

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

North American Indian Project

Navajo Indian

O. H. 521

DARYL KING

Interviewed

by

Jay Toth

on

September 6, 1979

DARYL KING

Daryl King is an attractive, young, athletic girl. She is bilingual, and was born in Shiprock, New Mexico on February 1, 1960, to Jim B. and Margaret King. Her father was a former medicine man turned Christian. Her mother is an excellent rug weaver.

She enjoys recalling events concerning her grandfather, and talks about the old Navajo myths. It's her nature to be athletic, and she excels in basketball and volleyball. She began playing basketball in the fourth grade. By the time she entered high school (Shiprock Chieftans) she was a serious contender. During Daryl's junior year, not much emphasis was placed on girls basketball, but she continued playing on her own.

Besides playing high school basketball, she played on independent basketball teams. After regular season play, to help improve her skill, she played with older players. Her playing helped to lead her team to the Indian Nationals in Oklahoma last spring.

As with most American Indians, she is close to her family and respects the old ways. Only different than a generation before, she wants a small family, an education, and to see the world. This change is in support of Peter MacDonald's (Tribal Chairman) recent interview with the Navajo Times.

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INTERVIEWEE: DARYL KING

INTERVIEWER: Jay Toth

SUBJECT: Basketball career, family, events
A typical day in her life

DATE: September 6, 1979

T: This is an interview with Daryl King for the Youngstown State University History Program on the North American Indian, by Jay Toth, in Arizona, on September 6, 1979, at 4:00 p.m.

The first thing I want to ask you is where you were born?

K: I was born in Shiprock, New Mexico.

T: What about your grandparents? Can you recall your grandparents?

K: Yes, my grandfather was born a few miles down from Shiprock and my grandmother also. They raised their kids there too.

T: You were saying many generations back that your family has been there at that particular spot.

K: Yes.

T: And you are planning on going back there?

K: One day just to live right where they used to.

T: You said you were raised there too?

K: No, my mother was.

T: Does your mother speak of it? Does she have any stories about it?

K: Mostly by my grandfather and grandmother and people who used to live around there.

T: Can you recall any of them?

K: Well, there are some funny ones. My grandfather was the only one around the area. He was in close to a new community. He was the first sheriff, and he drove the first car and had the first decent home with the first sewing machine. People around just looked up to him. Ladies from all around four corners over there used to bring their long dresses around so they could go and use his sewing machine. He was the only one with that machine.

T: It sounds pretty quaint. Any other ones?

K: Well, mother used to talk about him being a tough one as a sheriff. He wore his badge proudly. Those people were pretty afraid of him. They would do whatever he said. He kind of tamed up that area. He was strict with the law.

T: You remember him then?

K: Yes.

T: What is your recollection of him?

K: When he was grown during his elder age, I knew him then. He was alright. He just chased his kids around. We would bug him, and he would chase us all. He used to always talk about his younger years. We weren't supposed to act like that; we were supposed to respect elders, but we continued to follow him. I guess he enjoyed it in a way.

T: What about your parents? Tell me about them. They seem pretty nice.

K: Yes, they are. They taught us the good side of life and values and stuff.

T: Such as what?

K: Like having to get an education and not to just run into things, but to think about them seriously. Whenever we are troubled about something like that, he brings us down and talks to us. He is really understanding and so is my mother. She helps us a lot. We get on our own.

T: Do you get along with your brothers and sisters?

K: Yes.

T: Where did he work before when you mentioned?

K: He was a maintenance worker at the local hospital. He worked there for some time. Going deeper back, he worked in the mines in Colorado and all those areas. Sometimes during the summertime we would go back to where he used to live, and he would tell us about his childhood days because he started working when he was very young.

T: What were some of the stories that he told you?

K: There is one funny one. It is about a colored guy. The Indians weren't used to seeing colored people come around. They came to a mining camp. My father was working there. These young Navajos started pestering him about his color. The young man didn't like it. My father was saying that this one guy said, "Why don't you just wash off that color?" They felt that the dark color was just there, and that you could wash it off. There were stories like that that he used to tell us. Later on I guess he started realizing the truth behind it.

T: Where was your mother originally from?

K: My mother?

T: Yes.

K: She is from the same area.

T: How do you like school?

K: I like it. I like studying, knowing, learning things. I'm curious about the world.

T: You say that you like to travel.

K: Yes, I would like to.

T: You were telling me about something last night that people were scared. Do you still think that people are?

K: It is part of tradition. It is a belief. They have so many things. I never believe. Some of my own friends carry on. There are others like when you point to a rainbow, they say that your fingers come off. You shouldn't do that. You shouldn't be in the way of one of those whirlwinds. You should get out of its way because it is believed to be a dead spirit of some sort bringing evil around.

T: Any other ones? You said there were a bunch of them.

K: Yes.

T: I don't know any of them.

K: Also at night dogs come around and if just one of the dogs stays there and if its eyes shine out on you in a way that there is like a person underneath that skin, it is not a real animal. It is somebody using the skin to go around and scare people with it. That is what they say.

T: Have you ever been in one of those traditional hogans?

K: Yes, I slept in one sheep herding. I went out with my cousin this one time. We lost half of the sheep.

T: Did you get in trouble?

K: Took a spanking the next day.

T: What was it like sleeping in the hogan?

K: It is dark and cozy with a fire just right there. It smells nice too.

T: Do you like to camp out and stuff?

K: Yes, I love it. I just love being close to nature.

T: Where are some of the places you go?

K: Mostly mountains or where the cows are. I would shoot around with a rifle there and climb the rocks and do stuff like that.

T: But you said that you don't hunt?

K: I never tried it. The boys always go out.

T: What do you look for in the future? What do you want to do in the future?

K: There are so many things and dreams. One thing is that I want to go to a nice school, college, and learn something that is good for my own people because I know the situation of my hometown. Maybe somehow I can learn something and come back and help them.

T: What do you mean by the situation in your hometown?

K: Now it seems we are being neglected because most of the people talk radical. I guess they are just getting tired of us. We hold so many things. Our community is large, and we can build up and make it work and everything like that. It is the administration though that is coming

down on us. So I would like to help them out in that way.

T: What are some things that you say are considered radical?

K: The people talk like that. When the chairman comes around, they come out with answers like, "How come you are not doing anything for this community? How come all these uranium mining companies are all moving in here? You are not respecting our traditional stuff." We need those companies, and just a lot of people are moving.

T: How do you feel about tradition and the companies moving in and just running things?

K: You can always find tradition out here, places right here. You can't stay behind when civilization sets in. You can't just stay behind with the people coming in and everything like business. I value tradition in a way.

T: So you get married and you have kids. How are you going to teach them the Navajo traditions?

K: No, I only know so much about tradition myself. They are going to have to learn whatever is dominating.

T: You are a pretty good basketball player. Isn't that right?

K: I have heard that here and there.

T: Tell me some of your exciting moments.

K: I had a chance to play in front of Peter MacDonald once.

T: He is a tribal chairman?

K: Yes. Just a little of this and that, what a girl can do.

T: I was impressed.

K: I'm not supposed to be playing when I'm on season with the school team; I'm not supposed to be playing with another team. I wasn't allowed. Other moments we played tough teams with other schools. We played other schools like Farmington. They have got girls over six feet tall playing. We showed them and beat them. We came close to the championship, even playing out in Oklahoma. I hope maybe to try a little harder this year.

T: How tall are you?

K: Five feet seven and a half. It is good for a guard.

T: Are you going to continue with sports once you go to college?

K: Yes, I like sports intramural or something. I like playing a lot.

T: What is it like in your home, everyday life from the time you get up until the time you go to bed?

K: Sometimes boring. I go to sleep early, go to school, get ready for school, get my homework together, eat and attend school all day.

T: What about on a Saturday?

K: Saturdays I sleep late unless we have to go somewhere. At home I watch Tarzan and cartoons until the afternoon. Then I start playing outside if I can and help my mother do this and that. Sundays I get up early for church. Afterward my whole family comes home sometimes to eat and talk and go about stuff that we do in that time, go to sleep.

T: Where is your mother working right now?

K: She is working at that new tractor house.

T: What is her job?

K: She participates in community projects. She does weaving too. The other workers, if special persons come in, they prepare food and help out with that.

T: Would you consider your mother to be a pretty good weaver?

K: Yes, when she gets her head going and really gets down and weaves; she does create nice rugs.

T: How long does it take her to make a rug?

K: It depends. If she works on it every day and every night, it takes about--it depends on the size also. Sometimes she holds up for so long because she is busy with other things. She finishes. Usually with my brother and my sister's house, the rugs she makes they say, "We will remember you by it."

T: Does she sell any of them?

K: Yes, now and then but not as much.

T: What does she get for them, a pretty good price?

K: Nowadays you can't get so good a price for it.

T: What was the price? Do you remember what she got for one of them?

K: Well, one time I think it was a small rug, three by five or something; my sister knew some people that needed a rug. She sold it to them for about \$200 and some.

T: She is working on one right now, isn't she?

K: Yes, a large one.

T: She taught you how to do it?

K: She wants to, but I'm busy with working.

T: Do you think you are going to learn it?

K: I don't know.

T: Would you want to do that?

K: No.

T: Do you think that is sort of boring?

K: Yes, sitting there with your back aching and going over the same string and hammering it down. It gets boring.

T: How about your sisters? Do they know how?

K: No, they tried it. When one of my older sisters comes back, she wants to learn how. She says, "Learn now or you won't know it then."

T: What are some of your favorite foods?

K: I like my own fried bread.

T: Do you make your own?

K: No, just with a rolling pin. I like chicken. I can't really handle beef stew.

T: Let's see if I can remember. You said that you liked mutton stew.

K: Yes, if it is not vegetable. I also like my own type of bread. Sometimes I make it real fast. My mom and some of my sisters do that, just mix all the dough and come up with something.

T: And it comes out pretty good?

T: You have nine kids in your family?

K: Yes.

T: You like to ride the motorcycle, is that right?

K: I love being on it.

T: It is like a horse?

K: Yes.

T: Are you going to be riding it again after you hurt your ankle?

K: Yes.

T: Risk it again.

K: So, I have my fun.

T: What did you think about me coming here? You didn't expect me to make it?

K: No, you're okay.

T: I'm okay?

K: I guess I never really see people, outside of friends. My one friend was surprised because they know me as just alone and sticking to my own things and hanging loose with the little boys and stuff like that. I make fun of my own sisters because they have their boyfriends, and stuff like romance; I make fun of those. They think the same way. I tell them it is nothing.

T: They try to make something out of it?

K: Yes, I think it is nice to have somebody from a different area to know them and just be friends.

T: I told you a couple of years ago I would make it. I usually try to keep my word. I wasn't sure what your parents would say about me staying here.

K: I guess they took you in.

T: Your dad really seriously seems very nice.

K: I think he is really smart in a way. When my older brothers get their problems, either with marriage or personal stuff, they go to him. He advises them. He knows about the world and he really understands about

K: Yes.

T: So you like to cook?

K: Yes, I do. I just don't let anybody know. I want to learn about cooking.

T: Why? Because they will make you cook?

K: I don't know. I could serve good foods and things.

T: As you were talking about the future so you had--you would get to do the things you wanted to do. What would they be? Do you want to get married? Do you want to just go to school?

K: Well, I never thought about marriage. Maybe just go to school.

T: And be a bachelorette.

K: I thought about writing for a small newspaper company. Journalism interests me. I'm really good at that.

T: Like writing those compositions for English.

K: I get tired of that. I also want to see foreign countries. That is what I really want to do.

T: How come you want to see those places?

K: There are good books on that. I know it is not all that good and fantasy stuff, but I just want to see how it is over there.

T: So you don't want to get married until you are an old lady?

K: Well, now and then I think about marriage, but I don't think I can handle it; but then I want to. I used to think that if I would get married, it would get me a nice home out there way out there out of the cities or out of the towns, right there and have just about one little boy or something, a little cowboy getting horses or something.

T: You don't want a big family?

K: No.

T: Most of the Navajo families have big families such as yours.

K: Yes.

how everything is being run. He knows.

T: How about your mother? She doesn't speak English, right?

K: Just a little. She talks too much. She makes sense, but you know when people are getting old, they talk a lot. They know it is for the good, this and that, until they get tired of it. Tell you to be quiet. They said that so many times because they care so much about you. She really is a lot like that.

T: It is really nice out here, isn't it?

K: It is quiet.

T: What do you think of me? You were talking about some of the outsiders.

K: You are not all that different. You are pretty nice too. You stick to your word. You are working on your future right at the moment?

T: Yes.

K: You know your path.

T: You say there are not a lot of different ways; there are some differences. I'm just curious.

K: I always thought that people from the outside that their feelings and the way they spoke was all different. Some are not. Just look over like us Indians in a way. I don't think they appear too nice. I know that there are a lot of people like as I mentioned. It is just most of what I think is what I get from reading.

T: I don't have much more to add. How about you?

You said you cut your hair?

K: It gets in the way with sports. I guess I regret cutting it now.

T: Your brother is an artist. He is pretty good, right?

K: Yes.

T: What does he want to do? Just continue being an artist?

K: I think so, yes. He has gotten down to teaching it to others.

T: At the local school or college?

K: Yes, in his classes.

T: Does someone teach him?

K: I think his skill is natural. He used to draw a lot in school. I think he started taking more classes about it. He went to a commercial art school. Then he just started painting.

T: Right now he is just painting?

K: Yes.

T: Your sister that is home is the youngest? Seventeen?

K: Yes.

T: And all the other ones are married?

K: Yes. I hope she gets married soon too so that I can take over her bedroom. Then I will be the only child.

T: Okay, what do you say if we split here?

K: Okay.

T: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW