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2000.46.8-1

Cecile Hansen

Interviewed by: Sherry Boswell

January 9, 2001

1st Oral Interview

Seattle, Washington

Sherry: This is an interview with Mrs. Cecile Hansen on January 9th, 2001.

Let's start a little bit with your own background tell me about yourself and where you born and a little bit about your family, if you would.

Cecile Hansen: Okay, I was born in Tulalip, Washington, many years ago. And, evidently my folks lived there and my mother had me and my sister at Tulalip Hospital there, was on the Reservation. And come to find out many cousins were born there because my dad, my dad's brother lived there and I noticed that some, several of my cousins were born at the Tulalip Hospital. And grew up not on Tulalip Reservation, we moved down to the Coast. And we lived in Tahola(?) for a while, where my brother was born. And stayed there for a little while. And my dad was a logger and he fished. So, from there we sort of moved every two years, from mostly on Gray's Harbor, little towns, Aberdeen, Grayland, Tokeland. And then my grandmother had died in 1947 or '48, and the house was empty so it was just decided by, I guess, my dad's siblings that we would take the house. So, we moved to South Bend,

which at that time was probably about ten years old. And we lived there for two years and then my dad decided we would move to Seattle. So, we moved to Seattle, in probably '49, 1950. And my mother, who got tired of moving every two years, decided, "We're gonna buy a house." So, they bought a house over here in Burien, which was South Seattle. And for the next six years I lived in the south, until I graduated and got married and moved away.

Sherry: Now, tell me a little bit, let's start with your dad's family. You mentioned that you had cousins and things in Tulalip. Was his family Tulalip? Tell me a little bit about his family.

Cecile Hansen: No.

Sherry: What was his name?

Cecile Hansen: My dad? His name was Charles Oliver. I just think he moved there, there was a place available, and you have to remember, this, I guess was during the Depression. It was really hard time,s as I understand it. And, why my uncle and my dad ended up with their wives in Tulalip. Tulalip is a Reservation is for all Native Americans. And so, evidently that's where they were staying. I don't know who they were staying with. And then the person I would really like to ask why everybody was there having babies, except there was the Indian hospital, was an aunt that just passed away recently. And would have been able to tell those stories. Well, maybe she told it to my cousins and sometime soon I'll ask

her why her folks, *her* folks ended up there and I think that that's where she was born, too.

Sherry: Was on Tulalip. Now, were the Olivers, was he born on Tulalip, too?

Cecile Hansen: No, my dad was part Chinook and part Cowlips(?). And he was born down in South Bend, or around Basin, I'm not quite sure. But my dad's descendancy was from the Coast. Although, they had a uncle that was Superintendent of Indian Schools there at Tulalip. And he was a educator. And he lived there in Tulalip and he, then he moved to, he married a lady from Lummi, so then he ended up living in Lummi. But at one time he was Superintendent of Indian Schools for Washington, Oregon and Idaho. A very high level educator. And their name was Johnson, because my grandmother's name was Johnson.

Sherry: And your dad got involved in fishing particularly? Was that a Tulalip or was that a family tradition as well?

Cecile Hansen: Well, I don't know. Both my mom and dad went to Indian boarding schools which is down in Chimalo(?). I don't think they knew each other at that time. I think how my folks met is through my great uncle who is Victor Johnson, from Lummi. And at that time, I think my mother was hired as a nanny for this uncle. And I think that's how they met, in Lummi.

Sherry: Now, tell me a little bit about your mom and her family.

Cecile Hansen: Well, my mother was born a Suquamish. And so she's all kind of this descendants, with Suquamish and Duwamish and Stillquamish and Snohomish and German and quite a variety of Indian degree from different tribes. Anyway, she was born over there and my grandmother, her mother, died when she was four during the flu epidemic in the '20's. She was in her early forties. And my grandmother is buried over there next to the Chief Sealth. So, when I go over there, it's like home because that's where my grandparents lived and that's where my mother lived. From there, my mother, for the rest of her life was raised in Indian boarding schools. Until probably she met my dad. And moved to probably, to start working for this uncle Victor in Lummi.

Sherry: And so she was there, in the schools the whole time. What did she tell you about that experience?

Cecile Hansen: Not much. Although, I think that whatever she learned in those schools, she was a very, she came away as a, she was very smart woman. You always think, "Oh, your mother," right? [laughs] But she was a very smart woman, because I got some of her papers after she passed away and she's got "A, A, A," you know, she excelled. She was self taught. I don't know if she learned how to knit and crochet but she was really crafty. She was a wonderful cook. I don't know if this was part of her upbringing or what she was taught in school, but she was also very tough disciplined. Very structured. Her motto was, "Right's right and wrong's wrong." And one thing I think I came away from her, not so much as my dad, my dad was sort of the hollower, you know. I don't know if it was to

back my mother, and it was my mother always, well, what I came away from was that ,she didn't have to really have explain to me that things were, if I did something wrong. I had to figure that out. But she let me know if I was wrong. You know, I was in big trouble. But I was responsible for whatever wrongdoing I did. [laughs] So, and I tried to instill that, and the respect of your elders. I find it very hard to see young kids bad mouthing their parents. The respect of, I mean there's a lot of things that I disagree with my mother, but I would be the last one to say, you know, to disagree with her, you know? Because she was the mom. Or even to disrespect my dad, going, well, there was five of us. So, there was a whole bunch of us. But I think that I came away with respect for your elders and respect that, you know, if you do wrong, you're accountable for it. And I tried to instill that in my kids. 'Cause I can hear them talking to their kids now, their respect. And I see that kids today have kind of lost that.

Sherry:

I think that's really true. I think it's sad. And I think that's probably why our society is in the position it is.

Cecile Hansen: And I also think, although, we went to church quite a bit. My brother said we was brainwashed. We went to a lot of church when we were in junior high and high school, because I guess, we were so far away from, my mother was raised in the church as a young kid, and then we, maybe we didn't have a car, we couldn't get to church. And then once we got a car, this was, this was, there was no, you couldn't go to church, you *had* to be in church.

Sherry: What denomination, what church?

Cecile Hansen: Catholic. So, it was really interesting. My brother always said to me, he said, "I think we were brainwashed." But then he said, and he believed in God too, so, he said, you know, and he was a fisherman all his life since he was fourteen. And he said, "I can talk to God on my boat." I think that's okay. I think we all *do*, don't we? I think you this morning. [laughs] And then try to instill your kids, that, you know, I think that we all, if we read the Bible once in a while, the answers are all there. I really believe that. As I get *older*, I think that more, you know.

Sherry: I think faith, whatever the source of it is, I think I'm less of a Bible reader but more a believer that you believe in something and you care enough, then you'll be fine. Your mom, tell me a little bit more, her grandmother, her mother died and her grandmother, but her grandmother lived an incredibly long life. Could you talk a little bit about her? Tell me a little bit about Jane Garrison.

Cecile Hansen: I don't know too much about her, it's so exciting because I've, through the years, as I got involved in the tribe, going back and look at, trying to not invent my past, but to find where I came back and who are my ancestors are and where does this Duwamish come from. And I'm just sorry that I didn't interview these great aunts and uncles because my mother came from a family of thirteen children. So there was a wealth of aunts, who I visit quite a lot or they came

and visit me when I got married and so. And I had one particular aunt was very close. She never had any children, so all the nephews were her children, and nieces. And she kind of favored my mother, 'cause she was much older than my mother. My mother was four when their mother died. So my aunt must have been eleven or twelve. And they had two older sisters that were asked to come home because they were away in boarding school in Tacoma. And I just came across a letter where it said, could, they'd asked permission for, my grandfather had asked permission for his two older daughters to come home and take care of the kids. And then they gave him a couple of dollars or a dollar to travel, 'cause he didn't have no money. These are two *older* aunts.

Sherry: Now, your mom's family, what was their name?

Cecile Hansen: Henrys.

Sherry: And then she, her sisters then came home to help take care. Had her, I guess her, had her grandmother died by that time? She died in '30, '31, I think by those articles that you found.

Cecile Hansen: Yeah, much later than her daughter. I don't think she, my gosh, she must, was quite old. I understand there was another set of grandparents that lived down the cove, 'cause my grandparents, Roy Henry and Ann, was their names, lived in Miller's Bay which is, you know, Suquamish

is right here and then up the bay, and then they had a house there. And I understand my youngest aunt, who was the baby, went to live with the grandparents down the cove and then there was these aunts and my uncle, not my, my uncle, they tried to stay there by themselves. And they tried to catch them, to take them, so they could be in better living conditions. And these kids, it'd be my mother and her sisters, they, if they could hear a boat coming they'd go run and hide in the woods, 'cause they didn't want to leave. These guys were living up there by themselves, finally my Uncle Roy who was much older, he probably was fourteen, fifteen, and he probably come and told my aunt, he said, "You know, it's getting wintertime." And my grandfather was away, these guys were surviving by themselves up here in this house. And my Uncle said to them, 'course he didn't stay there, he was down at the grandparent's place 'cause, you know, he's smart. [laughs] Then don't blame him either. But he wasn't going to take responsibility of all his siblings. But anyway, he probably came down there and he said, "You know, it's getting wintertime and I think it's just better that you guys go with the BIA people." And this was where these were all. And they were taken away. Came down to Suquamish and then one of their friends of the family got them some clothes. They didn't have no shoes and they didn't have any clothes. And got them all dressed up to bring them across on the ferry, or the launch, that used to go to Seattle. And when they got over there my aunt, my Aunt lone was there to meet them. And she said ,when she seen all her siblings, she started to cry, 'cause they looked

so pitiful. And my aunt said, "We thought we looked great."
[laughs] But can you imagine in the '20's thinking you
looked so great, you got shoes and just think, you know,
you got another set of clothes.

Sherry: So now, they had lived, before their mother had died, had
they lived in Suquamish or had they--

Cecile Hansen: Yeah, they lived in Suquamish as far as I know.

Sherry: And then their grandmother, who was down more by
Bremerton area, right, Traceyton. So that was really the,
were there any other family members that were still left by
that time?

Cecile Hansen: There was some Garrisons that lived, oh, I want to say
around the Shelton area. I recall the stories, 'cause one of
my uncles, Uncle Ben, he was Ben Garrison. He had
married a lady from Squaxon Island, so he lived there. And
there was another uncle that lived somewhere in the area,
too. So I guess they sort of went by launch or canoe and
sort of visited each other, yeah.

Sherry: Now, tell me a little bit about the Duwamish heritage. You
mentioned it a little while ago. When did you first become
aware of, you know, that Duwamish heritage and why was it
important to you?

Cecile Hansen: I don't think it was so much important. I was taking Washington history in eighth grade and we start studying Native American history. Not so much Washington history, we were studying the Plains. And so my mother 'came aware, you know, that we were doing that and she said, "Well, do you know that you are the great, great, great" and then she started, "niece of Chief Seattle? That we're related?" So that, then I just sort of in passing told my teacher. And, my gosh, the next thing I knew, they had me out the University of Washington, took my picture in front of this teepee at the Burke Museum. And got my picture in the paper. It was like a big event. And I was sort of, not so much proud of that event, I was sort of embarrassed. Because in the '50's, the '40's it wasn't fashionable to be Indian, you know? A lot of discrimination. So, I was sort of, to be put in the forefront there like this, I was sort of, I was sort of embarrassed. Not, but I was always proud of who I was, but I certainly didn't want anybody to know that I was Native. I probably looked like Native, right. And then, then that's when I found out I was Duwamish. But I remember going to meetings with my mother over in Renton. I didn't know what that was all about. 'Cause, you know, we all thought that we were going to get millions and millions of dollars. This big thing when they sued the government for the lands lost for the Duwamish people? And we waited over sixty years for them to settle that litigation and it just went on and on and on. And nothing came of it. And then they, the deal was set up by the Tribal Council where they would receive so much money and it would not be a per capita share. Although the

way they did it, the attorneys got quite a chunk of it and each member who could prove that they were Duwamish got \$64 from the City of Seattle. Which is a sad, sad, story.
[laughs]

Sherry: It is a sad story. So, but your mom was involved in the early, some of the Claims Commission hearings?

Cecile Hansen: Oh, just to make sure that she got the annual meetings. I think that's what it was. So, it had to be a yearly thing that we would go to. And I just remember a lot of men talking and we all running around playing outside and there was food. It was quite an event.

Sherry: Were there, did your mom, aside from the time when you talked about, when she told you about the relationship with Chief Seattle, were there stories about the Duwamish connections or other Suquamish or any of the other different heritage that you had? Did they pass on stories about ancestors? Just generally about family and what they've done?

Cecile Hansen: Just generally, I never, we never got a daily, weekly, history class about our people. I think it's because we only had one car and my folks they always worked all the time. And I can recall that we never really went to visit anybody. If anybody, usually people came to visit *us*. But it'd be Native American, it'd be relatives. And then my mother would always, I always recall she always used to cook a big dinner on Sunday, you

know, and stores were always closed, so, the event was work all week and then prepare for the big Sunday dinner. And we never knew who was going to show up. Usually it was just the family. It was, that was an event in itself, to have a really lovely dinner and mom always made everything from scratch. So, it was really nice.

Sherry: People of the family did really keep in touch then--

Cecile Hansen: By letters and then we finally got a phone so, I guess there must have been some interaction there. And really, to go travel to see my people, usually if there was something like a funeral or wedding, which is very rare, you know, if you've only got one car. I remember going to one of my cousin's wedding in Tulalip, she was like in the '50's, in the '50's, and then my grandfather passed away, which my mother's dad. And we all, I remember that event because they had his coffin at his house and there was a wake going on. But actually, we didn't really go too many places. Just, you know, go to school, go to church. But always knowing that we had all these relatives all over the place. Really, not really got to know all of my people until probably the last twenty-five years, you know, that I can move around and visit all these relatives. And really get reacquainted. And then in the meanwhile, we've got aunts passing away you know, that my youngest aunt who was raised by these grandparents over in Miller's Bay, spoke Native, 'cause she was a baby at the time, so they probably spoke. And she passed away, way before my mother. It seemed to me, in

that period of time in the '80's, my mother's sisters were just passing away. Yeah.

Sherry: You mentioned earlier that as a child it wasn't necessarily fashionable to be Indian or to say that you were Indian. Do you remember the first time that you really realized that you were Indian and that that, to others, was maybe different?

Cecile Hansen: Well, I'll tell you story about when I was in the first grade at Pacific Beach. We were living there next door to my aunt and uncle. And there were some other, there was another Indian family, lived across the street. But everybody else seemed to be white. Well, I started the first grade and for whatever reason, this teacher did not care for me. And she just, was into me. And I was a very shy person. And it got to the point where I started coming home crying. And I didn't quite understand why she was making, embarrassing me in class. You just want to shrink to the floor and hide. Well, my mother got upset. I don't know, and then the other siblings, my other cousins, who lived, they went to that school, too. I don't know why, if they were getting any of this discrimination. But my mother, it must have got to her and so we went back to the school that one particular day. And my mother told her, you know, that, you know, if she was going to be acting this way towards me that she was going to pull me out of school. That I didn't have to. And then, in first grade to suffer that. And I just think that this lady, she didn't like Indian kids. 'Cause I don't remember her doing it to anybody else. That was my first experience with

discrimination. Not because, I don't know why me. What is it that must have turned her off to make me feel so humiliated. And I just think it is because I was Native.

Sherry: Oh, that's so sad.

Cecile Hansen: Yeah. It is a sad experience. I was only six years old. And I just learned, and then I went to a school in Aberdeen, didn't experience any of that, at that time. But it just wasn't, you know, it was not fashionable being Native American. But I was never ashamed of that. I mean, I have to tell you that. I remember, my girlfriend that I have told you about, she said, she knows that I'm involved in what I'm doing, which I've been doing the last twenty-five years. And she said, " Well, you never used to do that you was in high school," 'cause I was very shy in high school, too. And I said, "Well, it wasn't fashionable to be Indian." I mean, my brother and my sister and I and a cousin were the only probably Native American people going to school here in Burien.

Sherry: Oh, really?

Cecile Hansen: Yeah. And then my sister, who was very fair, she will never admit this, I swear, but she wouldn't even talk to my brother and I, 'cause we were a little more darker than she was. She acted like she wasn't Native. You know, that must have traumatized her, too. I try to be understanding, why, you know, but she just didn't want to have anything to do with my brother and I. [laughs]

Sherry: But then you think about what the society must have been like, and I don't know, maybe some people would argue are still like, that you would feel the need to do that. Because the consequences of saying you *were* Indian, at least to her, she thought would be also traumatizing.

Cecile Hansen: Well, when we lived in South Bend, was living in my Grandma's house, my dad's sister lived there and she was married to a Norwegian and they had one son. He was very fair. So we, because, I don't know, we got into the free lunch deal. And so my cousin said, "Well, how come" and he was talking about my brother, 'cause my brother was going to school. He said that he "wanted a free lunch, too," he said, "because I'm Indian, too." Maybe it was because Native Americans got free lunches or something. But both my folks, it wasn't, we were destitute because both my folks worked at that time and I'm talking '48, '49. And my little cousin he was just offended because, he said, "Manny's getting free lunch, why can't I?" And he said, "Well, he was Native, too." But he didn't look it. So, I don't know if he ever got free lunch, but you know, that was another instance where, that was a kind of a funny story, you know, demanding, "I *am* Indian," I mean saying, even though his father was full-blooded Norwegian, but he didn't *look* Native, but he *was*.

Sherry: Did your parents ever share with you that they had any of the same experiences in, say, the job world in terms of being Indian, too. Was that an issue at all?

Cecile Hansen: No, not at all. No not at all. I think that my mother who started out at working, the first time she started to work was probably the middle '40's. And she began with a job in a cannery down there, shaking crabs. That was her job, and she thought, "Well." And she got to be really, a excellent crab shaker. And so she did that and we even moved to Seattle here, she worked down the water front. And then she decided, you know, she'd been doing it over ten years and her hands were really getting all, you know, bad. And then she decided that she would try something else. And in actuality what happened, she got married again and she went to California and then decided, before she went to California, she was going to go back to school. So, here she was, she was in her fifties, and went back to school here in Seattle and got her certificate for, she was sort of leaning towards the medical field. Went down and graduated from college in California and was gonna go for her Master's Degree. She wanted to become a psychiatrist. [laughs] She was going to San Francisco State or something. But she became a nurse. And then she was like, she had a lot of, then she got these jobs, these great jobs where she had staff under her and sort of ran the whole thing.

Sherry: But she started out, now tell, because I don't really know, what is shaking crabs?

Cecile Hansen: Well, you know, when you buy a crab? You have to clean these things. Well, there's this wonderful technique of shaking crabs. When I got out of high school, I got a job down on the water front canning crabs. And it was such disgusting, dirty job. And I worked about two weeks. Told my mother, "Help me, I'll take you to lunch. I cannot do this kind of work." [laughs] No, actually what you do is you get a crab, the technique, you have these steel hammers and you crack. First you take the four legs off, on one side, And then you crack it with the steel hammer or whatever it is. And then you tap it and the crab, and, you know, you just keep doing that. And there's quite a technique to do this. Well, she got to be quite expert at this. And made hellacious good money in the '50's. Yeah. And the '40's. If you can shake two or three hundred pounds a day, you must be good.

Sherry: Oh, absolutely!

Cecile Hansen: Yeah, we're talking. My sister, I guess, she must have taught my sister, my sister can do really fast. I just don't get into it. I love crab. I do a pretty good job of cleaning them.

[End Tape One, Side One]

Sherry: So now, most of your childhood then was spent going from place to place. Was it hard for you to keep, you know, sort

of picking up and changing schools? Is that, in part why you think you were shy?

Cecile Hansen: Probably. It seemed like a normal thing, although, I think, you have to understand, I guess my dad would get kind of antsy. And maybe the job he had, you know, maybe he got laid off, or whatever. So, we just kind of moved and he always worked in saw mills or he went fishing. And he loved going fishing. He was always periodically taking off and going up to Alaska to fish.

Sherry: So, the fishing tradition was fairly strong in your family. Because, I know you said your brother became a fisherman. Tell me a little bit about him.

Cecile Hansen: Oh, he must have been about thirteen, fourteen years old and one of the times we traveled up to Tulalip. And he got a job helping my brother's, he got a job helping my mother's brother who was beach seining in Tulalip. And from there on, from fourteen, that's what he did. He finished high school here and went on to Alaska. And when he graduated, in fact, he left the next day for Alaska, he had a job to go fishing in Alaska. Graduated from high school and took off, went to Alaska. It was his love until he drowned in Tulalip Bay.

Sherry: Oh no. While he was fishing?

Cecile Hansen: While he was fishing. What a better way to go.

Sherry: I was going to say, probably that was--

Cecile Hansen: Well, I always worried about him because he had his, from time to time, he'd have his own boat. And skiff too, even a purse seiner. And he went to Alaska quite a lot of times. And I always was concerned about, you know, the seas up there. But he loved it. The rougher the better, was great. He would tell me these stories, I don't know if they were true, about fifty foot waves and the boat coming down and he just, you know, if any thought that he was going to go down with a boat, it would be Alaska. And then to go, to drown in Tulalip Bay in a calm beautiful day, but doing what he loved to do.

Sherry: So, later on, once he came back from Alaska, did he base out of Tulalip? Is that where he liked to fish?

Cecile Hansen: No, no. He came back and then let's see, that was, I'm trying to see when he graduated.

Sherry: What was his name, by the way?

Cecile Hansen: Manny. His name was Charles Oliver. But his nickname, that was known by everybody, was Manny Oliver, yeah. He came back and I don't know if he was going to school or what he was doing. But he met my sister-in-law and was working probably in the woods. He start doing that for a while. And then he met my sister-in-law, who is from Auburn

and he married her. And then he bought a home down there and that's where he lived until probably in, I would say, for at least ten years. And then he just got really involved in this fishing, fishing, and then the river and going to Alaska and going to San Juans and going down to San Francisco doing the herring. And that was the reason that *they* didn't survive is because he was always gone all time. And she kind of wanted him to stay home. Yeah.

Sherry: That fishing life you kind of have follow the seasons of the fish.

Cecile Hansen: I think he forgot. He got too caught up with his fishing and forgot that, even though he was a good provider, that that was sort of priority. And I think men sometimes take that, their work is more important over the family, unfortunately. I mean, he paid for it later by not being with his wife. And they loved each other till the day he died, I mean she still loves him *today*. But, they lost it.

Sherry: And so what happened? He was fishing in Tulalip and--

Cecile Hansen: I think he had a heart attack. I could hear him now saying, you know, "Fell overboard and was drowned on top of it."
And he was saying, "And I'm drowning too?" 'Cause he was a hilarious story teller. His son called me not too long ago and said, and wondered, if whatever happened to him and is he okay? And I said, it was quite a long conversation, and his name is Manny Oliver. He was named after his dad.

That is his legal name. And so, we talked for about an hour and a half and it was really great because I was really close to my brother. And so, I like being close to his children, although we don't see each other that much. But I was really touched that he would call. And he, one of the things he said to me, he said, "I wonder if everything was okay, when, you know, when he fell over and everything and is he okay?" And I said, "Well, you have to believe that the spirit moves on. And that your dad is just, he's okay." And his dog was with him and his dog died and so the children had the dog cremated and his dog was with him. [laughs] And so it's good, I said, "You just have to believe your dad's just fine."

Sherry: Well, as you say, dying doing what he loved to do.

Cecile Hansen: He would never have been hit by a bus or, I think that sometimes he neglected his health too, you know, he didn't take care of himself and that's unfortunate, too.

Sherry: Now, tell me about your path. You went to different schools, but you ended up coming back here to coming here to Burien and finishing school here, right? Tell me a little bit about that.

Cecile Hansen: No, I finished school here and then I wanted to go onto to college, but I met this guy and then I got married! [laughs] And he was from the Coast, he winded up down at the

Coast. And I spent probably the next seven years having children. And then coming back and forth.

Sherry: Now, did he have any Indian heritage or no?

Cecile Hansen: No, he was full blooded from the Coast. He was from Qweets(?), it's a little village there on the Coast. I'd never lived on a Reservation, so my experience living on a Reservation was shocking. [laughs]

Sherry: Really? Why? Tell me.

Cecile Hansen: Well, because living on a Reservation is a different kind of living, it really is. I mean, there was no running water. I mean, I came from running water inside plumbing, everything. And you hauled your water and I mean, you know, no lights. Maybe you've heard of radio? And very isolated. It was, and you didn't know anybody. And then people didn't like me 'cause they thought I was a White woman. So, I got discriminated by other Native people because the story was, "Oh he married this white woman from Seattle." [laughs]

Sherry: Now, tell me about that, *that* kind of discrimination. Was it just as bad or what? How would you describe it?

Cecile Hansen: Well, I made a few friend there, but his family, his father, I think adored me, 'cause we got along just fine. The step mother was a sort of a woman who, I don't want to say she

was, she wasn't very kind to me, either. And then my ex, God bless him, may he rest in peace, was not, he should never have married and then he had a drinking problem. So then, he liked other ladies and then she would know about it and she would, you know, she would kindly let me know that things were going on. You sort of sometime at that point, you know, you put blinders, you don't want to hear it.

Sherry: How did you two meet?

Cecile Hansen: Well, I met him, my cousin's from Pacific Beach, one of their, they used to take in people, you know, like, foster children? And one of the guys that they took in, I guess when he was a young guy, he went into the army during the Korean War. So he was just like one of the family. Well, his name was Doug. Well, Doug was coming in from, was he going over seas or he was gonna go somewhere, anyway, I had met him. We were all young teenagers and everything. And he was, at Fort Lewis. Well, one of the, sort of gyrated to the Indian and my ex-husband, my first husband, was stationed there too, so they just sort of clicked because they were from the same area on the Coast. So, Doug used to come up here to visit us on occasion and ask if I knew any girls. So I got him a date with one of my girlfriends and then we all started chumming around and he said, "Well, I'm bringing somebody up." And it so it happened to be, that's how I met my husband was through him.

Sherry: You said, was Doug an Oliver? No wait.

Cecile Hansen: No, he wasn't an Oliver. But he was just like, it was so interesting because when my aunt passed away last month, he's been around the family for fifty, sixty years, that he was just part, he's part of the family. I mean, he's not even Native.

Sherry: Oh really?

Cecile Hansen: No, he wasn't even Native. But he was like, he was part of the family. I mean, yeah, he was part of the family.

Sherry: And your husband, what was his name?

Cecile Hansen: He was Chuck.

Sherry: Charles?

Cecile Hansen: Charles.

Sherry: Hansen?

Cecile Hansen: No, no, no. Williams.

Sherry: And so, and he was originally from Qweets then?

Cecile Hansen: Yeah, he was full blood Quillayute.

Sherry: And then all your children were born over there?

Cecile Hansen: Some of them. Let's see. I had children that, about three passed away when they were little. So I have three children buried down in Gray's Harbor. They died as infants. So that's surviving, two were born down there.

Sherry: Now, and, don't answer this if you're not comfortable. Do you attribute, did they die, was it just childhood diseases or do you think it had to do with medical care there?

Cecile Hansen: No, I just think that these, I was having too many children one after another. And you can't do that. One, the first daughter died of pneumonia, had a cold. One was still born.

Another one died at home and I think it was, we didn't know at that time, and I think it was, they tried to say it was pneumonia or a cold or something, but I think this was a SIDS, this was a crib death. Yeah. And what did we know about anything out in the '50's. This was 1959. Yeah. So, you know, and I took very good care of myself. I mean, you know? And always had a doctor and always had my children in a hospital. Yeah. So I just, I don't know.

Sherry: That must have been so hard, though. To lose your children like that.

Cecile Hansen: Yeah. But, I read today that these children, if this is being believed, that these children are just fine. If we believe in the other side. I really sincerely believe that they are, that

they have grown and they survive as spirits and so, I think that's great. Hopefully they're praying for me. [laughs]

Sherry: Now, tell me what you told them, your other children as they grew up about their Native American heritage. By that, as they grew up did they have similar experiences that you had as a child or not or how would you compare that?

Cecile Hansen: Well, we always lived in, we were always urban, lived in urban setting, you know. I lived on Gray's Harbor and then I came to Seattle and I lived in Auburn. Stayed with my mother several times down in California, 'cause she lived down there, she was down there for about thirty five years, so we'd travel down to see her. Always lived in urban settings. And we were always seeing relatives, you know, I moved quite around, quite a bit. Because my husband was a kind of a person who never worked. His livelihood was to either work in the woods or fish. And we lived on the village there. So, once fishing was over, we were free to travel, you know. And then he, during the summer months, he would play baseball, so we sort of traveled differnt around with our kids. And then when I was raising *my* children, we always lived in town and then, of course by that time I had remarried and my husband *then* worked for the Port of Seattle. So, we had a home here and my kids were raised. But they always knew they were Native. It wasn't something that they had to be ashamed of. And they always felt that they were not, I don't think they experienced any discrimination. Because I think there was a, in the area that

they were raised, I think there was a wild range of different kinds of nationalities. And they had a very variety of Filipino, Black friends, Native American friends. Not too many Native friends, 'cause I think my kids and another family, there was probably two or three families that were Native American, that never suffered any discrimination that I recall. Other than saying one of my daughters was slow and they wanted to put in her in a special school. And *my* kids were pretty normal at home. But, they were very shy in school and they thought that this one particular daughter was slow and they wanted to put, I was very offended that they would think that she was slow. And I said, "There's nothing wrong with this." I went up and told the principal, "There's nothing wrong with her except she doesn't speak up." I was the same way in school myself. I wouldn't want to be called on for the fact that I might have to speak. That was painful.

[pause]

Sherry: So, we were just talking about your own experiences and your children's, in terms of, you know, being Indian and how they felt about it. So, generally until you got involved with Tribal recognition, were they interested at all? And you said, they didn't have too many Indian friends, was that just a product of where you lived?

Cecile Hansen: Yeah, it is a product, you know. We lived in mostly, you know, Caucasian neighborhood. Had a nice home and I didn't have to work. I was a stay-at-home mom. So that was

really a great deal. To have a home on my own, to not be a person that traveled every time I turned around. You know, unsettling life style. 'Cause I didn't have a home, I lived with my in-laws, I stayed with people. I never had a home. My home was my bedroom. I mean, to feel it was like as my own.

Sherry: You had all those kids, though, was it really difficult? It must have been difficult to move around all the time, I would think.

Cecile Hansen: Well, you know, actually, since they passed away at an early age, actually the ones that survived are my two oldest daughters, at that period in my time. Seven eight years of that, at that time. Yeah. So, it was okay. But we