



# Delaine George

*Great Basin Indian Archive*

GBIA 048



**Oral History Interview by**

**Norm Cavanaugh  
June 2, 2016  
Duckwater, NV**



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Interviewee: Delaine George

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G: My name is Delaine George. And I'm from the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe. And my family is from the Adams family, and my dad from the George family, and they came from Beatty—around there, somewhere. My mom came up—as the story goes, she came up from Beatty or somewhere from there, and she met my dad here, and they got off to a good start, so they settled here. I have three brothers, two which have gone on, and one sister. And we all live here in Duckwater now. And I have numerous nieces and nephews, and grandsons, and one daughter—Lisa. But we just love it here. But we first settled up there behind that white house by Virginia's? That's where we first lived, and we had no water or electricity, and we just "lived off the land," like they would say! [Laughter] And we had lots of farm animals, and we were busy from morning to evening, and—well, I thought it was fun. Well, now the thing I really remember is like, when visitors come to our house and visit my dad, and we'd run and hide underneath a table to hear what they're saying—you know, the little kids—and my dad would say, "Okay, no kids! Outside! You don't need to be listening to grownups' talk!" [Laughter] So, that was one of my things that I remember about him. And to this day, I say that to my grandkids. And they look at me funny. But that's the way I was raised. So, yeah, we got water from the ditch—oh, we got *drinking* water from a well. There was a well there. And then we'd swim in the ditch; it was flowing close by our house, and we, my sister and I used to just wade in there and play, getting the fish, and go swimming in there. And had a lot of fun. And we had pigs, and horses, and cows, and sheep. And it was fun. Every day, we had fun things to do.

[Break in recording]

I really enjoyed going to school. That was the best part. At first, the elementary school down—they have one here in Duckwater, that's where I went. Then, I went to Currant Elementary School at Currant, Nevada, because my dad had a job there, over there. And so, we went there. And I graduated from there, the Nye County school. Then I went to Stewart Indian Boarding School. And I really liked it there. I really liked what they did. They showed us how to live right—you know, clean sheets, and wooden floors. And lot of people, lot of kids to talk to. Whereas before, we used to stay on the ranch and have nobody to talk to. And so, and we lived in a little bare house with—when I was with my dad at Currant, we just didn't have any good floors inside the house, we just had the dirt floor, and had to haul water, and—. We just had to—life was a little bit hard. But, we made it somehow. And after that, I went to Stewart, and that's where they taught us all the things, and I really enjoyed that.

[Break in recording]

I was about fourteen, fifteen? My freshman year, to when I graduated. And I really liked that place. I know a lot of kids say that about Stewart, and I'm one of them. I just really missed it when I graduated, and I wished I could've stayed on little more. I just really enjoyed Stewart.

C: So, how many different tribes were there at Stewart when you were there?

G: Oh, my goodness! There were so many. And we'd watch the busloads coming in from Arizona, and the Nevada kids were already there. And there was the Navajos, and Apaches, and Pimas, Papagos, Hopis. There were just so much—Apaches. And so, I was just in Heaven! [Laughter] There's so many kids to talk to! And I can't remember how many other tribes, but it was the Washoes, Paiutes. And on weekends, there were movies

that we could go to, and basketball games, and volleyball. And there was so much to do, like go to the museums, and, or some people worked for families there and earned a little extra money on weekends. And that was nice. And I enjoyed that, and I bought little shoes and stuff with it. And there's just about everything going on, and they had a beauty pageant. That I can remember, because I was asked to be a pageant person to go from the classes. But I would always go to the prom with my date, and be sponsored by my class. That was a good feeling.

C: So, what were the teachers like there? I mean, were they all non-Indian, or were there some Indian teachers as well?

G: I remember the one for English was a white guy. I think his name was "Talbert"; I remember his name. [Laughter] And I think there was a couple. And Home Ec teacher, she was from Alaska, she was really good. And I enjoyed that, working up in the Home Ec department. And just fantastic, I just learned so many things my first year there. And I didn't know there were things to do and everything, because I, you know, I stayed home all the time up on the ranch with my dad. So, I was in Heaven. Oh! [Laughter]

[Break in recording]

My sister went with me, too. She went to the grade school there in Stewart, so I was with her at that time. But then, later on, they transferred her to the Fort Apache Boarding School in Arizona. So, we were separated for a while, and she came back. And yes, I enjoyed having my sister with me.

[Break in recording]

I went to—was going to say, I went to school at Haskell, they sent me to Haskell. And I was a Home Decorating, I took that class. And I didn't care for that too much, and then I

transferred to the Commercial Cooking, and which, I cooked for whole bunch of people. Because we all cooked for the whole pupils, and the people that worked there. Most of the time, there'd be a lot, a thousand of them, and we'd have to learn how to—from the recipe book, you know, you had to add or multiply. So. We did dishes, and how many pots and pans to make that? And that was a good training for me, food science and everything.

[Break in recording]

It could be all combined into one, because they had a high school there for the high school kids. And they had—could be a trade. They had painting and all sorts of other things that they could learn. And like my Home Ec classes, and I'm sure they were all combined together. And then, high schools would play other communities, other high schools. And we'd go there and cheer them on. I remember I joined the Pep Club, and had a purple sweater with that big old "H" there on my sweater. [Laughter] And I cheered, and that was fun. I enjoyed that, too.

[Break in recording]

Oh, they send me to another training school in San Jose. But that didn't work out, because I had an automobile accident, and I had crutches on, and I couldn't get around the campus too well. And so I end up coming back, and didn't finish that. I think I went to Reno. And then, after all that, I just end up working in casinos.

[Break in recording]

I was a change girl; carry lots of money! [Laughter] And that was fun. And then, one day, I got married! He worked at Stewart. He's one of the ones who worked at the offices, and so we got married, and I moved to Utah—Myton, Utah. It's over there by Fort Duchesne.

His parents are from there. But he end up going into the Army, and being gone for two years, and I stayed with them—the parents there, at Myton, Utah. And then, I went back to Nevada and worked in casinos again. And dealing with money, change girl. You know, being away from my husband, I took the graveyard shift. And drank lot of coffee!

[Laughter]

[Break in recording]

He came back, and we went down to Phoenix, with me and Lisa. Lisa and I; she was a little baby then. We stayed in Phoenix for long time, because he worked at the BIA office on Thomas Road. And he worked there quite a bit. Then, things didn't work out, so I come back.

[Break in recording]

I didn't return to Nevada; I went to see my sister. She was working in the Bay Area, San Francisco. So, she let me come stay with her, and I got to do lot of things; go to the beach, and—go to the beach, mainly, because Lisa loved the ocean. And take pictures on the Golden Gate Bridge. We'd go roller skating; Linda used to love that, so. Lisa loved that, too, so. We all went roller skating. And I made some friends. And it's, was great. Having my sister there, and my daughter, and used to do lot of things together.

[Break in recording]

My mother had died, and so, we came back to Duckwater. And I end up staying with my dad. He was staying here at my brother's house up there. Doug George's place. And he had a little trailer there, so I end up staying with him. Then I end up getting married to a rancher—here in Duckwater. He had a ranch, and I used to help him with the cows. Just about everything on the farm; haying, and driving the tractor. [Laughter] Riding horses.

Well, he's gone now, but his name was Donald Sam. And his family was also from here. And so, had a good time. I enjoyed the ranch work—because I was younger, and I could do those things. And riding horses. But I left him, and filed for divorce, and married another guy from here. His name was Allen Lenbeck. And so I went to stay up there with him, by Virginia Sanchez' house—up there? By Bank Ranch. And we had lot of fun. We went, turned to the church, and he was one of the guys that helped run the church, Mormon Church. And I helped them sing. So, we were involved in church for a while, and those were good days. And then, things didn't work out, so I was, I moved on, and got a divorce, and married Mitchell Mays. And so, I lived on First Street. And we were happy. And he was a medicine man, and I helped him with his medicine work, because he helped—he enjoyed doing that. And he, I went all over with him. And we did helping people; they called, and he went, helped them.

[Break in recording]

It depended on what was wrong, or what they were praying for. If it was something that he had to do twice, we'd go back, and he'd do that. And we went to lot of camp-outs. Remember going to Yomba. They had vision quest up in the mountains, and I went with him. And that was good. I learned lot of things from that. And what it involves, and, so. And I was there to help him. And people gave whatever they wanted to. If not, they didn't have to. And just something, he was there to help them.

[Break in recording]

It's at the Tribe here, at the Health Department, and my job was to help the Indians do cultural things, like I showed the kids—I had a little class of kids, and we'd go out in the ditches and find the willows, and we'd show them the right kind. And there was a person

here from, she was my mother-in-law. And she helped me, because she was very good at making willow baskets and stuff. But first, we had to get in the ditches and get the right ones, and how to soak the willows, and how to split them, and—it's quite a good project. And I had community involvement, and some of the teachers would help too, and they'd come. And you had to get them before they flowered, so it won't be so hard to get the, scrape off the leaves. The class and I and that lady who made, we made little, small, miniature cradle boards. And I also taught them how to make moccasins, and how to do beadwork on them. And I remember just being with them, and showing these, and the kids enjoyed that.

[Break in recording]

Some young people, they disrespect their elders. They come into a room, and they don't have a seat, and the kids are all sitting down, and not one of them will get up and offer their seats. And they'll not acknowledge them, or just go walk past them and don't say hello. And I think that's one of the things that really bother me. And I know my grandson, Alex, is good at that. He likes to help people. He's never mean to the elders. Because I taught him not to be mean. I'm very glad for that. And I wish more kids would be nice to the elders, and they could *learn* a lot from them. They could show you how to do things. And I think that's missing in our culture today.

[End of recording]