

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

North American Indians Project

Personal Experiences

O. H. 819

ROBERT T. HOSICK

Interviewed

by

Jay L. Toth

on

May 31, 1979

ROBERT T. HOSICK

Bob Hosick is fifty-seven years old and is the executive director of the American Indian Center in Akron. He was born in Cordova, Alaska, a Tlingit Indian. He came here to escape being put in an orphanage. He went one year of high school, then enlisted in the Army. He finished high school in the service. He went to college at Ripon College in Wisconsin. Later he went to engineering school, but became a trainer for a canine troop.

After he was discharged from the service, he came to Akron. He worked at Goodyear Aircraft, then worked a second shift at Goodrich. Once he got enough money together, he opened up his own truck repair business. He found that his business did extremely well. He passed as Jewish, because the public has an opinion that Indians are not to be trusted.

He started into Indian affairs in 1969, because he was the only Indian business in Akron. Thus, Indian people began coming to him with their problems. Since the nearest Indian Center was Cleveland, he helped start the present Akron Indian Center.

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INTERVIEWEE: ROBERT T. HOSICK
INTERVIEWER: Jay L. Toth
SUBJECT: Alaska, recognition, education
DATE: May 31, 1979

T: This is an interview with Mr. Robert T. Hosick for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by Jay L. Toth, at 1604 Spencer Avenue, Akron, Ohio, on May 31, 1979, at 6:30 p.m. The project is North American Indians.

You can start by giving me some of your family background like grandparents.

H: I had two Indian grandparents on my mother's side, both Tlingit Indians. My grandparents on my father's side were both Scotch extractions so that makes me half Tlingit, half Scotch. I was born and raised in Cordova, Alaska. I was born April 22, 1924. I came down to the lower forty-eight states at the age of seventeen.

T: What prompted you to come down?

H: My mother died when I was born. My father never remarried. When he died they wanted to put us four children in an orphanage so we all took off in different directions and that's how I came down here.

T: What were your experiences then after you got down here?

H: I went to one year of high school, federal way. Then I enlisted in the Army. That was December 7, 1942. After I enlisted in the Army, they shipped me all the way to Georgia, Camp Tocon, Georgia--from Alaska to Georgia. From Georgia they sent me up to California, Pittsburgh, California. From there I went to Fort Lewis, Washington. At Fort Lewis, Washington somebody decided I should finish high school. So I finished high school while I was in the service under what they called the Private Pete Program. Shortly thereafter, somebody decided I should go to college so while I was in the Army they shipped me to Ripon

College, in Ripon, Wisconsin. I did not have a study habit so I blew it. I flunked out. Shortly thereafter they sent me to Michigan State under what they called an accelerated program. They wanted us to be production engineers. Instead of a four year course, you went seven days a week and it was a two year course. When I finished a year there, they moved us to the University of Michigan where I attended for a year and graduated.

Instead of making us engineers they sent us to the infantry school for NCO's, noncommissioned officers. So then I started working in the infantry. I rose in rank from private up through staff sergeant. I was in cadre with the 65th and 69th Infantry Divisions. From there I did go to the infantry school for officers and graduated from there. I was reassigned to the 69th Infantry Division in Texas. From there I was reassigned to the Canine Corps in Nebraska. I was commanding officer of the 50th Infantry Scouts which trained war dogs for the war effort. We trained teams of dogs and men. There were five platoons. The other four platoons consisted of fourteen men with fourteen dogs plus a second lieutenant in command. We were forty men, forty dogs, twelve vehicles. We were the replacement training organization for the Canine Corps. We also served as a propaganda unit. We would parade in California as 6th Army, just returning from the Pacific; we would parade in Chicago as another organization just returning from Europe. We paraded all over the country--strictly propaganda with battle streamers, anything you could think of. We had different patches every time to give the public the impression that there were hundreds upon hundreds of war dogs and war dog troops. In actual fact--I gave you the figures--that's how many of us there were.

When the war was over they decided they wouldn't let me out because they had disbanded the other four organizations and mine was the only one left. So they kept me on in the service. Finally, I raised enough problems for them that they reassigned me. I was a schoolteacher teaching phonetics, biphonetics, to the prisoners in the big top in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas--military prisoners, bringing them up to a fifth grade level. From there I was transferred to Ashland, Kentucky Federal Prison for nonviolent people. I did the same thing. Bootleggers, one thing or another like that, and I brought them up to the fifth grade level by phonetics. I was discharged from there and came to Akron.

In Akron I went to work for Goodyear Aircraft for six hours a day, and B. F. Goodrich for six hours a day. I was working two shifts. When I got enough bucks ahead I went into business for myself. I went into the truck repair business. From the truck repair business I've graduated into the Indian business.

T: When did you start going into that?

- H: I got in the Indian business in 1969. The reason I got into it was . . . It was apparent that I was the only Indian businessman in the Akron area. Most of the Indians who had problems would come and see me and I would solve their problems. It developed out of that. It got to be a full-time thing just handling Indian problems.
- T: All right. What were some of the problems that you dealt with?
- H: Oh, discrimination, lack of jobs, no food, utility bills, anything you could think of I handled it. In those days there wasn't an Indian organization in the Akron area to assist anyone. The only one in existence was in Cleveland.
- T: It was started in 1957.
- H: You're talking about Cleveland?
- T: Yes.
- H: Yes, they were in business long before anybody else.
- T: Do any of the problems stand out in your mind that you can recall?
- H: You mean some special type of problem?
- T: Yes.
- H: Yes. A special type of problem that we have is the way the welfare system treats the Indian person. The average Indian person is an undereducated person through no fault of their own. As a result they either have the bottom line jobs on the average or no jobs at all. Now, Indian people are very tight insofar as family is concerned. And many of our people who are on welfare or who couldn't get on welfare lost their children due to your court systems. Now I got very active in fighting these matters in court because, in our view, the white people have no authority to remove Indian children from their parents. As evidence to this there was a law passed just this past year where it is totally illegal for any city, state, county, or federal court to remove Indian children from their parents. It must be done by the Indian people themselves. So, this is a battle that had been won. I just received the laws last week as a matter of fact.
- T: Interesting thinking. I was just thinking about the Indian people at Wounded Knee.
- H: Well, Wounded Knee was what brought the Indian people together insofar as they have got together. This has always been our weakness. People on the outside look at us all as being Indians. If we would do the same thing ourselves, we would be much stronger. We're just like Europeans. Europeans instead of

calling themselves Europeans, call themselves German, Belgian, Spanish, French, whatever. The American Indian people are the same way. They call themselves Sioux, Navahos, or Tlingits like myself. We would separate ourself from the whole. What we have to do is to totally unite as a people and forget this tribal stuff and make it secondary. We're Indian people first, tribal members second. The way it is now, people say, just like I did, "I'm a Tlingit. I'm an Indian; I'm a Tlingit Indian and that's the way we're going to have to go," and this is what Wounded Knee started. Wounded Knee started "to hell with this tribal business; We're Indians and we'll get together and form a united front."

T: Did you have any indication that this was going to take place?

H: Did I have any indication? No, as a matter of fact, I lived all of my life as an Indian person until I went into business for myself. Then I found out it was a bad thing to be an Indian businessman because the white and black communities are conditioned against Indian people from the very beginning of life. When they show the little coloring books to the kids, they'll show a little black kid playing ball and a little white kid rolling a hoop but they'll show an Indian kid either with a bow and arrow or a tomahawk. All these little things are imprinted in the white and black people's mind. Pretty soon subconsciously, they distrust Indian people. They say we are savages. They say we can't be trusted; we're not honest. All these things are in there whether you know it or not. They are there.

When you become an Indian businessman and approach a potential customer, he rejects you or tends to reject you because he has this image in the back of his head. Now I found this out the hard way because I went into the truck repair business and the field was wide open in those days. Yet, I got very few customers because I was saying I was an Indian person. I did notice when I would go into those places the people would say, "Oh, look at the big, fat Jew." So pretty soon I started letting it slide that I was--let people assume that I was Jewish--and they have just the opposite imprint of Jewish people. Jewish people are honest, trustworthy, industrious, stick together, good businessmen, so I was overloaded with business. I ended up with three truck repair shops in the Akron area and one in Pittsburgh. Pretty soon I started thinking that way myself, after you do it for years. But when Wounded Knee happened, that's what brought me again out of the bushes and I redeclared myself. I dropped out of the truck repair business and went totally into helping Indian business--teaching people not to do like I did, but to be proud of who they are. That was only for a short period of my life that I forgot who I was and that was in order to get by and raise a family. It is true. I want you to send any Indian person you know that looks like an Indian into some place and try to get their business and see what they tell them.

T: Were you involved in any way with Wounded Knee?

H: I was not. I wanted to become involved. When it happened then I got really shook up and . . . I was outraged, let me put it that way. I wanted to do something. My wife said, "Hey, you have two kids and me here. You go out there and get killed, what are we supposed to do?" We had several debates about the matter. Finally, she won in that regard. But we did sit back here and drum up supplies to send, but that was as far as I got involved.

T: How did you go about doing that?

H: Drumming up supplies?

T: Yes, and getting it there?

H: Oh, that was no problem. There was no real problem there. There were people from Akron who got into the act and went out there with ambulances to help. We would move stuff that way. There were all kinds of people who left the Akron area to try and help and when they got there they were rebuffed by the U. S. Marshals. We raised money, myself and thousands of others, to hire helicopters and make helicopter drops, which was done. All I was was a supportive person back here.

T: What do you feel about the outcome of Wounded Knee?

H: The outcome of Wounded Knee was a positive thing for the Indian people. It was a negative thing for the white people. It was positive insomuch that it brought to the other Indian people's eyes the fact that we could stand up and be heard and we could make change by uniting. But where it was negative was this huge force of U. S. Marshals. Normally there are two or three U. S. Marshals in a whole state. They normally serve papers and summons for a federal court, and yet at Wounded Knee here appeared several thousand troops who were supposedly U. S. Marshals. They weren't serving papers, they were driving tanks and half tracks, flying helicopters, firing machine guns, and the white population didn't even pick this up. Where the hell are all these U. S. Marshals coming from? How come they know how to do all this stuff? How come they operate as a military unit instead of a police unit? And so this was very negative as far as I was concerned. The Indian people picked it up. Where did all these people come from? That question hasn't been answered to this day.

T: Yes.

H: If you stop and think about it, how many U. S. Marshals are there in the state of Ohio? You might have one for each federal district and he might have an assistant, but that's it. When you have over a thousand men shooting over two and a half million rounds and using military equipment, this makes you wonder. Is this another

military service we have? Is it a force that can be used against any insurrection, or any group of people who disagree with the government? Indian people are not out to overthrow the government as such. Indian people are trying to advise the government that we do expect them to live up to the treaties that they have written with us and have been neglecting and breaking for all these years and we do expect them--since they recognize the fact that we are a nation within a nation--to live up to those treaties. They recognize this fact by writing treaties with cities, counties, states, or islands. They write them only with sovereign governments. They write them with Canada; they write them with Vietnam; they write them with Russia and they write them with the American Indian people. So this in itself indicates that the federal government of the U. S. does know that we are sovereign people and they also recognize this fact by letting us have our own court systems, by having our own leaders, and by having the ability to tax. We have all of these rights and all we're saying is, "Okay, you are saying this. Now live up to the treaties that you have written with us." And by God, just because we disagree with what they say doesn't make us a bunch of Communists.

Probably one of the most interesting experiences I had was not as an Indian person but just as a person. I was shown the psychology of people's minds. I was working for Goodyear Aircraft, Lake Division. Some people were laid off and others of us were moved into the main plant. I sat around for three weeks--didn't have a thing to do, nothing. So one day the boss over all production control--material handling control, tool control--told me to go over to wheel and brake division and assist the superintendent over there. He said, "We have to do something with you. Look busy!" So I went over there and I sat by the superintendent's desk and talked to him all day, asked him questions. "How do you do this? What do we do here?" All this stuff made him very, very nervous. The second day he came in and he was very haggard. He hadn't slept all night. We went through the same thing again because I was trying to find out what to do. What could I help do? His prime function was to supervise the machine shop, supervise the tool cribs, supervise receiving and shipping, and toolmaking for wheel and brake division. So the third day he didn't come in. I thought he was sick so my boss said, "Well, see what you can do. Sit there and fake it if you have to, but do what you can." So I did. And the following day the guy didn't come in. He didn't come in all week. He didn't come in for two weeks. He never did call in. About two and a half weeks later, he did come in. He went to our boss and confessed to him that he had been stealing from the company for all the years that he was over there. What happened was when I came over there he had such a guilt ridden conscience that . . . He thought I was a hatchet man that they had sent over there to check him out. And because he was doing all this stealing, it got the best of him and he made a confession. When he first went to work there and saw the system, what he had done was set up two tool companies to make tools but

they existed only on paper. Since he controlled shipping, receiving, and the tool crib amongst the other things he controlled, when the engineering department sent down a blueprint for a wheel, he would order tools that weren't needed; he would order them from these dummy companies. Then after a month or two he would show them received in shipping, received in the storeroom and send the invoices through and the company would pay. He had been doing this for years and years and years, probably ripped them off for over a million bucks. He thought he was caught and he went and confessed.

As a result, they didn't have anybody else trained so I became superintendent of wheel and brake division. This is no bull. The word got out that I was there as a hatchet man. "You look out for Bob Hosick." Everybody believed it. It was talked about so much that all the working people thought it. All the people I was working with thought it. All the people above me thought it. This guy is a hatchet man for somebody. So pretty soon, they started using me for a hatchet man. They would send me into a place and clean it out. Then I got to be a real honest-to-goodness hatchet man and nobody knew who I worked for. When it came time for wheel and brake to shut down because we lost the contract, they laid off everybody but me. Everybody but me! I sat there for several months without a single cotton-picking thing to do. My own boss was afraid of me; everybody was afraid of me. It hadn't started out that way at all. It was just something simple and innocent and it just shows you the psychology of people's minds: They see something happen and they hear a rumor and they tie it all together and pretty soon it is a fact. A little later on it did become a fact. But that was probably one of the most interesting exercises in psychology that I had ever seen. It was really fantastic.

T: You had the Longest Walk last year.

H: Yes.

T: Do you have anything to relate on that?

H: No. I didn't participate in the walk itself because I'm a heart patient and I can't do things like that. But I did join it in Washington and it was a great experience. Everybody will tell you it accomplished a lot. I think it accomplished very little because on the whole we were ignored by everyone other than ourselves. We had Mohammed Ali; we had Stevie Wonder; we had Dick Gregory and Marlon Brando. We had a multitude of stars put on a fund raising for us and the only people that came were Indian people. There were no white people who came to support us. The support we received was from ourselves. So that tells us something about the negative attitude of the general population to the Indian people and that's all.

T: Right now in Congress there are a lot of, let's say, the start of anti-Indian bills.

H: Oh, there are a ton of them. The American Indian Equal Rights Bill or the Equal Opportunity Bill and all these things that in actual fact strip us of what we have. Are these the bills you're talking about?

T: Right. What do you think prompts these bills?

H: What prompts them?

T: Yes.

H: Two things. In the west and on the west coast, the white population with the blinded eye of federal state justice, have been overriding Indian treaties for over a hundred years. The Indians had the right to fish in certain places, to do certain things and they had been aced out of these rights. Nobody had taken it to court, they had just been pushed away until they no longer could enjoy their rights. So when it was finally taken to court and the Indians did win their right to fish in the Columbia and their right to fifty percent of the catch of the other fishermen, then there was a tremendous backlash from the fishermen and from the white people. Now they were getting stabbed and they were starting to feel how it feels to get it up the butt. Indians have been taking this for a long time and the whites don't like to take it. So here we have all the fishermen on the west coast against us.

The Indian people in Tacoma, Washington have opened smoke shops all over the county, and particularly in the city of Tacoma. Since it is their right to sell products without state taxes on it, they have gone into business and are selling cigarettes and gasoline with no state tax. Now that undermines the white merchant and the white merchant is screaming. In Michigan, when the Indian fishing rights were reasserted on the lakes up there, this hurt white sport camp owners and it hurt white fishermen. These people are now against us because all these years they've been hurting us. Now the shoe is on the other foot and they're bitching like hell. On the reservations, eighty percent of the untapped resources in this country are on the Indian reservations. Now the white population is hurting so they say, "Jesus Christ, here's all this stuff on the Indian reservations, let's take it," just like they've done in the past. Now we're resisting this time. That's where the difference is. There isn't an Indian that's going to stand by and let the whites steamroll them again. No way is this going to happen. No way. We will fight if necessary.

T: Papers, newscasts, and the whole bit say that these bills are ten years into the future before being passed. How do you feel about that?

- H: I feel just like I said. They had better not EVER get passed. I don't intend to sound like an activist, but I'm a firm believer in Indian rights. Since we are nations of people there's nothing that says we can't raise our own troops. There's nothing that says we can't equip our own troops. I think you'll find on most reservations that people are willing to stand up and fight for what is theirs now. They have been stabbed so long and there's so little left that once they grab this, there's nothing. Then we are Indians of what?
- T: Presently most of the tribal chiefs, tribal leaders, on the big reservations, are either corrupt or they're doing things for their own benefit.
- H: Certainly.
- T: And that undermines the whole concept.
- H: I'll agree with you. This is probably very true but just look at it like it is. Indian people haven't had any money so when they get some they're going wild. The black people did the same thing when they were coming up. There are still some of them doing it. They were poor people. A lot of money was coming through. They would never have had any so they were ripping some off. But if we can stay with it until our people get past this stage . . . It isn't going to last forever. When people see other ones blatantly ripping things off then they will arise--people that are more idealistic and less material. Just like in my own corporation I see my representatives running around in \$200 suits. They don't have one, they have three or four. They're all driving fine cars. They ride around in a Lear jet. I know they don't make that kind of money. So you have to make several choices. I would much rather see an Indian ripping off my corporation than a white person if somebody has to rip it off. They'll finally get full and start getting down to business. But in no way are any of the programs designed to help the poor Indian. There isn't any program including the Indian programs that are designed to help the poorest of the poor. There's nothing to provide employment. There's nothing to start Indian businesses. There is nothing to start Indian factories--none of these things--and this is what it is going to take eventually to do it.
- T: Yes. One of the government's ways of undermining things, although it doesn't say, is to biologically eliminate the Indians.
- H: Oh, absolutely.
- T: Intermarriages. Like on the Allegheny Reservation, lease the land to whites. Once the land is leased to them, the whites are planted there like a seed.
- H: Yes, you can't stop it. Once you open the gates they're in.

T: Do you feel that may be the biggest threat to the Indians and if so how would you control it?

H: Well, some of the . . . If we're going to survive as an ethnic people--and we should survive as an ethnic people--the only way we can do it is by forming communities of our own, our own people mixed with each other. Bad as reservations are, that's all we have. It is real estate so the only answer as far as I'm concerned is factories on reservations--not white factories, factories managed by Indians. This old bullshit where the Mohawk comes out and sets up a rug factory and has a white superintendent and white secretaries and white foremen, and a white supervisor, and then expects Indian people to work for him is a bunch of bullshit. We have to work our people and move the ones that have the ability up in the world so that they can take over positions like this. But our whole problem is just like myself, when I first started. Only through luck did I get an education. Had I not received that education I would have been some fat, old man sitting on a reservation drinking wine because I had nothing else to do. So the only answer is education and training.

T: What was your education like in Alaska?

H: Oh, well, my education was very unpleasant. They had two school systems in Alaska; they still do. They have the federal school system and what was then called the territorial school system. The territorial school system was for everyone. The federal school system was for Indians. Now down in the federal school they taught you how to make copper ashtrays and bracelets and all this bullshit. The territorial school system was just like here.

If Indian people went to the territorial school system . . . You were discouraged from it in the first place. They didn't want you and if your parents decided that was where you were going to go, you had every right to go. But you put up with heavy discrimination by both the teachers and the students, especially the students. They were very race conscious up there and so we had a pretty rough time. We were never invited to participate in any plays, in any teams, basketball or baseball, or any group functions. We were totally left out of everything. The school-teacher would make a big thing out of running a comb through our hair every day to see if we had lice--all these kinds of things. My personal feelings about it were very poor.

But when I came down here it was different because most of the people had never seen an Indian before. When I went to Ripon, Wisconsin they were all Swedish and Norwegian people. I probably screwed more women there than I ever did any place in my life because they always wanted to try. "Look at that dark-complexioned guy over there. Oh, I want to try him." That's why I got kicked out. That's what I spent all of my time doing, chasing women.

(Laughter) In all honesty, it was twofold. I was getting back at the white bastards by screwing all his sisters. That was the thought in those days. I've changed since then, but we all go through lots of changes in our lives.

T: Since you're from Alaska, I'll bring up the point of parks. How do you stand about the national parks?

H: It's the biggest rip off against the . . . See, they gave you a black and white picture is what's the problem. They didn't leave a middle picture. If you were with the conservationist, you went for parks, that way nobody could come in and cut the timber and mine the coal and drill for the gas and all this stuff. If you were the other way, you threw it all open and let everybody come in and exploit it. There was no middle ground. My hometown is a case in point. Cordova, Alaska when I left it had 1,200 people in it. Tusach National Forest came up to one of its borders, has an ocean in front and a lake in the back so that was three borders that were closed. The city couldn't grow in those directions. I went up there this past summer. It has grown up to 3,000 people. It couldn't absorb ten more because under this new park business, the fourth side is now bordered by a park and the town has no where to go, no where. They can't expand out into the ocean. They can't expand into the lake. They can't expand into Tusach National Forest and they can't expand into this new area. They just ran it right up the city limits. There's no place to go. Now this may sound extreme but that's how it is and as a result 60' x 160' lots were selling for \$25,000 last summer because there isn't any land left. Here you are . . . My hometown is so remote that the only way in is by air or by boat. There are no roads in or out and yet it's locked there forever. Nothing can happen. It's ridiculous, but I think that was the basic problem, they didn't leave any middle area. You were either pro-opening everything up or pro-closing everything down. There was no "let's allow a little for expansion," none of that.

T: I think we're leaving out something too. What about the native people that live there. There have been no treaties to say that this belongs to you or it doesn't belong to you.

H: You're getting into the Alaskan Native Claims Act. Most people aren't aware, but the United States never did own Alaska, never. All they bought from the Russians was the Russian's claim to Alaska. The Alaskan natives have pushed this view ever since the United States took it over.

Eleven years ago the native people won. You couldn't build a house; you couldn't build a road; you couldn't do a goddamn thing in Alaska because all of the land belonged to the native people not to the U. S. government. We took them to court and beat them. So that's when they came through with \$5 billion to pay off the Alaskan natives for two-thirds of the land.

Alaskan natives then were allowed a selection of property-- 150 acres per native and so many dollars a year. I get \$330 and some a year. It was supposed to have been \$10,000 a year but by the time they. . . They had little kickers in there such as: Any federal monies that had ever been expended on native people would be deducted from that amount. In other words, welfare, roads, all this stuff was all deducted from the settlement so we ended up with nothing. One-thirtieth of what we were supposed to get is what we got. What did they do now on the land? Since I no longer live there I didn't get any. All I am entitled to is the money. But people in the Tusach Corporation got 150 acres apiece to live there. Nobody anywhere said that the land had to be in one piece. So they outfoxed us again. What they did with the Tusach natives was give them 150 acres, but in fifty acre plots. Now you may own fifty acres over here and 200 miles over there you own another fifty acres. 150 miles over there you own another fifty acres. Well there's no way in God's world you can operate those three places of property and that's the whole idea. They want you to sell them, see?

T: Yes.

H: You can't trade. You can't shuffle around with some other guys and get theirs and give them. . . That's illegal. You're forced to sell. So instead of 150 acres you got fifty. So that's what I think of the Alaska Land Claims and that last deal my own congressman, Congressman Siedenling, assisted in putting through Congress.

There hasn't been an Indian born that hasn't been raped in one way or another. It will continue unless Indian people start standing together as a block of people and say, "Look you, that isn't right and we're not going to stand for it."

According to the 1970 census, there are 124 Indian people in Akron, Ohio, yet it's very peculiar. They have 523 admitted Indians in the Akron school system. ANA, office of native American programs, has advised me there's 3,295 living within the city. But by undercounting the native Americans they don't have to put any assistance in there for native Americans. In most CETA programs it will tell you straight out that Indian people from a tribe of 10,000 or more are not allowed to participate. That is why we have this little, crazy CETA program of our own. Indian people, theoretically, are not allowed to draw food stamps. The government is being sued for that right now. Most people here don't realize that so we do slide our people through and get them food stamps. But Indian people are not qualified to receive food stamps. The budget on CETA programs in the county you live, like in Portage County, last year they were over \$11 million. And yet to provide the same services for Indian people. . .

Out of all the Indian people you've met, how many trained Indians have you met?

T: College trained? Not a whole lot.

H: Not a whole lot. You had better believe it. That's our downfall. That is it. But at the same time we have to watch ourselves so that when we do go to college we don't become brainwashed and become white people with brown skins. It's a son-of-a-bitching, tight line you have to walk.

The whole thing is basically white people think they are supreme. They'll say, "Look at that man. We're forever giving Indians things." As far as I'm concerned, what the hell is so great about being white? I'm who I am and I sure as hell don't want somebody to mistake me for someone else. I don't want them to mistake me for black or white. I'm an Indian and hopefully I will remain so.

We don't have the same aims in life as the white people. It doesn't take as much to satisfy us. We don't have to have all the material things that white people think they have to have to be happy. We can exist on much less because all these things that they hold so near and dear to them are not that great. Religion, they look at us . . . We have a religion as you are aware of, a very good religion that has served us for thousands upon thousands of years and yet they will say, "Look at those savages out there. We had better go convert those goddamn people." They say, "We'll send our missionaries out there and help them out." But how do they help? We were taught, when I was a kid, that Christianity was a great deal; it was a thing of brotherly love. You're supposed to help the lost sheep and bring him up and all that stuff but they don't do that. They go out there and convert or attempt to convert as if what we have is not good enough. But it has served us well. Why isn't it good enough? I can go on and on and on with this kind of stuff.

T: I've come across two views: The very traditional religions and that which Christianity is the major religion.

H: Well, here's the whole thing. What is so goddamn great about Christianity? What is so outstanding about it? The Moslems managed to survive and so do the Buddhists and so do the Indians.

T: Here's one. Not that I believe it or practice it, but my girlfriend is a reborn Christian.

H: Fine.

T: She says, "We got a book." I say, "Fine, you have a book."

H: I know. That's what I'm saying.

T: And I say, "So, the Aztecs had books and you burned them."

H: Yes. The thing about it is, living like I do, I'm living in a

white community with white neighbors. I work with some white people. Politicians I deal with are white or black. What are black people today? They're white people with black skins. They have the same desires, go to the same churches, buy the same kind of houses. It takes the same things to satisfy them. So when you live like this you have to shift gears and when you're with white and black people you think like a white person and then when you're with Indian people you're yourself. And that's how it has to be.

T: There tends to be a trend where blacks want to be like whites but the whites don't want the blacks to be . . .

H: That's right.

T: But the whites want the Indians to be like them.

H: Right.

T: And the Indians don't want to.

H: Right. And the blacks look on us as if we were white folks. And the white folks look on us like we're something . . . Who knows what? But it's a very complicated situation so each thing you get into you have to play it by ear because after all, let's be honest, today the way we are, we could not survive without help from the federal government. And what is help from the federal government is help from the white and black taxpayer. That's what it is. So as long as we're receiving their help, we can't very well wish for their downfall, until we are up on our own feet, which will take a couple of generations anyway.

T: Interesting situations, I have blue eyes but I'm dark. This lady says to me, "How was Florida?" What would you have said?

H: What would I say? Well you know, my problem . . . The only real problem that I know of that I have is a very, sharp tongue. I get hot under the collar real quick but it's gone as fast as it comes. First of all, I'm not discriminated against because I don't allow anyone at any time or place to discriminate me. It has been tried and in the past it did work but it doesn't anymore. I'm sure I would have cut their water off depending upon who was around. If they hadn't said it loud enough for everybody to hear, if it would have been a female, I would say, "Hey lady, \$20 for tonight is just too damn much," or something to that effect. I would cut them off.

This is another problem we have with urban Indian people. It's not just Indians; it could be Spanish; it could be Mexican. It could be anything of these things. Well, what the whole thing boils down to is this: When you go into a classroom today, it's basically half white, basically half black and you might have that one Indian or Spanish or Mexican or whatever he may be.

Now, who is it safe for all the kids to take their aggressions out on? They don't want to fight with a black as long as that other one is available over there because they'll start a big ruckus. So they go over and beat the shit out of the Indian kid because who's there to defend him? Nobody. Who is it safe for the teacher to take her aggressions out on if she feels bad because she didn't get a piece of ass last night? That Indian kid over there. So, now we monitor the schools. Guys like myself go into those goddamn places and if they're mistreating the Indian children in any way we'll get their ass. There's no question about it. We don't stand for individual picking out of an Indian kid. We don't want that kid put in the position where he will have to deny who he is and say, "I'm white or I'm black." He wanted to be an Indian and we want him to be an Indian. We don't expect him to have any undue peer pressure nor pressure from the authorities in the school. Now, this is just starting. This is the prime of it. We just started this in the last seven months. So all that has happened before we had any control. We knew it was happening. My own two kids had it happen but that doesn't mean it has to happen anymore. The people advise us, we stop it. If we have to take them to court we will. If we can solve it by talking to people we'll do that. Whatever road we have to take, we'll take it.

T: I don't really have any questions lined up now.

H: Okay.

T: You're free if you have anything you want to express.

H: No, I think I've talked just about all of it. It was a pleasure.

T: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW