



# Nevada Penoli

*Great Basin Indian Archive*

GBIA 006



**Oral History Interview by**

**Norm Cavanaugh**

**April 26, 2006**

**Elko, NV**



Great Basin College • Great Basin Indian Archives

1500 College Parkway Elko, Nevada 89801

<http://www.gbcnv.edu/gbia/>

775.738.8493



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Interviewee: Nevada Penoli

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P: My name is Nevada P. Penoli, and I have been here for 74 years. And I was born here, and I'm raised here, and probably I'll die here. And I'll just give you a small story, because sometime I like to talk too long. And I think I'll just talk about getting ready to go pinenutting. That's interesting part. Continue?

C: Uh-huh.

P: Does that sound all right? Okay. First of all, when we get ready, Grandmother would get everything, tell us, "All right, time to get ready, go pinenutting. Who wants to go?" So everybody wants to go. So we start getting our cans—five-gallon cans to put our water in—and small buckets to put our pinenuts in when we start gathering. And she would get her a long pole to shake down the pinenuts, pine trees, and then she would make a hook to put on the end. And then she'd get our boxes for our clothes, and our groceries, and a heavy cast-iron cooking pots, and coffee pots, and everything would just go in there, put on the wagon, and get the horses ready to take us up there onto the mountains. The mountains were not very far away from us. Maybe about four or five miles, and there's pinenuts there. And we gather them as much as you want to. But we just want to go gather a large amount, and once we get up there, we're going to start finding a place to camp. And every one of the people that's going up, young and old, they know what to do. And of course, the children like to run and play and look the area over to see what they can play with. But then they had to come back in and start work. The mens, they start putting up the tents, and find a good place to put their tents and sleeping blankets and stuff. And then, the part that had to be dug for the main part of the pinenuts, because there'd be large amount of pinenuts going into that big hole, after the fire is started in

there. Well, then we all settled down for a supper. The womens, they would all prepare the meals, and gather everythings up, and then the mens would go gather some wood, so that we could be ready for the next day. My grandmother sure liked to make the Indian bread, what we call the ash bread. She always had to make one big ash bread to go with our meal. And usually it's deer meat stew, and everybody likes that. Then the big pot of coffee on the fire. And they don't have the, I don't know what you call it, but it's the thing that you hang over the fire so the water would boil, and the coffee would boil, and everything would be just perfect. Many times, people would come back in, or have cup of coffee, and sit there long into the night and tell stories. Sometime it was grown-up stories, and sometimes short stories of different animals, how they acted. Sometimes they would hear laughter, because we would have to go to bed early. And sometimes there would be jokes of all sorts. So then, after, they're talking about we're going to do it tomorrow, Grandma say, "Oh, shut up, you guys! Go to sleep." But we'd all laugh and do what we were going to do, and my Grandma and the other ladies, they'd talk to each other what they're going to do. And they had their bandannas to put over their heads, to go out to look at the trees, because the pinenuts usually falling on their heads, and the pine, um—it's sticky. Yeah, pitch, on it, and then land in their hair and be sticky. And so that's why they wore bandannas. And then they had gloves to wear for their hands, because their hands would be sticky and everything. So we'd all get up and have breakfast. And they would, the men would all go out with their poles, and they had long willow poles. And look for the pine trees that had nice, good-looking pinenuts, pinecones on them. Then they'd knock them down, and the womens, they get their baskets and pick up the sticky pinenut cones and put it in the bucket. And when they fill up with that, they take it back

to the campground, and that guy there would be ready to throw it in when we get enough. And then, they'd set fire in that pit. It's just like a barbecue pit. And then, when they get enough in that pit, then they would cover it up with fire, and then they'd put some dirt over it, and they'd let it steam. So then, after that, people would sit around that day and talk, and have their lunch. And then they'd wait until the, they know just about what time it would be when the pine nuts would be ready, and the pitch. And when they do it, they always took one out as they took a shovel and got one out of there, and they said, "Here, you try it!" So then, they said, "Okay." They took the pinecone and turn it, put it in their hands—with their gloves on, because it was hot—and they twisted it different directions. And then when it was easy to twist, and they said, "It's ready!" So then they all start getting shovel, and all start digging up the pinecones in the pit. And then it would be hot. And then, after a while, they would cool off, and then they would, the womens, they would gather a spot where they're going to sit, and they would have their pinecones in front of them. And they start twisting the pinecones in order to get the nuts out of there. And then, they'd use their thumbs and their fingers to start digging the pinenuts out of there, and shedding the nuts so they get them out of the cones. Then, they would put it in the buckets, and throw the pine cones, the old pine cones away, and then they'll be doing that all afternoon until it's all done. And then, they would, the mens, they would go out for some more trees to get some more pine cones off. And that goes on for until we get maybe two, three bags of pinenuts, cones that had been shelled. And then, they would go out, take some raw pinenuts, and put them in a gunnysack, and take them home. For their own use. And the ones they already cooked in the barbecue pit would be cooked, and that one needs to be selling. Sell it to the people outside. And that's how that was done with

the pinecones. But the gathering of all the things to work with is very tedious, because they'd have to go up with the proper wood to use for the poles, and the hooks on the top of the poles, and the canvas to put under the trees after they start knocking them down. And the children, they liked to pick up the pine cones, and each throw it at each other. But then, they would be all sticky with pitch. But then—they all had their old clothes on, but other than that, that's where the pinenut story ends, there.

Many a times, when I'm sitting by myself, I remember the times my mother would talk about old days like wagons, horses, and bridles, and reins, and everything getting all—horses hooked up to the wagons, so that when they drove, traveling, that's all they would have is the wagon. Because they never had no cars, or anything to use to go traveling.

The horses was the main thing for the Indian peoples to have in them days. So that would've been in the 1860s, somewhere in there. And so, then she would watch the TV shows that had Lonesome Dove on it, and the chuck wagon was main thing that caught her eye. She says, "That's just the way we used to do it, when we got ready to go somewhere!" Wagons and the food, it all goes together. And everybody knew what to do. Nobody ever got on the wagon without knowing to take care of something. Horses had to be taken care of, and sometime they'd have a chicken. They would take that along, too. Because of the eggs they'd have to have. And then Gram, she would gather up her children, and put them all in the wagon, where they would sit and have their blankets there, because sometimes they'd drop off to sleep. Mom would do the same. She would be the oldest member of the family besides her sister, and they would know what to do to tend to the children, and all those things that girls do. No one had time to play or anything. So that every hand on that wagon had a job to do. There never was an idle hand

on there. And lot of times, Mom would tell us, “If you only was there when I was a kid, you would probably just sit down and cry, because that time was real hard. We didn’t have nothing to do our work for us. And you guys got it real easy!” And the children nowadays, if they were always doing their work with their grandparents, and their mothers and dads, they would know how to handle themselves, and respect their own lives as we had did then. So, on our wagon trip down through the countrysides, when our horses was get tired, we’d stop and rest ‘em. We’d always find a spot to be cool, by some willow trees or by water. And then, when the horses got rested, then we’ll start again. But most of the time, we keep going, keep going, ‘til we found a place where we could camp. And that would be a place with some trees. And then Grandfather, he would get his gun, and then go out and get some rabbits, or a deer, or maybe a bird. Some kind of sagehen, I think he would get. But other than that, that’s all he would get. Bring it in, and then the womans, they would prepare the meat by scraping the deer hide, and taking care of the hide, and the meat. And that is another story. And so then—I won’t go into that, because it’d be another long story. And after everything was prepared for, the meat was prepared, then Gram would take the meat and put it over the fire, and we’d have fresh meat over the fire. And everybody would really like that. And then she’d have her ash bread, and she’d give us all a piece of ash bread. Sometime we’d want more, but then she’d say, “No, if I do that, then we won’t have enough for breakfast! Oh, well, go ahead. I’ll fix some more tomorrow.” So then we had some more bread to eat, and we all went to bed with our tummies full. I told mom that time, “Did you know you had a very good childhood? Because you was, all you did was just go around. There was no fences, no gates to open, and nothing to—nobody said, ‘Don’t do this, don’t do that.’ You just

went.” And she says, “Well, that’s because you guys all knew what to do.” So then, I just—that’s sad, because I didn’t have that kind of childhood. And that’s all I’m going to say.

C: Uh-huh. So what parts of the country did you guys travel?

P: They traveled from **O’Neill, O’Neill** down this way, along the Snake River, down to Jackpot, and all the way down this way, because there would be fishes in there. And then they would gather the fishes, and they’d dry them, and prepare them for getting dried up, and then they’d have dry fish, and then they wouldn’t spoil. And then, down here, about 10 miles, 20 miles out of Wells, there would be the deers. And they’d probably get a young doe and bring that in, because at that time, if they got a deer, they just didn’t mutilate it. They just brought it in, took care of the meat and the hide, and dried the meat like jerky. And everything was fine. And then brought everything in. Nothing was wasted. Because Mom and Gram, they took care of the meat real good. And Grandfather, **Chief Jones**, would have hanging up the deer for them to work with. And then they would go down into Wells, and then they’d take that down the edge of the Humboldt. Right up where **Ogle’s Ranch** is now. They’d be camped right there, where many of the peoples who was on wagon trains would travel through on horses. They would stop there, also, and refresh their horses, and go on their way. That was just like a water stop where the peoples nowadays, they stop at the cafés and places to eat. And that’s why I build that **gold oval samote [15:50]** water over here, is place where the people can rally around and camp, and enjoy their rest time. They traveled then, they’d either travel south to Ely, and then west to Elko, and then east to Salt Lake, because that’s the poor travels way. Highway 48, and Highway 93, both north and south. And east and west.

C: How many days did it take to travel, like, to these places?

P: It would take probably about—a steady drive would be about two, three miles a day.

They would stop and camp, and then they would, to Elko, mom told me it would take two days just to settle down in the night, and then get up early and go in the morning to Elko.

By the time they got to Elko, it'd be about noon. And from here to Ely, maybe it would take about three days, three to four days. And then, that's the only trip they ever took. But that's travel by wagon and horses.

C: How many horses pulled the wagon?

P: Sometime four, sometime two. If it got light, it would be two. But they always had, Mom would be the wrangler. She was the, she liked the horses. She always was a horse woman. And she always took care of the horses. So she had one horse she always had, and she'd ride it bareback. So, she was quite a lady.

C: Where did they get their horses from?

P: Oh, they were from the ranches where they worked. They'd buy it and work for the ranches. Then they would buy the horses. Or he would, Grandfather would break wild horses. That's how they got their horses. Because there were wild horses around here.

C: So, was there a lot of mustangs in Nevada at that time?

P: Yeah, down by Currie. That was the area where they had the mustangs. Wild horses in Butte Valley, Odger's Ranch and around in there. But you could look there now, there's not too many. The horses are all getting down now. At the time, when the horses were here, people respected them. But now, they're killing them, and I don't think that's right. The horses have a right to be on earth as much as we do. And that's all I can say about it.

C: So did the Indians back then use saddles, or did they ride them bareback, or...?



P: They had saddles, and they had—Mom rode on hers bareback. She didn't like saddles. And Grandpa, he always had a saddle when he rode broncos. And he had his reins and everything. Even made his own lariats and rawhide. And his bridles. Many years ago, when my mother and her mother settled down in a place where they were going to work, with Grandfather and the rest of the family, usually there's about three, four hands along with my grandfather. My mother Ruth, and her mother Gimma, knew just about how they were going to prepare their tepees. Their tepees and tents. [\_\_inaudible at 19:42\_\_] tepees are pointed places, and a tent is like a room. And that's what they used. And then they would cook outside. And they would live like that all summer, and then, in the wintertime, when they were getting ready to move out of there, and get ready to move out to the ranches where they were going to settle and spend the winter, then they'd have to find a place where they could live. Sometime it's a shack, or sometime it's just a lean-to with willows, a willow bows to hold a canvas over their other, regular tents. And it wasn't too easy, either, for them people. And I look around when she tell me that, and she says, "You know, people are very lucky to have homes like they have now. They can go in and open their doors, and they have stoves in there. And all we had in our places was a tub to make our fire in and cook on. And people nowadays really don't take care of what they have. I really like my stove. Because I have a cookstove now, and I have that. And we have that in our tent. But we had to watch our tent, for the roof of the tent, because the chimney would go through the tent, and sometimes that stove fire would get hot, and would burn the canvas around the tent. And when that started, our tent would start leaking, and we would have big holes there, and we'd have to run around looking for a piece to put in there, which wasn't very easy. Because we'd be way out there, and, the

men would have to get an old blanket and put it on the sides. So then, while they were doing that, we was fixing our place where we were going to eat, and which, we ate on the floor of the tent because we didn't have no table. So we'd put our blanket, or our canvas, down so we could sit there and eat off the floor. But we was always clean people. Some people would say we weren't—because we always washed our hands before we ate. And then, we settled down, get that all down, then we start getting ready for night. And then, next day, when we'd have to do the same thing all over again. Until the boss, the white man who Grandpa was going to work for, came and saw the family living like that. He said, "We've got a bunkhouse up there you guys can use." And boy, my grandma was so happy, that she'd put everything on the wagon just as it was, never even took care of whatever. She just threw 'em all up back of the wagon, hooked up the horse, and away they went up to that bunkhouse, and unloaded 'em up. And in there they had a stove, and a place to put their water. And everything was really nice. They had a table. So, that's the way they lived in white man's place when they went up working in the hay fields. And I think all them people around had lived that same way. And every man, again, they would go hunt for deer. Deer, and then they would get their meat. Sometimes, the rancher would have some beef for them. And usually it's the ribs, and parts that they wouldn't use, and they would give it to the family, and *they* would make use of it. Make soup and stews. And which is better, because meat that time, you'd have to eat it right now, but the soup would last a long time. And they always had a good time, preparing their meals, and their homes. Once they chinked up the holes in their log cabins, sometime used the logs to make their homes, and it was done with mud so that they would chink up between the logs, so the wind wouldn't come through. And that's what we liked to do was play with

mud. So that was the job that children did. Chink up the holes in the walls. And that, mostly all the children liked to do that. And when I grew up, we didn't have that. We had, our homes had walls in. So we didn't have very much hardship then. But I always think about mom, how her hardship. And I feel sad for her. I feel sad for all the old people at that time, had to live like that. Now, I see the people in the overseas, how they're living. They just live like we did then. It's just not fun. So, the children should respect where they live. Take care of their homes and their families. That's what I like for all the youngsters to grow up loving their families, as the kids love their families now. That's it.

C: Where did they get the water...?

P: From the well, and the river. Streams.

C: And so was the water good for drinking then?

P: Yeah.

C: And the streams?

P: Yeah. Water was good everywhere. 'Til now; it's been all contaminated with all these things floating on the air. And every stream was always running. It was good. Of course, you always ask Gram when—when we went out to go fishing, she'd taste the water, because there's always been a dead cow above it, or a deer or something. A horse died in the water. And then you'd tell Grandpa or one of the guys to go up and see if there's any animal dead up there. Because there's always, sweetwater, they call it. So when they'd come back down, they said, "There's nothing dead up there. It's clean." So that's where we'd get our water. It was clean.

C: So what kind of fish was in the streams back then?

P: Mountain trout.

C: Mountain trout?

P: Uh-huh. I like them. They're real sweet and delicious. I don't like the trout from the lakes. They're no good. They don't taste good. Now, I'll talk about the deer hides. The deer hides was intended for the wearing items. Pants, shirts, gloves, hats, moccasins. Nothing was wasted. Nothing. Bones were made into needles. And spoons. And things to do the stirring the food with, and eating the soups and stuff. Things that—anything that they could think of. Nothing was wasted. The Indian people always used everything. And mom and them, whenever they got a deer hide come in, a deer, they take the hides, and scrape it and stretch it out, first thing. And make sure it doesn't have too much holes in it. Because sometime, like a shot, they'd have holes in there. And then sometime there'd be one big deer, sometime they're little ones. Sometime they're bucks, and they'd be heavy hides to handle, and so then, first thing Gram would do is take the head off and then put that aside, and then cut the neck off, and strip it down. And then she would take the legs off, and set the legs aside, because she used that for purposes of her own. I could not say what it was. It was her special ways of tanning the legs of the deer. And the tail's also special thing to handle, women to handle. And I can't talk about that either. So, they took the part of the deer, and they'll make jerky out of it. And then they make stew meat out of it, and dry it, and make sure that everything is just right. So when that's all done, then in the meantime, when that was being done by the younger woman, Grandma'd take her deer hide out, and get some water in the tub, and put the deer hide in there. And get some rocks and put on top of it. And that would sit for about three weeks in the water. Tub of water, and then every day she would go check the fur of the hide that's in the water soaking. And she'd turn it, and handle it just right. And then she'd take the fur of the deer

and pull it. And if it comes off easily, it's getting close to where she can take it out of the water and put it over her log, which she's going to use to scrape the deer hide on. Then, when the heavy part of the deer hide, by the shoulder, the fur would come off of there, then it was ready. So then she'd take the—it was a wet job when she took the hide out of the water, and she put it in that bucket, and she'd take it over there where she had her log, and stretch it on top of that, take—her scraping knife would be a bone. I think it was a horse bone, rib. Something. Either a horse rib or a cow rib, to use. And then the shin of the deer was also an implement for scraping. And it'd be a certain bone. And then she'd use that. And then she had a knife—a draw knife, she called it—and I'd see her standing back there, humped over that log and that deer hide, scraping that heavy deer hide, and, boy! I'd go back there from school, and she'd, "Come here," she says. "Give me some water." And just, I'd go there and give her some water, and I says, "What are you doing?" She goes, "Scraping the deer hide." I said, "Pretty soon we'll get some money and buy some potatoes." So then, we're so happy because money was coming. So, one time, one day when I came back from school, I went back in where she was, and somehow that hide didn't smell good. And I said, "Pew, what is that? What are you doing?" She said, "It's a deer hide. It got a little wild for me, and I've got to hurry and get it done." So I kept saying, "Pew!" to it. And she says, "Well, pretty soon you won't say 'pew,' because we'll have some money and we'll buy some good stuff." So then she said, "Help me move that deer hide around." And so then, so I grab ahold of one leg, pry its leg and move it around. And it was heavy! And I don't know how she ever managed to use that big deer hide, moving around on that pole. So then, because she was a 5-foot-4 woman, and she wasn't *too* strong, didn't *look* too strong, but she *was* strong. And she

moved herself around really good, and got her deer hide working right again. So then one time, I tried to use a draw knife on it, and she told me, "Leave it alone! You're going to put a hole in it." So then, that's the time that I never bothered the deer hide. And I grew up not knowing how to scrape. But I know how to sew the deer hides together. Because she showed me how to do that. And when she was ready to take the hide off, I helped her take it off, and the same with Mom. She always, I always helped them both. But I was a little girl at that time, too. But I was always there. I knew just about what to do for them. And then, come tanning, same thing. I helped them get some wood, and you had to have certain wood to smoke them. Have a certain place to put the deer hide to hang up after it's been dried. Because it's lot of work to get those deer hides to where they could be pliable to work with. Because I missed one spot, one item, is from the scraping to the stretching of the deer hide, to make it soft and pliable, they had to work with it. They had to put brains on there, smear the brains on the underside, and on the top side, in order to soften it up. And that was a job, too. If you didn't have the right kinds of brains, it wouldn't soften. It'd take long time to soften. So, Grandma'd always hurry and do that, and stretch it up on the wall, leave it up there and let it dry that way. Or put it on the clothesline. And if the dogs don't get it, she was fine. But if the dogs come around and tear it down, she has a fit. But you have to watch it all the time. So then, when that's all done, then she'd soak it again. I don't know how many times she soaked that deer hide in water in order to get it all softened. And she'd put it on a tree stump, and tighten it up then. Wring it out there, and let it stand on that, wring it out on that post until it's dry. And then she'd shake it off, and then she'd work it. Stretch it this way and that way. It was a time to do that. And I asked her, I said, "Don't you ever get tired of doing that?"

She said, "I've got muscles! I don't get tired." But she did have muscles. So, then when she got all through doing that, then the smoking started. Now, it was vital to do that. The two ladies would take care of the smoking. They'd have to have just the right color, and use the right kind of bark in order to smoke the hide to make it smell good. The sagebrush is strong smoke. And cedar is good smoke. The fire would make the cedar smoke, smell good. And so that they would use that. But then, you leave it in too long, it's just too dark. And Grandma'd always say, "Go check it! Go check it!" So I'd go over there and peek at it, where she has her hole. We'd have to put a cloth back in that hole. So then I told her, "Okay, it's yellow." So then she'd go over there, and pull the bucket out, and take the hide off that's hanging there, and turn it inside-out, and it was just right. So the hide turned tanned, that's how they tanned their hide. It used to be a very hard, tedious job. But I wouldn't want to do that. I can't do it now. But it was enjoyable to watch them ladies do that. Which I know I'll miss as time goes on. And I hope somewhere along the line that somebody will pick it up. They get the gloves ready to sew. And then they have a pattern. A woman's pattern, and a man's pattern, they're all different sizes. She know the size of a man. Says six, size six, seven, eight, and she'd make a—a six is a small one, and a seven is a medium, and a eight is a large. And then the buckaroos, they come around for their gloves to her, because they already ordered them, and so then, when she'd get 'em all ready, she'd send the kids out, tell them that their gloves were ready. So, as time went on, she'd do that every day. And she'd sit there, afternoon until night. And all she had then was an oil lamp. And they'd have a whetstone to sharpen their needles with, and a buckskin thread to use that would be a heavy number 3 thread. And then she'd run out of that, and then she would go get some more, and add

wax, beeswax. She'd have to go find her own beeswax. And sometimes she'd get bit by the bees. That was quite a hard job for those ladies. And I'm sad for them, and I'm proud of them, because they knew what they were doing, and how to do it, and how to get things ready for everybody. And I don't think none of the womens could do that nowadays. Because everything's prepared for them. And I hope somebody picks it up from here on. Like I said, I hope some, or a lot of the ladies will pick up the sewing of the buckskin, because it is very tedious job, and you poke your fingers, and then you run out of thread, and run out of glove wax, and needles. You break many needles. But it'll be four-pointed needles to work with those buckskins, to push the needles through the buckskin. And a good sharp scissor, and a good steady hands, and good eyes, and **uninterrupted** work. And then, what was that?

C: How much did they sell it for?

P: Oh, the buckskin, the gloves—you either had to have the working gloves, they would be heavy buckskin. That'd be the buckskin that would be heavy, in order to work on the field where they had to fix the fences. And they either had a short gauntlet for the working gloves, and for the long gauntlets, they had that for dress-up. And the long gauntlets used to have beadwork done. And fringes on there. And Grandma liked to fix the fringes and beadwork on them. She was an avid beadworker also, as well as my mom was. And that's all they ever did was just beadwork, all, from noon 'til night. And sit there, and sit there, sit there... "When you guys going to bed?" somebody would say. "When I get this rose done." "When I get this leaf done." And always something like that. And I know somewhere along the line that there are still beadworkers out there, and buckskin workers, and womens, they're out there doing buckskin scraping. And I hope



that they would teach their youngsters to do it right now, before it's too late to even teach them. Like they done to me. They was always chasing me away when they were making deer hide, scraping the deer hides, because they thought maybe I might put holes in it. So I never did actually learn how to scrape deer hides. But I watched it. Then I beaded with them. But the gloves, at that time, they sold for ten, nine dollars. And then the cowboys and the buckaroos, they'd come and look at it. And always would look at the thumb part, because that's where most of the heavy part of the work of the glove is done, by the thumb. And so they'd look at that, and they says, "Good, that's what we wanted! Something like that so it won't split open." So they asked my grandma, "How do you do that, Gimma? You know, you're the best buckskin glove makers that I've ever had." And they'd always come back to her, every year. Before the seasons of gathering the cattles in. That was it for her. Mom was the same.

I have a grandson who was five years old when he started powwowing. And he danced. And his name was José E. Salazar. E is for Edward. And I put him in the, made a costume for him for the parade. We always had parades here in Wells, Nevada. And every summer, I'd make a float. We'd go out and make a float, and put all the kids on there. All native children. We'd make costumes for them, and dress them up with feathers and everything. Faces and whatever. So then, grandson, he'd want to learn how to bead, and to work with, sew the buckskin. So my mother and I, and Ruth Jones and me, would sit there and show him the needle, and how to thread and everything. And the beads. And we told him, "It's going to be hard! It's going to be hard on your eyes!" So he's 26 years old now, and he's glad that he had learned how to bead, and work with feathers, and respect the feathers. And people are proud that he had learned how to do his dances. He's

a traditional dancer. But right now he's working for the white man world. And he doesn't [inaudible at 42:32] powwowing. But when he does, he goes out. But he's working now to get his own regalia ready. And when he does that, when he gets it finished, he'll go out and dance again. Which I'm proud to say that he was a good little dancer, from five years old up to twenty years old or so. And he bead his own beadwork on his headdress, and his roaches. I got him a roach, and it was for a little boy. He said, "Grandma, that's too little for me! We got to get a bigger one." And his, I call them "tailfeathers." He said, "No, they have word for that!" So I just call 'em tailfeathers, the big old plumes and feathers behind him. And he said, he start laughing at me. And so then I said, "Okay. I won't say 'tailfeathers' anymore." Mom made his moccasins. She made several moccasins for him. He outgrew 'em, because his foot got long. And then, now... [Crying] now she's gone. So then I'll have to do it. But I'm proud that I had taught him all these things. Because my mom doesn't no more.

C: Yeah, tell us how you got your name, Nevada, and how that came about.

P: Many years ago, when I was born, it was in December, and my grandmother and my mother both worked for a family that was known as **Agee-Smith** family here. They were quite rich people, I'd say, because they had cattle and everything. And they lived up in the **Ovin Hill** area. That's where they originated. That's where my mom and my grandmother used to go up there and work up there in the field, in the hay field with my grandpa. So, in December, in the [19]30s, my mom was expecting me, and I was born the 15<sup>th</sup> of December. And so, when they got back down here, they made a moon house, her and my grandma, because my mom couldn't go in the main house, because there was mens in there. And boys. You can't go take the womens in there like that. As most of the

older people know, that there's a taboo for the women to go in the main house when there's mens in there. So, my mom and I, we lived in this little house, what people call "moon house." And my grandma fixes, prepared a place for her to sleep, and cook, and have water and stuff. Eat. And have me in there. So this one night, mom was getting ready to give birth, and I was born there in that little tiny shack behind, right where I'm living now. Where my mom was living. So it's a time of naming the baby—me—Gram had went to work that day for this lady's daughter. And so, this lady's daughter told her, "What are you going to name the baby? Did you name it yet?" And she said, "No." And her mother, Mrs. **Agee** was standing there, she says, "Why don't you name her Nevada, after my daughter, Nevada Smith?" Nevada Agee, and then as time went on, she became Smith. So then, I became Nevada at the time. So the white lady gave me the name of Nevada, after her daughter. And so I've been Nevada ever since. And my last name was **Kamassee**. But, my dad came from Idaho. So, every time I give my name to people—they ask, "What is your name?" I said, "What state are you in?" As time went on I said that. And they stand there thinking, and they says, "Nevada." I says, "That's my name." And then they start laughing, says, "Really?" I said, "Yeah." "You're just kidding me." I said, "Nope. That's what my name is: Nevada **Ellen Kamassee**." And they say, "Oh, how original! That's so authentic, that's such a beautiful name." I said, "I know it is! It's a beautiful state, too." So that's how I got my name, from another lady was named Nevada by her mother, **Tressa Agee**. It's been just like family name. I been with this family forever, ever since I was born. And that's my name: Nevada.

C: Huh. That's good, Nevada.

[End of recording]