

American Indian Oral History Collection
Transcript Record

Tribe: Navajo

Clan:

Tape Number: 270 side 2 ^{Nov 21} ~~Dec~~ 1969

Narrator or Event: Anonymous Navajo Woman, Student of University
of Arizona

Second Narrator:

Interviewer: Anna Boyd + Irene Silberman

Locale:

Subjects: ~~Opinions re. Indian Education~~
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MISCELLANEOUS

December 1969

Anonymous Navajo Female from University of Arizona

By BOYD and SILENTMAN

Side two

Today is November 21st.....I am interviewing a Navajo that goes to the University of Arizona in Tucson.....

Q. The first question that I would like to ask, is what do you think of BIA schools.....are they good or bad?

A. Well, I can answer this in one statement.....and you can interpret it anyway that you want to.....If I had a child at school age and if I lived way out in the boon docks on the Navajo reservation.....and no running water and in a hogan and all that.....if I had only one choice for my child's education.....I would never send them to a BIA school, boarding school....I would rather keep them home and teach them myself.....and I think... that answer will, my answer now will answer the next two questions that you are going to ask me.....they are about BIA schools too.....

Q. Alright.....what do you think about the teachers the BIA recruit??

A. You mean the teachers.....according to your question there.....well, old white ladies.....gee, that is a neat question.....some BIA students must have asked you that.....you must have thought that, that was a neat question.....neat goes beyond cool.....Oh darn, I don't know.....I am the product of Indian schools, too, but I don't know, I think they do recruit old Indian women.....I mean.....how about old Indian mothers.....in a sense.....old Indian lovers.....in a sense.....yeah.....oh, gosh.....

Q. Some complain that BIA teachers are often a bunch of old ladies.....and that they don't know about their subjects.....and they don't care about the students.... is this true or not??

A. Well, to rephrase my answer.....do I have a second place, A bunch of old ladies, huh?Well, I am or I can speak from experience.....is that what you want me to do??

Q. Yeah.....

A. There are.....way back when in 1908 when I was in the Indian school.....there were a bunch of old ladies there and some people said that they were beyond admission into a regular public school....They were too old to teach in public schools and that they, their only escape or their only place to earn money was to go to the BIA Indian schools because they would hire anybody for the Indians.....but I don't know if that is true or not....but.....

Q. How about the ones here?

A. Well, there is this old bitty there and her name.... I think her name was Willey.....and I forgot her last name.....but.....

Q. How about your.....because of your personal experience about going to dfederal schools.....in your opinion, do you think that the teachers that you had didn't show or know their subjects or that they really didn't care about, about Navajo culture, etcetera.....

A. Well, most of them were old people.....and they were just interested in getting through the day..... and it is not a question of whether they cared about us.....or if they knew their subject matter, they just wanted to have some source of income, you know, and they were just tired all the time, you know.....

Q. How about, do you think that graduates from BIA schools or federal schools.....are prepared for college or, and university work/?????????

A. Well, //.....it depends upon what you are prepared for, just like in any other schools, well, BIA schools don't they tend not to push their students, you know, for high academic standards.....and they let them go.....get by, kind of like patting you on the shoulder and say, well, that is alright, that is alright, you will still make it, you know.....and I think that is their kind of their attitude....like I hate to use ths word.....pater-
nalism.....it just doesn't entail what I feel and want to say.....but I guess that is the only word that you can use now.....and I hope that nobody will

misinterpret this.....anyway, you just can't help any-
 one by just letting them get by with things.....and
 I think that BIA schools have a tendency to do this.....
 they have good intentions but I don't think that they
 just don't know how to do it because they feel kind of
 guilty about being white.....cause, they have to help
 these Indians.....

- Q. Well, do you think that BIA schools and federal schools
 should remain on the reservation?
- A. Do you want me to answer that yes or no?
- Q. Yeah.....
- A. NO.....
- Q. Well, this might be elaborating on the same question,
 but why?
- A. Yes.....Might be elaborating?? You want me to elaborate
 on that?
- Q. Yes.....
- A. Well, to begin with, it goes back to my original answer
 about BIA schools.....I just don't think that their
 whole educational system fits with our culture at all...
 because they just don't know how to.....I don't know...
 identify with you, you might say.....
- Q. How do you think.....what role do you think that the
 University should take....? In education of the Indian
 students.....you know, this is along the line of the
 American Indian studies.....
- A. Do you mean Universities in general?? Or specific univer-
 sity??
- Q. In general.....
- A. Okay, well, I saybecause I am.....I have been
 college educated and all of this crap.....well, I think
 that Indians should face it for themselves/.....
 it is a pretty strong statement.....I should support

that myself....but here are alot of students back from the reservation, lived on the reservation all of their lives who need some kind of a buffer to get into college, or for the university to help them....but if they were intelligent enough and if they knew how to get along in society.....then I think this statement just kind of goes from one extreme to the other.....because you say that the university shouldshould the university have special cirriculum for Indians.....well, that is a question....was that your question??

Q. Yeah.....

A. Yeah.....yeah.....well, your question goes from one extreme to the other.....you, maybe you have this image in your mind about the old Indians way back when or even our parents.....and that they adjusted to this society.....are you speaking about the young people, today?

Q. Yeah.....well, you see some universities, like the University of New Mexico etcetera.....are trying to establish American Indian studies.....programs...whereas you can get a degree, amajor and graduate work in this..... and I wanted your opinion on what you felt about it.....

A. Well, I don't know too much about university standards.. this and that as far as Indians are concerned, you know, culture studies, but what I was trying to say before was, about having special programs for Indians.....and well, like I say, I think that they ought to fare for themselves.....even if they are way back there from the hogan.....and don't speak English ad all that.....I don't think that they ought to have special help.....

Q. Okay.....do you think that we ought to have more colleges like for Indian students, like Navajo Community College, at Many Farms.....?

A. Yeah.....my statement prompted your question..ha..ha.. I think so.....I have never been there, I don't know what it is like there, but what I read in the papers and what I hear about it, I think that it is a good idea.....some day I will get up there and see.....see for myself, but I think that it is a pretty good idea... I know Dr. Roessell who started this whole business.... and I hate to mention names....being an anonymous per-

son.....

Q. What do you feel about Indian militants or Red Power??

A. Well,what do I think of Indian Militants and Red Power and all this.....gads.....the....I think the whole idea.....the original idea.....of getting an organization together.....forming this organization is a white concept.....kind of like a sun burned white power.....

B. I don't know what to say.....

A. Hurry, you are letting that thing waste.....

Q. Talk about your school.....

B. Okay.....

Q. Say who you are **and what** kind of Indian you are and when and where you live.....

A. Okay.....I want to say when I grow up....reallyI am going to say.....I go to school by a nursery.....and even though I go to, when I grow up, when I go to college first.....even I can go to a really big school and anyway.....

Q. How come you want to go to a really big school?

B. Because I am going to be grown up.....

Q. Oh, do you mean grown ups go to big schools?

B. Yes.....and anywhere that any people can go at..... that is anywhere that people can go at.....is that a real, a real school.....that means....we can go anywhere we want to when we could do even what we want to do and anywhere we want to go is being and any where we want to go, we could even go by ourselves..... by going anywhere....even we could do anything be going..

Q. Where would you like to go right now?

B. Well, I don't know, I don't think I am going no place, right now....

Q. How come?

B. Because anywhere I want to go, because I already went shopping.....

Q. Would you like to back home?

B. Well, I am already home now, you know that.....because anywhere I would like to go is to school....is....well, I like to stay with my Mom and I like to go to school and anywhere I like to go is.....well, I don't think that I do another thing.....because I go to school by going....because anywhere I want to go is by school...

(End of side one of interview)