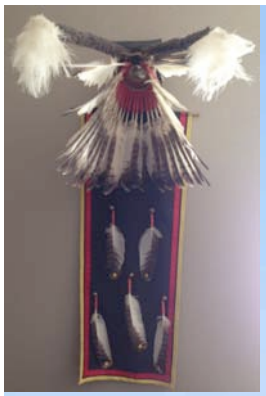


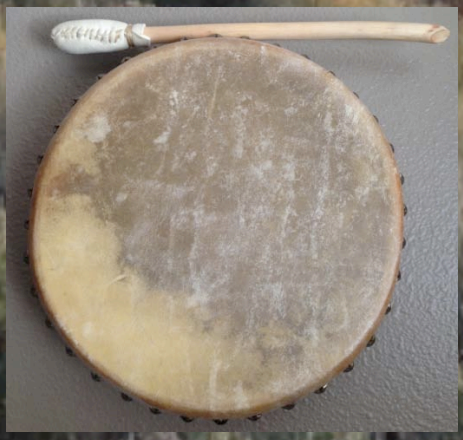
Naomi Mason

Great Basin Indian Archive

GBIA 034

Oral History Interview by

Norm Cavanaugh
April 23, 2014
Owyhee, NV



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GBIA 034
Interviewee: Naomi Mason
Interviewer: Norm Cavanaugh
Date: April 23, 2014

M: I'm Naomi Mason. I'm 84 years old, and I would like to start by talking about my mom and dad. My dad's name was Tom Premo, and his mother, on that side of the family, came from the Jarbridge area. So his mom came from there, and his dad came from the Elko area, as part of the—people called themselves *Tosawihi* [White Knife]. So, they were, that's my dad's side. Then my mom came from, she was actually born—she's listed as being born in J.D. Ranch. And that's in the Roberts Mountains area. And her mother died after she was about two, and her uncle raised her. And they moved to Ruby Valley. So she grew up in Ruby Valley. But, you know, she was born in 1890. And those were very difficult years. And my dad was born—according to the Census—1855 or 1853. So it's just matter of two year difference. So, my mom and dad—all I can say is in the 1800s, it was really a bad time for all the Indians in Nevada. In every little valley, every little canyon. It was very difficult times. So, my mom grew up there. While she was growing up, my dad somehow—when he was small, he was back and forth. His family apparently moved back and forth to Owyhee. I think most Indians did that, because there was not a reservation at that time. So, he… Well, one moment. Did I have—well, they moved back and forth. And not too many people were on the reservation. And early on, they did have a school here. And the earliest time my dad appears in the Census is 1855, he was four months old. And he's listed there with a dad. And my grandpa had *two* wives, which was not uncommon then. And I don't know what happened with the wives, but he had two listed. So my dad was four months when he first appeared on the Census. And I followed him through the different Censuses, and the next significant thing that happened to him was, he was—maybe he said he was 14, when he went to Carlisle.

Maybe he was a little older. He was never clear on that. And I guess I always wondered, how'd he get picked to go to Carlisle? And the really interesting thing is that, we had a doctor here in 19—oh, let's see, what time did that man come through? A doctor named Dr. Montezuma. He was here for two years in Owyhee. And he wrote to Washington, D.C., and said we were in a very deplorable state healthwise, and wrote letters to D.C. asking for hospital. And Montezuma happened to know the man that ran Carlisle, which is really the very first Indian school. And so, I think that's how about six people went from Owyhee to Carlisle. So my dad went in 1905, or 1904, and it was kind of like an industrial school. And he came home in 1909, I think is what it says, because we've got papers from Carlisle and that's what we figured out it was. So, that's what happened to my dad in 1905. He—it seems to, he came home to recruit students for Carlisle when he was home. But my mother was always irritated with him, because she said she wanted to go to Carlisle, but according to her, she was tricked by my dad, and so instead they got married. So, she didn't ever get to Carlisle. But then my dad and mom, they lived in the Elko area, and in 1913, after they had my oldest sister, Laura, and they had my oldest brother Thomas, they moved to Owyhee. Because by then, Owyhee was offering 40 acres of land that you could cultivate and live off of it. So, that's why they moved here. But remember, my dad as a child had already been back and forth with his family, as many other families. So that's when they moved here. And the rest of us were born here after they moved here. And my mother, you know, she never did—she never adjusted to Owyhee. She always wanted to be back in Ruby Valley. That's where her heart was. She loved it there. And her aunt was still there, that raised her. So, I became very attached to Ruby Valley just from hearing the stories about it. I thought it must be a magnificent

place. And it is, because since then I've been there many times. And so—I've lost my train of thought. One moment there. So, in—the Treaty was signed in 1863, but actually it didn't become a reservation here in Owyhee until 1877, when President Hayes signed the papers to make this Duck Valley. And temporarily, they were at the Carlin Farms. All the people, that's where they had been moved. The movement from all the areas, that's how my grandmother—my dad's mom—that's how they ended up in the Elko area. They were kind of all living on the Carlin Farms. But many of them already were coming back and forth to Owyhee because, you know, it was to avoid the military people. The military people really was very abusive to a lot of Indians. A lot of, you know, tragedies happened with the military, everywhere. And so people were back and forth to Owyhee. And so in 1877, after it was made a reservation, some people trickled here and were already living here. So then, shortly after that, they begin to *have* the people, kind of like a forced move to Owyhee. As many people as they could. Because this was the Western Shoshone reservation. But not everybody wanted to come here. Many wanted to stay where they were, where they were employed as cowboys, or they worked in the mines, and many worked on the railroads. So sometimes, people came to Owyhee, and tried to farm, and maybe they were not farmers. They had nothing to start with. And so, a lot of the people went back, you know, wherever. To Austin. To Ely. Everywhere. They just… life was very difficult, here. There was really nothing. No employment. No housing. Sometimes the water was scarce. It was just the events of the weather, and the environment. Some years were good, other years was very dry. Just as it is today. So there were actually years even the game was down, and they couldn't find enough food to put on their plates, I guess you would say. So then, life here in Owyhee was really very, very hard. And then,

in—my mom and dad worked away, and originally my dad was, you know, addicted to alcohol while they were still in Elko. But my mother temporarily left him, and he really did sober up. So when he came to Owyhee, he and my mom, they became Christians, I would say. They became very attached to the Presbyterian Church, and at that time we were getting a lot of Nez Perce missionaries—native Nez Perce missionaries—that were coming here to share their religion, or the Protestant religion, with whoever would listen. And my mom and dad really did become devout Christians from there on. So, you know, all the children, our lives became divided between what they knew from the olden times, and the church. The church rules. So I guess we kind of grew up kind of a split personality, I always think of it. But he became, they both became—he became an elder, for his lifetime, with the Presbyterian Church, and my mother taught Sunday school, in Shoshone, and she just devoted a lot of time to the Presbyterian Church. And then in 1910, that's when my sister was born, my eldest sister. And when they moved here, in 1912 or [19]13, they were still giving out commodities to people that were good. If you left the reservation, or if you were bad in the ideas of the Indian agents, you were denied commodities or any kind of help. It was very restrictive living, and probably painful for those people that had a lot of freedom before they came here. So, but, you know, my mom and dad worked very hard. And their 40 acres, they cleared it together by using picks and shovels until the 40 acres had no sagebrush. But that particular 40 acres burned, and then they had to move to a different spot, and then they had to do the same thing there. But you have to remember, all their peers were doing the same thing. Or I should say, most of them. They were working very hard to clear the fields so they could plant. And that is exactly what they did. So my dad was always busy planting, and I always

look at my life in periods like the dates. Like in 1924, before I was born, you know that's when the natives became U.S. citizens. And that was very significant, because my mother, especially, was really geared into all kinds of history, and she would always bring that up. That, you know, we were lucky to be citizens. And so during World War I, of course, we were not citizens, but some of the Indians participated in that. That World War I. I was born in 1929, during the Crash, which was worldwide. And I, maybe because of that, and because it was still very difficult to live here, it seemed—everyone was poor. Even the non-Indians. That's when they had a lot of hobos, a lot of riding of the rails, and it was a very hard time for many many people. And the Dustbowl. Historically, it was just a very hard time. But it affected Indians on reservations, because the rations were even shorter, and if you were not a planter, I don't know what you ate besides beans and bread. You know, fry bread is not a traditional Indian food. That's a later food. We didn't fry. So, we had—there was a lot of beans. Good thing, that's a very nutritious food. So we had beans, and my parents always planted—originally, without Wild Horse Dam, most of the people had to go to the springs along the mountainsides, where they planted. So it really involved all day to go up there to take care of your garden, and then come back, and water it from the spring. Many people did that. Almost every spring here in Owyhee, there were garden spots. And the remarkable part then is everybody was so honest, and so hard-working, that no one ever pulled any of your plants up. It was always the honor system. I can't believe the integrity those old people had. We didn't have to worry, and everyone was helpful with each other. So that's what was happening in 1929, and I was the next to the last in a family of 10. The third one died at four months. It was a flu. And my family's kind of divided in half: the older half and the

younger half. That's because the older half, they were already going to school in government schools when we were younger—the younger half. And also, the older ones experienced a very stern dad and mom, and when we came along, I would say that, you know, they had mellowed. And we had very mellow parents compared to the older ones. That's what I remember. Of course, then they were also very active in church. So, you know, we were very geared to all day Sunday for church, and all day Wednesday for prayer services. And that's just the way I grew up. And always, we had the tone of the importance of education. Always, always. But, you know, it was not that easy to become educated, other than to go away to boarding schools, which all of my brothers and sisters went to Sherman Institute in Riverside, California. And I even went for one year, but that's all I attended Sherman for. And let me see… Then, and Owyhee, only had grades up to eight when I was growing up. And after that, you had to either go away, or not go to school anymore. So that's why many of the students, my peers, went to either Stewart Indian School or Chemawa. Apparently, they had a choice. I went to Sherman because all my siblings went there. And so, life, you know, continued on like that. It was everything—you had to work hard so things could get better. There was no other thought in your head. Everything you did is so it could get better. And so, I think that's why everybody really did work hard. And I don't ever remember having—I only remember two alcoholics on the reservation when I was growing up. Never saw an empty liquor bottle or empty beer cans. Just except for those two people that were obviously, now in retrospect, they were alcoholics. So, I guess in so many ways, my life was just kind of ideal. We were very, very poor. We didn't go too many places. We went to the mountains a lot to get wood, and also fish, and hunt. So time was spent between the mountains and

home. And so then comes along 1931, and the school became a high school, but it was not enough time to accommodate my need for high school. Just my brother only went. My youngest brother went to high school here in Owyhee. Because by then, unless you were a social service case, you didn't need to go to a boarding school anymore. So, in about 1931, I think the Elko school system, I don't know if they embraced us that year, but we became part of the Elko school district. And the big change happened in about 1934, when they started talking about the Reorganization Act, where all the tribes were offered to adapt by-laws and develop rules and laws to govern people on the reservation. So, that's when my father became active in the politics. And from then on forward, he was always involved with the politics in Owyhee. Very involved. And I think maybe the training he had in Carlisle helped him. Because I remember once he told me one of the things that they did at Carlisle that he really enjoyed was, they actually got to go to D.C. and sit in on the Senate hearings. So, he enjoyed that, and I think he always remembered that. So actually, he was a pretty decent politician, and he was very honest. So, you know, from there on, from 1934 on, well, he was always very political. And I guess because of that, the rest of the people in his family, his children, had a lot of politics at home. Discussions and what was going on. So, that was at—[19]36 is when we really adopted the by-laws, Constitutional by-laws, which was kind of based on the U.S. government by-laws and Constitution. And it was completely different concept. And then in 1938, the Wild Horse Dam was built so that we could have water to irrigate our lands. And that was very good for us, because we had years that we actually were flooded or really drought-ridden. So—let me correct myself. It was 1946 that the high school was added by the Elko County School District. And so then, kids could go here and didn't have to go away.

I was just going to talk a little about families, because it happens to pop into my head. You know, my mother grew up in Ruby Valley, but she explained that most people kind of lived in little groups, like mini-communes. And she said that she grew up with Ralph Jim and Isaac Jim. That was in her little commune. She and her uncle, ***Honteko*** [**19:08**] was his Indian name. And I can't remember the third family. So she always knew them. She thought she was related to Ralph Jim, and Ralph Jim always called her aunt, ***paha'me***. And so, I guess over the years, my mom and dad moved here and kind of lost track of him, but finally, when Ralph's dad's wife died, he moved here to Owyhee. And by then, he was an older man, and he was living with that old man Crow's sister. You know, the Crows. You know the—I can't remember his old name, just a blank. Well anyway, that's who he was living with. And I think she passed away. And my dad became very close with him also. And they said he became so depressed that he actually hung himself. And my dad officiated at his funeral. And he was so full of remorse and so unhappy, that Earl remembers that he was actually crying while he was trying to conduct the service. And that's just the one family that I really learned about. And it was a sad thing. And as with my uncle that raised my mom, well, my mom left Ruby when she was with my dad, and her aunt remarried. And so, that left her uncle. He moved here to Owyhee because my mom was living here. And Mildred remembers that really well. She said he arrived on a little tiny buggy with a horse tied in back, and about six dogs behind him. And then he moved into, she said he built a little tent in the back. And that's where he lived. But he was very much a part of their life. This is before I was born. And so, she said every morning—in the evenings—Owyhee was different. The land had not been subjugated. So in front of our house was like a slough. And she said every night, he had a

fish trap. And she says in the evenings they'd set that fish trap in that slough, and dam it on each side, and in the morning they would go out and pick out the fish, and she said that fish would be what they would have for breakfast. That was ***Honteko*** [**21:34**], my uncle, as it turned out. Well, actually, my grandpa. Excuse me. So, but he moved here, and I guess he had already been ill. And he, my mother kind of took care of him, but that was the early years before they knew how to take care of tuberculosis. And when he was diagnosed with tuberculosis, and we didn't have a hospital here, she thought they shipped him to either Fort Bidwell or to Schurz. And he died there. And she, they didn't have the money to go after his body. So to this day, I really don't know where he's buried. Possibly in Fort Bidwell, or maybe in Schurz. But that was a sadness for my mother. And she did follow her aunt, her Aunt Sally—***Tup'a pitnawina nanaihen, e newe naniha*** [**22:25-22:28**]. And she died, and her burial site is in Elko, and we still continue to decorate her grave, because that was my mom's aunt that raised her, and she was very close to her. So that was… And I guess, when they picked up my mom, it sounds like it was in the Roberts Mountains. Because if you look at the map, and look at Steward's maps of all the Indian camps, there are all kinds of Indian camps along at the foothills of the Roberts Mountains. And in that area is where she—actually, her mom died, and when the group moved to come toward the Elko area—because remember, they were like nomads. They went from place to place looking for whatever food was available. You know, whatever it might be—rabbits, antelope, whatever. And so, she was kind of abandoned. Because the old grandfather said the mom was dead, and they didn't want her as an extra burden. An extra mouth to feed. So I guess they made, set up camp and left her, and the uncle heard her crying, and picked her up, and that's how he raised her. She

was an abandoned person, poor thing. That's my, that's another little incident. I remember that. Because I was thinking of her uncle, ***Honteko***. And that's, that's just a little family incident right there.

C: So were they from—so, did they roam through the Rubies, mainly?

M: Yeah, it—it really is puzzling. They even talked about wandering all the way down to Lund. I think, people don't appreciate the fact that they wandered everywhere. And a lot of people, they say they stayed in one spot, but I challenge that, because the stories show that they wandered. Then on my dad's side—because he came from the Jarbridge area, he knew. He knew all the names of places, like the mountains going toward Salt Lake, and he said his mother and his grandmother from that side, they actually made fishing trips up there by Twin Falls. There was an existing falls there where the people fished for salmon. And one of the dams, of course, obliterated it. But he said they migrated up there just to fish. And that was my dad's mom's side. Her name was ***Hainne*** [**25:04**], that was her Indian name. But we've had a really hard time trying to trace her, because there was no written documentation of her family. But, you know, some of them have faded away. *Taibo* ***pekkaipe'na*** [**25:18**]. And so, there were a number of people in our family, but they just sort of disappeared from the face of the earth. Some of them, you know, became very dilute. One of them, Strickland is one family portion. [Laughter] It's on dad's side of the family! Yeah. So that's just another little family story that I know of. Yeah. So my mom was born in the *Tubattsi* ***Tewatekka*** [**25:46**]. She was what you would call a Pine Nut-Eater. And, because her grandpa—who was not very kind, apparently, people talk about how mean he was—and so, during his lifetime, he had six or seven wives. Not all at once, but some died in childbirth. Some, you know, just died. Death rate was huge.

And so, I can almost say that I'm probably related to everybody over in that Te-Moak area. Because of that! [Laughter] But unfortunately, you know, we grew up here, and *we* were growing up—we didn't travel a lot, because mainly finances and crops. And animals. So we didn't, we were disciplined. That was our first responsibility. And I used to wonder, how do all these people that come to visit my mom, how did they do it? Because they were just as poor as we were, but yet they would appear Fourth of July or any old time. Some of them worked on the railroad, and I could see that they could afford it. But, we just, we never, we were responsible for our place. You know, we all had our duties, and we just didn't go any places. But it was very interesting. But mother would always tell all the stories. And so we kind of knew who we were related to. And if we went to town, she always visited them. Fourth of July, when they came—because during my lifetime, the encampment was almost an entire circle. You know, that's early on, in the 19—maybe, early [19]30s, they were still doing that. And so, the encampment was entire circle. And one end would be where the people came from the Elko area, Austin. They would all be encamped on one end. So I would go with my mom, and we would visit one relative here. We move to the next encampment. A whole, it seemed the south side is where most of the people from the ***Tubatekkate niikwai sikka naakkan*** [**27:46**] the Pine Nut Eaters, they seemed to gather around there, and they had their homes there. And on the other side, [**27:54 in Shoshone**]. Fort Hall, lot of people came from Fort Hall. So there were a lot. And then they were still, when I was young, they were still on Fourth of July day. The parade began at the rodeo grounds. So these people on horses. And we still had these people in, especially for Fort Hall, they came with their headdresses on, and with their leggings on. ***To'pararak*** [**28:33**] that little front apron that the men wear.

On bareback horses, painted horses. So I got to see that in my lifetime, that you see in pictures. And I think that was the tail end of it, because after that, it just kind of stopped. And then, that's when the young people were in boarding schools, and all those young people, they used to even put down a huge floor that they, in the evening, you could either go to the waltzing and the jitterbugging, or after that—seemed to only last a certain length of time—and then there would begin the round dancing, which went on all night until morning. And what I remember most about it is that different men sang during the night. Somebody from Goshute, somebody from Ely, somebody from Duckwater. All those amazing voices. It's too bad no one recorded them. I remember that so well. ***Soonde hupiakande*** [**29:20**; (Had many songs)].You know, it was—I didn't realize that I really experienced a good treat. But gradually, that faded away until everything just had to stop, I guess. One of the things, it depended a lot on the superintendent, too. Because Fourth of July is when you start harvesting your crop. And many of those people, you know, it used to last a whole week. People'd be camped there for a whole week. And their crops would be drying. So then he had to put his foot down, because remember, they kind of ruled us then. And people had to cut it short to, like, two or three days, instead of the full week. Sometimes *two* weeks. [Laughter] So, it gradually changed. But my dad said the way it really started, was when they first got on the reservation, to tell the Indians, like a newspaper, they had a crier. A town crier. He said what would happen is, the Indian agent would be on a horse, and the people would be gathered, and he'd circle around them to tell them what is happening. These are the new rules, this is what you have to do. And he'd just—like a town crier. He said that's what Fourth of July started from. It started as an informational gathering. Then, well, Indians love to celebrate. So

from that, it grew into Fourth of July that we started celebrating. But it came as a practical method for informing people what changes the Big Father was making. That's what it started as. [Laughter] But, it's turned into a big, big celebration after that. And so, then they had better means for trans—for giving information to you, you know. They, by then, I think they must have had an office, or an agent had an office. So, he didn't have to be a town crier like he used to be. [Laughter] I always love that. So that was one thing they did, that happened Fourth of July. Yeah.

C: So what type activities did they do during the Fourth of July?

M: Well, when I look at it now, they *loved* activity. Now, let me tell you, I don't think there was a fat person around there! They *loved* to race, they loved to bet. They loved anything that seemed as competitive. I remember that so well. They would have races. And I have a sister that's one year older than I—two years older—than I am, and she always won. Beverly. She was like an antelope. She could beat everybody. So, she always raced. [Laughter] And we, we couldn't, we weren't allowed to camp there, because we had to come from home daily. And I think we only got to go twice. Unless my mother won the argument, then we'd go three days in a row. But we would come early in the morning, stay all day, and then leave when it got dark. Or sometimes, special occasions, stay up all night to hear the singing. But that was, you know, that was very special to do that. But I think they—everything they did was very competitive. And then, I remember they danced also. Until daylight. You know, the singing went on 'til daylight. Then, in the early mornings, they had all those little competitive races, and tug-of-war. Anything that was competitive, they did. And it was very exciting. I think the Indian just was meant to be active. And they were. I remember growing up, everything was activity. Nothing was

sitting down except handgames. And that was very active also. It was like a sideshow: you know, those people that were holding the bones; they just would fly. They have their arm and then their draped blanket or whatever, wherever they were hiding their bones. [Laughter] And all the motions they would go to. It was wonderful! And all his teammates would encourage him. Even that was *so* active. Now—then I didn't see any handgames for *years*, about 20 years. So I finally went to see a handgame in Fort Hall. And lo and behold, they were sitting on rocking chairs, on stools… [Laughter] Not even on the ground! That was a real shock to me. Because they always sat on the ground with a log in front. So that's evolution. [Laughter] That was, I really enjoyed that. That was good, too. Yeah. That's what I remember of some of the activities. Then of course, at the rodeo grounds, they had a lot of competitive racing. Because we used to have a race track down there. And everybody who thought they had a good horse to beat everybody else's, they entered and they raced around the race track. And sometimes they had no saddle. Many of them had saddles, and they would race with a saddle on, saddlehorse. They didn't have the regulations and rules that they do today. So they were—everything was competitive. Everything they did. And I think that was a good thing. Yeah, I think that was very good. Yeah. It was really good. So, that's what I remember about *that* activity. Let me see what else… Oh, and then school, of course. That was also—at the end of school day, we always had a barbecue the last day. And they had a racing again. And three legged race, and tug of war. And all kinds of games that they had last day of school. And of course, my sister Beverly would always win. But I could win at one thing, and that was three-legged race, because I happen to be coordinated. I could win that. But I couldn't win anything else! [Laughter] So that was fun. And they would have a barbecue

for—everybody came to that. All the school children, because that was the last day of school. And that was where I was, it became already Swayne School by that time. So it was Swayne School, so that was at Elko School District we were part of. So by then, we had teachers, and every class had a teacher. They didn't have a one-room schoolhouse anymore. We had our own teacher, I had a third grade teacher. You know, every class had their own teacher. And that's where that **Glenn** Nutting that you remember, the dad, he was our principal when I was here. Yeah. Before I left Owyhee, he was still principal. Mmhm, Yeah.

C: When you left Owyhee, I mean, where did you go to pursue your education and—?

M: Well, first I went to Riverside. Because remember, it only went to the eighth grade. And I went to Riverside, Sherman Institute, when I was in the ninth grade. And you know, I wasn't really happy there. I don't know why. I just felt like a misfit. Although I enjoyed every minute of it. Then when I came back that summer, you know, because every summer I worked. I can't remember where I worked that summer. Maybe in that ranch, 101 Ranch, that big white house? I think I worked there. It seems we all worked there. And then I just felt like there was more to Riverside—more in life than Riverside. You know? I just didn't want to go there. So then, my poor mom and dad, they didn't know what to do with me, because of course, I wasn't the kind that ran around or did anything that was out of order. It's just that I just wasn't going to go back to Sherman. So they didn't have a solution, but at that time **Rush Juney** was the minister. And his wife was named **Arta**. And she had been our minister before he came. Then they got married, and **Rush Juney** was very forward-looking, and he was always talking about education. And he actually came from Berkeley, and the Bay Area. So once he spoke of people living

with families, and working your way through school. So I went to them, and I asked them if that could happen to me. So, I think within a week, they found me a place in Berkeley with a family from a part of the Presbyterian chain. So I went to Berkeley, and I stayed with that family, and I was a babysitter, their bottle dishwasher, and whatever they needed, and I got to go to school. So I graduated from Berkeley. And then from there, you know, I just went, I worked a whole year, and then I went into a nursing program. Then I got halfway through my nursing program, and then I just fell in love and married somebody and never finished. Didn't do that until later, then I went back to school and finished nursing program. But that's how I got there. I think that, in that time, you had to be innovative if you really want to do something. You know? It was out there. And that was always my mom's attitude, is that if you really wanted something, it's possible. She was a great one for that. Like, she'd just—at least, she didn't think *anything* was impossible. But she knew better, because during her time there was a lot of prejudice. And you know, she was very intelligent. It was frightening, she was so smart. I think she taught herself how to read. And during the World War II, when my brothers were in the service, she kept up with all the campaigns that Willis was in. She had maps that people would give her, because she was so different that people gave a lot of literature to her. So she kept up with all the campaigns worldwide, what was going on where, in Japan and—it was just amazing. So, I guess that kind of made us all aware of history, and aware that there was a world outside of Owyhee, outside of the United States. I think that's what she did for us. But it was her personal interest. She just had so many interests. She was just amazing. You know. So, I think that's how I got interested in the world outside of Owyhee, and outside of Sherman. So that's what happened. You know? And I think there

were others that did that, too, that went through the church, the help of the church. So that's how I got there, and that's how I went to school. Thanks to my mom and dad and all their interests. They had a lot of interests. Yeah.

C: So where'd you finish your nursing school, and then where did you go during your career as a nurse and that—?

M: Well, I worked in Redding, because my kids grew up in Redding. My children were all born in San Fransisco. Because that's where my husband worked. Then from there, when we realized that it wasn't such a hot place for our children, we moved to Redding, California. Because he was working for Ward's and then they transferred him. Montgomery Ward's? So, that's where the children grew up the rest of the time. And that's where I went to school, and I worked in the—and a T.B. sanitarium was next door to us, it wasn't very far. So I worked there nights, because that was most convenient. You know, that's what I did. And when I was in San Fransisco, I worked nights, too, like that. Because I couldn't work—you know, we had to work it so somebody was home with the children. So that's what happened. And then I finished in ISU up there in Pocatello. Yeah, I went back to school, finished there.

C: What degree did you get when you finished, or what—?

M: Bachelor of Nursing, science, in nursing. That's what I did. Then I started working on my master's program, but I just had too much to do to be over. I was overwhelmed, because then my children were growing, and they had their needs, and it seemed that was where my money went, was to help this one, and then help this one, and then help this one. It was unending. And you know—and no one can tell me about child rearing, or how hard it is to raise them when they go crazy. I told them I have been to Hell seven times and *back*.

So. [Laughter] There's nothing you can tell me! The tragedies that happen in families. But you know, I'm, they have been very good. They have moved along themselves with encouragement. They've done well. I'm very proud of them.

C: So you have seven children?

M: Yeah, I have seven children. Yeah. I have four boys and three girls. So you know. So that's just what happened. [Laughter] Yeah.

C: So I understand you worked for Indian Health Service for quite some time. Can you share—?

M: I did. When I came back, that was like a second career for me. I went into the Indian Health Service, and I actually worked at this hospital for a year, I think. And from there, I moved on to the satellite clinic in Elko, and from there I was their public health nurse, and covered all the little reservations. And I really loved that job. That was my favorite job of all the things I ever did. And it was really—for me, I felt like I was being useful and helpful. And they were all Shoshone-speakers, so I could speak Shoshone. And that was an advantage. And I guess I could see their needs, and I felt like I was being useful. So I think that was the most exciting work period I had. You know, because it was—it was a little of everything when you do public health nursing. Just a lot.

C: So what were kind of the needs during that time? It wasn't T.B. anymore, was it?

M: No. No, it wasn't T.B., but as a public health nurse, it really is kind of exciting because, you know, you still are with the diseases. And if something breaks out, and one person gets something, you do all the investigating and follow-up. And I guess the most exciting—it's not *exciting*, but it was very… I guess it was. It was, because it was challenging—was a case of syphilis. Because you know, as they say, you could even

trace syphilis back to God. Because, you know, it's traceable. So *that* case, I think I even worked with Canada, people out of Canada. Trying to solve that case. Which eventually, we *did*. We did solve that case and found out who was the person that contacted everybody else that ended up with syphilis. So that's what I liked about public health nursing. You know, the investigation, and how to figure it out. The analytical part of that. I really like that. That's part I like the best. I worked in Intensive Care, too—neonatal, when it was first creating, and I thought *that* was fascinating—but I really loved public health nursing the most. That, to me, was a—people with people. Trying figure out their problems, trying to plug them into—crippled childrens and whatever. Yeah. I really liked that.

C: So what type of diseases did you—did the patients have then?

M: By then, I think we were already beginning to see diabetes. Diabetes was quickly and rapidly becoming out of control. You know? It just was already out of control. It just… And diabetes, it's very hard to teach people about self-care and diabetes, because for years you can have it and feel okay. You just maybe feel lousy sometimes. And you're not real sick, you know. Over time, you get sicker. So they're not going to listen to you. They're not going to listen to, "You need to eat differently. You need to exercise." They're not going to listen to that. Because they don't feel that bad. And over time, of course, they get sicker. And soon, they're so sick, they have to be admitted to a hospital. And then they find out they're a diabetic, and their kidney's already in failure, they're losing their vision… Because over time, it's very destructive, diabetes is. And I think that's how come we have so many diabetics. Because it's just unteachable at the beginning. Or I would say the *people* are unteachable. They won't listen. Because they

feel okay. They're not real sick. Until, you know, the little vessels have been destroyed in their heart, and you're going blind, and you're in renal failure. So… that part is the really hard part. That's the first thing I saw here. Then I came in on the tail end of alcoholism that I had never faced before, out in the white society. All the World War II veterans were kind of on the tail end by then. Including my own brothers. And the hospital was where they would end up, after going on about. And they, we would have to treat them for immediate care, because by then, they just, they just were coming off of a big drunk. They had to have care. And it was really kind of sad to see that. Because by then, it was all the people—all the young men that I knew as I was growing up, my own brothers—and it got to the point where you knew all of them. Well, what they, they would go into DTs, after they've been off to somewhere, after two days they would go into DTs. And when they were in a full-blown DTs, lot of times we would have to cuff their hands and their legs, and then you used what you call a leather straps. They don't do that any more. It's not treated that way, thank Heaven. But at that time, that was the mode of treatment. And I think I really—because, remember, when I was growing up, they only had two alcoholics that everybody was aware of. So then, when I come home, *all* these—by then, they're not young anymore—they're in their thirties and late twenties. And here they were. You know, in full-blown alcoholism. And I think that's when Owyhee started initiating the large workshops on alcoholism. That's when they started doing that. And then, AIDS was kind of like that. AIDS came in the same way. Those were the things that they were worrying about at that time. You know. And then, I noticed something when I was out in the field: that's when the young girls—and it was gradual, I think that they—I noticed that young girls that I was following, that just had children, babies, they didn't

know how to care for the baby. And they didn't know how to clean house, let alone washing dishes. And it seems to, they were not taught at home, I don't know whether it's because they came from alcoholic parents, but I noticed that trend, which I think has gotten worse. They, I don't know what caused it, because of course we were taught at home. My daughters were taught at home. So, I don't know what happened to make that change, but I noticed that the girls were not—and if they didn't know what they were doing, how could they take care of their little babies, you know? It was, it was really a concern. And I did share it with a few people when I worked with the different, you know, Duckwater and Ely, and stuff like that. And they did have programs to help them. But somehow, I think we may have caught some, but probably a lot fell through the cracks. And I think it was just, everything was so free. You know, everything. Everybody was open for having a good time. Drugs, you know, it's just a whole new life. Not one I grew up with. So. But you know, you can adjust to it, and try to figure out how to, what to do. Somewhat. Yeah.

M: I just want to talk a little bit about my dad, when he was growing up, and how he got his name. Well, we never really decided where he was born. Probably in the Elko area. Or some say he was born in Owyhee. But I, all I know is that, where his life changed was, they were coming from Elko on a wagon, because that's the way they traveled. And his dad was on horseback. And his sister-in-law was driving. And the grandma was there. My dad's mom was there. And they were coming to Owyhee, and it sounded like it was falltime, and it was very cold. And originally, they didn't want to come, but the sister-in-law, her name was ***Paakkappeh*** [50:32]. That means ice. She insisted—they said she was kind of like a man, and could handle any team. And so she was driving. So she came, and

then when they got to Wilson Mountain—that's by Tuscarora, by, you know, how else can I identify that? Well, the Indian name is… [**speaks Shoshone at 51:00**] Well wait, I'll think of it in a minute. Senior moment. So, they waited there. Because he went on to hunt. Because they said right there, at the bottom of Wilson Mountain, used to be a spring, and that's where Indians stopped on their way to Owyhee. And they would camp there. So they decide to stay there, because they were waiting for him. He was hunting. His name was Elko Jack. ***Areko Jack,*** *ne nanihan* [**51:28**]. That was my grandpa. Well, he never came back. And they waited and waited, and it felt like it was going to snow. So they finally had to leave. And they left. And my dad was a little baby. And they left and came on to Elko, because my grandpa, Areko Jack, never came back. And he never did ever return. When they got to Owyhee, they waited for him there, but he never came back. And so, they just kind of thought maybe he just ran off and left them. But apparently, somebody had, in the springtime—his horse returned with the saddle. But he was not on it. And it was too late. By then it snowed, and they couldn't find him. But in the spring time, they went looking for him, and they did find his skeleton, or whatever was remained. And he had a bullet hole in the skull. So during that time, you only had a few reasons you received a bullet hole. I mean, you were somebody's enemy, or you were in a fight, or else you were a kind that was a womanizer, and they said that's what he was, a womanizer. And they felt like the gentleman of the lady he was womanizing is the one that shot him. That was what they surmised, but we don't know. But what that did, was it created, my grandmother went to work in Tuscarora. She worked there when my dad was little. And then also, my, Elko Jack's brother, who was a MacIntosh, stepped in and took over the family, because that's what they used to do. So he raised my dad,

and also they had three children. But according to the Census, they all died. The three died. It was very difficult times; diet, and the flu. And they all died. That's all I can see according to the Census. And so, my dad kind of grew up when he was little in Tuscarora, and they worked for a family, Antone Primeaux, and it's spelled the French way, P-R-I-M-E-A-U-X. And his dad let them work there, and he's the one that gave my dad the name "Premo." Over time, they shortened it to P-R-E-M-O, but it's really P-R-I-M-E-A-U-X. And those two boys played together, and the little Primeaux boy learned how to speak Shoshone. Of course, my dad learned how to speak English, too. So that's how my dad grew up part of the time in Tuscarora. So, that's how we got our name. And we never knew who killed my grandfather, it just, that was it. But that's how he died. ***Oon Natsippata*** [**54:26**, (Spread Out Lava Rock Hill)]. It comes to me, [Shoshone at **54:27**] *nanihade* Wilson Mountain. ***Oon Natsipatta***. That means a sliding lava rock, flow of lava rock. That's what that is. That's where they waited, that's where the Indians used to camp. Yeah, that's it. So, my dad became very good friends with the Primeauxs. And when he was ill in the hospital, before he died, they came to visit him. And I have some letters from them, when he passed away. And I went to the son's funeral when he died in Elko, and you know, they were just very good friends with my dad forever. Yeah.

[End of recording]