HENRY SECONDINE, Delaware
DON WILSON, Delaware
September 22, 1975
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

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

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

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

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LISTENING TO INDIANS

NO. 39

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September 22, 1975
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Sam Myers:

Today, on a bright, sunny September day, we're in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, at the headquarters of the Delaware Tribe, talking with two men here, Henry Secondine, the vice-chairman and business manager of the tribe, and Don Wilson on the tribal business committee. Is that right?

Henry Secondine:

Yes sir.

SM: O.K. Henry, first of all, did you grow up in this part of the country, is this your home?

HS: Yes sir. My family been here for about 108 years in this area, since 1867, and I was born in Nowata, Indian territory, in 1905, about 20 miles east of Bartlesville. So I'm older than the state, really.

SM: You mean your family is?

HS: Yeah. Well, I was born in 1905, and this didn't become a state till 1907.

SM: Well, I guess you're right there.

HS: About two years older than the state.

SM: That sounds like it should make you terribly old, but you don't look it. Anyway, you were born in the area east of town here. Did you go to a school out there?

HS: I went to a public school in Delaware, Oklahoma.
SM: That's a town nearby?

HS: Yes sir. About six mile north of Nowata.

SM: That was a public school and not a reservation school?

HS: Yes sir, yes sir.

SM: Any particular problems there?

HS: Oh no.

SM: Everything went along O.K.?

HS: Yes sir. Everywhere I've been has been O.K. as far as I'm concerned.

SM: Well, that's good, because every once in a while I run into someone who encountered discrimination or segregation or something of that kind. But you didn't run into that?

HS: Oh no.

SM: I've noticed in my brief experience in Oklahoma, less of this than in other parts of the country, and maybe it's because Oklahoma is proud of its Indian population.

HS: Oh, we're proud to be Indians and proud that the people think . . . you know, that we are.

SM: That's a good way to have it. Maybe that's one of the messages we should bring to other people around the country, so there's less of this feeling of antagonism that goes on in some places.
HS: Hasn't always been that way. Now years ago 'twasn't very popular to be an Indian, but it has become so today. Very popular to be Indian. Lotta people know they're Indian, but they can't prove it, and they'd like to. I got lotta letters and calls wantin' me to help 'em prove that they're Indian.

SM: Run down their lineage so that they can establish where they came from. Well, let's go back and pick up your schooling. Did you go to school after Delaware, Oklahoma?

HS: I went to Tulsa for a while, business college.

SM: Is it still there?

HS: Yes sir.

SM: And then?

HS: Went to work. Went to Kansas City and got in construction work, and eventually went on to Chicago, and construction went bad. It wasn't very good up there, so I worked for Bell and Howell Company, the engineering department, for a few years.

SM: Are you an engineer too?

HS: No. I kept records, and stuff like that. Then the depression came along in 1930, and they shut down the plant and I came home and went into construction again, and went on up until World War II, and then I went into an aircraft company, and they were building . . . gun director, to be precise about it . . . that was a gun director for the Navy, and we built thousands of them.

SM: So you must have seen the conditions here that we show in movies in
our school classes of the dust bowl in Oklahoma. Do you remember that?

HS: Oh yes, sure.

SM: Do you have a brief comment of some kind on that? A movie called *Life In the Thirties*, shows some very dramatic scenes of the dust bowl conditions, and Oklahoma seemed to get hit the worst of any of the states.

HS: Well, yeah, back in the early '20's we used to have those dust storms in the spring. In March, when the winds would be high--you know generally it's a windy month, March is here. And it was always west of here where all the dust would come from. This is called green country in this area here.

SM: Oh yes, the state is divided up into sections like that, isn't it?

HS: Well, yeah, in a way. And then out west, you see, it's lotta plains, just flat country, and when they plowed it up, you know when they plowed for wheat and all that . . . so those high winds whipped up that dust, and then sometimes the wind'd turn maybe to the northwest in the spring. Blow here, it'd sift through the house, through the windows, and it was really bad.

SM: Do you remember any particular incidents?

HS: Well, I don't know. Sometime the dust'd be so heavy in the west, it's be just like a cloud, it's be dark.

SM: In the middle of the day?

HS: It sure would. You could see it over there.
SM: Top soil just blowing away?

HS: That's right.

SM: That's a good thing to add from someone who actually saw it happen. Then did you have any more experiences before you got to be vice-chairman and business manager of the tribal office here?

HS: Just in construction work mostly. I was in the union here, and I had worked on these bigger buildings here in town.

SM: Bartlesville has some nice, new, tall skyscrapers.

HS: I worked on those--Price Tower down here, and . . .

SM: Did you get up on the high construction?

HS: Oh yeah.

SM: Didn't that scare you?

HS: No, no. Well, you start in the basement on something, and you come up with it.

SM: You gradually get used to it?

HS: You come along say five or six floors cold on the thing, it gets you, you see, but if you go up with it as it goes, why it don't make much difference.

SM: The Mohawks back in New York are famous for their high construction steel work.

HS: That's where they get their steel workers in New York City is the
Indians. Yeah, I know that.

SM: How many Delawares do you have in your area?

HS: That's hard to say how many are right here in the area, but we have close to 9,000 enrolled all over the country. That includes some what's been rejected—that's claimed to be and we found out that they weren't, or didn't find the proof that they were.

SM: Things have changed a little from thirty years ago when people would just as soon forget that they were Indian. Now they want to claim they are.

HS: That's right.

SM: Because the climate has changed. Would you say that's for the better?

HS: Well, yes I do. I know there's a lotta people that would like to be Indian, even a little bit, and a lot of 'em claim it. These Okies, a lot of 'em that are natives of Oklahoma, they probably have a little bit of Indian blood mixed with it, and maybe they don't even know it.

SM: We got into an argument about whether or not a famous author was an Indian, because he wrote books about Indians all the time. I wrote him a note and said, "Are you Indian?" And he said, "No, I'm not, unfortunately." So his attitude was just like you described, he wishes he were. The tribal office here, the headquarters in Bartlesville, is a regular business establishment for the carrying on of the business of the tribe?

HS: Well, yes sir. We hear from our people all over the country. We have people on the east coast and on the west coast and all in between, Florida, Michigan, Wisconsin.
SM: Do they keep in touch here?

HS: Not all of them, but if they need anything, or change their address, they write here and we make a record of it. Then they maybe write in and ask how our claim money is comin' along, and stuff like that.

SM: Do you have claim monies coming in?

HS: Oh yeah. Yeah, that's one of the reasons we have quite a few people who.

SM: One of the reasons maybe some of the people would want to be called a Delaware?

HS: Well, there's a lot of 'em that have proved up that never did claim to be before.

SM: Is this because of oil lands?

HS: No, this is broken treaties way back in the 1700's and 1800's.

SM: You were old enough to remember the dust bowl, but you're not old enough to remember the Dawes Act back in 1887?

HS: No, but I got on the roll there. I got on that one, m'folks enrolled me, see.

SM: You got an allotment under that act?

HS: Eighty acres, yes sir.

SM: Eighty acres for a child, 160 for an adult?
HS: Well, yeah. Let me go back and tell you about what started back in 1867 when they came down here, see. Well, they were gonna set up Washington County here as a reservation for the Delawares here and the Cherokee Nation. And the Cherokees, they wouldn't agree to it, so they went to court and they won—that the government couldn't do 'em that way, you know, take their land and just buy it in a block for a reservation. But after they won their case, then they said, "Well, we'll sell you 160 acres apiece, and you can settle anywhere in the Cherokee Nation that you want to, and then the descendants will be known as native-born Cherokees, members of the tribe." So that took me in, that's the reason I'm on the Cherokee roll.

SM: Oh, you're a Delaware, but you're on the Cherokee roll.

HS: And so, they bought this 160 acres of land for all of us that was living at that time. I think, when they came from Kansas down here, Kansas River, they moved down here, and they settled all over this area.

SM: Now, the government bought this land from the Cherokees?

HS: No, the Delawares bought it, it was their money, it wasn't the government money. Like they sold right-of-way for the railroad up there, they got part of the money. That was part of the money that went for different things, and they sold their land up there, they bought this here, it was Delaware money. And then the government didn't pay for some of this land, so that's consequently in some of our treaties and we won. We had about a half million dollars that they didn't pay. When we won the case it had come up to $9,000,000 something, 'cause the government was paying all these hundred years or so, 5% interest, so it brought the money up.

SM: Did that come to quite an amount per person?
HS: Well, it hasn't been paid out yet.

SM: Oh, that's still pending?

HS: Tied up in court.

SM: Do you expect it to get settled favorably?

HS: We're very hopin' it would be this year, but I wouldn't say.

SM: In the Indian Claims Court. . . .

HS: We're past that, that's where it came from.

SM: It's been decided in favor of the Indians in many cases.

HS: That's right. We've got several different dockets that's been approved.

SM: So it looks like it's coming through?

HS: Well, we got a lot more. This one, we've already got it. There's some we've gotta write legislation on yet. It's in Albuquerque, New Mexico, invested by the government, Treasury Department, for the Indians, all Indians goes through Albuquerque. It's invested all over the country in a good safe amount in different, varying interest rates.

SM: It's been allotted and it's sitting there, but it hasn't been disbursed yet?

HS: That's right. It's drawing interest in the meantime, it's building up.
SM: Well, that's kind of a nice thing to have that coming. Did you get a very big price for the acreage you lost?

HS: No. Maybe they got 50¢, maybe they need $1.00, maybe they got 75¢, they got $1.50, you know, to settle the claim. Now land's probably worth $3,000 an acre.

SM: Some of these claims are turning out in favor of the Indian people now, whereas fifty years ago it was almost useless, wasn't it?

HS: Well, I remember they've been after these claims all my life, and long before. M'grandparents, m'parents, they knew they had these claims, and they've been after 'em, and we finally got organized and they elected this business committee in 1958, and I've been on ever since they started it, but we had just a floating committee—it wasn't really elected, just people that were interested—that worked on this for years and years.

SM: You mentioned the tribal business committee. We'll introduce Don Wilson over here. Don, you're on the tribal business committee, the one that Henry just spoke of, right?

Don Wilson:
Yes.

SM: And you've been helping to work on these same problems, I suppose? You're in the middle of it?

DW: Yes, since the last election in November, that was when I was elected to the business committee.

SM: Can all the Delawares anywhere vote?

DW: All the Delawares can vote, the ones that are livin' here, and the
ones that are not livin' here can vote by absentee ballot.

SM: And that's how you got elected last year?

DW: Yes.

SM: Let's go back and pick up where you started out. Were you born here in this part of the country?

DW: Yes, I was born west of Copan, a little community 12 miles north of here.

SM: Did you go to school there too?

DW: I went to school in Copan, a public school.

SM: You didn't get sent away to an Indian school then like some of the kids did?

DW: No.

SM: Neither one of you did?

DW: I had a chance to, but I decided to remain in Copan and go to school in Copan.

SM: How did things go there?

DW: It went very well.

SM: Good. Did you go through high school there?

DW: I didn't go quite through high school.
SM: Do they have a high school there in Copan?

DW: Yeah, they have a high school there.

SM: But you dropped out before you got through?

DW: I dropped out, and later on I took a GED test and finished up my high school while I was in Service.

SM: May I ask you why you dropped out?

DW: Well at that time, of course, people were havin' a hard time makin' a go of it, you know. It was back in the early '30's.

SM: Do you go back that far?

DW: Yes. And, well, to tell the truth, my parents at that time really wasn't able to afford to send me to school. That was one of the main reasons. Of course, I guess I'm like all the other kids, you know, if they have a chance to drop out they will, but they need someone, as they do now, to talk to them and keep them goin'.

SM: After you got out of school, then, did you go to work someplace?

DW: I went to work for various ranchers up in that section of the country, and I worked up until the time I went into the Service.

SM: What part of the Service were you in?

DW: Well I went into the Army first. I spent 12 years in the Army, and 8 years in the Marine Corps. I retired in 20 years.

SM: You had a 20-year hitch and then retired and came back here to Bartlesville?
DW: Yes. Well, not right away. I lived in Lawton, Oklahoma, for a short period, and then I moved back to Copan.

SM: Do you speak Delaware?

DW: No, I just know a few words.

SM: You grew up speaking English, and picked up a few words?

DW: That's right.

SM: Henry, do you speak Delaware?

HS: No. I understand quite a bit of it, 'cause m'mother and grandmother talked it all the time, and really talked it.

SM: It's hard to keep a language if you don't use it, isn't it?

HS: Yes, well, I didn't learn 'cause I figured, well, later on there wouldn't be anybody to talk to, to understand what I was talkin' about. Consequently I just didn't learn it.

SM: Back to Don now, and we want to bring you up to today, when you got on the committee. You moved back to Bartlesville, and you're working here now?

DW: Workin' here.

SM: You also retired from the Service.

DW: Retired from the Service, and here I work with the Community Health Representative Program. This is a program that the Delaware Tribe has had since 1971, and it's a fairly new program that was started in 1968. I think it started with the reservation tribes first, and then
moved to Oklahoma.

SM: So then both of you have gotten involved in tribal affairs here at headquarters on the business committee and as the business manager. What are some of the main problems that you have?

HS: To answer your question, one of the things is that we formed an organization which is called The Advisory Board to the Indian Health Service in the Oklahoma City area. To start with, we had five states involved. Since then, North Carolina, Mississippi and Florida have dropped out, they got their own organization, and we started out in Oklahoma City in June, 1969, and adopted the constitution and by-laws.

SM: For several states?

HS: Yeah. Now we have two states, Kansas and Oklahoma. We started out we had several tribes attended the meeting, but they wouldn't join up at that time, so the Delawares were one of the charter members of 13 tribes that did join and start this. And as we went along, why they seen we were doing some good, so the other tribes kept comin' in, and at this time we have 38 tribes.

SM: It's grown to 38. Kind of a pan-Indian movement?

HS: Well, more or less. We're a lobby group for more money for our Indian Health Service, which we don't get enough of, and that's a constant thing--money.

SM: Does the Indian Health Service come through the HEW?

HS: Yes sir. Since 1955. It was in the BIA and now HEW has it. And we try to get health facilities built for our people in the different areas. We have a new hospital at Claremore being built at this time, which will be opening in early '77.
SM: That's at Claremore, Oklahoma?

HS: Yes sir, home of Will Rogers. Anyway, that's one of our big problems—gettin' enough money for our health services and clinics for our people where they won't have to travel so far to get service. That's what this program that Mr. Wilson has here that he makes transportation for people that don't have transportation, and no way to get to a doctor or hospital, they furnish it.

SM: That's just one of his committees on the tribal business committee?

HS: Yeah, he's the director of it. We have seven employed, including Mr. Wilson, and we'll get some more help as we go along to cover the different areas where . . . someplace we have no-man's land.

SM: Do you get involved in this very much, Henry?

HS: Yes sir.

SM: Were you in it from the beginning?

HS: Oh yes.

SM: Still there?

HS: In a way. I'm on the advisory board, and I'm on the advisory board of the Claremore Indian Hospital. And just got back from a meeting in Oklahoma City Friday and Saturday, and had a nice attendance, and I think we've ironed out a few difficulties. And on this new law, 93-638, this Indian Self-Determination law, to be implemented around the first part of November, which will be, I think, a big help to the Indians.

SM: That was recently passed by Congress?
HS: I believe in November, '74, I believe is when it passed, and then they've been holding meetings in different areas all over the country that people can have their input into what they want, settin' up the rules and regulations.

SM: If it works out to its best connotation, it should be a great thing?

HS: Yes sir. In other words it's kind of the Indians' right to do what they want to do.

SM: Instead of being told what they're going to do.

HS: Yes, have their input into what is best for our people. We know what our problems are, and through this self-determination, we'll have the programs that we want, that'll fit our area, you know.

SM: Were you chairman of this organization for a while?

HS: No, not this one. This was a different organization. It's called here, NECO, Northeast County of Oklahoma. It's sort of to help all minorities groups in the area, and the different projects for the different tribes and cities and towns. This is over in the white man's world. I'm the recently-elected chairman of that--a seven-county area of northeast Oklahoma.

SM: Back there when you were in the construction business, you had experience as a committeeman or chairman of some committee?

HS: No, I was in the labor union, and then I was business manager for the union, labor union, yes sir. That took in all people.

SM: Not just Indians, but anyone in the union, the construction business in this part of the country. So you have a lot of background in this kind of organizational work. Now you are with NECO?
HS: Northeast Counties of Oklahoma, made up of 30 members, county commissioners, city managers, school superintendents, mayors, and any elected official of any entity of a government. It's kind of a question right now if I am elected official of a government, and I contend I am, because I'm elected by the people through this area, the Indian people, who I'm representing really, a minority group. It is like on your elections. They always talk about, well, the minorities are beat. I say, "I belong to several minorities. If I get my minorities all together, I'm gonna have a majority."

SM: Yes, you probably would, because then that so-called dominant society would become a minority.

HS: That's right. I managed museums. We have one over at Nowata, Oklahoma. Originally that was supposed to be Noweeta--welcome--in Delaware.

SM: You managed that too?

HS: Well, I was president the first four years. We obtained the building, part of the building there for the museum, and I got too involved in Indian affairs, and I asked to be put down a little bit, so I wouldn't be involved too much, but I'm still on the board, vice-chairman of that.

SM: Now is NECO still going strong?

HS: Oh yes.

SM: And you are still involved in that?

HS: Oh yes.

SM: Is Don Wilson in that too now?
HS: No.

SM: You're sticking with your tribal business committee work right now?

DW: Mainly, and the Community Health Representative work, and also I'm on the committee of the BIA home improvement program.

SM: So you've got several irons in the fire too, haven't you? You are two busy men. Of course, you probably aren't typical, you aren't the average person, because you're involved in so many of these same things in leadership capacities.

HS: Well, it all boils down to this. We're involved, and it's to help our people, is the main thing. Now I worked lotta times for . . . didn't even get expenses, no salary, just my desire to see that people get a little better living. Well, that kinda goes along with your union, that's what they're organized for--a little better working conditions, better wages--so it goes on over to the Indians too. That's what I'd like to see them get. We'd like to create some industry here for our Indian people.

SM: Well, in Bartlesville you have the oil business. Phillips Petroleum Company, is probably one of the biggest employers here?

HS: Yeah, I'd say so. Well, we have the smelters out here too. The National Zinc Company employs quite a few people.

SM: But you'd like to bring in some other businesses to diversify a little?

HS: Yes. They have people working for these oil companies and other industry like aircraft work, and so forth, and on our powwow days, why you'll see 'em out there dressed up in their Indian costumes,
dancing and everything on Sunday, maybe, and then on Monday they're in a business suit and tie, maybe they go to a law office or to the executives of Phillips, or they may be a jet engine mechanic in Tulsa, or other places.

SM: You have quite a few Indian people working in the oil business?

HS: Oh yes, quite a few of our Delawares ... well, others too, Cherokees, here in Phillips.

SM: And like you said, some of them are lawyers and business managers and engineers and so on. So that we don't let anyone get the impression that they're all just working with a pick and shovel, or out there with a horse and a lariat.

HS: (laughter) That's right.

SM: Well, you see, some of the people who listen to our recording here may not be aware of the diversification and changes that have occurred in Oklahoma. And Oklahoma is different than some of the other states.

HS: And we have some cowboys too. We've got one in Utah--he wants to be in this rodeo comin' up the 27th, I believe it is, on Saturday here--and he thought to maybe get some help to maybe get him excused so he could attend. He's right up in the top of the roping. He's a Delaware. His name's Les Reynolds, and I hope to see 'im on the TV on Saturday.

SM: Does he work for Phillips?

HS: No, no. He's workin' for a school out in Utah.

SM: He wants to get time off so he can go and participate in the rodeo?
HS: Yes sir, this coming week-end. So we have Indians at the top of most any profession, you might say.

SM: At the top of lot of professions?

HS: That's right.

SM: That's great.

HS: It's like Phillips Petroleum Company's last-retired president, executive officer was Mr. Keeler, Chief of the Cherokees.

SM: And also chief of Phillips Petroleum Company.

HS: He didn't participate in the last chief election. He's a retiring chief--has been for 26, 27 years, so he didn't choose to run this time, like Coolidge was, you know.

SM: Yes. "I do not choose to run."

HS: And Mr. Ross Swimmer was elected in his place. I guess he may be down there helpin' them out kinda get started on the right foot probably.

SM: He is one of the most famous Indians in the country in the business world, wouldn't you say?

HS: I'd say yes. He's been on President's committees, commissions, and different things on Indian affairs.

SM: Ada Deer, who is also famous, and Billy Mills, you know, who won the Olympics back there a few years ago--the first American ever to win the 10,000 meter run.
HS: How about Jim Thorpe?

SM: Jim Thorpe is dead.

HS: I know, but he was one of the best in athletics.

SM: Oh yes, by all means.

HS: See, they have a Jim Thorpe building in Oklahoma City in the capital complex there.

DW: They're in the process now of tryin' to get his medals restored.

SM: Yes, it seems like they might make it.

DW: I think they went all the way through President Ford.

HS: That might have been a little bit of Indian discrimination right there, maybe.

SM: It could have been. If it wasn't that, at least it was cutting the line a little fine for the purpose, because he wasn't out playing for money. He just got a little expense money, as I recall it.

HW: Well, you see, they tell us now, Indian preference. Now like on this board I'm on over there. There was some things came up, and they said, "Indian preference." That Indians can do this and Indians can do that. They said, "How come these Indians gettin' all this preference?" I said, "Well, way on back, the white man's been gettin' it, now we're beginnin' to get our share, our preference in there. We're gettin' a little preference in this," and that kinda shut him up.

SM: It will take a while to even the scales?
HS: That's right.

SM: But it is changing. Do you think there's progress being made then, Henry?

HS: Oh yes.

SM: Do you think so, Don?

DW: I think so. I think there's a lot of job openings now in the Indian programs or Indian affairs, where I think, if at all possible, they should hire Indians to put in lot of these posts, because they do have qualified Indians for these. There's non-Indians in these posts at the present time. I think there should be a change on this. I think it is gradually changing.

SM: I think so. For example, one school used to be filled with all non-Indian teachers and all Indian children. Now they've changed it, and the Indian people are running the school themselves—the director and all the teachers are Indian. And they have set themselves up, with the permission of the school board, and they're still getting their state aids and everything, but they're running an experimental school of their own, the way they want to run it.

HS: That's what this law is all about. Each tribe can run their own business, that they can do these things, get funding from the government to carry these on, until maybe such time as they get industry where they get an income, they can go on their own.

SM: A couple of years ago there were seven pieces of Indian legislation, the main thrust was self-determination, but it was bogged down in Congress, nothing was happening.
HS: It's passed. Then we'll have another one, called 25-25. It's a five-year plan that gradually ups the appropriations over a five-year period to where Indians can get more things going for them, such as health, and so forth. And we're pushin' to get it through. That's where our advisory board comes in.

SM: That one isn't passed yet?

HS: No. We've had hearings on it. I attended a hearing at Tahlequah on it. Congressman Mead, I think's from Washington, Johnson from Colorado, and our own Congressman from this area, and several Indians attended, and they put forth their ideas, a little input into the law of what they wanted, and so I think maybe it'll pass. But anyway, the Indians are all pushing for it. It's a different law, similar to the other one, but this one specifically sets up so much money per year for a five-year period.

SM: Are there appropriations in the self-determination law?

HS: Oh yes, this is separate.

SM: Well, that certainly is progress.

HS: One is the self-determination law; this one is funding, the funding of these different programs. Like we want health facilities. My Congressman told me if we got that, we'd get our health facility over at Nowata. So this advisory board and the Indian Health Service, we're workin' together tryin' to get one of these health facilities set up for the 20-mile radius. You know, Congress will pass a law, then it's turned over to the bureaucrats, and when they get through with the rules and regulations, sometimes the Congress can't even remember what their law was; they can't recognize it from the rules and regulations. It's conflicting to the law. I find some in this one. It conflicts to the law, the rules and regulations, but these
will have to be straightened out. We disagree with some of those things in the "Proposed procedures." Well, lots of times they write in here what you'd call "escape clauses," set in the regulations where they can take it away, you know. They say, "Yeah, here it is," like I've always said when I had the farm or ranch out here, and they set up these different federal programs for you. Like I always say, they say, "Here it is, just try and get it." When you try to go through the rules and regulations, you're not eligible, or you're lackin' a little something, you don't get it. Big deal! Here the government's tryin' to help you, see, but they got clauses in there where they're takin' it away from you. Like the fine print on insurance.

SM: That must be aggravating, after all the work to get the law passed to accomplish the self-determination.

HS: When you get down to the rules and regulations, a lot of it takes it away from you that you can't do it. Very frustrating.

SM: Anyway, now you and people like you in other tribal headquarters will be watching this carefully and working with it and pointing out these discrepancies and hurdles put in the way of carrying out the spirit of the law.

HS: That's right. We had a meeting in May at the University of Oklahoma on this, and had quite a bit of input there. We're gonna have another one not before too long in Oklahoma City. The tribe's gonna meet on this problem with some of the officials. See, this takes HEW and BIA, see. And they're a little bit conflicting, the BIA and HEW, on just what they want.

SM: Both of them are getting so big.

HS: That's right. Some is for this and some wants this in the law, that
give them a little better advantage.

SM: Do you get involved in some of those things too, Don, where you have to go to these meetings to help protect the rights of the people under those laws?

DW: I go to quite a few meetings, all right, and one of them was on this Indian self-determination, whereby they wanted as many tribes as possible to attend and have an input on the rules and regulations that they intended to set up on this Indian self-determination.

SM: Here's this law passed now which sounds very good, doesn't it?

DW: Yes.

SM: Then you get another complete bookful of rules and regulations, which sometimes takes away what seems to be the spirit of the law. When you and the other tribal leaders come together and protest or disagree or point out these things, do they tend to listen?

DW: The last meeting I attended was at Tahlequah, and there was many things in these regulations that the tribal leaders didn't agree with, and at that time they had their chance to voice their opinion, and what changes they would like to see put into the regulations. As I understand it, the final regulations haven't been put into effect as yet. They're supposed to have one more meetin' at the end of this year.

SM: This printed set here could be changed yet?

DW: It could be changed, and as I understand it, we're supposed to have another meeting at the end of this year, and go over the changes that was suggested at our last meeting, and if there was any more changes,
these would be taken under consideration also.

SM: Well then, it sounds like they're going to try to listen to the recommended changes. But now, here in Oklahoma, you have enough Indian people, and you are organized well, so that you can make yourself heard pretty well, can't you?

DW: Yes, we can.

SM: Whereas, in some of the more isolated areas where there are just 200 or 300 in a particular tribe with no particular clout at all, they simply don't have much influence.

DW: No, they don't. And since we have as many tribes as we do here in Oklahoma, we have a very large input into anything pertaining to Indian affairs, any changes that may come about.

SM: Now you're helping Indian people all over the country, then, because this law is a federal law that applies to all states?

DW: Yes, it does.

SM: So if you do get something changed for the good here, it will help some of those other tribes that may not be able to put it over by themselves?

DW: Right. Now they had meetings, like the last one I attended in Tahlequah, all over the country, that's similar meetings, in different states. And they're takin' the proposed changes, regulations, under consideration from all these tribes, and not only Oklahoma, but we do have a fairly large input into this.

HS: A bunch of Indian women from Anadarko are comin' up here to visit with us next Monday night, to meet one another and visit a little
bit, and talk about the different cultures.

SM: Are they from other tribes?

HS: No, they're a branch of our people, the Delawares, which left us back in the 1800's and went to Texas, and then were put back up, and they call 'em "Absentee Delawares." They're absent. Like we got Absentee Shawnees, see they split off from the main group, and then formed their own deal and were taken into other tribes down there. I asked them one time if they were bought into those tribes or were they just picked up. They said, "Well, we just were picked up." So that's different than us, we bought our rights with the Cherokees.

SM: When you came in and bought the land and all.

HS: That's right.

SM: This is a very, very complex thing, to try to understand all the changes and all the different attitudes, and that's what we're trying to do here today.

HS: Indian business is complicated.

SM: Yes, even in one tribe it can get complicated. What else can we say now before we finish here today?

HS: Well, let me maybe put this in there. Our government, in all these bills, they say, "reservation Indians." Now Oklahoma is fighting that, because we have people just as poor and needin' help just as much as the reservation Indian does. And, of course, they think all of us are rich, we've got the oil land in Oklahoma, all of us are rich, we don't need this help. But we do, just as much as they do anywhere else.
SM: But you don't have reservations here. Are there any left in Oklahoma?

HS: Well, Osage County is kinda, sorta an Osage Reservation.

SM: Kind of a sort of?

HS: But they're not really, and we've been fightin' this thing for quite some time, about everything goin' to the reservation Indians, where our people needs this help as much as they do.

SM: Well, now, technically there aren't any reservations left in Oklahoma then?

HS: No, that's right.

SM: And that surprises people, because they think there must be more reservations in Oklahoma than anywhere, but there aren't any. Because you live on the lands, and, like you have the Cherokee Nation and the Delaware Nation, and so on. Is that right?

HS: Well, the Delawares are in the Cherokee Nation. See, like I said before, we bought in with them, and our tribe is organized for these claims. We're an entity as far as the claim is concerned.

SM: Do you have a tribal organization, like the business committee Don is on--do you have a tribal chairman, and so on, so the tribe is still there as an entity?

HS: Yes, pursuing these claims a hundred years or so ago, we got one in Ohio. There's several tribes involved in that, tryin' to determine how much each tribe is entitled to. And this one claim we got was in Indiana, around Anderson, Indiana. And then this one in Kansas,
up here about the railroad, and all that. And then the outlet claim up there, where the government had a strip, I think ten mile wide, went west, and never did put any limit on it, so I guess it runs out in the Pacific Ocean somewhere.

SM: Some of the old land claims did, you know.

HS: And there's different things like that. And we're organized, and have our own lawyer in Washington and presentin' these in the Court of Claims.

SM: That is awkward where you don't have reservations as such, but you do have more variety and greater numbers of Indian people than any other state.

HS: That's right.

SM: Will they get the law straightened out so it applies to non-reservation and reservation Indians as well?

HS: It's straightenin' out a little bit. We're gettin' a little more out of it than before. They're kinda beginnin' to wake up to the fact. When we've hollered so long and loud, they begin to listen a little bit, and we say, "Don't write these laws up for reservation Indians, just say for Indians." That way it will take us in as well as the other tribes.

SM: And even though you don't have reservations here, you do keep the tribal rolls, and so on, so that you have everything excepting a geographical line around a piece of land.

HS: That's right. We need a land base. We could get a lot of other programs if we had a few acres of land out here, where we could say,
"This is ours, it belongs to the Delaware Tribe, we want this there, we want that on this piece of ground," we could get it. Now we don't have it, no place to put it. You know, like we'd have a community building of some sort, a museum. We'd have to have some land. I've been wantin' to get ten, twenty acres of land, but our money's tied up in court with no money available. Where we could get a full grant maybe for a building, or a partial grant, 80% with us put up 20%, but we don't have this land base.

SM: When people hear of the Delawares, and school books talk about them, they're east coast Indians, back around the State of Delaware?


SM: Can you briefly get those Delaware people moved from there out here to where we find them now in Oklahoma?

HS: Oh yeah. See, they made the first treaty with William Penn, and I was back there and incidentally found this spot where this was.

SM: I thought you were going to say you were back there when you met William Penn!

HS: No. I was there at the spot where he made the treaty with the Delawares. The elm tree was taken out about 1911, and they have a steel fence around the marker there where this tree stood, in southern Philadelphia, on the Schuylkill River. And then from there they moved to western Pennsylvania, I think around Washington, Pennsylvania, in that area. Then on over into Ohio, a little farther in Ohio, then into Indiana, then to Kansas, and well, they came to Missouri, over here in Sarcoxie, Missouri, Anderson, Missouri, in that area, and then they took them up west of Kansas City about 10 mile, and then down here. And my great, great grandad was Chief
William Anderson that made the treaty. That's what Anderson is named after, Anderson, Indiana, was named after Chief William Anderson.

SM: When they were still in Indiana?

HS: Yeah, they called it Anderson's Town. So that became Anderson, Indiana. And then they had these sons, they named them Delaware names—Secondai, Apuske, Sarcoxie and Swanuk. And Swanuk, incidentally in Delaware, that's "white man." If you're Swanuk, you're a white man.

SM: Pawhuska over here, the town to the west of you, does that mean "white man" too?

HS: I don't know what that means. That's Osage.

SM: So the Delawares moved on until they got over into Kansas, and then finally moved on down here to Oklahoma?

HS: Did you ever hear of the Grinter House up in Kansas? A museum. It's west of Kansas City about ten mile. You can look east and see the downtown of Kansas City. Agricultural equipment museum is there, not far from there, west of Kansas City.

SM: What's the name of the museum?

HS: Well, I don't know what they call it, it's centrally located for all old agricultural equipment. I'd have to look at the map to tell you the number of the highway, it's a state highway, 34 or something. And I found my last name on that thing the state historical society put up—the name, Secondine, the first non-military post office in the state of Kansas.
SM: That's of interest to you, then.

HS: Surprised me when I saw my name on the thing, this thing in front of that down by the highway.

SM: So that's roughly how the Delawares moved all the way down into Oklahoma.

HS: You could find out from the Wyandotte County Historical Society. It's close to this agricultural exhibit. They have a building right close there, and they tell one another about each other, so people can go from one to the other. And you can find out a lot about the Delawares there.

SM: Thank you, Henry and Don.