



Johnny Bobb

Great Basin Indian Archive

GBIA 042



Oral History Interview by

**Norm Cavanaugh
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Yomba, NV**



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Interviewee: Johnny Bobb

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B: Hello. My name is Johnny Bobb, and I came from Yomba Indian reservation. I was born and raised up the valley, south of Austin, Nevada. I was raised with my grandma, grandpa. Everybody else out there worked hard for their living. *Aishe wookkah po'i* [1:08]. From there, when I was growing up, I had a hard life. Because most of the time, I didn't have—parents didn't have food. Because they couldn't get to town sometimes, it was hard to get to town. It was so isolated that town was too far for us to travel every month. But we did it somehow. Because I don't really remember, because I don't really travel with them to town because it was too far. So me and Grandma, and my sisters or brothers, we stayed home, played, went up in the mountains. But I think the most important thing was that we had to know the reason why we were brought up that way. Because it was a hard life, and hard lecture from our parents, grandparents, to see—we were to be safe. And get fed. That was the first thing that our parents always thought about: us being fed, us being healthy, get the right kind of food in our system, so we could grow up to be strong. My uncle—they came from different area. Most of the people that came to Yomba, it wasn't a reservation then. It was something where the BIA had us put there to open up a reservation. Most of my people came from Smoky Valley, Monitor Valley, Little Antelope Valley. And then, from there, you see Duckwater, and Ely, and then wherever else. But for the wintertime, we always go down towards Yucca Mountain. And that's where, up in the mountains, they have caves. They have places for our people to gather. They have places there for kids to run around, to be a man, and pick medicines for the elders, and pick medicine to learn what it does when you use it in ceremonies. All these thing about the medicine: we took care of it, with our prayers. We used the water;

water was important. There was lots of water then. Now, there's no water. Now, to come to this place, people on the reservation—just drying up. Up in the mountains, mountains are drying up. They're not dying, they're not dead. Because you don't really use that dead and dry it, dead this and dead that. We use it to, when we pass on or something. But you know, when we look at the trees and everything else, we just dry up. But we use that for good purposes: to make fire, chips, or use it for gardening. Or something like that. But in our way, we have forgotten our languages, too. We're not the ones that, out in Yomba, know that things are going wrong for the people to know that everything is drying up. So we keep trying to teach our kids, trying to let them know what's happening. Nowadays, more ceremonies we do, the more people we get, the more word we get out with our prayers to look around and see what we're talking about, for the kids to recognize ourselves—themselves—to know what's going on on this Mother Earth, and see things. Right now, today, see clouds. It's about wintertime. That winter is pretty—I think it's going to be long winter, but we'll get that winter. Hopefully we'll have good weather and good rain. But this life goes on. You know, life goes on forever. Things that the Indians used long time ago, we were studied by the white people. So, they learned from us. They studied our medicine, they studied our ways, they studied our languages, they studied our body, they studied our ways of standing on this Mother Earth. How we stand, how we use our languages, what we use our languages for. How do we pray? They have that knowledge now to go out and take a look at us in that way. The health clinic, you know? They still experimenting on us. Nevada Test Site down there, and Mercury, down toward that way. They're still studying on us. We're the pygmies of their country. We still stand on our 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley. When that Ruby Valley treaty was signed, it was for

Peace and Friendship. And the white people came from California and back and forth to Colorado, wherever they take that gold. They travel that route, northern route, over here in Nevada. And what the Indian did was, they just took and slaughtered this wagon train—for what? Not the gold. Maybe the **scalp**. They like **scalp**, they like wagon, they like horses. Maybe that's all they took. And left the gold somewhere. And then white people come back and take the gold and carried on, with guns. But we never did care for gold. It was part of our ceremonies, it was part of our ceremonies that we use with our sick people and everything else that depend on us with our prayers.

[Break in recording at 8:16]

B: So, to continuing on this film, telling people that, guess what? The Shoshone National Council is still around. We want the council to continuing with our traditional people. But the people have to be coming from different reservations, and different areas, tribes, and different places like cities where Shoshones are at. Got to be Shoshone traditional person to recognize our traditional ways through our own government, where we be of our own government. We are all **taking** stand, and learn, and talk about our traditional ways, and what's happening on this Mother Earth, and what's happening on our reservation and our treaty land, and our *Sokopia*. [Shoshone at 9:16] to leave it alone [Shoshone at 9:50] Geneva [Shoshone at 11:23] treaty [Shoshone at 11:27] do the studying. When they studying, [Shoshone at 12:00] guinea pig [Shoshone at 12:34].

You know, where this water that comes from this cloud up here to water the plants and the animals, and to drink—for the mountains to drink, and everything is good. But water keep pumping up from the ground for the wells to benefit them there, their part. And their mining. They using lot of water! This water is for the Mother Earth. It stays. [__inaudible

at 13:29__]. Everything should be—shouldn't be looking dry, like this tree right here. Through winter, it should be protected from that water, should be to protect it from this Mother Earth being damp. Everything. You know, back east, there's lots of water over there, so that's why it still stays free. But they have lots of water. And the flood is going on? That's good. But there was a reason for that. People better look at Mother Earth and how it rotates, how it moves, how the water works. Water's the very important life of the Mother Earth. Take that time to think, you Indians! Take that time to think about our language, how it is spoke. Not how it is pronounced. Because sometimes, we send our kids to school, they come back not knowing our grammar. Not knowing our way, how *we* speak. It's their way, of how white people want to interpret our language, how they want to use our language, how they want to use and understand our ways. Because that's how we went to school, learning the ABC and the vowels and all that. So, something's got to be done. Something's got to be standing with us kids. This life is short. This life don't continue. [Shoshone at 15:13] Everything's a story. The music's a story. Everything is prayer. Everything is taking care of this, our Mother. Everything is taking care of her ways, because *Apppe*, everything is taking care of our grandma. Everything is taking care of our elders. So, that's all I have to say right now. There's lot more to say, but to understand our way, you know, keep on praying. Keep on using our language, knowing our ways. But there's lot of people that—kids—that forgotten our ways, that's already grown up. To take care of all that, we got to stick together and do more ceremonies, and get together, know one another. And Grandma always say, "We're all related one way or another." So take care of yourself, and be happy, and know what's out there. Because we,

the Newe people, we should know each other. We shouldn't be far apart. Take care of yourself. *Ho'. Aishen kwai tsaa. Suntahaiken.*

[End of recording]