

# **NEVADA** INDIAN COMMISSION

## **STEWART INDIAN SCHOOL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

### **BOY FROM OWYHEE: AN INTERVIEW WITH DELBERT HOLLEY**

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Transcribed by Barbara L. Zeigler

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# BOY FROM OWYHEE: AN INTERVIEW WITH DELBERT HOLLEY

*Delbert Holley is a Western Shoshone man from Owyhee, Nevada, the location of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. He first attended Stewart Indian School when he was nine or ten years old, in the mid-1940s. He liked the classes and the teachers at Stewart but not the disciplinary tactics used at the school. Delbert left Stewart with permission and transferred to the Phoenix Indian School in eighth grade. Later in life he joined the U.S. Army. He currently resides at the Battle Mountain Band Colony in Battle Mountain, Nevada.*

*My name is Terri McBride. It's Tuesday, February 21, 2017. We are at the Battle Mountain Indian Colony Community Center and the interview is with Delbert Holley, a former student at the Stewart Indian School. We'll be discussing his experience as a student. This interview is being conducted for the Stewart Indian School Oral History Project with the Nevada Indian Commission and will be archived at the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center, the State Library and Archives, and Special Collections at the University of Nevada Reno. So, what is your name?*

Delbert Holley.

*When were you born and where are you from?*

I was born in 1936 in Owyhee, Nevada.

*How many people were in your family?*

Nine.

*How many brothers and how many sisters?*

Two brothers. Joe Holley, he's my nephew. His dad was my brother. I had, let's see, I can't remember! (laughter). Evan, Pat, Mae, Patricia, Phyllis, six sisters.

*What language did you speak at home?*

Shoshone.

*Were there any problems between the parents and the children communicating?*

No.

*While you were little and still at home, did you celebrate American Indian cultural things like the pine nut harvest or the round dance or anything like that?*

Nope.

*Were any of your other family members educated at Stewart?*

Yes, my youngest brother, May, Phyllis, Patricia. I think just four of us went to Stewart.

*So three sisters, your youngest brother...*

And myself. That's five of us went to Stewart.

*Wow. When did you go to Stewart? Do you remember what years?*

I can't remember now. I think 1945. I'm pretty sure that's when I went.

*How old were you when you first went?*

I think I was about ten.

*How did you end up going to Stewart in the first place*

You know at that time, my mother, with all of us kids, well; I don't know what happened but I went to first grade, kindergarten here in Battle Mountain. Then, all of a sudden I know, here I'm going to Stewart.

*So, somebody made you go*

My mother couldn't take care of all of us. With Indian people having a hard time at that time, so they asked my mother, I guess, to send us to Stewart because she couldn't take care of all of us. That's how we all ended up going to Stewart.

*Was she a single mom?*

Yes. My dad died when we was all little.

*How did you get there? How did you travel?*

There was a bus that used to come from Owyhee, Elko, and then here. They'd pick us up on a bus and take us over there.

*Did you know where you were going?*

Not the first time, I didn't. I was crying because I didn't know where. I had my cousin, my cousin from Elko. He was going to California, to Riverside. That's where he went to school. He tried to calm us down on the bus. We didn't know where we was going. He was trying to calm us down. "Don't cry, you'll be all right". Yeah, he kind of took care of us when we first went there. After that we were waiting for the bus every time school was going to be back. But we came home for the summer.

*What was your first impression when you got off the bus and looked around? All those kids...*

I didn't know what to think! There was a whole bunch of us; a whole bunch that went to school there. Anyway, when we was there, we used to talk in our own language, all of us. We had a matron and a supervisor. What they did is, if they caught us talking in our own language, they had lye soap that they'd wash your mouth out with.

*In general, did you enjoy being a student at Stewart?*

Not really. That's why in seventh grade I told my mom, "I need to get out of Stewart," 'cuz I ran away from there, I didn't like it and she talked to the Superintendent at Stewart and then they found me a place in Phoenix Indian School. So that's where I went, after seventh, eighth grade I went to school in Phoenix Indian School.

*Was that better?*

Yeah because when you came out of school, you know, like about four o'clock you'd come in, Phoenix is a pretty big town you know, and you'd go up in there, you'd go up into their office and you'd see who called over there and who'd want their yard cleaned or something done around their house. They'll come and pick you up and bring you back and give you money. They had a bank. That's one thing about that bank at the Phoenix Indian School. They had it right there and tell you how to save your money and tell you how to spend it to buy shoes or whatever you really need. It was really a neat school, I really liked it there. I liked it better than at Stewart! (laughs) In Stewart, you made your own bed. If you didn't make your bed right, the supervisor would come through and tear your bed up and tell you to make it over again. Everything's gotta be tight on your bed. He'll go like that (sound of a light pound on the table). If his hand don't bounce off of it, and that bed comes apart you gotta fix it over again.

*That's like military, shipshape.*

Yeah. Everybody had the same kind of pants, overalls. That's what they wore. Some of them had a back part, where you could drop it. Then they'd march you to school. They had a . . . they went to the auditorium. I was in the building right next to the auditorium. That's where the little boys stayed. They'd march us over there to watch a movie or, like each class, they'd put on a play and you'd go over there and watch the play. Then they'd march you to school; they'd march you to eat. Then we had some older boys



Delbert Holley, Battle Mountain, Nevada. February 21, 2017.

that would make you walk like you was in the service. You march over there. If that guy didn't kinda like you, he'd hit you with his fist. But when the guy hit me, it knocked my wind out of me. Then if you got caught doing something, they had their lettermen. Them guys that played football, basketball and track and all that. You'd crawl between their legs and they had a paddle. Some of them would drill a hole in there. Your butt would be nice and sore when you'd get out from there. That experience I had there was kind of...then we had a advisor, he was kind of mean. On the weekend they'd have any extra lunch. If you wanted that lunch, you had to box with a bigger boy. You're little and you're fighting with a bigger boy, boxing, and the bigger boy would knock you around.

*Over a lunch.*

Yeah over a lunch bag, a sack lunch. They had like a barbershop, two barber's chairs, and they'd give you haircuts. Some of the older

boys would come and cut your hair. The older ones, from the high school. They'd come and trim your hair. If you'd get caught doing something, he'd grab you and take you and bend you over the barber chair. They had a great big old, I don't know what you'd call it, a two by four, and he'd hit you with that thing right on your butt, two or three times. He was a pretty rough guy.

*He worked there?*

Yeah, he as the Superintendent, I mean he was a supervisor that took care of the boys. He stayed right there. And then we had a matron. She had a different place and he had a different place with his wife and kids. That time he'd walk, no clothes on, walked down in the boys building, walk down the hallways and check to see if you're still in bed. Anyway, they had a place like a big cave. We always used to go play in that cave there at Stewart. I don't know if it's still there. It's been quite a while since I've

been there! We used to go up there and play. They had a dump pile up there and people would go out there and dump. We used to go around picking through the dumps looking for funny books so we could look at it. Some of our families were pretty poor, you know. They couldn't afford to send us a package for Christmas. But they had a church there, right next to [Stewart]. That church is still there. We used to go there and they'd give us candy and they'd give us a toy. We was happy with that little toy we used to get from the church and a little bag of candy. Man, I'm telling you that Stuart [?], he was kind of a good guy. I mean, you know, there was enough bad but a few of us we used to run away from there. They had a store where you could buy candy and pop. It was right across from the school, where the gym is now, they used to have a store. Somebody would lose a dime or a nickel and we'd run over there to get candy. We was happy! (laughs)

*Good! I had a question about that later so I'm glad you talked about that. When you went to Stewart, all you had were your clothes? Did you take anything else from home?*

No. Just a few clothes. My mom used to . . . maybe a couple pants and shirts because they, Stewart, the government, had all the pants and shirts and shoes. That's what you wore. At least they gave you clothes to wear. Everybody had the same kind of clothes, but there were clothes for you.

*So they were uniforms.*

At home, my mom couldn't afford--a lot of us Indian kids went because our parents couldn't, not like now when they've got welfare and all that. They didn't have that at that time. So, you went to Stewart and you was happy with what you wore. They had a laundry and they did your laundry. Like when I was in the service you had a marking on your clothes and you had a box and when your clothes would come in from the laundry they'd put it in your box and you'd

know where you got your clean clothes and you'd get it out of there.

*How did your mom feel about you guys going to Stewart?*

She couldn't take care of us. That's a reason all us Indian kids went to Stewart because our family was pretty poor. They had to send you to Stewart.

*So let's talk a little about campus life. What was living in the dorms like?*

It was good; it wasn't bad living in it. Just your supervisor and your matron was pretty bad. That's one reason I used to run away because they were pretty rough on you. Our supervisor was pretty mean. Us little boys in that building there, we was right next to the auditorium, we used to have to get down on the floor, and they'd wax it and give you a rag and you'd get down there and all of us were shining the floor of the building all the way around. Have you ever been in the building right next to the auditorium?

*Yes.*

Goes around, goes back and goes back around this way. You've got to go all the way around there shining.

*So were those regular chores or was that for punishment?*

No, everybody got down.

*Just regular Saturday chores.*

Everybody that stayed in the building. One thing I didn't like either was our matron, when you'd take a bath, they had like showers in there and you'd take a bath and they were in there with you and you had no clothes on or nothing. Some of those boys were fourteen already and they'd go in there. They had two matrons go in there and they'd check your legs, check under



THE SCHOOL HOME  
(Grade 1)

Top Row: James Osborne, Theodore Chenat, Joe Ramos, Billy Wright, Marvin Village Center, Dick, George Tom, Harold Ridley, Jimmy Pete, Elvis Patterson, Robert Broncho, Wesley Dewey, Margaret McKee, Geraldine Abel, Oma Sailors, Madeline Patterson, Carol William, Donna Ric Brown, Justine McDonald, Marilyn Shoshone, Clara Flint. Third Row: Wilma Mae Eagle, Carro Jeanette Rooker, Dora Burton, Alfreda Broncho, Edna Wright, Agatha Miller, Patricia Roy, Lois DeCroy. Fourth Row: Frank LaPena, Frederick Shoshone, Danny R.

Delbert Holley's class photo, 1946. Delbert is 4<sup>th</sup> from left in third row (courtesy of Delbert Holley and Nevada Indian Commission).

your arms, scrubbing here and there. That's what made it bad too. I was already in seventh grade and going into eighth grade and, hell, they're doing that.

*It's embarrassing.*

Yeah! In that school you went to school half a day. The other half you either took up fixing shoes . . . like in seventh grade, we had our own pigs we took care of out there. They had a farm out there. We used to milk. We'd go out there and milk them cows. Some of the boys used to play with them things and squirted one another or squirted in your mouth and I never think I got sick because it was fresh out of the cow and I squirted in my mouth.

*Yes, it was raw!*

That's what we used to do.

*It's not like the milk bottle.*

Yeah, they had big gallons. What the hell do you call that thing when you get the milk and make it fresh?

*Pasteurize it?*

Yeah, they'd empty it, they had a big deal, then they had big milk cans where you put the milk then you haul it to where you eat.

*The dining hall? What was eating in the dining hall like? You talked about marching; you had to march there and back. What was eating there like and what was the food like?*

It was good. You gotta eat all your food. You couldn't waste none of it. You had to it all, what

they gave you. It's just like when I was in the Army. They put it on your plate and you go to your table and sit down and eat.

*Was it social? Was that a time when the kids could talk?*

Yeah. Well, they had good food, you know, like all the greens you could eat, vegetables. It was good; they had good food. They had their own bakery there. When I left from there they must have made it out of a laundromat or no, what was she saying, they turned it into a post office. Where that bakery used to be, seemed like [races?] . . . The hospital is still there; I seen that. Anyway, that's where the [race is?] done. They'd march us over there and they'd call uh, what was that thing, you'd drink it. It's like a cod liver oil. What the hell do you call it? It's from, ah, shit, I can't think of it now but that's where everybody'd go to drink that. All the girls and boys from school, each grade would go over there.

*So it was for the digestion?*

Yeah it was something like cod liver oil, but it was like fishy oil.

*Well, cod--cod liver oil.*

They said it'd like, you know, help. A lot of us guys would get tired of, say, winter time, and we'd say, "well, I'm sick" and go to the hospital. They would put you in the hospital all right. It was really a fun school and like I said, if I didn't have a matron and supervisor, I never would have run away from the school. I would have stayed there and finished school but I couldn't get along with them.

*You talked about how every time you got a spare nickel or dime you went to the student store. Was it called Novake then, or do you remember?*

That was later.

*You said the store, when you went, it was across the street.*

Right where the school used to be. It was right across the street. The gymnasium is sitting on it now; that's where the store used to be.

*Oh, okay. The new gym.*

Yeah, that new gym. That's where the store used to sit there. We'd go in there to buy candy or pop.

*On that tour the other day, last week, that first building we go into that they're going to get fixed up for the Cultural Center [Building #1], the student store was in there later. It was in that building.*

They must have moved it because when I was a student that's where the store used to be, where the new gym is.

*Right, kind of by the big dorm.*

Across from there that used to be the store.

*Okay, on the other side of the auditorium.*

Right, on the other side, like coming around the girls' building where that new gym is now is where the store used to be.

*Okay.*

They called it a trading store; they had a name for it.

*That wasn't the Wa-pai-shone, was it?*

Yes.

*Wasn't that the trading post?*

I've seen pictures. Somebody had a picture of it, of that store. Where in the heck did I . . . ? Wasn't it in one of them papers they had given us. It had the store name on it. Somebody had that picture.

*Did you have a favorite class? What class did you enjoy the most?*

Not really.





## SEVENTH GRADE

Delbert Holley's 7<sup>th</sup> grade class photo, 1951. Delbert is third from left in bottom row; his friend Joe Ramos is next to Delbert on his left (courtesy of Delbert Holley and Nevada Indian Commission).

*You talked a little bit about milking. The vocational training was half the day?*

That's what you did at noon. You went to school in the morning until after lunch and then you went to whatever you want to take.

*What kind of vocational training did you do?*

That's where I went.

*Milking?*

Yeah.

*Did you take care of the hogs?*

Yeah, see when you're like, my picture, when you're younger, you went to school in the morning. Then in the afternoon you napped. You slept in the afternoon until you got to be a sixth grader and then in sixth grade and fifth grade you go take your band. If you want to learn how to play trumpet or drum, then you went there noontime, after lunch. That's where you'd go.

*So, starting in sixth grade you had afternoon things to do.*

Learn how to play trumpet or drum or whatever you want to take up.

*Did you play an instrument?*

What did I have? I can't remember what I took. It was a trumpet, I think, or one of them big old, I don't know what that thing's called. Oh, I know, what the hell do they call that thing?

*A tuba?*

Yeah! With the big ol' . . .

*Do you remember any of the teachers? Was there one that you liked?*

I can't think of this one; she was from Owyhee. I can't think of their names anymore.

*What did she teach? Do you remember? Or why did you like her?*

Because she was an Indian girl like my tribe. She was from my tribe. She was kind of like a mother to us. But that other one, she was kind of mean. She was pretty good. She would take us, like on a Saturday they'd take us down, now I see they're building a freeway through it. Up

toward the mountain there. That's where all us kids, they'd take all us for a walk. She used to take us for a walk way back over. We'd take a lunch along and we'd have lunch, way back there.

*So that's called Prison Hill now. And it has the Stewart "S" on it still. It's kind of faded but it's still up there.*

In wintertime it used to snow quite a bit. Anyway, them older boys used to make sleds. Right behind the football field, you see that little hill back there? That's where we used to go play and come down the hill on them.

*By the creek.*

Yeah, we used to ride the . . . some of them guys made their own skis. They skied off of that little hill across the creek.

*You did not graduate. You left Stewart after seventh grade. You didn't want to go back anymore.*

I went to Phoenix Indian School. I see they closed that down too.

*It's now a museum. Did you come back to Owyhee that summer?*

My uncle lived in Elko. That's where I went and stayed with him. From there I went into the service.

*After Phoenix?*

Yeah.

*Did you graduate from Phoenix?*

No. I went to tenth grade. That was like Stewart too where you went to school half a day. Then I took up making saddles, billfolds.

*Leatherwork.*

Then I wanted to, they had a bakery there too. Nice bakery that ran on the school. I wanted to learn how to make bread and doughnuts. So, they said, "Do you want to go over there at noon" and next day they said "do you want to

make saddles and stuff?" I said, "Yeah, that'd be fine." So, in Phoenix that's what I used to do. Sometimes there'd be a job opening and I'd go to work out there and I'd make my own money and buy my clothes. So it was better than Stewart, really.

*More opportunities.*

When I went into the service I was right at the—because I learned at Stewart how to march, how to make a bed. Them guys would get drafted and they'd be crying and they'd say, "Delbert, help me! I don't know how to make my bed!" "Okay, I'll help you guys, because I already know." And then the sergeants used to say, "Delbert, where'd you learn to do all this?"

And I said, "Indian school." I was pretty well at home there. That sergeant laughed, and said "Oh!"

*You were probably too young to play on sports teams when you left? Were you in sports?*

No.

*Did you ever go to any of the games?*

Yeah, I used to like to go watch the basketball because that old gym used to be screaming and hollering in there. We had a good team!

*Yes, you did!*

We had that guy from Pyramid Lake, I can't think of his name now. He was a hell of a good basketball player. One time he was laying on the floor and shot the basket. Earl Dunn.

*Earl Dunn, yes. I've seen his name in the newspaper articles.*

He was one of the best players that they had at Stewart. That's why we used to march to watch the games, football. Stewart used to have a good football team and basketball team. We played everybody. A good boxing team. There's some guys still living in Elko that used to box at Stewart. I used to [ask] "Are you guys still boxing?" They just laugh. "That was a long time ago!" (laughs)

*You said that in the auditorium you would see movies and plays? In those days was it still boys sat on one side and girls sat on the other?*

Each class, before school was out, put on a play in the auditorium. You seen the curtain there? Each grade before school was out you put on a play. I remember my brother Joe and Danny Ramos. They had a thing and they put on a play anyway. They were making (makes a popping noise). I always think about that and told my brother, "do you remember this?" He says, "I don't want to remember that!" (laughs)

*Do you mean an accordion?*

Not the accordion; just like a, what'd they call that thing? It's round and they have it in each hand.

*Oh! Cymbals!*

Yeah! That's what it was! All that class, the girls and the boys, and the teacher was playing the piano. We used to laugh because all of us had the same kind of shoes that looked like a biscuit at the end, nice and round. We used to say "Yeah, I'm going to put on my biscuit shoes." (laughs) I still remember that. Danny Ramos lives down here but he don't like to talk about it. Anyway, he used to say, "You remember them pants and shoes?" Yeah.

*Government issue.*

Yeah, government issue. Jacket was the same way in the wintertime. A leather jacket. Everybody had the same kind. Then they had leather caps. Nobody wanted to wear the leather caps.

*Regarding the buildings on campus, any experiences in any specific building stand out in your memory? You talked about the auditorium, you talked about how fun the basketball games were, the dorms.*

The girls' dorm was right across from our little boys, right across from there. That was the little girls' dorm. Then on this side here there were older girls living there. They stayed in them

buildings. Then right next to the dining hall, you seen that building there? That's where them girls that were going to graduate, that's where they stayed, in that one. It's kind of like this and the dining hall's over here. That's where the older girls that are going to graduate and stuff are staying. The other girls kind of stayed on this side. Then the little girls go over here. The boys stayed way over by the old gym. That used to be their building.

*That dairy barn that's out there still?*

I don't know because we didn't go out that way. It's right back where the older boys' building is. It's right back over that way. They had milk cows, we raised pig there. There's a cow they didn't want no more. They had a little farm down toward Gardnerville, Minden?

*Jacks Valley.*

They had a ranch out there and that's where they'd take that cow and then they'd take a cow to Minden. They had a butcher shop there where they slaughtered. That's where they'd take that and cut that meat up and haul it back to Stewart. I still remember that 'cuz I used to go out there because I was in the 4-H. That's why they took us to that little ranch out there from Stewart.

*Is that the Jacks Valley farm?*

Yeah, that was seventh grade. You had to take that. And the girls, they did laundry. All the boys doing the milking.

*Did you have to plant fields or anything or was it all just animals?*

Just animals.

*You were in 4-H?*

Yes. We had our own pigs. They give you a stick. You teach your pig; you put it on the nose to stop or turn it around. You go to these different areas to show your pig.

*At the fairs and stuff?*

Yeah.

*So you trained them a little bit? Wow!*

(Laughs) My pig was pretty good!

*You mentioned this earlier—did you get sick at Stewart? Did you have to go to the infirmary? You had to go get your cod liver oil, or whatever it was.*

Yeah. The whole school had to do that. Go to the hospital and they'd be waiting for you there with a spoon. That stuff tasted terrible!

*Yeah, I bet! But you never had to go and spend the night in the infirmary or anything?*

Nah!

*Did you attend church at Stewart?*

Yeah, that was when the Catholic Church. That Catholic Church was in the auditorium. That's where they had Catholic Church.

*Oh, before they built it?*

Yeah, it was in the auditorium.

*So, they just had a priest come in in the auditorium?*

Yes, it was a priest and, what you call them? Sisters? Catholic sisters?

*Nuns?*

Yeah. They used to come and they'd bring some candy too. After church we'd get to go there and have candy. (laughs)

*We talked about—you went to the farm down in Carson Valley. Did you go into Carson City for shopping or anything?*

Yeah. That's for weekend. That's where . . . they used to have that old train come through there. We used to walk on that track going to Carson on weekends just to go over there and fool around and get out from Stewart. A whole bunch of us young kids, we used to walk over there to Carson from Stewart.

*Okay. You were too young to work a job in the summer.*

Yeah.

*Do you have any memories of special classmates? Kids that went to school with you?*

Not really. I know this one still lives in McDermitt. His picture's right there too.

*What's his name?*

Let me look in that.

*So, he's from McDermitt and not Owyhee.*

Joe Ramos, I know him. He lives in Reno. I see him all the time, too.

*You went to school with him?*

Yeah.

*Cool! So, you keep in touch with him.*

Half of these guys are probably gone.

*Was he there when you were in sixth grade?*

Yeah. (Sound of pages turning) There's some more on the back of that too. Those are freshmen.

*Was he in your same grade?*

Yeah. You can make copies of these if you want.

*Okay, thank you. I know you'll think of his name. You've kept in touch with some guys that you went to school with. You probably didn't keep in touch with the teachers. . . .*

No.

*Your sisters were there when you went to school too.*

Yeah!

*Were there any other friends at school from back home when you went?*

No.

*But you met that guy from McDermitt?*

Yeah, they went to same . . . sometimes I see him in Winnemucca shopping. He talked to me sometime about that Stewart [there? inaudible]. He asked me if I remember and I say "I don't think I want to remember the school!" (laughs)

*What kind of student were you? Were you shy? Where you a troublemaker? Were you quiet?*

(Laughs) Probably noisy!

*Okay! Were you a pretty happy kid in general, or except for the superintendent that was mean.*

I didn't get to see the superintendent too much just the teachers and our supervisor and our matron.

*Yeah.*

I'm trying to think of the name of that one nurse. She was pretty nice. I went to school at the Phoenix Indian School and I was with her son over there. I can't think of her name now, neither. It's been quite a while, ever since my, my memory is shot!

*She was American Indian too?*

Yeah.

*So, her son went to Phoenix but she worked at Stewart.*

Yeah, at the hospital.

*Hmm. Seems to me they would have had her son come to Stewart with her.*

That's where I had my tonsils taken out, at Stewart.

*At Stewart?*

Uh-huh.

*Oh, so you were in the infirmary! You were In the clinic. Did you have to spend the night there or was it just a quick . . .*

No, they just took it out. Only when you had your appendicitis. I had my appendicitis taken out there too but you stayed in there.

*So the nurse was nice when you had to stay at the . . .*

Yeah. Well, they had these older girls were like a nurse. They were learning how to do that, I guess. Take your temperature. At that time they had that thermometer where you stick it under your tongue. A lot of the boys, they wanted to get it out, shake that thing. (laughs)

*You had your appendix taken out and you had your tonsils taken out. So you left those at Stewart!*

Yeah!! (laughs)

*Do you think there was a sense of camaraderie or community amongst Stewart students, like they felt they were part of this special thing?*

Maybe some of them did; I think some of them did, yeah. Some of us, well, some of us boys said, "well, you know, you can't talk your own language." You get caught talking it; you get your mouth washed out. So we used to sneak off somewhere and talk our own language. Then pretty soon, I don't know what happened, I can understand it [Shoshone language] but I can't talk it anymore like I used to. My wife talks good because she didn't go to Stewart! (laughs)

*So you can understand her? But you just can't speak it.*

Oh, yeah! A lot of them Elko boys, they talk Shoshone. They talk to me in their language. I want to talk it but my tongue gets all tied up and I can't say it and then I get mad at myself. Never should have done that. My brother, well, when my dad died, they took him in, my uncle took him in. He wanted to take me and my younger brother. He wanted to take all us boys and raise us, but my mom said, "No, you can have the oldest one; I want to keep the others." He raised him up pretty good. He went in the Army and came out with pretty good stripes on

him. He didn't ever lose his language. He talked Shoshone. That was Joe's [Holley] dad and he talked real good Shoshone. Joe reminds me of my brother because he talks, you know he don't give up, he talks. That's why they kind of look like dad and my brother too. That's what I told his mother, "He reminds me of my brother. He talks." He didn't go to Stewart. He went to Elko school but my youngest brother and me and my sisters, we went to Stewart. My oldest sister didn't go to Stewart. All of us went to Stewart except her and my brother.

*So she was too old to go?*

Yes.

*There were lots of kids from different tribes there. What was it like for so many people from different places to be all in one school?*

Yeah, we had to get along with them. Mostly, most of them were Navajos. When I went to Phoenix Indian School that was their part of the country over there, and we didn't have very much Navajos going to school there. Stewart had most of them over here. They used to cut all their hair off because they had lice. When they got off the bus, they'd march them right in there and cut all their hair off.

*After Stewart you went to the Phoenix Indian School and after that, were you drafted or did you enlist?*

No, I went in, volunteered.

*Okay, enlisted, was this after World War II?*

Korea.

*Did you fight in Korea?*

No, they were just signing their treaty paper. But they sent us right up to the front lines. You could see the North Korean soldiers and the Chinese. They put us right along the front line to be sure they wouldn't come back. We had live ammunitions and everything. We used to watch them with field glasses. They'd be watching us and we'd be watching them.

*It was after the war was over, but still there was that DMZ . . .*

DMZ line, right. We was right there, right up in front.

*What did you do for a living after the military?*

Just like they taught you. Get boozed up, drunken and drugging—no drugs, just drinkin'. I didn't know drugs. Well, I seen it when I was in the Army, them colored boys. I used to wonder what the heck they're doing. They'd tie that thing up and blood would be coming out, shootin' themselves. We didn't have any house, it was like a tent that we lived in. They had wooden floors. They'd lift that up and put their needles and stuff and then push it back down. I used to wonder what they used to do and then I came out. Later, way later on, them guys was talking about drugs and stuff. That's what they used to do. I didn't know nothing about drugs or nothing. I'm kinda glad I didn't, either. My grandson, I'll get after him. "Don't you be doing that!" But he still sneaks off and does it, I think. (laughs)

*When you got out of the military, did you come back . . . ?*

I went to Elko. I went and stayed with my uncle, because my mom was remarried, I didn't wanna . . . . My uncle told me to come stay with him so that's where I went and stayed. But my youngest brother stayed in Stewart, graduated from Stewart.

*What did he do after school?*

He went in the Marine Corps.

*Did you get married?*

No, but my youngest brother did. He had three kids, two girls and a boy. He played football and basketball in Stewart. When he came back he had a nice-looking sweater with a football thing on it, basketball.

*He had all the letters.*

Yeah. I don't know what ever happened to that. My mom was trying to save that sweater. It had a big "S" on it and what he played. I don't know if he went and got it or what he did to that sweater. My mom used to try and save a lot of our stuff, like my Army pictures. When I got out we just wanted to go to work, get drunk, lose that job. I had a tough life until I met my wife and settled down! (laughs) Been together since 1975, me and her. We been together for quite a few years. Seventy-five, eighties, nineties, now the twenties.

*Over thirty years.*

Yeah.

*Over forty years.*

We been together that long. We got our little grandson we raised up because his mother used to party and get drunk. He was a little boy, just a baby, maybe five or six months old. His grandma called us and said "you guys want a baby?" We said, "Hell, yes! Bring him." We raised him up. Now he's still living with us! He's got a kid, a little girl, my little granddaughter. About all I remember about Stewart . . .

*I've got a couple more questions; you talked about this and I think this is really important. Attending Stewart did affect your life in that you lost your language, kind of, I mean part of it. Your speaking.*

I could talk some of it. They caught you talking, man, you had it. They had a lye soap that they'd wash your mouth with it. A lot of the kids that went to school at Stewart, they'd tell you that, what they did. Like my wife was telling me. She came from Duckwater. She said some of them kids lost their language. When they went to Stewart they used to talk their own language, Shoshone. They went back and they went over there and one lady told 'em, "Go gather some eggs." She told her in Shoshone, in her own language. I said, "What did you say?" (laughs)

*Did it change your outlook, and the Phoenix school too maybe, attitude?*

That's where the difference was. The Phoenix school was a lot better than Stewart. 'Cuz your matrons and your supervisors over there, they didn't do like they did at Stewart.

*Right, discipline.*

Yeah, it was pretty good. They didn't march you when you go to walk to school or whatever. On weekends you go to work out there and somebody calls in and want you to clean their yard. They'd come pick you up and take you out there. To me it was a lot different from Stewart because they didn't march you around, you walked to school. Whatever you wanted to take, you wanted to take making saddles, anything you wanted to do in the afternoon, you did it. So it was a lot different from Stewaert.

*Do you talk about your experience at Stewart with your family or your kids?*

Yeah. Me and my brother, we talk about it 'cuz he graduated from Stewart. We always talk about it. He says, "Sometimes I wish Mom and Dad was still alive and we'd made it," but you know . . .

*You've visited the campus since you left? You were there the other day. Have you been there other times?*

Yeah, when they had their powwow. That was quite a bit after that. Because Stewart really closed. My wife went there for a little while, I think. We walked around there one time. [unintelligible] . . . that school. He said yeah, it burned down. And the store wasn't there because they had a new gym. But everything else was still there. They used to have that a . . . they made cabinets and whatever. They used to have that building there. They used to take us over there at night time, like Halloween. They'd take us over there and tell us about spooky . . . turn the lights off, and tell us spooky stories. All the kids would go "ahhhhh!" I still remember that! (laughs) They said that's where it used to

be spooky in that building. They'd take us over there and tell spooky stories and turn the lights off. Man, everybody'd be screaming! All the kids.

*Was that like the older boys or like, the teachers?*

That was the teachers.

*Oh! Doing a haunted house thing for you guys. My last question is, what needs to be told to visitors that aren't familiar with the Indian boarding schools that are going to come visit. What do they need to know about?*

Really, if they go visit that school now, they got to know that Stewart Indian School was, like to some of us kids, well, it changed after I left, I think. But you know it was pretty rough. The older boys were all right. It was just the younger boys because we had that supervisor. He was kind of mean and that's why we couldn't get along at Stewart. Otherwise, they must have changed after I left, I guess. My youngest brother said they changed quite a bit. 'Cuz he [the supervisor] got drunk in Carson or something and had a wreck and got killed. He was changed after that, he said it was pretty good. He said you could talk your own language and they wasn't so rough as when I first went there and stuff. But he said he changed after I went to Phoenix Indian School. He said he liked it there because it changed quite a bit when he [the supervisor] died. So, I think Stewart was all right, it was a good school. I kind of liked it. The only thing was I couldn't get along with that one supervisor we had. That's the reason I used to run away.

*Because of him.*

Yeah because on account of him, you know. The teachers were good. They taught you everything that you wanted to know. Mostly what they taught you was, like, you know, that the Indian people fought against the United States. They helped the British owners, them Indians. They taught that in Stewart. They were trying to the British. When I went into the

Army, we was right next to British soldiers; they were on this side of it. They used to come and pick me up because they knew that too, that the Indians were trying to help them. They'd take me over there to their base and get drunk over there. Even their military officers used to come and pick me up and they'd treat me like I was one of the Queen's . . . one of their soldiers. I couldn't believe it, you know? That's what they taught me in Stewart, too, Sacajawea, trying to keep us on our own Indian ways. The older I'm getting, stories coming out. This one old man was tellin' me, "You know, I heard this from my grandpa. And I heard this from my grandma." He said they used to have in Carlin they had a . . . where they raised corn and I don't know, and they used to sell it to the whites. The soldiers came in there and took it away. They'd march them to Owyhee Reservation. Then this one cowboy he said one time he was camped out there watching the cows and stuff and he said he could hear kids and old men crying, 'cus that's where them soldiers used to kill them because they couldn't make it over there, marching. There's a lot of stories that when they're older they start telling. Stewart was all right. I liked it, but I just couldn't get along with that one supervisor. It was a good school, really. The ones that were with me in that little boys building, we used to run away. We didn't like it. Otherwise it was good. The teachers were pretty good.

*Thank you very much for sharing your memories with me.*