose. We had a one-room house, and a spare room. Of course, today they would call it a shed. It was a rather big house. The ladies were preparing food and making flowers, I think, over in the main house. We stayed with him until he expired late at night.

Grandpa's funeral was a regular Indian burial as far as I remember. As the ladies mourned, I remembered his headdress and his other Indian things that he had-doctoring things-that were all buried with him. I don't remember who took that picture, but it might have been one of my uncles, maybe Uncle Richard. He had gone to Sherman, so he was a little bit more educated than we were.

Indians were always afraid to go to a white doctor, because they didn't speak the same language and they didn't think alike. So they didn't go too often-not when I was little. The Indians back in time were awfully afraid of white people. Indians were killed in wars, and the government has treated them like wards. In other words, they were prisoners-people thought nothing of their race. I remember if our parents or somebody wanted to scare us when we were little kids, they would say, "A white doctor's coming to our house." We panicked...we went and hid under our beds.

We didn't want to see *any* white people come to our door. We were scared of them. I just can't believe it sitting here now. If anybody would mention that nasty word to us, we ran into our house, just *panicky*, and just hid for dear life, like those terrible people were going to get us. My folks were just scared of them. Any time people are being attacked, they have this feeling that they live with all their life that they're a prisoner of war-that they have no right to live. Basically I lived around my folks who felt that way a lot. Of course, this made it harder as the years went by.

Indians knew that hospitals were for certain illnesses. They would call the medical doctor in that area, although in those days, we didn't have a doctor that lived there all the time. Maybe they were scheduled from Fallon to go out there twice a week or whatever. But they did have a little hospital in Lander County, I remember. So people just didn't see a white doctor unless they really had to, like for broken bones. There were some illnesses that were sent to a white doctor by the Indian doctor-referral. [laughs] They did their referral.

My stepfather had an attack of appendicitis one time when he was working at the Potts ranch. I think his boss's wife, being a schoolteacher, knew it was severe, and they took him to Tonopah to a white doctor. He had surgery for appendicitis. Another time when he was breaking horses for the ranchers, he got bucked off and got a rupture, and they took him to the Tonopah hospital.

But the Indian doctors handled many other kinds of illnesses, both physical and mental, like rheumatism, arthritis, depression, self-pity, sorrow, evil thinking.... I remember my mother separating the minds of a set of twins. Twins have two bodies but one mind, subconsciously. This lady came over from Eureka, Nevada. One twin had died, and the other one was sick. In order to separate their minds, my mother doctored the baby. The baby was in a little Indian basket, and

they did their prayers and their meditation and their chantings. They had a blanket over the baby's basket so it was fully covered, and they sang, meditated and prayed, I guess, to separate their subconscious minds.

I didn't go to that because the baby was way out there in the sagebrush, where they had built a little shelter. And my mother lifted the blanket up and let the smoke go in-it was a certain kind of smoke. Then she covered it to separate their minds, to restore this baby to its own mind to separate it from its dead twin. And the baby continued to get better after that.

There were other incidents I remember like that. I can see why in other situations like this, your mind is awfully close to the person you're devoted to. And when something happens to that person, you can hoard that sorrow forever if you're not separated from it. You have to separate your mind and your thinking from that evil spirit that just hovers over you all the time-like a dead lover maybe, or a best friend or relative.

I remember incidents where some people came to her who had violent tempers. Some of them hoarded their tempers inside; they really wanted to do away with some member of the human race. But I remember her counseling those kinds of people, too, that came to her. And she separated their mind from that temper-"temperitis," you might call it. [laughs] I think there's such a thing as temperitis in this world. I've seen them smoke the person-give them so much smoke that they can't stand it, and then they start coughing. And then they start vomiting—get that *out* of them. I mean they almost suffocated them out of that situation to make them realize that they were suffocating themselves with a temper. She did that kind of doctoring. She also doctored a child of about five or six who was always cranky and mean. She smoked him to get rid of his temper.

After a person went to an Indian doctor, they usually never had to go back. Like if you had arthritis last year and got the help of an Indian doctor, you wouldn't need to come back. When my mother would doctor these people with a temper or whatever ailment they had, sometimes it was drawn out over three or four days if it was killing them.

Whatever the Indian doctors did, it wasn't in a book or written on any kind of tablet. How they get their message is through their dream. What the Great Spirit tells them to do is the way they treat people. And they don't talk much about it-it's just between them and the Holy Spirit, much like the sand writers of the Navajo people. The Spirit communicates to them, and that's how they make the sand paintings with different colors of sand. Then when they figure out the problem, they erase the painting-that's it. You don't see it again. If they ever mock that, it probably wouldn't work.

Where these things are very sacred, the Indian doctors don't even talk about it. I have heard them just mention dreams. Maybe a song will come to them in a dream and they will use it to cure the sick. The only tools they have other than their dreams are different things, like different teas...like sagebrush tea, or *yomba*, which is a carrot-like root. *Yomba* grows in Virginia City today-I heard my uncle mention that. The tules that grow in the canal are used for doctoring, too. They also eat them, like in stew. Then there's the sacred white rock near Reno, the *abve*. There's also a canyon going towards Austin that has this white rock. Everyone is handled differently. The older people had such knowledge of herbs and plants that to this day, no one can really trace all of them. There's even some barks

they used off of different kinds of trees and shrubbery. The gift of healing is supposed to be in each generation. But if a person refuses it, he will get sick. Or that's the way it used to be in the olden days.

My Uncle Richard was supposed to be an Indian doctor, though he'd gone to Sherman Institute. He had many dreams and songs given to him, but he kept refusing it, and his life turned out to be bad. My mother kept telling him if he didn't start using the gift that had been given to him, he would get sick. And he did-he did get sick. His wife left him, and he got very lonely, and he went back to live with my mom. All the sorrow was loaded on him, and he lost his mind and turned into a wino. When he died, I don't think he cared; I don't think he felt too much pain. He was already mental. So he refused this sacred gift and things turned out very bad for him.

I always believed my mother was a praying woman because she was an Indian doctor. I just always believed by the spirit that she was praying for me. The Indians are *always* praying for their families: any free time they have during the day when they're just sitting around, they pray, sing songs, or they do their sagebrush rituals. You can never unfold these people's minds to understand how their prayer life is. They deal with the winds and get their food off the land-that's their life. They lived no other way, just by fasting and praying all the time. They don't make it a spectacle, because it's their way of life.

Whatever I did was OK with my mother. But I never kept in contact with her for the reason that she was always praying for me. I didn't even tell her when I was having problems in my marriage, but she probably sensed it, anyway. She knew a lot of things without being told. She could always tell when people were coming to visit her. She could tell by the signs. She could also tell when someone was real ill. A lot of people say that the Indian belief is a lot of superstition, but it's not. I have heard the elders talk about where a person has passed away and stopped by the bedside early in the morning. The old Indians knew these things. They never missed.

I was with my mother when she died around 1970. I thought that was my special time with her. We took her to an Indian hospital down in Phoenix, Arizona, when she wasn't feeling well. She was complaining about stiffness in her neck and awful pain. Then soon she got sicker. She tried to tough it out, to see if she could shake it, but she couldn't. So they took her by plane to Phoenix. I felt bad because we couldn't go with her on the plane. My sister and I drove all night from Schurz to Vegas to Phoenix to be with her. We told her we'd meet her there at the Phoenix Indian hospital, and we did. We got there.

They did an exploratory on her, and she was cancerous, so they closed her up. I flew back with her on the plane. They had a special plane with doctors and medical equipment for them to do their mercy flights. We landed at the Fallon Naval Air Station. They took her off the plane and we went into the infirmary to wait for the ambulance they were sending from Schurz. (They had called ahead to meet us when we arrived.) Then we took her in the ambulance to the Schurz Indian hospital. She was in the hospital for some time. My mother was a tough woman.

While my mother was in the hospital, I attended a ceremony with my Aunt Iola, who had had a stroke. During the ceremony, I prayed for my mother, because she had just been diagnosed as having cirrhosis of the liver. She was just laying over there in the hospital

in Schurz, suffering. So I was just praying that my mother would have a peaceful death. At that minute, the lights were all out in that room, and the assistant to the doctor said, "If you have any special prayer requests, you tell them to the shaker when he comes to you." So I was praying for my mother when the shaker came to me. He had some eagle claws, I guess, and he was shaking them in the pitch-black room. I didn't know how he could see where he was going, yet he went from person to person.

When he stopped by me, it seemed like he touched me, and he was going around my respiratory area. He went around me maybe three or four times, then he stopped. I believe to this day that that's when my mother went to glory, because when we went to the hospital after that meeting there she had just passed away. But I didn't want my mother to lay there until she was skin and bones. She had suffered enough. She hadn't known us sometimes, because she was semi-comatose. She was about seventy or seventy-five when she expired.

Indians have very strong beliefs in their medicine. Right before I left for Stewart[15] about 1937, my cousin Marge got very sick. Marge was about fourteen years old. She had goiter problems. She actually died because of this, but she woke up long enough to see her parents weeping over her. My Aunt Iola and Uncle Charlie were so desperate that they took her to this peyote doctor. The whole family then took peyote, but it was for rituals, for special healing service. Marge had even been taken to the Schurz Indian Hospital and had seen several white doctors. They probably even took her to Reno, because she was dying. I mean, any parent will do anything to save their child, especially Aunt Iola, because she had been married before and had already lost a child who drowned in the canal. Naturally, to lose Marge would be too much. And Marge is still alive. (The Indian doctor who healed her, Chief Yellow Horse, later married Louise Byers from Fallon Colony.)

You never know when the Indian doctors will come. You don't know when they're going to come or where they're going to be at. The ceremonies aren't announced. News of them will travel quickly, but you don't make your schedule according to your time. Things just happen when the Indian doctor shows up.

My Aunt Iola had a stroke around 1970. After her stroke, she had a paralysis of her right side, which created aphasia, and she couldn't talk. We took her to an Indian doctor in Schurz. Then this other Indian doctor from Montana came. He did look like a holy man: he had a peaceful look on his face. He looked like a man that could look right through you, and yet everybody went up and told him what their problems were. But he never spoke. He'd just shake his head. The type of doctoring he did wasn't exactly like the sweat-house kind-there were two parts to it. They had the supper, and then they had their blessings and all that. Through this, the Indian doctor suffered. He wrapped himself up in the Indian blanket and they tied it with a rope. He was laying there on the ground in the middle with all the people's illnesses and different requests tied in little velvet bags. He said the eagle would come and we would hear him flapping his wings. The eagle would untie the doctor and free him from the blanket. Then it would throw the blanket, and wherever it landed, that person would have to get up and give thanks.

Well, my aunt was sitting there in a wheelchair. We did hear the flapping, and we noticed all of a sudden that the Indian doctor was unwrapped from the blanket-the rope had come off of him. The blanket was

whirled across the room, and it landed on my aunt's lap. Even though she hadn't been able to talk, her voice came back and she started uttering the Lord's Prayer. She attempted to thank God for touching her. I remember that. I don't know why that's so vivid in my mind, but it seemed like for one thing, my aunt was very weak and very frail. But when that blanket landed on her lap, it seemed like she just got a surge of strength, super strength. It was something I expected to see some day, a miracle like that. After that ceremony, she got stronger. It was a thrill to attend that doctoring. I felt in my heart like I wanted to be there, like I had a calling to be there with her. Otherwise, I would have ignored it and not even showed up, because there were a lot of other things that I could have been doing.

That ceremony was one of the most powerful ceremonies I ever attended. Now that was a *ceremony*. There's a lot of things that's happened in my life that I've totally forgotten; I don't remember some of the things that's in the past now. Every now and then somebody mentions something, and I just can't recall it, but I'll always remember that ceremony! It touched me, because it was powerful. That's why I can't say to anybody, and I can't believe even the best minister when he says that Indian doctoring and the Indian ways are witchcraft. I cannot say that, because when somebody that you love in your family is touched by God, it's nobody's business. My aunt was a very active woman when she was young. She did many hundreds of things in a single day, and I can't say that her Indian ways had *anything* to do with witchcraft. In fact, she was the one that raised most of the kids in the family to go to church.

There are a few Indian doctors today, but some are phonies. They're trying to go back into the Indian culture, when they never were in it in the first place. They do it for what you call a Native American status. But you're always native with your language, with your culture, with your thoughts, with everything you do. You can't put a book into an Indian person to make them Indian. It doesn't work that way. [laughs] It comes only through the language.

Indians have gotten away from their language and culture. I mean, half-breeds aren't even half anymore. They are 90 percent Anglo-American in their mannerisms and attitudes, so a change has come about. They no longer speak their own language; and the few that do, have their Indian ideas mixed with white ideas, basically. Whoever is the dominant race, that's who they're like. Down in the southern United States, for example, the Spanish language is spoken, so the Indians' other language is Spanish. And up here we speak English. Whoever is the more dominant race, that's who their thinking is mixed with.

An Indian can't think totally Indian anymore, and these gifts just don't come anymore, because they're not being used right. That's why doctoring is a very sacred talent. You can tell an Indian doctor by looking at him. They don't talk very much. A true Indian doctor reads your mind, almost. They're very, very sacred people. They don't have any animosity toward anybody.

Memorial Day is an important time for Indians, feeling the closeness of our people that have gone on. Marge, my Aunt Iola's daughter, always comes to visit me around Memorial Day, and that's because we're remembering our relations. It's also a sad time because that's usually when the old-timers come to mourn. So though we remember them, we have to be awfully careful that we don't overdo it. We have to be true to our

relations, but not go so far as to wish they were living. Not in this day and age. We aren't glad they're gone, but we are glad maybe that they aren't suffering like we are today.

Eddie, my son-in-law, works hard preparing for Memorial Day. I don't know how many miles he traveled to gather flowers this year. He gathered some Indian paintbrush and some other types of wildflowers that Grandpa used to collect. He got some little desert flowers, like those little ones that look like small sunflowers, and some bluebells.

At one time as kids we were so poor that we couldn't buy flowers in the store. So about a month before Memorial Day, our folks would start making flowers: they would wax them and put glitter on the tips, and they bought wires. They got the whole furnishings for flowers for Memorial Day. But nowadays, they just put one bouquet on a grave. Grandpa used to walk the hills around Virginia City and around this area. And Eddie knows the same spots to pick wildflowers for Memorial Day, so we had plenty. You could smell the wild fragrance of those flowers this year as I was fixing my brother's grave.

I also fixed Aunt Dorothy's, Grandpa's, Uncle Charlie's, and Sarah's graves. We all loved Indian paintbrush, and that was one of their favorite flowers. They don't grow by the batches, they're scattered. You have to walk all over to gather maybe just a little handful sometimes. I can't imagine how many miles Eddie covered to pick that Indian paintbrush. (Eddie works hard, even though he recently had heart surgery. He wakes up at 4:00 in the morning, gets his breakfast, packs his lunch, reads the paper, and goes to work. Sometimes he's the last one to bed at night, too.)

They tell me that I think a lot like an Indian person. Well, my basic language was Indian. I didn't try to speak English till I was eight years old, and I still don't understand it very good.

Some people in my family are sensitive to the Indian thinking. Eddie knows a lot about where certain plants and flowers can be found. Most people nowadays can't tell an onion from a weed. But Eddie knows where these things are because Uncle Charlie told him. (Uncle Charlie was his grandpa.) Eddie knows his grandpa's ways-more than most people give him credit for. Eddie's brother, Frank, has a lot of Grandpa's things. He has the rolling stones that are used to crush seeds. They used a flat rock and then a nice smooth round rock to crush the seeds and separate the hull. The only things the boys haven't picked up is the language. Their mother, Sarah, never spoke Paiute that good because she spoke Paiute *and* Shoshone, so it wasn't 100 percent Paiute or Shoshone. Some of these things are basically there with Virginia, my granddaughter, because Eddie has always taken her hunting. He has always showed her his Indian ways.

Some Indians try to be Indian through their arts and crafts: the arts of dancing, singing, and then their beadwork and buckskin work. Some of the meanings of these things have changed as a result. Pow-wows were supposed to be held for feasts of thanksgiving. It was never held to be a big show-"Come one, come all." There's more to it than that, because an Indian person is very sacred. If you do something wrong at a pow-wow and you do it with a prayer, you'll lose your generation of children if you're drinking and acting evil. It'll come back on you. Or at least that's the way the old people would say.

Indian people have to have their songs. They believe in the power of the animals, whether it's coyotes or bears or whatever. Though it sounds very simple to a lot of people, to them it's real, because there is a

certain amount of power given to the animals. It's the animals that have always kept them alive, kept them in food, kept them warm. My mother believed these things.

My mom didn't really talk to me about what it meant to her to be Indian. She just more or less put it in a way that we had to respect everybody, especially the whites, because they were fearful of them. The Indians were always talking about the government: the government could do this to you or that to you. I guess they were fearful that maybe we'd be persecuted, because they came from a lot of persecution from the early days like their ancestors did. Because they had to work for the white people, they respected them-otherwise they would have no bread and butter at home.

As far as Indian beliefs and white beliefs go, you can't disqualify either of them. Whatever we were raised with from our youth is part of us, and we just grow up the ladder-that's all there is to it. I don't care if it's Indian doctoring or white doctoring. Whatever we practice in our youth becomes a part of us. Religion has many names. That's why I look at this on a broader perspective than a lot of others, because I've seen too many experiences of God's hand in people's lives. So who am I to say, "This is right and that's wrong." Who am I to think that Indian beliefs are better than white beliefs, or vice versa? But for those Indians who don't speak their own language, I would say study the Bible, because they don't speak Indian. Something that nobody can make you do is to step back into time and pick up your language. It's too difficult.

I don't like to go into the lifestyle as compared to days back when I was a little girl, because a lot has happened. There's been bad feelings created by both sides: the Native Americans and the Anglo-Americans. Their style of education and beliefs are so different from ours. But through the years, whether Indians have a better understanding today, at least they have learned some basic education and some basic talents to survive in this aerospace generation. There's a lot of conflicts we had to grow up with that we didn't realize we were going to face when we got into society.

3

Stewart Indian School, 1937-1939

When my mother met Archie and we were traveling around a lot, my uncles felt that I didn't have a place to live. The field nurse who took care of the half-orphans (that's what they called the children who were separated from their families) was making her rounds, and my uncles complained to her that I wasn't being properly educated. So they decided to send me to Stewart. I was in about the seventh grade; it must have been about 1937.[16]

The field nurse from Austin took us to Stewart that August. I was traveling down that road—it seems like we went on a bus—and I thought, "I'll be back someday." We had to go on the bus to Fallon, and then the field nurse took us on over to Stewart. When I got there, I thought this was just this side of heaven: lawns, tall trees with leaves. You know, I came from the desert and I wasn't used to all this sudden greenness. [laughs] I also liked it because I'd never seen a swimming pool before. You had your own bed and you had bigger houses with floors. [laughs] It was kind of neat, I thought.

I went to Stewart a little bit sick, I understand, so they treated me at the school hospital. I was undernourished. But I only remember one treatment that I ever got when I was a child—my mother was rubbing me with Vicks, which I liked because it was cool. That's the only time I remember being sick. I don't remember missing a day in high school for being sick, and I don't remember my brothers being sick, either—maybe a cold now and then, but nothing serious. That's because we grew up eating Indian foods, not the junk food they eat now.

Stewart's grades were from kindergarten to high school. Students came from all over the western United States: Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, Utah, and from different reservations in Nevada. There was quite a few from reservations in California, too. At Stewart, the dormitories were split up into the larger kids and smaller kids. There were 500 or maybe more Indian children all together in these dormitories, so you can imagine what a job it was to our matrons—we were a handful.

We lived to the signal. Each morning you got up to the bell. The bell would ring and everybody would fall out of their beds. They'd signal us to line up after we woke up in the morning, and we had to line up and be accounted for. And then we had to march over to the dining room and stand in line by grade—first graders, second graders, third graders. Then we all marched in and we sat family-style in the dining room, six at a table. The girls were on one side; the boys way over on the other. We were served hot cereal, and the school had its own dairy, so we had fresh milk. They served a lot of prunes. [laughs] They had scrambled eggs, hotcakes, corn flakes. We had a real rounded breakfast. Everything was served family-style. Then we took our plates up, stacked them up by the dishwashing machine, and then we marched out and went back to the dormitory on our own. When we got there, we changed clothes—of course, we'd already made our beds before breakfast—and our teeth was brushed. We were in A-1 shape. Then they'd blow the whistle and we'd line up again and go off to school. So we were always under escort. [laughs]

We had a lot of Okie teachers—Oklahoma Indians, the Cherokees. [laughs] That was strange, being around the Cherokees, it seemed like. We had every kind of shop on the campus: we had a home economics building; we had a school hospital; we had a bakery. We had everything. It was an empire of its own. I felt like I belonged to a place like that. There were a lot of people there, and it was organized.

When I first got sent to Stewart, I didn't know what education was meant to be. I didn't know whether it was supposed to be a part of my life or not. I couldn't get situated with the idea of studying; I didn't know what that was. To be reading out of a book in a different language was strange enough. We studied from the Dick and Jane books. I couldn't comprehend what they were doing, even if they were walking, running, jumping, or what. I didn't know the difference because they were just words, and I spoke a different language.

I didn't understand why we had to dress up so nice and clean to go to school. That was another thing that I had to learn and be programmed to do. Everything had to be clean: your teeth had to be scrubbed; your shoes had to be polished every day. It took me a while to fall into the routine. I look back once in a while and these things were strange. They were transforming us into educated Anglo-American Indians. [laughs]

I don't think any of the Indian students were treated badly just because they were Indian. I think their purpose was to educate us, but like all educators know, there are some children who don't like to learn. Actually, we had so little academics at that time. They were teaching us other things to motivate our lives, like cooking, sewing—those basic things that we need to do no matter what race we are. We couldn't just sit and do beadwork all day long. There were other things to do around the house—that's what *I* thought, anyway. But I don't think it was a hindrance.

We didn't have enough academics, but that wasn't their purpose at that time. There was reading, writing and arithmetic, but on a very low level. I guess they felt like we were not capable of studying at our grade level, which we probably weren't, you know. We were born of our own native tongue. We didn't understand English enough to function the way you should in a classroom as it is today. We understand English just a little bit better today, and we've forgotten a little bit about our own native tongue in the meantime,

because communications do change through the years. It's just like our children in school today don't understand the language of those that were in school in 1960 when my kids were in high school. They're using a different type of language. It's just the way they're using their language, because they are educated. But we were far from that in our earlier days of education.

Stewart was an adventure, at least, because I liked academics so much. I also learned the basics of life. I did a lot of scrubbing, a lot of polishing, a lot of ironing at the laundry and baking at the bakery. We had Home Economics practicing cottages where we went in and set up our own budgeting system, pricing the types of foods we served. We even raised a little pig. [laughs] That was fun. We had our little acreage, and we were taught a little about cooking and housekeeping that way.

The school offered different classes from time to time. I signed up for a class in woodcarving. We carved wood, polished stones, and studied different kinds of rocks. I was into that for a while, but in the meantime I had been trained in the laundry and in all the vocational shops. We even did sewing for the school at times. We sewed bath towels and sheets and things like that for the dormitory supply rooms, so as the dormitories needed something, the supplies would be there.

We had to work in the kitchen and we had to work in the dishwashing room, and we were all on different details. Some helped in the kitchen. It was a great life, because some of our cooks and instructors were elderly women. It was just like having your mother or your grandmother—that's home. They taught you and showed you how to do things, and we always listened to old people, because we were taught to listen to the words of our elders with high respect. So we always treated our instructors the way we'd treat our grandmothers at home. We learned a lot that way.

About a year after I got to Stewart, I called for my brother, Bobby. Bobby was a boxer, and he was on the team. You could pick things like this to do. Some students learned about ranching; some worked at the dairy; some studied medical things at the hospital; some took shop and auto mechanics; and some studied to be painters or carpenters. My brother was a carpenter. So it was like a vocational school. We all learned something.

The idea of Stewart was to bring things back home and teach others how to be more developed. For example, how to take care of your teeth, how to stay physically fit.... Stewart was kind of like a small college, actually, in some ways. I mean, we learned a lot of insights into things that we didn't have to pay for, basically. [laughs]

It seems like we were always at the gym or in the football fields. We had to go because it was compulsory. We all had to participate in sports, and we all had to be there for all of the games and matches—everything. We competed against other schools in sports. We competed with Douglas High School, and we had some fabulous boxing shows with our team against the United States Marines from Hawthorne. We slaughtered them a lot of times. We played basketball against Reno High School and the University of Nevada, and we beat them a lot. (I remember when the university lost the state championship by one point to the Indian team from Panaca.)

It was much easier to function as a group than to function individually, I imagine. When you're out there alone, you're labeled as being whatever people saw you as. That was harder to face. But when you were in a group like the Stewart Indian School band

or something.... As a group, we functioned very seriously together. We had a purpose. We had a dream that we followed. I mean, we didn't have to come from homes where our parents weren't home, where our food wasn't prepared, where our clothes weren't clean. That school provided us a home, and we helped organize that home together.

It wasn't until I was in Stewart that I realized I was an Indian, for the simple reason that I didn't realize there were so many different tribes of Indians. Stewart gave me a good insight about different tribes, but before that I thought we were the only people that lived here: the *Newe*.

There might have been a few squabbles amongst tribes—they liked to have their fun and call each other petty little names like "snake-eaters" for the Shoshones, "lice-eaters" for the Paiutes, "fish-eaters" for the Pyramid Lake Indians, and "salmon-heads" for northern California Indians. We had little bits of insults amongst the different tribal backgrounds, but they were fun. We could laugh them off then. That was just our way of saying, "We are of different tribes." We live in a society where a person thinks they're better than another, but they're not when they eat lice and eat fish and grasshoppers. [laughs]

The half-breeds used to poke fun at the real full-bloods from the reservations; the full-bloods were supposed to be dumb. I guess this was when the red in us wasn't so red; it was getting white. [laughs] The full-bloods felt the same way about the half-breeds—that they were dumb. But the groups still associated with one another. They had to, because we were kept under strict guard most of the time by the matrons. They wouldn't allow name-calling and they had their rules. But we just liked to poke fun at each other.

At Stewart we weren't supposed to speak our own language. A lot of our teachers didn't want us to make fun of them, which we did sometimes. [laughs] They didn't want us talking our language in class. The other tribes might think we were talking about them, too. What they were trying to make all of us do was speak English, but we weren't aware of that.

I was fearful that somebody was going to call me a Chink or something like that at Stewart. I got so that I wouldn't mix with people because the kids would throw that up at me. In fact, one time I had a terrible fight with a girl from Yerington because they were picking on me in Home Economics and I got my anger stirred up. I almost bit her finger off when we were fighting. [laughs] She had to go to the hospital, and I resented them calling me names because it seemed like I was always in the center of attention. That's why I was off to myself quite a bit. I thought those kids were basically cruel. A lot of times I didn't like myself because they said those things to me.

I was relieved when I could work at my piano teacher's house; she was married to the forest ranger. I cleaned her house in exchange for piano lessons, and I spent quite a bit of my weekend over at her house. It wasn't quite like going AWOL, but close. I did everything at her house: I mopped, scrubbed, waxed, and washed windows, and ironed. Then she would give me my piano lesson, and I enjoyed that. She introduced me to operettas and operas. That's when my mind started to get involved with other things and what the girls had to say at me at the dormitory didn't bother me any more.

I was in the band, so I had a little bit of musical background. We were always recognized and treated like special people, because we did have an outstanding Indian

school band. In band I played a small tuba. Alfred Kitchen played the big one, so I always had to lean on him because he would *always* prompt me and tell me where we were at and what we were doing. There was Montero, Alfred, me and two other tuba players. There's a double bass tuba besides the regular first bass tuba. We had a real good band teacher.

I had no idea that I was going to be playing in a band within a year of when I got to Stewart. I had signed up for band. When they called me to go to the band class, I was really surprised, but I went down to the band room. They gave me an instrument because the school supplied the instruments, so I picked this *big* tuba. I didn't know what it was. It was just a big instrument, and I felt real comfortable with it. [laughs] I learned how to play it and it was fun. We went on these trips and we played the football games and we did our lettering at halftime at football games, which was a chore, but we managed to get through.

We had to go to church on Sunday or else we had to scrub the latrines. [laughs] "Take it or leave it," the major said. "If you don't want to go to church you don't have to. But if you don't, you have to scrub the dorms." That forced us to go to church, so a lot of times I went. A couple of times I stayed back so I could sneak out and go roller-skating on the campus after I got through scrubbing the latrines. [laughs] But I just never seemed to get through.

We always had a Sunday dinner, and I used to look forward to those fruit jellos. [laughs] I remember when I worked in the dining room, I'd get the biggest bowl and hide it under a plate, and if someone came along, I'd say, "That's my plate!" [laughs] Sometimes we took wads of peanut butter in our red and black government sweaters so we could eat it later. But mostly we'd end up making little balls out of it and throwing them at each other. [laughs]

Our principal was Mr. Wiley, who was a very quiet man. The way he talked to people, he was a man of few words. But he handled us very well. There were others that had been there before Mr. Wiley. There was *Mr. Snyder*. We thought that Mr. Snyder was a *tyrant*. We thought he would surely execute us, that he was a bad spider who'd really sting us! And, *oh*, our folks knew *Mr. Snyder*. He'd show you how to behave. [laughs] There's a street called Snyder in Carson City today.

I had real interesting school days. I don't regret going to school, but like all kids, you know, I had to listen to the wrong crowd a couple of times, and I got in trouble. It's funny, because a lot of people called Stewart a reformatory where they were going to reform us and make us good people. [laughs] That's what our folks used to tell us, and we had this idea that Stewart was a punishing school. We were a little bit fearful because they entrapped a lot of minds with that idea. So that's why a lot of kids *hated* Stewart.

They used to tell us, "Now, if you're bad in Stewart, they will send you to Riverside." That's like sending you from San Quentin to Alcatraz! [laughs] I mean, that's how these Indians had labeled the government schools. These were places of punishment. You better act right like a white man, or else. I guess that's what they meant, because we were always being sent up the river from the time we heard about these government schools. We were threatened with punishment all the time. If we made it through Stewart and didn't get hung, we were sure going to get it in Riverside! [laughs] Though I ended up liking Stewart, I had this in my mind when I went there—that I had better behave myself. I don't

remember anything that I did that was bad, compared to the juvenile delinquents today! [laughs]

When I got to Stewart, of course, it was different than the way it was interpreted at home. When I got there, I thought, "Oh, this is a classy place"—green lawns, trees, swimming pool, dining room where you're fed three squares a day, and clean sheets to sleep in. What was there to complain about? The only thing that you had to accept was the idea that Indians can survive and go to school. If you could accept that, you were in. So you just followed the crowd; you did what everybody else was doing. Everybody went to school and did their thing, and they were happy.

We didn't have things easy at Stewart. We had to wear GI everything. We even had GI toothbrushes and the GI soap wasn't very pleasant, either, but we had to wash our socks with it. But it all worked out OK. [laughs]

I think they exaggerated the treatment of the Indian schools as being cruel. Maybe it seemed cruel to some people because our race of people is a little bit playful. (I won't say lazy—I'll say playful.) I believe that's our custom of communication or socialization, or whatever you want to call it. We have a hard time using our intellectual abilities. The Americans are intellectual, but the Indians are the opposite because they communicate by their arts, their actions, and their emotional side more. So getting the two together was hard. I think it was difficult, because you have children that are unteachable. It's difficult to learn anything.

However, when the white teachers started talking about the Indians, that didn't set well with me. They said that the Indians were dirty and they had bugs and they said all kinds of things about the Indian cultures. Well, that bugged me, too, because I did speak Shoshone. I didn't think we were dirty and I didn't think we had bugs. They had us believe that the Indians couldn't find jobs, either. This is a cliche that went around the school that we had to grow up with. So sometimes I felt like I didn't like myself; I didn't like being an Indian, because they were dirty and they were ignorant and they didn't know how to work. They had to do all kinds of the dirty work for white people. Or at least that's what my mom used to say.

We were always brainwashed to think that we were poor Indians. They never said we were *made* poor, or by who; they just said we were poor Indians.

We had assembly programs, and that's where I saw Jim Thorpe. I guess the King of Sweden told him he was the greatest athlete in the world, and Jim Thorpe said, "Thanks, King."[17] [laughs] Anyway, he was on a tour. I remember he could pick people up off the floor with his jaw and then lay them down straight. I don't know who else I saw at assembly, but I remember seeing Jim Thorpe. That was, of course, *after* he went to the Olympics.

We had these assemblies at Stewart, plus movies. I mean, they gave us everything, but we were always chaperoned. Everywhere we went we were chaperoned. Sometimes we had white dances in the gymnasium at Stewart. But that was different from the dances we knew. We were used to round dancing and singing. You had to put your true words into your singing, because it was like praying.

We had great commencement programs. The students would put on their tribal dances. The kids pretty much remembered their dances, songs, and ceremonies. We had a show right under the spotlight during

commencement week, and we had a great big barbecue. Everybody came from the different reservations in Nevada, and from out-of-state, too. It was a huge commencement program. It lasted, I think, three days; then the school closed for the summer. I remember our bakery baked over one hundred pies, and we carried them all out to the barbecue area. Over one hundred pies! And we baked the best bread I ever tasted. The school always had its own bakery goods and rolls and stuff we baked for the commencement exercises. Then there were track meets and baseball games—whatever—to finish up the year. But people didn't sell things at the events.

They had social times in the classrooms or over to the gymnasium during the sports events or whatever. We could visit one another over there, but mostly they didn't mix the boys with the girls. We were spared a lot of trouble, because they kept the boundaries very tight. Kids would go together to the candy store. They would treat each other over there and talk and visit. They all lived and ate together, anyhow, so there was a lot of togetherness.

The students always seemed to settle once they got to Stewart. Then we became like a family, with the older kids looking after the small kids. But there was always an elite group of students that were the nice-looking kids, and they separated themselves from the kids that were from poor reservations. Imagine! A minority group in an Indian school! [laughs]

A few kids had a background of having it real nice. The kids from Warm Springs, Oregon, had a lot of money, and they had school banks, you know. The tribes deposited money for them in their accounts at school. They were the richer kids. There were a few others from Oregon and Washington that had money over us. But we had one shopping day a month, when we could go to Reno with five dollars.

My folks never came to see me when I was there, and I didn't go home in the summertime. I never went back to see them until fifteen years after I was married, but my mother had sent me off with a good feeling: I felt my life was my own. Of course, I was a smartie about it. I had that teenage attitude where you think you know it all. She said, "If you think you know what it's all about, go out and find out, but don't come home crying." I never went home crying. I never went *home*, so I was *still* crying! [laughs] Well, I respected what she told me. Of course, I thought that my mother didn't know anything, too. But she knew it wouldn't be easy.

We lost communication with our families at home. Half of them didn't expect us to come home, anyway. I knew my mother didn't-maybe just to see her, but not really to go home and settle down. She had told us to make our own lives, and my brothers and I did. And I don't think my mother ever regretted not seeing us that much, because our lives were our own. This is how she felt.

There are many people still living that I went to school with. A lot of people went on to college. Those who went into the service all left for Pearl Harbor, I remember. The campus was deserted. All the boys took off and went and joined the service. A lot have done good, from what I've observed, and their kids are also doing good today. Many are right up there with the rest of the kids nowadays as far as getting degrees and that, and they all have good positions. And some now have their own businesses. For instance, George Molino now has a store at Pyramid Lake. He and his wife know our family. All I can see is that they finally made it.

Looking back today, I think the campus was run very well for the simple reason that the girls stayed on the girls' side, and the boys stayed on the boys' side. [laughs] There wasn't so much liberality where the boys came to the girls' dorm and that kind of thing. We were taught to mind our p's and q's. There wasn't really any sneaking around. The boys never tried to sneak around and neither did the girls, maybe because we had people that toured the campus at nights.

It was a very orderly campus, like any military base. Compare that with today—the boarding schools today are very bad. They have lost control and are *very* disorderly. They're just wide-open nowadays. For young kids, I think you have to keep the gates closed until they finish high school because they get too involved before they're *sixteen*! Then they act like they're married, or worse. I don't know how their lives are going to turn out up the road a-ways. I don't know what they're going to think of themselves for all that they know about life today. How are they going to make a living? These kids today think that money buys everything. Yes, but you've got to work for it. They say *never* teach a child that everything's free because you'll handicap them. You've got to teach them that they earn their money. Those are the types of values we learned at Stewart.

In thinking about Stewart and my other adventures, I think my home life and the way I was meant to live was all taken away by the powers of this world: educational powers, medical powers, and all these different organizations. Here I was used to the wide-open ranges which were home to me, and I ended up with no home life.

4

Living in the Govenor's Mansion

I was in Sewart three years-for seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. Though I learned many things there, I didn't think they had a strong enough academic course. I wasn't satisfied with that area. In fact, that's why I got bored with Stewart and left the school at the end of the ninth grade. They weren't teaching me very many academic courses. I had already been trained in all the vocational areas, but I felt like I had a strong need to learn more about English and math and other things. I had learned to speak a little English at Stillwater and Fallon, and then a little bit more in Stewart. Then I really learned more from Carson City High School.

I was baby-sitting for a state senator during the summer after ninth grade, and my girlfriend from Sparks was working at the Governor's mansion. I had been baby-sitting Ken Johnson's two children-he owned Hunter's Lodge in Carson City. Then I also worked for George Meyers. I baby-sat for his daughter. He still owns Meyers Hardware store there.

That summer I met Lucille Sanchez, who worked at Governor E. P. Carville's mansion. [Carville was governor of Nevada from 1939 to 1945.] We would meet on our days off. She was a housekeeper and maid. Some evenings I would go up there and help her, teach her how to set the table...of course, restaurant work was part of my background, anyway, from being around Harry's restaurant in Austin. So I would assist her for Sunday dinners-I'd go to the dining room and help her set the table: we'd put all the plates out and the ten pieces of silverware that go with each plate. I got used to doing this with her. We could set that place up in nothing flat, because we were getting pretty experienced. But Lucille had planned to go on to be a teacher, and she had plans to go to Arizona State Teacher's College in Tempe, Arizona. So she asked me if I would be interested in taking her place when she moved. She said that she would ask Mrs. Carville, because Mrs. Carville had asked if I would be interested, anyway.

I was still living down at Ken Johnson's at the time, because I would have had to return to Stewart otherwise. If I hadn't landed a good job, they wouldn't have let me leave Stewart,

but as it happened, it was real easy to get out. I was fifteen, I think. (That's why I say to my grandchildren, "I was working when I was fifteen, and I finished high school, too!")

I just fit right in at the mansion. I was at home with Lucille, because some nights I'd spend up there with her and I knew what was expected of me: to collect the laundry and get it ready for the laundry trucks. I just kind of fell into the routine-how to clean and serve and all that. Because of the vocational background at Stewart, nothing was too complicated for me at that time, so I moved in right after Lucille left. I just moved into her place, which at that time was downstairs. Later, when the cook left, I moved upstairs into her place. I had my own quarters right in the mansion upstairs: I had a living room, a bathroom, and a bedroom with two closets.

While living and working in the Governor's mansion, I attended Carson City High School. When I started at Carson High, I put myself back in the ninth grade to start over again. I was very conscientious at that time. [laughs] I mean, there's no disgrace in starting over. I had great plans for myself. I thought if I put myself back, I'd get a *full* four-year high school education, and that might get me a secretarial position someday. But kids nowadays can't *wait* to get out of high school.

Some of the Indian kids at Carson High were related to Stewart employees. They went to school in Carson because they couldn't go to a government school if their parents were working for the government.

I joined the band when I got to Carson High. I had to be there by 8:00 in the morning for band practices. Sometimes we performed operettas...we didn't play just little row-row-row-your-boat-gently-down-the-stream-type music; we played classical music. I was also on the basketball team, so I was pretty busy.

I had good teachers; some of the teachers there have taught very prominent citizens, like Paul Laxalt before me and his brothers. There are just a lot of kids who have made it, who became very wealthy.

Living in the mansion, I found Governor Carville to be a very warm-hearted person-easy to talk to. He and Mrs. Carville used to sign my report cards. One thing about him that really tickled me was he used to sing Shoshone songs in the kitchen. He could talk Shoshone language and sing Indian songs like the Shoshones did up in Elko, because he had a ranch there and always hired Shoshone ranch hands. I guess he sang songs that his ranch hands would sing-the cowboy ballad-type singing. He could also do Indian dances. I didn't talk to the governor in Shoshone. I would just laugh. I would laugh at him talking Shoshone, because I couldn't believe it. I just couldn't believe it! It shocked me. Most people in Nevada don't know that Governor Carville could speak Shoshone.

Governor Carville had been United States Attorney and was also a judge, so he was a very important man even before he was elected. I remember when Governor Carville ran for his second term and he won. Every radio was on in the house. [laughs] There were a lot of friends there that came to listen to the contestants. Then later while I was in the service, I guess Governor Carville ran for senator.[18]

The governor and his wife had four children. Robert, the youngest one, was my age. He was going to Bellarmine Preparatory College in San Jose, California. Ted was an officer in the navy, and Richard went to Stanford University. Their fourth child, a baby girl, died.

I was the only Indian working at the mansion, and was the youngest employee

there. There were many other employees who took care of the property-the ex-convicts [trustees] took care of the yard, and different gardeners would come in, too. We also had a cook until the war came along and she got a job at the Veteran's Hospital in Reno-that's when I moved upstairs and got her quarters. After the cook left, Mrs. Carville started doing the cooking. She cooked my lunch and she'd wait for me after school, and she signed my report cards.

Governor and Mrs. Carville were devout Catholics, and Bishop Gorman used to come over twice a week to eat. I got to know the bishop very well. The governor invited me to go to a Christmas mass one year, a midnight mass. In the church he had a special pew that was reserved for him, so I got to sit there with them and their son, Bob, who was home from preparatory college during the Christmas season. Afterwards, Governor Carville says, "How'd you like the mass?"

And I said, "Yes, that was something."

He says, "You know, you got to be a good athlete to be a Catholic," he said. "Down on your knees, up on your feet, back in your seat.... You got to be a *good* athlete to be a Catholic." I laughed because that's exactly what I was thinking. Those people never sit down for a little while like Protestant churches. They're down on their knees, and up and sitting down again, and they're genuflecting in the aisles and they're genuflecting as they cross the altar, and at the door, and holy water flying all over the place, and.... [laughs]

There's one thing I'll always remember about Governor Carville: he told me I was as good as anybody on the face of this earth-I was equal. I remember one time when we went to get his granddaughter, Irma Anne, in Las Vegas. (She was named after Mrs. Carville, whose name was Irma.) We stopped in Tonopah because he was hungry, but I wouldn't go into the restaurant with him and his chauffeur. I didn't want to. I was going to sit in the back of the car and stay there. This was during the time when Indians ate in the back of restaurants. He told me, "Now, you just come right on in with the rest of us. It's time for you to eat, too. You're just as good as we are, so don't be afraid. Just come on in and eat." He must have read my mind, because I wasn't going to go in with him. I always knew that he could see right through me, and that he meant what he said.

That event started opening up a lot of doors for me. I realized that I'm not a prisoner of this country anymore-not because I was working for the governor, but because he treated me like an equal. He had an Indian sense of humor because he kind of communicated through comedy, through teasing. He made me feel like Indians are OK. He hired them, worked with them, sang their songs, and joked the way they did. I thought it was so funny that I didn't have to speak his language-he spoke mine! He spoke Shoshone very good.

Governor Carville was a real humanitarian. I didn't take him as white or Indian. He was just a good humanitarian and I was always happy wherever he took me. The white people in Carson City didn't make fun of me, because they knew I worked at the Governor's mansion. In Carson City people treated me differently because they respected the governor. Mrs. Carville used to give me the checks, and I'd go downtown to pay bills. I used to go to pay the newspaper company, grocery stores where we charged, shoe stores, drug stores, and bakeries. It got so that all the merchants in town knew me. The students at Carson High School treated me real special, and the teachers did, too.

None of my friends or classmates thought it was unusual that I lived in the Governor's

mansion. They never mentioned it, ever. I was treated very good by my classmates. I think I earned about $130 a month-somewhere around there, and that was a lot of money then. It was better than when I lived in Stewart, where I didn't get a penny but worked just as hard. But it's not the idea that money is everything-I did pick up a lot of good talents at Stewart.

When I lived at the mansion, we had a high school club called LaSool. What we did was we had a party at somebody's home once a month. One time, the governor's wife allowed me to have the party at the mansion, so all the girls came up *there*. I tried to make a fancy baked apple with jello in it and whipped cream on top. It seemed so funny, because the girls kept running up to my living room. They were excited about being inside the mansion.

There were also times when the girls would call me when they were outside so they could come up to my room. [laughs] One of them was Jackie Ross, who later married Paul Laxalt. Her father was a very prominent attorney in Carson City. Paul Laxalt used to come to some of the Carson City High School dances when he was going to the University of Nevada. I remember I used to see him. I went to school with his brothers. They were all nice children, very kind. His sister, Susan, became a Catholic nun. She was very sweet. I could always talk to her because she was so friendly.

Another friend of mine was Jean Sanford. Her father was also an attorney there. I think she passed away. Then there was Lawrence Jeppson, who was the son of the Nevada state highway engineer. We lived across the street from them.

A lot of the people I went to school with came from business families. A lot of their parents were lawyers and state officials. Another schoolmate of mine was Leslie Harvey, whose father was a minister in an Episcopalian church. I came across her just nine years ago, in fact, when I worked at the Washoe Medical Center. She was married to a regent of the University of Nevada. All of her four children were lawyers, even her daughter. Leslie was working as a volunteer at Washoe Medical, and they lived in Sparks. She was very sweet.

When I later left for California, I left many people behind in Nevada that I thought I would never see again, like Mrs. Carville. I have a terrible habit of not keeping in touch with people. In fact, I heard that she passed away a little after I arrived back in Fallon. She died in Long Beach, California, at the age of ninety-one. I could have seen her, but I didn't keep in touch except for the time I stopped to visit when I was on furlough. Mrs. Carville's sister, Marsha, still lives in Long Beach. I guess Governor Carville died when he was en route from Washington, D.C., to Reno. I think it was in 1956. They were both good people.

5

Wartime Military Service

About my Junior year at Carson High, I met Ray Redner. He was a Chilula Indian of the Maple family from the Redwood Creek area in northern California.[19] Ray was born in Blue Lake, California, with a twin that died. I understand the other twin possibly was light complected, but Ray had darker hair and skin.

Ray was attending Stewart and was working at a boy's ranch in Jacks Valley. The ranch belonged to Stewart-it was part of the agricultural extension program. It was called Jacks Valley ranch and it was about eight miles from Carson City. They watched cattle at the ranch and did some dairy work up there. The boys that didn't go home for summer could spend the summer there, and they could work on that ranch. Ray had been at the ranch just that summer. He was at Stewart while I was there. He was ten or twelve years old then, and he was on the small boys' side of the dormitory. I remember him on the small boys' side, because he was playing basketball when I first saw him.

Ray joined the service when he was sixteen. His father gave him permission to join, so he enlisted in the navy. I was a senior in high school at the time, and I was getting tired of staying at the mansion and wanted to do something else. I had already joined the Cadet Nursing Corps, and I was waiting for my orders when we decided to get married. I was working at the Stewart Sanitarium while I was waiting for my orders. As it turned out, the sanitarium was going to be closed because the government was tightening up and letting some of the small hospitals go. Stewart Sanitarium was one of them.

Ray came back on a leave and we got married in 1944. It turned out I couldn't join the Cadet Nursing Corps because I got married, even though I had already gotten my orders to report to Colorado Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs. I didn't realize that they wouldn't take married cadets. So I went and joined the service.

First I was going to join the navy because my husband had joined the navy in 1943. But the quota was filled, so I joined the WACs [Women's Army Corps]. They first offered me band, so I could play at the White House

and different places. But playing in the band in the army didn't set well with me. I wanted to learn something more professional, like nursing, so I went into the Medical Corps.

My mother didn't really understand my going into the military. Of course, she'd never been out of the state of Nevada, but she approved of whatever I was doing *because* she didn't understand. She thought maybe I did. It was just like when I worked at the mansion, she didn't understand that either. But whatever I was doing, it was OK with her. I didn't have any contact with her when I was at Stewart or in the service because she didn't read or write.

I reported to the army for three months of basic training. (It was an emergency time, and they were putting new recruits through basic training as fast as they could. All the military bases were in full swing.) I boarded the train in Reno and went to Salt Lake City. I traveled all night by train and then stayed at the Temple Square Hotel across from the Mormon Tabernacle Square. I picked up and joined the other girls that had been in the service, and traveled on across to Fort Des Moines in Des Moines, Iowa, a great big female military base. Fort Des Moines had been one of the original cavalry posts that was converted into a women's basic training center.

When we arrived, we went into the receiving station, which was full of double bunks. It was larger than an ordinary high school gymnasium. That's where all the women reported until they got their orders to report to different barracks. We started right off with the customary military order of going in groups to receive our government issues of complete military clothing and shoes, everything khaki colored. Then we got put into different platoons and got our barracks assignment. Then we started basic training.

We made our beds and we lined up and marched to the mess halls for breakfast at 6:00 a.m. Our company sergeant was right there yelling out orders, but I was used to marching already because I had played seven years in the band at Stewart Indian School and Carson High. So, marching was just my nature. Then at 8:00, after we got our classes all scheduled, we went to study military customs and courtesies. We learned every phase of military training, the *do's* and *don'ts* of the military and the privilege of wearing a military uniform. We also had a complete physical and got all our shots in both arms, like cattle going through the chute to be counted. The medical techs were on both sides and just flew those needles into our arms. Then that night we had to scrub the barracks to keep from getting sore. Oh, to get up the next morning wasn't very pleasant.

We had military parades on Saturdays. All the different companies had to report to the big field to show our company commander how well we were marching. Then we went into our weekly routine, going to breakfast, GI-ing our barracks, and jumping into our fatigue uniforms to go for physical exercise. We'd fall out and in five minutes change into our A-1 uniform and report to classes.

We lived in very small quarters, just our bed and our trunk at the foot of our bed. It was much like the boarding school except we had a small closet. I guess we weren't supposed to have very many clothes because that closet was less than two feet wide. But to live in very small quarters was second nature to me with just our bunk, closet, and trunk. Everything in our trunk had to be folded a certain way so it all fit. We had inspections regularly.

Our officers were real smart-looking women. They looked very professional. They wore different color uniforms than we did-

theirs was a deeper green. We had an officer for everything: a finance officer, our company officers, and all the different professional departments-they were all women officers.

There was an Indian girl from Fallon at the base. I remember one day when I was at the PX [Post Exchange], I ran into her. The PX was like a regular store where we went in the evenings for a while. They had different types of clothing, make-up, and other supplies that were sold at government prices. There was also a fountain there and a little restaurant-it was a nice place. I was shopping around there and I turned around and looked, because somebody tapped me on the shoulder. It was my friend, Evelyn Works, from Fallon. I was glad to see her because I was so lonesome. She told me she was leaving the service and going home. I don't know why exactly. Anyway, I always seemed to run into her in different places at different times.

I met a lot of nice girls at basic training. The Easterners treated me *really* kindly. The Easterners are real friendly to the Native Americans, though some people would call me Chief and make other comments. But I figured that wherever you go, somebody's always going to say something. Some invited me to go to church with them, and some out for dinners. We used to get an A-pass, which got you off the base for four to five hours-enough time to go into town and then come back. But there was also a deadline. If a lot of the girls went uptown to go to the movies or out to a bar or what-have-you, there'd be a lineup of cabs. The girls all made a beeline for the cabs at 2:00 a.m. You could see all the lights headed for the base, everybody going home at the same time. [laughs]

There were a couple of times we went out there in Des Moines in the winter. The snow was very deep and we had to march on the ice and things, too. But we were careful and we could do it. We had to conquer everything-rain or flood or fire, or what-have-you. We were soldiers, and we had to face all the elements. We had to shovel snow, we had to wash our windows on weekends. We had to GI our barracks, and our bathrooms had to be spotless. We had white glove inspections on Saturdays, and if we needed a haircut and the captain saw it, she'd tap us on the shoulder and say, "Report to the beauty parlor. Get your hair off your shoulders." I had lots of hair, and I thought I could roll it up and then put my hat right on it, but it was absolutely too thick. [laughs] So I went in and they just whacked my hair off left and right.

We had a lot of lonely days. It feels strange to be in the service, because everybody you meet is a stranger. Then by the time you get acquainted with them, you're always parting and saying good-bye. Plus you've already said good-bye to all of your family.

I did sentry duty for one week on the base. We walked with whistles. We had to walk in a military manner, but we didn't carry any firearms. We had to say, "Halt! Who goes there?" if we saw anything strange. Since we didn't carry any firearms, we had to blow the whistle to the second station, and then they called for the men MPs [Military Police], who were at the front gate. They were the ones who carried the firearms.

They taught us about who carries firearms, and a group of women were sent then on to other areas to study things about handling weapons. Those usually were registered nurses, women of the Signal Corps. Then we also had six-footer women that worked in the motor pool to be mechanics and to handle heavy equipment. They were sent overseas. They had to train on the same bases as men because they had to go to the front lines, too. These six-footers were something to see. These six-footer women could handle jeeps

and all that. We used to see them walk around in their fatigues. They were really big women!

We were assigned to work in different departments during basic training. They picked a lot of girls to work in personnel, which meant that they had to be attractive girls of real influential personality. Most of us wanted to be medical WACs: surgical, veterinarian, dental, and x-ray technicians. We were all grouped into going to different schools. Besides those areas, there was also administration and so forth in the medical world. Some were chosen to be cooks, so they went to cook school for the service. No military personnel worked in the PX, because civilians handled that. They also handled the movies, the musical departments, and libraries and all that.

After we finished our studying and training, we graduated and had to say good-bye to our friends again. At graduation, several officers gave speeches-one I remember very well. It touched my heart, because he was so genuine. A lot of people look on women as the weaker group. Well, he didn't, and he said that a woman's role in the military is double because she's called forth to assist in a time of war and she sacrificed her freedom to serve in a time of emergency. Some left husbands home; some left children. (I thought when I left the military I would go home and have a big family. Little did I dream I would be the mother of ten children. [laughs]) I was really getting ready to serve Uncle Sam and then come home and have a big family. I knew the officer was talking about me, that women had a much bigger role than men had. The men know they should help their wives at home with their families, but a lot of them are very egotistical. They think that they won the war and that they don't have to serve nobody when they get out, when really they should appreciate their families, because they were living their lives on the front lines. But it takes all kinds of soldiers to make a service.

After our very nice graduation, we all packed up our gear and went back to the receiving station. Oh, we were snapping-to this time. We were walking sharper, and our shoulders were more muscular, and we looked more trim. We boarded the train and we went down to El Paso, Texas. The base at El Paso was another one that was originally a cavalry post. We all had special sleeping quarters on the train, and we had very good service. We all ate in the dining room on the train and the waiters carried these huge circular trays, and they could weave and rock with the train and not spill any food. We had priority over the civilians and we were served A-1 style-white tablecloths and all. Our waiters were the blacks.

We were sent to William Beaumont General Hospital in El Paso. It was on a hillside. El Paso was interesting because we were stationed right across the street from Fort Worth. Then to the right was Fort Biggs, and to the left was Logan Heights. There were many military bases right around us. I had already decided I wanted to be a nurse, because my husband was overseas-not that I thought that the army and navy would ever work in the same area, but we *were* working for the same country, after all. [laughs]

From as high as we were situated on the hillside we could look across the street to Juarez, Mexico, really south of the border. A lot of their people would come over and have sales by the roadside. They made all kinds of things. They used a lot of rabbit skin to make little animals. (I had a little rabbit skin dog that I had for a long, long time.) A lot of things they sold looked a little cheap, but we really couldn't complain because I guess our money is much more valuable than theirs. I thought the Mexican people were very happy

people, because they'd sit on the streets and they'd play the guitars and sing.

We didn't have to fall out on Sundays. We could lay in our barracks; we could go over to the PX; we could wear our off-duty uniforms. We could wear them to the mess hall late on Sunday mornings or go to church. Those uniforms were pretty. There were a lot of hangovers those mornings, too. [laughs]

At the hospital we learned to give shots and we practiced taking all the vital signs. One day we would have doctors that lectured us from 8:00 to 4:00, and the next day would be for practice.

William Beaumont General Hospital was a place where burn victims got their treatment. It was a big plastic surgery center, and there were many people from Hollywood who worked there rebuilding the faces of burn victims. They used pictures of the victims to help them. A lot of the doctors did a real good job. The group that was there when I got there was the Pearl Harbor victims. Our GIs had burnt faces that were unrecognizable. They had matchsticks inserted into their facial openings such as their noses. It was hard to look at them, but we were told by our officers to guard our feelings and just treat them natural. A lot of those patients were up in the big psycho wards. They used to holler at us as we were marching to mess halls. Our sergeant would say, "In cadence, wave," and we'd all wave at once. [laughs]

It was funny, because there were a lot of girls who didn't like the medical corps. Some of them flunked out. Some just physically couldn't take it because some of the things we had to do made them sick to their stomach. They didn't get kicked out of the service or anything-they were just reclassified. [laughs]

When we had our graduation from the medical training departments, we had to say good-bye to our friends again. We were escorted to the train again and boarded, traveling A1 to New Orleans to LaGarde General Hospital.

There's a bridge in New Orleans that crosses the Mississippi River. It's called the Long Bridge, named after Senator [Huey P.] Long from Louisiana. It was springtime and it was right after the floods. In fact, the cemeteries had to use vaults above the ground because of the flooding conditions. Being from Nevada, this was something new to me. I noticed as I traveled on the train that a lot of Negro people lived along the river in cabins. Coming into New Orleans at the railroad station was strange, too, because there were more black people in that one area than I was ever used to seeing. They had their own stores and businesses at the railroad station. I was surprised to see all that.

When we arrived, the sergeants met us from the base hospital and we jumped into the convoy trucks and headed for LaGarde General. The hospital was along Lake Pontchartrain, a big lake. Because the hospital was situated in Louisiana, a seaport, there were a lot of people from Brazil and South America there. That was interesting, too, because I was just beginning to realize that there were people from other countries, and they didn't all speak English. [laughs] It was different than what I was used to seeing. Canal Street was the busiest street I'd ever seen. See's Candy Factory was made of blue mirror on the outside. It was beautiful, like a castle. And the magnolia trees were in blossom on the driveways. Can you imagine having magnolia trees going to your station? [laughs] The blossoms are great big and white. They're real pretty.

Louisiana seemed like a foreign country, and it was very damp. If you hung your washing out damp, it came back in more damp. [laughs] One thing I thought was

funny about Louisiana was the fireflies. We used to sit around in the evenings on the hospital grounds and watch them.

There were a lot of GIs coming to the hospital from European theatres of war. They came off of their hospital ships at night on the gurneys. LaGarde was a big general hospital for civilians and GI wives, too. General hospitals are basically like a receiving hospital. Naturally we treated a large number of orthopedic injuries.

We had a big mess hall on the base where we had to get our patients' meals. We all had to take turns driving the mess cart back and forth. We worked ten-hour days. There were colored girls at the base that did the dishes. They were jovial people, cracking jokes at one another. They're real tender-hearted people, and I always had a lot of fun with them. If it wasn't for those people that could make you laugh, my face would have been a foot long. Being out of the state of Nevada and around strangers, I felt like I was in a foreign country, except for the colored help that was in the kitchens. We had a few laughs, and life didn't seem such a burden.

On our days off we could go where we wanted to, and one time we went to eat along the lake. They served a lot of lobsters, but I didn't know what those ugly things were. I didn't even know how to eat them, but everybody seemed to be enjoying them. They were cracking them and eating them with tamales-that's their style of eating. I thought, "What's all these things they're eating?" I just didn't like the looks of the lobsters. I didn't know what to eat down there, because everything was so strange. I did try some of those little finger tamales, though. It was the only thing I could tolerate. Most of the restaurants in town were closed during the war. Some opened up for short intervals, but mainly they were closed. All the food had gone to war, too, I guess. All the good places to eat, like the St. Regis restaurant, were closed for the duration, so we didn't get to see everything.

When I finished boot camp I was a private first class. When we finished medical training at LaGarde General, we automatically would have been T-4 tech sergeants, but it depended on the number of openings that were available. There were always others ahead of you in line for promotions. If you got promoted you were lucky. They handed out promotions during peacetime left and right, but it wasn't that way during wartime. You came up in your ranks when there was an opening. We just had to go up the ladder as there were openings.

For men, if you did real, real well out on the battlefield, you got your ranks there. There was an Indian, Leonard Lowry, who made it all the way to colonel during the war. He lives in Susanville now. He was just one of those people who was good in anything he did, and he earned his ranks on the battlefield.

We had furloughs every now and then. I remember going back to Carson City on furlough after I got transferred from LaGarde General Hospital. I think we had either seven or ten days, I forgot which. I went to see my friends in Carson City, and I visited Mrs. Carville at the mansion. She was glad to see me and I got to sleep in my old room. She told me of all the happenings there.

The reason I got to go on furlough was because I was on my way to the Los Angeles Port of Embarkation, where I had been stationed after LaGarde General. I had to travel by myself there on the Greyhound from Louisiana. As soon as I got to my station, they were waiting-you had to be at a certain place at a certain time. If I had gone as a civilian, I probably would have been lost, because I wouldn't know where I was going. [laughs]

I went to Wilmington, California, and after they received the new recruits there, our

CO [Commanding Officer] sent us on over to Torrance, California, to a little merchant marine station hospital. This was a hospital that handled GI wives, merchant marines and sailors more-so than military personnel. By being sent to Torrance, I probably would have gone out on a hospital ship, because that was also a receiving station for our registered nurses-the old group came back and the fresh nurses went out to sea. We'd either have an overabundance of nurses or a scarcity. A lot of our nurses that came off the hospital ships would be ill from tropical fever and different things. We also received a lot of POWs [Prisoners of War] there from the Attu Islands that came in very ill from starvation, tuberculosis, and different illnesses.

I got stationed in the maternity division taking care of GI wives. There were a lot of babies born during wartime. We were busy all the time, and I did all of the autoclaving, the sterilizing. I met a lot of people from around that area, and a lot of nurses, too.

We got to go to L.A. and looked around. We had special tickets to go and see a lot of the movie stars in the entertainment world. Being stationed there was a little bit different than our military training bases: we had to be up and at 'em at the military bases, but once we were stationed it was like a regular job and we had days off. We got regular pay; we could bank; we could go on a shopping tour or go off the base in the evenings; it wasn't compulsory that we ate in the dining room or have regular inspections on weekends. But at the same time it was kind of a letdown-after all that hurrying and the strictness of basic training. Of course, we still had to salute our officers.

But then the war was over about nine months after I had arrived. I remember I was walking down the street in Wilmington-I had just been to the bank, and suddenly the sirens went off, everything just went off, anything that could whistle or blow its horn. Everything just sounded at the same time that the war was over. Then the newspapers came out: "The war's ended," and all this and that. I thought, "Oh, my goodness. Now what do I do?" But I was kind of a little bit glad, and I hurried back to my station at Torrance.

They told us that military WACs could get out, and told who-all could leave and who-all could stay. But no one stayed at the station hospital. They were transferred to general hospitals throughout the United States, like Walter Reed Hospital, or Carson Hospital in Denver. Later I learned that my company had been sent to Australia to bring back the GI wives. I was sent to Camp Beale in Sacramento to be discharged. They just gave us our papers and we were gone.

6

Family Life and Employment, 1946-1970s

After I was discharged from the army, I went to Eureka, California, because Mr. Redner's dad, Frank, had written me a letter while I was in the service. He told me that his wife, Ruth, had had a stroke. She was so ill, and she was crying all the time. I thought, "Oh, I could go up there and help him because of my medical training." I was pretty well into the hospital routine by then, so I went up to Eureka and I introduced myself.

Mr. Redner's place was a little white house on Montana Street. He let me stay there and introduced me to his wife. About a month later, my husband, Ray, came there. He had been stationed at Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay after he came back from being overseas. We stayed there about a month with them, but Mrs. Redner was very jealous of the attention that my husband's dad was giving him. She was his stepmother. (My husband's mother was a Chilula Indian from northern California. There are several aunts, great-aunts, and other relatives of the children who live up around the Hoopa Reservation in California. They're also related to some Yurok Indians and some people from the Redwood tribe.)

We finally decided to move out of the house, so we moved to a housing project. It used to be a project where the dry-dock workers lived during the war. Since we were just out of the military, we got right in. Some of the units were two bedrooms, some were three. They were pretty nice for that type of building. The project had nice facilities, like a laundry, clotheslines, and nice lawns. It was close to a grocery store down by the bay. There were a lot of other GIs that got housing there, too, so we met a lot of people. Then all the children came along. First Russ was born in 1946. Then came Norene, Frank, Roy, Rose, Theresa, Raymond, Virginia, Robert, and Gerard. They were born in that order, but I don't know where I'm at on dates anymore. Our children got acquainted with the neighbors' children. The communities really grew, and lots of families spread out and bought properties and homes, eventually. There was a logging boom in that area, so there were a lot of jobs.

Mrs. Redner's health did not improve, though, and she passed away. Mr. Redner was sort of lonely, so he found another companion a little bit later. He used to come over and visit us and play with Russell and Norene. He enjoyed them so much. We named our son, Frank, after him, because Mr. Redner was at our home the day we came back from the hospital. Soon after that, Mr. Redner went into the hospital because he was suffering with cancer of the bone and he had a lot of pain. At that time, my husband was working at the barrel factory over in Arcata.

I was working at St. Joseph's County Hospital in Eureka. Then I went to work at the convalescent center, and I worked there a long time. When it first opened, it was a beautiful place. There was a waterfall in the middle of the circular living room. The water came down real pretty on some lily pads. The convalescent center was owned by an Italian man, Mr. DeBeni. He was a very creative person, though he never went to college.

The center had sixty-five beds, so it was small, but there sure was a lot of work. The rooms were a beautiful blue color, instead of that gaudy prison yellow. I did a lot of physiotherapy work there, and I was a treatment nurse for a lot of time. But because they were a for-profit hospital, they didn't like to keep employees for over ten years, because they had to start paying higher wages and insurance. So they would start laying off the people as a top priority, because if they keep things on a minimum wage, they made more money, too.

Mr. DeBeni eventually got a monopoly on all of the rest homes in that area, so he had about six of them total. Some were Spanish-style hospitals, and some were built like homes up in the hills, overlooking the ocean. I got real busy at that hospital, because I wanted to forget my past, so I really bogged down and learned a lot in those years about the care of the elderly.

I had a lot of wonderful experiences in the convalescent center. I don't know why this is, but working with the elderly was always a part of my life. I think it's because we have such respect for our elderlies. We honor our old people, because we look up to our grandpas and our aunts and uncles. So I used to really enjoy my work with the elderly in the convalescent hospitals.

We have such a large family, but I'd say all-in-all my children put a lot into education. This was something I worried about when my husband got tuberculosis and couldn't work anymore, but somehow it all panned out anyway. My children graduated from high school. Russell graduated from St. Bernard's Catholic High School; Frank, Norene, and Theresa graduated from Eureka; and the rest of the kids went to other schools. I wanted all of my children to go to college, and I could see *no way* that I would ever have children that would go on to their education when we were so financially deprived.

I was fortunate because I had a great big house, though it was too big for me to take care of and take care of my kids, too. It was a big Victorian house in Eureka, California. It was a good home, right in back of St. Bernard's School. It was an ideal spot. It had a huge dining room and living room, but I combined the two, because the kitchen was big enough for a great big oak table, anyway. We had two living rooms, which we needed. I loved that house, but it seemed so big. It had high ceilings and it was hard to heat and the kids couldn't get warm in winter. We loved to cut the lawns together and the kids played in the back yard. But the oldest children didn't adjust. They felt lost, because they were used to living in the housing projects where the

rooms were a lot smaller and there were a lot more people around us. Things were available for us there at arm's length, like playgrounds and stores and all that. But when we moved into what you call the higher class area, they couldn't find anything to do, and they were far away from their friends that they grew up with. The housing project was like being part of a big family. So I can see now that the adjustment to moving to the big house was too hard on my older children.

I never had baby-sitters for my children. I took care of my own children, up until the time when their dad got sick. I did everything by myself, because I was living in a place where I didn't have any relatives, and I had already lived in white society and I knew how to live among them. (But whether they accepted you as their neighbor because you're Native American is another thing.) But I didn't believe in going out, so I didn't need anyone to watch my children. I was told by my welfare worker that I should go out once in a while, but basically that was not my belief. Under any circumstances, I always believed that I was not to leave the home.

But I did get where I was feeling very tired, so I didn't eat right. You can be trapped by your own self if you don't eat right and you got a large family to take care of. You have to sit down to eat to maintain your energy so you can get your rest at night. But after I had my tenth child, I didn't have a good appetite. It seemed like a lot of times if I didn't eat, I could keep going a lot better. I tried all that, but I didn't realize I was getting weak and depressed.

After Ray and I were divorced in 1960, I definitely couldn't see any way that I could provide for my children. It caused further complications for my bitterness that the children all eventually went into foster homes...and I went into alcohol. I guess I was beginning to realize that I couldn't do a lot of things that I thought were easy to do. Being raised partly in a government school and partly living off the land, I didn't realize that money was such a necessity. I realized I couldn't be extravagant raising my children, but my goals were as high as they were when I was living at the mansion. Somehow, though, it didn't match my husband's pocketbook. There was such a wide difference between my husband and me—he still had tastes of his own, things he wanted, and I had tastes of the things that were so necessary in order to achieve certain goals in life.

I had my chance of not getting married, but we were both lonely children because he didn't have a mother in his younger days, and I didn't have a father. My mother had always told us to go out on our own and do our thing and not to bother our stepfather. This wasn't a bad idea, but we still missed that closeness of belonging. But then, to do your good thing in this world was a part of the Indian culture, I guess you might say.

All in all, no matter what happened in my life, I can't say that if I had been married to my husband for ten years more that I would have lived happily ever after. My husband had a very bad temper, and was irate from being a navy veteran. There's some people you cannot live with, and there shouldn't be regrets if you leave them. If personalities are too different, they'll never make it. And here I was, losing my mind trying to figure which were our happy times. There weren't any! [laughs] Sometimes it's like trying to please someone who has no pleasing machinery in them. That's the type of man he was. [laughs]

I guess it's true what the Bible teaches us: "In pain shall you have your children." But I didn't know it was for a lifetime! [laughs] No one can hurt you as much as your children,

because you think all this time you taught them different. But they can hurt you, because in this world, it's true. There's a spirit called jealousy. And that's very sad. Nowadays, even in families, people are jealous of one another. But the Indian people say to *honor* your relatives. You call your cousin your sister and brother. You honor your uncles and aunts and your grandparents. You *honor* them. We share with our relations a certain respect and honor, and that's what we were raised with. That's why I've never put my foot down to my children and told them how to live.

I missed Nevada when I lived in California. My heart and my mind were over here. In fact, I couldn't get used to the redwoods of California for the first ten years of living over there. And everybody lives indoors over there, year around. Your home is your recreation place, it's your lakes, your woods, it's your everything. But here in Nevada, you don't live in your house all the time. Sure, you go home and eat and go to bed, but you live outdoors.

I had come back to Nevada a few times because I was worried about my mother and my uncles. When I finally came back for good, I felt kind of like a stranger because I didn't recognize all these people. There were second and third generations already born, and I felt old. My children weren't born there, so I felt strange at first.

Shortly after my daughter, Norene, and I moved back to Nevada in the early 1970s, for some reason we went to Carson City. I had often wondered if it was possible that my Uncle Bill Birchum was still living. At the time I last saw him, my son, Roy, was twenty years old. I looked up a friend of mine, Virginia Rupert, who had been what you call a bridesmaid when I got married in Carson City. We got there with a ball bearing out of our wheel, and we called from the pay telephone to see if Virginia could pick us up. So she and her husband came and got us. They had Rupert's Auto Shop at the Carson City Indian Colony, and they fixed our car.

Since we were there, we started looking for Mary McCloud, who had taken care of my Uncle Bill for years. I wanted to see if he was still alive. I found out he was, and that Mary was still looking after him. (There were a lot of family conflicts because Mary took over caring for Uncle Bill. But she figured nobody had time for him. She was always very fond of him, so she took care of him—she adopted him as her grandpa. She was raised around us, so she was like our little sister.)

Well, I found out where he was living and went to visit him. He was living in a trailer park in a double-wide trailer. It was a nice place. Mary was working at the convalescent center in Carson City. We went up and knocked on the door. At first nobody answered, and we knocked again. It was kind of quiet, and a little boy came to the door. He didn't know us, so I asked him if Grandpa was there. He said yes, and he showed us into the living room. There sat my Uncle Bill, all white-haired. He was sitting there in a special chair that Mary had for him watching "Beverly Hillbillies" on TV. He still carried his cigarettes in his shirt pocket—that's why his Indian name meant "smoke." His shirt was still buttoned up to the chin, and all his cuffs and his buttons were done up. My goodness, it was a shock to see him in such good shape. He was in his hundreds then!

I went over there to shake his hand, and he said, "I knew you were coming." He started talking Shoshone, and he told me he knew I was coming because he had a vision early that morning by his bedside. So he was already expecting me and I didn't know it. But he was waiting to see me.

We talked, and his mind went back into our family history. He said he'd like to go up to Elko and visit other family members. Then he started bringing back into my mind all the people that used to live in Austin, our other relatives that moved away. He started naming quite a few families. The two I remembered was the Gilberts and the Roberts. There were some others, too. Then he started to reminisce about when we were little kids and we used to do this and that. He could talk very well.

Then soon he had to go to the bathroom, and seeing an elderly man like that, I didn't think it was possible for him to make it there by himself. When he said that he was going to use the bathroom, I looked at that little boy and was wondering if he needed help. The little boy must have known what I was thinking, because he told me, "He does it himself."

So Uncle Bill got up, walked across the room, went down the hall all by himself and came back. So he took care of himself. That was way when he was in the hundreds—a walking man! He said, "I guess I'm getting kind of old. My limbs are getting kind of tired." So he rubbed his legs.

I thought, "Boy, you call that old." And I was so ashamed of myself when here I'd been running around the neighborhood acting like a big old crybaby, so frustrated about life. [laughs] When I saw my uncle, I think he lived for the purpose to let me see that your life is what you make it. Uncle Bill didn't do anything what you'd call *great*. I think the greatest thing he ever did do was to live a simple life. He just ate simple foods, all Indian foods. He didn't like white bread and things like that. He wanted Indian bread.

I've heard people say that he had two minor surgeries: one on his eye, probably for cataract removal, and the other, I think, was a tooth extraction. Then his gallbladder was giving him trouble one time, but he had a doctor in Carson City who suggested no surgery. He just recommended that he stay off of all kinds of foods and fast for a month or so and just stay on liquids until he could get things stabilized. That was his treatment that he had. I think he had a couple of hospital visits when his gallbladder was acting up.

In fact, I heard someone say he was in a room with four other patients, and some relations came to visit him. The nurses were saying that that room down in that corner was always very quiet except when Bill had relations come in. When he had visitors, it was the noisiest place in the hospital, because they were all talking Indian and laughing. Uncle Bill was hard of hearing, but he always felt good when people came to see him.

I don't know towards the very end if he wound up in a hospital. I don't know where he died. He probably just went to sleep for all I know, as people do sometimes when they're very old like that. They're very tired and they just go to sleep.

Uncle Bill was a strong man, and everybody always said so. In fact, the people at the university came down and painted his portrait, so he was well known in the state. He outlived I don't know how many kings, popes, presidents, and generals in his lifetime! [laughs] He must have seen it all, I imagine.

Uncle Bill was just an outdoor man. All he cared about were the seasons of life, his deer hunting times, and pinenutting. He never went along the lines of becoming an Indian doctor, but he was a man of wisdom. He was like Solomon in our family: *very stern* when he was younger, and never socialized with any of us kids.

Uncle Bill has quite a few children. His grandchildren are some of the Millets over in Duckwater. He took care of many of his

grandchildren, and they were very close to him. The Bradys are his grandchildren, too—Leroy Brady lives on Yomba Reservation now. The Smiths at Fallon Colony—Kenny Smith and the others—are his great-grandchildren.

When I came back to Nevada in the early 1970s after living in California, I went to work at Washoe Medical Center. It was funny, because when I worked there, I met a lot of people that I had known earlier. I think there's a reason why our pathways meet again—to finish our history or to explain a time in our lives that we may have been puzzled about. When I meet old friends or acquaintances, I don't feel like a stranger as I thought I would feel after all those years. I meet these people more and more here and there in different businesses and things, and it really shocks me. [laughs]

One time I was chosen on the floor to attend a special in-service workshop by the state director of gerontology. I was glad that I could go, because Washoe Medical didn't take care of the elderly that good. I had already seen how long old people could live, and when they would bring patients from the rest homes to the Washoe Medical Center when they were sick, they didn't get good care. So I gave them the best care that I could give, because I knew if they got well they could go home again.

I guess some prejudice against Indians has carried over to today. I remember one time I had to tell a doctor off at Washoe Medical Center when my daughter, Norene, was sick. She was working for the telephone company in Fallon at that time, but she was also on contract care.[20] Norene told me that the doctor was going to send her home. I said, "Right away? Did they take an x-ray?"

"Well," she said, "he sent me to a technician, but the doctor wasn't satisfied with the x-ray, because it wasn't in the place that he ordered. So he wants to send me home."

The doctor told Norene, "I think I'll discharge you because I'll probably end up paying your bill." In other words, his taxes were going to pay her bills because she's Indian. My temper hit the ceiling. I marched right up to that nurses' station and told them I wanted to see the doctor. In those days, I had a vicious temper. I knew how to fight back, I thought. [laughs] So I asked him why he made that comment. I said, "Did you make that comment about my daughter, that you want to discharge her because you think you'll be paying her bills because she's Indian?" I said, "Well, I happen to know that there are other people who get this kind of care—the military, for instance. There are a lot of medical bills that are paid by the government, and it's not only for the American Indians. Besides, my daughter is a taxpayer. She has a job and she has insurance."

Then he backed off a little bit. He didn't know what to say. He probably felt like he had said the wrong thing to her, and he said, "Well, I'm sorry. I wasn't trying to insult her."

I said, "Well, I just want you to know, even though you have all this modern technology, one of these days your modern technology is going to totally fail. That's what I know about your modern technology." And see, I see some stopping today...nuclear accidents, failures in a lot of the technological fields. They don't know all the answers, and they never will. I told the doctor, "When you're cooking your food by electricity, I'll be cooking my food on the bonfire, and I'll still eat. After your electricity goes out, I'll still be eating." [laughs]

He had a lot of respect for me after that, because later I worked there. One time he saw me and he turned the other way, because he knew that I could see right through him. (But later, I noticed when my cousin came in with a severe heart problem, he gave her the

best care. She almost died, but he did give her good care.) I heard afterwards that he was just a new intern. That means a lot of them aren't mentally trained to deal with people. They got to watch their mouths, too.

Washoe Medical Center was like an international hospital. You had foreigners from all over. You try to take orders from a Japanese nurse, and a Vietnamese, Iranians, and what-have-you—you can't understand their language! The other nurses would always be in a panic and come running to me and ask me if I spoke Vietnamese or Spanish or Hawaiian. They thought I was part Hawaiian! They were so desperate. They wanted somebody who could speak this so-and-so language, and they would come after me! I'd say, "No, I'm Indian. I speak my own language." But of course, they would never come and ask me if I could speak an Indian language!

But there was always an international community at the hospital, and I'd think, "I wish I did speak Hawaiian! I wish I did speak Spanish!" Well, I did have Spanish in high school, but the real Spanish don't speak at the same speed that I speak Spanish at. [laughs] I know as much as the next person, all the *alohas* and the *gracias*. But it goes to show you that if you're separate from the next person because of language, it makes you really want to know what the other person is saying.

When we were little and we couldn't speak English, nobody *cared* if we understood them! And for it we were ill-treated, and we were always turned down. But I'll tell you one thing about being turned down is it makes you stand on your own feet. That's why people ask me today why I'm so independent. Well, this cruel world stood me up on my feet at an early age, so I can stand all kinds of foolishness. [laughs] Life teaches you these things as you get older and the fight is all gone. I really believe that Nez Perce chief, Chief Joseph, when he said, "I will fight no more forever." He'd seen it all. I admire him for saying that, because he could see then what I can see today.

After working at Washoe Medical, I went to work at the convalescent center in Fallon. It was a good hospital, and it was organized, too. When I started working there, I ran into Mrs. Ida Gondolfa from Reese River. I knew other members of her family from when I was a child, like Bert and Adele. They were teachers and they were also well-to-do ranchers. The two Dyer families worked on their ranch. Danny Brown's family also worked on the ranch. Some of the Gondolfas are still living in Austin, and a few are in Fallon. (Mrs. Gondolfa knew my father, and when she was alert, she'd tell me about him. She told me that he had a shoe store in Austin. I said, "No wonder I used to sit in front of that shoe store next to our laundry.")

Mrs. Gondolfa was a high-brow woman in earlier times; she wouldn't even think of talking to me. But since I was taking care of her and I understood her ways, she liked me. It was so marvelous to see her alive after *all* those years. I don't know when she passed away.

I also ran into Maggie Maestretti. Maggie used to have an ice cream shop in Austin when we were kids, and she has passed away since I came back from California. I was very fond of Maggie. She was a very friendly lady. She's a grandma of Joe McGinness in Fallon. Old Maggie had that ice cream parlor for years, and she always had an apron on. I don't care what time of the day it was. [laughs]

Most surprising of all was running into Ben Charlie, who also lived at the convalescent center. In the old days, he used to ride to church in Stillwater on his white horse. Ben Charlie was a top gambler, and

he used to always wear a bandage across his face. He was a very lively, energetic person, always on top of things. Well, when I found Ben Charlie at the convalescent center about eight years ago, he was blind by then. But you didn't have to take care of Benny. He got up and went to the bathroom by himself. He was old. After so many years in California, coming home and finding Benny in the convalescent hospital was really something. He was quite old by then.

There are quite a few elderly people that I remember from my childhood who are still alive. Annie Potts came to church not long ago and she's in her eighties. She walks around town a lot, and so does Ruth Bill. Ruth is up in her eighties or nineties. She walks from her home down to the Fallon post office every day. Then she usually goes and stands around the Nugget and gambles a little bit. She knows everybody's car and who she's seen in the day. She's got a good memory. Ruth's husband, Willie Bill, went to a ceremony when he was sick one time. So he's in good health now.

Pug Ike is another elderly person I remember from long ago. Pug and his wife have a housekeeper who comes and takes care of them during the week. For years, they lived in a little shack here on the colony, but they moved them into a modern home. I guess Pug protested. He did not like it at all. They should have left him in his shack. He had a yard where he sorted his wood and did his thing. Well, they took that all away and put him in his modern house. His grandchildren live there, too. He's confined just to his house, and that's not the way Indian people like to live. They want to go outside part of the time because they're outdoor people. I know how he feels. I think I do, because I used to see him chopping wood and stacking it. Thank God Pug's wife can drive so he can get out. They have an old pickup. They laugh, because it's an old antique, but it's outrun a lot of cars. [laughs]

There are a few things that came along and shortened some peoples' lives, but up to that time, the Indians were very strong. The people who came before us are doing pretty well from what I have observed of those who are still with us today.

One thing I saw when I came back to Nevada was that my parents were still living the same way. They had the same ideas, and they were still kind and ambitious. And they didn't condemn me for the way I went out in the world and tried to become a success. In fact, I was ashamed to come home because I was such a failure. [laughs] I didn't want to come home the way I did, but I had to swallow my pride and come home, anyway. I didn't make it in the white world that well, but I did accomplish a couple of things: I learned a couple of things, but nothing outstanding. Half of it's just all fallacy, anyway.

7

Epilogue: Nevada is Indian Country

A lot of Indians have gotten involved in Indian law. There's some people that I've been around that know more about the law in Washington, D.C., than some of the senators back there, because they've had to confront many important people. The Shoshone land is a big legal issue now. Carrie Dann and Glen Holly have been active with that. I don't know a lot, because I haven't been around it that long. I didn't really get into the fight, because I believe basically the way they do: we own this state. [laughs] We don't own it because of paperwork, but because we own it by heart-we know our rivers and our lakes and our mountains. Nevada is Indian country!

All the lakes in Nevada speak to the people. I think sometimes it even scares them. The elements try to teach harmony to the people here. That's why we have had problems with our water. Pyramid Lake speaks to the people in this state, but they're not aware of it. Pyramid Lake lets people know in Fallon, "You're not going to get any water from us for your fields." It's kind of cruel, but it might be the way things were meant to be. Pyramid Lake has talked to Reno, because it's teaching brotherhood, and until the people all agree, these lakes around here will continue to speak to this state. The governor might have his office over in an important building, but the lakes speak stronger than he does, because they never change offices. I have seen this every year when I come back-I notice and I listen to what's going on at Pyramid Lake, Lake Tahoe, and Walker Lake. I've always strongly believed this, maybe because Pyramid Lake is such a big body of water for Nevada. Where I come from you don't see big water like that. You might see a small creek, but even the little creeks are important because if they dried up, our cows wouldn't get any water, or our fish. So the creeks have authority even in a small community.

You notice all the changes from season to season when you're raised in nature. For example, the mountains are changing. Some of them get taller and some get shorter. Right now I think Schurz Mountains are getting taller, and haven't flattened out like a lot of other places that I've looked at. Indians notice

things like that. Indians are very detailed. "It was very, very early," or "kind of early," or "nearly early," or "it was late, late," or "it was right after lunch...." They're always timing themselves with three times of the day: morning, noon, and night. They're always describing the scenery of the land more than the faces of people. One Indian doctor told me that the mountains between Alpine and Austin are mine because my folks were all gone, and I was next in line. So they say those mountains are mine. Chief Toi-Toi and my grandpa were the chiefs in their day, and they told me I had eleven eagles wherever I travel. I don't know what that means, but an Indian doctor told me that. They said if I wanted to go see my eagles, I could go over towards Minden. But I always look when I go from Fallon to Reno, and there's always eagles out there, too. In fact when my daughter Rosie went back to California recently, she told me she saw eagles. So when anybody tells me about eagles, it makes me glad. [laughs] There's a lot of things that I basically live with that I don't talk about to people, because it's in my heart. I guess that's what you call power.

I haven't listened to any good Shoshone speakers lately. The Byers family will speak Shoshone, but they'll speak it only to themselves. They don't want anybody to hear them. They'll only speak the language if they're interpreting, like reading mail from Washington, D.C. I try to catch what I can, just to keep practice, but I'm forgetting a lot, too. So when I spend a day or two around them, I feel good.

There are some people who were taken out of their language, and they realized what happened. Those that were born with their language quickly come back to their native tongue. But when they first come back to their language, it's difficult because they've had some studies of the English language. They don't have a true meaning of their native words, and so they're wishy-washy about their pronunciations. But the old people still understand what they're trying to say. They don't speak as accurately as they once had when they knew their language so well.

A lot of us lost our technique of speaking Shoshone. I can hear it for a little while and then it comes back, but it's difficult to remember only one word at a time, because you really have to think. It has to be a time and a place when your language reaches you better. And a lot of times it just isn't the place, so then naturally you can't think. It's like thinking about Christmas when it isn't Christmastime-it doesn't have the same meaning that it does at the right time. There has to be a time and a place where it has more meaning to you so that you can speak it.

You can't be halfway with your Indian language; you have to be all Indian and be happy you are Indian, that you are *Newe*. Then your language means more to you. When you are part-time everything else, your language just doesn't even come near you. Whatever you speak-English or Shoshone or Paiute-that's how people stick together.

The difficulty in Indians' thinking came because their language was broken and their thinking was disturbed to where they got confused. Just by that idea alone I think I can almost put my finger on why so many people become alcoholics: when they lose their communication they turn inward to their bodies. A lot of them become split personality, I guess. It's a good thing that I can see things my way from an Indian point of view. I can also see the *white* point of view, but they can't touch my point of view, because they don't have my language.

I know the youth say, "We want the elders to come talk to us!" I hear the same cry at just about every pow-wow I've ever gone to. But I think a lot of the old-time Indians, the real Indians, don't like to tell their kids anything about the Indian ways because the kids are so far from it. But they don't really say, "I can't tell you," because it was told to them in Indian in the first place. If their kids don't speak Indian, it's kind of hard to get the true feeling in there.

My stepfather and my Uncle Charlie were both supposed to be hard of hearing, but we found out later on they were only hard hearing to English. In fact, they didn't want to hear it, because the English people, they said, either talk too loud or too fast. One time when Archie and my uncle were sitting across from each other, they weren't even hollering at each other, and they both claimed to be deaf! We laughed. We said, "And those two are supposed to be deaf? Look, they're talking to each other low, and we can't hardly hear them!" We thought that was funny.

My cousin said, "Listen to them now, they're going to talk about one incident, but it's going to take them all of their time sitting at the table going from here to there. They're going to describe the time of the day, the color of the land, the sky, and every detail, every rock in the road, everything."

They're very detailed about telling each other their adventure, and they don't leave anything out. When they talk like that, it takes them about half a day to tell a story. Indian language is slow and that's the way they live their life-they live every moment at that time. So it's always interesting to listen to them talk.

I think the tribes have strengthened their governments a little bit more in the last five years, because they're getting interested in what they *have*. It's always been the idea that they didn't have anything, but I think they're getting strengthened because of their resources. I think they have everything they need to live any way they want to live. If they want to live in a tipi out in a reservation, they can; if they want to live in a mansion, they can.

Comparing Indians to other groups, they're better off in some ways. Hispanics are poor, and they don't have what the Indians have: reservations. The Asians are hard workers, because that's their lifestyle over in their own countries-that's in-born. To work ten hours a day in a food establishment or on a farm or whatever is survival. But we Indians have our survival in the seasons. These other races may have been stripped of their land, their country, their flag. Even if they receive a college degree, they don't have a home to go back to. But the Indian kids do; they can make the choice to live in the city or live on the reservation. Most of them want to live on the reservation now, because the cost of living is cheaper, and they have more freedom for their kids.

The tribal governments seem like they're leading their people well-they sound like it in their newsletters, anyway. But within the body, there's still power trips and crookedness where the leaders try to get the backing of a tribe by saying this or that. The leaders take their orders from the BIA, so they're brainwashed because they believe in this type of government. They think, "How much am *I* going to get out of it?" And at the same time the leaders are taking the money from the government. So there's a lot of crooked politics, and there's been a lot of mishandling of the tribe's money; they have wasted a lot of money.

The tribes are led by those who *want* to be leaders, but they're not really leaders because they're not Indian doctors. The Indians always believe that a chief should be the

equivalent of a doctor. So there is no power in their leadership.

My grandfather was the last chief of our tribe, and, you see, from his time on there hasn't been any unity. The people haven't been in one accord; they've been in discord, confused. It's like when you're out of the house and the children don't know where their mom or dad went to, they get confused. They start crying and having tantrums, and they lose their mind. The tribes function the same way. I think the tribes truly operate on those same principles. A lot of the spokesmen went according to what the Indian doctor just prophesied to them: "We mustn't go this way; we must go that way." I think the leaders had to be like an Indian doctor and should today, because the way the tribes are going nowadays, everything is being programmed under educational systems. All the schools, Head Start, senior citizens programs-they're all basically the same way.

I don't think our old leaders would even associate with today's leaders. The old leaders weren't elected like they are now, and they would probably think the new leaders are a bunch of coyotes. Today's leaders have a lot of things missing because their beliefs are missing, the basic language is missing. But there are still some elders alive who are our old leaders, like Manny McCloud. He only goes to things that's very important. His nickname is Popeye. I don't think someone like him would mix with these new leaders. He would probably call them coyote because they're too wicked. [laughs]

I think that's why a lot of the tribes don't stick together. When my son Frank and I went to the last tribal meeting, there was only just us and the tribal council! Other tribal meetings I went to, there were thirty people or more. But I guess basically the old people stopped going because the council didn't carry out their requests. They made false promises, and the tribal members lost confidence in their council members. There are so many disagreements on reservations, it's just like looking at a bunch of three-year-olds out in the yard arguing over some grasshopper or something. The tribal members should be telling the council what to do, but it's the other way around: the tribal council runs the whole show. If some poor family wants to come up and put in a request for lights or water to their trailer, those kind of people get hurt. It's just like going to the welfare office.

One thing nowadays that everyone's so concerned about is blood quantum. The tribes have blood quantum requirements to see who can be enrolled. But when we were kids, whether the quantums all measured equally didn't matter. [laughs] But this is how people live nowadays. They don't ask you what tribe you are, they ask you what your quantum is. But I didn't know there was such a thing as Indian blood. [laughs]

The Indians have HUD [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development] housing, health care, and other things on the reservation. In some ways, maybe the government was trying to do us a favor, get us a good education so that we have a good job, settle down, and have a good home. That's a bunch of baloney!

The government tried to change Indians like me, for instance, through schooling. They took you away from your family because your family wasn't good enough, didn't speak the right language, didn't have a good dwelling place for you. They tried to destroy your family structure, and then they expected you to go out into the world. How can you do that? Can you do this? Your family is your life, your heart. That's why a lot of the kids have gone out and committed suicide. A lot of them are in prisons! It's a shame the way

they herd children away from their parents. But Indians are good people-so good that they didn't stand at the door with a shotgun.

Stillwater Reservation is quieter than it used to be when I was a child. They don't have any fandangos anymore. They don't have Indian doings like they used to. I mean, it was *here* at one time. They're trying to bring it in in a different way now, through schools. They're bringing it in bits and parts to little Indian children, though the way of living has changed so much. If this next generation is broke in enough, they might be able to recapture some of the heart of it. But if it takes fifty years to lose parts of your culture, it probably would take that long to bring it back, because you'd have to go clear back to the tipi, you might say. You have to go clear back to the basic way of talking the language. So, it's years down the road before they'll re-establish the kind of Indian society that they once heard about, because it's all changed. The ideas have changed.

A lot of Indians have ventured out. They think they're independent, but then they wonder about it when they come back to their culture. They haven't got anything to bring back to their culture, because it was always *there*, basically. If Indian children start studying the Indian culture now-which they could very easily, from the families that I know-they may be able to restore a lot of it. But with all the drugs and alcohol that's going around, I don't know if they care much about culture or anything. For these kids, all that seems to matter is their pleasure...which video tops which video, and which one is not equal to the one they saw last night. Will it be better, will it be just as good, or will it be worse? That's how they are now, always comparing. But there's nothing eternal about all these synthetic pleasures. And all that happens is they wreck themselves and wind up in counseling with somebody. What those kids need is to go to Stewart! [laughs]

I mean, you have a whole bunch of Indian people going to see a counselor, a white counselor! [laughs] He isn't going to break it to you. He can't! He's coming from the book, too. I don't think Indians can be healthy like they used to be. They don't walk enough because everybody has cars. We used to walk about two miles to school every day, rain or shine.

Another thing is Indians have more frustrations in the home. Years ago it used to be there were three or four Indian families living together: your uncles, your aunts, your grandpas, and a few cousins all lived under the same roof. But two families living in a house is too much nowadays. And there wasn't any boredom like there is today.

Ways of living have changed so much. Here are all of these modern homes, with children going to high school and college. Their style of living is a lot different than it used to be for us. Those kids live in nice houses with new furniture, like here at the Fallon colony they have new homes built by HUD. Those kids are living high on the hog, and they don't even know it yet! Some of the reservation Indians have finally made it. They've got stores and some businesses now. They're not all "gimme" people anymore so much as, "Ask me and I'll see if I can help you." They're helping one another, and they have a self-government today. They have good housing-most of them-today.

One day I was sitting in the parking lot at Safeway, and I was holding my little great-granddaughter. She's over a year old now. We were watching the birds in their nests under the light fixtures. They were jumping from their nests down to the sidewalk and picking

up some goodies and taking them up to their little nests. So I was showing the baby the sparrows. She finally found them, and she was so fascinated watching them. I thought, "Now I wonder how many children today even notice birds?"

No, the kids today are raised differently. They're raised to go to the store. Families are weakened by always looking outside the home-going out to eat; going to the store; going downtown...always going out. Our homes are weak because there's no discipline. It's strange to see how kids are raised nowadays. They get the best of everything and the worst of themselves. So there's very few home-based children nowadays.

I've forgotten a lot about the troubles that Indian youth used to have in the earlier days. I don't think they had that many, because Indians couldn't drink in bars until fairly recently. Alcohol has really taken a lot of Indian people away, like the kids I went to school with at Stewart. Alcohol has done a lot of damage to us. I think the fact that Indians drink is related to their ceremonies, because they did use peyote. But the difference is that they didn't realize that alcohol is so potent. I think they just got tripped up, because alcohol made them feel so happy. It is a tranquilizer and it makes you feel happy...happy medicine. But they didn't see the damaging effects. Then after a while just like anything else it became a game: "Get some. Get some of that good stuff." So I think they just tripped into this habit, not realizing. Then, of course, the language changed and caused a big landslide of alcoholism. It really is a pity, because Indians really are healthy-minded people, basically. No Indian ever made alcohol in the first place. They just took from the earth what was for necessity only.

A lot of the kids take drugs today. They don't know what they're doing, and they get tricked by it. Then, of course, it involves a little bit more because it involves money. Money is the main goal of most people today, but really it's just a wild game until the game's over. It destroys them one way or the other. It's a shame.

But I still think that Indian kids today carry knowledge that they aren't aware of. If you let them be, they turn out to be Indians because they do things that way. That's why I always say, "Just let the children play; just watch them because their spirit will come to them and help them play." Of course, there's been a lot of coyote influence and our kids are being led away by that. But I think if we could take some of our problem children out to the desert for about a month with no television or radio, they'd straighten up. Just being out there with Mother Nature would straighten them up, because they'd find peace.

I think it's hard for Indian kids nowadays to maintain their respect sometimes, because they basically all don't have the same understanding. They have tried to form different groups, but they usually fall apart. They can't stick together because they're not probably of one accord. See, we could do that in our generation because we only had one language. But now there are many languages.

There is a lot of tragedy in the lives of Indians. Pug Ike's grandson, Mike, was killed in Reno. He died tragically. They were having a basketball tournament one night-he was a brilliant basketball player. Somebody stabbed him at the tournament. That was really a tragedy. He was a very good-looking, tall, handsome Indian boy in his middle twenties. He was quiet and very popular.

It was just like the time that Leonard Harrison got killed at the bridge in Fallon. Leonard was a Sioux from South Dakota, but he married a Fallon girl. He was a head dancer

at all the pow-wows, and people liked him here. His van overturned by the bridge and he was killed. They say there was drinking involved.

Today the young teenagers get involved with alcohol and drugs, and they say, "Well, to us on the reservation, that's a way of life." That *wasn't* the way of life. It never was. It's just an excuse. They've taken away all their old ways of living. They put all their rituals on the back burner, the rituals that were important, their feast days that were important. Then the counselor the kids get sent to might be a Ph.D. and what-have-you, but he's not their relation. How is he going to help them? What it comes down to is respect. A counselor can't uncover respect in a person if the person never had it. Where is the teenager going to find respect? From the schools? From the jails? No, nowhere but his grandparents. They are the ones that can put it there. They're the ones that show you lots of love and attention, and you find out in your soul, "Hey, there's a person that I like! I feel good around here, because he shows me a lot of attention. He shows me love. He shows me respect." So that's why a lot of our Indian youth are lost and continue to be lost.

Sure, they go out and find a high-paying job, but then they get carried away. They go buy fancy things and get themselves in debt. It's just like my Uncle Bill said when I saw him in Nevada before he died: "Why don't you come home? Why are you always out there digging in your pocket, paying out, paying out, paying out? You're home now. You stay right here. You raise your kids like we raised you," he said. "Your kids go out in the world, they get lost. They're paying fines, they're getting big cars, they're playing slot machines. They're doing all these things, and they're paying, paying, paying out of their pockets. A lot of these kids aren't home because they don't have one. Make sure your kids do," he told me. He was right. Everybody's busy looking for themselves everywhere else but their own home.

Of the different nationalities that teach their children respect at a young age, it always includes the elderly people one way or another. Nobody can see like the elderly people. They see children from infancy clear up into their teens, way up to their married life, and after they have children. They see one generation after another, maybe up to three generations, and they have a lot to think about. There are many people in my life that have been strong figures. I thought a lot of the missionaries at Stillwater, and also of the cook at the day school there, whose name was Lena Weeks. Then later in my life I worked with a lot of good nurses and nurse's aides. They were strong people. And I admired the elderly people that I looked after for nearly ten years at different rest homes. Through them, I've seen life from one end to the other. I've seen the things they've gone through and their feelings, because I always sat and talked with them. We'd talk about what they had done during their lives, how they felt about death and life, their health, their poverty, the bad turn in the road, like dying from cancer....

I'm glad I went into nursing. I think the gift that was given to me was going into nursing and working around the sick people. I've worked around the elderly, the mentally disturbed, and the alcoholics, for sure. I always believed I had this gift, because I was comfortable doing it. I always felt that a suffering, sick person needs someone to take care of them. So the healing side of my mother's gift was given to me.

I'll tell you one beautiful thing that I saw happen-my dream came true. When I was a little girl, I used to play out in the desert. I was always trying to get that cotton-picking cactus blossom off of that ornery cactus with some

short sticks. I used to stand there and think, "You darn beautiful flower, you're the prettiest thing out here in the desert, but you're so hard to get." I used to ask myself, "Why is Nevada such a desert? Aren't there ever going to be any people here? Look at all these stretches of land with not a house on it, not even a tent, not even a road." I used to think, "I hate this state; it's so barren." But that hunger that I saw was to become a reality after sixty years.

Now, I go riding out into the same areas that I was born at and grew up at-like between here and Carson City, between here and Austin, beyond Austin to Eureka, to Ely, to Elko, to Beowawe-all around us it's so full. There's little shopping malls between here and Carson City, casinos strung out all over, and this little old state has finally blossomed. Where you had one high school, they now have two or three high schools. Las Vegas had only one high school when I went with Governor Carville to get his granddaughter one time. Now it has eighteen schools and a university, and UNLV's not the only university there. There are small community colleges, too.

The growth of the state has been bad, though, because the animal kingdom has diminished a lot. I remember as a child, if you got up early in the morning in Stillwater, you could hear and see the ducks cover the early morning sunrise. That sky was full with birds, and there were so many birds around the yard: blackbirds, bluebirds, robins, ducks, and geese. But those things are a scarcity today. I mean, you have to really point and raise the attention of your own family if you see the back end of a coyote now, because you don't see them like you used to. And we don't see jack rabbits jumping all over at night, anymore, either. The animal world has suffered a lot. Today Nevada is getting so congested, I feel like saying, "Hey, wait a minute, wait a minute, we have enough people here now!" But that was my childhood dream. That was kind of like a fulfillment of some of my desires as a child and my childhood days.

I knew what it meant to be an Indian in my later years, because I remembered our sports groups at Stewart. We had terrific boxers and basketball and baseball teams, and we had one of the best football teams in the state. We had real good extra-curricular activities for the Indian boys, and when I had boys of my own, I knew that they could succeed. I told them that they were just as talented and just as good as anybody in town. When it came to talent I told them there aren't any barriers, no matter whose kids are rich or whose are poor. I said, "When you're out there, you're all equal." So I tried to teach my boys that they were as equal as anybody in school. A lot of times when they had fights after school, I had to step in a lot of times. But it's just remembering some of the things my mom told me when I was little that I was able to raise my kids.

Most of the things that I worried about, my dreams, they have all come true. My kids finished school, and you can't push kids to go to school. Those that didn't want to, didn't go any further than they felt they had to. They went into some other thing. But my kids are all doing something to support their children today.

I have three great-grandchildren, but I claim all of my step-great-grandchildren, too, for the simple reason that they have been in our family and they're in our family today. So I claim all ten of my great-grandchildren because they all call me Grandma, anyway. Like I say, Indian people don't dispute over their relations. It's God-given. If you're a true woman and a true mother you will care for all children. A true woman, to me, loves little lives. Sometimes as I'm doing my

work during the day and I'm swamped with children, I think of Mother Theresa. I always believe if you're doing what's right for your children, God will help you to make the day easier. He will guard that day whenever you take care of little children, because you're helping him.

I watch little Indian children playing together. When you leave a bunch of little Indian kids together without their parents, they play a lot of Indian games, and their nature is with them. They shun their man-made toys to go play the Indian way, like they'll play in the sand, they'll dig, and they'll do other things that don't require modern toys. They're concentrating on more earthly things, I guess you could say. But as soon as there's an interruption and they go back into the material white world again, they start more or less retaliating or getting angry. So there must be something about being an Indian person. They're happy to be out under the sun; they don't care how hot it is or how cold because they have this natural endurance.

I've met life through the elderly and through my own growing maturity. Though I lived with influential business people and wealth, I was born among what you'd call poverty. I say for the whole shebang: take the *simple road*. Keep your life simple and plain, because it's great to live with less wants and to look at yourself two times before you want what others have. Because when would you ever trade places with a person with what they have today? Especially those that have been weak and have fallen into traps, like people with AIDS. Not cancer, not diabetes, not arthritis, not many other terminal diseases, but the tragedy of giving your life up to AIDS. But you should never fail to pray for those people either. Whatever desires they had made them turn down the wrong road and step into a trap.

One reason is children are marooned too young in their lives. They need this close parenting, this close relationship of a family life to honor and respect one another as a family, because that's healthy. It's healthy for a family to say, "Oh, Uncle Charlie's coming!" like we little kids would say when we saw him coming. We were *so* glad to see him. So I think one thing in our life that makes us extra happy is seeing our old relations coming up the road. With all my experiences in life, I think large families have a lot of joys. And large families have greater sorrow. In a large family, too, you can either be fearful or you can just really be strong, because you learn so many chapters in a short time about life.

It's hard to be happy out in the white society. If you're happy the way they are, you have to do the things they're doing. A lot of times there's a lot more happiness in the way I saw things in my youth, because real happiness is not in bondage.

The white people have been trying to change the Native Americans to worship some of their idols. Who could the Indians ever change? And yet they're fools for letting anybody change them, because they already live in a healthy way. The Indians are more spiritual than whites. They have to be, because they don't have a written Bible, for one thing. Their belief in the Great Spirit is a lot stronger, because it's not written. This is your *muhguhwah*-your common sense, your Great Spirit. Good sense and good deeds bring peace, and I think that's why a lot of people don't have peaceful hearts. Not everything can be taken too seriously. If I could hear my grandfather speak today he would probably say, "Don't take all these things too seriously. Just remember your home. You were born

here. This is your land; live in it the way we used to live in it: simply. Don't worry about all these people coming into the state. Just remember that we will always have a spot here in the state of Nevada, and things will be peaceful, because it's home." *Home* is a big word.

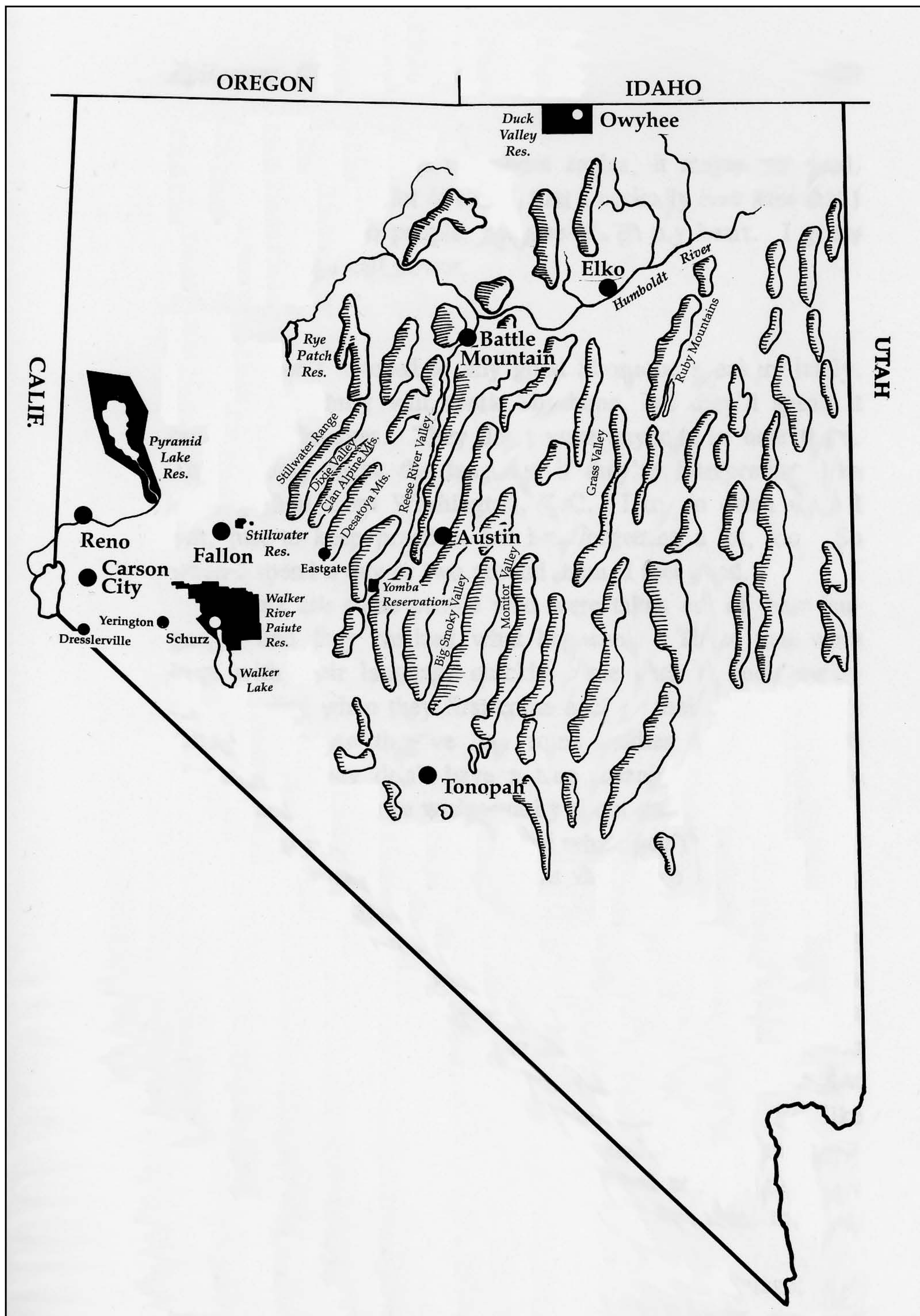
One thing I know about all Indians is that our minds link together when you see this picture of this *muhguhwah*, this Great Spirit. I don't know if it's that way for the Anglo-Americans. The whites have classes of people, where the Indians don't. When Indian kids are around this, they start to think that way. The whites say that they're trying to integrate other races, like blacks, but they don't really accept it. The worst thing in this world is to know that you are not accepted. The whites say the Indians are immoral, but they have no right to say that. This is a mixed world today, and no one has any right to say anything about the Indians' culture. Indians are modest people. They are no more immoral than any other group. That's one talk that I'm going to stamp out.

If I had to give advice to young Indian kids today, I'd tell them the same thing that my parents told me when I went out into this world: "If you think you know what it's all about, if you think you're big enough, then don't come crying home to me." [laughs] Seriously, I'd tell them not to let anybody change their Indian beliefs...not to change their thinking to think they could be anybody else, or be bigger than anybody else. That's the way it is to be born in your culture, in your language, and that's where your belief is.

Indians don't need to have anybody else cut them down, either. We shouldn't be ashamed or disgraced by what we went through. There's been a lot of tears shed by Indians because we've been kicked around, pushed around. But it's a funny thing-we just keep coming back, stronger than before. We'll be victorious yet.

Sometimes you can plant a seed, and it won't bloom for a century. Indians are like that today in a lot of ways. That's the way Indians have stuck around. Some of the old Indians don't have much money or education, but they're content because they live simply. They don't want any more than what they have because they never had it to begin with. So it's not the amount of things you own, nor the amount of things you want. It's living from day to day-not wanting more, not wanting less, but just living. That's the way all Shoshone people are. They just live the simple way, and it seems to have a lot of energy in it.

When I need some peace, I sit on the north side of the house and I forget about this world, because Uncle Charlie always sat facing north this time of the day when it got hot in summertime. He and Aunt Iola would sit facing the north wind. It seems like they're so close when I face the north wind, and I feel that peace come over me like it just touched me on the forehead. I remember that's the way they rested every day, because part of home life is resting and thanking God for life. People are always thanking God for food, for money, for all these things, but they've got to stop once in a while and thank God that they have peace.


OREGON
IDAHO
UTAH
CALIF.
Duck Valley Res.
Owyhee
Elko
Humboldt River
Ruby Mountains
Rye Patch Res.
Battle Mountain
Pyramid Lake Res.
Stillwater Range
Dixie Valley
Clan Alpine Mts.
Desatoya Mts.
Reese River Valley
Grass Valley
Reno
Stillwater Res.
Fallon
Austin
Carson City
Eastgate
Yomba Reservation
Big Smoky Valley
Monitor Valley
Walker River Paiute Res.
Yerington
Schurz
Dresslerville
Walker Lake
Tonopah

Notes

1. Major gold and silver discoveries in 1859 in the Six-Mile Canyon and Gold Hill areas, near present-day Virginia City, provoked a remarkable rush of treasure hunters into the area. Reservations for Nevada's Indians were first proposed in 1859, although none were formally created until 1874, when the Walker River and Pyramid Lake Reservations were established.

2. Dixie Valley divides the Stillwater Range from the Clan Alpine Mountains in Churchill County.

3. When her marriage to Mr. Charlie dissolved, Birdie Birchum met another man by whom she had three children: Albina, the narrator of this oral history, Bert, and Bobby. Although there is substantial hearsay evidence that the father of the three was George Iwomota-a Japanese immigrant who owned a laundry (and perhaps a poker parlor) in Austin—there is no evidence in Lander County records that Iwomota and Birdie Birchum were ever legally married. Birdie worked in the Iwomota laundry, and the three children were born there. Albina took the Iwomota name when she was still quite young, and Carson City High School records indicate that an Albina Iwomota enrolled in 1940 and graduated in 1944. However, today Albina is not absolutely certain that Iwomota was her father. She prefers not to identify him as such in this oral history.

4. Dresslerville is a Washo community in Carson Valley, a few miles southeast of Gardnerville. It was named after William F. Dressler, who donated forty acres of family ranch land to the Washo to establish a "colony" in 1917.

5. Owyhee is on the Duck Valley (Western Shoshone) Indian Reservation in northern Elko County. The reservation was established in 1877.

6. Under various federal acts and amendments, the sale of alcohol to Indians was forbidden for about 120 years prior to the

passage in 1953 of Public Law 277, repealing all such prohibitions.

7. Also known as Big Smoky Valley, this feature extends southwest from the Simpson Park Mountains in Lander and Nye Counties.

8. Stokes Castle was constructed for J. G. Phelps Stokes in 1897. Mr. Stokes was born in 1872 and died in 1960.

9. The Yomba reservation was established when the federal government bought the Bowler, Bolster, Dieringer, and Worthington ranch lands in Reese River Valley between 1937 and 1941.

10. Kent's store was established in 1892 in Stillwater by Ira H. Kent, who ran the store until about 1933. His son, Ira L. Kent, became active in the store's operation in 1918, and took over when his father retired. Mrs. Redner's Uncle Charlie and Aunt Iola knew both men well, and she says the Indians had very good relations with the Kents. The Kents have always traded with the Indians, bought their grain, allowed them to charge food, et cetera. She says they were the sole support of many Indians when she was a child, and are to this day. Bob Kent, grandson of Ira H., is the current owner.

11. Carroll Summit is in the Desatoya Range, on the boundary line between Lander and Churchill counties.

12. Chief Wash'akie (1804?-1900) was leader of the eastern Shoshone in Utah and Wyoming.

13. Grass Valley is in Lander County, northeast of Austin near the Eureka County line.

14. Head Start is a federal child development program for low-income preschoolers and their parents. It was implemented during the Johnson administration.

15. See Chapter Three.

16. Named after William M. Stewart (United States Senator from Nevada, 1864-1875 and 1887-1905), the Stewart Indian School was established just south of Carson City in 1890. Federally operated, it provided vocational and academic training primarily for Western Indian students, who worked half a day and attended classes the other half. Attendance was not legally compulsory, but there is evidence that early agents went to local camps and removed Indian children to Stewart. Later, admission was based on application, and any Indian student from any state wishing to attend Stewart could apply. Stewart Indian School closed in 1980, and the facility has since been operated as a museum.

17. James Francis Thorpe (1886-1953) was a Sac and Fox Indian who played football at Carlisle Indian School under Glenn "Pop" Warner. (Carlisle Indian School, located in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, was founded in 1879 by U.S. Army Captain Richard Henry Pratt.) In the 1912 Stockholm Olympics Thorpe won the decathlon and the pentathlon. However, a 1913 investigation revealed that he had played semi-pro baseball, so his medals were taken away and his name struck from the records. From 1913 to 1926 Thorpe played major-league baseball and professional football, and from 1920 to 1921 was the first president of the American Professional Football Association. He had retired and was in his late forties when he visited Stewart.

18. Carville defeated A. V. Tallman in the 1942 gubernatorial election. On July 24, 1945, he resigned his position and was appointed to serve the unexpired term of U.S. Senator James Scrugham, who had died on July 23.

19. Redwood Creek originates near Orick, California, and runs parallel to the Trinity and Mad Rivers.

20. Contract care is health care provided for Indians by the U.S. Public Health Service/ Indian Health Service.

Photographs

Albina's aunt Iola Birchum, her half-sister Barbara Jean Hooper, and her mother Birdie Hooper in Fallon, ca. 1940.

Photograph courtesy of Marge Milazzo

Girls' dormitory at Stewart Indian School, ca. 1930.

Photograph courtesy of Stewart Indian Museum

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