Delaine Spilsbury & Laura Rainey

Great Basin Indian Archive

GBIA 037

Oral History Interview by

Norm Cavanaugh
May 28, 2014
Duck Creek, NV

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S: Hello. Delaine Spilsbury here, and I'm a Great Basin Shoshone from Ely, Nevada.

R: I'm Laura Rainey. I'm a member of the Ely Shoshone Tribe, of the Western Shoshone.

S: Okay, since I asked to speak first, I'd like to ask Laura, who is four years younger than I am—and since I was mostly away from her most of the time, even when we were in grade school—I'd like to know a little bit about your experiences at Ely Grade School. To see if they were the same as mine.

R: Well, we still had a lot of prejudice at that time. I remember a lot of times, white kids chasing me across the railroad tracks, throwing rocks at me. When I was at school, they picked on me on the playground. But—normally, I didn't fight back. I would just run and go away. I didn't, I didn't fight with anybody. I guess I just allowed them—allowed them to do it to me! [Laughter] The teachers were good, though, and the education was good. It was just the peers teasing me all the time.

C: What kind of things did they say to you, or…?

R: Oh, just, like "dirty Indian" and stuff like that, and throw rocks. And they didn't want me to be around them. And if there'd be two white girls talking or something like that, I'd go up to see, and they'd say, "Oh, get away from us, we're not talking to you!" And just, you know. Kids still do that nowadays.

S: How about, you know, you spent all your high school years in Las Vegas, did you not?

R: Yes, I did.

S: And how was it there?

R: It was pretty good. Only the Mexican girls befriended me. The white girls didn't, really. We were all, the dark-skinned were just kind of outcasts. It took me three tries to get into

the drafting class, because they kept telling me—first time, I signed up in my freshman year. They said, "No, girls—that's not for, drafting is for boys." And they put me in the typing class. The second year I put in for drafting, and they said, "No, drafting is for boys," and they put me in Home Ec. My third year, I finally was able to take the course in drafting, which got me in my engineering career. And the boys, most the boys were okay, but a lot of them kind of tried to ignore me. And when I did win an award from Ford Motor Company on one of my drawings, in the newspaper they put "Larry Rainey" because they knew there were no girls in drafting. [Laughter]

S: That reminds me of when I was in high school in Vegas, and I had a chemistry class. And like I said, I never did live the life of a girl. And there was something about chemistry. I was a straight-A student at the time. I was a straight-A, and my partner in the chem lab was one of the top, the, well, she was just well-known and well-liked around the school. And she was a top student. And to say that she was a straight-A student also, and well-known. And I liked her. And I worked so hard at that chemistry class so we could keep our straight A. But the only thing I can explain—my self-explanation on it is, chemistry was so much like cooking I think I just rejected it. Because we never did get an A as long as I was the lab partner. [Laughter] Sorry, there! Okay, that was the end of my questions. And except for, is there, what are your primary interests now that you're retired, and…?

R: Well, my primary interests now are—my goal, my desire for many years, was to build a cultural center so I can teach the young Native Americans, and also non-natives, some of our cultural heritage before they get lost. I've had several beadwork classes and leatherworking classes, and I've taught a few people silversmith. And I'd like to go ahead and continue, because our youngsters are—there aren't going to be any teachers left

pretty soon. You know, all the elders are kind of dying off, and there's not going to be anybody to teach them anymore. So, I would like to continue to—I'd like to get a cultural center where I can teach, like, a class instead of the one-on-one as I'm doing right now. However, one-on-one works quite well. They seem to pay attention more, and maybe get more from it.

C: What type of cultures would you like to teach? I mean, like, you mentioned beading. Are there other things besides beading?

R: Also, well the handcrafts. Making the artifacts, replicas. The old, you know, the old way. Like, with the knives I make, they're hand-chipped obsidian blades, in a deer antler, and they're wrapped in rawhide, and they're set in pine resin. You melt the pitch, and it's just like epoxy. It works really well. I'd like to teach them the old ways of doing things like that.

S: And my goal with the youngsters is to—I mentioned it on another video—that I would like to teach the, have the young people know more about the Earth Mother. I think it's probably the most important item of our time, because we've overused all our necessities. They come from the earth. We've sullied the water, we've sullied the earth. We're trying to poison everything that we need to have a good life. To even have a life. And I'm heavy into environmentalism, and I'd like to—like, if the kids could learn more about what the earth has to offer, what Mother Earth has to offer, then I think perhaps they might think and be a better part of that picture. And most people say, "Well, I'm only one person. I can't do anything about it." Well, we're all only one person and we can't do anything about it. But as a unit, if we all band together and try to make something happen, there's

a chance we can do that. And no, we can't do it on our own. I don't know if I have any more questions. Do you have any?

R: Mm… Not really.

S: Well, I do have something I'd like to talk to you about. I've had a lot of success in my life by being frugal. It was something I learned from my dad. I was born in the Depression, and we didn't have anything. So when we did get something, or if we got something of monetary value, or even money itself—which was pretty rare—we looked at it, and found what would be our best option, what we could do to get the best out of what we had. And we didn't spend it on, just because it was Sunday—or whatever, the stores are closed on Sunday here. We actually thought about everything we did, and we never—I know people like to just do things on the spur of the moment. But we always considered it, and considered the alternatives, and I've done that through my entire life. I've saved, and it's worked out really well for me, and I don't know if it would work in today's economy, but at least we'd have something other than waiting for our next paycheck. Because that next paycheck is what's happening in society now, and with our politics is, paychecks are becoming scarcer. So we need to learn to be more frugal, and to—we can still live well. We don't have to deny ourselves everything. But I, having the newest model of anything that everybody has, I don't think is the answer to happiness. Happiness is inside us. Happiness is in our lifestyle. Happiness is in—for me, it's getting out and being able to enjoy the outdoors, the fresh air, the clean water, which is something that if we all band together, I think we can protect.

R: Another thing: I think we need to go back to our basic living, or style that the natives had years and years ago, about not wasting anything. I've noticed nowadays so many people

waste water. If they take an animal, they take only the best parts, and they don't use the entire body. You know, you need to use everything, and just not waste.

S: And don't let your tap run when you go into the other room! [Laughter] Take a little shorter shower! Shower with someone! [Laughter] And it's all, it isn't hard to be, to save a little on this, that, and the other. And then, when you go to town, and if you have to drive or whatever, try two or three errands on each trip. Try not to just, and I shouldn't have to tell anyone to try not to waste gasoline now that it's over four dollars a gallon, but I'll say it anyway.

R: That's right. And always make a list so you can make sure you hit all your stops! [Laughter]

S: And kids, you know, you don't just have to have everything that your friends have. You have everything inside you. And you need to take a look at yourself. Think what you want to do with your life. And it'll probably include getting a decent education, because, as I mentioned in the other video—I'm 76 now, and when I was out into the world, I had all of the knowledge and the talent and whatever I needed to get a decent job. And once I proved to people that I could do it—I did go to college, but I didn't get a degree—proved that I was excited, you know, that interested, and willing to work for whatever pay they wanted to give me. Because once you learned from that job, you could always move on to the next one, with more knowledge. I just, I didn't—what I'm trying to say is, I didn't need a degree at that time. But now, in this day and age, no one can even get an interview without a degree, and oftentimes there's hundreds of people applying for that same job. So, you need to dig deep within yourself and be determined that you want to do something. And whether it's for you, or your family, or for the world, or just because you

enjoy doing it. And that's one thing that we don't have an opportunity to do much anymore, is to enjoy what we're doing. And when I was a youngster, we had music classes, we had drama classes, we had literature that we studied… I'm thinking. Even in P.E. we had dancing, and games, and things. It wasn't all contact sports and challenges like I see in today's world. And artists are so valuable to our society. In our old society, artists were always supported by the rest of the tribe. If we had a basketmaker who did beautiful work, everybody worked to feed her and clothe her, and whatever needed, and all her needs were met, just so she could produce art, because people have *always* appreciated art. And it's same with the music or any other part of our culture that we want to develop. And don't just do what the other kids do.

R: What I've found, too, in my career: a woman in a man's job, they always get paid less. And have to work twice as hard to show a good job. So girls, don't get discouraged if you can't earn as much money as a man, because that's the way it's been, and I think it looks like it's going to stay that way. But don't get discouraged, and just keep working harder. And you'll do well.

S: Especially if you like what you're doing. [Laughter]

R: That's for sure! [Laughter]

S: Or *only* if you like what you're doing. I'd have to say that. Find something else if you don't like it. Because it is a lifetime, and lifetimes are getting longer.

R: That's right.

C: So in terms of what you both fell into doing, in your lifetime, how did you fall in to being—both kind of falling into drafting. Or, what prompted that interest, and what took you there?

S: I'll lead this one. [Laughter] I didn't fall into it. As I mentioned before, my dad was in the construction business, and he needed someone to draw his house plans for him, so he could—his house, building plans, whatever—so he could get his building permits. You can't just go and pay for a permit and build whatever you want. You have to have, there's all kinds of specs, they're specifications—we call them "specs" in the indusry. And they had, all these drawings had to show this. And he was so frustrated one day when he was trying to scoop up the money to do the next project he had. And he said, "Daughter, why don't you learn how to do this?" And since I'd been building with him for all that time, and working with him, and knew a little bit about it, I said, "You know? Why don't I?" And I was going to go into architecture. I started when—I did do some freelancing while I was in school. And I got paid quite well. But the problem I had with architecture is, once people got the drawing, they always wanted to change it, but they didn't want to pay for the time to change it. They felt all the changes should come with the original job. And that didn't work for me. And it's a good thing I didn't, because it's a tough—it's really a tough field. And not many people really make it in architecture. Unless they have something totally different, which at that time I didn't know, have any totally different ideas.

R: Well, nowadays, with the computers, it does all the work for you. So.

S: Well, yeah, but you still have to have original ideas.

R: Ideas, right.

S: Have you heard of the Lou Ruvo medical building in Las Vegas? It is the most unique, off-the-wall, crooked, upside-down kind of building I've ever seen. And it just, it's a

smash for the businesses there. People go there first. It looks like it's built on a sidehill, and it's flat. Haven't you seen—

R: I haven't, no.

S: Well, that's what architecture is. And now, of course, big structural buildings, pretty much that is all the same now. They have the standards, and like she said, the drawings are already there. So, there's…

R: And you have the certain specifications for earthquake and things like that. Which they, you know, you have to build it to those specs, you can't do something different, because this is what they've determined will withstand an earthquake—or, halfway, anyway. [Laughter]

S: And it's really, the building codes are really tough for a lot of people who like to be inventive, and, like all the people who have tried to build the homes that don't need the heating, out of things like old tires, and hay bales—and my son wants to do one out of adobe like it's been around for hundreds of years. And it *lasts* hundreds of years. But none of that will pass the building codes, so that's why we don't have that kind of structure. So, if you like architecture, go for it. But don't do it to make money.

R: That's right. But, the thing is, if you start something, stick with it. Don't get discouraged halfway through.

S: And don't let some guy tell you you can't do it because you're a woman, because I do *everything* better than they do! [Laughter] Well, maybe not everything.

C: So, in terms of our culture, the Western Shoshone culture—you know, I know you were both, you mentioned you grew up on the Ely Colony. And that you had parents that had

experiences that convinced them not to teach you to speak the language and practice our traditional native way of life. Can you reflect on a little bit of that?

R: Yeah, both our parents were sent to the Stewart government school, the Indian School, in Carson City. And there, they cut off their hair, they couldn't, wouldn't let them wear their regular clothes, they took their moccasins away and put them in regular shoes, just totally changed them to the, you know, European-type dress. They couldn't speak their language, they couldn't say their prayers. Everything had to change. So, our parents had such a hard time, went through such turmoil there at the Stewart Indian School. Dad ran away three times. He finally, when he was thirteen years old, they didn't catch him, and he was able—he went hopping freight cars, freight trains, down in California picking grapes and strawberries, whatever. And he just kind of hoboed, because, you know, that's the only way, the only means he could support himself. So when he met my mom and they had us, he told my mom, he says, "We're not going to let our daughters suffer the way we did. So, there will not be, we will not speak any Shoshone in the house. It'll all be English. And we'll just leave our traditions and teach them to be able to get along in society as it is now". So, we missed a lot of that background, which both of us are trying to recapture if we could. We're getting what we can. And this is the reason I have the goal of trying to have the cultural center, to be able to teach younger kids the way we did things before, and the way things were done. And our Tribe has a language class that people can attend. So, we're just… trying to do best we can, since we *lost* a lot.

[Laughter]

S: I have to correct you on one thing, on that last time that dad ran away from Stewart. He had a buddy in California who was from California. And they left Stewart in the middle

of the winter, and walked over Donner's Pass. That's how much he wanted to get out of that school. And as far as the traditions, we always kept up the traditions of hunting and fishing, and the pinenut gathering, and all the survival skills we carried on from the time we were little kids. When I was in, probably, first or second grade in Tonopah, I can remember picking pinenuts so I could buy my school wardrobe. And we'd take them in and sell them to the markets. But we did make a—we used those. And then, we used pinenuts all year long. Cooked with them and ate them. And, like we were talking about, we did a lot of hunting. We actually lived off the land for a number of years. **And throughout** and then the late Depression. And then World War II stopped all that.

R: Yeah, we ate a lot of rabbits. Now, they *are* good, I still love my rabbit! [Laughter]

S: But as far as ceremonial things, and gather[ings]—what some people call "powwows," we didn't participate in anything like that.

C: So in terms of rabbits, were you guys ever aware of any people making, like, the rabbit blankets that are talked about, you know, by, people mention that nowadays.

S: Yes.

C: That our Shoshone people did rabbit blankets.

R: Yeah. My mother was telling me how they made them. When the rabbits were fresh, you skin them—because the inside of the skin is kind of sticky. And as you take it, cut it in strips, and roll it on your hand, on your leg like this. And it would make these long strips. And then that's what they would tie together to make the blankets so that you have fur on all sides. It's—you know, like, a bear skin rug, you've got hair one side and skin on the other. With the rabbit blanket, you had the fur all the way, because it had been rolled and stuck together like that.

S: I'm the guy who shot the rabbits. She made the blanket. [Laughter]

C: So do you happen to know how many rabbits it would take to make a blanket, or…?

R: At least 60 for a small one.

S: Yeah. But we even, we had rabbit drives, too. We had the whole, big extended family I was talking about. We'd get the kids and everybody out there in the wintertime, and we'd harvest—we'd harvest.

R: They'd put a big net up, and then beat and make noise going through the bushes. And then all the rabbits would run into the net, and then that's where you'd capture them.

C: So were those jackrabbits?

S: Yes.

R: Well, jackrabbits and cottontails. Either way. They're all good. [Laughter]

S: Jackrabbits were bigger; there was more meat on them!

R: Yeah, bigger hide, too! [Laughter]

S: And I can remember what—I was the skinner. And I shot two or three with my .22, but mostly I was the skinner, and I can remember there were so many, we'd be skinning for at least half a day. But it was wintertime, and we could put the rabbits out in storage in the garage, and that way they would freeze and they'd stay that way. So… Nothing was wasted, not even on the rabbits.

C: Is there much rabbits around here anymore?

R: Uh—

S: There's quite a few cottontail, here. I don't see many jackrabbits anymore.

R: This year, there haven't been too many. They kind of, every seven years, they kind of fluctuate. They kind of disappear, and then they start building up again. And I think

maybe this year is probably time for them to start coming back. We do have a lot of coyotes around, though, so they take care of a lot of them. [Laughter]

S: I don't remember as many coyotes as when I was a kid.

R: I don't either. But… Oh, and the pinenuts that she was mentioning, that we'd eat on all year long. There's two ways of gathering; they'd go out, the Indians would go out, and pick the cones off the trees in about September.

S: Early in the season.

R: Yeah.

S: Early, be—

R: Yeah. They're ready, but they're not falling out of the cones. Pick them up, and they'd take big baskets full. And build a big fire, and scrape all the coals after it's burning, and cook the coals out because the ground is nice and hot. Dump the pine cones in there, and then cover it all up and put dirt on top so you don't see any steaming coals coming out or anything. And let them bake for, roast about an hour, was it?

S: I don't know.

R: I don't know how long. Our dad would dig one out, and open up and see if they're ready yet. [Laughter] So then, everybody would sit around—

S: That was always a big, big, big party. To eat.

R: Yeah. A lot of people, it'd take a lot of people to do this. And then they'd scrape out burrs, and everybody's sitting on their chair with a rock. And you beat that cone upside-down, you know, right on the top of it, on that rock, and it'd come open. And then you'd shake all the nuts out. And oh, they're just delicious when they're cooked that way!

S: And your hands would get all black—

R: Oh, everyone's!

S: So would your face, because you're eating one—save one, eat one; save one, eat one. [Laughter]

R: And the other way that we'd get them, too, was, after the first frost, the cones will pop open on the tree, and then we'd go crawl around under the tree and pick them up there. And that way, they're not so pitchy and everything. And then collect them. And then, of course, the guy with the big stick will beat the tree to knock the ones that are still up there in the cones, and make them fall down so we can pick them all up.

S: He beats them first, so you don't have to pick up twice. [Laughter]

R: Yeah.

S: And we still do that. We still gather pinenuts that way—when there *are* some. But, it's been bad, bad. They call it a drought; it's a permanent change, and I don't know if there *will* be any more pinenuts. Pinenuts have to have—well, they have to have water in the winter so they can start. But then they need those summer monsoons in order to finish their maturing. And there've been many years we've had a summer crop but it didn't mature, because we don't have the summer monsoons. And when I was a kid, you knew that it was going to rain either the Fourth of July or two days later. And that started the monsoon system, and we had, just, acres and acres of pinenuts then. And very few now.

R: And another thing: now there are so many commercial pickers, and they go out and get them when they're still in the cones. They take the cones and all, just strip the trees completely out. There's nothing left. Then they ship them, and run them through machines and water bath and everything, and crush the cones, get the nuts out. Float them on the water, and then package them. And sell them to the stores. So… Last year, I had to

buy my pinenuts out of the store, because I couldn't get any out of the woods. But, who knows?

C: So what do you think is attributing to the loss of the water, or the moisture, in our part of the country?

R: Uh—

S: Go ahead.

R: There is, one lady was telling me, there is a contributing factor. With the earthquakes we've had, it's kind of knocked the earth off its axis a little further, and so we're not getting the climate that we used to have. And—well, look at Greenland. All the ice is melting there, because our earth is tilted, and they're getting more sun, more heat. And so, everything is melting. I think, with that last earthquake, I think we've gained a second a day. Or something like that. And if this keeps continuing, our axis is going to keep turning and turning. So the places where it's been cold, it's going to be warmer—with the ice cap melting—and all that's going to cause the oceans to rise. They're saying that, I think, Florida, most of it's going to go underwater because of the ice cap that's melting.

S: Do we have a climate change denier here? [Laughter]

R: Well now, that's not the *only* thing that's doing it…

S: I think, I think our prime reason is because we've polluted the skies so much that we're just changing with, the, that everything is just changing. The system cannot work the way it did before. And I don't blame the climate change on droughts, because… I really don't know what to blame droughts on. But with the air so changed with the carbon layer, the carbon air—the air is so thick with carbon. And some places, even Salt Lake City, people can't breathe. I have a friend who's leaving Salt Lake City in a few weeks—he stopped

by for a visit the other day—he said, because he just can't breathe in Salt Lake City. And in China, they wear masks. I don't know if they do any good. But, with the sun not being able to get to us, it has to make some kind of a difference. I'm not a scientist, but I know it takes sun to make a tree grow. Sunlight, not just the sun staying up there and not getting to it. And the trees are… There's so much about the Earth Mother that I don't know, other than I know that at one time, it stayed in balance. When the natives were in charge. And they didn't disrupt the rhythm of the Earth Mother's heart the way we're doing now. And I am not a denier. I know something has to change for the better. And I think the young people can do it. Because we can see that the seniors are only in it for the money. And I think the young people—and they're trying. They're trying to stop a lot of things that are happening. And I think that there should be more of us natives that are part of this. They did have a cowboy—what did they call that? The Cowboys and Indians, that marched on D.C. a short time ago, and they went in and set up their lodges. And the cowboys brought their horses. I don't know if it had an effect, but it distilled, it brought a lot of knowledge to a lot of people who didn't have it before. And that was just last month or a couple of months ago. And I don't know—I'm not sage enough to have—I guess I'm not old enough to be sage enough to have the answers. [Laughter]

C: So, in terms of your, I guess the lifestyle you both have lived, what would be some of the things that you think young people should know or have some knowledge about, in terms of—not living on the Colony or living on the reservation, but surviving out there in the mainline of society?

S: Oh, I thought you were going to say "surviving out in the wild." [Laughter] I *might* be able to do that. Surviving in mainline society, ooh… For one thing, I know you need an

education and a degree to even interview for a job. I can't say that enough. I'm wondering how our entire nation is going to be able to survive in the society we're developing now. I mean, we've lost the middle class. People are—it's getting rapidly toward the point where there's going to be really rich people, and really poor people. And not just here. Number one, you have to believe in yourself. I think that's really important. So, making every effort to be the person that you want to be, not peer pressure about what you think they should be, or where you should go, or what you should do. Be true to yourself, because you're going to need that strength unless something *really* major changes.

R: And when you do be yourself and do what you want to do, as long as it doesn't interfere with someone else or hurt someone else.

S: I've been—had a request to tell folks what I did with my two boys to educate them about our heritage. I had a lot of help in my efforts to get those two kids grown—which one of them I didn't. [Crying] And we were always living near my parents. And by that time, my dad was retired. And he lived a really good retirement. He worked hard, he made enough money that he was able to go do things while he was in his older years. He spent a lot of time on a lake in his boat, fishing, and in the mountains, camping and hunting and prospecting. And the things that he really loved to do. And he included the boys along with him when they went to the mountains, and they learned to love the outdoors. And Rick was even bowhunting when he was old enough to get a tag, and he did get a small deer the first year he was hunting. And of course, Grandpa made him clean it himself and all those things. [Laughter] Field dress it, and butcher it, and whole thing. And so, I had excellent help in that way. And I brought them to Ely so they could get acquainted with

the elders, and we spent a lot of time doing the things that we did when I was a kid, like living as much as we could off the land. And I do have to tell you about an experiment I did one time. My buddy and I decided that we could live off the land for a week. And all we had were our bows. Oh, we took some, we took sleeping bags and things like that, we didn't sleep on the ground or anything. It wasn't *that* tough. But, we were getting up early in the morning to gather wood to get the fire going, to do this, to do that. And just carrying water, and the very necessary things we had to do. We had *very* little time left to go hunting, and then that was one of those years when we didn't get anything except for a couple of rabbits here and there, and maybe a grouse. And that was a pretty hungry week. And it was at the top of the season, it was in early fall. The weather was perfect. The only thing that—we did take ice with us, in case we did have something to eat, because I don't know how our ancestors survived in the summer with no refrigeration. I mean, because they had live game. And I know they jerked a lot of it, but… there's only so much you can do with that. And I know they didn't waste it, because it's too hard to kill. If you—and they had a lot of mouths to feed. But we were what I would say is a total failure. We didn't survive it—and it was peak season. There were berries, there were wild onions, and it got too hungry out there for me. I quit. So, I don't think I would have done well in those earlier times. I'd have had to be a lot tougher than I am now. [Laughter] And I have no idea how they could survive out there in the wintertime. I see pictures, and their clothing is pretty meager. Especially when they're pushed off their land. I don't know how they survived when they were put out in the—out into the cold. Literally. And I have all the respect for my ancestors, and that's carried on to my son.

R: Yeah, I raised my boys out hunting and taking care of animals. And when—my husband was in the Air Force, so we spent a lot of time in cities, but every time we had a few minutes, we would always go out in the country. Like when we were deer hunting, the first deer we got, we would take the head, and after breakfast, we'd bury it in the coals where our fire pit was. And then when we'd come back at lunchtime, after we were hunting, we'd dig out the head, and my dad would—we would skin it, and then eat the meat off that head. And it's the, the jaw meat and everything is just wonderful. It's tender and tasty and all. And that was the way that our ancestors, you know, would prepare a deer head. And so, my boys learned—well, I showed them how to do that. And they liked to eat rabbits, too. We've always had rabbit. And I taught them how to camp and fish. And, oh, they love fishing. And dressing them and eating them and all. So, the outdoors is very important to all of us. And the respect for everything. You know, you don't waste. And we used to get the watercress—well, I still do. And that's wonderful in a salad. My mom used to take the watercress cut it up and scramble it with eggs and brains, you know, from the deer head.

S: That came out of the campfire, too.

R: Yeah. The brains.

S: With the head, they cooked the brains and everything, and we used the brains. Instead of using to tan hides; we had wool. [Laughter]

R: Yeah. So anyway, my boys have had the knowledge of living in the outdoors. And I think—I don't know if we could survive out there with nothing, with only, you know, trying to live off the land. But my mom told me how the old people used to get the anthills and dig them out, and the little, the eggs in there, they would scoop those out and

cook those, you know, eat those. And it was called ant pudding. And they cooked them in—I guess they're very nutritious. But you don't—you just had to eat whatever you could find. But there's a lot of the wild onions and the sego lilies, you know the bulbs on those are very edible. And they grow around this area.

S: Did. [Laughter]

R: No, I saw on my property a couple years ago. [Laughter]

S: Okay.

R: But if we, if it keeps getting drier, we're not going to have any growing. It's getting, a lot of things are dying. The elderberry bushes are dying because of not enough water. And…

S: Well, I told my kids about what we did when I was a youngster, was we used to gather the cicadas for the elders. And they would put them on their—

R: Winnowing basket.

S: I'm trying to remember what the Shoshone word was—

R: ***Kwono***. [Usually, *Yantu*]

S: Yeah, the ***kwono***. And they'd put hot coals in there and cook them. And they wouldn't share with the kids because they weren't good enough for kids. And we used to go out and—the kids got to carry the buckets full of water, and the little, they're not prairie dogs, but…

R: *Ku'umbe*.

S: Yeah, I know. But what's an English word? Anyway, those little, little groundhogs.

R: Little ground squirrels, yeah.

S: Little ground squirrels. And my dad would get at the other hole, and we'd pour water into the hole, and when they'd come out he'd grab that. And he'd take those home to the

elders. And that was too good for kids, too, so we didn't get to taste it. [Laughter] So, I could not tell my kids how delicious it was, but when I told them about the cicadas, they didn't think they wanted to partake. And that's about all. So, there's a lot of things we couldn't share, that we learned. And as far as, we just told them to be fair, and to take care of the old ones, and always share. And it has worked for Rick. He's very good about that. But I know that every time we had, not necessarily extra, but I know that we shared that with my aunt and uncle that lived up there. They were from the family, same family as my dad. It was my dad's sister. Because—

R: His aunt, it was our great-aunt.

S: But we… okay. Our parents, my mother was orphaned when she was quite young. And my dad was not quite orphaned, but he had an errant father who felt that booze and wild women were more important than his kids. So they really didn't, weren't raised into the culture with parents and grandparents like is traditional for our people. So there's a lot of those things that we, that they didn't have the knowledge, we didn't get the knowledge. The only skills that we got and were able to pass on are the survival skills.

R: That's what we were—

S: Do you have anything to add?

R: Yeah, that's what we were taught.

S: And the grandparents, I didn't know any grandparents, except I did see that one grandfather. My dad's father. He came to the house one time with a gift for me. And he didn't stay long. He left the gift, and smelled of booze at the time, and he was gone. That's the only time I ever saw him. So… That was… we weren't involved in the

generations. But we did get involved in our family, to my mom and dad's families. So we…

R: But we didn't know our grandparents on either side.

S: Either side, yeah.

R: Passed before we were around. So… These kids need to really be happy if they have grandparents, too. [Laughter]

S: Yeah. To love. [Laughter]

R: Mmkay.

S: And respect your family, take care of your family as much as you can, because they're all you have. Them and you. You are the one that, nobody can help you. You have to do it yourself.

R: And as long as you're conservative with everything, you will be able to live well, and your kids can live well. Like, especially don't waste the water. That's very important.

S: Stay out of the casino. [Laughter]

[End of recording]