LISTENING TO INDIANS

BOB MILLER, Seminole - Creek
October 1, 1975
Norman, Oklahoma
Sam Myers:

Today I'm in Norman, Oklahoma, at the University of Oklahoma, talking to Mr. Bob Miller. Bob, would you explain where on campus we are?

Bob Miller:

This is the old Navy base, World War II Navy base, the south campus. We're in Building 4.

SM: And what is this building devoted to?

BM: It's primarily devoted to the extension division, or Continuing Education, here at the University of Oklahoma. I am in the Consultive Center, which is one of the departments within the Human Relations Center. It originated after 1964 when the Civil Rights Act was passed. It was designed to help desegregation in the public schools.

SM: There are several offices here being manned by and run for Indian people?

BM: Yes.

SM: Any other minority groups here?

BM: Well, there are Indians, there are blacks, Chicanos. That's primarily the minority groups on campus. We have some other students, some Chinese, but very few.

SM: From which tribe are you, Bob?

BM: I'm Seminole and Creek from Oklahoma. And most of the Seminoles are in Oklahoma. At the time of the removal, starting at about 1838 up to 1846 or so, most of the Seminoles were removed from Florida. There were only about 500 or less, 300 probably, left in the Everglades.
And now, presently, there are roughly 1,200 Seminoles and 500 Mikasukis still in the Everglades on the three reservations in Florida.

SM: The Mikasukis are a division of Seminoles?

BM: Yes. You've got to remember that the Seminole Tribe did not exist prior to, oh about 1775, and it's made up of 15 or 20 splinter groups, largely Creeks and Muskogean speakin' people, splinter groups from the Creek Federation, which at that time was located in Georgia and Alabama, and they left there and moved into the Everglades. This movement started probably in the early 1700's, and then over a period of time they became known as Seminoles, which means "runaway." You might be interested in knowing that this is the only tribe in the United States, Indian tribe, to be formed in historic times. All the other tribes were in existence at the time that Columbus discovered this continent.

SM: Also, aren't they the only tribe that never signed a peace treaty?

BM: This is true. The Florida Seminoles never signed. Now the Seminoles that were moved out to Oklahoma, we signed a number of treaties, and all were broken, not by the Seminoles necessarily. The federal government, at the time the Seminoles were moved, brought the Seminoles out in groups. They would put them on a ship in Tampa Bay, and then they moved them to New Orleans. They'd be unloaded from the ship at New Orleans, and from there they'd walk to Oklahoma.

SM: They didn't bring them up the river in boats?

BM: No, mostly they walked, and a lot of Seminoles died en route to Fort Gibson where they were stationed when they first arrived. The idea was, on the part of the federal government, they wanted the Seminoles to join the Creeks and become one tribe. This was one of the reasons
they had problems with the federal government. In fact, the first treaty, the Treaty of Fort Moultrie, was interpreted to the Seminoles, and this part about rejoining the Creeks, becoming Creeks, was not interpreted. The Seminoles did not understand that they were to do this. And so later on, when they found out that they were, then they rebelled, and they were supposed to have left Florida starting about 1828. The first Seminole war with the federal government started about December, 1817, and lasted up till about February, 1818.

SM: That was in Florida?

BM: Yes. There were three or four so-called wars.

SM: Went on for years?

BM: Yes. In fact, the Mikasukis and the Seminoles—there are still authorities who say have not signed a peace treaty, although they have accepted government help in recent years. This young man you were telling me about, the Seminole from Florida who was in school at your college, the Bureau of Indian Affairs is payin' for his schoolin'. This is one things Indians have today that other minorities, and even whites, don't have—the opportunity of higher education. Any Indian who finishes high school and wants to go on and get a college degree has this opportunity under the act which provides grants for higher education.

SM: He has to qualify though as an Indian?

BM: Yes. A quarter blood or more. He has to show that he has descended from someone who is an enrolled member of that specific tribe. And it's a funny thing. Education—you must be a quarter blood, you must be able to prove you are quarter blood. 'Course when I was in school, this grant program did not exist, but today, now in addition to the
money grants provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for higher education, there are a number of scholarships set up especially for Indian people, Indian youngsters, by different foundations.

SM: You are one of the Seminole descendants from those people who came west in a trail of tears?

BM: Yes, all of these were trails of tears.

SM: Where were you born?

BM: I was born at Wewoka. In Seminole it means "barking water." Wewoka is actually the old Seminole capital of the Seminole Nation back prior to statehood when the Five Civilized Tribes had the five nations in eastern Oklahoma, and it got its name . . . . right north of Wewoka is Wewoka Creek, and there was a falls there, or water that rushed pretty fast, and it made a noise, so they called it "barking water." One interesting thing, just north of Wewoka Creek, north of Wewoka, there was a remount station. Bill Sheridan was stationed there; he was a lieutenant as I remember it, prior to the Civil War. And George Custer, Yellow Eyes himself, was through there and camped at one time. It's a very historic town, and prior to statehood, and in statehood 'long about 1917, my grandfather and his brother--my grandfather was A. J. Brown, he was half Seminole and half Scotch. His father was a Scotsman, a physician, who had come out from Virginia with the Seminoles to serve as tribal physician. At any rate, my grandfather and his brother, John F. Brown were the sons of John F. Brown I. My great uncle was John F. Brown II. He also was governor of the Seminole Nation for about 30 years. My grandfather was treasurer of the Seminole Nation for about that long a time. They owned the Wewoka Trading Company, which I've been told was in Dun and Bradstreet as a $1,000,000 a year corporation.
SM: A big operation in those days.

BM: Yes, it was. I've been told it was the largest trading post between St. Louis and Santa Fe, at that time. It was the only place for Indians to trade--they issued their own script. And I don't know whether you know him, whether he has stores in Missouri or not--I think he does. C. R. Anthony has a chain of clothing stores. C. R. Anthony now is well into his 90's, and he's a fine gentleman. He started out when he was 16 as bookkeeper at the old trading company, the one my grandfather ran. A museum was opened for the Seminole Nation, which was sponsored by the Seminole Nation Historical Society, and my brother, who still lives in Wewoka--he's retired from the public schools there--he was principal of the junior high school, and prior to his retirement was director of the museum.

SM: You were born there and grew up in Wewoka?

BM: Yes, I grew up there, and was there until World War II. I worked on a newspaper there.

SM: Did you learn to speak Seminole as well as English?

BM: No, this is an odd thing. My parents wanted us to learn English first. They just assumed that we would automatically learn Seminole. Now Seminole and Creek--my father was 3/4 Creek, he was a Baptist minister. My mother, although she was actually 3/4 Seminole--her mother was full blood and her father was half Seminole and half Scotch--she was enrolled as a full-blood Seminole. And the Supreme Court has held that what is recorded on the Dawes Commission rolls can't be changed, so, legally I'm 7/8 Indian, although actually I'm 3/4, so I identify as half Seminole and 3/8 Creek.

SM: So you have restored the union of the two old tribes. (laughter)
BM: And, as a matter of fact, the border between the Creek and Seminole Nations runs right back of the courthouse, east of the courthouse in Wewoka. And what most people think is an alley is really Muskogee Avenue. And I used to live in the Seminole Nation and work in the Creek Nation—the newspaper where I worked was just to the east of Muskogee Avenue.

SM: You went to public schools there?

BM: Yes, I went to the public school in Wewoka. I never learned to speak Indian. As a youngster I understood it fairly well, but my father was probably the best interpreter in the Creek and Seminole Nations during his time. He had gone to Washington a number of times to serve as interpreter. He went to Florida, by the way, as a federal interpreter during a murder trial of a Seminole. He made his living as an interpreter. He was a minister for 30 or 35 years, but he never drew a dime of salary. The churches did not, at that time, pay salary. When he was a young man, before he and my mother were married, he worked for a hardware company in Muskogee, and later he worked for my grandfather at Wewoka. My grandfather, with the help of my father's brother, stayed in school at the University of Kentucky, the business school. Now he had a fifth grade education, and he completed this business course, which normally took a year, in about eight months, at the University of Kentucky.

SM: Now you went to public school, high school, in Wewoka. Then did you get into the newspaper business right away?

BM: No. After I was out a year, I worked for a while. The first job I had after I graduated was serving as a substitute on a rural mail route. I've never had as much money before or since, because none of it was taxable at that time. Everything I made was mine, and I'd leave at 8:00 in the morning and be back at noon, so I decided I'd go back to high school and take a commercial course. I gave up my high
school diploma and played another year of football, basketball and baseball. I went to the junior college, Oklahoma Military Academy at Claremore, in the fall and spring semester of 1928.

SM: That's not an Indian school?

BM: No, it's a junior college and military school.

SM: And did you go to school after that some more?

BM: Yes. Then the next fall I went to East Central State at Ada. I played a year of football there, and quit and went back to work. I worked around just doing odd jobs, common labor mostly. In 1931 the depression was on, so another friend and I hitch hiked to Des Moines, where he got a football scholarship and I got a half scholarship for football and a half scholarship because my father was a minister. This was Drake.

SM: Drake University. The famous Drake Relays.

BM: It was a real fine college, one of the best liberal arts colleges in the country at that time, and I presume it still is.

SM: I think so.

BM: But Dr. Sharp, the President of the University of Oklahoma now, came to the University of Oklahoma from Drake. He was president of Drake.

SM: Maybe your being there helped him make that decision.

BM: Well, I have a friend who went up there and played football. He went to Bacone College, which at that time was strictly an Indian junior college. This was back in the '20's. His name was Tiger.
SM: A relative of Jerome Tiger?

BM: Oh, I question it. I don't think so, because Tiger is a very common name. However, Jerome was Creek and Seminole, and my friend, if he still lives, is Creek.

SM: Young Jerome was a remarkable artist.

BM: I thought he was probably the best young Indian artist in the country. He was tremendous!

SM: A lot of people agree. Beautiful work over at the museum in Muskogee. Then you finished at Drake?

BM: I never graduated. I went the fall semester of 1931. My father died in December of 1931, so I was home, and I went back and completed a semester after Christmas. Then I dropped out the spring semester, and went back in the fall of '32. And at that time they deemphasized football, they let their coach go; he went to the University of Iowa, then later went to Syracuse. They cut about 30-35 of us off the football scholarships, so I hitchhiked home in February of 1933. It was 20 below zero when I left up there. Then I worked around, and in 1937 I started to work on the newspaper, and I worked there until I went into the Service in February of 1942.

SM: You had quite a lot of experience on the newspaper.

BM: Yes, a little over five years, from '37 to '42 at Wewoka. Altogether I have something like 26 years experience in newspaper work and public relations.

SM: How did you get into this work here?

BM: I came to the University of Oklahoma, and started work here Nov. 1, 1956.
I've been here 20 years.

SM: You've had connections with a lot of different schools.

BM: Yes. Before I went into the newspaper business, after World War II, I was discharged early. I had an eye condition that bothered me, in fact, I was seeing double, I'm still seeing double. I've had nine operations on my eye. I originally had a crossed eye and had it straightened cosmetically, but my vision never fused, so I learned to live with it, and disregard what I see with one eye.

SM: Well as long as you're looking at good things, seeing it twice may not be so bad.

BM: Yeah, if I could look at a ten dollar bill and see twenty. Well, I'd gotten to where I thought I'd never drive a car again, but when I first came down here I came as director of public relations for the extension division, which is now the Continuing Education and Public Service. My job was to publicize the extension division. Most people at that time thought of the extension division as primarily correspondence study. We made our own expenses, we did not get state money to operate. We did get our salaries paid. The first year I was here we had 150 to 200 workshops, seminars and conferences for people, serving the southwest area.

SM: How do you define the extension service at this university?

BM: Well, my definition here, and I think the proper definition for the University of Oklahoma is adult education.

SM: It is really adult education whether it be on campus or some place else?
BM: Yes. We take courses out, and we have credit and non-credit courses both. When I first came here we had a series of credit courses offered at Midwest City, and we still do.

SM: You send instructors over there?

BM: Yes, in several areas, in education and engineering and business. And we also send instructors to Fort Sill. Well, one of the things that developed while I was here is the bachelor of liberal studies program which has become popular all over the country. It's a program where you don't accumulate semester hours to graduate. It's in three areas, humanities and social sciences and political sciences. And you take a series of tests, and maybe you're farther along in one area, so it doesn't take you too long to complete it. Anyhow you complete one area, then you're up here for a seminar for three weeks, as I remember it, in the summer. Then you complete another area in the same way, and you come back for a seminar. Then you complete the third area and you're back for a seminar. In each area then you do a report. After you complete the third area you're here for an inter-area seminar in the summer. And you're required then to do a report, sort of like a master's thesis, and then, if it is a baccalaureate degree, you go right through with the graduates from the main campus in the other colleges.

SM: It's a very flexible program.

BM: Yes it is. It allows a student to proceed at his own pace. And in addition to that, they develop the master's in liberal arts. We do have programs in Washington--it's a master's program. We also have a program in Germany.

SM: Isn't that unusual?

BM: It's quite unusual. The extension division here, which now, as I
said, is Continuing Education in Public Service, is really a tribute to Thurman White who is the vice-president in charge of this. When I came here, Thurman was dean of the extension division, with about 85 in the total division, including clerks and stenographers. But it's grown to where some of the departments will have as many as 85. It's a tremendous undertaking. Of course I think it's doing a world of good. It affects people who aren't able to come to the university to spend time, and gives training courses. Now we have courses in oil field work, we have courses in the arts and sciences, and this is primarily an extension of arts and science courses to the state and to the Southwest. We have people coming here from foreign countries, we have had people here from all states in the union, and from a number of foreign countries. We have police training, law enforcement, we have a department, Southwest Center, for law enforcement.

SM: You also have post office personnel training on campus, and I saw some people in uniforms on the campus.

BM: This is ROTC. Yesterday, Tuesday, is ROTC. We also have ballet here. It's Yvonne Chouteau and her husband, naturalized citizens, they're a tremendous team, they teach ballet here.

SM: How big is the school altogether?

BM: It's a little over 21,000 on campus. Then there's the med students in Oklahoma City, the school of nursing, and then, of course, we have classes all over the state. I don't know what the total would be. And then we have students in foreign countries, like in Germany, and we have students in Washington.

SM: Bob, what is your title?

BM: I'm a field consultant for the consultive center here at the university, which is a department within the southwest center for human
relations studies. And there are other departments. Now after I had been in public relations here for a number of years, I transferred to business and industrial services, one of the three departments within the extension division, to learn programming. And I worked primarily with newspapers in developing conferences for advertising, circulation, editorial writing, as well as printing and other areas of newspaper work. I owned a paper in Hardtner, Kansas, a little town in Barber County, a town of 365, and never worked so hard in my life. My partner was a printer, and I did the editorials, sold ads, and I did the news stories. And later I began helping him in the shop, because he had more than he could handle. But prior to that I had worked for the state veteran's department, immediately after World War II; I was working at Holdenville at the time on a newspaper, helping set up newspaper training under the on-the-job training program, and I worked at this for about eight or ten months, and I went back into the newspaper business in Alva, Oklahoma. Then from there I was a printer on the paper, The Review Courier, at Alva. He and I bought the paper at Hardtner, Kansas, which is 15 miles north, just barely a mile into Kansas. And I was there 30 months, and I sold out and went to Ada, and from there I went to OSU and finally down here, which makes us fairly current. In 1962 we started a program, an experimental program, and there was nothing like it in the country. This was a program that developed into the Indian education program. Dr. Bill Carmack, who later on was an administrative aid to Senator Fred Harris, U.S. Senator Fred Harris, and later he became the top assistant to the commissioner of Indian Affairs, who at that time was Bob Bennett. Well, Bill was here at the time—he was in the speech department. Then he began working half time in the speech department and half time in the extension division. At that time we were out on the north campus. Each summer they were holding a human relations workshop for a week, and this was strongly supported by business leaders in Oklahoma City and in Tulsa, as well as faculty members here on campus. Well, out of this grew, after the third summer, in 1961,
the human relations center here. And Dr. Carmack did a tremendous
job. In two years time he was farther down the road than the sup-
porters of this center thought he would be in five years. They had
raised money to support the center for five years. Well, at the
time that Carmack was named director, they had an advisory board made
up of the faculty members here and people over the state of Oklahoma
and the city of Tulsa. At this time I went to him and asked him
about starting an adult education program for Indians. And he said,
"Well, why?" And I said to help with problems that Indians have.
And Bill had grown up in Lawton and around Indians. Lawton is south-
west of here. And so Bill asked what problems the Indians had, as
Indians, so I explained to him they were ethnic problems, ethnic dif-
ferences, differences in the value system of the Indian people, and
the white, dominant society. Well, I talked to him for about an hour,
and I sold him on the idea that this would be a good thing for the
human relations center to attempt. So he went to his board, the
advisory board, and he sold them on the idea. So he came back and
called me and told me that his advisory board had bought it, now it
was up to us to develop the program. So we didn't actually know where
to take hold of it. It was in the fall of '61.

SM: This was the beginning of your work with Indian people?

BM: I had worked since July 1st with business and industrial services,
developing workshops and conferences in the newspaper business—we had
newspaper people on campus. So I continued with the business and
industrial services, and we continued meeting here. We met Boyce
Timmons, Bill Carmack, Alec Wheaton, who is now with the Bureau of
Indian Affairs but was living in Norman at that time. And I would
meet at least once a week and talk about this thing. Well, we met,
oh, for about a year, and we didn't know how to get hold of this,
where to start. We knew that the important thing was to get input
from Indians, and develop programs that Indian people themselves
wanted. Too often the Bureau of Indian Affairs, in the past and today, are still developing programs on their own. Congress does the same thing. They'll pass legislation without Indian input. Let me digress and talk about a recent act that Congress passed, which provides that election ballots be printed for Indians. If there are a certain percentage of Indians living in the voting area, then the law requires that these ballots be printed in Indian, so that Indians would be able to vote, to look at a ballot and know who they're voting for. It's an absolutely ridiculous law. No one talked to the Indians about it before the law was passed. There are five written languages in the United States; they're all here in Oklahoma; the Five Civilized Tribes have written languages, the rest don't. And I'd venture to say that the people for whom this law was supposedly passed, the traditional Indians, those I know, the Creek and Seminole Nations, do not read Creek and Seminole. So if you printed the ballots in Creek and Seminole, it wouldn't help them a bit. It's something that Congress does, and, incidentally, when Congress passes a law, as a rule Oklahoma is overlooked. It's passed for reservation states, and there were no reservations in Oklahoma since 1892, when Congress was getting ready to prepare Oklahoma for statehood. So this is a good example. Well, laws like this happen all the time, so we decided that something had to be done for Indians, to get their input. In fact, the program is going to be based on what the Indian identified as local needs. We talked about this for a year, and we talked to faculty, and we talked to people in the anthropology department, and we talked to people in business, and education, in most of the colleges on campus, not most of them, but a good many of them. And at the end of the year we still hadn't started. We started talking about this in the fall of 1961 when the center for human relation studies became a reality on campus as an arm or department within the extension division. I had been working for a business and industrial service starting July 1st, '62. At the time we were trying to get this program off the ground, Indian education program for adults, I was
still in public relations for the extension division. We finally called a meeting in the fall of 1962, and we had a group of Indians, about 15 or 20 who came from Lawton, and they were primarily Comanches. Among the group were some of the finest people that you could ever know. LaDonna Harris was one—she's Fred Harris' wife, she's of Comanche extraction, and others from down there. They came up and we met, and we talked about programming. The result was that Carmack told them, "You go back to Lawton and you find a meeting place, you set the date and the hour when you want us to come down, and tell us what you want." So they went back and they notified Carmack in a few days that they'd meet at the Fort Sill Indian school, in the Home Ec. cottage, and as I recall it was on Monday at 7:00 or 7:30 that they wanted to meet, so we started going down there every Monday. And I arranged my schedule in business and industrial services so I'd be home.

SM: How far is it down there?

BM: About 80 miles. So I drove my own car without expenses, and quite often we'd take people. And the faculty people got interested when they found out about this program, and so we'd take a carload sometimes, and there'd be two or three cars going down, and we'd go to Lawton, have dinner, and then we'd go out to the meeting, and quite often after the meeting was over, we'd go to Fred Harris' house and just sit around and visit, maybe a dozen of us. Fred, at that time, was in the state legislature, state senate. The thing was so successful that the Bureau of Indian Affairs decided that they would sponsor it the following year. They gave us $25,000, and we had written the proposal to develop 12 centers, which was ridiculous, because Carmack was the only paid person working in this area. So we got this $25,000 to set up four new centers the following year in 1973, 1974.

SM: This would be other areas?
BM: Yes. This would be, and we would maintain the center at Lawton.

SM: Were you conducting classes at the Lawton center?

BM: Well, we conducted whatever they wanted. We started out, they wanted something in leadership training. This was Carmack's specialty.

SM: So these meetings were not discussions, they were actually learning processes?

BM: They were discussions. There would be a lecture for about 45 minutes; we'd take a break and the group provided coffee and cookies or something of that sort, then the person who was lecturing would still have something to say, he'd come back and talk for a few minutes, then we'd have open discussion. It was tremendous! People were interested. We'd have as many as 80 or 100 at some of the meetings, depending on what the subject material was.

SM: Were they getting college credit for this?

BM: No, this was simply to help themselves develop leadership, and develop to improve their self-image. But these Indians didn't need improvement of their self-image, because most of them had some college work, many of them did. Some were college graduates. Iola Hayden, for instance, was the home demonstration agent for Indians, a graduate of Oklahoma A and M. So they were sharp people. This lasted until the end of the academic year in May, and so then the director of the area office at Anadarko, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, took our proposal to Washington and sold it to the commissioner, an anthropologist from Minnesota. He was the last white to be Commissioner of Indian Affairs before Bob Bennett. Anyway, he had a rough time, but he sold it. And for $25,000 we developed four more centers. We deliberately picked two centers, and I'm going to name the towns where we thought were the toughest towns in Oklahoma for Indians to live. One was Watonga, up
in the northwest, in Arapaho country, and the other was Ponca City. And there are heavy Indian populations in these areas. At the time we went to Watonga, there was one Indian employed, he was working in a tailor shop. He was a veteran of World War II, and had a couple of years of student work at Southwestern State College. So we went in there and we went into Ponca City, and we had support from the Indians both places. And we later went into Anadarko, which is west of here, and into Carnegie. These four in addition to the one we continued to operate, the Lawton center. That spring, after we got the contract, Carmack asked me if I would like to join his staff as a field coordinator for the Indian Education Program - we had decided that's what we'd call it. I had conferred with Carmack quite a bit about this, so I transferred from business and industrial services to Carmack's staff. Boyce Timmons was director of registration here at that time, and had been for 20, 25 years, and Boyce is extremely interested in Indian affairs; he's of Cherokee descent. He was hired as an overload on a quarter time, and I was the only full-time employee, and Boyce actually put in more than half time, because he worked like everything. He and I'd get out, and we travelled these Oklahoma roads, and we talked with Indians, we talked with the white people in the areas, and we identified Indian leaders. We didn't go direct to the Indian leaders who were the tribal chiefs or tribal chairmen, we went into the area and we identified. We'd have maybe 20 people make a list of Indian leaders in that area. Well, if a man's name appeared maybe a dozen times, we knew he'd have leadership ability, he was considered a leader by Indians and then by whites too. So we would then call on this man and ask him to call a meeting of Indians so that we might talk to them about a center; if they wanted one we'd work it out; if they didn't we'd go on somewhere else. Well, every place we tried to establish a center we had good luck, they wanted this.

SM: It worked out in all these places.
BM: Then later on we got in to eastern Oklahoma. Now this was under Bob Bennett's administration as commissioner of Indian affairs, and Virgil Harrington was transferred from Florida to Muskogee as director of the area office in Muskogee. And I don't think there's ever been a finer director of an area office than Virgil Harrington. He has Choctaw blood, probably a sixteenth, but he's extremely interested in Indians. At one time or another we've had 12 centers in Oklahoma. We had these centers now, and our location had been moved. We were at the south campus, just at the end of Constitution Street here. But at any rate, we had these centers going, and, in addition to the centers, we did everything. We worked with Indians, and if Indians had a problem, they'd call in, and one of the three of us would work with them. For instance, kids whom I knew, whose parents knew me, would come to me, and I'd call Muskogee about their grants. Maybe there was a delay, maybe different things happened. Well, we still do this, Boyce and I.

SM: Are these centers still operating?

BM: No. In 1972, three years ago this last June, our support was withdrawn. And we had gotten information to thousands of Oklahoma Indians. The people now go into communities to work with Indians—they contact the Indian leaders who were developed through these centers. It was a tremendous program, and it shouldn't have been allowed to die; they should have retained it.

SM: Anything to replace it?

BM: No. We operated until just not very long ago, and it still does its work, although we didn't have money, we didn't go out in the centers. But Indians would call in, we still would help. It was a tremendous program, like the program that Boyce Timmons is working with. He's executive director of the Oklahoma Indian Rights Association. Now
this is a program that was developed with the help of the Indian education program. This is something we've been wanting to do for a long time, and so we had a meeting here that the Bureau of Indian Affairs sponsored. We had leaders from all over Oklahoma, 35 tribes in Oklahoma, recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as organized tribes. There are four in Kansas, around Horton there on reservations, and they're under the jurisdiction of the Anadarko area office. They have 23 tribes, including four in Kansas—the Sac and Fox, the Kickapoo, Potawatomis, Shawnee. At any rate, we had these people in, and the last program—it was for about a three-day workshop started Thursday evening—we had something like 150 to 200 Indians, leaders from all tribes. So on the final day we asked them to evaluate the program and tell us what they wanted as a follow-up. Saturday we had attorneys there to talk to them about Indian rights. I think I told you earlier that I was on an Indian affairs commission. And the Indian affairs commission and the Indian education program here at the university had gone together, and we had rewritten the booklet on civil rights, and it was rewritten especially for Indians—it's called Indian Rights. There are copies of it up in Boyce's office. We had 5,000 printed and we distributed those, and we had another 2,500 printed, and they were distributed, but it told the Indians about their rights as citizens, and the law enforcement involving the Indians in Oklahoma has been terrible. Not only the law enforcement, but the violation of Indian rights in the courts. Indian rights have been fairly well ignored. Now this isn't general, but it happens often.

SM: It happens often, but in some areas?

BM: Well, it happens in all areas, but I still will say that Indians in Oklahoma get a lot better chance than Indians in any other Indian state. In western Oklahoma the discrimination against Indians is much worse than it is in eastern Oklahoma, and the reason is that the eastern Oklahoma Indians, the Five Tribes Indians, were agricultural in background, whereas the western Oklahoma Indian is not;
were strictly nomadic. So when the Five Civilized Tribes came out here and established the Five Nations in eastern Oklahoma, they were operating these nations, and supposedly had government support that whites would not come in unless they were invited. And by and large this is the way it was until after the Civil War. Then we digressed, and instead of continuing to grow we digressed—the Five Nations did. But now one thing that makes work with Indians much easier in eastern Oklahoma, I've been told and I don't know what the basis of this is, but the curator from the museum at Bartlesville, out southwest of Bartlesville. . . .

SM: Do you mean Woolaroc?

BM: Yes, the curator at Woolaroc, Pat Patterson. He spoke to us and he said, among other things, that prior to World War II, in eastern Oklahoma, that 85% of the native Oklahomans in that area have some degree of Indian blood. And I don't know where his basis is for this remark, but I wouldn't argue with it, I think perhaps it's true.

SM: And it's not the same in western Oklahoma?

BM: In western Oklahoma their Indian blood is something that most whites hid. Now the situation is improving. I think the Indian education program had a lot to do with improving it. But people out there, whites, don't want their children dating Indians and marrying them. Kids play together on playgrounds, Indians and whites and blacks, and there is no distinction. If the parents would leave them alone there'd be no racial problems actually. But you got prejudice, and Indians rate lower than blacks in areas in western Oklahoma. Now we've helped the situation tremendously. The Indian Rights association I was telling you about, out of that critique, that evaluation, that Saturday morning when the program was over, they said, "That's just what
we want. We want to learn more about our rights, and how to protect our rights."

SM: This came out of the old centers?

BM: No, it wasn't from the centers. There were center people there, sure, because they were among the Indian leaders, but these were representatives of tribes from all over Oklahoma, plus the four tribes in the Horton, Kansas, area. And we had this worked out, we hosted it, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs paid for it, so after these people said this was what they wanted, it was then the following fall before we were able to get them together to have a seminar. It was a one-day seminar and devoted to Indian rights. Out of the information gathered, we found things the people were appalled at, the whites. We had representatives from the governor's office, the courts, the state safety commission . . . and out of this grew the Indian Rights Association, which has, since 1971, handled more than 1,600 cases where Indians feel their rights had been violated. It's been extremely successful.

SM: Bob, you've been successful again today in giving us much valuable information about these activities. Thank you for your help.