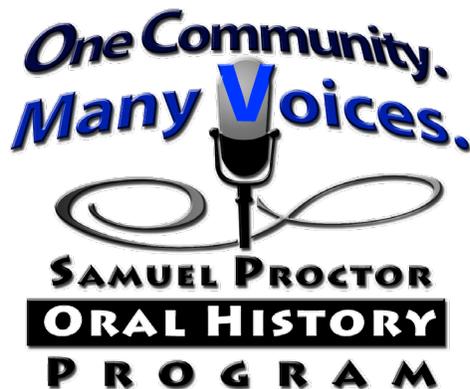


Edith Frances Canty Wade

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-071**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
July 31, 1973**



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CAT 071 Edith Frances Canty Wade
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45 minutes | 24 pages

Abstract: Frances Wade describes growing up on the reservation and shares how she and her seven siblings helped prepare the clay for their mother's pottery making. She speaks about the pottery-making process and how her family sold it. Wade describes going to school at the schoolhouse on the reservation. She discusses the challenges she faced when she started attending Rock Hill High School as a teenager. She shares her experiences of being afraid to register, struggling with her classes, not being allowed to ride the school bus, and facing bullying for being Catawba. She speaks about her teachers and how she left high school in the eleventh grade because of financial difficulties. Wade speaks about getting married and her children. She describes her experiences teaching children in her church over the last twelve years. She states that she believes there are more opportunities for Indians now than there were in the past and comments on the unity of her community. Wade ends the interview by saying that she loves her home and that she hopes to help young people be as proud of being Catawba as she is.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Family histories; Pottery]

CAT 071

Interviewee: Edith Frances Canty Wade

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: July 31, 1973

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Route 6, Box 260, Rock Hill, South Carolina. This is July 31, 1973. I am recording the oral history of the Catawba Indians and I am visiting in the home of Mrs. Frances Wade. Mrs. Wade, will you give me your full name and your address?

W: Well, my name is Edith Frances Wade. I was a Canty before I was married.

E: Now, were you born here on the reservation?

W: Yes.

E: Do you mind telling us how old you are?

W: I'm forty-nine.

E: You've got many memories that you'll have to tell us about your life on the reservation. Tell us who your mother and your father were.

W: My mother was Fanny Harris. My father was Alonzo Canty.

E: Your mother died when she was around fifty-one?

W: She was fifty-one, yes.

E: Your father married again, I believe.

W: Yes.

E: And he is still living.

W: Yes. He lives on what for a while was known as the new part of the reservation.

E: Who was your mother's parents?

W: My mother's mother was Lizzie Jane Patterson, and her father was David A. Harris. At one time, he was Chief of the Catawbas.

E: Yes. You gave me an interesting story of David Harris he wrote about the flood. I'm going to make a tape recording of that. Tell me about your home as you remember it as a little girl here on the reservation.

W: I think most people used to believe that we lived in tents and teepees, which wasn't true. We lived in, not the kind of homes people live in today, but I think we were a happy group then. I came from a large family of seven girls and one boy. I was next to the oldest. Momma worked in clay to support us.

E: You said that she made of clay as many as sixty pieces a day. Can you tell me 'bout that?

W: Oh, yes. She made more than that in a day's time if she got started early and worked late. It wasn't unusual for her to work and make more than fifty pots a day.

E: Now, where did you get your clay?

W: I don't know if you know where the Nesbit land is now. It's across the river. We had an old car, and we took sacks, and we'd go. Of course, we'd stay almost all day because they got both kinds of clay, pan clay and pipe clay. We'd take sacks and fill it up and put it in the old car and then go down from down on the river bottoms, down in the woods to another place to get the pan clay.

E: Then you'd come home and what would you do with the clay that you carried to your home?

W: We'd put the clay in soap. You know, we used to wash it in a big tin tub. When they would get holes in them and they wasn't any good for anything else, well, then we'd take those tubs and fill it up with pipe clay and pour the water over it

and let it stand until it softened enough to do something with it. The pan clay, which is a blue sort of—well, everybody calls it dirt. I don't ever think of it as being dirt. But it is a kind of bluish-looking color, and it was sifted through an old sifter—an old screen wire, really—that would come off of a window that had a hole in it and wasn't good for to keep out the bugs anymore. So, we used it to sift the clay. Then we mixed them both together and used something heavy. Daddy always took his ax and went and cut down a tree. Then he cut it down to where it was like a mallet or something like that, and we'd beat it until it got all of the lumps out of 'em. Then it would stand until it was just the right consistency, you know, just where it would work good.

E: All of you children helped in preparing the clay, did you not?

W: Oh, yes.

E: Did you help in making the pots or did your mother make with her own hands her pots?

W: Well, no, I didn't make. I didn't have the opportunity. See, she made our living like that and for a big crowd like we were, she just worked hard, and we worked hard. We got the clay fixed. She made the pots, she scraped the pots, but we rubbed. And that is a real job.

E: Would you be rubbing at night or during the daylight preparing those pots?

W: We got up early. That was one thing she insisted on, that everybody get up at the same time. We got our work done, such as getting our water early in the morning, such as milking the cow, and things like that. Then we would

immediately start rubbing pots. We worked as hard as grown people, 'cause we worked that many hours.

E: What did you rub them with?

W: Well, I have Momma's rocks that she used. They had been her grandmother's. And you can tell a good pot-rubber from a bad one if you were around 'em very much, because some of the pieces that you see that's been rubbed, they have look like little places that the rock has not touched, or little, tiny holes that hasn't been covered up. Of course, we used water and a rag. You washed those pieces of pottery before you rubbed them and that was the secret of being a good pot-rubber.

[Break in recording]

W: A wood stove and Momma always filled up the stove with the pottery that had been rubbed and they got real hot. When they were hot enough, which was when they were almost black, they were taken out and put in another fire that we had built in a hole that was out behind the house. We used green wood to burn them. We would let one burning—where the fire would burn down on the pottery, then we'd put another bunch of wood on top of that to let it burn again, so that they'd be strong and be able to hold water. We usually didn't have control over what color they would turn out to be, but we always had chips and bark that we'd put on 'em to help make 'em have color.

E: How long would it be before you could take those pots out? That would be a job all day long, would it not?

W: It would. But Momma always took hers out just as soon as they burned down because she always would have another stove full of pottery ready to go in that same fire. So, lots of people don't take theirs out until they're cold, but she did. She got hers out immediately.

E: Did she have a large table to display all these on?

W: No. Immediately after they were cool, she'd wipe 'em up. She'd have boxes and she'd wrap 'em up with paper and put 'em in those boxes to keep 'em from getting wet or getting broke. Because there was so many of us, she had to put 'em up out of the way.

E: Then air might crack them too if it got close to them, mightn't it?

W: While they were hot it might, but it didn't seem to affect hers.

E: Now, were hers waterproof? Could those be used to hold water?

W: Yes.

E: Then tell me how you sold that pottery.

W: Occasionally people from other places would come down here, such as from Ohio. At one time there was a man who came, and he bought from everybody. I guess they sold maybe for two or three years like that. But the biggest portion of the time, Daddy took the pots to the mountain and sold 'em.

E: Did he sell at Cherokee reservation, do you think?

W: Yes, a lot of 'em were sold at Cherokee or Black Mountain. At that time there was lots of gift shops at Black Mountain. They were taken to—just all up through those mountains.

E: Do you remember anything about the prices of the pottery at that time?

W: Oh, yes. Great big pieces of pottery didn't bring over seventy-five cents and it's hard work. You just can't imagine the hard work that goes into it and the time.

E: Now, your mother really made a living for her family?

W: Yes.

E: Plus, the farming that your father did in that way?

W: Yes.

E: But you had your own cow. Did you have a garden and fruit trees to help out too?

W: Well, we had chickens and we had pigs.

E: Did your mother enjoy cooking too?

W: I think that she did, but there was so many of us. And when you're sitting there making pots all day, you don't have time to cook. So that was our chore.

E: Then you learned to cook and do that, I'm sure. There were seven children in the family—

W: Well, there was eight. There was seven girls and one boy.

E: Seven girls and one boy. Do any of your brother and your sisters follow in your mother's footsteps in making pottery?

W: I have two sisters that can make. Alberta especially, she makes regular. Helen, she can make, but I haven't known for her to do it for maybe several years. And I can make, not all the things that I would like to, but I can make some.

E: Do you make some of the same things your mother used to make?

W: I think that I make candlesticks and things like that, but most of the pots the way Momma made 'em, I don't make.

E: Now I see the beautiful boat-shaped piece over there on the bookcase that has the Indian heads. Do you have the molds for those Indian heads?

W: Yes, there's molds for the heads.

E: Then you molded all the rest in your hands?

W: Yes.

E: You seem to get the light colors, the light golden browns and yellows that some of them do not get. How do you account for the fact that you get those pretty colors?

W: I have no control over that.

E: You think that it's the firing that does that.

W: I think so.

E: Let's go back to your early days in school. What do you remember about your school days? Where did you go to school? And your teachers?

W: We went to the schoolhouse which is right over the hill. If anybody asks where I went to school, I always say, "right over the hill." It was a one-room school building to begin with and later on they added a small room. We walked. We had outside rest rooms. We carried our water from the spring, which was a great joy because if we got to go to the spring we could stay for a while and get out of some lessons.

E: You had a dipper or a gourd?

W: Yes, a dipper and water buckets, tin buckets.

E: Did you go home for lunch at that time? I suppose you did at first, didn't you?

W: You know, really, I can't remember what we did in the beginning. I know later on lunches was served. Of course, I was about ready to leave from that school when that happened.

E: Who was your first teacher, or do you remember your first teacher?

W: J.C. Davis.

E: He was a Mormon elder, I believe, who came here and taught for a number of years.

W: Yes.

E: And then what other teachers did you have?

W: Well, I had only one other teacher and that was Willard Hayes.

E: Mr. Willard Hayes still lives in—

W: In Gaffney.

E: Gaffney.

W: Yes. Nell Lineburger did teach me occasionally when Brother Hayes was so tied up with other classes that she had to take some of the upper grades.

E: After you left this school, where did you go to school then?

W: I went to Rock Hill High.

E: And you had problems getting there, didn't you?

W: Oh, yes. I couldn't hardly stand to go. There was four of us that was ready to go and Brother Hayes took us up there. I'll never forget it. We were scared to death. He took us up there to register us at school. I had never been in a big building like that, where the old high school is. It's now Sullivan, you know. We were really afraid; we didn't know how to act. So, we were just like people thought Indians

ought to be, quiet and scared, I guess. [Laughter] He got us registered and then we couldn't ride the school bus. So, we had to find our own way to go. We thought we wasn't going to get to go. Grier Leslie was the Indian agent and somehow there was money appropriated that if somebody had a car, they could take us. But we couldn't ride on the school bus.

E: Who were the four students who were ready to go at this time, do you remember?

W: Well, me, Betty Garcy, Ethel Warner, and Gary, my husband.

E: Were you dating your husband at that time?

W: No, I wasn't dating anybody. [Laughter] I wasn't old enough at that time. Momma insisted we all be sixteen before we could date.

E: That might be a very good rule. Then you started school in the end of fall. And tell me about those school experiences. Were the other children good to you—

W: I didn't like it. I didn't like it. I wasn't prepared. See, Brother Hayes taught school over here and he taught seven grades. How much time can a person put in with each class, teaching seven grades in a day's time? And English—I didn't know anything about English. I was given algebra; I wasn't prepared for that. I didn't have a good background in arithmetic, and I just simply wasn't good in arithmetic. It was really hard. To make it even worse, every time we'd walk down the hall, somebody would go [rapidly covers and uncovers her mouth while vocalizing] and this was maddening. This was the really bad part, because even if you didn't know English and arithmetic you could have learned it if you didn't dread going to school and having to face all those situations. Momma, she always said—now, I

told her how they did us, and she said, "Well, don't you get in any trouble, because I'm sending you to school to get an education." Well, she was real strict and I was scared of her. [Laughter] And so, I took a lot of that every day. Somebody would be smart and do things like that. And then one day, this one girl in particular—she always did it in front of a crowd—so as I went to my locker, she made this same sound. When she did—she was a big girl, a big red-headed girl—I beat her head all up against that locker. It made lots of noise, it sounded like I was killing her because the locker was metal. I told her I would scalp her. I didn't know how to scalp people, but she believed me. And she became a very good friend of mine. She didn't ever do that again.

E: Do you remember your principal or your teacher being kind to you? You remember who your principal or your teacher was?

W: Well, the principal was Mr. Sullivan.

E: Yes. He was very much interested in you Indian children. He tried, but he couldn't control everything that pertained to you, I know that much.

W: I had one teacher named Mrs. Wade. She was young and she was really good. And my English teacher was Mrs. Nida Dupass, and she helped me a lot. But it didn't make it easy. In fact, I didn't want to go to school after that happened. I didn't even enjoy going to school until the last year that I went.

E: It was a great day when you graduated—

W: I didn't graduate.

E: No, didn't graduate.

W: Because I was going into eleventh and at that time the eleventh was as far as you went, and I had already started. In wintertime, Momma didn't get to make pots. Well, she made 'em, but they didn't get to sell 'em 'cause there wasn't a market for 'em. Every day you'd ask for ten or fifteen cents for this or that. And you think that's nothing now, but then it was just almost impossible to have ten or fifteen cents. So, she said, "I just haven't got it." I was taking home economics and I had to have money for my pattern and clothes. And she said, "I just don't have it. You'll just have to quit." So, I quit.

E: That's such a pity because if friends in the community had known, it seems that many people would have been willing to have helped out on things like that, or maybe Mr. Sullivan would have seen that you had it. But I can see how discouraged you'd get. What about the other four that entered with you? Did they continue or did they stop too?

W: No, they all stopped well before I did.

E: So, none of the four that entered with you got to graduate.

W: No.

E: Then after you stopped school, what did you do then?

W: Well, I got married.

E: And where was your home when you married?

W: When I married, Momma had remarried, and she lived in an old house that had been in her grandmother's. It stood right out in front of this house. We lived in it until we built this one.

E: Now, tell me your husband's full name. I don't think we've put that on the record.

W: Horace Gary Wade.

E: Then you had children. How many children did you have?

W: We have three children, one girl and two boys.

E: Are they married?

W: They're all married and two of them have children of their own now.

E: Tell me your children's names.

W: My oldest child is Sherry Osborne. She has four children. Horace Gary Wade, Jr., he has two children. Michael, he doesn't have any children. He's my baby.

E: I believe Sherry Osborne lives on the location where Chief Blue used to live, just across from the church.

W: Well, yes, Chief Blue lived in that house.

E: In that house.

W: Yes.

E: Who did Sherry marry?

W: She married a Mormon missionary from Escalante, Utah: Milton Osborne.

E: He is the ruling elder or the bishop now here, is that right?

W: He's the bishop of our church now.

E: Now, I believe a tape has already been made by Sherry. What about your other boy, one boy lives in Rock Hill?

W: Yes, and he works at the bleachery.

E: He has children?

W: Two.

E: Two children.

W: Two children. And Michael, he works at Champion Dental Lab. He makes false teeth.

E: That's a good job there.

W: Yes. [Laughter] In fact, he asked me just a few weeks ago, "Momma, when are you gonna get your teeth pulled so I can make you some false teeth?" [Laughter].

E: [Laughter] Did your boys marry Indian girls?

W: No, they didn't.

E: They married White girls?

W: Yes.

E: I notice that's very often the case. Both your boys have good jobs. I know you're proud of the work they're doing.

W: Yes, I am. Just like any other mother, I guess.

[Break in recording]

E: This is a continuation of my visit with Frances Wade and we're talking about the education of her children. Frances, you didn't get to go to college yourself or quite finish high school. What about your children? Did they have a better chance?

W: Yes, they did. Sherry finished high school and she went to college—Winthrop—for two years. Gary Jr. finished high school and so did Michael.

E: You have something to be proud of. What grandchildren do you have in school now?

W: Well, we have three grandchildren. Gary, Jr. has a daughter, Rhonda. She will be in the third grade. Greg belongs to Sherry and he will be in the third grade. And Todd will be in the second grade. He, too, belongs to Sherry.

E: Two of them go to Lesslie to school and the other goes where?

W: She goes to Charlotte. She lives in Charlotte with her mother.

E: Oh, yes. There was some racial discrimination when you tried to go to school, I'm sorry to say. But your children, are they treated like all other children in school now?

W: I really think so. I think that they are.

E: The children at Lesslie School—they're probably more Indian children there than anywhere else. I believe Lesslie School takes a special interest in Indian children. Do you find that is true?

W: Well, I think so. The teachers were always good to my children. I was interested in what was going on. I became a grade mother and all of that when they were in Lesslie. Also, when they went to high school and they would have open house, I was always there because I wanted to know who was teaching my child and what they thought of my children.

E: You've come a long way. I wish that the tape that you are making could also record your home because this is a lovely home, sitting on top of a hill overlooking the valley almost as far as across the Catawba River. This living room is beautifully furnished with some of the Indian things here, but it's a very modern, very comfortable, very lovely home. So, Mrs. Wade has come a long way, not only in building a home, making a home, but she's come a long way in

the kind of work she does. I want you to especially talk about the work you do in the wintertime.

W: Nine months out of the year, I teach two groups of young people here on the Catawba Reservation. I start early in the morning. Maybe I'd better tell you what I teach first.

E: That'd be fine.

W: I teach in our church. I teach each class one hour a day. One year I teach the Old Testament. The next year I teach the New Testament. The following year I teach the Book of Mormon. The following year I teach the Restored Church, and this, the Restored Church, is dealing with how our church was founded and things concerning the early people who founded it. I get up early in the morning, about a quarter 'til five. I get ready and I leave my home before it gets daylight. That's the one thing that I don't like about it because I'm afraid to get outdoors. But I go and pick up the students. All of these students go to Rock Hill High and they're from ninth through the twelfth grade. I go and pick 'em up at their homes. They get up early and be ready and waiting for me when I get there. The earliest student I get is about a quarter 'til six, I think. And I bring them down to what was the schoolhouse. It belongs to the church now and is used as part of the church. We have class for one hour. I, in turn, pick 'em up once again and take them to high school. I can't get 'em all in the car at one time, so part of 'em, they take turns about riding on the bus.

E: Now, when do they get their breakfast? Before they meet you in the morning?

W: Yes, they eat early before I pick 'em up. By the time we get finished with our lessons then part of them board the bus—it comes right out by the old schoolhouse—and I take the remainder on to school. At 2:30 in the afternoon, once again I leave my house. I go to the schools then and pick up the students in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. I bring them to the schoolhouse and teach them for one hour and then I take them all back to their homes.

E: You have to go to Leslie School to pick up these, and what other schools?

W: Oh, my. I go to Belleview, Sullivan, Castle Heights, Lesslie. Lesslie, that's—

E: Number—

W: Number two.

E: Right. Do you have any idea how far you drive every day?

W: Yes, I do. I drive a hundred and twenty-one miles per day.

E: That's amazing.

W: It's lots of miles, I realize that.

E: I'm thinking about that schoolhouse. When you go in the early mornings, you have to turn on your gas heat to heat the room?

W: Well, we have oil heat. There is a little gas heater in there, but we have a big oil heater in there and it stays on.

E: So, it is comfortable for you in the cold wintertime?

W: Yes. There have been times when we have gone in there and for some reason or another the heat was accidentally tripped off or something. I remember, year before last, I guess—maybe it was the year before that—but it was four degrees one morning. We went in there and there was not one bit of heat. I said, "You all

will have to go to my house." I said, "Everybody gather up your books and your notebooks." They said, "Well, let's just stay here and see what it's like." And we stayed there in that cold, cold room and we had our lesson. There's just so many things that I remember that's tied up with that. I've been teaching for twelve years. I had decided I wouldn't teach anymore after I finished this past season, but some of the students that's gonna graduate from high school this year asked, "Please teach," and I guess I'm an old softie where children or young people are concerned, so I agreed.

E: About how many do you have in the high school group?

W: Last year I had twenty-five.

E: That's a large group. And in the younger children, how many do you have?

W: Nineteen.

E: That's a big crowd. They're enthusiastic about what they're learning. I believe they keep notebooks, too?

W: Yes, they keep notebooks. They keep notes on what they learn, and they each have a book of their own. In all the years that I've been teaching, there is always some students who were not able to buy their own and I always end up buying. For instance, last year I bought myself a Bible, which I do almost every time we study the Bible because somebody doesn't have one and I end up giving mine away. And I bought myself four Bibles last year.

E: That's good that you do that.

W: But I in turn ended up giving them all to students who didn't have one.

E: Not only do you want to teach these children, but you want to get them actively related to the needs of the community and to the needs of the church. How do you relate to your classes, your young people, to the needs of the church here?

W: Well, the thing that I try to do is to teach 'em gospel principles. I try to help 'em to see that everything that they do in life each day, it won't only help them for today, but it'll help them for tomorrow and for years to come. Always you don't get that point across, but you try. I've heard several of 'em say that every morning it gives them a good feeling after they've had a lesson and it makes 'em ready to go to school and they feel like they're ready to take on anything. Of course, that's sometimes way out too **goin'** today, you know, but if you can project some sort of feeling like that to young people and make 'em want to do something that's good and worthwhile.

E: Is there a young people's group in the church then that meet together for prayer and Bible study or for that sort of thing?

W: This year we're going to study the Restored Church and last year we studied the New Testament. That's what it is, just what we're studying. Our seminary class is the study of the Gospel. At the end of every month, in fact, we have a testimony meeting. All those young people stand on their feet and bear their testimony to the truthfulness of what they think that the Bible is. I just can't tell somebody else, really, the joy that I get.

E: I think that is wonderful. Now, I hear through the young people that they have a high moral standard of living in the way they dress, the way they act, the way

they do not drink, and they do not abuse drugs as others do. Would you comment on the moral standard of your young people?

W: You have to start off in the beginning. It's hard to get up early in the morning. All of these young people are getting up because they want to. There has to be something that motivates them to get up. And so, I like to think that what they're learning has something to do with it. It's true. They're taught not to drink, to smoke; we don't drink tea nor coffee. Of course, we don't say anything about any other denomination or people that do, because that's not our goal at all, but that's just what our church teaches. I hope they don't take drugs and you hope that they don't drink and smoke, but everybody has their free agents and there's bound to be some that will be different even though they know different.

E: You're still a very young person yet, but you have lived a remarkable life tying the old with the new, from the time that your mother made pottery to sell, and you got your education at high school, and now you raised a family. You've seen a whole strata of history. I want to know, what do you think about the present status of the Indians today. Is it better than it was years ago? Are there more opportunities for you now?

W: Certainly! Every opportunity! The only reason any Indian would not have anything today is because he or she hasn't set any goals and tried to work toward them.

E: Any kind of a job is open to an Indian now?

W: If he or she is qualified, I would certainly say so.

E: What kind of work do you think most of them are best suited for? You know more of them than I do.

W: I just really don't know. I know that, given the opportunity, I think most Indians would be good with their hands, whatever they did. I really think that. But there's lots of different jobs that the people perform now because they were, in a sense like me, they didn't get the opportunity or the education or the training to go into something maybe that they would like to be, because when I was little, I always thought I'd like to be a nurse.

E: You have quite a few Indians who are nurses.

W: Yes.

E: Then you have quite a number of boys who're doing electrical or mechanical work, don't you?

W: Yes, we have one young man that's into computers. He works at General Tire in Charlotte.

E: Who's that boy?

W: Jackie Canty, my brother's son.

E: Oh, yes. It's amazing to me how many different kinds of work your people are doing now, which shows their determination to make something of themselves. What about the Tribal unity? A good many of you still live on the old reservation. You live in Rock Hill, you live on the new reservation, but is there unity of spirit among your people yet, you think?

W: I think so. I think that you don't really notice it too much until something doesn't go exactly right. Then you see it in little ways that you know that that feeling of closeness is there.

E: What do you mean? How is it demonstrated, in time of sorrow or death?

W: Yes, that's the way I see it mostly. If somebody here would die, almost every Indian would come and pay his respects or do whatever he could to help in time of need.

E: Also, very few people here on the reservation are on welfare, is that right?

W: That's true and that makes me feel real good. I think any people ought to be self-sustaining. I think they should take care of themselves if they're able.

E: Do you have a store of supplies to take care of needy cases on the reservation?

W: We don't have a storehouse here. In our church, we have storehouses scattered throughout the church, but in our particular section we don't. If there's a needy family down here that has to have something, though, they can go to the church and the bishop will look into it and take care of it. We never know who he sees. If I were in need—which, thank goodness, I have never had to ask—and I would go to the bishop, no one else would need ever know that. I think it's a good thing because lots of people maybe would go lacking because they would not want to ask. I think that I might be one of 'em. [Laughter]

E: [Laughter] Now, in the pictures you and I were looking at a moment ago, you remember we saw a picture of your mother and accidentally happened to have a picture of your home. It was a good home for that day—wooden building, weather boarded—and your children were outside, probably playing around outside and working. And now is this new home of yours, you're living on the old reservation, then, you don't own a title to this, do you?

W: No, we don't.

E: But you own your own home?

W: Yes.

E: And your husband works where?

W: Well, my husband works at two jobs. He works at the bleachery and then he works in a cabinet shop.

E: So, it's been a long, wonderful way that you've come from the home here in which you were born to this home on top of the hill, isn't it?

W: That's right, it sure has.

E: Then your first home was just a little bit in front of this building here.

W: Just directly in front of this. In fact, I can picture the outline of it right in front of this house. And we built. You know, down on this reservation, since you don't hold a title, you can't borrow money. So, if you get anything—oh, other than cars or furniture, you could probably get that on credit—but things permanent, like your home, you couldn't borrow money to get it built. So, at the time Gary could have gotten a G. I. loan and we could have built somewhere else. But I'm Indian. I love this part of the country. I love this place and I didn't want to go and neither did he. So, he said, "Well, we'll build us a house." And built it we did. I had black fingernails around here for a long time. [Laughter] We built every year when he got his vacation. It took us about five years before we even got in it. We took his vacation check, his Christmas club check, and we'd buy the top or we'd buy the floor, and this is the way we done it. It's not finished yet. I don't know when it will be completed, but it's ours.

E: Your very own. You've been visiting other Indian Tribes. You've been west. You've been to Cherokee reservation I know. How does this section of the country, your reservation here, compare with others you've seen?

W: Much better. I just wouldn't want to live in any other section. Out west, when we were going, we saw houses that the planks were just so far apart, in fact, that you could see inside of their house. And it was just miles and miles. We actually saw Indians living in old cars. I don't know how they did it. When you go to Cherokee, all you see is the gift shops and all of those things. But the Indians here are farther advanced even though they don't have the education that some of those other Tribes have.

E: You're proud of your past and you're hopeful for the future. Does that express it for you?

W: It surely does.

E: You're really proud of it.

W: I'm proud that I'm an Indian and I'm just proud that I was born in this section of the country. I hope that what little I know about Indians, that I can project it into those young people to let 'em know that to be an Indian is not to be ashamed and to be an Indian is not to live in poverty either. You can be whatever you want to be. All you've got to do is set your goal and work for it.

[End of interview]

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