

Interviews

The following pages contain my interviews.

Each interviewee had something unique to add to the knowledge of Peter Stanup. All tell something about their lives and how memory is carried forward to the next generation.

Lena recalls stories about her parents' and grandparents' lives, about life on the reservation and about how she shares stories with her children.

Judy tells us stories she heard growing up and how she hopes for a larger museum on the Reservation to share her culture with future generations.

Charles explains how Hawaii heritage is passed along with dance and song.

I removed many of my questions in an attempt to let the interviewees tell their stories, but in some instances my questions were left in for purposes of clarification.

Lena Magdeline Davis Daniels Landry

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My name is **Lena Magdeline Davis Daniels Landry**. I was named after the priest's mother. I never knew till I was older that my middle name was Magdeline. I was married twice. Both my husbands have died.

I was born April 22, 1919. I always thought I was born in 1920. When I got to be about 45, I sent for my baptismal record and found out I was 46.

My mother's name was Margaret Meeker Davis. She was always called Maggie. My father was William Joseph Davis. They had Indian names, but most people couldn't pronounce them or spell them so they were given other names. My father's father came over from Hawaii on the boat and married my grandmother. His family name was Davis.

I grew up in Fife at a place called Marshall Road. My grandfather owned property there — where the Port (of Tacoma) is now. When I was older we moved to town. We had a house where the Tacoma Dome is today. I went to public school for awhile—Hawthorne School—then around 1929 I went half-time to school and half time I was in the TB sanitarium.

There were a series of buildings here on the Reservation where the Tribal Administration Buildings are now. There were named Wards A, B, C and D. The girls in were in Ward A and the boys in Ward B. At first they didn't use Ward C. They had a school building, auditorium, a gymnasium and Ward D was the clinic. My sister and I were brought over to the clinic because we were very run down. We didn't know we had TB then. I got stronger faster and was sent down to Ward A and went to school in the afternoon. Only one of the buildings is still left today, it was the laundry and it has been moved from its original location. I wrote it all down and my granddaughter typed it for me.

My mother used to tell us stories all the time. We lived out in the country. We worked out in the fields and we'd sit by the fire at night and she'd tell us Indian stories. There were so many when I was a little girl — I couldn't remember them all. I can envision them, but to tell them I couldn't. I can tell you one that my mother told me about going over to the island across the bay.

When she was first married she was very young. And then she had her kids. She had three little kids and my father worked out. He went to Alaska. He built his boat and he went to Alaska to fish. That's how he made some of his living. He did a lot of things; he was a carpenter and things like that. When he was gone, she would take the kids, strap them on her back and row across to the island over there —Vashon — and dig clams. Then she would get the clams and row back and then she would dry them. She dried them on sticks, cedar sticks. And that's what she used for teething rings for the kids — the dried clams.

I think of those little stories once in a while — about how she lived. My mother had a very interesting life, because her mother died when she was very young and her father remarried and she was raised by different elders. She learned all that, how to dry fish and how to dry clams and things like that. She never went to school. But she learned to read and speak English from us.

My Dad, he told us all the stories about where he traveled. They sent him to Chemawa when he was a young boy. Chemawa Indian School — that's down in Salem, Oregon. It was a government school. He ran away from there because at that time when he went to school they were just like being put into the Army. You know, kids were taken right off the reservation and sent to school. They did not often speak English and to them, it was like being in the Army.

I was sent to Catholic School when I was little. St. George's. They had an Indian Catholic school right out here in Federal Way. The school's not there anymore. They tore it down when they built a cemetery there. Catholics built a beautiful cemetery there. I had nine brothers and four sisters. But, I'm the only one left. I was the baby of the girls. They called me Baby until I was about eleven. I flatly refused to answer them after that. (big laugh)

I've lived all over. I went to school in Chemawa after high school. I've lived in Tacoma mostly. But, when I first got married, my first husband, he was a logger so I lived up in Skokomie. I lived there when he died, and moved back to Tacoma. Mostly, I lived here in this sanitarium I was in and out. Mostly, I've lived in the Tacoma area.

I have living three boys and a girl and a foster daughter. I had a younger son, but he got killed in a car accident. The other two boys are in California. They've been there since my son joined the Navy and then when he got out, he had a girl and he married her. I have 16 grandchildren.

Has their ever been a book written about your family?

No, I have an uncle, my Mother's uncle. His name was Jerry Meeker. And he lived up in Brown's Point. And he was quite a writer. We find books in the library about him. And, I've been researching them. There was one at TCC (Tacoma Community College) that he wrote. I don't know the name of it. When I was going to school there, we were studying the Indians of the Northwest. And, then, we had to do a research. And so I ran across his name. But when I went back, I couldn't remember what it was under and couldn't find it again after I went back to get it. He wrote it. (Note: I checked TCC library and the Northwest Room at the Tacoma Public Library and was unable to locate it.) According to Jerry Meeker — that was my Mother's uncle — they were named after Ezra Meeker because they worked on his farm. They had to pick a name or they were given a name. They all had Indian names. Long names. Names that nobody could pronounce.

What does "Puyallup" mean?

Well, it's "generous people" is the way they look at it. People that were constantly giving and when the white people came and they would give everything they could. And that was the old tradition, was to give. Whenever they had a funeral, they would give everything away. Then start new. Or, when they got married they gave everything away and people came to the wedding; they were given gifts or whatever they had. That was the tradition. And, they did that for years until they started getting so poor that the government had to stop them from doing that.

That was called a potlatch. They gave land or whatever they had. Their belongings. Whatever the person had, if the person died they gave all. I remember when my sister died. Uh, the people just came and they lined up and my mother was handing out all of her treasures. She had, she had a trunk full of them. Course, my sister was the oldest. She, went to Haskell College and she got sick down there and when she came back, she had these trunks of things that she brought, you know, clothes and then all of her gifts that people gave her. And my mother gave them to everybody that came.

Is the name Peter Stanup familiar to you?

Yes, I've read of Peter Stanup and heard my parents talk of Peter Stanup. But I have really not heard that much about him. Whenever they were talking about something and it belonged to Peter Stanup or different names like that. But, that's just the way they said it; that it was caused by Peter Stanup. I didn't take much notice, you know, because I was young.

He was one of the ones that went to Chemawa and, and started that Chemawa School. (Note: Peter Stanup was one of the first attendees, but did not start the school, it was started by the government) You've heard about Chemawa? It wasn't called Chemawa then. It was called Forest Grove. And eventually it was named Chemawa.

When I was girl everything around here was woods. We used to up to Brown's Point and pick black berries, wild black berries. And cut Christmas trees. But, it's all houses now.

Condominiums. My parents lived up there before I was born. My brothers and sisters were born up there. But, we moved down to Fife when I was born.

The way my family made their living was by selling their property. And they sold it for such a small amount. And they, you know, didn't have the BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] to help sell their property. And, so they just sold it and ended up with nothing. And, uh, what property we had out here — See, my mother never went to school in her life. And my father was sent off to Forest Grove, so he went to school, and he went through the eighth grade and that was the equivalent of high school and so he was, you know, he knew how to read and write. But, they lost the property out there to taxes. That was depression days. You'd never know what depression days were. They, there was, you just took a job wherever you could find it to survive. It's, it's hard to believe. It's hard to, hard to tell how things were. We all worked out in the field, to, uh, just to make a living. Kids. Adults. Everybody.

I remember working, well starting with strawberries and raspberries, beans and cucumbers. Well, they didn't have cucumbers when I was young. But they had beans. We would, uh, pick beans. And after the beans were all done, we'd pick the vines and my father would burn them. You know for the farmers, they'd burn them to make the soil good again. Then we used to go up and pick the beans that were left over. Then we could can them or dry them.

My grandfather had crops and when, when he lived out there on Marshall Road he had a big farm and they had raspberries and wheat and things like that. He had, uh, raised a lot of young men that didn't have a home and they worked the crops. And my mother had a little house there. I, I guess that's where I was born. I remember the house my grandfather had. It was such a large house and I, I remember when I was a little girl, I was asleep upstairs and I woke up. And I looked around. Where am I? And I was in my grandfather's house. And then I started walking downstairs and I saw this great big lady. To me, she was a big lady. A tall lady. And I, I got scared. It was one of my mother's friends, but I didn't know her. And I remember her so well.

What does the Elder Program here do?

That's something we're trying to work on as a task force to get a more unified Elder program. We have three programs and they're all in different areas and they all do different things. There's one that's called Title VI and they just serve meals to the Elders.

Then the Tribe has its own program where they do services for the Elders. Health care. And we're working towards getting more home care because we have more elders who need that.

There is Chief Leschi school. We had planned to put an Elder program out by the school. Then we ran out of money and couldn't do that. We bought a house for the Elders up here, but it wasn't really convenient. And we wanted to put that right next to the Day Care. Not having much money has made it hard for us to combine the youth and the elders. But, whenever they have anything going on out at the school, they always invite the elders. We go out there and work with the youth.

How do you think tribal history should be collected and passed to younger generations?

Like you're collecting it now. And I like to write down when I think of things. When I'm asked, I write it down. And my son got me this journal (showing me a green hard-bound journal) to write in when I have time. I got a day-journal, but who has time to write in that one? Sometimes when I'm riding with the kids or something and something reminds me of something, I tell them.

There's always this stereotype I've gone through my life with, like dumb Indian, drunken Indian and things like that. And, and my kids don't drink and they don't smoke and it's, it's just when

they say Indian that that's the picture they get. I've always used the word Indian. Native American, that's something younger people use. I'd like to see that gone.

How would you personally like to be remembered?

Well, I (laughing) (pause) I don't know. I've always tried to be on the side and sorta guiding. And I don't get up and speak. There's lot I'd like to say, but I don't say it.(laugh) I guess I was always shy. And I, I just don't, uh, express a lot of my feelings that, that I want to be, uh, happy, giving and I don't want to be remembered as an old shrew.(laugh)

Why do you think some leaders are more remembered and written about than others?

Because they're outspoken, I would say. And, uh, Jerry Meeker — that was my mother's uncle — he saved, he did a lot of talking and writing and decision making. He went to school and learned how to talk in public. His brother was John Meeker — and that was my mother's father — he was not very known because he didn't serve on the council and some things like that. He was quiet, reserved. He was a very generous person, but he didn't get out in public and be known. And my father was on the council and he used to give talks, trying to fight for, you know, the people that couldn't talk or express themselves, he'd try to get things for them. I remember, he used to, during the depression days he always found a job and he would always find things. The big companies would give him things and he would always bring it out and share it with the community, you know, the other Indians. And he worked at Pt. Defiance (Park) and they gave him all the shrubbery that, you know when they change shrubbery all the time. And then they'd give him what they took out and put in new. And he would bring it over here for the cemetery. And he planted all those trees out there. (laughing and gesturing towards the cemetery beyond the window) So, a lot of those came from Pt. Defiance Park. Trees, flowers, roses. We've always loved flowers. The whole family.

Lena Landry is a Puyallup Tribal Elder and in a paid position as a Gaming Commissioner for the Puyallup Reservation in Tacoma, Washington. She also serves on the Task Force for the Elders and on the Election Committee.