Ernest Gary Wade Sr.

Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-116

Interview by:

Edith Frances Canty Wade
August 8, 1975

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Abstract: Frances Wade interviews her husband, Gary Wade Sr., as they drive through North Carolina. They begin with a song, then Gary talks about his upbringing on the Catawba reservation, his time in the National Youth Administration, playing sports throughout his upbringing, and being drafted into World War II, where he spent thirty months in and out of combat. He discusses his family life and employment, before giving opinions on the reservation's employment program, federal investigations of the time, drug use, and preserving Catawba pottery.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; North Carolina; Oral biography; Indian reservations]

CAT 116
Interviewee: Ernest Gary Wade Sr.
Interviewer: Edith Frances Canty Wade
Date of Interview: August 8, 1975

FW: This is Frances Wade. I'm gathering oral history of the Catawba Indians for the University of Florida. I live on Route 3, Box 304, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Today is August 8, 1975.

FW & GW: [singing]

South of the border, down Mexico way.

That's where I fell in love, when stars above came out to play.

And now as I wander, my thoughts ever stray,

south of the border, down Mexico way.

She was a picture in old Spanish lace,

just for a tender while, I kiss a smile upon her face.

For it was siesta, and we were so gay.

South of the border, down Mexico way.

And then she sighed as she whispered mañana,

never dreaming that we were parting,

and I lied as I whispered mañana,

for our tomorrow never came.

South of the border, I rode back one day.

There in a veil of white by the candlelight she knelt to pray.

The mission bells told me that I mustn’t stay.

South of the border, down Mexico way.

Ay-ay-ay-ay

Ay-ay-ay-ay

Ay-ay-ay-ay

Ay-ay-ay-ay

FW: Well, the past several months, I've been trying to get this young man on tape. He's my better half, and once I've got the opportunity to tape him, I just don't know quite how to get started. The song you just heard is the type of things he likes to do as part of his recreation. He can sing much better when he's singing by himself. What is your full name, Gary?

GW: Ernest Gary Wade, Senior.

FW: What is your birthdate?

GW: September 24, 1922.

FW: What is your address?

GW: Route 3, Box 304, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

FW: I am taping Gary. We're way up in the mountains, on one of the little, crooked roads somewhere below Highlands, North Carolina. I'm hoping that this will tape real well, even though we're in the car riding. Gary, who were your parents?

GW: Sally Harris and Ephriam George.

FW: Are they Indian?

GW: Yes—I would like to say my mother and father were never married.

FW: Gary, do you have brothers and sisters?

GW: Yes.

FW: Would you tell me who they are, and how old they are?

GW: My one brother, Mel Wade**,** he is about fifty-five. He's dead. I have a younger brother, William Perry Wade, he's about forty-seven. My one sister, Colleen,

lives in California. My brother, he lives on the reservation over on Route 29. Stoney, I call him the Shadow. He lives in Tampa, Florida.

FW: Why did you call him the Shadow?

GW: Well, he was so thin and little all his life. He was tall but he looked like a broomstick when he was growing up. We call him the Shadow, and it still goes with him.

FW: Does your mother work, Gary? Did she work?

GW: No, she used to work in the cotton mill.

FW: Did she farm, didn't she at one time help her husband farm?

GW: Oh yeah. We used to farm when I was growing up, we used to farm some. That was my step-dad. He had a farm.

FW: When you say, "that's my step-dad," who are you talking about?

GW: I am talking about Will Wade.

FW: Talking about Will Wade. Was he an Indian?

GW: No, he it was a White man. Somewhere in Georgia or Alabama, I think it was Alabama.

FW: We want to talk a little more about Will Wade, and the influence he had on your life in just a few minutes. I would just like to insert here that Gary knows so much about things that went on, on the reservation years ago. He's almost like a walking encyclopedia, and I will probably make five or six tapes on him if I can get him to do them for me. Gary, who were your grandparents on your mother's side?

GW: Dan Harris and Mary Harris.

FW: And they were both Indian?

GW: Right.

FW: What about on your father's side? Now you say that Ephriam George is your father?

GW: That's right. Lucy Sterns and Jules Nesbit.

FW: Is Lucy Sterns an Indian?

GW: Yes.

FW: What about Jules Nesbit?

GW: No, he was a White man.

FW: Can you tell me anything else about him?

GW: All I know about him was they say he was doctor. He lived across the river from the reservation. Part of—

FW: Excuse me, Gary. He lived on what was, at one time, part of the reservation?

GW: That is what I was going to say. It used to be the reservation over, it was in Lancaster County across from Hill County. I think, as far as I know, that they were servants to him. He got to know my grandmother and I guess they just slept with one another. [Laughter]

FW: He picked her—he built her a house and she lived over there, didn't he?

GW: Well, in the servants' house, I guess. I don't know. That's all I know about him.

FW: There is a great deal more history involved in what we are talking about right now. I know that our daughter is gathering genealogy, and she has gone to the Nesbits to gather the genealogy from your father's side. Gary, I know that you know many old stories that was told to you when you were young. Now, because

I'm asking you, and maybe putting you on the spot, you might not can think of any of them now. But if you can, would you tell me a story or two that was told when you were growing up?

GW: I do not know quite what you are talking about, but I will tell you how it was when I was growing up.

FW: All right. Let me ask you a question or two, and maybe we will just take it from there. What were some of the things you had to do at your home when you were growing up?

GW: Well, first of all, there was work. You had to work. I mean, my stepdaddy was one of those fellows that you had to work, and you had certain things to do, and you had to do them, or else. So, I grew up that way, knowing that I had to do things. I tried to get them done. Like, we had a field of corn to plow, and we had to get that corn plowed. If it had to be hoed, we had to get it hoed. We had to milk cows in the evening, feed the horses, or pigs, or whatever. We had to do that, and we had to do it before we went to bed, before we ate supper. There wasn't no way around it.

FW: How old were you?

GW: As far back as I can remember, I guess about ten or eleven years old, as far as my memory can go back.

FW: I know that a great many Indians did not have all of these animals that you are talkin' 'bout. Why do you think your family had them and the other Indians did not? Was it because of your father, stepfather?

GW: Well, one thing was that he was a bootlegger.

FW: I don’t want to talk about him quite yet. There's so many things that you can tell me.

GW: Well, that is the only way I could tell you to find out how he had these things.

FW: All right. We'll talk about him in just a few minutes. But let's get back to you as a child. What kind of a house did you live in?

GW: We lived in a little old log house. About like two rooms, I guess two rooms, open all the way, just back. You could lay in the bed at night and look at the stars.

FW: Well, that was about the way it was when you first got married and got your first home, too, wasn't it?

GW: That is right, but the roof was so steep that the water couldn't come through hardly anyhow.

FW: Did you have glass windows?

GW: No, we had windows in the main we called ‘em shutters, they opened up like doors. Fastened them with a latch at night and opened ‘em up in the daytime.

FW: Did you have to carry water?

GW: We had to carry water to wash and cook with. We had to have a kerosene lamp at night and an old flammables, what do you call it? I remember we had a Coca-Cola bottle filled up with kerosene and a rag stuck in it. We would light it up, just like you would a candle. It'd smoke up everything, but it gave off pretty good light.

FW: Did you always have food to eat at your house?

GW: As long as I had a stepdaddy.

FW: Did you go to church when you were growing up?

GW: No, we didn't have to.

FW: You didn't have to. Did your parents go to church?

GW: No.

FW: Do you belong to a church now?

GW: Yes.

FW: What church do you belong to?

GW: Mormon church.

FW: Are you active?

GW: Part time.

FW: Now, just because you didn't go to church, would you just tell me what it was like, what the church was like, and how the people down on the reservation got to church, when you were growing up?

GW: Well, the church was just like it is now, and it had the same principles. You did the same things. I mean, if you were a good member, and you went to the church you did the same things as you do now. You had to walk to church, down on the reservation down there. Now, people coming a good eight, ten miles. They have cars now. But we didn’t have cars then. We had to walk to church.

FW: Could you describe the church that was on the reservation when you were growing up?

GW: Yeah, it was a little block stucco church, about one room. The pulpit had two little offset rooms up on the pulpit. It had a large place for the congregation and a foyer for you to hang your hat and your coat when you walked in.

FW: What kind of benches did it have?

GW: It had long, wooden oak benches.

FW: Did it have a bell?

GW: Yes, ma'am.

[Break in recording]

GW: We used to get up on Sunday morning, when it was time for church, we could hear the bell ringing. Uncle Sam Blue, he was the Chief. He was a pastor, or what we call bishop of the church. He rang the bell for every meeting, and you could tell when it was time to go to church if he was ringing the bell for everybody to come.

FW: Everybody didn't have clocks back then, did they?

GW: That is right.

FW: What happened, Gary, when an Indian died on the reservation?

GW: Well, Uncle Sam would ring that bell, too. It was to let everybody know, and it had a certain ring. You could tell when it was a death bell and when it a bell was for a service—just a regular service in the church.

FW: He also rang it as many times as that person—according to age, did he not?

GW: Right.

FW: Once again, I would insert here that he did not read or write, and yet he knew the exact amount of rings for each person. Gary, what kind of musical instruments did they have in the church, or did they have anything to play?

GW: They had an old organ in the church, and one of Uncle Sam's daughters played a little bit. She played it all the time on Sunday.

FW: I can remember a couple of other women playing the piano, too.

FW: Do you know who they were?

GW: Sally Mac, I know had the red hair**.**

FW: I think that a Mrs. **Grata** had taught at least a portion of these people to play the piano. However, Lula Beck played simply from hearing other people play-- she did not play by notes, she played by ear. Gary, what was it like when you were growing up and a person died? What were the roads like, and how did the funeral procession go?

GW: Well, first of all, when somebody died, Indians back then, had all stuck together. If somebody would die, the next day nobody went to work. They would go and sit every night with the people and bring food. They kept them two days, they stayed up two days and nights. To get to the graveyard, well they'd have a funeral in church, then to get to the graveyard they had an old horse and buggy, a horse and wagon, Uncle Sam did. He'd back it up to the church and he would put the casket and box on it and take it down to the graveyard. That's the way they'd get people to the graveyard. Everyone else would walk down there behind the wagon to get to the graveyard.

FW: There were a lot of Indians who were never taken to the funeral home to be embalmed. Were they put in caskets?

GW: Some of them never did get embalmed and they would just bring the casket down and put them in it and dress 'em and take them to the graveyard. Most of the time, the road would be so bad that we had to meet them way up the road where the families could get down there with them. We would put them on the wagon and bring them on down to the church.

FW: This was usually Indians who just—they called it laying them out and getting them dressed. Most of the people did this for their own people.

GW: Right.

FW: Gary, how far did you go in school?

GW: I went to the ninth grade.

FW: All right, now I know that there are a lot of things that you could tell me about your school days. Where did you start school?

GW: Well, I started on the Indian reservation in Catawba—Catawba Indian Nation School. I went to the eighth grade. Then eighth grade, I started in high school, Rock Hill High School.

FW: Before you get up to high school, what was it like at the school on the reservation?

GW: I thought it was real nice. It was just a one, two room school. Everybody was close together. Of course, you had four or five grades in one room, but I thought that it was all right.

FW: Did you go to school regular?

GW: Well, regular as I thought I ought to go.

FW: As you thought you ought to. Were you not compelled to go by your parents?

GW: No, ma'am.

FW: Did they not think it was important that you get an education?

GW: Well, back then there was nobody but my mother, and I could do what I wanted. If I wanted to go, I would go, if I didn’t, I didn’t.

FW: So, many days you stayed at home.

GW: That's right.

FW: How did you keep warm in the school?

GW: They had a coal stove, wood stove to start with. We would cut wood and put it in.

FW: Who cut the wood?

GW: I am not sure, but I think Uncle Sam cut all the wood for it and brought it up there to the school.

FW: There were times when even the school children got out and got the wood.

GW: Yeah, but I think Uncle Sam got most of it.

FW: How did you get your water?

GW: We carried it from the well out on Uncle Sam's yard.

FW: Or from the springs, whichever.

GW: Yes, whichever one we wanted to go to, that we could stay out for longest**.**

FW: That’s right. Can you remember who your teachers were on the reservation?

GW: I only had two. Brother Davis and Brother Hayden.

FW: And both of these men were Mormons?

GW: That’s right.

FW: And in school, they taught such things as prayers, and also some of the principles of the Mormon Gospel because we were all Mormons already.

GW: Right.

FW: Gary, when we got ready to go to high school, I was a grade above you, and yet when we got ready to go to high school, our teachers did something different as far as you were concerned. It was very upsetting to us girls, even though we wanted you along. What was it?

GW: Well, he put me up in the grade with you all because he thought I was pretty smart, I guess. Of course, I was pretty smart. I'm not bragging, but I thought I was pretty smart. I was on the honor roll the year I went to Rock Hill High School.

FW: So, you must've been pretty smart.

GW: I went to school a year in Walhalla, South Carolina.

FW: What were you doing over in Walhalla?

GW: Well, that was back when I was sixteen years old. I thought I was a man, I guess. They had this 3CC camps and they had NYA, what they called National Youth Administration. I couldn't get into CC because I wasn't big enough, so they let me go in that. While I was up there, there was this fellow going to school. He let me go to school instead of staying there, working in the camp that I was in. It kind of worked out that he came back to Rock Hill and was a agricultural teacher.

FW: While you were in this NYA camp, you learned part of a trade that has even helped you, I think, today. Do you want to talk a little about that?

GW: Well, that was carpentry. Probably, when I came home, if I had stayed up there, I could have probably went in business. Probably could have been a big businessman these days, if I would have stayed up there and stayed with it. The man would have offered me an opportunity. But I'm like all the other Indians, I guess, I'm bull-headed and I like to do things my way. I didn't see it his way. I knew after I left, perhaps I had blown a good chance of becoming something or somebody, and I just let it get by.

FW: When you came and went back to Rock Hill High, what subjects did you take in high school?

GW: I just took the usual subjects: history, science, mathematics, and English.

FW: Of all the subjects you took, which did you like best?

GW: Math.

FW: Which did you like least?

GW: We had a crip course, I think they called it. I never did think it was crip, it was called Civics. I didn't like it.

FW: Gary, I realize that we were among the first group of people, or right near the first group of people, who went to Rock Hill High School, or was allowed to go to any public school. How did the White people treat you, knowing that you were an Indian when you went to high school?

GW: Well, I was treated all right. I never had no trouble. The only thing: that we didn't get to ride the bus. We had to ride in the car. You remember, your mother had a little car, and that is the only way we got to go to school. She furnished a car for us to ride back and forth to school, ten miles to school and back every day—that was twenty in all. There was, it seems everywhere you go, one or two smart ones want to holler like an Indian at you some, but I cooled that down. I never had no more trouble out of them.

FW: Did you take part in sports, or were you allowed to?

GW: I could've played sports if I had any way to get back and forth to school. I started out with football, but the only way I could get home was to walk home ten miles and I had no way to do it, so I had to quit.

FW: There was a little instance that I remember happened when you first started out to practice football, with the best football player on the team. Would you like to tell about that?

GW: Well, I was on the line and the coach put me out there-- I guess he wanted to see me get racked up, and then run his fast back through there. I am not sure, but I think his name was Rodney **Kibbit**. He took off down the field, he was supposed to be fast, he outrun everybody else, so the coach put me on him, and of course, I caught him. When I caught him and come back to the line, the coach told me, he said, "I didn't think you were that fast." I told him, "That boy couldn't run no how, I was faster than that." I kind of tore him up, but I didn't get to play. I wish I could've finished it.

FW: And so, you didn't finish high school, Gary?

GW: No.

FW: Why didn't you finish?

GW: I thought I was too smart, I guess. Didn't need any more education.

FW: Since you quit school, have you ever taken any other special training?

GW: Well, after I come out of the army, I went to GI school for about six months, I believe. I quit that.

FW: Why did you quit that?

GW: Well, like all Indians, you know, I like firewater. I got drunk one night and tore my car up and couldn't go. Had to stop that. I did not have any way to get to school.

FW: Did you ever take any other training?

GW: Well, after the reservation was terminated, I was part of—the Federal

government had a two-year course we could take, a two-year schooling. I went to a tech school in Belmont. I took machine shop for two years up there.

FW: Why did you go so far away?

GW: It was the closest school around that had the course that I could take. Next closest one is in Columbia, and that was too far away.

FW: Have you used any of the training that you got at Belmont Tech?

GW: No, I never did used it, but I still have it.

FW: Why did you not ever use it?

GW: I just never did get out and try any. There was no place around Rock Hill hardly. I had to get away from home. I tried at the place I worked at, Rock Hill Frame and Finishing Company, several times, but I never did get into it, never did get into shop, so I quit messing with it.

FW: Do you like sports, Gary?

GW: All of ‘em.

FW: Did you ever take part in any sports?

GW: I played a lot of baseball.

FW: What position—

GW: I used to box some, when I was in that NYA that I was telling you about that. I was a pretty fair country boxer. I fought good. In fact, a fellow wanted me to box in Golden Gloves in Greenville, one time. I didn't—I had a good chance of winning, but I guess like all the chances I ever had, I just didn't take it.

FW: Let us get back to the baseball. What position did you play?

GW: I played first base after I got to be pretty old. When I first started out, when I was

in this NYA organization, I played left field and third base.

FW: There was something that I should've asked a while back, and that is: what kind of games did you all play when you were growing up?

GW: Baseball, mostly.

FW: Did you ever go hunting when you were a boy?

GW: Well, only time I went hunting was mostly when the snow was on the ground. That is about the only time I ever had anything to hunt with, kill rabbits with.

FW: Well, what did you kill them with?

GW: Killed 'em with a slingshot. Carry a slingshot and go hunting. Catch 'em in their bed and shoot them.

FW: Did you ever get any toys to play with when you were small?

GW: Not that I remember.

FW: What was it like at Christmas time, for you?

GW: I remember getting, maybe, two or three apple, a couple of oranges, a little bit of candy. That's about all I can remember.

FW: Where did you get it? Did your momma buy it, or did it come from the church?

GW: I think, I am pretty sure, there used to be two county nurses down there and they used to bring stuff down. I think it was Mrs. Hume and I do not know what the other one was.

FW: I know who you are talking about, but I cannot think of her name either. What kind of games did you play when you were growing up, since you didn't have toys that were bought?

GW: We played cowboys and Indians. Mostly Indians. [Laughter]

FW: What did you do for toys?

GW: I don't remember ever having any toys. We used to, if we could get a hold of an old inner tube, we could take a piece of stick and maybe somebody had some clothespins, maybe some lone rubber, and make a pistol out of it. We'd shoot rubber a good little way, we would make like we had a pistol like that. We would get sticks and cut them out and made like a gun out of wood and fix ‘em. One time we sawed us a tree down, pretty good size and cut some wheels out of it and made us a wagon! We made it more like an automobile, I guess we'd call it. We put wooden axles on it and cut a hole in the wood. It looked like a wheel, we put a steering wheel on it. I don’t know, I can’t think how we put the steering wheel on it, but we had it on there, and we had a hill, and we'd would go down and race the hill with it. That is the way we had a wagon made. In fact, we never did buy a wagon until I growed up.

FW: Did you have a bicycle?

GW: Never. Never had a bicycle.

FW: Do you have any idea who made up the idea as to how the wagon would look when it was being made?

GW: I did. I did it myself.

FW: Did any of the other boys have anything like that?

GW: It was me and my two cousins that did it. We would made ‘em up ourselves.

FW: Did any of the other Indian boys on the reservation have anything like that?

GW: No, the other boys, I guess some of them, most of ‘em, had toys and things. I am talking about my family now. That is all we had. We was—didn't have nothing a

whole lot.

FW: Did you ever own a gun when you were growing up?

GW: I have owned a gun, but not until I was about thirty years old.

FW: And now it almost looks like you've got an arsenal. Do you like to fish?

GW: Certainly.

FW: Did you ever fish when you were growing up?

GW: Sure did.

FW: What did you fish with?

GW: A pole and a line. An old cord that you buy, a fishing cord, not a regular cord—It was a cloth cord, that you buy in the store, a ball cord. Put a hook on there and let the big fish bite. I could catch as many catfish as anybody else.

FW: When you were talking about playing ball, did you have a regular baseball?

GW: When I was in this other place, I did.

FW: All right I suppose I'm talking about when you were growing up and living on the reservation.

GW: Oh no, oh no. When we were at school, we made our own balls.

FW: How did you make them?

GW: Well, we would take a piece of rubber, like a piece of inner tube, and roll it up. Then we would get a piece of cloth, wrap it around really tight. Then get a ball of old thread, old soft yarn of some kind, and just roll it around until we got it about like a baseball. Then we would sew it good all the way around the outside with a needle and thread, and that was what we played ball with.

FW: Do you remember when we all used to bring our thread from our house so we

would have enough to make the ball big enough?

GW: That's right. We would cut hickory sticks out of wood for a bat. Sticks would make a bat, that we could hit with.

FW: Gary, were you ever in the service?

GW: Yes.

FW: What branch of service were you in?

GW: Was in the army.

FW: Did you volunteer, or were you drafted?

GW: I was drafted.

FW: How long were you in service?

GW: Thirty months.

FW: Where were you stationed?

GW: In the States?

FW: Yes, just tell me all that you did.

GW: I was stationed in the States at Camp Butler in North Carolina for eight months, and Fort Bragg, North Carolina, for four months. I went to England for four months. The rest of it I spent in combat, plus after the war was over, I pulled six months occupation in Germany.

FW: Were you married, Gary, when you went in the service?

GW: Yes—about a year, or a little older.

FW: Did you say that you were in combat for eighteen months?

GW: Yes, ma'am.

FW: Where did you fight?

GW: In Europe.

FW: You have five major battles stars?

GW: Yes, ma'am.

FW: Where did you get them?

GW: I got one for the Battle of the Bulge, one for the Ardennes, one for Central Europe, one for Normandy, and I am not certain where the other one was—I will have to look on my discharge.

FW: Were you ever wounded?

GW: Yes, I got wounded in the leg, on December 17, when the Germans started their last big stand.

FW: On another tape, you will have to tell me more about the places you were in service and some of the things that took place. While you were in the service, I know things have changed a great deal since. What war were you in?

GW: World War II.

FW: All right, things have changed a great deal since then. How did you get along with the Blacks?

GW: Well, wasn't no Blacks in my outfit. The ones that I came in contact with, I got along with them as well as I did with anybody else. I was in the hospital with a few, when I was in the States, I had the mumps. I was living in the same room with one, and we got along real good. In fact, he did all my KP for me, he taught me how to play "skin" and all that stuff.

FW: How did you get along with the Whites?

GW: Never had no trouble with them, either.

FW: What were your duties while you were in the service, Gary?

GW: While I was in the States, I was an ammunition sergeant. When I got overseas, I had a machine-gun squad, I was over a machine-gun squad.

FW: I am sure that what you did in the service would certainly not have helped you get a job after you come out, did it?

GW: No, it didn't.

FW: You work now. Where do you work?

GW: I work at the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company, and Flint Construction Company.

FW: What do you do at Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company?

GW: I work in the jack room, where you take these print rollers and put them on a big mounter, and put them in a print machine, and they print all this cloth and make clothes out of them.

FW: Do you think you make a pretty good salary there?

GW: Well, I guess for what it is, and for the place where I am working at, it is, in my part of the country.

FW: What about Flint Construction Company, what do you do there?

GW: I am a cabinet maker at Flint Construction Company.

FW: Do you think you make a good salary there?

GW: Pretty good, but now as good as it oughta be, but a pretty good salary.

FW: Well, Gary, I know that you're married. Where were you married?

GW: There is a little tale about this thing. If you would like for me to tell you about it.

FW: All right, go ahead.

GW: Well, first of all, when we got married, as you know, I did not have a job. I went over to your mother's house, of course, I had already asked her could we get married. She asked me when we were going to get married. We hustled around in, and everything got straightened out, so I went on home, and I met Uncle Sam.

FW: That's Chief Blue you're talking about.

GW: Right, so I borrowed a dollar from the Chief, and went on home. I think Momma had a dollar. I got the dollar Momma had, and I got a dollar from somebody else. I don't remember who it was. Now anyhow, I had three dollars. Come back, we went to York. Well, first of all, I married Edith Frances Kenney, and we went to York to get married. Of course, her mother went with us. My aunt and uncle was the ones that took us up there. I was scared to death, and I think she was too. We got up there, and the judge knew her grandfather. We went in this little room in his office there. It looked awful small, at the time. I don't know how small it was, but my knees were shaking so bad I think I could hear them! We went through all the rigmarole that you go through to get married. Then, when we got through, I asked the judge what I owed him, like I had a whole lot of money, you know. He said, anything you want to give me, so I gave him a dollar, and that satisfied him, 'cause he wasn't going to take anything to start with. We got ready to come on back down, coming home, and I asked my uncle what I owed him, he told me anything I wanted to give him. Nothing if I did not want to, so I gave him a dollar. That left a dollar. So, we got back to Rock Hill, and we went to the grocery store. Well, with a dollar back then, you could almost buy a truckload of

groceries. So, we bought some groceries with a dollar. We had a good deal of groceries. We had enough to get started on. So that night, my cousin—I had been trying to get a job, and he called over there and told me that he had me a job. So, the night I got married, I had to go to work, if you can imagine that. [Laughter] That's the way it was when I got married.

FW: When you say, Gary, that your cousin called over there, you literally mean he hollered over to your house, because there were no phones down there on the reservation at all.

GW: That's right. That's what I meant. I didn't mean he called over there on a telephone.

FW: All right. Did I ask you when you got married?

GW: I don't believe you did, but I think it was April 7, 1942.

FW: Do you have children?

GW: Yes.

FW: How many children do you have?

GW: Three tough ones.

FW: What are their names, and how old are they?

GW: Horace Gary Wade, Jr.—

FW: He's not your oldest child, is he?

GW: No, that's right, and he's—

[Break in recording]

GW: —born November 21, 1944.Sherry Geraldine Wade, was the oldest—she's Osbourne now. She was born December 8, 1942. And Michael Greg—he's the

youngest—he was born April 27, 1947.

FW: Gary Jr. was born while you were overseas, wasn't he?

GW: Yeah, he was just about a year old when I come home, and I guess you had probably shown him a lot of pictures of me, because when I come home and he was sitting up, he said, "Hello, Daddy," and Sherry, she didn't say a thing—in fact, she was scared of me. Took 'em a good while for them to get used to me.

FW: Gary, how did the opportunities for your children today differ from the opportunities you had when you were growing up?

GW: Well, they got a chance just like everybody else, now. If they don't take it, it's their fault. They have a chance to do anything, that anybody else has. I didn't have that chance. Like the chance I said I let go by, that was the only chance I had, and I let it go. But they have the chance to do anything they want, if they want to do it.

[Break in recording]

FW: I would just like to mention here that they do have many opportunities that we didn’t have, and especially you. Remember when you started to high school, you had to borrow your cousin's clothes to wear to school, because you didn't have any?

GW: That's right. Every day I had to, because I didn't have anything to wear. Coming up, I tried to give them what it took to go to school, and of course, they finished high school, all three of them, and Sherry went to college two years—like I said, they had a chance, and if they miss it, it's their problem.

FW: Gary, are you registered to vote?

GW: I don't think so right now, but I was.

FW: Do you think it's important to vote?

GW: Yes.

FW: Why do you think it's important to vote?

GW: Well, having somebody up there not running the job like they're supposed to be. Maybe there's a good man that oughta be in office, and when it comes time to vote. And if I don't go there and put my vote in, then I'm voting for the other man.

FW: You know about the land being terminated. Did you think that was a good idea, when it was terminated?

GW: No. I didn't like it.

FW: Why didn't you like it?

GW: Well, I knew what all the Indians was gonna do with it when they got it. Most of them were gonna take it and sell it and get the money out of it. And that's what they did.

FW: Do you think any different today than you did then?

GW: No.

FW: Do you think any of the Indians have made any improvements since it happened?

GW: Some have, and some haven't.

FW: Do you think the biggest majority of them have?

GW: I don't think so.

FW: You know that, in the last year and a half, the Tribe has gotten together and elected a Chief, an assistant Chief, two councilman and a secretary. Do you

think that was a good idea?

GW: Well, I guess it is.

FW: How can that benefit us as Indians, as we only have this little parcel of land down on the reservation that we live on?

GW: Well, it keeps the old reservation intact, and it keeps an organized body there to see that things go like things should go. If they don't do it, then they're not running the job, and oughta be put out—somebody else put in that.

FW: Do you think the thing that's going on now is benefitting the Tribe, in that we have a person getting jobs, helping other Indians get jobs?

GW: Yes! Well, I think it was to help 'em to maybe get a way to go to college, go to school, further education. Whether it's college or maybe a tech school, benefit ‘em in that way.

FW: Do you have any idea, Gary, how many young people, or how many people on the reservation have been helped since this program was started?

GW: Oh, I don't know, I'd say about fifty or sixty.

FW: Well, you'd be just about right if you said that. Gary, what do you think about the government today? Do you think the government is on pretty sound ground, and do you approve of the President we have now?

GW: Well, I think he's doing a pretty good job, myself. He's doing a lot more than any other president's done—he's been overseas two or three times, checking these countries out and seeing what things can be done, and that's more than the rest of them have done in the past. But I think he's doing a pretty good job, myself.

FW: I'm sure that there were times where you couldn't help but see Watergate on TV.

What did you think about all of the investigations, such as that the ones that's going on now about the CIA and the FBI?

GW: I didn't like ‘em—I thought he ought to have been left alone.

FW: Why?

GW: Well, if it's something already brought up, they knew about it, why show it to the whole nation, and the whole country? They knew about it, just let it—get through with it, and cover it up yourself—they'd already covered it up that far. Wouldn't have had the government all stirred up and got all the people-- they'd just got 'em out one at a time and nobody would have never known anything about it.

FW: Do you think it's a good idea to keep things from the people?

GW: Well, some things, I think maybe it is, and there's some things I don't suspect it is.

FW: But that particular thing you think should’ve been.

GW: Well, that thing was just exploited, it was all over—other countries knew what was going on, laughed at us, ridiculed us, and all that. I didn't like it on camera**.**

FW: Gary, you know that the drug scene is everywhere. What do you think we're to do about it, or is there anything we can do about it?

GW: The only thing I know is, when you catch somebody with it, give 'em the stiffest penalty you can give ‘em. Maybe that will make the rest of ‘em wake up and leave it alone.

FW: I've asked this many times before, and I'll ask it of you: do you think the Catawba Indian women should continue to make pottery, so that the culture won't die out, or do you think they should just give it up and leave it alone?

GW: I'm gonna tell you like it is. I know how you stand on it, and you know how I stand on it. I know it's a culture probably, and you feel like it should be kept up. And you know maybe they will. But when I was coming up, they had to mess with the clay so much, nowadays I just hate it. I don't care a thing about pottery no more. It's up to the individual, I guess, whether they want to keep it up or not.

FW: You're the first person I've heard say that it didn't make any difference whether it was kept up or not. But are you proud that you're an Indian?

GW: Most certainly**.**

FW: Gary, do you think you have accomplished very much in your lifetime?

GW: Well, I don't know. I never thought about it too much. All I ever thought about was living from one day to the next.

FW: All right. I would ask you to describe the home you live in, if you would, and where it's located.

GW: Well, an old wood house down on the reservation, down on Indian Nation. I built it myself, my wife, and kids. It's, I'd say about fifty foot long, thirty-four foot wide, seven rooms. It's made out of California redwood on the outside, sheetrock inside. It's the usual things, I guess, on the inside.

FW: It's located on about the center of the reservation. Gary, if you had your say, just to leave one piece of advice to the young Indians coming along, what would that be?

GW: I would say get all the education you can get, and don't let your opportunities go by.

FW: I've been talking to Gary for the last little while, and he seems to be the same

way I am today. I know just—many, many things that I would like to ask him, that I know he knows about, but this little microphone sitting here between us has its effect on me and him, and hopefully I'll get five or six more tapes on him because he has many things that he could tell that would add to the history that has gone by of the Catawbas.

[End of Interview]

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