

**February 26, 2008 & April 2008**  
**I Interviewee: Lena Davis Landry**  
**Interviewer: Cecelia La Pointe-Gorman**  
**Location: Fife, WA.**  
**University of Washington-Tacoma**  
**Oral History and Memory Project**

**CD2 Track1**

C: Testified \_\_\_\_\_.

A: To get, \_\_\_ that's \_\_\_\_\_ allows the tribes to compact and have all this?

L: BJ went to jail because she had gambling. But, uh...

C: So the way it started out was going back, go back to the beginning just briefly.

A: Where the tribal members, they weren't sitting on their council, approving these bingo halls for themselves.

C: Right.

A: They weren't, that's what Lena said. They didn't do that. Some of the younger tribal members have said that recently.

C: Oh no.

A: Yeah. They were all self serving.

L: Yeah. That's absolutely wrong. If it wasn't for the bingo halls, we wouldn't have gotten, that was the grandfather clause. They had to have a bingo hall, or we had to have gambling, before they would give us gambling in the, that was national law, and we have the bingo halls that the tribe itself didn't have it, they have it. If they didn't have it, then we wouldn't have got it. But they, they, they were working, uh, day and night to get those bingos started. And it was just because they wanted to.

A: They've always paid the tribe a portion of the profit.

L: They paid 5 percent of the gross of what they made, which was a lot of money. And if it wasn't for them, we wouldn't have had a cent. There was three bingo halls but the other one never paid us any money. She just, uh, was always broke so we have a...

A: Was that, was that the microdome?

L: No, no, no, no.

A: A different one?

L: That was, uh, yeah, a different one. And that was Faye's.

C: Faye Wright's?

L: Faye Wright, that was Frank's aunt, I think. Yeah, aunt. But, uh, Rolene and Bertha were the ones that have the bingo halls and they paid 5 percent of the gross and then after the national took over, they charged by the net. And the amount went down. But still they were paying and then when we had nothing and when we had a funeral, they, they chipped in and gave us some money. We was always collecting money for funerals and then they would think nothing of just giving us some money, what we needed. And people don't even think about that. It was really important. They, they should be honored. They should be thanked, instead of talking about them like that. But, that's sad.

A: Yeah. It's that jealousy that keeps popping up.

C: So, like Rolene and Bertha? And who else? Oh Faye Wright.

L: Faye.

C: Faye Wright.

L: Yeah, but Faye never paid us any money. She was, she didn't know how to, well, I don't want to say that.

C: Yeah. We'll just move on. We got the point.

L: Yeah. (Laughs)

C: They, they were, um, that now that they need to be remembered for those who did help, like Rolene and Bertha, that they need to be remembered. That they weren't selfish.

L: They were there when they were...

A: They helped the tribe out.

C: Yeah. They helped the tribe.

L: Yeah. Yeah. They paid for our salary and for any...

A: And then the bingo palace opened and the tribe opened the palace.

L: Yeah.

*(4Min:10Sec)*

A: And that's \_\_\_\_\_.

L: Then, uh, when Bob got on, he was the one that, uh, spent the tribe's money. And they want to honor him but he, he got away with a lot of money. And we had, when we got on the council, was after he was arrested and we had to straighten that all out with, uh, BIA because he spent, uh, BIA's money, the tribe's money, grants. And we had to work hard to get, get grants back for school and, uh, whatever the clinic, and it was Rolene and myself that went to Washington D.C. and got the money back for the school and, uh, if it wasn't for her. She, she's a good talker. She knows all those people in Washington D.C.

A: Lobbyists. She's your lobbyist?

L: Yeah. Mhmm. And we got the school, got the money to go to school and build the clinic. I don't hear anybody saying that they did anything wrong. They, they took away

her, her dome, the microdome that she built, her and her husband and her cigarette shop. Because she, uh, I don't know what happened. She owed money or something. And, nobody, nobody would help her and she, she lost that but she never used the tribe's money like they're trying to say she did. The tribe never gave her any help and it's, uh, it's sad. It's terrible that anybody would say that she was stealing or anything because she never did. And, uh, when we got the gambling, we had to prove that we had gambling and of course we, we had also the bone games. We, we used to do that. That was in our background but the bone games...

A: Traditional.

L: Yeah. So that worked towards us having gaming. We, we had to fight with the state and the feds to get it. And that's when they were on the council. We had to fight to get the gaming. But we didn't, we didn't steal it. We had to fight with the state. I remember this attorney. He's, uh, amazing, it's, uh, Bertha's attorney, uh...

A: Frank Miller.

**(7Min:35Sec)**

L: Frank, Frank Miller, yeah. We, we fought with him. We used to go to the meeting and \_\_\_\_\_. (Laughs)

C: (Laughs)

A: Now he's on the right side.

L: Yeah. When we went every day, he never scared me. He'd look at us so mean and argue with us and we fought and fought and, uh, Slade Gorton, he came in there and fought with us and into our meetings and we had a, a get-together, you know, all tribes, and we, uh, you know how Indians always pray and sing before the meeting starts. So

the Indians were singing. Singing in Indian. And Slade Gorton got up on the stage and he started singing "God Bless America" while the Indians were singing their Indian song.

How ridiculous can you be?

A: He's a creep.

L: Yeah.

A: He's bad. That's why he's out. (Laughs)

L: Yeah. All the Indians, all the Indians...

A: Gordon Fish. He tried to fight against our fishing rights so bad.

L: Uh-huh.

A: Terrible.

L: He just didn't want us to have anything. He still don't. And he was backing that, uh, what's the name of that governor, running for governor? Uh...

C: The governor?

L: Yeah, against, uh, our governor now.

A: Dino? Rossi?

L: Yeah. Dino Rossi. And I, I was laughing to myself because he didn't know what that Dino Rossi would never, Dino Rossi would never say he was part Indian. (Laughs)

C: (Laughs) Good.

A: You guys ought to start adopting in all these governors and honorary Puyallups.

C: (Laughs)

A: Well, what a move.

C: Yeah. It would be, huh?

L: I wonder if he ever found out that Dino Rossi is. He finally admitted it in public, that, that his grandmother was Alaska Aleut Indian.

A: (Laughs) Slade was probably having a heart attack.

L: (Laughs)

A: Wrote him off.

L: Yeah. He's not going to be backing him up. He's running again. He probably figured he'd get more votes on that side. (Laughs)

C: Yeah, huh?

A: Politics.

C: Yeah. Politics.

L: Yeah.

A: Poor Slade would probably find out he was actually an Indian.

C: Oh boy.

A: Then he'd have to shoot himself.

C: Yeah, that's what I was going to say. Suicide. (Laughs)

L: He could. Could be. A lot of, lot of people that are on TV, they came from Montana and they are part Indian but they don't bear any knowledge that... I just, I used to read the scandals and find out that.

A: Oh yeah. The gossip papers? Yeah.

L: Cher admitted it. That she...

A: She'd be hard to...

L: Hard not to.

A: Yeah, I think. Uh, are you guys going to be moving over to the other office?

L: No, uh, they're supposed to be finding...

**CD2 Track 2**

L: He worked at Cushman. My mother was a basket maker. She made her living by making baskets. She made beautiful baskets. And she was a land owner. She was a \_\_\_\_\_ landowner. And she sang songs. She sang the cutest songs. She spoke nothing but Indian. She had to learn English from us kids.

C: Wow.

L: Yeah. And she did speak very fluent English by learning from her kids. She told me stories and, uh, she learned to be, uh, she went to all religions, Shakers and her stepmothers were Shakers and, uh, but she never, never was a Shaker because we were Catholics. And she spoke fluent Indian. And she cooked. She, there's a story, did you see that story about her down at the dock? That, uh, that's uh, have you been there?

C: No, no. I need to know where to go. It's down at the, is it at the marina? The dock?

L: No, it's uh, you go down to, um, uh, Carr Street. They've got a little museum down there that they started. You ever been?

C: Yeah, I have been.

L: Yeah.

C: Yeah.

L: In that museum, there's, they, uh, they have pamphlets there but, uh, they, uh, they made these plaques for all the ladies. On each corner in that area and on Carr Street and 30<sup>th</sup>, I think is, uh, we lived on 30<sup>th</sup>, is a plaque right on the corner. It talks about my mother.

C: Oh good. Now, now I know where to look, I'll go down there and I'll look. I didn't know she was your mother.

L: Yeah. Maggie Meeker Davis.

C: My, my goodness.

L: Uh, I want to buy one for my son because he was raised down there and we, uh, my youngest son he was killed in a car accident and, uh, I want to buy one to put there because he, he played baseball for the team there and he was cute. Yeah, she made baskets and beautiful baskets. They don't make them anymore.

C: They were the watertight baskets you talked about too?

L: Yeah.

C: Real tight water baskets.

L: Yeah.

C: What was it made out of?

L: It was made out of cedar roots and, uh, um, let's see, cedar roots and they stripped the trees and made strings out of the, out of the stripping from the trees to wind around. It was all local. It wasn't the raffia they used. Everything that's grown around here.

C: Wow.

L: They, they, they got the cedar roots by the trees that were falling, you know, when you see those great big stumps?

C: Uh-huh. Yeah.

L: They fall over. And they get the roots and then we used to go out and get the roots with my mother.

C: Really? Did you pull them off? Yeah?



L: Yeah. And then, uh, then she'd strip them down \_\_\_\_\_ (4Min:45Sec) meat and...

C: Like strings.

L: Yeah. And mountain grass.

C: Mountain grass.

L: Oh that stuff is like, uh, blades of, uh...

C: Thread or something?

L: No, it's, it's like, uh, it'll cut you just to touch it.

C: Oh. Oh, no. It's sharp. I mean, it's real fine, huh?

L: Yeah. Real sharp.

C: Yeah.

L: And they'd dry that and, uh, and then they'd die it with, uh, bark.

C: They'd die with with bark? The color from the bark dyes it?

L: Uh, no, they get certain bark for, for certain colors.

C: Oh, okay. Okay.

L: And they'd boil it.

C: Hmmmm.

L: Yeah, I used to, when I was young, when I was a girl, go with my mother and do those things. Of course I couldn't do it. I was a dummy. (Laughs)

C: No you weren't! (Laughs) No you weren't.

L: She had, uh, yeah, she had, uh, was it your grandma? No. Uh...

C: There was Cecelia Betty. Sampson is my grandmother...

L: Sampson.

C: Sampson, yeah.

L: Yeah. Betty's, uh, no not Betty, Betty's husband...

C: Martin.

L: Martin. No. Uh, no, let's see, it's Bill Steve.

C: Bill Steve?

L: Did?

C: Bill Steve?

L: Yeah, they lived, uh, the same place as your, your folks. Up in that area.

C: Oh, okay. I think I know who...

L: Up in that area. Uh, his mother was Ella Steve and she, she was part of the, uh, \_\_\_\_\_

(7Min:02Sec) \_\_\_\_\_, uh, and she went to Tulalip, so, she became a Tulalip. But she was still a Puyallup. And, uh, she, she moved down here and she was my mother's friend.

She lived in a little house right down in that area and they would meet every day and talk in Indian, sit there and talk about us.

C: Yeah?

L: That was, uh, you know, good that they had, each of them had somebody they could talk to because nobody, nobody knows the language.

C: No. My grandparents used to talk together, Betty and Martin?

L: Oh yeah.

C: Yeah. They used to talk Indian together.

L: Yeah. That's La Connor wasn't it?

C: Yeah, when they'd get in, like they were arguing, they wouldn't talk in English so we couldn't understand what they were saying.

L: Yeah, when they talked about us, they, you knew they weren't talking English. So, uh, but, they, they were, uh, nice friends, good friends. Ella was, uh, real strict Catholic. She said, she, she was an old, old lady. I don't know if she reached 100 or not. She, uh said she was going to reach 100 and she was going to die in church and she, she did die in church. Down, down in \_\_\_\_\_. (8Min:58Sec)

C: Oh, St. Peter and Paul?

L: Yeah.

C: Yeah. I got an old plaque from that. I mean, the old plate they put out like in the 60's something. I still have where the old St. Peter and Paul, it's a plate that they made with the old, what was his name, I don't remember the priest's name? John \_\_\_\_\_.

L: Yeah.

C: Anyway. I know where. I used to go there.

L: Yeah. I was confirmed there. She did all that. She wove baskets and she fished and she dug clams and she had friends and, and she canned food. We used to have our garage full of canned food.

C: It was nice to go look into shelves of canned food.

L: Yeah.

C: Yeah.

L: Yeah and it was all good. It wasn't spoiled. Like you might get a can of food home from the market and it would be spoiled. Even dog food. (Laughs)

C: That's right. This was all good food, huh? Mmhmm.

L: That's how we made it through the hard times. We lived out in the country and, uh, um, it wasn't easy. And, um, then they sent us to St. George's and that turned into a

hardship because my brother was burned there and then we were taken out and sent to Cushman, my sister and I.

C: What, what brother was injured there?

L: My brother, Ralph. He was...

C: Ralph, yeah.

L: Yeah. He was just older than Elizabeth.

C: Oh, okay.

L: Uh, he was, uh, I told you about that, didn't I?

C: Yeah. He was helping you with a, or helping with building a fire.

L: Yeah. He helped me build me fire and then went down to the school and built their fire and the flames came out. The kids did all the work in the fields. He ran the tractor, that's...

C: Oh my.

L: That's how he got the gas on him. Just from him out in the field.

C: No child labor laws back then, huh?

L: Oh no.

C: Children were put to work.

L: That was, uh, everybody worked. We worked from the time we, we could walk. Uh, Indian boarding school started out with St. George's, and I went to Cushman and I went home and then, uh, I was going back and forth between Cushman and home until I got to high school and then I, my father passed away and I enrolled myself at Chamouwa. And I couldn't even graduate from Chamouwa because they sent me home and said I had TB. They kept saying I had TB. And I got, got back to, uh, um, Cushman and, and the doctor

said, they put me in the death ward and he said, um, I had to have pneumothorax and I was sitting there trying to think, pneumothorax, what is that? And then the doctor said "Well, if you don't take it, you're going to be in the happy hunting grounds with your brothers and sisters." I said "Well, I wasn't objecting to it, I was just trying to think what it is." (Laughs)

C: Was it called pneumothorax?

L: Pneumothorax. It, it was a needle about 20 inches long and they put it in your ribs and, uh, pump air in there and collapse your lung and that, that was an experiment.

C: Oh my goodness.

L: And that, that, but, uh, I took that. Some of them took the operation, but, uh, everyone in that room took the operation, they all died.

C: Oh my.

L: Yeah. Of course I was in the death ward and, uh, I, I, my mother said I was too ornery to die.

C: Too ornery to die. Good for you. (Laughs) Mother knows, huh?

L: Yeah. Well, I could just go on and on about Cushman. I spent so many years there. I was in and out of there. And, uh, I have some \_\_\_\_\_ (15Min:09Sec) rheumatoid arthritis I got now. I had that back when I was in Cushman and Bill Steve had to pack me in there. I was that sick. I couldn't even walk. And, uh, I never thought I'd ever get it back again but now it's back. Uh, and, uh, things like that. Just, uh, I just guess there's not much I haven't had. Well, I've had cancer, had cancer. And so I guess there isn't much I haven't had.

C: Wow, you came through a lot of stuff, huh? Yeah.

L: Yeah. How many minutes...

C: Um, it's okay. Yeah. As long as you want. And whenever you're done. We can do some more later too if you want.

L: Yeah. Yeah. It's a long story when I went to Chamouwa. Uh, I, I enjoyed Chamouwa. I worked before school and after school. You know, when you go to Chamouwa you have to work half a day for your room and board.

C: Wow, I didn't know that.

L: And then, uh, I, I worked besides after that for my spending money. But the funniest thing is my girlfriend and I, we wanted to see "Gone with the Wind" and, uh, we didn't have any money so we got a job weeding, uh, weeding, or pulling up onions that morning. And then we got out there and we worked hard all day and we got cleaned up and caught the bus, they brought a bus out to us, (laughs) and we made it to the movies but we were so sore. And all we could do is sit there and watch the movie and, uh, and everybody was getting up and getting down and they had to walk over us. (Laughs) And our knees were so sore. For those weeding onions all day.

C: That's a long movie too. Like three hours or four hours?

L: Yeah.

C: It's a long movie.

L: I think it was, it was more than three hours then. Then they had a long break and the kids would get up and go out and get something to eat. Of course, we didn't have that much money but we, we enjoyed the movie. (Laughs) I think it was more fun not having money than if you had money handed to you.

C: Yeah.

L: I don't know why it seemed to be. We enjoyed every, every cent we had.

C: Yeah. Yeah.

L: That's what I say about the kids nowadays. They get money handed to them hand over fist. They just don't appreciate it. I don't know how it affected the parents. They, they were home working. I know the last time when I went to Chamouwa my father had already passed away and he wouldn't have let me go. But, uh, I wanted to get my education and I know my mother couldn't afford it, so I enrolled myself. And, uh, I, I had to leave my mother and brother. But they got along good. But they, they sold my violin. They didn't tell me until after I got home. (Laughs). But that was okay. They had to have a living. Yeah. There was, that school, there was, uh, three of us from Washington. One was from Yakima and the other one was from, uh, up in La Connor. Um, we, we palled around together. We were at Cushman together and, uh, and, uh, we got in trouble together. They called us the Three Dum-Dums. The older girls called us the Three Dum-Dums because we were always into something. Not purposely it just happened to us.

C: Mmhmm.

L: Did I tell you about when we were eating and, and, uh, my girlfriend leaned over to talk to me, to whisper to me? And the disciplinarian said let's have it absolutely quiet and when she said absolutely quiet, she meant quiet. And, uh, my girlfriend \_\_\_\_\_ (21Min:32Sec) at the end of the table, we were at the little kids' table to begin with to teach them how to behave. (Laughs) And, and, uh, she leaned over and we had everything was tin. Tin dishes, tin bowls, and somehow her elbow hit the bowls and bang on the floor and you could hear all over the building and, oh boy, this disciplinarian

was a great big heavysset lady. She come waltzing over there and arms swinging and she picked up little Eva and she threw her out the door and I got up and followed her. I wasn't going to let her throw me out.

C: Oh no.

L: And she said now don't come back and we didn't go back and then finally we, we, uh, we ate at the drugstore. It was just, uh, you know, fast food, junk, candy and stuff. And, uh, people were, the other people were upset because we couldn't go back to the dining hall and they, they tried to make us go back and we wouldn't go back and then, uh, so that the older, after a couple weeks, they, uh, made arrangements with the principal I guess to make him get us back in.

C: Oh, okay. Hmmm...

L: But in order to get back in we had to scrub the porch. That was it. So we went out there and scrubbed the porch. (Laughs)

C: Wow.

L: Everybody was walking by making fun of us. You have to have broad shoulders when you go there.

C: Oh, it sounds like it. Yeah. Yeah.

L: That's all my mother could speak was her language and so we learned from her and she learned from us. And we were Catholics. Yeah. All, all my teachers were very good to me. I can remember that. Every school I went to my teachers, they all were very nice to me. No matter where I went. Starting from the first grade.

C: That's good, huh? They were good to you.



L: Yeah. Yeah. I don't know why but I always remembered the teachers were very nice to me. And then my family, they couldn't visit us. They, they didn't have money to even live on let alone go visiting.

C: Mmhmm.

L: My mother told stories, or my dad told his stories. I don't know what the cultural things, they seem to be, we lived in the city, and, uh, because we adopted this culture of the nation.

C: Mmhmm.

L: First job I ever had was in school and I was in, uh, grade school. After school I got, saying how the teachers were good to me, and, uh, they gave me a job. Let's see, I remember getting a little check every week and I remember buying my dad an alarm clock. I don't know why I had to buy him an alarm clock. (Laughs)

C: (Laughs) That's cute. Mmhmm. That's nice.

L: I married my first husband when, uh, let's see, I, I was, uh, 21.

C: 21?

L: Yeah. I was able to get married without, um, anybody's consent. And he died when my daughter was a month old. He had TB I guess, I don't know, they called everything TB at that time. It might have been cancer. In his stomach.

C: What was his name?

L: Robert, uh, Daniels.

C: Robert Daniels?

L: Yeah. He was, uh, his father was Leo Daniels and his mother was Lillian Young Daniels. She died when he was still a little boy.

C: Oh.

L: He was raised by Catherine Daniels. Uh, although it was a short time, we, he was a logger and he, he lived up in, uh, Snoqualmie during the wintertime when it was just snowing and you know, like it was this last winter?

C: Yeah.

L: Snow and he was sick and he had to go to the drugstore to get his medication and, uh, uh, I, I never, I never took any clothes up there for that kind of weather, and so I wore his clothes and, uh, uh, people didn't worry about fads or fashions or anything then. And, uh, I was \_\_\_\_\_ (29Min:45Sec) in that blizzard to get the medicine and that was all I was thinking of. And to get medicine for him. But, uh, we finally got a ride back to, to his home in Fife. And he passed away out in Fife. He wouldn't go to the hospital. I had to take care of him. And I, I had the one daughter, Margaret, and then, uh, later on I had my other children. I married Alec Landry from \_\_\_\_\_, North Dakota. He was, uh, I don't know how you would say. He was the jolliest person. Friendly, kind, and everybody liked him. I had been rolling along about then. Well, presidents.

C: That's if you want to answer those, you know.

L: Well, I've got my picture of the \_\_\_\_\_ there. (31Min:30Sec)

C: Yeah. Right there. And Greg White.

L: I got a plaque from Hilary. I, I got that at home. I should bring it in. Yeah. I...

C: Nice picture.

L: I dealt with, uh, the, uh, Norm Dixon and people like that, uh, Senator \_\_\_\_\_, for, for our settlement. I was on the council.

C: Do you want to, do you want to do that in the next session? Talk about some of the...

L: Yeah.

C: Yeah, that way we can, um, take a rest. Keep the, keep these questions with you.

This was wonderful.

### **CD2 Track 3**

L: .....enlighten you about Indians.

C: You told me about your life! (Laughs) That tells me a lot. Yes, it does enlighten me.

So...

L: Good.

C: That's like more than I could even ask for, you know. Like when people, you share your story with me, it means like everything. It's just, it helps me a lot too. And it brings back to home, you know what my grandparents and my parents had gone through.

L: Yeah.

C: Yeah. To have what we have today.

L: Mmhmm.

C: Yeah. It just didn't happen. You know, it went through a whole history.

L: Yeah.

C: And I think that's one of the things that the kids need to know it. They need to know where their grandparents and their parents, what they went through as, as children too.

And adults. Yeah. To bring to home that it's, nothing was free. You know, it took sacrifice and hard work.

L: Yeah. Yeah. And that's, that's the part that they don't, they don't see. I, I think about it, you know, when we was out there in that torturing hot sun picking berries.

C: Yeah. (Laughs) Now, if you ask how many kids have gone berry picking, you don't find very many kids that have gone berry picking.

L: No.

C: No.

L: And you put them out in the berry field and all they do is throw berries at each other.

C: (Laughs) That's right. Get into a berry fight, huh? I'll come back again and then we'll go over some of the political years, if you'd like. And, uh, this is really exciting and I will get these transcribed and I'm excited about this. You have been so wonderful.