

An Interview with
JUANITA BOW
KINLICHINIE

An Oral History produced by
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada
Tonopah
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Juanita Bow Kinlichinie
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PREFACE

The Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the tapes of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are not history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the NCTHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the NCTHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts, and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherence. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the NCTHP will, in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;
- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
- e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into many homes—in many cases as a stranger—and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. In a number of cases I had the opportunity to interview Nye County residents whom I have long known and admired; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and Nevada—too numerous to mention by name—who provided assistance, information, and photographs. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. “Bobby” Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project in 1987. Subsequently, Commissioners Richard L. Carver, Dave Hannigan, and Barbara J. Raper provided support. In this current round of interviews, Nye County Commissioners Andrew Borasky, Lorinda Wichman, Joni Eastley, Gary Hollis, and Fely Quitevis provided unyielding support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the program within Nye County in its first years. More recently, Darrell Lacy, Director, Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office, gave his unwavering support. The United States Department of Energy, through Mr. Lacy’s office, provided funds for this round of interviews. Thanks are extended to Commissioners Eastley and Hollis and to Mr. Lacy for their input regarding the conduct of this research and for serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. These interviews would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Lacy.

Jean Charney served as editor and administrative assistant throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Kimberley Dickey provided considerable assistance in transcribing many of the oral histories; Jean Charney, Julie Lancaster, and Darlene Morse also transcribed a number of interviews. Proofreading, editing, and indexing were provided at various times by Marilyn Anderson, Joni Eastley, Julie Lancaster, Teri Jurgens Lefever, and Darlene Morse. Joni Eastley proofed all the manuscripts and often double-checked, as best as possible, the spelling of people’s names and the names of their children and other relatives. Jeanne Sharp Howerton provided digital services and consultation. Long-time Pahrump resident Harry Ford, founder and director of the Pahrump Valley Museum, served as a consultant throughout the project; his participation was essential. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

All material for the NCTHP was prepared with the support of the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Office, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect the views of Nye County or the U.S. DOE.

—Robert D. McCracken
2010

INTRODUCTION

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the close of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of overnight riches from newly developed lodes, were but a memory.

Although Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that while most of the state was mapped and its geographical features named, a vast region—stretching from Belmont south to the Las Vegas meadows, comprising most of Nye County—remained largely unsettled and unmapped. In 1890, most of southcentral Nevada remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be so for at least another twenty years.

The spectacular mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), Rhyolite (1904), Manhattan (1905), and Round Mountain (1906) represent the last major flowering of what might be called the Old West in the United States. Consequently, southcentral Nevada, notably Nye County, remains close to the American frontier; closer, perhaps, than any other region of the American West. In a real sense, a significant part of the frontier can still be found in southcentral Nevada. It exists in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area also is visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, much of it essentially untouched by humans.

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously since its first year. In contrast, relatively little is known about the early days of Gabbs, Round Mountain, Manhattan, Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump. Gabbs's only newspaper was published intermittently between 1974 and 1976. Round Mountain's only newspaper, the Round Mountain Nugget, was published between 1906 and 1910. Manhattan had newspaper coverage for most of the years between 1906 and 1922. The Rhyolite Herald, longest surviving of Rhyolite/Bullfrog's three newspapers, lasted from 1905 to 1912. The Beatty Bullfrog Miner was in business from 1905 to 1906. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All these communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities once their own newspapers folded, although Beatty was served by the Beatty Bulletin, published as part of the Goldfield News between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 resides in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) in 1987. The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County

libraries, Special Collections in the Lied Library at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique—some are large, others are small—yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 700 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

On the basis of the oral histories as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories have also been archived.

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impact of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, which would be located inside a mountain (Yucca Mountain), would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions and quality of life of Nye County communities that may be impacted by the repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for a long time and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided at the site. And in the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

—RDM
2010

Robert D. McCracken talks with Juanita Bow Kinlichinie at her home in Moapa, Nevada, November 29, 2009.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Juanita could you tell me your place of birth and date of birth?

JK: I was born here in Moapa on the Indian reservation in 1932—April 8.

RM: What was you mother's name?

JK: Callie Nappy Lloyd Bow.

RM: Was Nappy her maiden name?

JK: Yes.

RM: When and where was she born?

JK: She was born in New Castle, Utah, July 4, 1913.

RM: Was she Paiute?

JK: Yes, full blood.

RM: Do you recall her parent's names?

JK: Yes, that was Nora and Rex Asket. They were from that same territory, the Shivwits Indian Reservation. (Sometimes it's spelled with two ts—Askett.)

RM: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

JK: I had three real brothers and one half-brother—he was my dad's son—and one half-sister and one deceased sister.

RM: And what was your dad's name?

JK: Willie, William, Bow.

RM: Where was he from?

JK: He was from, I believe, Parker. He used to be on the reservation right by Laughlin; they did away with it many years ago. I guess all the Indians there had some kind of a disease or something and died so they moved toward California and then up this way. He met my mom here and he married her. He used to live in Pahrump; that's where his other kid came from.

RM: So he was from the Laughlin area?

JK: Yes. They used to call it Bear Lake. You can just barely see pieces of it, they said. I've never been down there, I have just heard about it.

RM: Where did your folks get married?

JK: Right here in Moapa.

RM: How did your father earn a living?

JK: He was a farmer.

RM: How much ground did he have?

JK: I guess everybody here had one acre of land at one time.

RM: What kind of crops was he growing?

JK: He didn't grow any; it was just the land where we lived, our homestead. We used to live up in the middle of the fields on this reservation. The first time I went to school was over here by Moapa by the railroad station. That's when I learned how to talk English.

RM: You spoke Paiute at home?

JK: Fluently. I still do.

RM: Do you still own the land your father had?

JK: No. It belongs to all of us now, the whole tribe.

RM: When did you move to Pahrump?

JK: I believe I was in second or third grade, somewhere in there, at the little red schoolhouse.

RM: Did you go to school in the little red schoolhouse in Pahrump? What do you recall about that? Who was your teacher?

JK: Larry Lee. She was a lady but that was her name.

RM: Were there many kids in your class?

JK: I think there were maybe ten of us.

RM: Were most of them Indian kids or were there quite a few white?

JK: They were all mixed.

RM: Where did you live in Pahrump?

JK: I lived down by that artesian well. You know where that little red schoolhouse used to sit? Just a little west of it. I remember I used to walk to school.

RM: How many years did you go to school in Pahrump?

JK: I can't remember; it's been so long. It was for a while. When we moved from there we went to Logandale.

RM: Are you related to people in Pahrump?

JK: Yes, Annie Beck. I think she was Richard Arnold's aunt.

RM: What do you remember about Annie Beck?

JK: I barely remember her. I was small then. She had a little pet gopher; it was cute. She had all kinds of animals in a cage and they would come and go out of them and just run loose, then go back in their cages again.

RM: Because she was feeding them?

JK: Yes, she spoiled those animals. [Chuckles]

RM: What kind of animals were they besides gophers?

JK: She had quails and rabbits. All wild ones, too; they weren't tame. I would watch her feed them and she used to tell me not to stick my hand in there because they'd bite me.

RM: Annie Beck was a midwife, wasn't she? And was she also like a medicine woman who would treat diseases?

JK: I never saw her do it but I heard she did.

RM: How would you describe her?

JK: She was a small lady and a very active lady, I remember. She did everything around her place; she would do whatever she pleased.

RM: Where did she live?

JK: Down the other side of Manse.

RM: Did you know many people that lived up there across from the Manse Ranch?

JK: That is all I knew, just her. But up where we lived there was Joe and John Weed. My stepsister used to stay with them; she was cooking for them.

RM: What do you remember about the Weeds?

JK: They were quiet and they did some kind of farmhand work for the farmers around there. At that time Pahrump was barely starting. It's not like it is now, it was way out in the boonies and everybody lived far from each other and they'd meet once in a while at the store. After school I used to clean the store.

RM: Who owned the store then?

JK: Brooks.

RM: Where was it?

JK: It was on the side of the road a little ways from where we lived. It was made out of lumber. It was a nice place; it had everything in it like groceries—you could buy practically anything in there. They even had a bar on the other side of it. Like I said, I used to clean it.

RM: Would you go over there after school? Was it every day or once a week or so?

JK: Every day. I used to sweep the floor and stack some goodies. Whatever they'd sell, I'd put it up there and they'd tell me what to do. I was a small girl and could only lift so much so Mr. Brooks would do it for me. He'd say, "I want you to do this."

I said, "Okay," and I'd be stacking things or wherever they wanted. That was a nice little job for a while. I didn't get paid too much but at least. . . .

RM: What did you do with your money?

JK: I used to give it to my mom and let her spend it for whatever she wanted. I would keep maybe a couple of dollars. Back then, things didn't cost as much as they do now.

RM: Did Brooks have a family?

JK: Yes, he had a wife and three boys. They went to school right along with me.

RM: How long did you work at the store?

JK: Not too long. Somebody took it over so I just quit. I don't remember who the new person was.

RM: What did Brooks look like?

JK: He was sort of a cowboy type. He and his wife were both tall people. His wife had black hair and he had brown hair and the boys all had blond hair. I remember them but I can't remember their names.

RM: Were they growing any fruit trees or anything like that?

JK: They didn't grow anything there but I know the people down at Manse had pomegranate trees and fig trees. There was a guy named Steve Brown who lived in that area and he had all the fig trees and pomegranates and when my dad would go down there he would give us some. They were so good.

RM: Steve Brown was an Indian, right?

JK: Yes.

RM: Did you know any other people there?

JK: I knew the Bowmans from here because they moved over there. That's the one that owned the ranch.

RM: Bowmans bought it in 1946, I think. Were you still there when they bought the Manse?

JK: We left here in 1942 because my dad was a policeman here in '40 and '41. After we left here in 1942 we went down to Logandale and he worked down there. Then when the Bowman family moved in, we went to Pahrump. My dad worked for them over there and we stayed there until I was 12 or 13. Then we moved back here again and my dad started working over here.

RM: So you moved over there because of Elmer Bowman.

JK: Yes, he wanted my dad to work for him. I don't know what happened but we moved back here. I barely remember that. When we moved back here I went to school at Logandale at what is now a museum there.

RM: But you didn't live on the Manse Ranch when you were living in Pahrump, did you?

JK: No.

RM: Why didn't you live in the camp up there where Annie Beck lived? It seems like it would have been closer to work.

JK: My dad wanted to be close his daughter, my half-sister, I guess.

RM: What was her name?

JK: Her name was Mary Bow. She had a brother named Wilson Bow. I didn't get to know her until I was 13. I met her in Vegas when she was married to some guy there and my dad said, "This is your sister."

I said, "Gee, since when have I had a sister!" I was surprised because I didn't know I had one.

RM: Did you get to know her while you were living there?

JK: Yes. We used to pick watercress where the artesian water was; there used to be a lot of watercress there. And we'd pick Indian spinach. My mom and she and I would all go out there and pick it, then come back and they'd boil it. It was kind of bitter; they had to boil it two or three times before they'd get the bitterness out of it.

RM: Did you like it in Pahrump?

JK: It was okay; I didn't mind it.

RM: Did they have dances or anything like that in Pahrump?

JK: They didn't have anything as far as I know.

RM: What did you and your brothers do for entertainment?

JK: We didn't do anything, but I would sing a lot of Indian songs to myself. When I lived in Logandale I used to sing Indian songs for these people. I'd come up from Logandale on that locomotive—this old man, Mr. McCan, was a conductor. He was a good friend of mine. I'd ask, "Can I ride up to the reservation with you?"

And he'd say, "Sure, hop in." I used to ride in the caboose all the way up the valley on the line with the sidelights. I would walk over this hill and came this way. My family were here, my cousins.

RM: And this is when you were living in Logandale? What train did you ride?

JK: The Union Pacific. The line branches off up there; the work train was a local train. He'd let me come every Saturday, whenever I wanted. He said, "Sure, hop in the back. You know where to go." I sat way up on top of the caboose. I used to really enjoy that ride. I would come up here on Saturday night and they had big Round Dances and I used to sing for them.

RM: And when would you go home?

JK: The next day the same way—on the train.

RM: And what was the Round Dance?

JK: It's what they call a Friendship Dance today; we used to call it a Circle Dance.

RM: Is that a Paiute dance?

JK: All the tribes do the Friendship Dance, the Round Dance, or whatever you want to call it. People dance together, get acquainted, and have a lot of fun. We also danced for the servicemen when they went into service and we celebrated when they come back.

RM: Is the Round Dance mainly for young people?

JK: It's for everybody.

RM: Do you know a lot of Paiute songs?

JK: I used to know a lot of them but it's kind of going away from me. My girls tell me to record them before I forget all of them.

RM: Do you know the Salt Songs?

JK: Yes. I travel with the Salt Songs. I go where they have memorial sings and all that. I sing at the funerals, too, along with everybody. We all get together and sing.

RM: How many Salt Songs are there?

JK: I have no idea.

RM: If you started singing now could you sing for two hours or . . . ?

JK: All night.

RM: Where did you learn your Salt Songs?

JK: From my grandparent, Rex Asket.

RM: Could you sing Salt Songs all night long and not sing the same song twice?

JK: Well, sometimes they come twice—it all depends on what we're singing about at the moment. The Salt Song is for people who have funerals. When they pass away the Salt Singers sing all night long. In the olden days the ceremony was four nights and four days long; now it's only one or two nights. Sometimes they have a half a night the first night and the second night they have it all night. Back then when we were children we weren't allowed to go to the funerals.

RM: Why was that?

JK: It is hard to explain. Back then the children were told not to go to funerals and ladies couldn't go to funerals when they were pregnant and when they were on their moon. It was really strict back then. There was no noise; there was nothing but the adults. They really felt sorry for the family that was moaning and having a hard time.

But today we have funerals and kids run all over and they sleep in there. We were not allowed to sleep in there, either. They run all over and everybody's visiting; you would think you were having a social gathering, the way it is nowadays. The elders are the only ones that respect what is going on; these new generations will be hollering and yelling and the kids are running all over. I don't think that is respectful but I don't say anything because they're not my children. Because you barely tell somebody's children don't do that and they get offended by it. So we don't say anything, we just let them do what they want to do.

RM: So children and pregnant women weren't allowed to be there because it was spiritually dangerous—bad things could happen to them?

JK: Right. Or something could happen to the baby—that's the reason they used to tell ladies not to come there when they're on their period or pregnant.

RM: Did women who were having their periods have to do or stay away from other things?

JK: You can't sleep with your husband when you're on your period. That was a taboo; they had to sleep separate. There's a lot of dos and don'ts in Paiute culture.

RM: What are some of the dos and don'ts for women generally?

JK: Don't sleep with your husband when you are on your period. And don't go around where a lot of men are, where the men are talking. The ladies keep to themselves unless their husband is over there. They would go to tell him something, or just look that way and he'd come. It's just the way they used to communicate. Nowadays it's, "Hey you, come here!" or whatever; they have no respect.

That's the way the women used to be back then. They weren't loudmouths and they didn't laugh out loud, either. And they didn't smoke or drink or do all the things they do today. They worked hard for their families, and had a lot of respect for each other. They took care of their husband and kids. That was their No. 1 role, to be a wife and stay home and let the

husband work. Today it's not like that. Everybody has to work to make ends meet. I can't blame them; it is just the way life is.

RM: Were there things the men had to do and taboos for men and so on?

JK: Oh yes, as much as the women did.

RM: What were some of the men's taboos?

JK: They couldn't sleep with their wives when they were going out hunting and they couldn't be around their wives when they were on their moon. A man, when their wife's pregnant, can't look at deceased stuff or see somebody dying. or something like that. There were a lot of things; I can't remember them all.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: When did the dos and don'ts start changing, do you think?

JK: I think it gradually changed. It's like the way I was raised. I was raised with both sides, Indian culture and white, so when I was growing up I had to learn the white side and the Indian side, and then I put them together and I was thinking about which was best for me. My mom and dad told me that the best thing to do was to "Go on the Indian side because you are an Indian. You are not a white. You can talk their language and learn what they're doing but don't learn everything, the bad side." That's what my dad used to tell me.

He said, "You can learn things to compete with what they're doing. You have to know what to do on each side—how to act on this side and how to act on that side." The only thing is, the white man's ways are easier than Indian way.

RM: How so?

JK: Like I said, all the things the men and women have to do. We have to be respectful and we can't do this and can't say that. And on the white man you don't give a darn what you say, you're just open [gives a fake laugh]. Everything's funny and everything is so easy.

I see it real clearly today. I sit here and think about it sometimes—"Why are our kids changing?" I know this is a changing world but you don't have to put your whole self in it. They can do so much for both sides.

I think the biggest problem we have is that the children are half-breeds. Some of them are half-Mexican, half-white, half-Negro, half-this, or whatever it may be. I think they live in two different worlds and when you put your other side's culture and this culture together you're having a warfare here, in your mind. You are thinking, "Which should I follow?"

I know from experience because my granddaughter is Mexican and Indian—her dad's a Mexican and her mom is Indian. At one time she danced in the powwows; she used to have the regalia and dance the Jingle Dance. Somewhere along the line she made up her mind. She said, "I don't understand the Indian too much, I am going to go to the Mexican side." So she started learning how to talk Mexican and cook their way and do everything their way and she quit all the Indian side. She knows how to talk Paiute but she mostly goes on the other side.

I said, "Well, it's your choice whatever side you want to go, whatever language you want to talk." Like I said, it makes their culture mixed up.

When I was growing up, I was going around with some Mexican boys. My dad used to say, "Don't go and get married to a Mexican, don't get married to a white, don't get married to a black, don't get married to anybody except your own kind. That way your kids will be full-blooded Indian, and their mind will be straight." He said, "They think better when they're straight-minded."

Sometimes I think about myself—no wonder I really can think straight. I know what I'm going to say, what I'm going to do. I am not going this way or that; I don't have a mixed mind. That is what the old people used to tell us way back. And I followed that. I never married a white, I always married Indian. So my kids are half-Navahos and Paiute. I mean no offense to Mexicans or whites or blacks; it's just what I was told.

RM: So it is okay to marry a Navaho or a Shoshone as long as it is an Indian.

JK: Yes, any other tribe. But we don't all talk the same. If you marry a Navaho you talk English; if you marry a Shoshone you talk English. So my children all talk Navaho fluently and they also talk Paiute.

RM: Plus they speak English. So they know three languages.

JK: Yes. My husband used to tell them, "Either learn your mother's language or your dad's language; or you can learn both of them." My mom used to talk Paiute to my children when they were little so they picked it up. Then my husband would talk Navaho to them and they picked that up. And they went to Navaho boarding school so that's why they talk Navaho fluently.

RM: Do you speak Navaho?

JK: I can understand some of it. I know a lot of the words but I just can't talk it. My husband's grandmother and grandfather didn't know how to talk English so I'd talk Navaho to them the best I could.

RM: So you married a Navaho man. Where was he from?

JK: He was from Lukachukai, Arizona, between Gallup and Shiprock, right in the middle of the reservation. I lived there 25 years.

RM: Did you like living there?

JK: Not really. There was no running water; we had to haul wood in the wintertime. It was a torture because it was so cold. I'm from here and I know the difference in the weather. I said to him, "I want to go home where it is dry, where I can keep my foot on the ground." Because a few times I slipped and broke my ankle. That's why I don't like snow; I don't want to be around where it snows.

My daughter was just here yesterday and she said, "Mom, I don't want to go home, I want to stay here."

I said, "Well, your husband and kids are down there so you'd better go home."

RM: So she lives on the Navaho Reservation.

JK: Yes, the same place her dad lives.

RM: Did you live in a hogan when you lived there?

JK: Yes and no. My husband built a house for us. He's a good builder so he built us a nice log cabin. We also had a hogan, too, one of the modern type. It had logs around but it had a regular roof. It is real warm in there; we had those barrel stoves and they throw a lot of heat. We didn't have to pay any heat bill, only lights. I was married to him for many years. Finally I divorced him and moved up here.

RM: Back to your home country.

JK: Yes. I like it here. I went crazy when I was here [laughs] because I had running water and I didn't have to go out to the outhouse. I brought my other two grandkids with me and they lived with me. I raised all my grandkids.

RM: Are they all Navajo and Mexican?

JK: Paiute-Navajo and Paiute-Mexican and the other one's Shoshone and Paiute.

RM: Tell me about the Shoshone culture.

JK: That was my oldest daughter's dad; he passed away. I didn't stay with him too long so I don't know too much about it.

RM: So you learned all of the songs from your grandfather and grandmother.

JK: That's how I know the Salt and the Bird songs. I learned the Friendship Dance or Round Dance, whatever you call it, from some of my cousins up in Utah. When we were kids we used to sing together and we used to practice a lot.

RM: I'm a little bit unclear about the Bird Songs. Is that part of the funeral ceremony?

JK: They have the Bird Songs on one side and Salt Songs on the other side and they're both going at the same time. With the Bird Songs, they dance completely all night long, singing constantly. And over here we are singing Salt Song—we sit. It's for the person, the deceased—they're going to the Happy Hunting Ground. They are going to take that road and when they get there it's breaking daylight so that's when we quit; we don't sing any more.

RM: Is it true that you sing them over the Milky Way?

JK: Yes.

RM: So the Bird Songs and the Salt Songs are being sung at the same time. And how far apart are you?

JK: If it's a big building they're way down at the other end and we're at this end. Sometimes we are closer, right next to each other. It all depends on the building size. In the olden days at the

funerals it used to be men on one side and ladies on one side. We were not allowed to go over on the men's side. But now it is the other way around. There's two ladies that always sit with the men now and the other ladies are all on this side. As far your singing, there's supposed to be men and ladies only on each side but now it is turned twist and all the ladies go on the men's side or they can sit wherever they want. The people that are coming to the funeral can sit all over the place, on each side. This is a sacred place and the kids are not allowed to run back and forth in the middle of where they're singing because that's where the spirit is going. But now I see the kids running all over the place, like I was telling you.

RM: A person can't sing if they don't know the songs, can they?

JK: They can sit over there and listen and they'll eventually get it in their mind. And the singers all have gourds.

RM: What would you do with the gourd? Is it a rattle?

JK: We don't call it rattle, we call it gourd; it makes it sound more respectable.

RM: Does each person make their own gourd?

JK: Sometimes, when they know how, or they can buy it or someone can make it for them.

RM: Then it is the same way with the Bird Song—men and women are separate and they are dancing?

JK: The Salt Song and Bird Song are two different singings.

RM: Do the Bird Songs sing with gourds?

JK: Yes. The Salt Song is the spiritual way of singing where they are going, the road they're taking. That's the songs that they are singing in the Salt Songs. And over here the Bird Songs are celebrating; they're happy that he is going away.

RM: So the Salt is about going and the Bird is freedom, or leaving.

JK: Right. That's why we have a memorial a year later; it goes the same way—the memorial is Salt and Bird. Nowadays I noticed down around Winter Haven, down by Tucson, they have a celebration and the kids, the young boys and little kids, are learning how to dance. They're teaching them and they have contests to see who could sing the Bird Song best. We don't do that here. It's very sacred to us and we don't play or have contests with it. In the olden days they didn't do that; that is why we don't have contests with it.

RM: Are the people having the contests Paiute?

JK: No, they're Quechan Indians. But we Paiutes take it seriously. We don't have contests and things like that. The Salt Song trail is a very sacred trail. I have a tape in there that I did in Riverside, California, with my uncle Larry Eddie from Parker. It was done for the children who went to school there. We went to a funeral in Utah not very long ago—one of my cousins passed away. Larry Eddie came up and he was so happy to see me. He said, "Oh, I haven't seen you for a long time."

I said, "I haven't seen you either." I said, "I didn't even know this lady was sick."

He said, "I didn't even know it, either." She had cancer and even the kids didn't know it. I guess she kept it real quiet and then all of the sudden she got a blood clot or something in her vein and they took her to Cedar Hospital and they sent her to Salt Lake and that is where she passed away. They had a Salt Song and he was there. We did an interview at Sherman Institute at Riverside.

RM: Did you help make that movie? Larry showed me a video. Were you in it?

JK: Yes. I was standing with a white sweater on. I got two copies and I gave one to my daughter; I just gave it to her yesterday. I said, "This is what I participated in when we went down there."

She said, "Oh, that is good." She never knew what Salt Song and Bird Song were, either. She was just like you—she asked me questions. I gave her that tape and now she understands why we do that as Paiutes. I gave it to her so she'll understand it and she will teach her kids what it is all about.

Some people might think we Paiutes don't know anything. But we just don't tell everybody everything; we keep to ourselves because it's sacred to us. Why should we go around advertising what we know? We've never been like that.

I have a lot of books on Paiute things. In fact, I got a book from this couple. They didn't write it, Kay Fowler wrote it. They gave it to me—it was the first issue. And she told me, "It's all about your people."

RM: You have another book by who?

JK: Heidi Roberts. I worked with her. I worked with both those ladies, her and Kay Fowler.

RM: Is she from the University of Nevada?

JK: Yes. I guess she's an anthropologist. She comes here a lot. She brought me a turkey for Thanksgiving. She's so nice. I went out with her a few times, with the language class; we always go with those people. We meet out at places like Corn Creek.

RM: Do you have any other recollections of Pahrump?

JK: No, that's all I remember about Pahrump because I was small then.

CHAPTER THREE

RM: You also told me you lived in Ash Meadows.

JK: Yes. I was married there. His mother was Shoshone-Paiute. We had a little boy and he died when he was four years old. He was working for the lime mine. My son drowned down at my mom and dad's place. I was visiting them and he was with the boys and he went swimming and I said, "Be sure you kids watch him good."

And they said, "We will." I don't know what happened. He swallowed a lot of water and it was all in his lungs and they had to pump it out. He went to the hospital but he never regained consciousness and he passed away. He was only four years old.

RM: Oh, how awful.

JK: And my husband came out and he said, "What happened?" and I told him—oh, he was mad, angry about it. But he said, "Well, it just happens." Then about a month later my husband passed away. The lime got down into his lungs. We had a funeral for him.

RM: Oh, my goodness. How long did you guys live in Ash Meadows?

JK: He was my first husband. I married him when I was 15. I lived there for quite a few years. He was a cowboy and we used to go riding horses. He's the one who taught me how to ride; I love to ride horses. Then we had that little boy and when he drowned that was the saddest thing. Then about a month later, he passed away.

RM: Was he a young man when he died?

JK: Yes. We were both young.

RM: Where did you live in Ash Meadows?

JK: I was there not long ago. It is nothing like it was. They had three houses. The old couple had their bedroom over here and my uncle had his house and at the end there was another kitchen with another bedroom and we used to live in that one. We used to cook there; all of us would eat together. Then there was running water right in the middle, nice spring water; we could drink from that.

There were all of these crawdads; they used to crawl all over in the water. I got scared when I first saw them because I thought they were scorpions. He said, "No, they are crawdads." he said. They don't bite but I thought they did. He said, "Just pick them up."

I said, "Eww, I don't want to pick it up." He'd run after me with one of them [laughs] and I didn't like that.

RM: What was your uncle's name?

JK: William Bishop.

RM: Was he Paiute?

JK: Yes.

RM: Did he work in the mine, too?

JK: No, he was in the United States Army. He had just come back so we were all spending time together. And there used to be a big pond out there—a real big water hole; we used to go swimming down there. It was real clear water; you could see the water coming up. We used to dive down there and they'd say, "Don't dive down there—you are going to get swallowed." They was teasing us.

I said, "Ah, it's not going to swallow me." I'd go clear in there and it was fun but yet it was scary, too, because they were making it sound like it was really dangerous. We used to go swimming about this time of the evening; the water was warm, really nice.

I don't know what happened to it. We were out there not very long ago and I was asking about it and they said they made a big pond out here—man made, I think. I don't know what happened to that pond. Maybe it dried up. I think they took over that pond. They built a bridge where tourists go through. I was out there not very long ago and it was a bit confusing because it all had changed. The construction people were working out there making a big dam like they have over here, some kind of a dam.

I said, "Gosh, I'm all twisted; I don't remember this." I went out there with Kay Fowler and Heidi Roberts and my daughter Geraldine, and I think Clarabelle and her sister Cynthia. I was telling them, "Gee, everything is changing; it's so confusing." It was a real nice, pretty place when I was out there.

RM: You must have been living there in the '40s. If you were 15 when you got married that would put you there at about 1947.

JK: Yes. I quit school when I was in sixth grade. I just went and got married—"The heck with the school," I said. I got tired of all the white kids harassing me, making fun of me.

RM: Did you like Ash Meadows?

JK: Yes, I loved it. It was nice weather, so comfortable out there. You could relax and have nothing to worry about.

CHAPTER FOUR

RM: Were you able to practice your religion in Ash Meadows? Did that come up?

JK: I would just sing to myself. I remembered those songs; I don't know how in the world I know all those songs. They have just stayed with me forever. Just like my language; I never forgot any of my language. My dad used to tell me, "Your language, don't ever forget that. Don't ever forget who you are and where you come from." And that's been like that with me all through these years. Everybody is changing; I'm still the same. And I'm quiet. I don't talk with very many people, I don't just say any old thing. I watch what they are doing and conserve what it is they are doing. I guess that's what you call respect.

RM: Are there many Paiutes that know as many songs as you?

JK: I don't think so except for up in Utah.

RM: Up at Shivwits?

JK: Yes, some of the elders still remember some of the songs. They sing them once in a while.

RM: You mean the Salt Songs and the Bird Songs?

JK: No, the Round Dance song. As I said, I learned it from them. My cousins and those folks used to sing it. We used to sing with drums. When I moved down here to the valley I used to make drum out of . . . do you remember those rubber tires, the tubes? We used to make a drum out of that. We used to stretch the rubber over the can and use wire to tighten it. That's how we used to sing here a long time ago. I've always sung. I don't know how I got that way, but everybody comes to pick on me: "Juanita, we need you to sing."

I say, "Okay."

RM: So when you were fairly young you started going to the Salt Sings. Did you sing in the Bird Songs too?

JK: No. When my grandfather started singing, that's when I started singing.

RM: Where were some of the places where you went to sings when you were young?

JK: Here in Moapa, St. George, Cedar, Kaibab. . . But recently when I met my uncle Larry Eddie, we started going south. Sometimes they have a death in Peach Springs or sometimes in Parker and we go that way.

RM: Did you ever go west, over to Pahrump or Shoshone?

JK: Yes, when my sister's son, Eugene Verla, died we went over to Pahrump because he was a POW.

RM: Where did they hold the Salt Sing in Pahrump?

JK: They held it right at the gravesite. My sister's son and his wife died at the same time so they are buried like this.

RM: On top of each other.

JK: Yes. And one of the Clarabelle's sisters died, the oldest one, so we had another memorial sing out there at the gravesite.

RM: How many sings would you say you go to a year?

JK: The only time I go is when somebody passes away. You can never predict who is going to pass away. We have some for young people, for old people. Most of our old people are going.

RM: What is your belief about the other side? What do you think it is like when you sing them over to the other side?

JK: How the white people say—heaven. You're going over to a real good place. You won't have any more problems. You're not worried about bills and what have you. You get over there and you don't worry; you're a happy-go-lucky, free person.

RM: And you join your ancestors?

JK: Yes. They're happy and you're laughing and talking—you're just real happy people.

RM: Do Paiutes look at death like whites do? I mean whites, even though they believe in heaven, are kind of afraid of death.

JK: It all depends on what you believe, how you think about life. I have to answer for myself; I can't answer for somebody else. I think it's better said that way, because I don't know what he or she is thinking. The only thing I can tell you is what my grandparents told me. They said, "When a person dies from a disease, or was sick real bad, you don't have to cry too much because the disease took her and there is no way you can prevent it from stopping." When they die of disease, you're not grieving that much because he died with a purpose or reason. That is what they told me.

But if a young child dies or people get in an accident then you grieve hard because these kids or these people had a long way to go and live. They got into an accident; that's not their fault or whatever. Then you can grieve. Because that's sad when people leave like that. The whole family is wiped out just like nothing and you just think, "My goodness, this is terrible."

That is the way I look at life and that's the way I think about death. Like I said, maybe it is best that you go when you're sick. A lot of times our people are on dialysis. My daughter and I said, "If we ever get sick, don't ever put us on that machine. God's going to take us—let him take us the way we are, not try to keep us alive." And what for? It's just a miserable place. We Indians always say this is hell's life.

RM: Life on earth is hell?

JK: It is. It is a devil's playground, really. That is the way I look at it. Like I said, I can't answer for somebody else. The way I see it today, when I am getting older, I think that's the devil's playground because you can do anything you want. You've got all kinds of freedom with nobody to say, "Hey, don't do that. That's not good. Don't go over there." Or, "Don't do this or don't say that, it's not respectful." Nobody's going to say that to you. You just do whatever you want to.

And these kids are going this way and that because their parents don't tell them what to do. They don't tell them, "Don't go over there; that's bad for you. It's poison—you can't drink that stuff or you can't take that stuff." Maybe if they were a parent then their kids would behave more better. Sometimes parents do tell them but they don't want to listen to them. They say we talk too much but when they get into trouble they cry and say, "Help me." I used to tell my children, "Go do it some more; you didn't listen to me in the first place."

In my day, we were whipped when we did something. I got whipped a lot of times when I'd say something wrong. I never talked back to my parents, I never criticized my parents, I never laid my hand on my parents. My dad would just go like this and point his finger at me and I would know what he meant. Out comes a belt.

RM: He would whip you with the belt? On the bottom?

JK: On our bottom. Always on our leg. If we did that to our children today I think they'd be better people. I am thankful that my dad whipped me when I was naughty. I might be just like these ladies—talking loud, yelling at everybody, maybe over there having booze or a drink. I don't have any of that stuff in the house.

RM: Did your mother whip you, too or was it just the dad?

JK: Just my dad. She said, "If you don't mind I'm not going to touch you. Your dad will take care of you."

I'd say, "Uh oh, something bad's coming. I know what she means," so I had to behave. Today I see a lot of kids talking back to their parents; I just shake my head. I say, "If that was me when I was a little girl I get banged on my head or even whipped."

I was telling one of my friends, "Everything has turned around. The kids are the boss and the parents are the children." I said, "The parents should be the boss; the children are here to be seen, not heard."

That's what I said and they just looked at me: "You are so old fashioned, Juanita."

I said, "I don't care, it still pays." You're still a good parent if you are that kind of parent.

RM: And you brought your children up that way?

JK: Yes, they are all well behaved. If I have company they would just walk by and say hi. They'd never listen to what I was saying. That's the way my mom brought me up. If she had company and a lot of ladies came, she would just point and I'd know what she meant. Or I'd be doing dishes and she'd say, "Well, when you are finished doing dishes you know I have to go."

I'd say, "Yeah." And I'd go out the door; I'd go play. I never heard my parents argue and I never saw them fight. They stayed together until my dad died.

RM: When did he pass away? Was he pretty old?

JK: I can't remember how old he was but my mom died at 84 years old.

RM: A lot of Paiutes have diabetes, right?

JK: Like me.

RM: What do you see as the cause of that?

JK: That's inherited. I got it from my parents. It goes back generation to generation. It's in the genes.

RM: Did your parents have diabetes?

JK: Oh. yes. My dad had it, my mom had it. My mom had high blood pressure, my dad had high blood pressure and he had epilepsy. He worked real hard for us kids and when he got older he started having convulsions. It used to scare the death out of me. My mother used to stick a spoon in his mouth and she said, "You better do it."

I said, "I don't want to touch it." And he was so strong. I couldn't even hold it. He would just shake and she'd tell me to hold her arm and I'd hold it best I could—I wasn't too strong myself.

RM: Did he take medication?

JK: No. They were staying at a house way up at the other end of the reservation. I used to live up in Elgin with my Navaho husband. My family told me my dad got sick so I came down. Then I stayed here and he died down in Schurz, Nevada, when he had a heart attack. He worked real hard. He was a tractor driver; he used to drive a John Deere.

RM: What else do you recall about Ash Meadows, living there? There is a cave not too far from Ash Meadows where Coyote and Wolf lived. Did you ever go there?

JK: Oh yes, I've been up there. I used to ride horses up there with my sister-in-law. We used to peek in there and that water would come up like this. I didn't know anything about it, and she said, "It's going to come up when it sees you."

I didn't believe it and I peeked about like this, just looking, and it started rising and I said, "Oh my Lord, it's coming up." And I didn't say anything, I just backed away. After you back away, then it goes back down.

Clarabelle was telling me that it's like that, it does that. It is a very sacred place. We went back there not very long ago and they had fenced it so the tourists can't go near it.

RM: Does the cave have a name in Paiute?

JK: Clarabelle is the one you should talk to about that place. She knows it better than I do because she's from that area. They used to have all kinds of these springs—the bubbles would come up all over the place.

RM: All over Ash Meadows?

JK: Yes. When I went back there I was wondering. "Gee, there used to be a lot of springs here; whatever happened to them?" All I saw was a bunch of bushes.

RM: Did there used to be more water?

JK: Yes, a lot of water. The Bishop family owned that place and somebody threw them out of there. They had the deed and everything—that's what I hear. I was told that they had all the papers to the place but they told them, "Get out; you can't live here." So everybody moved.

One of the Bishop boys went to Parker and Lalovi was telling me that he died down there and they want somebody to claim his body. She said, "Juanita, you should claim his body because you know the family."

I didn't go down there. He had a lot of money. I said, "I don't want to do it just for money." I guess that money all went back to the state. Anyway, that's what happened to the Bishop family; they took it all away from them.

RM: What were some of the family's names?

JK: The old man's name was Joe Bishop, and the old lady's name was Belle Bishop. Then there was William Bishop and Archie Bishop and Billy Shaw. Billy Shaw was her son, the old man's stepson; he's the one I was married to.

My husband had 36 horses there. We used to gather them every now and then and bring them back to the house and feed them and then they'd all go off again. I had a lot of fun riding horses with him.

RM: Tell me about your horseback riding there.

JK: [Laughs] He's the one who taught me how to ride horses—how to get on and what side you get on and how to put the bridle on, and the saddle. He taught me how and then he said, "You do it now." I put the bridle and the saddle on and I got on. He said, "You did real good, you learn real fast."

He gave me a colt that had little white legs all around; I called it White Sox. It was a yearling and he was breaking it in so I could ride it. Finally it was old enough to ride and I got on. It took off on me and kept on running through the trees and they scratched me all over. He was running behind, trying to catch up. Finally he caught me and he said, "Oh my gosh, he ran away with you."

And I said, "He sure did." So he had to break it a little more so he wouldn't be doing that.

RM: But you stayed on.

JK: I hung on. It was just fun to ride [laughs]. But he said, "You're not riding this horse for a while until I really get it broken in." We used to ride all over; in hot weather too. In fact, I almost killed my horse. My sister-in-law, Jesse, did, too, and my old man sure did get mad at me. He said, "You're not supposed to do that to those horses. You're supposed to ride them when it's cool, not in hot heat." The horse was just exhausted, it was wet all over. He wet him with water and gave him water.

RM: How long did it take you and where did you go?

JK: We were riding from Ash Meadows down to Scotty's Castle, Death Valley Junction. Then we were standing around and it was getting kind of late; it was about 3:00, 4:00, something like that. She said, "We'd better go; it's getting late." We took off and came all the way back to Ash Meadows and got there about 8:00, and they were mad at us. "Where have you girls been? You're not supposed to take the horses." It took six hours all together. We had a good time down there and came back but we sure got heck for it.

RM: Did you ride with a saddle or bareback?

JK: I couldn't ride bareback. I was just learning how to ride then and I had to have a saddle.

RM: When they got kicked out of Ash Meadows what happened to the horses?

JK: The government took them all. They took everything. This all happened after I left there. I was over here then with my mom and dad because my boy and my husband were deceased. There were just five people over in Ash Meadows so they got kicked out.

RM: Were other people living in Ash Meadows then?

JK: No.

RM: In a general way, where is the cave where the water comes up where Coyote and Wolf lived?

JK: It's just a little ways from where we used to live, maybe a mile up.

RM: Larry Eddie told me a story about Coyote and Wolf living there. He says that he can tell Coyote stories all night long.

JK: He knows a lot of stories. He tells us about where the Salt Song's coming and he names all those places where the songs come from.

RM: Yes. He told me that in the Salt Song ceremony they go to all these locations around the area and then at the end they wind up on Mount Charleston. Is that right?

JK: Yes. That is where the two sisters are and they split up from there.

RM: I don't know the two sisters.

JK: One goes down south and the other one goes north. They started to cry because they had to part; that's why we have Cry songs.

RM: Tell the whole story.

JK: That's all I know, just that part.

RM: Who were the sisters?

JK: I don't know their names. They were sisters.

RM: And they were on Mount Charleston?

JK: They're still up there. We were up there about three or four years ago—I went up with Kenny and Lalovi and everyone—they were showing me where it is.

RM: And so one sister went south. Did she go down to Parker?

JK: Yes, and the one who came north came through Kaibab and through here, up that way. The Salt Song trail is just that—it's a big U-turn and then it goes all the way back down to Walapai and back to Chemehuevi and through Bishop, California. They all sing the same songs.

RM: Do the Bird Songs go on a journey?

JK: Yes. It's the same route. They travel together. They are both for the same thing.

RM: And the two sisters were crying because they had to part?

JK: Yes. That is why we cry; we're grieving for our loved ones. That's the story I heard. They don't just sing for nothing. We have a purpose, a reason to sing the songs.

RM: Is Mount Charleston sacred?

JK: Yes. So is that gypsum mine over here, Sunrise Mountain.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: Oh, there is a gypsum mine at Sunrise?

JK: Yes, way back in there. That's where the Salt Songs originated. My grandpa and my dad's uncle went down in there. They stayed four nights and four days and they practiced those songs, and that's how he learned it. And he was a medicine man.

RM: What was your dad's uncle's name?

JK: Joe Pete. You saw his picture down there on the building. He used to live here. I believe he was from Las Vegas. We lived right by them in Las Vegas when I was a little girl before I was married.

RM: What kinds of things does a medicine man do in the Paiute culture?

JK: Pray, heal, sing.

RM: Is he the leader of the Salt Sing?

JK: No. Salt Songs don't have a leader. The ceremony has a leader, but in its own way it's a spiritual leader; he just follows the trail wherever it is. It is a spiritual being, you don't see it. It's all in the air and you can hear the songs.

When you are down in that gypsum mine cave, you can hear all those songs. They come to you if you really want to learn it. They pray in there all night long and sing all night long and eventually it comes to them. It's pretty powerful stuff.

RM: Do people still go in the gypsum cave?

JK: They can't go in there anymore; they fenced it because too many tourists would peek in there and people were spray-painting and all.

RM: Yes, they ruin everything.

JK: Yes. They don't have respect for the Indian things. Now they have fenced it in and you can't even get at it. But I have been there—Lalovi and her son took me there. When you sit there, the air comes this way out of the cave. I wanted to go down in it but I can't see.

RM: What side of Sunrise Mountain is it on?

JK: The cave itself is facing this way. You're sitting right here and you can feel the air coming out of it.

RM: Is it a big cave?

JK: It's just enough for an individual to go down in there. You go down one at a time. I've never been in there so I don't know. Richard Arnold's been down there and Kenny and Lalovi but I have never been in there because of my knees.

RM: And it is very sacred, right?

JK: Yes. That's where all the Salt Songs come from.

RM: Are there other sacred sites in the Mount Charleston area?

JK: That is the only one I know. That's why they don't like those lights on top of there. They used to say no houses there. Now look at it—it's all up against it. They've ruined everything. And they've dumped so much garbage back there. We went through there and I said, "My, look at the tires and the couches." They've got no feeling for Mother Nature.

RM: They have no respect, do they?

JK: No. That's what they were doing to the cave; they have spray-painted everything. I was so angry. I said, "They never respect our things." And the same thing happened up at Red Rocks. We went up there and we saw all kinds of spray paint there, too. They went and white-washed as best they could—scrubbed the artwork up there, on the rock art.

RM: Is Red Rocks sacred to the Paiutes?

JK: Yes. We've been up there several times. We went in the museum there; they've got a lot of stuff. We try to preserve all we can for the Indian people, what they did way back then.

And they've got a cave right over here by the power plant on that side—I think it's called Black Dog Cave. They've been down in there, too, and they said that they found some old yucca sandals and some corn but someone had already taken the pottery out of there. You know how those guys like to get rich on those things.

RM: They're thieves.

JK: Yes. We were up there three or four years ago. My uncle was living then and he went in but I said, "I don't want to go because I can't come back out if I do." [Laughs] I was having trouble with my leg then. That's why I stopped going places; I used to go all over with those people.

They had another trip, going to the Colorado River—some people went to another sacred ground area there and I didn't go. I wish I had gone because I was well then. They said there were a lot of sacred places and it was really spiritual up there—you could just feel the spirits moving.

RM: Where was this—on the Colorado River?

JK: Yes, going down the canyon by Kanab, down that way. They said it was very interesting. I worked on the Hoover Dam bridge project, too. We stayed at the old Gold Strike motel before it burned down. We'd leave from there in the morning. We went over by Sugar Loaf—that's where the bridge is going to pass through. I didn't finish my project because I fell and I sprained my ankle so I had to come home. They paid me anyway for the whole amount because it wasn't my fault. They asked me if I wanted to go to the hospital. I said, "No, I'll just go home from here and I'll go see my own doctor." I've got the book on that project.

RM: I've heard that is a very sacred area.

JK: It is. It is really something. We saw where the deer and the antelopes had a big place where they had laid. We looked at all the sacred grounds and everything.

RM: The bridge goes right past the sacred area, doesn't it?

JK: Yes. They didn't want those big semi trucks going over Hoover Dam anymore because it is cracking all that cement and it costs a lot of money to repair the dam every year. I went down there not very long ago for a memorial birthday thing at Pete Springs. I said, "Oh my lord, is this what I worked on?" My gosh, that thing is so huge.

RM: Beautiful isn't it.

JK: Scary. [Laughs]

RM: I can't wait to go over it.

JK: I can't, either. They were about halfway done and I said, "I am so scared of heights." I'm telling you, I don't think I could work where those guys are. And they've got those machines. . . .

RM: I don't know how they do it.

JK: I don't either. I say, "Lord, take care of those people up there."

RM: Now, you said that your grandfather was a medicine man. Can you talk about any of the things that he did—like, what he could treat and how he did it?

JK: Well, he sang; he would sing all night long. I guess God has a way of giving people spiritual healing, so they gave it to him. When he would touch you and pray on you and sing, he'd pull things out of you.

RM: Why did God pick your grandfather for this power, do you think?

JK: The way I was told was that he dreamed about these things. It's given to you through your dreams. When you dream it, you're not supposed to tell anybody what's what. It's sacred between you and God. Whatever you learn, it's a gift from him so you can't tell anybody how it came and what you did.

It's just like your personal prayer. You have your own personal prayer with him, the lord Jesus Christ, and with God. You tell him your own inner secrets. He knows all about your soul because that's what it is when you get these spiritual feelings—it's between you and him. That's why it's sacred. It's nothing to make fun of, nothing to play with, because it's your personal gift from the almighty God.

RM: What kind of diseases would he treat?

JK: People suffering from witchcraft. Some people witch somebody or they'd get sick on it. That happens to all tribes.

RM: What kind of diseases could you get from somebody doing witchcraft on you?

JK: Any kind.

RM: Did people pay him when he cured them or treated them?

JK: Yes, they'd give him . . . in those days it used to be buckskin, baskets, the real genuine stuff—not like we do, money. Money didn't mean much in those days.

RM: Did he also do cures using plants and herbs and everything?

JK: Oh, yes.

RM: Can women be medicine women, too?

JK: Oh, yes. It is passed down to you from, like, your grandparents. It is just like witchcraft; you can be a witch doctor or you can be a good doctor and cure people.

RM: So witchcraft is passed on to the families. Why would a person do that?

JK: Because they are jealous, angry. . . .

RM: How do they get their witchcraft powers?

JK: From the devil, I guess. The devil is the root of all evil. He's a big liar. He can speak to you and you are in between the good side and bad side all the time. You fight with it—it's like a spiritual war.

RM: Does a medicine man then have to study with another medicine man to get all of that special knowledge about plants?

JK: Yes.

RM: Were there any particular plants that your grandfather used?

JK: That would be up to him. That was, like I said, a gift for an individual. If he said, "God gave me this," then he could use it for a certain thing. And some things are poisonous—you've got to watch what you're doing because you could make a person sicker. You've got to know exactly what amount to use.

RM: Do you know of an example?

JK: If you've got diabetes you can't take another person's dose. Like insulin—my daughter takes 60 units and I take 10 units so I can't give her what I have and she can't give me hers. Hers might make me get sicker and mine may not be enough for her.

RM: Are there any Indian plants that help diabetes?

JK: Yes, there is—greasewood. You can boil it and drink it. It's a cure-all. Dry it up and make it powdery and then rub it on impetigo and it will cure it in two or three days. It's also used for colds. You can make it real bitter and you can drink it but it is real hard to swallow. If you've got strep throat or something like that and you drink it and you have to really withstand it.

RM: Do you make the tea out of the green part, the leaves?

JK: You stick the whole thing in there and let it boil, then strain it. After you strain it, you can drink a small portion of it.

RM: How long do you boil it?

JK: Just like you boil tea—you can make it light or dark or medium or heavy, whatever you want; it's up to you.

RM: A Pueblo Indian told me about a plant that causes abortion. Do the Paiutes know that one or use it?

JK: I don't know. Down at the building they've got all kinds of medicine. They're in little baby jars and they've all got names on them; somebody did that years ago. It's right there in the front of the building where you come in.

RM: I have heard that the Paiute have a really good thing for curing eye problems.

JK: Yes, they do; it's the same plant, greasewood. Just put a little bit in a dropper.

RM: That's really interesting. What kind of eye problems will it cure?

JK: If you've got a lot of mucous and it comes through the eyes and you can't see too good, it's good for that.

CHAPTER SIX

RM: It is too bad these cures aren't used more, isn't it?

JK: I'll tell you why—it's because of the nuclear tests. Remember the nuclear bombs they set off years and years ago? That destroyed all our medicine. We don't have very much and they aren't as good as they used to be. They're full of nuclear. I worked with the nuclear project; that is how I know that. I went to Yucca, I went to Ely, I went to Vegas—I have been all over to different meetings. Lalovi and I used to go on those projects. This was about 20 years ago. We had a meeting here in Moapa with them and they brought us a little Geiger counter about this big and we did a survey down in this area, right down here by this annex building, senior center. There's is a culvert down below in a dip. We went down there and you could just see that Geiger counter go buzz.

RM: It is right there?

JK: Yes! It's all over on the reservation. When it rains from the Yucca Mountain this way, all the water comes underneath the ground and it is just all over. So now we don't have any medicine. Even some of the greasewood is no good. It's all cause of darned Yucca Mountain.

RM: And atomic testing. Did you ever used to watch them test the nuclear weapons?

JK: Oh yes. I was a little girl when that happened. We used to play on top of this hill up here before any of these homes were built. We used to get car hoods and put wax on the underneath. The boys used to come down that hill there really flying; they would hit down there. And they used to call us girls chicken so we tried it. We'd jump in and go down the hill. In those days, we didn't think the hill was that far down. I look at it today and think, "How in the world did we ever have the guts to do that?" Oh, my gosh.

We used to have a lot of fun. And we made our own toys back then. We didn't have TV, we didn't have anything. The boys used to take fruit crates and roller skates and make a board like this and put wheels on it and make a scooter. They'd go like this down the dirt road. And we used to play hoops, we had those big round hoops. In fact, I found mine in the storage today; it's about this big.

RM: About 12 inches.

JK: They would put a slat like this, then take a can and tack it on there and you shape it like this, then you roll that that thing and it'd go all around. I just found mine—it brought back a lot of memories. I've got a lot of antiques that I keep; some time I want to put them in the museum.

But anyway, when we were on top of the hill, we used to see those nuclear things go off. We used to play up there in the morning, towards noon. And we'd play there after dinner; we used to eat dinner early. We'd go up there and see that mushroom go up.

RM: You could see the mushroom cloud.

JK: Yes. I said to the kids, "Gee, that's really pretty, it looks like an umbrella." We were admiring it; we never knew it was going to affect us here. It was [the most] dangerous thing we ever had. Now that I look back I say, "It's not pretty anymore." It sure destroyed a lot of our things; it even destroyed some of our people. My aunt died of cancer. It brought a lot of sickness to us.

We didn't know what the white man was doing. Back then, we Indians didn't think anything of anything. We were just living because it was our life. Now we think about it and say, "Gee, how dumb we were." Our old people just didn't know the white man stuff.

RM: Well, none of us knew.

JK: So that's the way it went back then and that's how we lost a lot of our medicines. Now we're fighting with this pollution down here.

RM: At the power plant? Is that the Reed Gardner plant?

JK: Yes, Nevada Power Company. We're having a hard time with that. In fact, a guy came along here and had us sign our names to a petition to either get us a new home elsewhere or pay us money.

RM: What kind of pollution is it giving you here?

JK: It just smells ugly. I get a lot of it because I'm on top of the hill. When the wind starts blowing, it used to really stink. You can smell it in the house. It was like that for a while and they kind of corrected it, but it's not enough. It still makes us sick.

RM: How does it make you sick?

JK: The kids are having diarrhea or vomiting and they go to the doctor and they don't know what's wrong with them. It's like a hidden sickness of some kind. Things are really bad when they damage our health because we've lived here all our lives.

I remember when I was a little girl that place was just a small place; there was just one guy, Robert Stewart. He was an old man. He used to have a water pump coming across the railroad pumping water and he had an engine going. There was a big water pond there and he lived a little ways up above the water. He had a big white house there and we used to pick up his son going to the school I was telling you about earlier.

Not very long ago, they had a meeting about the pollution and I was telling this lady, "Robert Stewart used to live here."

She said, "Yeah, I remember him."

I said, "Yeah, he's the one that started this darn thing, the plant. Look how big it is now." I said, "I would never ever think that I would live next to it, and it's right there." We get mad at him because, like we said, it's bothering the elders and the children.

RM: So you really feel the pollution from the air.

JK: Yes, we do. It used to be worse. I won't say it is better but it is better than it was. But yet, our local people work there.

RM: Do quite a few tribal members work there?

JK: They used to; there's just a few left now. In fact, my son-in-law works there and so does my niece's mother's husband.

RM: Are they pretty good-paying jobs?

JK: I guess so. My son-in-law doesn't actually work there. Sometimes he does one night or so, then he'll go out to the Crystal by Dry Lake.

RM: What do you think when you see Pahrump now, or have you been over there?

JK: I was over there a few years ago, when they buried my nephew. It has really grown. It is way different. I don't even know where the artesian water is anymore.

RM: When you lived there, did you ever get up into the mountains above the valley?

JK: I went up to Clarabelle Jim's place. Her dad and mom and sisters and everybody were living there. I used to go up there with my dad. It's a rough road. They had lot of fruit trees and they lived the old ways. It was a good place, a nice place. I was only there once, many years ago.

RM: Did you ever go down to Shoshone or Tecopa?

JK: No. I wished I had; I heard they have hot springs down in Tecopa where you can go swimming. In fact a guy that lives down here, Vernon Lee, lived in Tecopa. His family had property there.

RM: Vernon Lee lives here?

JK: Yes, he lives down in that trailer down there.

RM: How do you see the future of the Paiutes in Southern Nevada?

JK: I don't know about other Paiutes, we're doing all right. We're a sovereign nation; we take care of ourselves.

RM: Can you think of any other recollections of your way of life in Pahrump and Ash Meadows?

JK: I didn't do much when I was out there. All I did was cook and be a housewife and ride horses and go swimming. Just enjoying life, that's all I did. Then I come back here and life was hectic

for me for a while. My mom would say, "Don't cry; you're not going to bring them back." I had a hard time for quite a while. I cried because I had lost my husband and boy the same month; that's why she said that to me.

But I grew up here in Moapa. My life was different back then. Like I said, when I first went to school I didn't know how to talk English, I talked nothing but Indian.

RM: Would you rather speak Paiute now if you had your choice?

JK: Any day. When I got married to my husband all I had to do all was talk English, talk English. I got tired of it one day and I started talking Indian to my kids. "What are you saying?" said one.

I said, "Well, I'm saying this, I'm saying that."

"Oh, okay." They finally got it. They went to stay with their grandmother, my mom, and she used to talk Indian to them all the time. That's how they picked it up.

A lot of our kids don't know any words. They lost it. And people blame it all on boarding school. They said when they went to boarding school the whites wouldn't let them talk their own language so they had to sneak around the building to talk Indian or sing their own songs. I never went to boarding school.

RM: How do you see the future of the Paiute culture?

JK: I think it looks okay but the whites are always giving us a hard time. They change this, they change that. Things are getting too hard for me to even understand. I'm saying, "Why do they keep raising food prices, why do they keep doing this and that, when a lot of the homeless are starving and a lot of the people are out on the streets?" They could be taking care of them. They're just sending all of the money overseas. We have nothing to do with overseas. They could be taking care of their own people here.

Another thing that I didn't like was when they bombed the Twin Towers. I was telling my pastor's wife and her husband, "You know, this is a wakeup call for United States; they have been asleep for too long." They just let the foreigners come here and do what they want to do, just like they're hungry for freedom. They take up all our money and learn what we do and then they go back there and maybe whoever is over there—what do you call those, communists—they can sneak over here and do this and that. And we're asleep spiritually and I don't know what all. I said, "When that 9/11 came along, that was a wakeup call for the United States." Somebody'd better wake up and smell the roses here and see what's going on.

I was kind of angry. I said, "Us Native Americans, we've fought for so long to keep our freedom, and then here they're doing all this and that and we're the ones who have to suffer." I was kind of angry about it. Your boys and girls are out there fighting for us and you've got to think of them, pray for them, that they come home safely.

And even little kids are fighting over there. I saw that on a Christian channel that the news comes on. I said, "My goodness, we'd better start praying pretty hard for our Washington, D.C., senators and whatnot and make sure they open their eyes—that they're just hurting us instead of freedom like we are supposed to have."

And the children are learning it early. They are trying to be like Hell's Angels and all these gang bangers. I said, "I don't like it. I've never been there and I don't ever want to be there and I don't even care for them." I don't like what's going on. It seems like it's telling us

how to kill and hurt people, and we're not supposed to be like that. We are supposed to be loving people, God-fearing people as I call it.

And that's why we have this nuclear stuff lying around and all kinds of junk that doesn't belong here is destroying our deer or rabbits. Whatever we used to eat we can't eat any more.

RM: When you were growing up did you eat many traditional foods?

JK: Oh yes, I ate quail, fish, duck, geese, rabbit, deer—I ate all those.

RM: What plants did you use? You mentioned the watercress and the wild spinach.

JK: Yes, and we have another kind of spinach that grows in the valley, too. I can't remember the name of that. It's got big leaves; I know what it looks like.

RM: And do you use pine nuts?

JK: Yes, we used to go pick pine nuts a lot with my grandparents.

RM: Where did you pick them at?

JK: Up at Rim Canyon., way up the other side of Ely. And we went to Panaca Summit and to Indian Peak up in Utah. One time I was coming back from Arizona—I took my kids to boarding school down there and I was coming back. I stopped over here at Fredonia and they had pine trees and I saw all those white people with machines in their hands. I said, "What in the heck are they doing?" They were cutting all the cones off of the trees, using machines, "Since when did all this happen?" I was thinking to myself, sitting there. My little granddaughter was with me. I was thinking, "God, that's awful."

I was going to turn around and go back down there but I was hurting for time—I didn't want to get home in the dark. I sat and looked at them through the window. I said, "Gee, they destroy everything we have as a people. What gave them the right to do that?"

It made me so mad because we Indians won't do that. Up the hill there were big pine trees with a lot of cones on them. I went under there to investigate and there were a lot of pine nuts as big as my thumb; they were huge. I started picking them and I got almost a coffee can full. They were big; they had a lot of good meat in them. You don't very often see pine nuts like that. That made me mad, when I saw those guys cutting them open.

RM: Just wasting them.

JK: Yes. I was telling the ranger about it and he said, "That is not supposed to be, that is outlawed."

RM: This was down in Fredonia?

JK: Yes. By Jacob Lake, up on top of that mountain. I was just so angry with them. I said, "What the heck gave them the right to do that?" We Indians don't do that—we spread out a big burlap or canvas, then we shake the tree.

RM: So you wait until the cones open and the nuts come out.

JK: Yes, then we make . . . it looks like a cane, a hook, and we shake the tree and then it all comes down.

RM: I've heard that when the rabbitbrush turns, it's pine nut time. Is that true?

JK: That's true.

RM: Is that a Paiute saying?

JK: All the Indians know the weather and they know what time to do this or that. It's like we don't tell stories in summertime, we tell stories in wintertime.

RM: Is there anything else you want to say that we should have considered?

JK: That's as much as I can tell you about my life and what know and what I heard. I kept my eyes and ears open when I was a little girl. I mostly hung around old people. I hardly ever hung around with young people; I don't know, it's just that I liked old people. And your ears are open—"I've got to know what's going on." It's good that they left all this for me because it is good to pass it on.

RM: It is wonderful that you have this knowledge. You have done a wonderful job and I really appreciate it. I think future generations will thank you for this interview.

JK: I have another interview I did with Larry Eddie and that bunch. They got it on CD and I did a Deer Bear dance story. And then the LDS church people honored me.

RM: Are you LDS?

JK: No, I'm Christian.

RM: How do you put you Christian and Paiute beliefs together?

JK: There's no difference. We all believe in one God, right? I don't care what denomination you belong to, we're all praying to the same almighty God, the same Jesus Christ, so what's the difference? Only it's in our own way in our own language.

Like I pray in Indian all the time and I also pray in English because a lot of our kids don't know how to talk Indian. I say it in Indian, then English to make it so they understand what I'm

saying. I go to a lot of funerals. And I'm always saying a breakfast prayer, I'm always saying a dinner prayer, I'm always just full of prayers. They call me a spiritual leader.

We just had Thanksgiving dinner, my kids and I. My husband I and the kids and I all gather—we did this every year. We tried to invite somebody but they never came, so we stopped inviting people and we just have it ourselves. You should hear my kids pray. My oldest daughter said a good prayer for the whole family.

But that is as much as I can tell you about my life and what I know about a little of this and a little of that. I come from people who sing Salt Songs and dance and all that. I saw all that in my childhood and I remember these little things and what they said.

RM: You have a wonderful memory and you are a wonderful speaker. You really are.

JK: Back when I was a little girl, like I said, we never went to funerals but we could go to memorial sings. Not all night, just during the day when they eat. Back then we didn't have all this plastic stuff and whatnot—it used to be blankets and materials they gave away. The materials would be just hanging by the door, a whole bunch of them.

RM: What kind of materials?

JK: Cloth materials—cloths would be hanging all over the fence posts they made. And people came from Utah, Arizona, California, Nevada . . . the Walapais and the Shoshones all those people came from all different places to sing and have a Salt Song and a Bird Song. They really danced back then. They used to hit the ground about this low (about 18 inches) and dust would be flying all over the place.

RM: What do you mean they would hit the ground? Oh I see, really getting down low.

JK: Yes, like they're getting down, they say now. [Laughs] They really danced back then. Back there on the hill around the turn, there used to be a lot of trees. They had memorial sings out there in the open. Do you remember the wash tubs they used to have, the big ones and the little ones? Well, they had a big tub with a whole bunch of coffee and a tub with a whole bunch of fried potatoes and one with beans—all kinds of food. There'd be meat boiling. It was enough to feed the whole bunch that came. The visitors had plenty to eat.

In the morning when it was over they'd put up a big canvas and sit around all over the place on the ground and eat. We didn't have many tables back then so most of them ate on the ground. As soon as they finished eating they'd pass around all those materials and blankets. They'd give everybody gifts, the visitors first. It was a really happy time.

RM: And this was in the '30s or the '40s?

JK: Yes, that was going on in the '40s, when I was a little girl. They still do that but now it's plastic containers and cups, maybe bags or whatever they have, that they bring to give to people. It is what you call a giveaway. It's for the visitors, for coming. Everyone likes to go to memorial sings because they always get something.

RM: When the family has a sing for the deceased, they are also going to have to give away some things.

JK: Right, a whole bunch of it. They give it to all the people who came—even their relatives. It's not really supposed to be given to the relatives but they have so much left over they give it to everybody. Way back then it was visitors only, not relatives.

RM: How many people would come to a sing? Like 50 or 60?

JK: Whole bunches; more than that. For my cousin up in Utah who passed away, they had a whole gym full—I never saw so many people in my life. And think about the family that's going feed all those people. I said, "How do they do it?" It costs a lot of money just for the food. But they did it. There were a lot of people of all different tribes; she had a lot of friends. They'll probably have a memorial sing for her, too, a year later. You're saying you're not really forgetting them.

RM: Thank you so much for this interview.

JK: I dedicate this article to my children and friends. I hope they will learn some few things from my life when I was a little girl.

I also thank Bob McCracken for interviewing me. I had fun doing this article.

My prayer for my children and friends: May our Mother Earth take good care of all our people who walk on her and drink the Holy Water which gives life to us. And may the Fire that burns in our homes keep us warm; and may we eat good nourishing food. And may the Air we breathe that the Good Lord our God gives us keep us breathing and keep us all well and from harm.

(Amen)

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