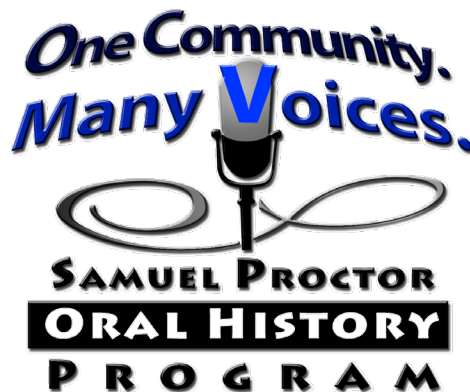


# Lawrence Howard George

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)  
CAT-013**

**Interview by:**

**Jerry Lee  
January 16, 1972**



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**CAT 013 Lawrence Howard George**  
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**1 hour, 9 minutes | 53 pages**

**Abstract:** Lawrence Howard George reflects on his life experiences growing up on the Catawba Reservation up to his life in Rock Hill, South Carolina. He describes life on the reservation, living in Ohio selling pottery, and his experience at a Native American festival and conference there. He shares his experience regarding discrimination against Indians, specifically legislation that allowed for integration with Whites, although he and his wife were married before this passed. He spoke about his and his father's careers with the Highway Department, where he has worked his entire life. He also speaks about his experience living and working without any education, as well as how he felt about attending an adult education school. He ends the interview speaking about how Catawba land was sold to the government, as well as what the then current rules were for building a home on the Catawba Reservation.

**Keywords:** [Catawba Nation; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Oral biography; Segregation]

**SAMUEL PROCTOR**  
**ORAL HISTORY**  
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**University of Florida**

CAT 013

Interviewee: Lawrence Howard George

Interviewer: Jerry Lee

Date of Interview: January 16, 1972

L: This is Jerry Lee, and I'm sitting in the living room of a Howard George. Mr.

George, where do you live? What is your address here?

G: 1172 East Black Street, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

L: And how far is this from the reservation?

G: About eight, nine miles from where I'm standing, where we are sitting now.

L: Is Howard George your full name?

G: Lawrence Howard George.

L: Lawrence. How old are you, Mr. George?

G: Forty years old.

L: Do you know what year you were born?

G: 1931.

L: How many children do you have?

G: Seven.

L: Know their names?

G: Lonnie, Tommy, Fanny, Rita, Peggy, Neil, Kathy.

L: Who were your parents?

G: John Marvin George and Evelyn Brown, then she married my father.

L: Are you a full-blooded Catawba Indian?

G: Supposed to be, that's what they told me. [Laughter] I don't want to say or not now, I'm not going to say or not. But that's what they's told me I was. I reckon so.

L: Is your wife an Indian?

G: No, sir.

L: Where'd you meet your wife at?

G: On the bank of the Catawba River, down at the pier, down there in 1950. Right?

And so, we start talking to one another back and forth and then translating letters. My granddaddy done my writing for me. And then, 'bout, seven, eight years later we got married to one another, and raised a happy family, and that's what we've got now.

L: Anybody have any objection to an Indian marrying a White woman? Or—

G: Well, back in 1927, I think it was, [19]27, [19]28, they claimed they hadn't passed a law up 'til then. They wouldn't want Indians and the Whites to mingle together. Said there was too much trouble for 'em. They didn't want 'em, you know, to go associate with one another and all that. But now, since up to today, they can go to school with 'em, like everybody else goes to school with one another, you know. And now, they can go to school with 'em, go to church with 'em, go the hospital, same doctor and everything and all that. But, then in 1928 and [19]27, well we had our own **believing** doctors. We had our own doctor, but he was a White doctor. He was a Hill. And he used to come over there into the reservation, when I stayed in the reservation down there. Had his own horse, came in on an old buggy. And he'd pull that old buggy down. And he'd drive that buggy over there and he'd deliver the little babies in the world. Then when the bigger people, the men-folks was sick, well he'd bring them a little something to give them, some kind of medicine to help them along. I don't know what it would be or nothing, but he'd help them all he could and so. They got out, and that happened while they—President Roosevelt—he passed a law then that said they let 'em go

to school with the White and then—said because they could learn more, 'cause they weren't learning nothing on they own, 'cause they's just learning about Indians. So, President Roosevelt passed a law where you could go to school with the White and you know, anybody, individual people, I call them. So, well, they went ahead and went to school with 'em and they passed. Then they went started going to school with them and talking back and forth. So then, back then, they started translating them, letting them go ahead and let them get married to one another. Said they's letting them marry one another so he could, you know, when he got—they married. And they started marrying one another. Well, I jumped up and married me a White woman. And I thought it was a big deal 'cause you could marry a White woman and you couldn't marry your own race of people. Well, in a way you could marry your own people down at the reservation. Down there on Catawba Indian Reservation, you're marrying your own kinfolk. We're all kin, one way or another, you know that. We all some kin to one another. We all got aunts down there, and great aunts, and great-great aunts, and then uncles and great uncles and all kind of cousins, all type of cousins. Just like my baby brother, now he married his own third cousin, and I say that was foolish.

L: What was his name?

G: Wayne George.

L: Wayne?

G: Yes. You know him, I would imagine. I wouldn't say you do, I imagine you do, but I'm sure. But I look at it this way, if you're gonna marry anybody, marry somebody who ain't no relation to you, I think. But if you do, one of these old

days if you do marry somebody, it might not be so—but I always told—my granddaddy told me, you marry close kin to you, if you marry someone really close kin to you, your children will be handicapped somewhere, they'll be born deformed, maybe with their hand somewhere, leg, or maybe come with a half ear, fingers missing, something like that. And then he said that he knowed some of his people married like that to people, and he said that their children was born blind. And so, they claimed that's what caused what's wrong with the Indians down there now. Lot of 'em married a lot of close kin you know, and that's what messed them up, and then they even, no Indian, no more like that. So, I just said, when I had the opportunity to get married, and I told him, when I was coming up, I said, "When I get married, I'm gonna marry me a White woman. Where I know I wouldn't be related to 'em." So, he said, "You got, in your daddy's people," said, "On the George family, there ain't no George. That's a White man's name. His name is Billy Bowleg. That's an Indian name." So, I didn't know, still don't know, and I don't know whose name it is or nothing. But they claim it's an Indian name and all that. So, I was talking down to a fella in Columbia, South Carolina, over the weekend—not this weekend, last weekend. I went down, I work with the highway department. So, he said, "George, I understand you're Indian?" And I said, "Yes sir, I'm supposed to be full-blooded Indian, just like that." Well, he said, "Full-blooded Indian, bald head?" And I said, "Yes, sir." He laughed, and he said, "Ain't nothing, we bald-headed and we ain't full White people. I'm a Black Dutch and my wife's German, so what?" And I said, "Well ain't nothing, makes no difference." He went ahead and talked a little bit and talked and he said, "Well,

I'm gonna give you something." I accepted it and said, "Thank you," and he gave me a notebook, with some writing in it. And he said, "Well, I'm gonna tell you, George ain't no—that's a White man's name—do you know what your proper name stands for?" I told him, "No sir, I wouldn't have no idea." He said, "Well, I'm gonna tell you what your proper name is, it's 'White Cloud.' That's an Indian name, White Cloud." And I said, "Well, that's an Indian name, I appreciate it." He said, "Well, that's what your Indian name is, 'White Cloud.' George is 'White Cloud.'" And I laughed, and I let out a big curse word. He said, "Don't curse it daggum, you gotta be thankful!" [Laughter] So I said, "Well, you know how I am, I'm ready to curse something and if I get excited, I might say anything." He said, "We's one time gonna talk about y'all people. We's studying a bunch of y'all history books about y'all Indians, but nobody don't wanna talk to us about y'all. How come, what's wrong with y'all, y'all scared of us or what?" I said, "I ain't never been scared of nobody, I whopped old Juto Larson one time back up side of the wall. Big as a wall he is, I 'tack, 'tacked him." He laughed, he said, "I understand that. So, you got a good knowledge about you, shouldn't talk about like talk about the Indians." I told him, "If I know anything, I'll try to answer." So, he talked and then he said, "Oh yes, I got a question. You sent to me about—you went to Ohio, didn't you?" I told him, "Yes, sir." He said, "Well, tell me something about that." "Well, I'll tell you what I know, that's all I can tell ya," I said, "I don't know more." So, I said what I done, I went up there in 1971, in July, I stayed up to two weeks. And I met, I think it was thirty-seven families of Indians up there.

Well, there's more than that, but those are the ones I met. And they's all different Tribes of Indians at that time.

L: What were some of the names?

G: There was Shawnee, Pawnee, Creek, and Apache. And there wasn't no Sioux. I looked, I know the Sioux Indians. There's a few Cherokees there. And I was the onliest Catawba Indian in the bunch. I felt like a black sheep of the family 'cause I was the onliest Catawba Indian there. But they said, they wanted to know what was the—I asked the man—what was the meaning of this, he said, “Well, we comes here every year, have a convention,” said, “The Governor of Ohio is an Indian hisself. He's three-fourths White and he's Indian anyway, he still believes in Indians, you know.” So, he said, “Well, we're gonna have a convention here, before you go back we'll give a big party for you.” And I said, “Well, thank you, appreciate it.” And he said, “**No thanks at all**, we got some clothes for you we're gonna give you, if you don't mind.” And I said, “No, I'll accept anything, I appreciate anything anybody give me, I don't care who it is or nothing. I'll accept anything.” Things like that, you know. He said, “Well, I appreciate that.” So, I jumped in, and go back to the place where I was staying at. And that next day, they called me and said to come to the town, they were gonna have a party up town.

L: What town was this?

G: Cleveland.

L: Cleveland, Ohio?



G: Well, it wasn't right in Cleveland, Ohio. It was out 'bout forty miles from Cleveland. A town called Salem, Ohio, its population of seventy-five thousand. Well, we get there, and we went to that town, and they put on that big party, and they started dancing, all that Indian dancing and singing and carrying on and beating on drums, and they just split the town half in two. They had all you could eat, and all the soft drinks you could drink, and all that good stuff back then. And so, the old man told me then, he said, "You leave us, we're gonna give you something to go away with." Well, they give me clothes, and children's clothes, and I can go back today, believe it or not, and get clothes from those people, and ain't never been on nobody's back. Some of them have and some of 'em ain't, then they like new, and everything I got on right now was given to me from them people up there today. And I've got clothes in the house here, they've brung to me and sent to me. And if it wasn't for them nice people up there, well you see, most of 'em is Indian up there, they all Indians up there. There are very few Whites, there ain't no colored people in that town and nowhere in a hundred miles, neither way you look, east, west, south, north.

L: Who was over the Indians?

G: The government. The government, they call him Bright Eyes, Chief White Bright Eyes.

L: He was over the ...

G: The Indian.

L: ... all the Indians.

- G: Yes, that's right. And he was an Indian, but he was three-fourths White, but he was still—you could tell he was Indian.
- L: Where did y'all stay when you were up there?
- G: We stayed in a log cabin they built for 'em. People toured through there, and they had cabins they just throw together, just like—I don't know how you would call 'em—I call 'em like these little houses you build 'round here in North and South Carolina, you know these prefab houses?
- L: Yes.
- G: Well, they just throw them houses up, and then they can tear 'em down and put them back, store 'em back, and they put them up every year like that. Have tents like that, they're the same way. And they fix all that stuff up like that, and make it up and all that, and then they take it, fix it up, and they get through all this stuff, well they just take it down and store it in a big old—I call it a big old building, you know. And so, they, laugh about it, talk about it, and you can see—you can tell when something is gonna happen like that, 'cause they say the world stands still for maybe two days up there for them, 'til they get set up and get ready to start their work up. When everything starts, boats whistling, hauling I call it, you know, these tugboats start whistling, going on. Trains quit blowing, cars quit blowing, and they quit traveling. And they got a big street, three cars coming down, it's like going down Main Street, and three going up, and it's six-lane traffic, and they block the road straight off. And you can tell, when they—
- L: And the Indians get out there and—

G: And the Indians get in the middle of the street there and they just paint the—it's what's called "paint the town red." They just have that one big street, about six blocks of it, all one big street there. All the Indians and the Whites, they all get together and just celebrate 'bout like they did when Columbia come to America. And they talk and laugh and—they just have parties, and they eat and associate with one another, and they put on **daggum** plays, just like when the Indians discovered—I mean, when the White man discovered America. But it's an amazing thing to look at, I mean it's real nice. I've got a book here somewhere in the house here somewhere that shows some parts of that, if you ever wanna look at it.

L: Yeah, I'd like to look at it maybe later.

G: Well.

L: I'd like to ask you, you mentioned a Doctor Hill earlier.

G: Yes.

L: Do you know where he was from?

G: He was from down—no he lived down about two miles out of the reservation.

L: Was he an Indian?

G: No sir, he was a White man.

L: But he lived on—

G: He was the doctor for the Indians.

L: Well, you said that they'd passed a law for the Indians not to marry the Whites in the [19]20s.

G: That's right.

L: Who passed this law? Do you—

G: The government—I mean the—Wait a minute I'll tell you ...

U1: The government—

G: No.

U1: Claimed that—

G: No.

U1: In 1961.

G: It was in [19]61? Yes.

U1: Right up then when they set up that the new reservation and give it to the Indians to sell.

G: Mhm, that's right, it was 1961, they passed a law then where the Indians.

U1: For them to keep it? 'Cause me and you had been married, because we had been married for about, I don't know for sure, but they said we wasn't legally married 'til then, and they passed it then. But we had been married a long time. I had all my children but Neil and Kathy, so it must've been about ten, eleven years ago.

L: So, they actually declared that before that you were illegally married.

G: We wasn't legally married.

L: Right. You'd being an Indian and she a White woman, in 1961, you were legally married.

G: And that was a long—I mean, just to think about that—thirteen, fourteen years ago.

U1: And we married in 19 ...

G: We got married in 1951.

U1: [19]52.

G: Was it [19]52?

L: You said that your grandfather had told you about marrying your own race and all. Who was your grandfather?

G: His name was John—I mean Early Burly Morgan Brown.

L: Say that name again?

G: [Speaking slower] Early Burly Morgan Brown. And he was a full-blooded Catawba Indian too.

L: Did he speak the language?

G: Some, but not much. Now, there was another fella who we used to call Old Chief Blue. I know you and all of your people have hear talked of him many a time. Now, he could speak it, but he wasn't no Indian. He was what you call half-Indian. He was about, I'd say, about a third Indian and the rest was White. And—but they claimed—they called him Chief Blue and all this, called him that. I didn't pay it no attention because I look at it this way, all of us got flesh and feelings just like one another. I think if you see a man going down the street and you say, well, there goes a Black man, then they say, "Why you want to start a rumpus about something or other?" And then if you see an Indian man going down the street and they say, "There go an old redskin." Well, there you gonna start another fight and then, there you go, so.

L: What—back to your early life, Mr. George. Where were you born at?

G: I was born on the Indian reservation.

L: The old Indian reservation, the government land?

G: Yes, sir.

L: What type of home did you live in?

G: Just an ordinary house, just an old plank house. I could stay late in the bed at night, and look up through the ceiling there and count the stars in the sky.

L: Did y'all have any plumbing?

G: No, sir.

L: Were your parents real strict on ya?

G: Well, certain things they were and certain things they weren't.

L: Who did the discipline in the home? Your father or your mother?

G: Well, both at times.

L: What type of work did you do when you were small?

G: Well, I helped my old man. He worked in the—he done WPA work. I imagine you hear talk about it in **Shorbett**. He done WPA work. That's when they build these roads and things, you know, like these I-77, they built roads like that. But they did the grading work and then they would come along with another crowd and do the blacktop work. Now, these days, they don't do nothing like that no more. They just contract to do it all, one way, you know, one whole thing, all the time. Grade it and then blacktop it all. Back then, they didn't do that. They just had one crew do grade work and the other crew would come from somewhere else. And he said he remembered when they did the old 21 here, from Columbia to Rock Hill.

L: About what year was that?

G: That was in—well, let's see. Must have been in 1935. I ain't sure but I believe that's what it was. He said he'd know when they come through Rock Hill, and he got a job with 'em and they went to work there. And they sent for us, the government did, from Ohio, to come to Ohio and go work up there. We went up there and made pottery up there. And made bead work. And when we made the pottery and beadwork, I believe we stayed up there from [19]35 to 1945, and uh—

L: Who in all stayed up in Ohio?

G: My mother, my father, my granddad, my grandmother, and myself. And my baby brother.

L: You all moved to ...

G: Moved from down here in the reservation to the state of Ohio.

L: What part of Ohio?

G: There in New Philadelphia. That's just four miles from Salem, where I went to on my vacation.

L: Before I go on, do you know how much money your dad made when he was working for the WPA?

G: No, sir, I sure don't. If I knew, I'd be glad to tell you all that.

L: When you all lived in Ohio, what kind of homes did you live in there?

G: Tepees.

L: You actually lived in tepees?

G: Lived in tepees, just like they did hundreds of years ago.

L: And you made pottery?

G: Made pottery, and then we made it and sold it. You'd get a sale just like wildfire. Then in about a month, maybe a year or two later in 1940, we made so much of it, we had a store building. We called it storage, you know, way back for summer for we make it all in winter months and then in summer months, we'd sell it. They'd sell it, and so they couldn't sell it that year, for some reason, I don't know what got wrong with it. They couldn't do nothing with it. Then they told my granddaddy, said, "Well, can't sell it. Just couldn't do nothing with it. I'm gonna have to send you all back to South Carolina for some reason. Wish I could sell y'all's pottery, but I can't sell it. If I could sell it, so I'll send back for you." And that was in 1944. So, my granddaddy, he gets up and he walks around the old tent and he looks down the road and he says, "Well, it's been a rough winter here, I wonder how it is at home." Then my mother speaks up and my grandmother said, "Well, the onliest way you can find out is we go home and see." So, they kept talking back and forth, seesawing back and forth at one another, wanting to go home, go home. So, they gets up and they leaves, and we all jumps up and leave from up there and comes back home, down to Rock Hill, South Carolina. And we come back here and stayed, and they said they had a pretty rough winter. Done lost maybe five or six families, we didn't know nothing, we knew them but we didn't know nothing about it 'til they died and passed on. And—

L: Excuse me, did they die from cold? Or ...

G: Yes sir, hunger and cold.

L: The Indian families died?

G: That's right.



L: Down here on the reservation?

G: That's right. So, they said then, then they fixed it where the government could come in and help 'em out. The government, he come in here every third week, he'd come in here to Rock Hill and he'd send some kind of big truck out there, with all the food and stuff he could and clothes for the evenings. If they were willing to help themselves, why, he's willing to help them. But the one wouldn't wanna help themselves, well, he wouldn't want to help them!

L: Do you know any of the names of the people who sent this food out?

G: What, down to the Indians?

L: Yes, sir.

G: No, sir. I don't know. Let's see, I'd say there's a Faircloth, he's from Westminster, South Carolina, and then there was one from Bishop, South Carolina, he was a Williams. Now, the other two, I don't know.

L: They were the government?

G: No, sir, they was working under the government. And as they'd bring the stuff here, you know, they'd distribute it out to the Indians. They'd bring you clothes and food, and then shoes, like that. And then they'd see to it you got food enough to go to school with, you know, and something to carry you over three or four more weeks and then they'd come back again. And that's the way we got started and they started helping us, and then we'd start helping them and looking out for them and they'd look out for us. Well, when Roosevelt was the president then, he passed a law where Indians and Whites could marry one another, so they said we wanna start going to school with the Whites.

L: Well, what about your early life, in the tepees, in Ohio? Y'all have outdoor toilets and all?

G: Yes sir.

L: And you were used to that, if you didn't have them.

G: That's right.

L: What about your younger life when you were a kid? Did you go to school?

G: Well, I had the opportunity to go to school, but see, my mother and father then, they had ten or twelve children, I forget the exact—eight children at the time. No one to tend to 'em, 'cause they're so mean and aggravating. You know how kids is today, well, we were the same way, so they didn't have nobody to tend to 'em, so I just told her, well, I'll volunteer to stay home and tend to 'em. So, I didn't get no education. I'd see to it they went to school, I'd get up—they'd get up and go to work and leave me there—and I'd see to it they'd go to school. They had to walk in snow and rain for about three or four miles to school.

L: Where was the school at?

G: Outside of the reservation, about two miles out of the reservation. You know where the school's at today, I reckon, right about along where it's at now. And we lived way back down next to the riverbank. Down probably about, oh, I'd say **three hundred** yards from the river, maybe further than that.

L: Well, how old were you then? When you had to help your brothers and sisters. All the time you were growing up?

G: Yes sir, ever since I've been big enough to know what kids was like, up 'til I was grown and went to start staying with my granddaddy.

L: What's the first job you ever had?

G: State highway department.

L: You worked for the state highway department?

G: On up 'til now.

L: Where did you work at?

G: Oh, I ran a ferry down at the Catawba River. It was operated by the state highway department. I stayed there from 19—let's see, the old man, he went there in [19]45, same year we come from Ohio, and I went there in [19]50, and I stayed there with him—well, I stayed off and on with him, but I didn't stay all that much with him. And then in [19]50 I went to work with the highway department, and I've been with them ever since.

L: Tell me about this ferry, where was the ferry located at?

G: Well, it was located—well there's a highway down there now called Number 5 Highway, right behind Bowater plant. But back then it used to call it 504. It used to be an old county road. And so, they just had that road down there. When it would get real bad and rough, well, you wouldn't see a car maybe for two or three days. Then maybe you would, maybe you wouldn't. But in the summertime they would work you to death because it was just operated by poles, push it back and forth across the river, and it's an amazing thing just to look at and think about.

L: How big was this?

G: Well it would hold three automobiles, or else you could put two tractor trailers on it, just two trucks by itself, you know.

- L: How many people did it take to push it across?
- G: Two, three. Well, one person could do it, but if you wanted to get across fast, you could take and put three people on there and operate it a whole lot quicker and faster.
- L: And how much did y'all charge to take people across?
- G: Well, see it was operated by a government and the government give to the ... **They generally**—well my granddaddy told me he operated it, and they'd give him maybe forty dollars a month. So, they told him to stay there for a while and then they turned it over to the state highway department. He wasn't there long and the highway department took it over and they put a motor on it and they operated it by motor then. So, then, they discontinued it in 1959.
- L: How much did you make when you worked on the ferry?
- G: I started off at exactly sixty-five cents an hour. And then, worked up to where I'm at now and [Laughter] I ain't making not all that much now.
- L: And you've been with the highway department for how many years now?
- G: Seventeen and a half years.
- L: Will you retire when you reach twenty years?
- G: Well, they claim I could, but they said—I mean, I was talking to the superintendent Thursday and he said I could but I wouldn't draw the whole benefit, or whatever you wanna call it. I don't know how to explain 'cause I ain't got that good education to say those words like he can or anybody else could. But he said he'd try to help me all he could but he'd advise me to go on you know, 'til I wasn't able to go. I told him, I'd rather do that, too, 'cause I want to

have some pleasure in my life and try a little bit of my life, you know how I'm young as I am. But one of these days I might have to give it up. And he said, "Well, they're liable to give up work and call it a day."

L: How much do you make now? Would you mind telling me?

G: No, sir, I make a dollar eighty-five. A dollar eighty-five, up to ... I make a hundred and twenty-nine dollars every two weeks. And that ain't no money for as big a family as I got. I got a clipping of a piece of paper here I want to show you, if you don't mind looking at it and if you wanna read it. I'll let you read it, 'cause I can't read it.

L: Yeah, I'll look at it later. Well, you said you had that job. Did you live in Rock Hill then?

G: With the highway department?

L: When you first took the job with the highway department.

G: No, sir, I lived next to the ferry at the time.

L: When you worked in town, how'd you get back and forth to town?

G: Well, you mean to my job?

L: Yes, sir.

G: I walked. Used to walk from the reservation up here, walked just ten-and-a-half miles from the reservation to work, and walk back. Work nine hours and then walk back in the evenings, seven days a week.

L: You walked twenty-one miles a day?

G: Yes, sir.

L: To do your job.

G: That's right.

L: That's quite unusual. Have you ever had any trouble with the White people?

G: Well, some of 'em. A lot of them—you know these young generation, what I call, coming up these days you do—but I don't pay 'em no attention myself, 'cause I say the people what's raised like that, what they call don't care. Yet I try to be good to anybody be good to me. But yet, a lot of people call me "old red Indian," all kind of stuff like that. I don't pay it no attention, 'cause we all got to live some time or another.

L: Are you proud that you're an Indian?

G: Yes, sir.

L: Have you ever felt ashamed though?

G: Well, one time when I started back to school back here, not that long ago in August, I went out there and I enrolled in school, at Rock Hill High School, and this lady she said—she had two or three in the front of me, and she said, "Well, I'll take the little gentleman behind there," and I went ahead and sat down and she said, "What are you a German, a Polack, a Dutch or what? Jew, Irish? I can't name it all, what are you?" I said, "Well, I'm a full-blooded Catawba Indian." She said, "Lord have mercy, a full-blooded Indian?" I said, "Yup." Just like that. She said, "You can't be." I said, "Well, I am." She said, "Well, I'm glad to have you in my class." So, she said, "You come regular and me and you'll get along just like man and wife, or else get on like brother and sister." And I said, "Well, if it's brother and sister then we'll be fightin' all the time." And she laughed at me, said, "No, I mean, we'll get along just fine. Now you be good to me and I'll be good to

you.” Said, “If I can help you, I’ll help you, and if you can help me, I’ll ask you for help,” but said, “I know you can’t help me, ‘cause you ain’t able to help nobody.” Said, “I’ll hear a lot of talk about you after you come out here a couple nights. I’ll trace up your race of people and talk about your people.” And she’s studying on the Catawba and she’s writing a history book about the Catawba Indians.

L: What was her name?

G: Liviston, Ms. Liviston.

L: Liviston?

G: Yes, she from Fort Mayo.

L: And, what school did you go to?

G: Rock Hill High School, night education school.

L: Adult education program?

G: Yes, sir.

L: What are you taking?

G: Just learning how to read and write better than what I know. See, I can’t read and write at all. Well I can, but not all that good, you know. I’m tryna get where I can read and write and get me a better job or something. They said that would help me get a better job. So, I thought maybe I’d do that you know, try to just get me a better job. If I could get me a better job, I could make ends meet and all like that. I ain’t worried myself ‘cause we got [inaudible 29:10] everything.

L: Do you feel like with education, you could get a better job?

G: Well, I believe I could. I ain’t gonna say I couldn’t, but I believe I could.

L: Do you regret not getting an education when you were younger?

G: Oh, yeah.

L: How does that affect your children now? Do you send them to school?

G: Every chance they get, I make 'em go. I told my boy and daughter, back when we first moved to Rock Hill, I said, "I'll make you all go to school if I have to follow behind you with a walking stick if I was ninety years old," and they laughed at me. So, they all still going except one, she dropped out and got married. I don't know what they did to her now to made fun of her because she was dark-skinned like myself, and they'd call her all kind of names and this and that.

L: What school did she go to?

G: She went to this Castle Heights, down—you cross 72, it's mostly White down there now. It used to be a colored school but they changed it up so much. You do all your schools up so much you can't tell coloreds from Whites now, these days. So, she got disgusted at it. They made fun of her, called her all kinds of names, and she didn't like it and she'd come home crying. The old lady would go down there and talk to the principals and things and they didn't try to do nothing about it, so I just told her, if she wanted, as far as my part, she could go ahead and quit. She couldn't get along with children down there, go ahead and quit.

L: Let's talk about your schooling now. What are you studying in school? How are you learning?

G: I'm learning pretty good, they started me off just like you do a little child, you know, start in the first grade, and you work up. It's pretty good I think.

L: What level are you on now?

G: Sixth grade.



L: How long have you been going to school now?

G: Ever since August.

L: August.

G: August 21. That's the year past.

L: Of [19]71.

G: Yes, sir.

L: Well, that's good, do you have any idea of how long it'll take you to finish?

G: Well, she told me—this lady what for signing up—she said when you sign up they prefer you to go for three years if you could, and said that gets you to grammar school and high school education all combined, you know. So, I said I'll try to do all I can, you know, I said, "If you help me I'll help you," I said it's like business, I told her. I said, "I'll do all I can, I'll try to stick with it as much as I can," and she said okay.

L: Was the schools that you could have attended as a child, were they very good schools?

G: Well, it was fair, I reckon you'd call it fair. I wouldn't exactly say 'cause I didn't go there much, hang around the schools, because I had them little brothers and sisters of mine to tend to. But I've heard other ones talking about it, said you could go down and sit in the door—I mean in the hallway or the door—in the classroom, and said you could see through the cracks in the classroom, look down at the floor and you could see the floor and the ground and all that. No doors on classrooms and shutters on the windows, they was all tore off half the time.

L: The home you live in now, do you think you have a pretty nice home?

G: Well, I think so. Far as my opinion, I think it is.

L: Do you rent?

G: Yes, sir.

L: How much do they charge you for that?

G: Well, twenty-four dollars a month. We've been living here, where we're at now, about seven or eight, about nine years. They've been trying to help us out. My boss, he was the one who got me the house, and he helped me all he could. He told me, said—when I first thought about moving to Rock Hill was the funniest part about it, though. He said, "You move to Rock hill, Chief, and we'll get you a home." I said, "I wouldn't stay in Rock Hill," just like that. He said, "Why?" I said, "I'm used to staying down on the reservation where I can hoot and holler when I get ready." He said, "Well, go ahead and talk it over with your ma'am and then think about it." I said okay. I went home that evening, talked to the old lady about it and she said, "Yeah, I'd like to move up there." I came back to work the next day and I told him about it. So, me and him scouted around looking for houses, different places, and they all weren't occupied for big families. So, I told my wife about it and she said she'd go up there and look around. She went up there, come to Rock Hill, looked around and she found this one that we're in now. So, come to find out the man we were renting from was my daddy's boss-man. And so he said, "Yeah, I'll let the boy have the house and be glad to let him have it." Said twenty-four dollars a month. So, we been living here 'bout nine or ten years. Ain't had no trouble or nothing.

L: All those years you walked to town and worked. Do you work out in the open?

G: Yes, sir.

L: Do you like that type of work?

G: Yes, sir, like where you can get out and holler and hoot when you get ready and you ain't crowded.

L: Well, what do you do on real cold days like today is, six degrees?

G: Like when it's real cold? Well, mostly what we do when it's real cold like today, we take and ride around and check roads for dead animals, you know, and all that stuff like that. But, if we don't find no animals or nothing, well, we find something to do. Like sometimes some of them will be patching roads. These potholes I call 'em, in the road, they patch them. But I don't, I just sit in the truck, well, mostly listen at the radio. They got a short-wave radio in the truck and he tells me, "See, you stay by the radio and if I get a call, you call me." But he be right in the truck all the time when he's telling me that and he'd be driving and I be just listening at the radio there, you know. A lot of times I answer it, a lot of times he'll answer it.

L: Do you think that if you had been a White man instead of an Indian, you think you'd have made more money?

G: I doubt it.

L: Make the same?

G: That's right, probably the same thing. No more education than I've got I know I wouldn't.

L: You feel like your education definitely has held you back.

G: That's right. I can't read and write you know—I mean, I don't know about you because I been knowing you, I reckon, a pretty good while. But you know yourself a man got a good education, he can get somewhere. Writing and reading will get you somewhere. But you know a man can't read and write, it ain't gonna help him none. When you go to a place to ask for a job, that's the first thing they ask you, how much education you got, these days.

L: Well, how large is your home here?

G: Five-room house.

L: It's five rooms?

G: Yes, sir.

L: How many children staying here now?

G: Six. My oldest daughter, she got married and moved away on her own.

L: Do you remember when they used to have Chiefs and they used to have the councils out at the reservation?

G: Yes, sir.

L: Were you ever involved in that?

G: No, sir.

L: Was your father?

G: My granddaddy was.

L: What was he?

G: He was what you call a committee, some kind of committee, I forget. I don't know what you would call that, but they said it was a committee. He talked about it. I had a picture here one time here and my mother—I mean, my sister come here

and get it and took it away, and I don't know what she was gonna do with it, she never brought it back. He was in his—he had his Indian feathers and all that on.

L: What did he do? Do you know?

G: No, sir, I sure don't. If I knew I'd be glad to answer all the question I could, but a lot of them I can't answer, but, you know, a lot of them I can.

L: Excuse me, did the old Chiefs and all, did they have a lot of power?

G: Well, it's like a governor, I reckon, I'd say. They tell you when not to do what you, not do this and not do that and then they'd say well if you go ahead and do it, well, they punish you for it. Well, they punish you on the reservation. The White man couldn't bother you for it but if you go off the reservation and get in the White man's trouble, they claim. Well, the White man had to punish you and then you had to take his punishment, you know.

L: How could the Indian Chiefs punish? I mean, do you remember?

G: No, sir. I never did learn that and I wished a thousand times I did know how they did that. I'd be punishing a bunch of my little young'uns that way. [Laughter]

L: Well, your family today, is your family pretty close today?

G: Yes, sir. We all talk over, me and my wife talk problems over. Maybe we work together, you know, work out things together. We may have a little squabble sometimes but then everybody has them, you know that.

L: Yeah. Well, you've never had any trouble with a White person, I mean as far as, you know, you just being an Indian and with the government or the police?

G: Never been in trouble in my life. As long as I been in this old earth I ain't never been locked up. I ain't never been in no kind of jail. I pay people visits, you know,

like that, went and seen people. But now as far as I've been locked up or something like that, I've never been locked up, never been in any kind of trouble.

L: Do you vote in elections?

G: No, sir.

L: Never registered?

G: [inaudible 38:39] Never did vote or anything like that.

L: Do you think it does any good to register and vote?

G: Well, I don't know, to be honest with you. It might help and it might not. I say one little old name wouldn't hurt nobody. It might help to put your name down there, maybe. Then they say we lacked one more in having enough, maybe we could have gotten him in there. And then they'll say, well, you could have voted for that man and helped to get him in that place. So, what of it? He didn't help me. He didn't help me so what's the use in me helping him?

L: You still go down to the old reservation?

G: Sometimes, yes, sir.

L: You visit a lot of your people?

G: Some of them. Just like my granddaddy's sisters, I go see them right smart, you know.

L: Well, I think you mentioned pottery you made, do y'all make pottery now?

G: Some of them do, yes, sir.

L: What about you and your family?

G: No, sir.

L: You haven't made it since you were in Ohio?

G: That's right, sir.

L: Do you know how much you got paid for the pottery?

G: Different prices, there was different sizes. You can get big sizes, little sizes, and all that. What they do, they sell it for different size and then the White man take it, they sell it to the White man and then he'd take it and he'd double his money on it. He'd sell it—maybe say, you sell it to him for maybe a dollar a pot and he'd, say, sell it for two dollars. And he'd double his money.

L: You think you were getting the short end of the deal?

G: I believe in a way I was, but that was when I was small and I didn't much care. But now I'll look at anything like that if I can catch it before it happens, I try to correct anything like that. It don't do no good sometimes, sometimes it do.

L: What kind of games did you play as a child?

G: Just like everybody else's children, I reckon, like they do today, baseball, football, hide 'n' seek, and all that kind.

L: Did you play cowboys and Indians?

G: Oh yes. That's the biggest daggum sport there was back then.

L: Who played the White?

G: Just a bunch of little Indian boys. A bunch of us would get together, get out there and run down the riverbanks in our birthday suits. Play cowboys and Indians that way. When we wasn't doing that, we'd be shooting slingshots at one another.

L: Did you play an Indian or a cowboy?

G: I don't remember, to be honest with you, been so long back.

L: Did y'all do a lot of swimming, hunting, and fishing?

G: Yes, sir, we done a lot of that daggum. I remember one time me and my father and my brother was fishing, and he told us that they'd catch a bunch of bait out at the creek here and said we'll fix it to the line. And we went and put the line in the river and fixed it. So, we went ahead and went back down the river that day. Next day the old man said he wanted to look at his line. He said that you don't mind, so I said no. He went on, got the boat. We had a few boats back then was made out of just regular lumber, you know, but they were hand-made boats that I call bateaus. And so he took off and went on out there and he hollered. He got him a colored man, but he didn't say colored man, he said he got him a nigger. We started laughing, we didn't know what he was talking about. Sure enough, when we come back, he caught him a colored man onto the fishhook, been knocked off the trestle about ten or fifteen miles up the river there at the next little town called Red River. Train knocked him off the tracks then he washed down the river about fifteen, twenty miles down the river, and he caught him in the ear with a fishhook. He wouldn't come to the bank, go up into the bank in the boat, put him in, and they went and called the law. Well, he had to walk about three or four miles, call the law and when the law come, well, he done changed colors. And so, these people come down there, looking at him, looking at him, and so they talked about him and this lady said they wanted to know who could identify. One old colored lady said if she could see his mouth, said she'd tell them if it was her brother or not. So, some man, fella, said, well, he'd open his mouth and he took his hand and put it on his chin and his jaws to pry his mouth open. And all his flesh start falling off and said then he had a bunch of gold teeth in his mouth. She said,



yeah, that's my brother. So, they just wrapped him from a big bedsheet then and there's two, three cops, they were put him on, tied him around a big old—I call it a sapling, big old stick, and they carried him out of the river bottom there. They had to carry him about two miles out of the river bottom back up on the main road, you know, where they could get to a car, get to the body that way. She had a reward out for it. **Who find it**, they'd give, I think back then, it was about fifty- or sixty-dollar reward. But that wasn't no money. I mean it was then, it was a good bit of money but don't seem like—

L: How old were you at this time?

G: I don't exactly how old I was but I tell you the year that it was in. It was in 1939. And so, they said that the old lady, that colored lady, told 'em, "Of course I'll reward you when I get all this straightened out and all this straightened up." But my father said, "No, you don't pay me nothing." Said, "I do that as a favor, just as a friend." Well, he was the onliest—there's a few colored people down there next to the reservation, they love the Indians. But the Indians don't love to mingle with the colored for some reason. They don't know why but they just don't associate with colored for some reason.

L: Hold on a second, I'm going to change this over.

[Break in recording]

L: Mingle with the Blacks. What was the reason for that?

G: Well, see, they claimed that—I don't exactly know how you would explain that—but my granddaddy always told me, said White man carried more germs than an Indian and a White man did. Said they didn't like a Black man 'cause he carried a

lot like that, done got all that. Said another thing, said he was a thief in the crowd, they called him a thief in the crowd, but I don't know for what or nothing. We never did mingle with them. When I was in the Army Reserves, they had a bunch in that and I never did mingle with them. And now I work with them out here on the road and I've got about four or five colored with the man I work with the highway where I'm working now. And so, the rest of them's colored and some of them's White. We're all mixed up and I'm the onliest full Indian working with the highway department. They all tease me and call me names, you know, "Hey, Redskin," and all that. But I don't pay it no attention now, 'cause I said I'm just as good as they are and maybe better. I just, you know, ignore it and go on about my business what I'm supposed to be doing and don't pay it no attention. Not unless I get up in the morning feeling bad and leave home cross. Then I might have to say a few bad words, something to them then.

L: Did any of the Indians ever marry any Black people?

G: Well, the Catawba Indians never did, no, sir. If they did they probably, you know, slipped off and married and then didn't bring them back there. But if they did, I don't know it.

L: You said you were in the Army Reserves?

G: Yes, sir.

L: How long were you in the Army Reserves?

G: About six-and-a-half year, wasn't it? How long was it? Do you know?

U1: Four, about, anywhere about three-and-a-half, four.

L: What year did you join the Reserves?

U1: 1953, 1953 to 1958.

G: [19]53 to [19]58.

L: Did you serve overseas?

G: No, sir, never did serve no kind of duty at all, just went to camp two or three times.

L: Just a weekend?

G: Yes, sir, weekend.

L: Well, did they not hesitate to take you because of your education?

G: Well, see, like those in back then, I reckon it didn't make much difference or nothing. They didn't never ask me for no education 'cause I talked to a German officer and he couldn't even speak English. And, shoot, I got in with him just like two black-eyed peas in a pod. I mean he was a good friends together, and so he told me then, he says, "I'll sign you up if you're willing to take a chance on it." And I said, "Well, I can't read and write now, Captain." He said, "That don't make no difference, a lot of us can't." So, he took me to—I forget where we went. I took my examinations and next two or three days later he said, "Come down to the reservation,"—I mean, not the reservation, to the **field** where I stayed at. He said, "Well, you belong to Uncle Sam now, you're Uncle Sam's son." And they had a big old bulletin board there and he said, "This old man right here." I says, "That old crank, like that?" And he laughed, he says, "That's Uncle Sam." So, one word ran on another, next, well, "Come on up here and said let's take your blood test. We gotta have a little test of your blood." So, I come back to Rock Hill with him, and we come up to the post office up there and he told me, "We'll go over here to

the post office and we'll take your blood test up there. There is a doctor up there who will take it. And then, I'll take you back home, you know, maybe it'll help you some, keep you from walking back." So, I went ahead and went on and took the blood test and I went up there. The doctor said, "Come in there." He said, "The doctor be in here in a minute." I said, "Okay," and he said, "Just drop your pants." So, I said—you know, I try to go along with anybody, anybody, I try to do what they tell me to. I mean, anybody that looks like they're going to help me some way, I try to do what they ask me to. So, I dropped my pants below my knees and had on a pair of shorts, then standing there, had my shirt off. Funniest part about it is when they come in, the doctor come in there is a lady. She was a doctor. And I said, "Oh Lord, I says you're a doctor." She said, "I'm your doctor." I said, "Well, ain't no woman puttin' their hands on me," and I jerked my britches back up and started walk out. She says, "No, ain't gonna excite me. Don't let that bother you." Says, "I've seen many a person that's like that, you know." So, I said, "Well, I'll do it then this time but I said I ain't going to do it nobody else no more." So, she did it, took my blood. She said, "Well, we'll let you know in ten to fifteen days what type of blood you got." And so, after that they told me what types of blood I had and they said I had double A positive blood. The best blood they could find anywhere. So, I didn't say nothing about it, didn't think nothing of it. So back here about a year ago, my boss-man, his wife on the point of death and she had to have that kind of blood and he'd find round and trying to find round, fish round, find somebody had that kind of blood and he couldn't find nobody had it. He asked me about, said did I know anybody have same kind of

blood. "What kind of blood them Indians got down there," he said, "George?." I said, "Well, they got all kinds of blood, they got kangaroo blood in them," all kind like that, talking junk to one another, you know, cutting the fool. So, he said, "Well, what kind blood you got?" I said, "I got a little bit of wild duck in me, got a little bit of deer in me, I got a little bit of squirrel in me," so, just like that, you know, he laughed. He said, "What kinda blood you got in you?" I said, "I don't know, be honest with you." And he said, "We'll go down and see." I said okay and I went down to the Red Cross with him and they was taking blood for different people down there and so I went in there and this lady said, "Are you going to give blood?" I said, "I'd love to." She said, "Well, you ever give before?" I said, "No, ma'am." I said, "This is the first time."

L: What year was this?

G: This was 1970. I went ahead and gave blood and she's come back there. She said, "You giving blood for a lady, ain't you?" I said, "I'm supposed to be giving to my boss-man's wife," and I said, "She's in the hospital in Charlotte, North Carolina, and I'm way down here in Rock Hill, how will she ever get it?" She said, "Well, just don't worry about how she's going to get it, but you got the same kind of blood we looking for." I said, "Whatever takes to make her live, you can have all my blood and put alcohol in me for blood if it'll make her live that much longer." And this lady doctor laughed. She said, "If we could do it, we'd do it." They took a pint of my blood and they sent it up there. And the funniest part about it though, 'fore they could get the blood into the hospital, into her room, she died. And they said they were just lacking two pints. If she had got them two pints

of blood, she probably would have lived. And I said, "Well, if I knew it in time I would have done it, you know." But, you know, things will happen like that, and you don't know nothing about that 'til after it's over with.

L: That's a shame. Your family background, or when you were a boy being raised up and all, did they teach you about the Indians and the old Indian ways and customs?

G: They tried to, but a lot of us, like you say, [inaudible 51:25] butt-headed, don't wanna learn nothing. They want to learn something about like the White man want to learn. They try to live like the White man did, you know, coming up. They didn't want to be like the Indians. They said [inaudible 51:36] "There ain't no Indians no more, there ain't no Indians no more, there ain't no such thing as an Indian no more." I imagine you've heard that yourself where they say there's no Indian. But I say, well, I don't know what you call me, I'm supposed to be a full-blooded one.

L: Would you say that the Indians as a whole have been mistreated by the White man?

G: Well, not exactly, I wouldn't say, but I can say one thing about them. I'll say this for just my opinion, now I ain't gonna say this is for true or for false, but the Indians had their ways. Well, they had their ways, but yet, if they'd had ammunition and everything they got today, this world would been still an Indian reservation, there would be Indians here today because there wouldn't be a White man or colored man on the face of this earth today, I don't believe. There's

a man I was talking to when I went to Ohio, he was a hundred and four years old, and he said—

L: Was he an Indian?

G: Yes, sir.

L: What was his name?

G: His name was Suznook.

L: What type of Indian?

G: Pawnee. And he said the Indians back then didn't believe in but using clubs and all that, bow and arrows. If they had the ammunition, stuff just like they got today, said they believe they could have stood their ground and there wouldn't be a White man or a colored man in the United States today. And boy, I mean, he gets up and talks, you know, he writes a big history book about the Indians out there. Tells a bunch of stuff to these people and all this. He tried to get me to go home with him, stay with him. He told me, "I'll give you a place to stay where your family can come stay with us." Well, I was going, I come home and got my family—

L: Where would you have gone, where was that?

G: Back to Ohio.

L: I mean, at this same town?

G: Yes sir. Salem, Ohio. But see, my wife didn't want to go. My kids and myself was raring to go but my wife wasn't wanting to go. See, she wouldn't know nobody, and she said she didn't know nobody. I told her, [inaudible 53:32] "You come from where your hometown was," she come from Monroe, North Carolina. I says,

“You come from Monroe and then come to my neck of the woods,” I call it my reservation down here. I said, “You didn’t know nobody down there. Now look up today, you know just about all of them just like I do. I said you’re just like you one of the family down there.” I said, “We treat you just like one of the family.” She said, “Yes, that’s true that.” But I said, [inaudible 53:56] we would probably be better off and had a nice homestead he was going to give to me. It’s furnished and all that. I took my daughter up there and my son-in-law, we went up there. I said, “They treated us just like one of the family.” Every time they sat down, we was right there at the table with the people. There wasn’t a hard word passed or said between them, all the time laughing and talking, telling things what happened a hundred years ago maybe, you know, way back. We talked about Indians and this thing and that thing. So, this old man said, “I’d love to go back to look at the reservation down there in New Philadelphia, where y’all used to stay.” I told him, I said, “I’d love to go down there myself ‘cause I hadn’t been there since I was a kid.” He said, “Get ready and I’ll take you down there and show you.” So, when I went down there, well, it come back to me just like a picture. I could remember things what happened to me when was up there and used to stay up there, when my granddaddy and grandmother used to stay up there. I could remember things what happened when we stayed up there and all that. We stayed up there and I could see things happening and things like that happen, you know. We talked about things there and he said, “Do you remember when you stay up here?” I said, “Of course.” They had the old-timey log cabin at the time I was up there. They had just started falling in and going away with rotting



and all that and there's some old tents there. There's a—what you call an amusement park, but they don't do nothing like that anymore, they just done away with everything up there and that's just running down. So, I don't what they're going to do this year. They call theirself on, try to fix it up if the government will let them have enough money to fix it back up. I don't know if they will or not.

L: Well, do you think the White man could've helped the Indian more than they did?

G: Yes, he could have helped him if the Indians would let him. But I don't know, to be honest with you, they've been good to me. The ones I been treated right as a person and I've been good to them, try to be good to them. But you know you can be too good to some people. The old saying is that you can break your back to help somebody and then still they don't appreciate it, and a lot of times they'll appreciate it. Yet now, I don't know, there are quite a few people that have been good. [inaudible 56:30]

L: What about the government, as far as the government helping the Indians, do you think they helped the Indians a lot?

G: Well, he give them a better education, in a way. Because he give 'em, seen to it they go out and mingled with the White and go to school with the White and go to church with the White. Back then, when I was coming up, before I was coming up, before I come into the world and after I was big enough to remember, we never did get to mingle with the White. I don't know whether we talked and then we'd get out here, we'd talk to one another and pray with one another. Now, these days my kids get out here and play with these little White kids, you know,

and they don't ever say nothing to one another. They just think they's one, just one of another, you know. It's like an Indian and Indian or maybe White and White but back then we never did. We would see White people but we didn't know what, we just thought they's just one, you know, we didn't know they was White people. They would come down to the reservation, they'd have big dinners down there on the Fourth of July, have big baseball games and big square dances. The Indians would go down on the riverbank maybe two or three weeks ahead of time, fishing, and all them cook fish stew, fish fry and all that good stuff like that.

L: When was this?

G: Well, when I was a kid. That was in the [19]30s and [19]40s. And they would take and have all that big stuff like that and they would take and when they get through that, well, they invite these outside people to come down and play baseball, you know, against the Indians. "Come on down and play baseball with us," and they would call such and such a person's name you know. They would come down there and, you'd see them coming down the road maybe two or three miles up the road there, wagons and nothing but wagons. Well, there wasn't cars back then but there wasn't many cars like there is now. And you'd see them coming down through there and they'd had the wagon and they'd park the wagon and take the mule out from under the wagon, tie him up. So, they'd get out there and play ball. They would get out there and they'd Indian wrestle, or they'd do anything, you know, with the Indians, just get to know the Indians real good. They'd start coming down there every weekend and start playing baseball. And

they said the Indians back then had the best baseball team in all of York County. Played every little old town they could pick up, and they didn't have any way to travel, just by horse and wagon, but they'd go play baseball. They'd leave before daylight and they'd come back in way over in the night from playing baseball. But you know, when they'd go off like that, they said, "Well, them boys going off to get whupped," but when they come back, you know, you'd hear them maybe three or four miles coming down the road singing, hollering, and hooting. And you'd say them boys done won a baseball game. 'Cause they's happy.

L: Do you remember the first year that the Indians went to the White schools?

G: Well, that was the same year I was born in, 1931.

L: And the Indians, what school did they go to?

G: Right over here in Rock Hill. Some of 'em went to Northside School and they call it Old Rock Hill High now, but then it was Rock Hill High then, and Central and Ebenezer.

L: What was the name of the school your brothers went to?

G: One out on the reservation you're speaking of...?

L: Yes, sir.

G: They's just call that one school, that was just the Old Catawba Indian Reservation School. It was in this old building, looked like a barn.

L: No Whites?

G: No Whites—we had White Mormon teachers come from Salt Lake City, Utah, to teach us down there, but that was it. There weren't any Whites in there going to

school with them, just White teachers, you know. No White children going with all the Indians.

L: Was your family Mormon?

G: Now?

L: Well, then.

G: Oh, yes, then.

L: How about now?

G: Yes.

L: Most all the Indians are of that religion, is that not correct?

G: That's right, biggest majority of them, I guess, that's right.

L: One thing I'd like to ask you, Mr. George, what year did the government break up the reservation? You know, the year they gave the land to all the Indians?

U1: 1961.

G: [19]61, I think, if I'm sure. I'd have to look that up, I'm not sure, but I believe it was in 1961.

U1: They say that new reservation was in 1961 because we was living with [inaudible 1:01:08] because she was born and she got, she got her share.

L: How did they divide that up?

G: Well, see, back then they said they had land. I forget how many thousands of acres, but they had a bunch of land. They told you, you could take land or money. Well, at the time, it didn't make me much difference to me 'cause I'll say I wasn't no Indian anyhow then. I was working out there with the White man and I tried to be living with the White man, work like he worked, and I thought I was

doing a big thing. But they sent a bunch of them got petitions up and went around signing it, you know, one getting money, one getting land—

L: How much money or land?

G: Well, each child was supposed to get six-and-a-half acres. Now that's one child. I had six children at that time—no, it wasn't that many, 'bout five or something [inaudible 1:01:57] We got a good bit of money. But we didn't get to sign neither one, we didn't. I wanted land out there where my father stayed, but I didn't get neither one of them, 'cause somebody went in there and signed our name, said we'd take money. So, come the showdown we came down to my granddaddy's one day and he was sick. We come from where I was working at next to York, South Carolina. We come down there and spent the weekend with him and they brought a check down there and said, "Well, here's your check for your land, you took the land." So, I said, "What land?" They said, "They settled the reservation down here back here about a month ago, you didn't know anything about it?" I said, "How would I know anything? I live way out yonder and on the other side of York. They don't ever let me know anything about this." I said, "That's the way it was when my auntie died. They didn't let me know nothing about that 'til after she died and was buried, and they came and told me about two or three days later."

L: How much money did you get?

G: Oh, about four or five hundred dollars, I reckon.

L: Is that all?

G: Well, back then that was—I don't say it was much then. But yet, **they cheat you** out of that. Well there's a bunch of the Indians down there, they're like everybody else, I reckon, they just hog over money. And they all want for theirselves and nobody for nothing **daggum**—I know a bunch of families down there right today that if they can't get what they want, they don't want nobody else to have nothing.

L: This money they gave you, four or five hundred dollars, now would that be for five children and you?

G: That's right.

L: At six acres of land apiece? Everybody with Indian blood got land, is that correct?

G: That's right.

L: Didn't matter how much Indian blood you had in you?

G: That's right.

U1: Well each one of the young 'uns got a check.

G: Well, that's what I said, all of them got a check. A bunch of them got money, a lot of them got land, you know, the ones that wanted it. I got a brother and sister, just like myself they got land and some got money.

Child G: All of 'em but one.

L: Well, you got money. In other words you got about five hundred dollars for thirty-six acres of land somewhere.

G: That's right, that's right, somewhere in the neighborhood.

L: But you never signed a paper.

G: I didn't sign a piece of paper, no kind of document, nothing. See that's what I say, there are some of them down there want to give you, I mean when they come up

short. When you go down there if you want to now, you can go down there, back down on that reservation and you can just stake off your piece of land as long as there's two hundred and fifty acres, two hundred and fifty yards from each house, don't care where's it at over down there and build, long as you're an Indian. But then they said when you build down there, the government help you build your house and you pay the government back for so much what they put in it you know. But they all time come in here and holler about me, "Why don't you move back down there, why don't you move back down there," I told them, shoot, I have lost nothing back there, only thing I got back down there, about six foot of ground down there and about three foot deep. They ask me what that is, I tell them burying ground I want down there. That's all I want down there, because I used to go to church down there when I was a kid and then up to a while back. Then I quit going to church, quit doing anything, just laying around the house, day after day, work all the time.

L: Well you said you can go back there now and build a house—

G: That's right.

L: And the government will pay part of it?

G: Supposed to. That's what they claim. I was talking to a lady the other night. She said the government had helped build her a house down there. He paid, I forget exactly how much it was, but he had it built for her and then she had to pay so much back, you know, like paying rent, you know.

L: Who was this lady?

G: She's a, I forget what, Hendricks.

L: Hendricks. Is she Indian?

G: Yes sir. She's about third or fourth cousin to me.

L: Well, you can just stake off land 250 yards from—

G: Yes, sir, from any house around there, close to a house or anywhere down in there.

L: Well, who owns that land?

G: It still belongs to the government. See, the whole state of South Carolina belongs to the Indians now. It was leased to the government back in, when the Indians leased it to the government, back then, for a dollar a year or a dollar a day. I forget which it was now. For so many years, so many thousands of years. Now the government done took up some of this, they done away with and they got so much of taxes on this land. The Indians are going to start paying taxes on it, on his own property.

U1: Well what he's trying to get across here is about the land. You didn't clarify that. He's talking about when they settled up, they settled up the new reservation. The Indian still has got the old reservation, that's six hundred and about thirty-eight acres.

U2: You can go down there now—

U1: Either children I got can go down there and build them a home because they part Indian, but if something was to happen to Howard, I couldn't. I could go down and stay with one of my young 'uns, but I couldn't.

L: Well, what is your name?

U1: I was—



L: Before you were—

U1: I was a Burgess.

L: Burgess.

U2: Well, Daddy can go down there right now and have him at least a ten-room house built. He would stake out a lot and the government would have it built, and the government will pay fifty-fifty and Daddy'll have to pay fifty. It's fifty-fifty because what's-her-name had one built down there, Ms. King. I don't know her first name.

L: Well, I wasn't aware of this, Mr. George, but the old reservation is still intact, is still there for the Indians.

G: Yes, sir, that's right. Still right down there. There's an old saying, the old squaws and old braves belong to be dreaming there, Indians that existed there be a piece of land in the corner.

L: Who would you have to go see if you wanted to move down there?

G: Where, down on the reservation?

L: Yes, sir.

G: No one, just go down and stake off your piece of land, clean it up, clear it off, whatever you wanna call it. And just put you a trailer down there **if you living**, buy you a house-trailer or else just buy you a bunch of lumber and just put your lumber down there and start working on it. Build it up from the ground up, you know, as long as you cleared off a piece of lot.

L: Well, you feel like you were cheated when they sold this land and gave you money?

G: Well, back then I didn't much care myself, 'cause I said I want to get out where I could, you know, feel like I was on my own and had my own freedom. You know, a lot of people—I'm still that way, in a way I feel like I'm tied up yet. I can't be still at times. Being in a place where I feel like I'm penned up, I just don't feel right. I want to be out where I can move around all the time. But I feel better when I can be out working with the White people, 'cause I've been treated, you know, with them, since I've been big enough to know them. They've been good to me and I've been good to them and all that. But ain't nobody has mistreated me as I know. Coming up, we used to fight one another and curse one another and cuss one another and all that, but now further than that you fighting with White, I never had a fight with White families. If I has, I don't remember it. I don't recall it.

L: Well, I guess that's about all I need to talk with you about for right now. If I think of anything else, I will ask you. I appreciate you taking the time out and I'd like to add that today is January 16, 1972, make sure that gets in the tape 'cause when they're typing it over, they'll need to know that. Well, I appreciate it and I'll just close for now.

G: All right.

[End of interview]

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