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.

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LISTENING TO INDIANS

NO. 107

ALEX GARCIA, Mexican Indian
ELLEN GARCIA, Puyallup

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Sam Myers:

I'm talking today here in Tacoma, Washington, with two people, Mrs. Ellen Garcia, who is a Puyallup Indian, and her husband, Alex Garcia, who is actually a Spanish-American.

Ellen Garcia:

My name is Ellen Garcia, I am a descendant of the Puyallup Tribe.

Alex Garcia:

I consider myself, I would be of a Spanish descent and also of an Indian descent.

SM: So you are Indian also?

AG: Right.

SM: Are you from Mexico?

AG: My parents were born in Mexico. They didn't migrate into any country, they were always, I guess you would call it, in the Americas. And for quite some time now the people tried to separate and tell us we are of a different descent, but actually we are of an Indian descent. They tried to brainwash us a long time ago, to keep us away from the other Indian people, but . . .

SM: Do you mean keep the Mexican people away from the Indian people?

AG: Right.

SM: So that they'd be two groups?

AG: Different groups.

SM: The old divide and conquer idea?
AG: Right.

SM: Actually, both are Indian at heart.

AG: Right. Just like you take the Alaskan Indians, the Canadian Indians. A long time ago there was no division, there was no lines to divide the country, the country was not divided.

SM: Do you agree with that, Ellen?

EG: Yes I do.

SM: But now you come from, basically, the south of the country and from the northwest part of the country. Did you ever live down there?

AG: I never did live down south.

SM: You always lived up here?

AG: Well, I was born in Wyoming, but I was raised among the people over this way, at Yakima and the Puyallups.

SM: Do you speak Spanish?

AG: I can speak it, yes. I can speak Spanish. I can speak the Yakima language, and I know various dialects of the other.

SM: Do you speak your native language?

EG: No, I don't. I'm learning it.

SM: Is it hard?

EG: Yes, it's quite hard, because my mother didn't teach us our Indian
language, they just forgot about it, and now we're bringing it back. I'm teaching my family the Indian traditions, Indian culture, their own language.

SM: In travelling around I have found this more and more. There are even several schools like state universities and elementary schools where they are teaching the Indian language of that area. Chippewa, for example, at the Pine Point school on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota, and other cases like this now where ten years ago they weren't doing it. So the change is coming, and it looks as if we're going to have a lot more people bi-lingual. So, anyway, you're both here working at the Indian Center in Tacoma?

AG: Yes.

SM: The Puyallup people have been foremost in this fishing controversy problem, haven't they?

EG: Yes they have.

SM: And together you can maybe explain something of the background of it and how it all came about, and how it stands now, because across the country people are interested in this. All we know is what we read in the papers or hear on T.V.

AG: O.K. Actually the whole Tacoma area has been declared reservation, but we still don't own it. There's many buildings and different places that are occupied and they were just ripped off. And we always have trouble with the fishin' rights, ever since 1854 when the treaty was made, that as long as the river would run we could fish.

SM: "In the usual and accustomed places," as Commissioner Thompson just said. The treaty says that, doesn't it?
AG: It stipulates that, and so that's what we've been tryin' to do is fish, and we get arrested every time; our gear would be confiscated; go to jail for long terms, and finally the people just continued until a judge came along that believed in upholding the laws of the land. And we got some of our rights back, such as fishin'. We haven't got our huntin' rights.

SM: How long ago was that?

AG: That would be about two years now.

SM: Two years ago the decision was made by... .

AG: Judge Boldt. There was a stipulation that we was supposed to manage it, and, well, they didn't consider us qualified to manage it, the state thought that he was gonna get us in that way.

SM: The fishing waters?

AG: Yes. But we know more about conservation than they know, because we never have destroyed the natural runs like they have. That's why they put hatcheries, artificial runs, but the natural runs, we never destroyed 'em. I can tell you briefly who destroyed 'em was some of these big companies that are takin' all the trees out, such as Weyerhauser. We can't even get into some of the streams to survey the streams, we have to ask permission to go in there and try to rehabilitate some of those streams. But they keep puttin' us off and puttin' us off.

SM: The timber companies?

AG: The timber companies. I think they own most of the state of Washington. But finally we finally broke through, and we have our own biologist,
we have our own managers to get data concernin' the fish; we have data while the state didn't have data because we got up there and went out and got some test fisheries for the state. They done some from their offices, settin' on their duff, and we know all about the waters and everything around here, because some of our people's been fishin' for centuries. It's a way of life.

SM: Have you folks ever fished?

AG: Yes, we've gone out fishin'.

SM: Have you too, Mrs. Garcia?

EG: Yes.

AG: And there's quite a bit of struggle yet, because we're still contending with the state. The state is still . . . every decision made is still made in court yet.

SM: Alex, can you tell me what the Boldt Decision really says?

AG: Well, the Boldt Decision actually says that we can fish in our usual accustomed places, accordin' to the treaty that was made that way.

SM: Now what does that mean in practical application? That you can fish two days a week, or that you can fish 50% of the time, or what?

AG: We actually can never get 50% of the fish, because when you talk about 50%, O.K., there's not that many Indian people. If you're goin' percentage, just stop and think what the percentage of the Caucasians, the blacks, the percentage of the other people, and what the percentage of the Indian. There's no way we can get 50%, but we are gettin' some percentage, possibly 20% of the fish.
SM: I read one place that the Indians in these particular areas could fish five days a week, and the non-Indians two days a week. Is that right?

AG: True. Just stop and think. If you ever see our fleet. We don't have no purse seiners. O.K., most of our boats are just skiffs, so it would be just like tryin' to have a cup of water and a person's got a bucket of water, so you know how many cups it would take to fill that bucket of water, so you see, there's a difference.

SM: The small equipment compared to the big equipment of the non-Indian commercial fishing?

AG: Right. So, and anyway, if you look at it, I don't know why it is, but they always say that the Indians are gettin' the best part of it. Well, we're not. If we did, you would see all those business, those banks would belong to us. But they don't. O.K., when we get a government grant, the first thing they say is that the government is givin' us somethin'. The government hasn't given us ... all the gold, all the silver, all the oil, all the timber, everything, it comes out from here. It's just like me gettin' into your pocket and sayin', "I'm gonna give you a nickel out of your own pocket."

SM: Because at one time the Indians owned the whole country?

AG: Now many times we talk to some people and they ask us, what is the Indian food? I tell you, what we eat, what you eat every day, that's our food. Because in Europe they didn't have no potatoes, no corn, you know, no tomatoes, really. The salmon didn't come on the Mayflower, it was here all the time. So actually, I could say that all the food that you see, with the exception of some that's imported, but most of the everyday food, like your potatoes, and that, it comes from here.
SM: From what the Indians used to have. An economist said that 4/7, that's over half, of the whole gross national product in foodstuffs in the country now came from the Indian people.

AG: You see, that's why they had the Thanksgiving when they came over, they never seen things so plentiful. A person didn't even have to work hard. Go out and shoot you a deer, as long as you didn't waste it. If they had kept it up like that, people could, you know, get the amount that they use, never waste it, you wouldn't have to transplant, you know, or anything. O.K., like they destroyed all the buffalo, all the deer. I always wondered why? So they could bring their own cattle, see? Now I would like to go out and shoot me a cattle, 'cause there's no deer. But if I go shoot, that'd be transgression. But then they didn't look at it that way when they came over and shot the deer for nothin'.

SM: On the fishing thing, now, does this apply to certain sections of the Puget Sound and the bays, or where does it apply to?

AG: O.K. We can fish in the reservation and not on the reservation.

SM: You have a reservation?

AG: Yes, we have a small reservation.

SM: Where is it, Ellen, do you know?

EG: My husband knows more about this than I do.

AG: O.K. The reservation. Right now you're in the reservation.

SM: We're on here now?

AG: Yes. You're in the reservation boundaries.
SM: We're in Tacoma here?

AG: Yes. Actually you're in the reservation, but actually in order for us to get it back we got to buy it back.

SM: Oh, this is a reservation but not officially, according to the government.

AG: Yes, but I want it, I gotta pay for it. That's confusin', but that's the way they got it. Just like our house there. O.K., we bought a house, and we can put it into trust land where we don't have to pay taxes, but it's gotta be approved through the BIA and all that sort of stuff. But actually, how they ripped off our reservation was that any reservation's not supposed to pay taxes. But they tax us.

SM: Well, most of them don't, do they? Like the Fort Hall Reservation, that's out there where you can physically draw a line around it. They don't pay any taxes on that.

AG: But here they did it this way so they could overthrow us.

SM: Because now this one is a different set-up?

AG: No, it's not different. It's just that the people that were here were different, they had different ways of doin' it. It was very illegal, see?

SM: So now if you bought a house, if you get it approved by the BIA for a house on reservations, then you don't have to pay taxes on it?

AG: Right, but I gotta go buy it.

SM: You buy it first of all. And if you don't get the approval, then you have to pay taxes like everybody else.
AG: Actually, like I say, you're within the reservation boundaries, in the reservation. . . .

SM: Where are we? On the east side of Tacoma?

AG: East side.

SM: Tacoma is on the Sound, isn't it?

AG: Yes.

SM: So now the people fish in the streams and the rivers and the Sound too?

AG: Well, we fish actually in the Puyallup River and in the Bay and out of Carr Inlet and out of East Passage and West Passage, and we extended our boundaries way up the other side of Seattle. That's the usual and accustomed places.

SM: Seattle is about 30 miles north of here?

AG: Yes.

SM: Now these are the "usual and accustomed places," according to the Puyallup people?

AG: We have proved that, and, of course, they had to have an anthropologist prove that we were there.

SM: You did that, didn't you?

AG: Yes, we got it all recorded.

SM: Judge Boldt took that into consideration in his decision?
AG: Yes. Some person from a college, some Caucasian person, just come and studied a little bit and told us that we fished there. I can't understand how they could tell us where we fished. We know our ancestors, and have done all this type of fishing.

SM: I suppose it helped, though, to nail down the decision.

AG: Right. And actually the people here speak the Salish language. The Salish language goes all the way up north as far as Alaska.

SM: That's the language the people speak, and that goes all the way to Alaska?

AG: Yes.

SM: That's a language that prevails over many different tribes. Do they speak a different dialect?

AG: They have a little different dialect, like you would with your "you-all" people, your Southern, and people up in the Bronx.

SM: Yes, Boston and Texas for example. Even on the Navajo Reservation people who were in Shiprock, New Mexico, had a different dialect than those living over in Arizona. That was within one tribe even.

AG: I've been to many reservations throughout the United States and Canada and Alaska. I've stayed with many people, you know, Indian people. I've been . . . like Shiprock, I've been there.

SM: That's quite a rock sticking up there, isn't it?

AG: Yeah. O.K., the Navajo language. I have been up to Alaska among the Tlingit Indians.
SM: They live in Alaska?

AG: Yeah, and their language is similar to the Navajo. Some words.

SM: They're both Athapascan people?

AG: I suppose it is, because I know some of the words are similar. Some of the words are similar.

SM: Are there any other people around here who have that same language, the Athapascan language?

AG: I think the Tsimshian.

SM: The Haidas are up there too?

AG: The southeastern part of Alaska. O.K., you take the Tsimshian are from Canada, like from Prince Rupert on up to Metlakatla and Ketchikan. And then from Ketchikan on up you have your Tlingit. Your Tsimshian and Haida are, you know, from Ketchikan. Then from Petersburg on up, the southeastern part of Alaska, you have your Tlingit. Then your Aleuts are up. There's an island.

SM: Way up, and off to the west. Coming south from there, Alex, what kind of people do we have?

AG: O.K., then off Queen Charlotte Sound, I think those are Nootkas, 'cause I've been up over that part of the country, Bella Bella and Bella Coola. I've been up.

SM: How about Makah?

AG: The Makah here in Neah Bay.
SM: They're over on the coast and the straits out there.

AG: Yes, Neah Bay. That would be by Port Angeles.

SM: Now they fish in the ocean, don't they? Even whale?

AG: Yeah.

SM: Do you have to fish salmon in the streams, or can you fish out in the sea itself?

AG: O.K. In the streams . . . we're not really sportsmen. Like you would say fishin' for sport. We're fishin' for our food, you know. We're not sporty then. If we want to become sporty we have games where we have some potlatches or powwows, you know, if you want to call that a sport. But it's not really a sport, it's traditional, it's our way of life. And to fish, we usually do it on the Bay, the usual accustomed places where we have fished. The streams, you could fish in the streams, but we let them for escape. That's for escapement purposes, so they can go and spawn.

SM: Oh, upstream?

AG: Yes.

SM: Then most of the commercial fishing is downstream, that's in the coastal waters?

AG: Yes. When the fish is comin' back up then, in the streams, I believe most of them are spawnin', because the fish comes back every four years to spawn.

SM: When the fish go upstream and spawn, then do they die?
AG: Yes, they die.

SM: And then what do they do? Come floating down dead?

AG: Well, when they spawn they just die, the carcasses just lay there.

SM: Birds and other animals eat them?

AG: I suppose they do, yes. But it's just the way of life.

SM: Now people don't gather them after they . . .

AG: No, once they . . . they only get them when they're good. They turn dark, they turn different color. You can get some fish that are pretty well ready to spawn. If you get 'em, you can smoke 'em, they're good, but usually we let 'em just lay there. But out of the hatcheries sometimes, they used to give to us some fish there from the hatcheries.

SM: Now back to this Boldt Decision, if we can pin that down. He decided then that the Treaty of 1854 would have to be applied fairly, which meant that the Indian people could fish in the usual and accustomed places, and that meant on the reservation, off the reservation, wherever you usually and customarily had fished.

AG: See, that was a way of life. That was our food. And so, in exchange for some of the land, you know, I didn't say all the land, some of the land, we just told them, "Well, you go ahead and have the land, just give us our fishin' rights, that's all we ask in exchange." But then people began to fish right along. We taught them how to fish, 'cause in Europe they never fished for salmon. We taught them how to fish, and how to smoke the fish and how to cure it, dry it and everything. And then they see that it was a big profit in it, and they said, "Well,
let's just turn this back into . . . take it away from them." They were not satisfied with the land they were given in exchange for this, they wanted everything.

SM: The fishermen dominated the scene?

AG: Yes. And every time we wanted to fish they wouldn't give us a chance, because there is money in fish, you know.

SM: Yes, salmon is very expensive. Well then, the Boldt Decision now is still being argued about, because there are accounts of it in the paper where people are saying he handed down the decision, but the law enforcement people are not carrying it out. Is that true?

AG: O.K., what do they mean, "law enforcement?"

SM: The sheriff?

AG: O.K. The state has no jurisdiction over the tribe. The treaty was not made with the state, it was made with the federal government, way before the state came. It was just a territory, I guess you could call it that. So there was no way that we made a deal with the state, so the state has no jurisdiction, but they're trying to exceed their jurisdiction all the time, and there's no way they can do it. So that's why we have to go to federal court.

SM: So this is a federal court matter. Do you feel that the decision is being carried out fairly?

AG: Well, I could say that it is being carried out fairly on that point. Now there's other things that I would like to see. Our huntin' rights.

SM: You kind of surprised me there now, because I've read several articles
where Indian people have been complaining that the game wardens have not kept the non-Indian fishermen abiding by the law, according to Judge Boldt's ruling.

AG: O.K. When I was up there the Indians supposed to go out fishin', I think it was four days. There was lot of non-Indians fishin' there.

SM: During those days for "Indians only" fishing?

AG: Yes. And the state just turned their back, like they have done all the time. Just turned their back. Finally we got the news media from here, from the Tacoma News Tribune, went out with some of the boys out in a boat. We got some documented evidence, we took some of the attorneys and we went out in the boat and we got pictures and everything.

SM: Pictures of boats in waters where it was supposed to be Indians only?

AG: There was a lot of them fishin' anyway.

SM: Did the news media--the television, newspapers--give you publicity on this?

AG: Yes, they give us publicity.

SM: Well now, then, it's being improved somewhat?

AG: Well, somewhat I would say. Somewhat. But it has to go back to the Judge Boldt Decision again, and go through court.

SM: What do you think's going to happen, Alex? Do you think it's going to get straightened out?
AG: Well, it could get straightened out if the state would just let us manage. We've been doin' a good job managin'. And let them manage out of the "usual and accustomed places." Let them manage that other, and let us manage where we're at. I'm talkin' about the state of Washington. See it would be just the same thing as, O.K., you got two different states, like Oregon and Washington. And the governor from Washington don't tell the governor from Oregon what to do? See, that's two different groups. Well, that's the same as we are. We're a sovereign nation, and we can govern us pretty good. We got biologists, we got men with knowledge.

SM: Is there room for the commercial fishermen who are non-Indian to get some fish too somewhere?

AG: Oh yes.

SM: Then this is not going to put them out of business?

AG: Oh no.

SM: Do other countries like Russia and Japan have anything to do with this?

AG: O.K. now. Now the sockeye run which comes from Canada, most of that salmon, I believe, is reared here in the States, and it goes out and the Canadians get quite a bit of it--they're negotiatin' that--but the Japanese and the Russians, they fish pretty close to our waters. I think we still got a 3-mile limit.

SM: And they come in and fish the coast?

AG: Yes. And some of the people have boats big enough for refrigeration and canneries right in there, see. Right in the boat.
SM: And they make the catches, bring them to the mother ship and process them. What do they do with all the refuse then? Throw it back in the ocean?

AG: I suppose so.

SM: Is that polluting the ocean?

AG: The only pollution that is bad is your waste of oil and things that they dump out there.

SM: Organic stuff, like fish intestines and material that they threw out, that would be eaten by other fish?

AG: You got your birds that follow, they take care of that.

SM: Somebody said that the Japanese and Russian ships stood off there, and oftentimes would clean out a whole run of fish before it even gets back here to the shore where the Indians and non-Indian Americans could argue about it.

AG: That's right. Since the United States has no jurisdiction, really, because they're off the 3-mile limit, unless they come in closer. But how closer can they get? Three-mile limit is real close, when other countries got the... what is it, 100-mile limit or 200-mile limit? So I don't see why they don't put the 200-mile limit.

SM: What we need is the federal government to negotiate with those countries to make some kind of settlement about not wrecking the fishing in this part of the country.

AG: Right. That's true. But then you get into politics, and they don't want to do it for this or that. They'd rather see us fight and bicker
here. And actually, let me tell you, the non-Indian fishermen and the Indian fishermen, they shouldn't be involved in this bickering, because it's all the big companies, such as Weyerhauser, I'll say it again, and those big companies, that are really doin' the harm to the fishing.

SM: They're not fishing, but because of the timber?

AG: Like I said, if they would have left the natural spawning grounds, they wouldn't need no artificial hatcheries, see. But because they destroyed the natural runs...

SM: By cutting timber...?

AG: And letting it lay there, blockin' up the streams, pollutin' the streams. That's what the whole situation was.

SM: You feel a little optimistic that things are somewhat better, but there's still a way to go?

AG: This shoulda been that way back in 1854.

SM: One hundred and some odd years ago?

AG: So they shoulda done at that time, and everything woulda been O.K. They shoulda honored the treaty. I believe all of the people throughout the United States insist to honor the treaty like you honor your Constitution, and any time that a person breaks the treaties, it would be just talkin' against your Constitution, because the very thing that the people stand for, they're goin' against, see? The freedom of the people...

SM: Treaties are the supreme law of the land, aren't they?
AG: Yes, and they should obey them, you know. Otherwise, if they can't make a contract, you know, don't make one. They made treaties with Canada, with Mexico, and they have followed 'em, so why should they mistreat the Indian people in this respect? But the Indian people always treat 'em good, always taught 'em the way of life, how to survive in this wilderness. The white men didn't know anything about it. We taught 'em.

SM: They were very helpful at first.

AG: Yes, we helped the Pilgrims. We gave them some food, and they turn around and exploit us. I don't say that all Caucasian people, but some that came in the Mayflower. See, you had two type of people. You had your Pilgrims, which were a good people. They escaped England to come and learn about the Creator, and we knew quite a bit about the Creator, so we figured they were just good people, but, at the same time, you had other people that were from the penitentiaries, your murderers, your rapists, that were turned loose, and they came on the same boat, and some of them people are still doin' wrong, that's why you find so much rapes and so much murder, so much strife, deceit, because they was two types of people. And so you find that you still have your churches here that some of the people from Europe brought Christianity, and you'll find those churches that are good people. And then you find your people that are still out in the streets, still doin' the wrong, because they both came on the same boat. I believe if they wouldn'ta turned them people loose over here, every-thin' woulda been O.K., but they sent the poor quality of people over here, and that's the ones that we're strivin' with right now, even to this day, those are the ones that are against our fishin'; those are the ones that are doin' all the things against the Indians that we won't get our rights back. From that lineage, that seed, the bad seed.
SM: The bad people are the ones that are causing the problem, and some of them, the good people, are trying to help, or at least being fair. Do you agree, Ellen?

EG: Yes, I agree.

AG: See, our way of life, we always believed in the Creator, that you call God, we call Creator, the Great Spirit, we believe in Him. We're not heathen like people thought.

SM: Is there a Puyallup name for Him?

EG: Just Great Spirit.

AG: And up this way we have the Shaker belief among the Indian people, and we have our own way. I guess you would call them rituals in your way. We worship the Creator. We respect, we knew about the Ten Commandments before the white man taught us. We knew about this. We knew how to respect the land. We never destroyed it. If you wanted to go out and catch a deer, you would kill him, but yet we would use everything because we know that he had to give up his life for us, so we didn't just destroy that. We also took care of the land, you know, we never destroyed that. The Creator created the land, it was for everybody to use. If there was a stream runnin' by and you come, you were thirsty, you could drink of it, because I didn't create the water. The Creator did, so it's not really mine to say, "It's mine," and put a corral against it. Harness it. No. I didn't invent it, I didn't create it, so you can partake. If you were tired, and the sun was real strong, and there was a tree there, you could lay by it and that tree would protect you from the heat, and it's not for me to come and say, "Hey, get off of there, you know. That's my tree."

SM: This was a new idea that came from Europe, this marking off the
land, "this is mine"?

AG: Yeah. You see we believe that the Creator put everybody in his place. He put the Europeans in Europe, He put the black people in Africa, He put the Chinamans in Asia, He put the Indian here. People think we came from another place. Oh no, no. We were here all the time. Other people came from other places. You see, we didn't have to go anywhere. I believe when the Creator give us the land He said, "Take care of it." Now in Europe they didn't took care of it. They ruined it and everything. They did everything wrong over there, so that's why they had lot of plagues over there, because of disobedience. And that's why, if you know in your history, that this land was here, was virgin, was good land, pure, undefiled it was. And they brought 'em over--the curses came with the people.

SM: Yes, there weren't many of these serious killer diseases here.

AG: I believe the reason why the diseases weren't here was because we obeyed. We obeyed the Great Spirit.

SM: Is that the way most of the people feel about it?

AG: Yes. We never done things wrong. O.K., here in this country we had no need for penitentiaries. We had no need for crazy houses like they got 'em now. There was no need for that.

SM: How did people handle problems like that?

AG: There wasn't too many. We'd all pitch in and handle 'em. But most of the things came in because of disobedience.

SM: There were very few of such problems to start with, and then the people handled them in whatever manner was necessary at the time?
AG: Yes. O.K., now, in our way of life, how we kept our family tree, that's why some tribes use totem poles. Like cousins, they wouldn't intermarriage or nothin' like that. There was no intermarriage all the way up to the fourth generation. But the Europeans they come in here, they intermarried. You know, their intermarriage was between cousins and pretty close. That's why you find lot of freaks, you know. You find people that . . . can't keep their mind together because of too close lineage. Even animals—-we know that you don't cross animals too close. So our way of life was not that way. That's why there wasn't so many people, because that's how . . . you know, to keep our family tree, for example, some clan belong maybe to the Raven Clan, another one belonged to the Eagle Clan, and if you travel all over the United States or wherever, and you come across another person that belong to another clan similar to yours, you wouldn't intermarriage, you would know they were of your family, so you wouldn't intermarry, see. So that's how we kept ourselves, you know, and we purified ourselves. Everything that we done, the Creator helped us, you know, guide us in everything that we did. That's why I say that our way of life was a lot different. That's why we didn't have penitentiaries. There was no need for penitentiaries. So it's really hard to make people understand our way of life, because our desires are not to go to Europe or any other place, you know, we never lost nothin' over there. We're here, we're content bein' here, see. Not that I got anythin' against you, but the Creator didn't put us in Europe. He put us here, and I have really no desire to go to Europe. What for? If it was so good, people wouldn't want to come over here.

SM: I guess they were having problems there.

AG: But they shoulda handled 'em, see?

SM: Somehow it could have been done much better, we can see now, looking back.
AG: Now maybe I can tell you a little bit about the history of the Europeans. O.K., their culture, I don't think they had a culture. They had to borrow everything. O.K., they borrowed, even the language is made out of Latin, Greek and French, your English language. Then also your alphabet was borrowed from the Phoenicians, your judicial law was borrowed from the Romans.

SM: Some of it.

AG: Some of it. O.K. Your mathematics was borrowed from the Egyptians. So everything is borrowed. O.K., your ammunition, your guns and gunpowder was borrowed from the Chinese. Your structures that you build, even the White House, it's actually Greek.

SM: Greek and Roman design.

AG: Right. So everything was borrowed, really. Not that I'm . . . I'm just bringin' out some truths, you know.

SM: I suppose the various tribes borrowed from each other, learned from each other?

AG: Well, but from America, America here, the America, most of our way of life was the same. Our way of life was the same.

SM: Basic attitudes. The practices--like fishing would be different from farming in the Southwest--but the basic attitudes, you mean, are similar?

AG: Um hm. So the people over here were content. The simple way of life. You know that most of your European people are turnin' back to the simplicity way of life?

SM: Some authors say that's the secret of the problem, a return to a
a form of tribalism. I don't know if I understand exactly what it means.

AG: So we're content. We don't want to go to the moon, like some other people who want to go to the moon. That's queer. Just like me, just like tryin' to take a fish out of the water and tellin' him, "Why don't you live on the land?" He can't do it. So, in other words, we're programmed to be here. We're made of the dust of the earth, we'll return to dust. We got a spirit, you know.

SM: You have a much greater acceptance of the land and the conditions, the environment, not the way it is, but the way you wish it was, had been kept?

AG: Yes, I wish it would have been the same way.

SM: Of course, a lot of us wish it could be kept nicer, and not wrecked and defiled, littered and all that.

AG: O.K., like somebody said one time. They take all of the gold out of one mountain and put it into another mountain, Fort Knox. What sense does it make to take it out of here and put it in there?

SM: Have you any idea how many people there were in what is now the United States about the time before the Europeans came?

AG: Oh, I suppose a big country like this, the United States that is 3,000 miles long, from coast to coast, about 2,500 miles in all, so you stop and think of that. There was quite a bit of people here.

SM: Well, it's a lot of land. But have you any idea, like 1,000,000 or half a million?
AG: Oh, up in the millions, I think.

SM: Have you ever read any educated guess on it?

AG: No.

SM: See, now we have over 200,000,000 people living in this same area, a lot more people, so we have a lot more problems, maybe just from that fact alone.

AG: Well, I think that the reason why the problems have developed is the greed. People came over here and thought there was a fast buck to be made, you know. Came with certain ideas, and they were not concerned with anybody else, but just themselves. And again, like I said, there were some people that are concerned with Indian problems, but they don't have a voice.

SM: Do you think it's getting any better? Like this Boldt Decision now. That was an improvement, wasn't it?

AG: Yes. I'm glad there was a man that wasn't afraid of the truth. A judge should judge right, according to the letter of the law, but I guess other ones, they compromise too much, they're afraid, then they won't do it.

SM: What's your job here in the center?

AG: O.K. I'm an alcoholic counselor.

SM: You counsel alcoholic people with problems?

AG: Yes.
SM: Ellen, do you work here in the center too?

EG: Alcoholic counselor.

SM: You work together?

AG: Together we counsel the families.

SM: If a man comes in you counsel the whole family and all the members of it. Some of them wouldn't be having the problems directly, but would be suffering from a father, for example, who has the problem. Now that's kind of a new approach, isn't it?

AG: I think it's a better way, because, for example, if I was to go by myself into a home that the husband might be a jealous husband, this way my wife and I both go together.

SM: Besides she can help with the mother's problems and the children too, can't you?

EG: Yes. We work that way as a team, and we get things done.

AG: I may add one thing, that I have worked with the fisheries, the Puyallup tribal fisheries, before I moved over to the alcoholic work, and I have quite a bit of knowledge in. . . .

SM: Oh, that's why you had so much information on the fisheries situation, because you worked in that area.

AG: I'm still workin' some in both, you know.

SM: You're doing something on both?

AG: Yes.
SM: Well, I want to thank you both for your time. You've explained a lot of things for us.