

American Indian Oral History Collection
Transcript Record

Tribe: Santa Ana Pueblo

Clan:

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Narrator or Event: Donna Pino (ICAP)

Second Narrator: Dr. Louis Ballard (IAIA) at ICAP Training Seminar

Interviewer: T. Weber Greiser

Locale: WNM

Subjects:

Pino: Personal Educational Background

Job Experiences w/ Head Start

Ballard: Taped, Songs + Music (not transcribed)

Comments:

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Education
Songs

Tape #571
SANTA ANA PUEBLO
Donna Pino (ICAP)
April 10 and 11, 1970
Recorded by T. Weber Greiser
Side One

DONNA PINO TALKS ABOUT HER JOB
WITH HEAD START AND HER EDUCA-
TIONAL BACKGROUND

Q. Donna could you give me your educational background starting with grammar school?

A. Grammar school.....I went to the Santa Ana Day School in Santa Ana, until I was in third grade, after that I left, my mother remarried and we had to move down to Isleta Pueblo. And there I attended the local day school, until sixth grade. After I left Isleta day school, I then went to Santa Fe Indian School in 1958, where I completed my seventh grade year and after my seventh grade year in Santa Fe, I came down to Albuquerque and came to John Adams Junior High here in Albuquerque for my eighth grade. And after I completed my eighth grade year at John Adams here in Albuquerque then I moved back to Santa Ana pueblo where I attended the local high school, Bernalillio high school and there I graduated. And after I graduated from Bernalillio I went onto Highlands University in Las Vegas, and I left Highlands in the Spring of 1968 and I have been out for approximately a year and I was here at the University working at the Indian Community Action Program here on the campus and I was moved up to the six Sandoval County councils there, and I was there as a secretary for awhile they were short of funds and the ICAP loaned me to them and there was a turnover in personnel since the program had submitted their proposals for the following year, and there were other

job openings there and get this job and I did enjoy teaching these children of my own tribe, and seemed to know what their needs are and I was teaching their numbers in Indian because most of my children have forgotten their Indian language which is quite a shame.....

Q. You are dealing with the pre-schools?

A. Yes, I am dealing with the pre-schoolers, three to five and I only let 2 to 3 year olds, and my teacher aide, Mrs. Montoya, takes care of, handles the 3 to 4 year olds, and I handle the five year olds, the ones that attend the head start, you know, the year before and so we have a division of class on Mondays, and the 3 to 4 year olds stay together as a group you know. And we thought that this was an advantage to the children to separate them, in that.....these other ones were much more immature say like their numbers and reciting their ABC's and teaching them their colors, learning their colors and teaching their numbers, and I am teaching my 5 year olds and I said as a group I am teaching them how to say their numbers in Indian, small phrases like yes and no, what is your name, what time is it, and they have some perspective and increases.

Q. Like are they getting any help at home? Or do their parents speak mostly English at home?

A. Their parents know how to speak Indian, but I don't think that they speak to their children you know in their native tongue, but when they do speak to their children in their native tongue the children understand but they won't respond, and I know that there are quite a few homes that are right in the village and these parents constantly talk

to their children in Indian and the children have learned to speak but the majority of children don't, but even in the older, the old folks in the village, speak to the children, the younger set, even the teenagers in the village, when they speak to them they respond in English. Although the older ones in the High School and Junior High students know how to speak Indian, they don't respond in Indian, now I have, I am sponsoring a youth program now and I encourage them to speak in Indian at our meetings you know and we converse with each other in Indian instead of English and of course we have a hard time with the bigger words and the words that we don't know how to say in Indian we say it in English and I say well wait, let's see, whether we can find a word or sometimes we even go back and ask well how do you say this

and this is one way of keeping your Indian language at home. But the children even when they play together they speak English to each other and I think it is quite a shame that we are losing our language in that way although traditionally most of my club members feel that they are, high school and junior high age, feel that they are participating in Indian dances and we do encourage this as a club, to continue the Indian tradition and to speak their language, and I know, I know, that when they leave the club that they try and go back to speaking English, but as long as I'm around they speak Indian and I still encourage the Indian.....

Q. So there is a really noticeable loss of culture?

A. Yeah.

Q. At Santa Ana?

A. Yeah, at Santa Ana, and the younger set, I know that the parents who

are really gung ho about the Indians and about keeping the Indian culture really push their children to continue to keep it. I know my parents do, I am really glad that I haven't lost it and sometimes I think, I stop to think and say well I think I believe more in my Indian religion than I do my Christian religion. Being that there are so many changes in the church, the Catholic church, and all these changes going on and all these years they have made us believe that certain things are wrong and then all of a sudden bang, they have changed all these things, and I say, gee, I was taught that this was a mortal sin and that you went "down there" for it and now well no it is not wrong you can go ahead and do these sort of things. And I don't know, I have seen alot, for myself about what the Indian religion can do and although I can't tell you exactly what goes on, I mean I see it for myself and because I see it, I have taken courses in psychology and in the scientific fields and I try to evaluate it in that way and when I do I turn to my Indian religion and I say well is it really this way, and I sit there during the Indian ceremonies with an open mind and I try not to soak in all of what goes on in the different kinds of.....then again I say, well gee, there is, there is no, how would I say, there is no magic trick there, and when I observe that our medicine men goes through, and I say golly, maybe it is that way, and from all these observations and sitting there and from what I have learned in college going to school, well I say, well it is really so, you know, and maybe talking to you as a non-Indian being that, you have never been to these things you probably say, well she is an Indian, that is why she is putting you on, telling you that

garbage and so I don't know, maybe I am the only one that thinks this way, but as I have said, I have studied both sides and I have been thinking over what I have learned and relating it to what goes on there, and I say to myself it is really.....and maybe to a non-Indian it's superstition, it's something that can't really be, I mean, it is all in my mind.....you know.....?

Q. Oh.....yeah.....well, I think it is mainly because they don't understand and they don't try to understand.

A. Right, right...that is it, and then they think, no, it is not those dumb Indians down on the reservation, they are all superstitious it is not really so, but to me, I really began to believe in it, I don't know,.....maybe someday I will lean all the way on my Indian religion and leave the Christian religion and then I find if I compare the Christian religion with the Indian religion, I find that their teachings and their theories are quite the same and then I tell myself, what, what kind of a god have you got, different names, or teachings well it all goes back to the same thing, if there is a supreme being, you know, which we believe in, it is just that we practice it with different names and different ways, and it all goes back to the supreme being. And I try to put this across to my Indian students and we even have our Indian dances, I taught them our dances, and most of them do dance, and most of them have danced in our dances there, and it is really amazing that some of these children would go out, like say for instance Easter, I had quite a few of my head start children participating in the Easter Dances which some of them never have done you know and I had a good satisfaction that I had taught them something and they have gone up there and they demonstrated to me and their parents

were really amazed that they could learn you know their Indian language and after our Christmas program is when I first introduced the parents to their little phrases in the Indian language and our numbers and they were really amazed that they could learn those things and I told them that I think that they are losing it and although you parents say, keep it, keep our Indian language and our religion, but it is you that are pushing the younger generation away from it, because you haven't practiced it in the homes, and I think that we are the only, Santa Ana that is really turning away from the Indian traditions.

Q. They are not as conservative as the others?

A. They are not as conservative as the others and I know Santo Domingo, and San Felipe are finding it difficult especially for the non-Indian teachers there that don't speak the language, and of course there are the Indian teacher aides which help them alot still I think that we are really having quite a problem with our Indian religion and as a result of their speaking the English language, learning it as a second language that they catch on real fast and that is what I am trying to get across education, the white man's way of teaching it and they really catch on fast, they really do and one of the problems, a matter of fact Dr. Gilman told me that my children were ready to learn how to read and it was already teaching them how to read, you know by recognizing words. First I put a picture, say for instance of a girl on the blackboard and right besides it I would write the word girl, and if they don't remember the word itself, all they have to do is look at the picture, girl, and they have learned how to read sentences like, "there are two girls, or there are four girls" and I have been teaching them the adjective, using the right adjective with the right

plurals and the right adjectives. Sometimes when I'm talking with them they say, "there is horses, I say no, there are horses. And they are beginning to catch on you know. I try to increase their vocabulary they learn such words as Transportation what it means to transport things, what transporting means and to create things.....and some of them caught on, and some of them it's amazing, even though they knew how to speak English, they didn't know the difference between on and over, and below and under and these other things I stress and they caught on very well, I am really proud of these children. And you know like being I am Indian and knowing what I went through and knowing what other Indians students have a hard time, I try to get to these children, but in a simple way, you know, being on their level I would think that kind of problems that they would run into as they continue on to public school and I hope that I put across what I want to put across being that I did go through almost the same problems, that I think that the Indian students are going through, I try to help them.....

- Q. Yeah, like could you go into some detail as to what kind of problems that you did run into when you were in school?
- A. When I was in school, my first big problem was an inferiority complex, I thought that every time a non-Indian looked at me, and found out that I was an Indian, he would be saying, she doesn't know anything, and even if she goes into class and tries, she will never get anywhere that was the problem that I.....I think that that was my biggest problem. And I still have it sometimes, it still comes back to me but I try and overcome this problem. And I think that this is bothering most of our Indian students. And they don't try and try

again, I was that way at one time, I would try once at one subject and if I failed, I would say, oh forget it, I'll never get it again and sometimes I would get picked up by my parents, they would say, oh try it again, and see what happens and I don't think that I would have really tried it again and I tried to stand on my own ~~two~~ feet, and I keep telling my club members, tell it like it is, you know, if you are having a problem in class, well don't be afraid, I mean I've come down, I've told myself, okay, they are just as human as you are, they probably have the same problems that you have, they are just as lonely sometimes, they just, they feel insecure, maybe.....just as much as you did once upon a time, and then I say, well everybody needs somebody, and yet some of us want to go out and say, well to hell with everybody, I don't need you, I don't want you, I can do it myself and sometimes I have got that attitude and when somebody gives me this complex, it just goes all the way back down again, you know and I think that is the biggest problem that I had, but I buckled down and I did what I was suppose to and when I did what I was supposed to, I got good grades, I became much more secure with myself, I had much more self confidence in myself, and only then after I had accomplished all of these A;s which were only letters to make me feel good A's and B's, instead of all those D's and F's, it gave me alot of gum gumption to go out and okay, speak out and do what I felt was right and I didn't stop and acquire this until I was a junior or a sophomore in high school, then I began to stop and think and I think that it was because I got together with the crowd that I hung around with. They had all this self-confidence in themselves and they even made me feel inferior, although they were Indian students they made me feel inferior

because they knew, well they had self confidence in themselves, which I didn't have, and they taught me, they taught me to have self confidence in myself and some of these students who I am talking about now, are doing good, they have gone to school, they are helping others you know, indirectly and directly, helping other Indians get along and get ahead and I think, I am afraid that If I had gotten into the wrong crowd, maybe I wouldn't feel as comfortable as I am right now, it is a good feeling really, sometimes well when I have this self confidence I take it back to my people, I don't know, they tend to make me feel as though, well they tell me, who does she think she is, trying to be like this, trying to be this way, trying to tell us what to do just because she has gone to college, I think it has gone to her head, but I don't see it that way, the first year that I was away at college, I came home for break and my friends shunned me really, and it hurt me, and you know they wouldn't talk to me, I wondered why and I finally cornered one of my friends and asked her why are you ignoring me, why aren't you talking to me you know, we used to be real good friends and the crowds and I don't seem to get together anymore like we used to, and she said well I am going to tell you the truth you have been to college and I said that doesn't make any difference in the world, just because I have been to college doesn't make me any different than you, or better than you. I said, I still have alot to learn, and I said, even when I leave college, I know that I am still going to have alot to learn and it doesn't make me.....it hasn't gotten to my head and I don't want it to get to my head, and I still feel that way you

know, and being a teacher is nothing to me, to me it is just a job you know, it is a job to go and teach children, although I have alot of self confidence in my job you know I feel that I can do it, but I don't go out through in the village and say well hell, I am a teacher you better bow down to me, I don't expect to see the people doing that and I treat them, as I do every other person, I try to get along with them the way I did before I went to college, before I started to teach, and that really makes no difference to me myself you know, it really makes no difference to me at all, and that is what I try to put across to my club members and I think that I am getting something through most of the seniors that are graduating, are expressing the desire to go to school even if it is vocationally, I say, well we are not all cut out to go to college, and we still need our electricians and our janitors and you know, we couldn't get along without these people, so really I believe the main thing is to have something going for you rather than staying home and just bumbing it off and so that is just the way I feel about things, maybe I am wrong in some points and it doesn't make sense to some people but that is the way that I feel about me, my environment and how I would like something to be, and it is really quite ashame how some of the people at home are so hypocritical about stressing education or telling you to go ahead and when you come back and you try to help them and they say, well oh.....we don't know, even when I applied for the teaching position at home, I had quite alot of opposition and opposition came from the very people that told me to go on to school, to continue schooling so that I could come home and

help my people and you know that was really.....well they aren't sincere about what they say, why should they tell others that.....

Q. And then who would they have teach their children??

A. That is true, and they.....

Q. Why not their own people.

A. And then they tell me, well if you are doing so good, well why did you come back here, why don't you go out and get a better position elsewhere? But the thing is, I want to help my people, to teach them, well people say, well if you want to set an example, a good example to your people well you go out and say, well gosh she has a good job out there, why couldn't I go to school and continue my education and maybe I will have that same kind of job that she has got outside of the village but then again they might say the same thing, with me in the village, like I said I want to continue helping and.....

Q. That was one thing that I was wondering about, like how many people that do go out and get an education do come back to the pueblos??

A. The majority of them express the wish to come back, but when they come back, it is hard to help, as I said because of this opposition that they face, it is really hard to hack, you go back and you try to help your people and they say, who does she think she is, she is trying to be all this and that is really hard, you have to ignore some of these comments, and don't let it get to your head so much I tell myself you know what you are doing is right. I mean you think what you are doing is right, and you continue to think that it is right for you and I tell them, I tell my young club members, I said, if you

want to come back to help your people good, but you are going to find it hard, very hard, coming back, because they are so set in their ways that they don't want to change, it takes quite awhile to get those old councilmembers there to say okay, we.....there were many hard times when we were trying to get electric lines coming into the pueblos and we finally convinced them that it really makes life easier and finally they said okay, after about two three years of hitting the council, we finally come through with our gas lines, and our telephone lines are finally coming through, and there were alot of other good things that the council turned down that the younger people thought was going to better our pueblo, our village and the majority that go off to school want to come back and help their people and I think that most of them that come back to the village go to different places in the Bureau of Indian Affairs or different schools, different places to teach Indians and to me, by my people, I don't just involve my own pueblo people, I mean the whole Indian nation, as a whole, I try to look at it that way all the time, when I say my people, I just don't mean my Santa Ana people, I mean everybody, all the Indian people.

- Q. Well you know you were talking about the.....like bringing in electricity and bringing in gas and things, can you.....do you think that you can do that still and you are also trying to have the kids maintain their Indian language, don't you think that that is kind of a conflict there? A conflict in cultures??
- A. Well not in my case, not in our pueblo's case you know, we have two pueblos, we have an old pueblo up on Highway 44 and is located 10 miles west and that is where we hold most of our Indian ceremonies, and I

think that when we go back there I even find myself seeing the change and I think that it is very good that we do migrate back and forth. When I go back to the old pueblo it is just all in me, you just get that Indian feeling back into you and you want to go out and say, wow I am all Indian, I want to dance, and I am not afraid, you know, Indianess, you get that feeling and I think that the majority of the people, do everytime you return to the old village for our ceremonies, we all think, we say, hey we are losing our Indian religion, we are losing our language and I even find myself speaking you know, well of course I speak, try to speak my language most of the time at home, but I find that even the younger set, tend to regress, go back to our old Indian ways and I know that no electric and gas lines, we still chop wood, we still go for water by pail and we still cover ourselves with the Indian blankets when we go up there, it is really amazing how it changes from our ranches down here, most of the time, and I think it is good, but I think if a pueblo or a village is really gung ho about their Indian religion and their Indian culture, I don't think, telephone lines or gas lines will change it, you know, like look at the village of Santo Domingo, they have telephone lines and electric lines that still hasn't changed them, they are still deep in their Indian culture and tradition and I don't think if a person really feels something for his Indian religion, I don't think that all these extra curricular whiteman lines will change a persons attitude. Even I have gone to college, it still hasn't effected my thinking about the Indian religion, it is still very dear to me, I think it will be, regardless of how much education I get, cause like I said, I have seen it for myself

the whitemans' world as opposed to my Indian religion, and it has really made me believe it, I even surprised my philosophy teacher, one time I told him that I was really gung ho about my Indian religion and he looked at me and said you're educated.....and you are not supposed to believe in this superstitious ideas, I said to me they are not superstitious, they are real to me, because I have seen them and heard them, and it is not all black magic.....so that is the way I feel about that.....

END OF THIS PORTION OF TAPE

TAPED SONGS, MUSIC AND DANCES BY DR. LOUIS BALLARD OF THE INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN INDIAN ARTS, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO. The preceding has been Dr. Louis Ballard at the Headstart, ICAP TRAINING SEMINAR, April 10, 1970, UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO.