MARCUS SEKAYOUMA, Hopi
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Sacaton, Arizona
Part I

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 Sacaton, Arizona, talking with Marcus J. Sekayouma.
This is the Gila River Reservation, isn't it, Marc?

Marcus Sekayouma:
That's right.

SM: This reservation is the Pima Reservation?

MS: Well, it's the Pima-Maricopa Indian Reservation.

SM: There's another Pima, isn't there?

MS: Well, actually the original people here, of course, when the Spanish came in the early 1600's, were the Pimas living along the Gila River, which is just a little ways up to the north there. Later on in the 1800's the Maricopas, who were a Yuman Tribe from the Colorado River area, were having problems with their neighbors over there, the Mojaves, and more or less were driven out through warfare to this part of the country. The Pimas took them into their home, and as a result they've intermingled with the Pimas for the last hundred or so years. They have their own separate community in the northwestern part of the reservation. They have their own little community which is called, obviously, the Maricopa Indian Community, and they have their own separate language, and, of course, their own distinct culture as opposed to the Pimas, and there aren't but a handful, maybe 200, 300, 400 Maricopas, and the Pimas, I think there may be 9,000 or 10,000 of them, not all on the reservation. I don't know what the latest figures are, but as I recall a couple or three years ago there was a constant population of roughly 5,000 or 6,000 and there was a kind of a migratory population that went back and forth between the reservation and Phoenix, or wherever--this being an agricultural state--where the crops happened to be, they'd work and come back. A
floating population of 2,000 or 3,000, and the rest live off the reservation more or less permanently in Phoenix or Eloy or Los Angeles, or wherever else in the world they happen to be. I think the total enrollment right now is 12,000 or 13,000, but, of course, you've got people on the rolls who are deceased, but just the enrollment numbers, as I remember it, were up around 12,000 or 13,000 enrollment numbers issued, but some of those people have passed away, so I'd say probably 10,000 or 12,000, including both tribes.

SM: For those who aren't familiar with this territory, we're on the Gila River then, which is the... 

MS: Pima and Maricopa Reservation, right.

SM: Just south of Phoenix?

MS: It depends whereabouts you're driving from from Phoenix. At its closest point it looks like it may be seven or eight miles. The reservation has something like 283,000 acres. It's not one of the biggest reservations, but I guess not one of the smallest as compared to some of the little, little rancherias in California. The land essentially falls into two groupings, or two ownership patterns. One is that of tribal land, that is land that is owned or controlled by the tribal council, and back in 1887 there was a piece of legislation enacted, called the General Allotment Act of Feb. 8, 1887, which in effect authorized the distribution of tribal land to individual members of the tribe.

SM: Was that the same as the Dawes Act?

MS: That is the Dawes Act. The allotments that were issued on this reservation were selected over a ten-year period between 1910 and 1920, and there were approximately 4890 allotments issued, which roughly
translates into almost 90,000 acres of the land allotted today, so you have the bulk of it being tribal land, and if you deduct 90,000 from 280,000, then you have roughly 190,000 acres of tribal land and 90,000 acres of allotted land. But it is south of Phoenix, but it runs at a southwest to northwest, 65, 70 miles at its widest east-west point, and about 15, 20 miles in depth. Of course you can see on that map on the wall there.

SM: It shows the outlines of the reservation.

MS: Now there is another Pima-Maricopa Reservation just east of Scottsdale. That's the Salt River Reservation. As many families do, they had a falling out among the membership here some years ago, and some people went up to the confluence of the Salt and the Verde, up through that way, and got their own reservation there. It's a smaller reservation. I think 10,000 or 12,000 acres.

SM: Isn't there another one way down by San Xavier?

MS: Well actually there are three reservations that belong to the Papagos. It's a relative of the Pimas. Actually it's the same grouping, they're all Pimans, but this is just another group of Piman Indians who call themselves Papagos. And they have three reservations. There's the one down in San Xavier that has roughly, I think, 91,000 acres. I know this because I used to work down there, and that's just about 10 or 12 miles southwest of the city of Tucson. And then there's a large Papago Reservation which begins 20, 30 miles west of Tucson, and that has 2.7 million acres of land. Then there's one up by Gila Bend which is about 40 miles west of here that has about 10,000 acres.

SM: Is there a map of all the reservations in Arizona that I could get from someone like the BIA?
MS: Yes. I think if you wrote to the office of information of the Bureau back in Washington.

SM: Marc, you said something about the rancherias in California?

MS: They're small reservations. They're called the Mission Indians over in California, simply because when the Spaniards came in back during the 1600's or so, one of the first attempts to get Indians on the reservation was in California, and by creating or setting aside tracts of land around the missions, the Fathers or the people in the church felt they'd be able to civilize the Indians if they were concentrated closer to the church, and they'd show them how to farm and all this kind of stuff. But, of course, California is infamous for its treatment of the Indians back there in the gold rush days, and wiped out, I would say, maybe two-thirds of the Indians in California during that period. So you have these small groups. Many of those lands were purchased for the Indians because they didn't have any reservations. If you ever read that book, _Catch 22_, there's that Chief White Halfboat that was an Osage Indian, whose family had an affinity to oil, and it got so that the oil prospectors in Oklahoma would follow this group around, see, and wherever they lighted for the night, strangely enough, oil would be found on that camping spot. So once they started a camp, the oil people would come in and move them off their camp ground and put an oil well down and find oil. But it got so bad that these people would try to anticipate where this family was going to camp, so they never would be able to rest, because these people were always on these little spots, so he finally joined the Service and he died. He said he was going to die of pneumonia, and of course it takes place in Italy, I think. But it's kind of amusing, and it was almost as bad in California with the gold seekers and the Indian people. They killed a lot of them off, and of course lots of them through disease. It was pretty bad. But that's in effect the history of many of the rancherias. They were purchased by the government for
the Indian groups out there, or they were purchased or set aside from the public domain for the Indian groups out there, but they're called rancherias. It's a Spanish word.

SM: And that explains the background too. Now back to you as an individual. Did you come from Hopi country up north?

MS: Well, I was born up on the reservation.

SM: One of the towns up there?

MS: I was born in the Hopi village of Moenkopi in traditional Hopi style. In traditional Hopi style you're born in the house. The mother and the baby are sequestered in the house for a period of 20 days. There's no light let into the house, and on the morning of the 20th day the baby is taken out before the sun comes up, and the baby is shown to the sun when it arises and he is introduced as a new Hopi and a new member of the tribe who will work for the Great Spirit--for lack of a better word.

SM: Can you tell us more about that, Marc?

MS: Well, I don't want to get too detailed because it would be a long story, but when the baby is born, of course, the mother is by herself, except with her is either her father . . . I can't recall exactly the sequence, but it's either her father or her mother, maybe it might be an aunt attends her, and she has it in the house by herself, unless there are complications, of course, which would require a mid-wife. She has the baby on a sheepskin blanket, and, of course, she, like many primitive women, has the birth, and the baby is washed in yucca, which is a very kind of a sacred soap. When you go home to the reservation many times your hair is washed as a kind of a purification rite, and there are four lines on the wall that
represent a five-day period. And as each five-day period goes by, one of the lines is erased, marked off the wall, so that they know when the 20 days is up that she's supposed to go out and introduce the baby to the sun--Father Sun and Mother Earth--which happened to me, and then the baby is taken back home, and then all the aunts and uncles and relatives are there to greet the baby and give him a name. The maternal aunts give the baby a name. It might be different names, but the one that sounds best sticks for the period during the puberty of the baby. My Indian name happens to be Nasikgweeva, which means "bright arrow."

SM: Can you spell it?

MS: If you spell it phonetically, I guess, Nasikquaeva, which means "bright arrow." And that name sticks with you during your puberty, and then, when you're 12 or 13, it's almost like having a Bar Mitzvah. You get your male name for the rest of your life, but you're supposed to go through a ceremony which takes place in a kiva and you get, in effect, chastised.

SM: You get whipped a little bit?

MS: Yeah, they whip you around a bit, right.

SM: And the new name comes then?

MS: Yeah, right. But here again you've gotta be on the reservation for most of your life, and you're introduced to the clan, of course. The Hopi society, as in many societies, is a matrilineal society, and your kinship and your clanship is reckoned through the mother, and I happen to belong to the Coyote Clan, and there's a Fox Clan. Coyote and Water Fox Clan, so I'm a member of that clan, and my children would be the clan of their mother, if she were a Hopi, but she's not.
She's a member of another tribe. That's my first wife. She's an Onandaga from the Onandaga Reservation in New York. She's an Iroquois, a member of the Iroquois Nation, but here again, if I had married a Hopi, my children would be of the clan of their mother. And after the ceremony, the initiation, or say Bar Mitzvah, you're a man, and you assume the duties of a man. You have clan or kiva, clan responsibilities—taking part in the dances and the ceremonies—and of course you are tutored by a godfather, if you will, during your initiation period so that you know the clan rites and the incantations and the songs and all that kind of thing.

SM: These are very intricate and take a very long time to learn?

MS: Yeah, takes a long, long time to learn. I was born in 1940 which, of course, was still as far as the reservation was concerned, still in the midst of the depression, and my father didn't have any work. They were married five years earlier, and I came along in 1940, but it was very difficult—and it still is on many reservations even, as you probably found out—to find any work. My uncle, for whom I was named Marcus, was with a kind of a circus—it was called a Sportsman Show. And this show involved a number of activities like log rolling—they had several lumberjacks who would throw axes and chop logs and log roll—and archers, Indian archers, and non-Indian archers, and we had Eskimos and we had Plains Indians and, of course, there was a Hopi Indian doing the Butterfly Dances and the Buffalo Dances, and some Zunis and Isletas doing their Hoop Dances and whatever other dances that they were required to do working with this group, which was travelling all over the country at fairs and at various grand openings of hotels and something of that nature. And there was an opening at that time for a man, a wife, and a baby, so we just happened to fit the bill, so my uncle wired money to my folks to join the show, and we travelled with them for a period of a couple of years. They went back to the reservation where my brother next to me was born, and
then they went back with the show. And this was until about 1943, when the show was around in upper state New York, and because of the war effort many of the younger people were being drafted, and because of this and that, the show folded there, and they had an opportunity to move down with the impressarios—the people that ran the show—to their home in Connecticut, about 20 miles north of Bridgeport, at a little town called Newton. And they lived there, and they went to work in Bridgeport in the plants down there, and I grew up there until I was 15 years old.

SM: So you're a New England Hopi?

MS: Yeah. There was one other family that lived in New Haven, and of course we'd go over there and see them on special occasions, and they'd get together and they'd talk Hopi, and they'd get a package from home, maybe some mutton or some fried bread, or piki or parched corn, and they'd get together and drink a little sauce and sing some songs, have a good time, and I kind of enjoyed it. But sometimes they'd get on an Indian drunk. An Indian drunk is where you get together with some friends and you start drinking, then you tell stories and you laugh a lot, and once you get through laughing then you start crying, see, and once you get through crying, you start fighting a bit, see. But after you get through fighting you cry a little bit, and then pretty soon you're friends all over again. So they'd go through that whole bit.

SM: It just takes a while?

MS: Yeah. It takes a little while.

SM: A few days, a few hours?

MS: Well, about 2:00 o'clock in the morning, that's when they'd get into
the fighting bit. It's kind of amusing. So I grew up there until I was 15, then I went to live with my brother in Washington State. He was in the Service, and I went to live with him for about a year or so.

SM: What part of the state?

MS: Tacoma. And I lived in Tacoma for about a year and a half. I went to public school there as I did in Connecticut. I was a freshman in Clover Park High School in Washington State. Then after that my brother was married, and they didn't have any children at the time, and he was in the Service. He was an enlisted man, he wasn't making much money, of course, it took a little bit to feed and clothe, so I went to Haskell. They're both graduates of Haskell, he and his wife, so I enrolled at Haskell.

SM: Was it a junior college then?

MS: Oh no. It was a commercial vocational school, and I went in the high school--they still had a high school then--and I went as a sophomore and as a junior, and I graduated from Haskell, then I took one year of commercial work in typing and clerical kind of thing.

SM: Did you know Billy Mills there?

MS: He was in the class ahead of me. He was in my first wife's class. He went to Kansas University from there.

SM: I'll bet you were in the class with Herb Johnson?

MS: Yeah, as a matter of fact I was. Herbie? Yeah, sure.

SM: I met him in Tulsa and asked him if he went out for track. He said he
did. I asked him if he ran with Billy Mills, and he said, "Well, no, I ran behind him."

MS: He ran behind him. Right. As many people did. But I went to Washington after three years, Washington, D.C., where my future wife was working, and I followed her there, and we got married. I worked in the Washington office, and I was a clerk in personnel for nine months or so. Then one day this fellow come up and said, "Hey, would you like to work in real property management?" Of course I said, "What's in it for me?" And he said, "Well, we can give you a chance for promotion," and it sounded pretty good so I took it. That was about 1960 or so, and I've been with the branch of realty or real property management for going on 15 years now.

SM: Have you been down here all that time?

MS: Well, I was in Washington until 1964, and from there I went to the Phoenix area office. There are about 11 regional offices, of which Phoenix is one. Then from there I went to the Papago agency down at Sells, which is on the large Papago Reservation, about 60 miles west of Tucson. And I was down in Papago 1966 to '70, and then after that I went to the University of Arizona in Tucson for a couple of years, and then from there I went here at Pima, and I've been here at Pima since the fall of '71, so I've been here going on five years now in the realty job. I've been in this particular position for going on two years now.

SM: Marc, you have been around more than most of us, and have lived in the East, Northeast, Washington, D.C., and the West, Northwest coast. Have you run into any problems because of your Indian ancestry, or any advantages, on the other hand?

MS: Well, I don't know. I would say no. I don't think that I have been
discriminated against like some of the people I know that live up on
the Hopi, that go to these small towns like Flagstaff or Winslow or
Holbrooke, or even around here at Coolidge or Casa Grande, where you
have a predominantly large Indian population, and white people dealing
with Indians on that kind of scale are used to them, or think of them
in a different way perhaps than they would back East. Of course,
being the only family in Connecticut, or one of the only Indian fami-
lies in Connecticut, in this one area, we were rather anomalies. We
were special, and people looked at us in a different light. Even in
Washington, I worked in the potato fields, picked strawberries and
blueberries and worked in farms here and there. No, I can't say that
there's ever been any ill feeling towards me because I am an Indian.
Maybe I've been lucky.

SM: Yes. Well, it depends a lot, perhaps, on the circumstances. Ada
Deer, the Menominee leader, sort of sums it up. She said, "It's a
typical reservation border town," referring to one of the towns near
the Menominee people in Wisconsin. You got away from that?

MS: Yeah, but I can see it or remnants of it here and there. Travelling
out of the Phoenix office I spent several days in these small border
towns, and, of course, when I go out, when I travel, you know I don't
look like a reservation Indian. I'm not wearing Levis, or torn shoes,
or I'm not staggering down the street like they're used to, like say
the south side of Holbrooke or so, or Winslow, and so I usually dress
up in a suit or at least I look fairly presentable. I look like an
Indian dressed like a white man. And, of course, having a little more
money, and a little better education, I never had any problems, but I
can see it--I've been to the south side of the street, just for the
hell of it. Not slumming, just because there're Indians down there;
I was interested; I wanted to know a little bit more about how the
Navajos are treated, and how the people react, and I can see that there
is a great deal of ill feeling toward the Indians. A friend drew an
analogy to a situation they had in Hawaii one time. It's called "the
crab in the bucket syndrome." I don't know whether you ever heard about it. He told me that Hawaiians—and I see this among Indian people too—hate, or don't like to see their people do well, or some of their people do well, or even families don't like to see the children get ahead. And when you trap crabs in Hawaii, or some people trap crabs by sinking a stainless steel bucket into the sand and put a female crab in the bottom of the bucket, and the male crab will come along and see the female, and, of course, he'd jump into the bucket. Then after a while there'd be several crabs in the bucket, filling up the bucket, and when one crab would get to the top of the pile he'd try to get out with his pincers, and he'd just reach the top of the bucket or grab ahold of the sand and try to pull himself out, but as he did that the other crabs would grab ahold of his legs and pull him back down, see. I've seen this on many occasions here and there drinking with the guys, and they'd say, "What are you trying to prove?" Or, "Who are you tryin' to be?" Or "What the hell makes you think you're so damn different?" And that's the way I am. And I see this exhibited among many people, especially if you start drinking with these guys. Then, of course, a little truer feelings come to the surface.

SM: Billy Mills ran into that when he decided to quit drinking, and his friends would say now he was too good to drink with them.

MS: That's it exactly. That's exactly what I mean.

SM: Of course you run into that, I think, in other groups too. Is there something in the background of the Indian philosophy or world view that sort of dislikes competition, or maybe not competition so much as excelling at the expense of others?

MS: I couldn't tell you. I don't know.
SM: The Hopis are supposed to be a more peaceful, friendly, close-knit group, but they don't like to excel so that they stand out conspicuously. Is that true?

MS: I don't know. Heck, I try to keep away from that as much as I can up on the reservation.

SM: Could that be the explanation for the "crab in the bucket" kind of thing?

MS: It may be. I don't know. Here again different people have different ideas about their fellow-man. I know this is true in other races. I think the Japanese are pretty much conformists. My wife spent several years in Japan.

SM: Is she Japanese?

MS: No, she's Anglo, but she got with the culture. She lived with some people, she learned it pretty well, and she knows. This is a reaction that's not solely that of the Indians or any other group. It seems to be rather well distributed among non-Anglos, maybe even among Anglos. Small communities, I think.

SM: Because if one man sticks his head above the crowd they snipe at him?

MS: I guess success is fine if you... .

SM: It generates envy in the others.

MS: Yeah, right, exactly. Here again, the Hopis way back used to have that symptom of "don't be better than anybody else" kind of thing. And, of course, on the reservation, being as far away as they are from anything, way up in northern Arizona, of all the Indian groups
in the United States, the Hopis have probably more pure culture than any other group in the United States, I say. They don't have their culture that they had way back 400, 500 years ago, but they've held on to many of the things that a lot of tribes have lost. Like you see many of the Plains Indians doing dances that they'd never done before—they're not their dances at all. Cheyennes doing some Crow dances. . . .

SM: And sometimes wearing clothing typical of other groups too.

MS: That's right. Here again, maybe it's because they have been way up seemingly in the middle of nowhere. Of course this is where the Hopis have chosen to live, and they do have a purer culture, and maybe they have maintained this not sticking your head above somebody else more so than some other people. I don't know.

SM: That's a difficult thing to explain. The older literature refers to things like this, the anthropologists dwell on it a little bit, and then you come to someone from the Sioux country, and they say they like to compete, and they're aggressive. It's a very complex situation.

MS: Yeah. Here again, I'm aggressive. I like to get out and compete in my own way. I'm not an athlete by any means, but I certainly do have my own areas of competition. I like to do a better job than somebody else, or be more conspicuous than somebody else, but that to me is a personal trait rather than something that was infused into me by my culture, my heritage.

SM: And you're kind of a product of having moved around so much so you've been in contact with many people all over the country, haven't you?

MS: Yes. I think that I probably had a great deal more exposure to different people and different situations in the Indian Bureau than many
of the bureaucrats—my fellow counterparts—have been able to gain over the years, and I think it's helped me in analyzing situations, not strictly from a resource or an economic standpoint, which is of course what I'm in, real estate and economics and land development. But something that I was really gung ho about for a while when I was in Washington was looking at it strictly from the dollars and cents material standpoint. But now, in working on the reservations, I see that there's a heck of a lot more—there are values existing among the tribes—money takes second place. For instance, we've got a project on the reservation that would create, in effect, a hydro-electric power plant in the mountains to the west of us here about 20 miles, that would consume water from the river basin. The river doesn't flow any more because it's been dammed upstream, but nevertheless there's still an underground source of water, it is a watershed area. It will create the tribe a couple three million and a half dollars a year when it gets into operation. The former tribal council, back in the mid-sixties or so, heartily endorsed the idea, because they didn't have a steady source of income as they do right now, or dependable sources of income. So they took it and ran with it and they passed resolutions saying, "Hey, this is a great idea, let's take the ball and run with it," but now the council was changed, their economic situation is changed, and when this idea came up again or the momentum began to really get it off the ground, some of the other council members said, "Hey, what will this do to our traditional wood-gathering areas or mesquite areas? It will drain the water and the mesquites will die, and we won't have any firewood." Or, "Where will my horses graze?" Or, "Maybe you'll be taking out some shrine areas, or some areas that we just like to go down to look at." So rather than the dollar sign being in front of your eyes, they're looking at it from the standpoint of, here again, environment, which is a big thing among Indian tribes now. But here again, these are other values that you have to consider, and the peoples' wishes too. Just because it's gonna make you $100 doesn't necessarily mean that
you're gonna accept $100. You might feel, "Well, why should I let somebody use it when I like it the way it is? So what?" There's a lot of that on the reservation right now. It may hurt the tribe, and then again, maybe the land is better the way it is. For instance, let's take some of the mining operations. I've been out to one area of the reservation, and it's really a pretty site--it's a gullied area, it's got a lot of washes, scenic, got a lot of Indian things around there, archeological sites--but there happens to be an ore deposit there. And the mining company has a lease--it's a copper deposit, it's a small ore body as ore bodies go, but the company's gonna go in there and mine it. Of course this means bringing in roads and those big old trailers coming in and electric scoops coming in. They're gonna get the money, but what's gonna be left is a hole in the ground and a bunch of overburden dumped here and there. Of course even though the lease does provide that they'll take the means to try to restore it to its original shape, that is, plant desert grasses and vegetation along the dump site, it's not gonna be the same way that it was before. You're just gonna have a big hole in the ground out there. Let's face it. You're gonna be a couple of dollars richer, you're gonna be several dollars richer, but in the end it's not gonna be the same piece of property. You can't go home again. Things are changing, and it's not the same thing that you had when you started out. So the tribe is looking at it from this standpoint, except not just the dollars and cents, but from the sentimental value maybe, or intrinsic value that it has to them at the time.

SM: It makes a very difficult problem sometimes.

MS: Yeah. But I think this tribe is sophisticated or gaining sophistication that they're gonna be able to balance the two. They're not just in it for development's sake, they're very cautious; they're looking at it from the standpoint of how will this affect us in the long run rather than just the immediate short run. And they've got certainly
a resource here, that is farm land, that is more in their way of looking at things or doing things, the Pimas being an agricultural people from many, many hundreds, perhaps thousands of years ago, find that farming is more to their liking, let's say, than having a bunch of townhouses or condominiums on the reservation.

SM: Are the Pimas descended from the ancient Hohokams?

MS: Yeah, they say they are. The archeologists claim that there is a direct descendancy, although the Hopis may have something different to say about that.

SM: Do they?

MS: Well, you've got the Casa Grande ruins out here, and I heard some old Hopis say that that's Hopi stuff down there. See, an old Hopi tale is that when the Hopis came out of the ground in the Grand Canyon they were looking for the most perfect spot on which to live, and they sent their people to the east, west, north and south, and they were supposed to come back after a certain time to report to the rest of the tribe what they found, whether it was worth living there. They were looking for some place where there would be harmony with the earth and the sky and their surroundings. And the story goes they travelled into Mexico, to the coast of California and back as far east as they could go, and, of course, on their travels--it didn't take overnight, it took many hundreds of years, maybe thousands of years--according to the legend, and some of the people stayed around, let's say in the Mayan areas or the Aztec, the Toltec, the Mixtec area, and stayed there and built that civilization down there. And they say the same of the Casa Grande area.

SM: Was it in Central America that they started?
MS: Well, 'course this is the way Hopi stories go. Hopis, like many tribes, are very ethnocentric, I guess, and they think they're the only group that has any ability, and, of course, I'm biased, I kind of think so too.

SM: Well, they left marks.

MS: Yeah, their clan marks, that's right, yeah. And then they say that a lot of these things, these markings are clan markings. So here again, although the archeologists, anthropologists claim that the Pimas are descendants of the Hohokam, the Hopis might have something to say about that.

SM: The Hopis think they might have been here influencing that other ancient people, or working with them or maybe they built Casa Grande themselves, because they have always been builders, always built their homes, using adobe and rock both.

MS: That's right. You see, like we're talking about the value system in the Indian culture. The Pimas near Scottsdale exhibit this to some degree. I don't know whether it's an ulterior motive, or whether it's a drive to keep the reservation as it is. But they passed some land use ordinances, zoning ordinances upon the reservation, which preclude, by and large, the residential-commercial type of development that Scottsdale has and Tempe has. There's an enclave in the midst of several communities there. It's all farm land, you can tell where the reservation begins just by driving across the street. Yeah, they said, "We've got this land plan, and we're gonna stick with it," and this precludes any of this neon lights, condominium, car wash type of thing on the reservation. Because they feel that by doing this we're gonna lose our sight of being Pimas, we're gonna be just like John Doe across the street there, and we don't want that. And that land is worth millions of dollars over there right now. But
they're looking at it not just from the dollars and cents standpoint, but what's it gonna do to me and my children.

SM: That's a very interesting point, because at the confluence of Scottsdale and MacDowell Road. . . .

MS: Pima Road.

SM: Yes, Pima Road--Scottsdale is on the left as you look north, and the reservation is on the right, and all the way along the Scottsdale side there's nothing but a long row of new homes, condominiums, apartments, and so on. Across the road is the reservation, mostly farm land, although they do have Scottsdale Community College there, which is on a lease, isn't it?

MS: Um hm.

SM: But then there are also some homes, and some of them aren't too attractive, but now they have chosen this. They are not living there in those homes because they can't have something better, but because they prefer this. Is that true?

MS: Yeah, at this point. Let's put it that way. At this point there are more people on the tribal council that feel this way than are not. Obviously, like in any city or town, you can get a zoning variance, or you can just modify the whole doggoned thing and throw it out the window and start out all over again. There are many people who own land by themselves--I explained the allotments to you and you know what they are, obviously--along MacDowell Road and along Pima Road that would lend themselves to this type of development, and they would like to have a development, but they can't get a variance, they can't get enough power to overcome the land use code. Now I would suspect that in the future there probably will be some variances,
and you will see some development, but at this time, there is just a moratorium in effect on that type of thing. Now, this has another connotation from the bureaucratic standpoint, or from the standpoint of the administration's posture towards Indian tribes, and that is one day when all this Indian stuff has gone out the window--it being great to be an Indian, or my father or grandmother was an Indian kind of thing--Congress and the administration is going to say, "Look, these Indian people have this valuable resource, they haven't done a damn thing with it, why the devil should we continue to fund the program to continue aid to these people when they've got this resource just sitting out there? You know, culture is nice, but it is costing the taxpayers millions of dollars a year." And, of course, right now the Indians are riding a very high crest of public feeling, public sentiment, and many friends in the administration and in Congress that will fund Indian programs. Where some of the other Great Society programs have gone out the window, Indians are getting more and more money, direct funding from the Congress, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Housing and Urban Development, HEW, Department of Transportation, ad nauseum, as far as the bureaucrats are concerned, are funneling millions of dollars into the reservations. Here again, as I say, how long will it continue before the Congress says, "Hey, you haven't done a thing with your property. We're giving you x numbers of years to shape up or we're gonna cut off the bread."

SM: That probably will become a problem sooner or later, or a decision will be reached somehow.

MS: Yeah. Well here again you've got a tremendous land base in Arizona that is Indian land. Twenty-seven percent of the entire state is Indian owned, and of the entire state, only 15% or 17% is owned by non-Indians in fee. When I say, "in fee," that is like you own property in St. Louis or Chicago, you're a land owner of a particular property, and of course you are taxed by the state and by the
county and maybe by the city if you're in a special improvement district.

SM: So the Indians own more than the non-Indians.

MS: That's right. And so here again, the non-Indians are being taxed on their land base, and the Indians are not, you see.

SM: The rest of the land is government owned?

MS: Either owned by the federal government or the state. There are three entities.

SM: Indian-owned land, Anglo-owned land and the government land?

MS: Yeah, the government including both state and federal. Right. The federal-Indian relationship is based on the land itself, and on nothing else. Initially it was based on a trust, that is, the federal government owns the land and provides the Indians with a possessory or use right in the property. O.K. Now if the federal government says, "O.K., in 100 years we're going to terminate this trust relationship and give you the land in fee, like any other citizen," then at that point you're gonna have to start payin' taxes on it, buddy, and if you can't pay taxes on it, then of course what happens when you can't pay your taxes? You lose it at a tax sale, right? And so with many, like with the Papago Reservation that has 2,000,000 almost 3,000,000 acres of ground, which most of it is just suitable for grazing and you're not going to make enough money off of grazing land to pay the taxes on it, I think you're gonna find lot of the Indian tribes are gonna have to tighten up, and hunker down out of the wind, and start getting some programs to develop a tax base so they can take care of the taxes. Now here again it may not be in my lifetime, and maybe not in my childrens' lifetime, but I grant you, one of these days it's gonna happen.
SM: Now you're speaking, when you say that, from the standpoint of an Indian person, but you have been exposed to the whole picture enough so that you see the whole picture, right?

MS: Yeah.

SM: The average Indian person doesn't consider that other point of view so much?

MS: Yeah. The Indian people that can see this, of course, are trying to maintain the trust relationship with the federal government. Take, for instance, the Menomines. They just got back to the blanket, and, of course, their land is not taxable anymore, and they're back in federal services and federal service relationship. Now the Bureau's gonna move back in, probably set up a new office. HEW's gonna come back in and set up a clinic, and so they'll have all the services that they had before the termination came, back in the '50's, which was a period of termination for the United States. That's when all your Oregon tribes, your Grande Ronde, your Siletz, your Klamath people, went out of the Indian trust relationship. But the people that do see this and are aware of it are saying, "Hey, let's maintain this as long as we possibly can, because being non-Indian, white, is fine, but I don't want all the advantages of being white. I don't want to pay taxes on my land." You find a lot of Indians moving back to the reservation for that very reason—it's cheaper to live back here. And of course with the interstates and modern transportation I'm only 40 minutes from Phoenix right here, and a lot of people are commuting 90, 100 miles to Phoenix, back and forth every day. But they're moving back because it is cheaper to live on the reservation. Granted there are some drawbacks, but the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. You've gotta trade off things, of course.

SM: Yes, you can't always have it your own way, in any group, whether you're an Indian or otherwise. You've been working for the BIA and
the Land Management?

MS: Yeah, land management, property management, right.

SM: And your purpose is to help the Indians of the Pima Tribe here and the Maricopas to handle their land most effectively?

MS: Well, actually, here again the whole concept of the Indian-federal relationship is based on the land. When you guys first got off the boat, there was nothin' but a bunch of Indians living out in the woods and helping you celebrate Thanksgiving, or working in the mines down in Mexico. The land belonged to the Indians. Maybe they didn't have title to it--nobody had a piece of paper--and so you had the French coming in, the Spanish coming in, and of course the English, and they said, "Hey, it's ours by right of discovery." And of course they said, "Well, nobody's using the land, and it's so much lebensraum--living room, right? So we'll give the Indians something, and we'll give them a piece of paper that says you can have that land for as long as the grass shall grow and the waters shall flow, and because you can't deal at arms length with those other guys out there, those other non-Indian people, we have to exercise some trust over you so that you're not done out of your property by some unscrupulous white trader or some Anglo, non-Indian." So this concept, of course, stemmed from the English during the early part of the English society when they would have guardians for Indian tribes and Indian individuals, take care of their land and whatever treaty monies that they got. But if it weren't for the land and the fact that the federal government has this relationship to own the land in trust for the Indians, you wouldn't have any Bureau of Indian Affairs any more than you would have a bureau of black affairs, a bureau of Puerto Rican affairs. The Puerto Ricans don't own 10,000,000 acres of land or 4,000,000 acres of land. The blacks don't, the Lithuanians don't. So the whole concept of trust relationship is built on the land.
Other services have been provided for Indians either by treaty or act of Congress, but those aren't actually trust relationships, they're obligations that the federal government has taken onto itself as a result of its relationship with the Indians—that is we need more schools, we need to educate the Indian people, bring them closer to God, they need welfare services. These services have, in effect, been terminated in states that adhere to what is known as Public Law 280, which provides for state assumption of civil and criminal jurisdiction over Indian tribes. California has it, I think, Oregon has it, several other states have it, and the state has taken over the functions of the Indian Bureau, except for the land. O.K., so it all revolves around the land itself. The United States is the trustee, and there has to be someone to deal with third persons regarding the use of that property, that is, if there is a lease, the superintendent or the Secretary of the Interior, under his delegated authority from Congress has to approve that document, that lease, or that right-of-way, whatever it might be. And, of course, the secretary and the commissioner don't have the time to look at every lease or to draw up all these documents, so he has to have somebody on his staff to do that, and of course bureaucracies being built as they are, we have a branch of realty. Of course, you need people in the field to look at these documents and to take care of land titles, to deal with rights of ways, to negotiate leases and to negotiate whatever else might come as a result of land use, and that's what I'm here for, initially as the representative of the trustee. These papers I signed this morning are the result of lease transactions over which the secretary and superintendent, through his delegation of authority, have the authority to approve. The land owners don't approve them, the superintendent approves them, as a result of the contract. So initially, that's what the job is—a representative of the trustee, making sure that leases or documents dealing with or involving land are in the best interests of the Indian people. Now that's the basis of my job. However, I'd have to take it one step further, and assist the Indian
people, not only to preserve their land, but to enhance it as well; to increase the productivity or the wise or the very beneficial use of their property for whatever it might be. They might want to set aside regional parks, they might want to set aside tribal land for homesites. They might want to drill wells, or they might want to bring in more farmland, and so it's something I get involved in because I feel that it's taking my job one step further to help them enhance or develop their properties.

SM: So now, even though you work for the government, the guardian in this ward-guardian relationship, your primary purpose is to assist the Indians. Is that true?

MS: Well, yeah, that's true.

SM: That's the way you see it?

MS: That's the way I do it. Right. Yeah.

SM: A lot of people think the primary purpose is to swindle the Indians, and that's not true at all?

MS: Well, I don't think that's ever been true. You might have had some unscrupulous people in the agency, and I know there have been such people who were out to swindle the Indian people out of their resources. However, you know, the old bureaucrat, the age of the old bureaucrat where the superintendent was God on the reservation, is gone, and many of our Indian people, they're a bunch of the older people that can't adjust to changing conditions. You know, that's why there are no more dinosaurs, because they couldn't adapt to a changing environment, and we find a lot of these guys that are confused, because they think of Indian determination as something that will go away if they stick their head in the sand. I don't see it
that way. Obviously my job is to help the Indians develop their property, and to make sure that these developments are in their best interests, as well as exercising some fiduciary responsibility with regard to the land, and, of course, being a representative of the trustee, I have to look at it in that light as well. But some of the older people in my division or my branch and in other agencies are still laboring under the assumption that they have to lease the land for the Indians, or they have to in effect take the Indian's place in transactions with non-Indians. I try to turn that around down here by involving the Indian landowners in the use of their property. That is, if there's a lease coming up for renewal, I have been calling the landowners' meetings and giving them alternatives. That is, you can either lease it to the same guy, advertise for lease, or just negotiate with the best man, or you don't have to lease it, just take the land back and use it himself, but I think it's incumbent upon me to develop a series of alternatives for the landowners and let them make the selection, and once they've made the selection, to carry out that selection to the best of my ability. And I've done that with landowners as well as working with the resource committee or the tribal groups, showing them the alternatives, or what I feel would be the alternatives, giving them whatever legal advice they need through our attorneys or through my own experience and knowledge of the law and history, and then let them develop their own set of guidelines or their own approach. If they want me to do something then I'll do it, but if they want to take the ball and run with it themselves, so be it.

SM: Do you feel then that compared with 50 or 100 years ago, the people here on the reservation are getting a little better advice and more consideration than then?

MS: Well, I'd say within the last ten years.
SM: It's been that recent?

MS: I think the whole turnabout to me came in the '60's, as a result of black attempts to have them recognized as people, people with certain special needs that they weren't getting before that time. The Indians are operating with a lag, and they always have operated with a lag. You'll notice, especially in recent times, you've had the Black Panthers, and you've had these various groups, but now what have you got? Seven years later you've got AIM, and you've got all these little coalitions here and there coming up, so many Indian people, I think, look at it and say, "Hey, this worked for the blacks, maybe it'll work for me. It worked for the Chicanos, maybe I can get a little recognition." I think that one of the spinoffs from the AIM thing, one of the things they've done, is the fact that there has been a greater awareness by the Indian people of what they can do if they have a concerted effort, rather than saying, "I can't do it because the superintendent says I can't."

SM: A superintendent of an agency said that about 95% of the criticism of the BIA was unfounded. A young member of the AIM said things are so bad that there's going to be a revolution soon, so watch what happens in 1976. Those two opinions hardly agree, do they?

MS: Well, I wouldn't know what the percentages are, talking good and bad, whether it's 50% good or 50% bad. I'm kinda the guy that looks at a glass and says it's half full rather than half empty. I'm kinda an optimist on those kind of things. Looking at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, of course that's about all I can talk about since I am incidentally aware of that group, having worked in Washington and in the Phoenix office and down here. I would say most of the people are dedicated to their task. There's a lot of deadwood floating around, but, hell, you go to any corporation and you read in the Peter Principle a guy doesn't do his job you promote him upstairs, or he's given
a lateral arabesque, he's pushed off to the side somewhere. It's not indigenous to bureaucracy to have a lot of people that aren't really 100% people. In terms of percentages, I don't know whether it's 90%, 95% good and 5% bad or not. But I know that there are a lot of people in the Bureau that are hard working and looking for the betterment of the Indian people. Here again, the 5% maybe are more conspicuous. I know that in one area that I visited a few weeks ago, they're losing employees over there through this reduction in force, and the boss was telling me, he said, "Years ago we could hide the deadwood in numbers, but now that our numbers are thinning out, the bad guys are being more conspicuous, or the guys who are less competent are being more conspicuous." Well, maybe the numbers are 95% and 5%. I don't know. I know at least in the Southwest--now when I talk about the Southwest I'm talking about Arizona and New Mexico--I don't think there's gonna be this revolution, this uprising that you're talking about. I personally don't see that it would really gain anything for the Indians beyond which they have already gotten, or at least, the momentum is being developed. You'll have your Wounded Knees, you'll have your take-overs here and there, but at least in the Southwest, talking to the tribal people that I'm familiar with, and even up in some of the other states, the cooler heads prevail in governments.

SM: Do you know what percentage of the BIA staff is made up of Indian people?

MS: Well, I think it's probably right now maybe 65%. Well, it's significant again, not from that standpoint, but it's significant from the standpoint there are more Indian people in higher-rated positions than there are being janitors or scullery maids or GS-3 or GS-4 clerk-typists.

SM: They count too, but there are more now higher up the ladder.
MS: Yeah. A friend of mine, the guy that worked here before was my boss. He said, "Figures don't lie, but liars figure." So if you want to talk about pure figures, yeah. Even back 10 or 15 years ago there were a lot more Indians than there were whites. But who held the top jobs? Who was commissioner, you know? White guys. The first one that came along was Louis Bruce for a long time, then Bob Bennett came along.

SM: About a hundred years, I guess.

MS: Well, look under Bob Bennett. You see the deputy commissioner, the associate commissioner, all these assistant commissioners and people in the branch chiefs, GS-15, 16 level, most of them are white.

SM: I talked with him recently.

MS: He's a hell of a guy! I don't think that people that really have thought about ... they, of course have different angles or take a different view of it, but I think there are many areas of understanding or agreement, more than there are areas of disagreement.

SM: So, a lot of the more important positions now are being held by Indian people.

MS: Anne told me that, even at the university level, there are some good people up there in the art department. I said, "Well, in many cases there are people just don't know how to teach. They're adequate at their craft and their trade, but, hell, they just don't know a damn thing about teaching.

SM: Is Anne, your wife, in the art department?

MS: Yeah, right.

Part II of this interview appears on a separate transcript.