Listening to Indians

CATHY WILSON, Nez Perce
December 30, 1974
Tempe, Arizona

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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NO. 3

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Sam Myers:

Today we're talking to Cathy Wilson. That's Cathy for Catherine?

Cathy Wilson:

Um hm.

SM: Cathy, you're nineteen and a Dartmouth College senior?

CW: Right.

SM: That's a little remarkable! Would you admit that?

CW: No. (laughter) I don't feel like it, no.

SM: You must have something on the ball. But, let's go back to the beginning. Where were you born, Cathy?

CW: I was born in Bridgeport, California, which is right across the border from where we lived in Nevada at the time--Stewart, Nevada.

SM: And your father is... .

CW: Gene Wilson.

SM: What does he do?

CW: He works with the Indian Health Service which is part of Public Health Service and H.E.W. here in Phoenix, and he's a tribal affairs officer, and covers health problems in Utah, California, Nevada and Arizona--Indian health problems.

SM: And he's an Indian?

CW: Right.
SM: Nez Perce is the way you say it and he says it. The other day someone said "Nay Persay."

CW: Oh, yeah, people say Nez Pierce, and other forms too.

SM: Nez Perce is commonly the way it's pronounced by the people themselves?

CW: Right.

SM: That's the best way, isn't it?

CW: Yah.

SM: And your mother?

CW: She's non-Indian.

SM: And you were born in '55 in California, just near where you lived in Nevada at the time, where your dad was working?

CW: Right.

SM: Went to school in California then?

CW: No, not at all . . . I didn't start going to school 'till we lived in Sacaton, Arizona, because we lived in Nevada for only a year or so after I was born.

SM: Where is Sacaton?

CW: It's south of Phoenix, about thirty miles or so, on the Pima Indian Reservation. It's very small.
SM: And your dad was doing work there then among the Pimas?

CW: Right. He was a relocation officer on the reservation.

SM: And then after that, where did you go to school?

CW: We moved again after seven years, and we went to school in Aberdeen.

SM: And then?

CW: And then we moved back here after about four years.

SM: To Tempe where you live now?

CW: Right.

SM: Did you go to school here in Tempe then?

CW: Yes, high school.

SM: McClintock High School. When did you graduate?

CW: '71.

SM: And then?

CW: Mesa Community College, one year, and then I transferred to Dartmouth.

SM: Which school do you like better?

CW: I liked them both. They're both so different I hate to compare the two, but I feel like I had better teachers at Mesa Community than I did at Dartmouth, but I'm not sorry I went to Dartmouth, even though I'm kind of tired of the place now after being there three years.
SM: You're not quite finished at Dartmouth, are you?

CW: No, no. I still have one term left, to graduate.

SM: What did you take at Mesa Community College? Any particular curriculum?

CW: History, geography, astronomy, German.

SM: Why do you say you thought your teachers were better there?

CW: I dunno. I just felt like I learned more there.

SM: Were they tougher?

CW: No, they weren't tougher.

SM: More interested in you?

CW: That could be. Classes were a lot smaller there. At Mesa Community I think there are about 5,000 students there--I'm not sure. I think that was the figure they told me when I was there, and at Dartmouth they have about 3,500 students, but a lot of my classes at Dartmouth had over 50 to 100, 200 students in them, and I never had any classes like that at Mesa Community. I don't even think they have any classes like that there.

SM: Most of them are 35 . . . 25?

CW: Twenty, even less than that, the ones I had. And so I was kinda disappointed in Dartmouth in that aspect. Most of my classes were so gigantic. And the students there also are mostly Easterners that have gone to prep schools and things like that, and they're really competitive, and I didn't like that type of atmosphere;
that attitude that always school, school, school; we've gotta get
"A's" and constantly studying and hardly time for anything else,
you know, really competitive. It's like a person may be fairly
intelligent, but the other students there are so much more into
studying and getting that high grade, very competitive, that you
constantly have to study in order to keep up, like a "B" or even a
"C", with the other students.

SM: It's interesting and somewhat of a paradox that at a school which
has a smaller enrollment spread over a four-year college experience,
the classes would be larger than in a two-year college with a larger
enrollment. But is is that way, isn't it?

CW: Yeah.

SM: And you think that's probably one of the major reasons that you liked
it better at Mesa Community College?

CW: I think it probably was because I knew all my teachers at Mesa much
better than I ever got to know . . . well, my last year at Dartmouth
I did get to know a few teachers pretty well, because my classes were
smaller, but up until this past year, say summer term, I didn't really
know any of my teachers very well, 'cause the classes were so big.

SM: And so you will have finished three years there when you graduate
after one more term?

CW: Right.

SM: You came home from Dartmouth just before Christmas?

CW: Right.

SM: And then you're not going back this next semester. What are you
going to do this next semester then?
CW: This winter I'll be working in Sacaton with the Pima Indians. They have a legal aid, a tribal legal aid office there, and I'll be working with them.

SM: Keep in mind, if you will, Cathy, that people who will listen to us don't have the advantage of your background. You understand the Nez Perce Indians and their point of view, and the Pima Indians, you've lived there, and some of our listeners haven't lived near any Indians. What is the difference, if any, between the Pimas and the Nez Perce? Did you have any problems there?

CW: Well no, not really. I haven't really started working with them yet, and when I lived there before I was very young, so that I got along with them; I played with them and stuff.

SM: Just a bunch of kids playing together?

CW: Right. But I haven't started working with them yet--I start later in January, and so I really couldn't say right now.

SM: The Pima Indians were very peaceful people, and then, of course, the Nez Perce were too?

CW: Um hm. The Nez Perce also, yes.

SM: Chief Joseph--I think one of his comments made often was that they had never harmed any of the settlers at all, 'till the last trouble when they were forced to fight.

CW: Um hm. Right.

SM: You'll be working down at Sacaton for three months?

CW: Right. Uh huh.
SM: What kind of country is that down there? That's quite different than the Nez Perce country, isn't it?

CW: Right. It's all deserts, mountains, and cactus--deserty.

SM: What do they do? How do they make a living?

CW: I honestly couldn't say.

SM: You're going to find out though, aren't you?

CW: Right. I'm sure there're various tribal jobs or farming, or whatever they do.

SM: Are you going back to Dartmouth in the fall?

CW: No. Spring term I'm going on a foreign study program to finish up.

SM: Where are you going then?

CW: Germany.

SM: So the balance of your work at Dartmouth is in Germany after you finish the three months at Sacaton, and that will enable you to graduate?

CW: Right.

SM: Do you speak German now?

CW: Yes.

SM: Do you speak Nez Perce too?

CW: No.
SM: Your dad does.

CW: Right. I don't know why he never taught us.

SM: You understand some of the words, of course?

CW: A couple, but not very many.

SM: When you go to Germany, what do you plan to do?

CW: I'll just be studying there at a university, taking classes.

SM: Where in Germany?

CW: Meintz. It's near Frankfurt.

SM: On the Rhine?

CW: Um hm.

SM: Pretty country.

CW: Yeah, it's beautiful.

SM: It'll be quite different from the Pima Reservation.

CW: Yes.

SM: From the desert to the Rhine. Well, it's great to have those kinds of experiences. And then, when you graduate you'll have a degree in what?

CW: German Literature, bachelor of arts.

SM: Bachelor of arts in German Literature?
CW: Yeah.

SM: Education?

CW: No.

SM: Just German Literature.

CW: Just that. I really don't plan to do anything with my German major. I plan to go to law school, and you don't have to have any particular major to go to law school.

SM: A Liberal Arts degree?

CW: You're right, and among my German classes I've taken history and other types of pre-law related courses, but they don't have a pre-law major as such.

SM: You're going to go to law school then after you get your degree from Dartmouth?

CW: I hope to. I haven't been accepted.

SM: It's a good idea to start working on acceptance early, isn't it? Where would you like to go?

CW: Arizona State.

SM: University?

CW: Right. Because they have the best Indian law program. They have seminars on tribal law, Indian law, things like that, and I'd like to continue working in tribal legal aid after I graduate, something
along those lines, and I think Arizona State has the best facilities.

SM: You would specialize in Indian law or law relating to Indians' activities, and so on?

CW: Right.

SM: And ASU has one of the best schools of this type in the country?

CW: From what I can tell from just reading through catalogues, it's the only school really, outside of the University of New Mexico, which even mentions Indian law and has Indian law seminars, that I could find.

SM: The University of California at Berkeley has 87 courses in various native American studies.

CW: Oh, I didn't know that. Oh, undergraduate. Yeah.

SM: I don't know what they would have for law school or graduate work, but ASU is a beautiful place in the first place, and then, this is where you live too.

CW: Right. That's another reason. It's closer to home, and I'm kinda tired of being away at school all the time.

SM: You are younger than the average college student. Was it a little difficult when you left and went away to the university?

CW: I didn't notice any difference. I mean, I just feel like one of them. It's only when my birthday comes around or something like that that people, you know, find out that I am younger, but it hasn't really made any difference.
SM: You look mature enough to be a college senior all-right, but, on the other hand, you have accomplished a great deal for the few years you've been living.

CW: Yeah.

SM: Have you run into any problems because of being a member of a minority group?

CW: I haven't really, but it's probably because when people look at me they don't think, "Oh, you're Indian."

SM: You don't think of yourself as a member of a minority group? Or doesn't that occur to you much?

CW: No, it doesn't really occur to me too much.

SM: Would your going to school here in Arizona, California, Mesa Community College, have helped in that connection?

CW: Probably. Here I didn't feel anything special at all. It was when I got to Dartmouth that I began feeling...

SM: Were the New Englanders... verbal?

CW: Well, just the people in the school. When I got there the first year, there were 20, 30 or 40 Indians, around somewhere in there, and we were having a lot of problems, academic problems, and problems with the school mascot--they had an Indian mascot--and things like that, and we kinda got out talking to other students a lot, and that's when you begin feeling the pressures being a minority group.

SM: This mascot. Do you mean for athletics?
CW: Yeah. It was the Dartmouth school mascot. The football jerseys and other jerseys had the head of an Indian on their shirts and their equipment.

SM: Did your group of people disapprove of that?

CW: Yeah, because, well, one of the main problems was that, like in the half times of the football games, some person, some non-Indian, would go out on the field dressed up, like half-naked, with all kinds of paint all over him, and go out screaming and whooping and stuff like that.

SM: Now this is the kind of thing that I think people are interested in knowing more about, because we get to a place where some people's feelings are being hurt, and this is what we're all hoping we can avoid by learning to understand each other better; and here, I imagine, innocently enough, they adopted the idea of an Indian mascot, but then the native American students didn't like it because of the way he did it?

CW: Right. Yeah, and I guess how they got it was that Dartmouth was originally set up to educate Indians, supposedly to Christianize. . . .

SM: When?

CW: 1776. And up 'till, you know, 1970 or so, only like five or six, ten Indians had graduated in all those 200 years, and so, it was kind of ironical that they would say they're set up for that, and then not get Indians there. But I found out the reason that the charter was set up like that, Eleazer Wheelock was the founder of the school, and he wanted to set up this school, and he didn't have enough money, so the only way he could get money was to go over to England and take this Indian with him--Sampson Ochem I think his name was--take him
over there and tell all the rich, noble people over there that they were setting up the school for Indians, Christianizing and educating them. In that way they got a whole bunch of money from the English people, and they came back to America and set up the school. At first they had a few Indians there, but they really didn't continue to educate them or, you know, try to enroll them.

SM: How many Indian graduates in all these years?

CW: Well, I would say ten, approximately.

SM: Only about ten?

CW: Yeah. I'm not sure of the exact number, but since 1970 or so there's been maybe fifteen, in addition to the ten.

SM: So you've accomplished more in that direction at least in the last four years than in the preceding two hundred.

CW: Yeah.

SM: What's the atmosphere like there as far as you're concerned? Do you like it?

CW: Oh, I don't mind it.

SM: No problems?

CW: No. Most of the people that I was friends with in the dorm and stuff like that were pretty nice, and they understood, and they weren't at all. ... I just didn't associate with the people who weren't sympathetic or didn't understand, you know, like, well ... a lot of athletes didn't really try to understand, you know; they just wanted to wear their symbol. And the real traditional people, the ones
whose fathers had gone there and whose grandfathers had gone there, and they were there, they were getting pressures from their parents and stuff, and they just wouldn't accept the fact that that Indian symbol wasn't right; and they're still kind of making a fuss about it, and the alums also come every year and make a fuss about why was the symbol abolished, and all that.

SM: It was abolished though?

CW: Yeah, officially, this year. It's called "The Big Green" now, and they use a pine tree which is nice; I mean, it's better than the Indian symbol.

SM: Yes. If they had been willing to use the Indian symbol and then carry it out in keeping with the ideas that your group had in mind, would that have been acceptable.

CW: Well, no, I don't think so, because somebody would always misuse it. You couldn't ever get the ideal symbol for them to use. The fact that you call it a mascot is like saying it's an animal or something, you know, not human.

SM: Yes, I see what you mean. Does it seem that we're putting too much emphasis on this idea of "Indian-ness," the mere fact of this interview?

CW: I don't quite understand, I guess.

SM: Well, are we making too much of the fact that some people are Indians and some people are not?

CW: I don't think so, no.

SM: Would you say, on the other hand, that the people have not made
enough of this kind of difference?

CW: Yeah, I think people are beginning to understand the difference more and more, I mean between Indians and.

SM: Well, you see, you and your friends resented the idea of the Indian mascot.

CW: Um hm.

SM: Do you resent me asking you about Indian things, Indian affairs?

CW: Oh no, because I think it's important for other people to listen to this tape, say, or talk to other Indians, and really understand the problems, because if they don't understand it they're going to be completely ignorant, and they just won't care, and it's important for them to care about it.

SM: It's important first to understand and then the solutions of any problems that may exist should come out of that.

CW: Right. Another point I'd just like to mention is that where I worked, the Choctaw Indian Reservation, their school was Choctaw Central High School, and they were the Indians, the Choctaw Central High School Indians, on their sports team, which they didn't mind. I mean, as long as they're all Indians, you know, that's perfectly all-right with them, I guess, and another thing is that you don't really like other people masquerading as Indians.

SM: Like the Washington Redskins?

CW: Yeah.

SM: (Laughter) That's a kind of a joke, isn't it?
CW: Yeah. (Laughter)

SM: You worked in Philadelphia, Mississippi, with the Choctaws for a while?

CW: Right. I worked there for three months in their legal aid office.

SM: When was that?

CW: It was a year ago. Let's see, from September through December, 1973.

SM: Did you get credit at school for that?

CW: No, I didn't get any credit. I got a stipend for it, and it was just an off-campus term where it was like a job, like any other job, only I was funded through a Dartmouth organization. It was like an internship.

SM: But then, when did you get your school work accomplished. Did you go to summer school?

CW: Yeah. I went to summer school this past summer, and I honestly don't understand exactly how it all worked out, but I know you have to have eleven terms of credits to graduate, which is thirty-three credits, and when I transferred I got nine, and I just built them up and it turned out that I could take fall term off, that fall term, and I can take this winter term off.

SM: And in the process you've taken the one term off at Philadelphia, Mississippi, and now you're going to take this next term off at Sacaton, Arizona?

CW: Right.
SM: And then, the next term in Germany.

CW: Um hm, but that's for credit. I get credit for that one.

SM: Tell me more about Philadelphia, Mississippi, if you will; what you did there, and what it was like.

CW: O.K. Well, I worked in the legal services office, and I originally went down there to work as a community legal education worker. I was supposed to set up programs and talk to the different Indian groups about their legal rights, so that they would use the legal services office. I would talk to them about different problems they might be having, legal problems, and then they would come in to the legal services office and talk to the lawyer, get them to help them out with any problems, and, in the process, well, we talked to different groups—the students and the adult groups—and I set up radio programs on the local radio station in both Choctaw and English, and those were aired. We had, I think, one minute spots where we'd just talk, say something about minimum wage violations or DWI, DUI drinking problems, various things like that that go over the radio, and we used to get some pretty good responses. People would come in saying they'd heard the program and found out that they weren't getting their legal rights.

SM: One of the instructors at our college is part Choctaw, and through him I've gotten their newspaper.

CW: Oh, uh huh. Choctaw Community News?

SM: Yes. And there was an article in it not too long ago about someone selling some kind of mouth wash.

CW: Yeah, antiseptic.
SM: And people drinking it for its alcoholic content?

CW: Right. Right.

SM: Were you there when that problem was going on?

CW: Oh yeah. Right. It's a dry county. There are seven communities, Choctaw communities, on the reservation. Most of them are in dry counties and some of them aren't, but the Indians would cross the county line to get liquor, come back, and the sheriff or the police, county officials, would be waiting on the other side of the line in the dry county, and they would be stopping any car with Choctaws in it, whether or not these Choctaws may have been across the line drinking, or just coming back from another city or something like that. They would stop every car, which is illegal, and then, well, a lot of times they'd stop them without reason, which is illegal, and a lot of times they would catch people with beer and things like that, and they would even search the car illegally, and then they'd take them off to jail. But the Choctaws wouldn't know that. I mean, they figure as long as they're guilty, you know, they're caught, there's nothing wrong with that. They didn't know about their rights.

SM: They accepted this?

CW: They accepted it, until now they're starting to understand that they can't just be stopped.

SM: And the sellers of this stuff, this antiseptic, even though they were probably quite aware of what it was going to be used for...

CW: Oh, yeah.

SM: Nothing was done about that?
CW: Right.

SM: It's a problem, though. How can you stop somebody from selling some antiseptic?

CW: Well, let's see. I don't know how much of this I should be saying, in fact, because a lot of it is pretty confidential, and I don't know if I should be saying any more about how we made them stop selling it; but, how long ago was that news article?

SM: Almost a year.

CW: O.K. Because we have taken action. I guess the winter after I was there they were beginning to take action against the company for selling this stuff, because what would happen is that when somebody would have antiseptic on 'em, and they'd be really drunk, the police would pick 'em up for being drunk, but they would not pick them up for possession of alcohol, which was ridiculous. Yeah, so they got around it that way, but we did take action on it, and it was a federal court, I think--well, federal officials were investigating it anyway and . . . let's see . . . I guess I won't say any more.

SM: The problem has been pretty much solved then?

CW: No, I don't think so, no. The problem is that right now, as far as I know, there is no legal service office there anymore because they ran out of funds, and we looked and looked, but we just couldn't find anybody to fund the office. The tribe wasn't rich enough, and we couldn't find any government sources or private sources, and so, as of October, the office was no longer in existence; and I correspond with a lawyer there, my ex-boss, and that's what he told me. I haven't heard from him within the past month or two.

SM: How are the Choctaws doing back there otherwise?
CW: Oh, when I was there I felt like they were progressing pretty well. They have their own housing authority; they own so much, or were in control of so many of their resources and agencies, like the housing authority, health work and youth counseling, things like that.

SM: Do they have a new hospital too?

CW: Yes, they just got a new hospital this past year. The old one was really a wreck, and it's right on the reservation too.

SM: The new one is?

CW: Yes. Right in the main community, not too far from the tribal offices.

SM: The old one wasn't?

CW: No, it was in town. The main community, Pearl River Community, is seven miles outside of Philadelphia, and the hospital was in Philadelphia, but now it's out in the Pearl River Community.

SM: How many communities are there?

CW: Seven.

SM: These are the Choctaws who did not go west to the Oklahoma territory then, back there in the 1830's?

CW: Right, right. They were all just hiding out, you know, in the swamp areas.

SM: And now they're a thriving group of communities?

CW: Right. They are having financial problems, but, considering, I think, you know, they're doing pretty well.
SM: How do most of them make a living?

CW: Well, some of them cotton cotton.

SM: Raise cotton?

CW: Yeah, some of 'em, or work in the fields and industry. In Philadelphia they work in the factories and things, or they have jobs with the tribal government, which is really good. What the tribal government has been doing is giving more and more jobs to the people themselves, the Choctaws, and letting them earn money that way. Instead of giving it to an outsider, a non-Indian, they would give it to their own tribal members, who are just as capable of doing it.

SM: O.K., Cathy, before we leave the Choctaws in Mississippi, what's your summation—did you like it, or was it a struggle, or how did it go anyway?

CW: I really enjoyed the work 'cause I was always constantly doing something, and I enjoyed the work I did, working with the Choctaws, investigating various legal problems, and it made me realize what I wanted to go into eventually as a career, as a tribal legal aid or along that line.

SM: This helped you make your decision to go into law with an accent on Indian law?

CW: Right.

SM: Good. You know a lot of people aren't fortunate enough to have experiences that help them make these decisions. O.K., then, let's go back to Dartmouth. You were the president of an association there. What is the name of it?

CW: It's called Native Americans at Dartmouth.
SM: And what's the membership of the group?

CW: Well right now it's varied, fluctuated from year to year, but right now it's about ten, I think.

SM: Do you only have native Americans in that association?

CW: Well no, it's not barred to other people; anybody can belong to it.

SM: What's your program or your purpose?

CW: Well, our purpose is just a student organization. We have a budget from the school just like any other student organization, and we can plan activities--we bring in speakers and other Indian leaders to come and talk to the community.

SM: Anything more you can tell me about your Native American Association? Is that the title of it?

CW: Native Americans at Dartmouth, NAD for short. We have a Native American Programs Office which we call NAP, and Native American Studies Department there, NAS, and I was a member on the Native American Council which we had there too, which was made up of our faculty advisor, student advisor, who's a dean of the college, the freshman dean, the Chairman of the Native American Studies, Michael Doris, and two, three students, and the head of Native American Programs, and that council was set up ... oh, and our counselor also, our Indian counselor. And that was set up to just handle any problems students might have. It's kind of a recommending body or council to higher-ups, like if they have some Indian-related problem and they want to know how the Indians feel about it, what they want done, they come to us and we made a recommendation, and generally they would follow our recommendation.
SM: Did your association, then, sort of spearhead this action on the mascot thing?

CW: Well no. Actually the council was not set up until a year ago, and before that it was the student organization that did that.

SM: You were active in the other student organizations too?

CW: Right. Native Americans at Dartmouth—that student organization was the one that started the thing against the mascot.

SM: Talking about Dartmouth and its original purpose—supposedly set up for the sake of educating Indians, and then has only educated a few over all these years, these 200 years—would you say that now with more students there that it is finally coming into its own?

CW: No, I don't think it is. When I first got there the program was at its peak—maybe thirty students, some in the med school, and then under-graduates, and since I've been there the past three years it's dwindled down to where we have maybe ten, and most of these are freshmen. The first year I was there a lot of students dropped out after the first year, or went to other schools—they just didn't like it—and then the next year people transferred or took off a year—the Indians did—to go to other schools. And then this year we have another set of freshmen, so that there really aren't that many students there anymore. And part of the problem is that, well, they bring in reservation kids, and they want them not to have their own community, not to continue to live the way they always have; they want them to mix in and become real Dartmouth students, which I don't even want to be, and I'm not from the reservation or anything, but I don't even want to be this traditional Dartmouth student—loyal to the school who loves it and all this jazz—because, well the school just wants to bring the Indians in and make them over into something
that they're not, and consequently students have left.

SM: If you had it to do over, would you do it any differently? For example, at ASU which is down the road a little ways, there are more Indian students than at Dartmouth. Would you have maybe chosen to go there, or do you feel that your experience at Dartmouth has been valuable?

CW: Oh, I'm not sorry that I went to Dartmouth at all, because it did give me the opportunity to go down to Mississippi—that job—and work there, and meet other Indians. I'm not sorry.

SM: And you still have your opportunity to go to ASU in law school, and so you can have the best of both.

CW: Yeah.

SM: Would you like to make any comment on the total situation across the country about the progress Indians are making, if any?

CW: Well, I think they had been the past two years. You know, Indians have been getting a lot of opportunities and advantages—school, more scholarships, things like that, more jobs opening up for them. But it almost seems as if the future trend may be to cut off these opportunities or advantages, because in a lot of the tribal situations now, the legal situations around the country, tribes are asking the government for help because, according to treaties, the government is the protector of the Indian against any unjust state actions.

SM: The federal government protects the Indians from states?

CW: The federal government from states, state governments, and it's
starting to be across the country now, or in various tribes, that when the tribe leaders call to the government, the federal government for help, they're out to lunch, so to speak, or they're not available. They're stopping their help, and Morton, in particular, the head of the Department of Interior, is unwilling to help the tribes. I mean, he's the one that should officially be telling the federal government, "Yes, we're going to step in here and protect the Indians in this action," and it's starting to be where he is refusing to do things like that, and I don't know if that's going to continue.

SM: Secretary of the Interior, Morton. He's non-Indian?

CW: Right.

SM: But the head of the BIA, the Bureau of Indian Affairs is ....

CW: He is Indian, I think. Yeah, Thompson I think his name is.

SM: Morris Thompson. From Alaska.

CW: Right. I don't know too much about him.

SM: He doesn't have enough authority, then maybe, to offset his boss's attitude?

CW: That could be, I don't know. I really don't know too much about what he's done. I guess he's kind of new, and, I don't know, I think it would be hard in his position to do much.

SM: What do you think of these activist groups around the country? According to a newspaper article, Marlon Brando is going to give forty acres to a group of Indians.
CW: Oh, really? Do you know where it was--California, or somewhere?

SM: Well, I don't remember. It was some place where he had this forty acre piece of land, and he was going to deed it over to a group of Indians, and he said also in the interview that he had some more land in Illinois in joint ownership with his sister, and ultimately his share of that would go to the Indians too. Well, that and AIM---you're familiar with AIM, the American Indian Movement? Anything you'd like to say about those things?

CW: I'll say how I feel. I don't particularly agree with their methods of getting things done, but I do know that there are a lot of people who are behind them and supporting them, a lot of Indians, and that's just how one group of Indians feels about things. And I would say I think that probably most of the AIM followers are people who really have been treated rawly, very poorly, all their life and really show it. And that might be one reason why I'm not so sympathetic with AIM, 'cause I've never really had any big problems with being an Indian, like, say people on the reservation who live near communities which really are prejudiced against them have had, and so, I don't know. I disagree with the way they're doing things, but I think it's probably . . . I mean, they're doing these things and they feel that this violence is right simply because of the way they have been treated and the type of violent acts that have been put upon them all their lives.

SM: In other words, if you and I had had those same experiences, maybe we'd feel the way they do?

CW: Right. Right. Yeah.

SM: It's very possible, isn't it?

CW: Yeah.
SM: Well, after your experience now at Sacaton, and then to Germany, and then back to ASU to law school, do you feel that you have an interesting background for yourself here and for your future?

CW: Yeah.

SM: It looks remarkably good to me compared to the average student who often doesn't have any particular purpose. But, you know now what your purpose is?

CW: Yes. I feel like I do.

SM: And ASU is the place you're going to study law?

CW: I hope to. Whether or not I get accepted is another thing.

SM: Well, maybe you can let us know more about that, and also your experience at Sacaton in the fall.

CW: Um hm. Right.

SM: So thanks very much, Cathy Wilson, and I will look forward to seeing you again.