Listening to Indians

V. J. ROBERTS, Pawnee - Chippewa

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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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Sam Myers:

Today I'm in Santa Fe at the Institute of American Indian Arts, on Cerillos Road, and I'm talking with Mr. V. J. Roberts. What Indian tribes are you from, Mr. Roberts?

V. J. Roberts:

Pawnee and Chippewa.

SM: Two tribes. Chippewa is up in Minnesota country?

VR: Right.

SM: How did you get down in Santa Fe from there?

VR: Well, I was raised primarily in Oklahoma during my early days, and after World War II broke out I migrated west. I guess I found out there were other states besides Oklahoma and Kansas.

SM: I should point out to our listeners that you teach history here at the Institute of American Indian Arts, and that you have classes in American Indian history and American Indian culture. What other classes?

VR: That's primarily what I'm involved in.

SM: But you include now in Indian culture, not just the local area, but you go way back archeologically to pre-Columbian history, don't you?

VR: That's right.

SM: You have an Aztec calendar over there, a large blow-up of it with the complete breakdown of what it means. Well, Mr. Roberts, first of all let me ask you about yourself, so we can sort of introduce you. You
came from Oklahoma, your parents were Pawnee and Chippewa and French. Did you go to school in Oklahoma?

VR: I finished high school in Oklahoma, and then, just like I said, I sort of migrated out of the Plains area, and I went into California, and I wasn't involved in education at that time. I was working as a mechanic in aircraft.

SM: Was this during the war or after the war?

VR: I got involved in this during the war, and I followed it up until about 1950. Then I decided maybe I had enough of aircraft. My next thought was to try to get into education, and I never was a good student.

SM: What prompted you to become interested in education?

VR: I liked the high school age.

SM: Do you mean the high-school age students?

VR: The Indian. I figured if I wanted to get into education, this would be the bracket I'd like to fall in with.

SM: You were thinking then already of working in an Indian school, and not in a non-Indian school?

VR: Right. So I asked for employment with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which was allowed back ... I think it happened about in '57, eventually. And while working in the Bureau I got a job working in a dormitory, and they allowed me to go to school jointly.

SM: Where was this that you went to school?
VR: Well, I went to several schools. I went to Wichita State in Wichita, Kansas; I attended ASU in Tempe, and I attended City College at San Diego, and I finished school at Northern Arizona University at Flagstaff. And I also took some courses over here at the College of Santa Fe, and this is where I got certified to teach.

SM: The College of Santa Fe is across the road and out a little?

VR: A few miles from here.

SM: Well, you've experienced quite a few schools, so that gives you a good background.

VR: And incidentally this is my first year in the teaching field, but I did my student teaching right here, so it was just kind of a continuation.

SM: Do you mean when you were over at the College of Santa Fe, you were doing student teaching because you were working in education?

VR: Right. The last semester of last year.

SM: You worked here last year, and now you're here as a full-time instructor?

VR: Full-time instructor, and to me it's really great. I really go for it because I think this is my thing, this is what I've always wanted.

SM: There are so many different kinds of attitudes, cultures, and so on. Like here now. Your mother being Chippewa, and your father Pawnee and with some French blood, and so on, and you're working here in the midst of the Pueblos, which is quite a different thing again. I imagine you have to study and work at that.
VR: Well, I don't concentrate specifically on the Pueblos. I did this year at the beginning of school, because we have so many tribes coming from all parts of the United States. As you will note right here underneath, we have 77 different tribes listed— that's our latest roster of different tribes.

SM: That's interesting. They start all the way from Aleut up in Alaska, and down through Apache, Crow, Eskimo, and finishing up with Zia and Zuni.

VR: So most of them, as you can see, come from areas where they're strictly aloof of the Pueblo culture. So right away I focus in on it, and I take 'em on field trips. Last week-end I took 61 students to Bandelier National Park, and this is typically a site where the Pueblo migrated down from Mesa Verde to this area.

SM: Do you know about when that occurred?

VR: Well, I would say it must have been pre-Spanish, that would be the 1400's. It could have been around 900 A.D., or something like that. And from there they migrated to areas along the Rio Grande, I would say. We have most of our tribes strung out along the Rio Grande; we have a few that are west of the Rio Grande; we have two that are in Arizona now, the Hano and the Hopi. So that gives us a total of 21.

SM: There are 19 Pueblos here and two more over in Arizona?

VR: The Hano got over there when DeVarges came up in 1693, and used force on the Pueblos. He had to deal with each tribe separately. His headquarters was Santa Fe.

SM: He had his capital here, didn't he, in the old Palace of Governors down here?
VR: Right. The Hopi was having trouble with the Ute and the Navajo, in their area, and they heard about the Hano being warlike, so they sent representatives down and asked them to come up there and help them keep these Navajos and Utes from attacking them, but with the understanding that they would be given the same rights as the rest of the Hopis.

SM: That's very interesting. I read a book called The Fourth World of the Hopis about this same story. Well then, the Pueblos, how about giving us a brief over-view of them? You're just working on it right now, aren't you?

VR: Well, we just finished up a session on it, and having so many different tribes represented in the classroom, you almost had to take extra pains to make sure that you reached the student that is from a way off.

SM: And that knows nothing about the Pueblos.

VR: And you also have some students in the class that are Pueblo, and they have a tendency to get bored, but you still have to reach the student from other states.

SM: Let's say you have a student from San Ildefonso, and you have these others here from all over the country who probably don't even know where San Ildefonso is. Can you involve that student from the Pueblo in the discussion and let him help out?

VR: Oh, they eat it up. They like to take the leadership, and then add to the discussion.

SM: And that would keep them involved instead of turning them away because you're going over old stuff for them.
VR: I don't have a required text, but we try to take tribes from different areas. Now we finished up the Pueblo, and now I'm going to spend maybe a couple of weeks on the Navajo and the Apache, mostly on the Navajo. And as you can see in the room, I have some aids.

SM: You have a kachina doll over there.

VR: Yeibichai. They call it a Yei. That's where their dance comes from. This was made by one of the students here, and this is by one of the students. I also have an exhibit here made by one of the students of a hogan, and then I have posters on Navajo weaving; I have a sand painting; all the aids I can muster.

SM: Now then you got out some of the things you have in the back room there. That's a Navajo rug, isn't it?

VR: These are some of my own. That's the reason why I keep them locked up.

SM: That's pretty valuable too.

VR: Tomorrow we will be talking about weaving, so we will use this as an example in our discussion. Then we have posters made by students which illustrate some of the processes, and, as you know, over there we have a poster and also discuss this along with sand painting.

SM: That's a very nice sand painting. Did you frame that yourself?

VR: It also has the story in the back to go with it. This was given to me as a gift from a Navajo classmate at NAU, so it carries a lot of value. And then with all the aids I can get, we generally go into detail. Today we went into detail on the hogan, the different types. Now there's different types. You have all kinds of illustrations.
These are basically the old type.

SM: The old type is almost tepee shaped?

VR: Well, something like that one right there. But you have all variations, but mainly these two are the type that you generally get familiar with.

SM: Some of them are shown as octagon construction and some as hexagon, and even the Window Rock capitol of the Navajo Tribe is built in an octagon shape. I guess they use both those plus a round shape, depending on the circumstances of the materials available, and so on.

VR: And their assignment to start on the Navajo--with these students all being artists here in the field of art--I try to get the most out of them and still work in their field.

SM: That prompts another question now. This is called the Institute of American Indian Arts, but are all of the students who come here interested in art?

VR: Well, in different forms. They have to be. You see, we offer a degree in fine arts.

SM: But you don't have, for example, a math major here?

VR: No, it's always art.

SM: But then, of course, you have this Indian history and Indian culture, which is part of learning more about the background for current art, and traditional as well?

VR: Right. So they have an assignment to do a week from tomorrow. What
I asked them to do after talking to them about the hogan, the significance of the hogan to the religious life, the family life, and then in contrast with the Pueblo. We had a lecture, and then I discussed all of the closed eyes policies or happenings that the students could get an idea of how life really was for the Navajo; everything is in contrast with the Pueblo because they were neighbors and we just finished studying them. O.K. Was it possible that a family had more than one hogan? It was. It depended on circumstances. If they had a lot of sheep, and they had to move.

SM: Didn't they traditionally abandon them if somebody died in one?

VR: Well, this is what we brought out. We opened that up for discussion yesterday, and it wasn't answered. We didn't come up with a . . . .

SM: You mean you had some Navajos in class here?

VJ: Well, only one Navajo. But today we put some more stress on it. O.K. The door always faces in what direction? Facing the sun. O.K. If somebody died in the hogan, what happened? You said, "Well, they burned the hogan." O.K. That's what we figured too. What they do, they tear a hole in the wall of the hogan in what direction? The north, that's the direction of the evil. So that's how they dispose of their dead, through the hole. I was told the old way--and I went and talked to a Navajo--an elderly Navajo. The old way they used to destroy it, now it's optional. So along with that I was working up to this assignment I wanted to do. O.K. We have the hogan. You might have two or three extended family living, but here's the way you can contrast it with the Pueblo. Maybe this family, they could look off at a distance they could see another hogan. That's the way they wanted it.

SM: They never did live closely in groups like the Pueblo?
VJ: No. And anybody could see with this, their life was centered around the hogan--their religious life, their family life, their social life.

SM: Because that's all they had, was a building.

VR: O.K. So if you're going to draw me a landscape sketch of an image of how a family lived in the surroundings and everything else, O.K., you got several things to consider. Geographically, how many states did the Navajo cover? In recent times, pre-Hispanic or after the Spanish got here. But to me your landscape you can go after the Spanish had their influence on the Navajo. O.K. If they had sheep, where would you put the sheep? O.K. They had to have a place to store their belongings. What did they use? You know about the cellar. They must have had a pit. Where are you going to put the pit? If they had a sweathouse, where are you going to put that? How are you going to describe it? It was common among the Navajos in the summer to build a shade shelter. How are you going to do that? They ask me to describe it.

SM: Do you mean the students did?

VR: Yes. I said that you can start out with four poles, lay some poles across, then the way the Indians do in the spring of the year, they cover that with branches, fresh branches, and that generally lasts throughout the summer. This gives the family another place to spend part of their time, which is a lot more comfortable, they can cook out there, and remember that the fire is always the center of most Indian religions. It's always there.

SM: You can still see those buildings and the summer places up in Navajo country now. But did your one Navajo student help you with this then?
VR: Not too much. Not too much. O.K. Another thing, try to consider everything in your sketch. How did the Indians deal with the water problem? How did they deal with it? Are you going to show me that they were conveying their water on a wagon or on a horse, or are you going to show me that the San Juan River was going close by? Or how are you going to do it? But be concerned about it.

SM: Now the Navajos solved the problem differently than the Pueblos did, right?

VR: Right. Are you going to show me that the man was herding sheep on a horse, or was he on foot, or was he using a dog? I want everything.

SM: You have to fix a date for that kind of answer though.

VR: But I gave them a time they could use--pre-Hispanic up through Hispanic times, the influence. And then I said, if you put a loom out here and show a Navajo woman weaving her rug, that's great. They did it. You could put her under the shelter, you know.

SM: You emphasize them sketching this because they all are involved in art work of some kind?

VR: And then this is also a pictorial way of learning.

SM: Do you have resources here where they can go and look up things if they don't know it?

VR: Yeah. We have a real good library, I think.

SM: And then of course with all these people here they can ask each other?

VR: Right. And the students ask one another, they learn from one another.
But while I was talking, an Apache boy had already drawn me a sketch of this type of hogan. Great! You should have seen it.

SM: He drew a good sketch of one. Now he knew because he lived near the Navajos?

VR: Well, the sum total of all of his experiences. But it's really fascinating to me. If I just lectured to them out of the book, I think I would go mad, and they would too. I've got to reach them in every way I can, and yet give them a little something.

SM: Now some of these students you have are in the last two years of high school? And some of the other classes are in the first two years of college?

VR: Right.

SM: Because you have what Mr. New called a "middle school" here.

VR: Yeah, a middle school. And then I reach them with quizzes. I like for them to take notes, I like for them to do a little paper, like on the Pueblo, and then I'm going to get out of it. I'm checking for subject matter; I'm also checking for achievement. I like to get the first paper, and then check it against their last one. Well, that's what I'm going to do, because I want it to be their own work. They can always copy out of a book, but I'm not interested in that.

SM: It's a lot of work for you as an instructor, but if it helps the student you're willing to do it?

VR: So what? As long as they can show achievement I'll feel happier when the year is over.
SM: So far have you enjoyed your experience here at the college?

VR: I like it. I figured I'd like it anyway.

SM: You expected to and you do.

VR: I had a real good coordinator at Santa Fe College, Brother George, where I did my student teaching. I had a real good teacher here that I worked under too, Fayne Porter. He's been in this Indian history work for a long time.

SM: Now Mr. Roberts, can you comment in any way on the Pueblos, because these are least familiar perhaps to the people back in my part of the country. That would be on the eastern edge of the Great Plains, the Mississippi River culture, the old Mississippian culture, the Cahokia people, the Osages and so on, before they moved to Oklahoma. But the Pueblos are different. Now they live in these apartment dwellings, close together, as contrasted with the Navajos you were describing?

VR: That is the older image, still clinging to the older image. I try to contrast, in studying the Pueblos, the old image and the new image, the now.

SM: What do you mean by now? This last decade, this last century?

VR: Well, it's been for the last ten years. What's really made the change, I think, is this housing, this federal housing. It's sort of disbursed the tribe. The old image is where everything was centered around the plaza. Now the movement has been scattered in areas away from the center of the village.

SM: Taos is trying very hard to keep the old pueblo as is, but there are houses going up around the edges, so this changes the pattern of life, doesn't it?
VR: I think it does. But in comparison to the Pawnee, there's just as much difference as there is in daylight and dark. Traditionally I was trying to contrast the Pawnee, my tribe, and the Pueblos. Now the Pueblos, according to history, they were under the influence of the Spaniards; the Pawnee, they were the Plains Indians just south of the Sioux Nation, and they were in contact with the influence from the eastern movement west, so I would say my first sight of a Pueblo village I was just shocked, because I just couldn't see in contrast to Plains Indians how they could live that way.

SM: Well they had to have a higher developed agriculture, didn't they?

VR: And not only that, they developed artistically and socially, and you could see the Spanish influence almost in every way; in their language, in their food.

SM: Haven't the Pueblos retained a lot of the old culture?

VR: They have, and what kind of bothers me is, I can't penetrate into a lot of their old traditions yet, as an outsider. I'm an Indian, but yet I'm an outsider. Some of their religious practices, I have to stay aloof. Now the Pawnee . . . their condition is just . . . I would say where I was raised the older image is gone.

SM: The old, nomadic, buffalo-hunting Pawnee?

VR: What the government had really planned to do, it really shows, assimilation.

SM: Do most of the Pawnees farm now?

VR: Most of the Pawnees . . . back in the 1800's we were given, we bought tribal land in so-called Indian Territory of Oklahoma, and then we
also got caught in that allotment act. Every Indian that was living, every head, got 160 acres. My dad got 160 acres, and every Pawnee was supposed to develop into a farmer. My dad tried to farm, and he was a failure, so he had to migrate somewhere else. And then eventually they came up with a revision where they could sell their land. Each allottee could sell their land, it could be deeded, and this is what has affected where the Pawnee Tribe used to be in Oklahoma. Very few still retain their allotted land, whether through heirship.

SM: What do they do now?

VR: What do you think the original reservation looks like now? When I go back I can't even say it's Pawnee any more. It has a new image. All of the white farmers have all of that. They've all developed it, developed that Indian land; why, they have cattle, and every once in a while you'll see a place where the Indian still retains their allotted land. Very few. Where did they all go? It created a new situation. Now we have what they call the urban Indian vs. the reservation Indian, so this is a condition that's developed.

SM: Of course, now in Oklahoma you don't have reservations as such. You have this allotted land, each person owned his own land.

VR: Most of it is allotted lands. Osages, for one, still retain land as a reservation.

SM: The mineral rights at least. But that's unique and that's unusual. Oklahoma has more Indians than any other state, and yet there are no reservations except that Osage semi-reservation. And so then there has been more moving-in of the non-Indian people on the old Indian land, hasn't there?

VR: The image has changed completely. When I go back home, I don't go back to see what my tribe's doing, I go back to visit my aged
parents. There's nothing left.

SM: Do they still live on the farm?

VR: They live in town, but it's a sad situation. The old Indian school and the old agency has been closed for years. A little, mock agency in downtown Pawnee--it's just like a little store--they call this the agency.

SM: The present Pawnee Agency in Oklahoma? Do most of the Pawnee people live in Oklahoma now?

VR: No. My age and younger, they are all gone. There was nothing left.

SM: You're working in a college in Santa Fe, instead of back there on the prairie?

VR: Right. So when I retire in a couple years, it won't be to go back home, it'll be just to retire so I can do other things I can't do when I'm working. I would like to make Santa Fe my home part of the time; maybe go back to Pawnee part of the time, kind of a nomad.

SM: This is a pretty great place to live, isn't it?

VR: I like Santa Fe. I like the facilities in Albuquerque, but I like to live in Santa Fe. That's the way I always express myself.

SM: Albuquerque is a much larger city; Santa Fe is much more unique, it's different. That's what they call it, "the city different." They try to keep it as it used to be in the old Spanish days, but, of course, before that it was the old Pueblo days, and the Pueblos are keeping as much of their culture as they can too, aren't they?

VR: You know, I often wonder. We've been ripped off back there; it's been
accomplished, just like I told you. How're they going to rip off these Indians here? This hundred-year lease, there's two been made since I've been in this area—one with the Tesuque, and one with the Cochiti. How can the land ever revert back to the tribes?

SM: Well, what is that?

VR: What they call hundred-year leases have been made. The tribe has leased it to different firms, and here they plan to build on it, and down in Cochiti there's a big lake there, they're selling all of this land in little lots to different people, and they're building on it. How will this ever revert back to the tribes?

SM: A hundred years is a long time.

VR: It never will.

SM: And this other lease to Tesuque, for example. Is that a commercial firm of some kind?

VR: Right, and it's binding too. They tried to get out from under it, and they couldn't.

SM: They tried to change it? To whom did they lease it, do you know?

VR: Some Sangre de Cristo company, I can't think of its name, but I was there when they had a big formal gathering.

SM: They're going to build some kind of a manufacturing plant?

VR: The way I gather it, they're going to open it up for housing. And they're also going to build some golf courses.

SM: If the tribe sells or leases the land, then they lose control?
VR: I don't know how it will ever revert back.

SM: In some cases, though, like up in Taos, they got got back 48,000 acres.

VR: Around the Blue Lake?

SM: Yes.

VR: Sacred land.

SM: They said that's restricted. They have their own forestry service people up there who take care of it, look after it, patrol it, and so on, and it's off limits for anyone who isn't a part of the Taos Pueblo. Isn't that right?

VR: I would say so.

SM: Well, then, have there been any other developments like this now down the valley here, as the years have gone by?

VR: Intermarriage has made a lot of difference.

SM: Between the Pueblos, between non-Indians?

VR: Well, you have through intermarriage, inter-tribal marriage, or inter-racial marriages, where you have the type of Indian that lives in the cities, but yet they still go back to their traditional dances and worships.

SM: Does that make for problems?

VR: Well, I think just more or less like you take the Tesuque for instance,
where they live communally. Everything is done as a community, and if I intermarried into that tribe, and I chose to live there, I would have to live as they live.

SM: You would have to become a Tesuque in habits, practice?

VR: Right. So if I don't choose to live that way, then I got to live away from there. Which a lot of them probably do.

SM: Some leave because they don't want to conform?

VR: That is one example.

SM: Now they're still living communally there on the reservation, the Pueblo Reservation? A sign on the road says reservation limits, and then you drive several more miles and you come down into the pueblo itself. So the reservation is a large tract of land on which the pueblo sets, right?

VR: Right.

SM: Now do all the pueblos have land around them that is their reservation?

VR: Right. They do. Just like driving from here to Albuquerque. Why don't you see lot of restaurants and filling stations and amusement centers from here to Albuquerque? It's all tribal land. You betcha.

SM: O.K. Now they're hanging on to that, aren't they?

VR: They're restricting the use of it.

SM: Do you know, for example, in Tesuque how many acres they have?
VR: Well, they own some property clear up to the Sangre de Cristo. But I don't know as far as acreage is concerned.

SM: Thousands, I suppose. Do you have any idea how many acres the Isleta Pueblo Reservation includes? Like, for example, the Navajo Reservation is huge.

VR: Well, it's as big as three of the New England states.

SM: On the other hand that's the largest one, and then, for example, the Iowa Reservation in Kansas is a very small, little remnant.

VR: Most of them were condensed and recondensed down through the years, especially the 1800's.

SM: Well, what else can you tell us about the Pueblos, this area right here now? Have you been here two or three years?

VR: Ten years.

SM: So you are pretty familiar with the place, you're almost a native. Santa Fe has lots of people coming in here most of the time, don't they, lots of tourists, lots of visitors?

VR: Summertime they have a lot of tourists, and the Pueblos can sell under the old capitol--what do they call that building?

SM: The Governor's Plaza?

VR: The Governor's Plaza has been under three cultures, three governments. About 400 years ago. The Indians still sell there; they sell their art.

SM: The other day there was one lady sitting there. She said she was
Navajo, and she was wearing a fortune in jewelry. The pieces she had on her, around her neck, on her arms, were worth $4,000 or $5,000, and then she had the rest of it spread out. Are these people usually silversmiths, or are they dealers, or do they go out and buy it and bring it in?

VR: Most of them do their own. Traders and dealers, they generally go into stores, and they do their thing separate. I know a man and wife in Tesuque, they make the small animals, and this is the way they get along, they manage to eat and sleep off of it.

SM: Now if you go over there, for example, and talk to this lady like the one I was describing, would you have a chance of getting a better buy on a piece of Navajo jewelry than if you went to a shop someplace?

VR: They tell you they'll give you a special deal. I don't know, things are so high, you wonder sometimes. How much do you think I paid for that Navajo rug ten years ago?

SM: Ten years ago I don't know. Now it's quite valuable, they've gone up so much.

VR: My sister, when her husband was working out on the Navajo when I first came here, I asked her to get me a Navajo rug. She said, "How much do you want to pay for it?" $20.00?" And I said, "Well, if you can get one for that." She called me one day. "I'll get you one for $40.00." So this is what I got for $40.00, ten years ago. I couldn't touch it for $40.00 now.

SM: Lot of people were trying to buy them for less than $40.00 ten years ago. But you got three or four colors there.

VR: What do you think that sand painting is worth?
SM: I have no idea. They used to be not for sale at all. They were taboo to sell. They were rubbed out as soon as the cure was accomplished, weren't they?

VR: Right.

SM: Do the Isleta people make sandpaintings too? Mostly it's the Navajos and the Zunis, Hopis.

VR: Most of the ones I see are from the Navajos.

SM: I did hear, though, that they borrowed the idea and the weaving, too, from the Pueblos here, and they were doing it before the Navajos came, according to the textbooks.

VR: They liked the Pueblos because they did so many different things.

SM: In order to survive in a country like this, and in order to live in it without roaming, they had to develop a way of sustaining life, and had to have water, food and a social system that worked, and so they developed a pretty complicated culture. Well, the rug now, what would it be worth today?

VR: I don't think I could buy it for $120.00, 'cause around Flagstaff they have a museum up there, gosh, you just hate to look at them, for fear of the cost.

SM: The sand paintings used to be only made in connection with a healing ceremony, weren't they, by the doctors, the men who were, what shall we call them, not priests in the formal sense.

VR: Medicine men or healers.
SM: Whatever term. And then as soon as the patient was healed the sand painting was rubbed out, which seems like a sacrilege to me, because it was a work of art and it's spoiled when it's rubbed out. But that wasn't their purpose, their purpose was to heal the patient. O.K., then they were kind of sacred, and you weren't even supposed to take a picture of them, were you?

VR: No, I don't guess so.

SM: Now you buy them here, sprayed so that they don't fall apart, and put on a piece of masonite or something and frame them, and they're beautiful. How do you suppose they came from this point where they were something that you couldn't even take a picture of to now they're being sold?

VR: I imagine it's been through forced integration, like they forced the younger ones to go to school and try to accept the national way of doing things in the classroom; forget about your culture; learn this one. And this is probably some of the end results, some of the younger generation.

SM: The pressure of the outside world?

VR: And just like I say, it's good for like myself to get out and work and earn a living, and yet still be able to go back home and enjoy a good dance with the rest of them, and then say, "Oh well, I've gotta go back to my job and forget about this, and maybe next year I can come back."

SM: You're one of the lucky ones, because you enjoy what you're doing. If a person had a job they didn't enjoy, then it would be a pretty hard wrench to take, and that causes problems, doesn't it?
VR: So you're really caught between your own culture and many other cultures.

SM: Now you've made a successful and maybe happy, comfortable adjustment, would you say?

VR: Well, if you use this illustration: I'm living out here ten years, my interest is greater here than it is back home. I really have a high interest.

SM: You have a terrific investment in this activity, and besides, you're helping now, helping your students to recognize and preserve some of their own culture?

VR: I think we're trying to do it altogether inductively, you know, together, because we don't know all the answers, but we try to put what facts, try to figure out, maybe this is the way it was.

SM: And when you can, you get to some of the older people who remember older ways?

VR: I get to relate to some of them. If I can't get them in the classroom, maybe I can go talk to them.

SM: By the way, there's another resource, I don't know if you've encountered it or not, over at the University of Oklahoma, the Doris Duke Foundation, 400 recorded interviews like this one. There is a great gold mine of information, usually from older people. One was a man describing his role as the roadman in the Native American Church. So there's another source for you, if you ever want to use that one, and it's not too terribly far, it's back in your own home territory.

VR: Right.
SM: Well, have you anything else that we could add here?

VR: Well, I'd like to tell the students, where else can you go and get together so many different cultures, so many different tribes, and don't think that we aren't different cultures, even though we're all called Indians. Look how much different the Pawnee is from the Pueblo. How much different the Navajo is from the Pueblo.

SM: And if you take the Eskimo here, both of you would be completely different from them again.

VR: And I do know that peer-wise they do talk to one another about their own cultures.

SM: Are they interested generally in preserving it?

VR: Well, I ask them, "Have you ever attended public school?" "Yes." "Tell me about, did you have any courses offered in Indian history"? "About all they ever tell us is that we're savages."

SM: Are they still getting that kind of thing?

VR: Well, this is the way they respond. I've only had one student through a questionnaire that said he did get a good background in the Indian part of it.

SM: Do you remember where he came from?

VR: Yeah, he came from Laguna, right over here at a Pueblo public school.

SM: Well, some of the students come into my classes with quite a bit of information in some cases, and practically none in others. Elementary teachers in Missouri often teach a unit on American Indian history, so
they come to my classes to get some more information for their own teaching.

VR: It looks like your thing would be good to have the real Indian, the real people to come with his thing. It looks to me like it would be a great thing. See when you have people that are required to teach it, yet they have never lived it.

SM: Yes, you see, you're going to be there yourself on this tape.

VR: I'll tell you another thing that's helped me. I've travelled in about every state except about five or six, out in Hawaii, and the extreme Northeast. I've taken the time and travelled around while I could . . . maybe I'll never get another chance, but I can say that on wheels I managed to cover that many states.

SM: I'll bring back opinions like yours and from other people, and if we can get enough of those opinions like that, even though a lot of them will disagree, we should all come out learning more. So that's the whole idea, Mr. Roberts, and you have helped today, and I appreciate that, my students will appreciate it.

VR: I envy you, because I would like to be doing the same thing. I think this is where I'm missing the boat, by not going out. Last spring I went out for two weeks, in just an isolated part of Oklahoma, and I was reared in Oklahoma, but there's a lot that I don't know about.

SM: You're looking at it with new eyes now.

VR: That's true.

SM: Another thing is the complexity of it all, as we have said before, and another is the graciousness of the Indian people. I have run into only one instance where I was not welcomed and treated very
well, so there is a nice thought, and with that, our tape has come to an end. I want to thank you again, and hope you have a good experience here in your class.

VR: I'd like to ask for feedback, how you're doing.

SM: O.K. Good. And thank you.