HELEN CHUPCO, Seminole - Creek
September 23, 1975
Tulsa, Oklahoma

This transcript is one of a series of interviews with American Indian people throughout much of the United States by S. I. Myers of the History Department of St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley, St. Louis, Missouri, 63135.

The purpose of these interviews is to bring the Indian peoples' own comments to students in classrooms, and to foster greater understanding among the peoples of the United States by providing Indians the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions to a wider audience.

This transcript has been edited for clarity and ease of reading, but every effort has been made to preserve the original feeling. Conversations and opinions were encouraged on any subject of interest to interviewees; questions and responses do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the interviewer, the National Endowment for the Humanities, or St. Louis Community College.

This transcript series was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and by support from St. Louis Community College.

Copyright © S.I. Myers 1978
THE NEW YORK TIMES ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

LISTENING TO INDIANS

NO. 40

HELEN CHUPCO, Seminole - Creek
September 23, 1975
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Glen Rock, New Jersey
Microfilming Corporation of America
1978
Sam Myers:

Today I'm talking to a lady in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Her name is Mrs. Helen Chupco. May I call you Helen?

Helen Chupco:

Yes. Chupco means "long" in the Creek and Seminole language.

SM: That would be Helen Long, if it were an Anglo name?

HC: Right.

SM: This is Creek and Seminole. Are the languages similar or the same?

HC: They're similar. There are a few words different.

SM: I heard one time that the Seminoles were sort of off-shoots of the Creeks.

HC: Right, they were.

SM: But that they moved down into the Florida peninsula and became a separate people.

HC: Yes, they were called a runaway group of the Creek Tribe.

SM: But there were many Creeks. It was a powerful nation, wasn't it?

HC: Yes, they were a powerful group.

SM: Well, first of all, were you born in Tulsa and did you grow up here?

HC: No. My home is in the south central part of Oklahoma. I was born and reared there.
SM: Is that Creek territory?

HC: It's right on the border of the Creek and Seminole Nation.

SM: Would you explain the Creek and Seminole Nation, as against the term "reservation," used in other states?

HC: Well, we have no reservations in Oklahoma. And originally, when the Indian tribes were relocated here—-I'm speaking of the five so-called "civilized tribes," who were removed from the southeastern part of the United States to Oklahoma before it became a state—it was known as Indian Territory. And at that time they were placed in a different geographical area under the so-called "nations," instead of reservations. The Indian tribes in Oklahoma have never been segregated from the rest of the people. We've lived along with other people in our own community. We've mixed in—in fact, we went to public schools.

SM: Do you have Indian schools?

HC: We do have them, but not strictly what you are familiar with like on the reservation—totally Indian reservation school. We went to school with the white children here in Oklahoma, and we were segregated from the blacks. Blacks had their own separate schools.

SM: That's a different kind of thing, isn't it? People from other states aren't familiar with this, and when they think of Oklahoma they think of the state with the largest number of Indian people, and then they assume that there'll be the largest number of reservations, and there aren't any.

HC: No, not in Oklahoma. The only one that the federal government still claims is a reservation land is the Osage Tribe in the northern part.
SM: They do have a reservation?

HC: Yes, their Osage Nation is known as a reservation.

SM: So there is that one. The rest, like the Creek Nation, the Seminoles, the Choctaw-Chickasaw Nation, and so on, are areas of the state, including all kinds of people?

HC: Yes.

SM: Let's get back to you now, Helen.

HC: I'm a full-blood Indian, a member of the Creek and Seminole Tribe. My father is full-blood Seminole, my mother was a full-blood Creek, so I'm a member of both tribes, grew up in a traditional Indian home.

SM: Did you speak the language?

HC: Yes, I did.

SM: Do you still?

HC: Yes, I still speak my language. I could never forget it. I had to learn to speak English when I started going to public school at the age of seven.

SM: Was that a problem?

HC: Yes, it was a problem. For that reason we never taught our children the language, our tribal tongue.

SM: You let them speak English so they wouldn't have that problem in school?
HC: Right, because my husband and I both had this experience, had this difficulty. Goin' to public school bein' bi-lingual was kind of difficult for us.

SM: Some of the schools are meeting this problem, or trying to preserve their own native culture by teaching the culture and the language in the schools now.

HC: Yes, they are. They are goin' back to teaching the languages to our younger generation.

SM: One school and one college up in Minnesota is teaching the Chippewa, or Ojibway language. In fact these changes have come in the last six years. It's hard to imagine how you would overcome that, walking into the schoolrooms speaking a different language, and expected to learn in another language. Can you remember how it was?

HC: Well, a lot of times we're asked, "What foreign language do you speak?" And I'd have to say, "English," that's the second language we had to learn after we started to school.

SM: Did the teachers give you extra help?

HC: I had another Indian to interpret for me. I was told about two, three words, what to say or how to answer when teacher would ask me questions before I started school.

SM: Like, "yes", "no," or "I don't know?"

HC: Yes. How to reply when the teacher asked certain questions. That's all I knew on my first day of school. I don't know how I acquired it, but I know I had this Indian boy to be my interpreter.

SM: That's really staggering when you think of it, and it really kind of
boggles the mind how youngsters can cope with that situation. They do do it, and you were one of them who had to.

HC: Right. I was one of those who had to learn to speak a foreign tongue, I call it.

SM: How long did it take before you were going along comfortably?

HC: I can't remember that far back--it's been so long.

SM: You're not that old now.

HC: Oh, maybe I don't show my age--I hope. They say the Indians didn't show their age. The other day I was at the hospital, and the nurse talked to me and thought that was my sister who was my daughter with me. She didn't realize that was my daughter.

SM: That was nice, wasn't it?

HC: Yes. And I told her thanks for the compliment.

SM: I met a man in Ponca City the other day, I would have bet $5.00 he was 50 years old, and he was past 60. Same way.

HC: My father always didn't show his age either. He looked about to be 40 when he was 65 or going on 70.

SM: Isn't that amazing? I asked this man, Johnny, how he did it, and he said he tried to keep happy and he tried to keep busy, and he didn't try to "stew" about things. But back to you. Where did you go to school?

HC: Well, I went to public school, day school, in my community by walkin'
two miles to school in all kinds of weather.

SM: In what town?

HC: It was near Holdenville out in the country, that's where I had my elementary education. Then from there I went to mission school.

SM: Is that the southern part of Oklahoma?

HC: Yes, the south central part of Oklahoma.

SM: That's where the Creek Nation is, at Holdenville. Then you went to a mission school?

HC: Yes, I went to mission school for my junior high education.

SM: That was run by a church group?

HC: Yes, it was run by the northern Baptists.

SM: Did they insist on you changing your religion?

HC: No, they didn't. Not until I got into government boarding school.

SM: Where was that?

HC: Chilocco Indian School.

SM: That's up in the north edge of Oklahoma?

HC: Yes, right on the Kansas border, and we almost had to forget our own culture and everything. They demanded it.
SM: Were the teachers all non-Indian?

HC: There were a few Indians along with Anglos, but we were taught.

SM: Chilocco seemed to be a popular place to go, or the place to go.

HC: The place to go back in my high school days because of the economic situation in my family. That was one of the reasons I went off to government boarding school. And it's a little bit different category now, I hear how they have to get into Indian schools, but it was different back in my time.

SM: And did you go to school after Chilocco?

HC: Yes, I did. I went back and finished high school in my home town.

SM: Back home?

HC: Yes, Holdenville High School. And from there to the university in Oklahoma City. I did not get to finish--well, this was after I was married and had a family that I continued my education.

SM: Did you go to Bacone College?

HC: No, I didn't get to go to Bacone College.

SM: But you went to the university in Oklahoma City?

HC: Hills Business University in Oklahoma City.

SM: You went to a lot of different schools, and that gave you a lot of experience?

HC: It did give me wide experience of different people.
SM: And how to cope with life in general?

HC: Right. And I was one of those who made this migration from rural to urban here in the early years of the Second World War, and made this kind of adjustment. So since I've been in the urban Indian world for the last nine years, I can sympathize with these people of my own race who're havin' to make this adjustment, and I can very well understand their problems and what they're facing. Only we have more Indian population in the urban area, and they may have relatives livin' in the city before they come in, and know they have someone to identify. But durin' the Second World War there were not any Indian population, or I just didn't see any Indians for days and days. And it really became lonely times for me, because I looked for my own peers to be with, and felt more at ease by bein' with my own people. And I made weekly trips back home until I finally got used to bein' away from home and made this adjustment to urban livin'.

SM: How did you get into this government work that you're in now?

HC: Well, I did church work for many, many years, and my husband bein' a minister--he's been a minister now for over 30 years, a Methodist minister, with full clergy rights, and at the present time he is a director of program and finance of the Indian work in Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas, and he's at the headquarter's office in Oklahoma City. And I remain here with the urban work in Tulsa for the time being.

SM: You do a lot of travelling, but it isn't so terribly far, is it?

HC: No, it isn't with the toll road connectin' the two cities. The distance is just about a hundred miles.

SM: And it's a toll road all the way, a nice road to travel.
HC: Since we were in the church work, most of his ministry has been in urban churches, and we saw the need for this kind of center for Indians who were migrating to big cities, and where the church did not reach many of the Indian families, if we had a center where it could serve Indians, we could reach a lot more, non-church related. And I can venture to say that 85% of the clientele whom the center reaches has not been inside the church, have never darkened the doors of a church. And I feel like this is a kind of outreach that we're doin', if the churches really wanted to help, they could come to an Indian center and seek out Indians who were in need of religious . . . Christian aspect of life, because I experienced it, and I know what I'm talkin' about. I had this kind of need, wishin' there was some Indian could come visit me.

SM: Were your parents Methodists also?

HC: No. My father is a Baptist minister, and my husband has a Presbyterian.

SM: Oh, you're not a traditionalist family?

HC: Right. So I grew up in a Christian home. I had this kind of background, and I guess I was one of the ones with this kind of background, when I see so many Indians maybe have had only native religion backgrounds.

SM: Are some reverting to that now?

HC: Yes, there's quite a few who are wanting to return to their own culture, tribal culture and traditions and ceremonies. At one time it was almost . . . vanishing.

SM: But now it's sort of growing, isn't it?
HC: Yes. We're tryin' to recapture a lot of the things that we've lost.

SM: Well, there isn't any reason why you cannot participate in both cultures is there?

HC: No. There are cultural values in both that we can preserve.

SM: Does it ever get difficult, does it pull you in two directions sometimes?

HC: No. If I want to participate in Indian ceremonies or some of the traditions and customs that I'm used to, it's no problem for me.

SM: I read that the Native American Church has become quite extensive, and that some people could belong to another Christian church and the Native American Church also. Is that true?

HC: I'm sure it is for some people, and it's bein' accepted by both. Well, for a fact, I guess it is true, because I happened to see an Indian fellow in the Methodist church this past Sunday, and I know him to be a priest in the Native American Church, and he was introduced as bein' a visitor in the Christian church.

SM: Well, it is a recognized church then. The use of the peyote button is legal. A lot of people think this is exotic, something very strange and unusual, but it's acceptable, isn't it?

HC: Right. It is acceptable.

SM: And legal too?

HC: Yes, I know a lot of people think it's not sacred, or it's not a religious group, but they have their rights to have this religious
freedom, and they base it on that, and it's their freedom to practice that kind of religion.

SM: And you, coming from two generations of another Christian home, recognize it like any other denomination?

HC: I don't condemn anyone's religion--it's their own business, that's the way I always look at it.

SM: If we learn to do that all the way, then many of our problems would be solved, don't you think?

HC: I think if we learn to respect each other . . . all through each other's traditions and customs, instead of tryin' to change everyone, we'd get along much better.

SM: Like that government school where they tried to change you?

HC: Yes. It happened to my mother in her day, and she used to tell me of her experiences where she was in government boarding school, and was not permitted to speak her language--she was almost asked to forget her language. In other words, it was bein' forced on her, and she spoke to us about it a great deal. I had that same experience although I was in high school, so I could speak both languages very well, but in her day she was just a youngster--she was an orphan placed in boarding school--and she could only speak her language, and it was forced on her to learn the Caucasian language or Anglo. She had to endure some demerits as her punishment.

SM: I hope we're doing better now.

HC: I think so. I hear they don't demand this of the Indian students so much.
SM: Well, for example, here you are, you're in charge of this office.

HC: Yes, I have five people to supervise.

SM: Let's explain what this office is and what it does, and what is the correct name for it.

HC: The center here is the Tulsa Urban Indian Center, and we are funded through the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, through the office of Native American Programs. And we are dealing with the urban Indian problems, their frustrations as they try to make their adjustment from rural to urban living. And we are developing programs to help them overcome their adjustment problems, educate them in how to become participating citizens in the part of the society in which they live, and so it is geared to training and educational program based on the needs assessment that we have done. Indian clients come to us with many problems.

SM: Do you have any idea about how many Indian people there are in Tulsa?

HC: Well, 1970 census has it somewhere around 11,000 or a little below that, but that's incorrect. I find there to be about twice as many.

SM: Around 20,000 or so Indian people in Tulsa?

HC: Right. We guess it's about that many Indians.

SM: It's a big population of Indian people.

HC: It is.

SM: Do you know the population of the whole city?
HC: I think it's about 550,000. It's growing. It's the second largest city in the state.

SM: Next to Oklahoma City. And about 20,000-21,000 Indian people here.

HC: We think there are about that many Indians.

SM: People even in the Census Bureau admit that they aren't at all sure of their figures, because the way the questionnaire was made up they said there was a great deal of confusion, and furthermore, people were at liberty to say, "I am," or "I am not," as they chose. And if they thought maybe they weren't supposed to be, then they'd maybe say, "no," or they would simply get confused because of the questions.

HC: Yes. We have many, many people who are wanting to prove their degree of Indian blood, and want to know how to go about getting their blood quantum, and we have many, many inquiries, because they're thinkin' of Indian benefits that may come to them. But I can be identified as Indian no matter where I go, 'cause I can show by my biological color I am an Indian.

SM: And no one can dispute you?

HC: No. No one can dispute. I'm proud to be an Indian.

SM: I think each of us should try, at least, to have respect for what we are, and take it from there. Do many of these people that live in the town come into the center then?

HC: Quite a few. We have many newcomers who hit our place too.

SM: Do you get mostly the people who have problems, or do you get all kinds of people coming in for just companionship and sociability?
HC: We have just all kinds. We just have all kinds of people, and many of these families may have multi-problems.

SM: What kinds of programs do you have?

HC: We are goin' to be holdin' classes on employment, job development, how to apply for employment, how to keep it, work for promotions, employer-employee type of relationship, and how to sell yourself to an employer, because many of these people know good and well they can go and perform the task or skill, but many times they lack in self-confidence, can't sell themselves to an employer. So we're tryin' to help them to overcome those kind of barriers that they may have. And there is an Indian work training program here, but that program alone cannot meet all the needs of the Indians through their eligibility criteria, because I know some of those people who cannot meet their eligibilities, we can pick them up and try to help them.

SM: Now, what do you have to do to meet your eligibility requirement?

HC: They have their own guidelines because they're funded through the Department of Labor. First of all, they have to be a resident of Tulsa County, and if you have someone live outside of Tulsa County, and needs training of some kind, or some type of employment, he wouldn't be eligible for this other program. So we try to help him and establish his residence here, and make contacts for him for personal interviews, and we have to be familiar with all the resources that are available in the Tulsa community.

SM: You're kind of an employment office in a way too?

HC: Well, that's just a part of our goal. And along with that we have consumerism and helpin' or teaching our people how to manage their income.

SM: The kind of groceries to buy, for example, and the kind to avoid?
HC: Yes, and we found that many of our families are eligible for food stamps program, and they're not takin' advantage of it. They do not know anything about it, so we have to explain these different types of resources that are available to them in the community, and this is adult education. And we hold different group meetings on various subjects that they are interested in, for example, women who want to learn how to sew. And maybe legal problems they may have, like landlord-tenant problems. Most generally the tenants don't know their rights, and I've seen many Indians just move from one neighborhood to another neighborhood ever' week or ever' month, and there's a great deal of mobility among our Indian families. And I know in one elementary school they said there was 100% turnover among the Indian children enrollment, because of the parents movin' from one neighborhood to another. Lotta times they're in the low income socio-economic groups and tryin' to find a better neighborhood somewhere, tryin' to find a better house, so we try to help these people to get into some of the low-income housing, and they're not familiar with that either, so it's all kinds of education we're doin' for these people.

SM: Have you just set up this office here?

HC: Yes, we were at a different location, and not enough parkin' facilities, and not enough facilities to do anything, so we got this space. We're going to have our own private offices here. This is the size of two large classrooms.

SM: And then you have other parts of the whole building complex here too, don't you?

HC: There are other programs located here in this school.

SM: This is an old school building?
HC: It's an old school that's no longer used by the Tulsa public school system, and it's called the Adult Learning Center. It used to be a public elementary school.

SM: Now it's the Adult Learning Center, but there are non-Indian people who attend classes too, as well as your programs?

HC: Yes. They have GED classes in certain classrooms here, and there is the straight school, which is for drop-out children, that's under a different program, next door to us, and there's a senior citizen transportation project over to our left.

SM: It's really quite a center here.

HC: Yes, and it's right close to down town, and it's in walkin' distance, and I'm glad to have this kind of location, for many of our Indian people do not have transportation.

SM: Do quite a few live in the neighborhood?

HC: Yes, there are quite a few in the inner city, because of the low rent they can get in the apartment--that's the older part of the city.

SM: Well, this often happens. Do you have any other Indian centers in town?

HC: We have other Indian programs, but as far as multi-purpose, this would be the center.

SM: There is one thing that might make you feel envious, but it also might make you feel encouraged. In Minneapolis they have built a new center from the ground up.

HC: I read about it. I visited the center there once, about three, four
years ago, and I knew they were goin' into a big, multi-purpose center.

SM: Perhaps you could get one here some time, but then, you have lots of other things on your mind too.

HC: Yes, we have referral service here too. Our counselors make referrals to various agencies in the city for assistance that the family may have need for, and also, I might point out that our number two problem in the over-all picture of the urban Indian situation is the health care need.

SM: What was the number one problem?

HC: Employment. Health problems of Indians in urban areas need immediate attention. Many of our Indian people have a crisis-oriented view of health care, and seek only when there is an extreme emergency in the family.

SM: Otherwise they sort of tend to neglect it?

HC: Right. And cultural differences often prevent effective health delivery, so the staff here will have to become familiar with all community health resources, and establish relationships with them, and help poor families receive health care, which they need. That is, like drugs....

SM: How to get into the hospital?

HC: Right. And so we try to have a public meeting on health education, using personnel from health delivery systems, technical systems here with our center. And they get to learn about the different, free clinics they may have, and they would not solely depend on Indian Health Service. There is an Indian Health Service facility 30 miles from here, but many of our Indians do not have transportation, so they look to
center staff to provide transportation.

SM: Can you do that?

HC: We can on a limited basis.

SM: But you don't have big busses?

HC: We have an Indian transportation program, but it's geared for senior citizens only, but if they have room they will accommodate some of our others, and we have to coordinate this with them. Also the Indian transportation projects supplement the local senior citizen transportation project for the city of Tulsa, and only a minority group could get this kind of program funded, so the Indians got the project, and we're really doin' a great service for the city of Tulsa in providing transportation services for senior citizens. It's not only for Indians, but for all senior citizens, for all people. And it's a door-to-door type of transportation. Pick people up right at their own home and take them—well, there are priorities on what kind of transportation they can provide the senior citizens with—it's medical and maybe for shopping, things like that. But it has really shown a great need for it, and now I think they're gonna increase more buses because there's just greater demands for it, and right now they say they can't meet all of the needs, and that's the reason they had to set up priorities on it.

SM: If these people need transportation, do they call in?

HC: Yes. For instance, about 9:45 last night I had a fellow to call me at my apartment askin' for transportation to the Indian clinic today—he had an appointment and no way to get there. No money, and lotta time it's one car per family, and whoever is employed in that family will need it for transportation to his employment, so that leaves the rest of the family without transportation, or the wage earner
has to take time out from work to transport the patient to the Indian clinic, so this is where we try to help fill the gap and not have to solely depend on the Indian Health Service for medical care, but try to utilize the resources in our community and health delivery systems.

SM: Now you are in a unique position, Helen. You're working for HEW really, aren't you?

HC: Yes.

SM: But you have also had the experience of going to a government school, which wasn't entirely pleasant. . . ?

HC: No, not too pleasant.

SM: So you've seen the government move in on Indians and their lives in both ways. So you would be a good person to ask, what do you think of the whole thing of the BIA?

HC: Well, I have no qualms about BIA. There are a lot of good programs within the BIA, and I have a lot of good friends, and many times the Indians seem to blast BIA, but there may be some unhappy experiences some individuals have had with some individual in BIA. There are many branches of services in Bureau of Indian Affairs, and they have been helpful in many ways. If it wasn't for the BIA I think lot of us may not have had as many opportunities as we have had.

SM: One person says if the BIA has anything to do with it it will be all fouled up, and another person said--both of these are Indian officials now--that about 95% of the criticism of the BIA is unfounded.

HC: That's about true. You try to abolish BIA and you'll have Indians defending it, and they'll admit that the BIA is the greatest friend
that the Indian ever had.

SM: It isn't perfect.

HC: No, nothing is perfect.

SM: But, it has tried to help?

HC: Yes, and I've found that many Indians who've been very critical of BIA have been the ones who really benefitted from BIA, and they're talkin' about some individual in some branches of service. You'll find all kinds of people and human relations, so I can't just condemn the whole BIA for what it does for Indian people.

SM: That is a good, rational summation of the situation. Any other programs you're working on here or hope to get started?

HC: Well, there are just so many ways, I can't get my directions right just where I want to really gear in on, but we did have so many inquiries on the Indian housing programs, and so we invited the tribal official in—he's the executive director of my tribe, tribal housing program—he came in here and spent two or two and a half hours answerin' questions to the Indian families who came.

SM: Is there a housing project in town?

HC: Yes, there is a government housing program here, public housing, not strictly for Indian people. This is for anyone, and so we have some of our Indian families living in those kind of housing projects.

SM: Are their experiences usually good?

HC: Usually in low rent housing we've found it's large families, the
children may have problems, maybe different races livin' together may create some problems there. We've tried to help some of the Indian families and serve as liason between the housing project, directors of housing authority and the Indian family. We, as the center staff, serve as an advocacy role for Indians in the city of Tulsa.

SM: Just about anything that comes up, you might get involved?

HC: That's right. And we get calls from social agencies, law enforcement officials, oh, just about any different agency here in the city about the Indian. We have to be familiar with and know how to deal with these problems, and interpret some of these things to the agencies and vice versa to our Indian people. Speak for them, talk for them, take them by the hand.

SM: If a person was in need of some kind of help, walked in here, and encountered someone like you, they would feel better.

HC: I think they relate to an all-Indian staff more than they do to any non-Indian, because they still are insecure and lack confidence, as I said. But they can get used to it, 'cause I did. I had that same experience, but I begin to gain confidence . . .

SM: And you're going a little further to help.

HC: Yes. I'd never once thought I'd really be standin' up fightin' for somebody, or speakin' for them, seein' that they got their needs met. I never would have done it for my own self. I had that kind of need, I guess, but when you're doin' it for someone, you'd be surprised how much more you will really make an effort.

SM: You'll speak up a little louder for someone else than for yourself?
HC: I was one of those shy, full-blood Indians, hardly would speak up. I was shy and timid, but it took it out of me, I guess, I've overcome it. Had to be out in the society and be part of everyone else. You had to learn to cope with these situations.

SM: When our listeners see a picture of you, they'll realize what kind of person I'm talking to, that you look like anything but a rural little Indian girl.

HC: Oh, I was one of those full bloods who was shy, a typical Indian that was probably so quiet in the classroom. I mean, I would just be fearful of what the teacher might ask me and how I would have to answer in front of everyone else. I experienced that, and I know just what it is.

SM: Not pleasant is it, for a shy person?

HC: Right. But I learned to overcome all these things. I feel I can stand up to anyone and speak up.

SM: And now you're doing it for the benefit of these other people.

HC: The benefit of my own Indian people.

SM: If all 20,000 of them come in here, you'll do your best?

HC: Yes. I just hope they can get help, that's all I'm interested in seein', that they're taken care of.

SM: Can you think of anything else you'd like to add?

HC: I don't believe so. They're just so many things to be said about Indians.
SM: And you've said them very well. In a few sentences you've described the whole purpose of your office.

HC: Put it all in a nutshell? Well, I enjoy doin' this work, and it's really been a gratifyin' experience, and I wouldn't trade it for all the missionary years that I may have done bein' a minister's wife, if I had been a missionary, 'cause we have been really missionaries among our own Indian people. 'Course we're servin' a mission church all these years.

SM: And then you kind of see your role here as a manner of reaching out to help people?

HC: Yes, I enjoy this very much.