

Tape #274
NAVAJO
Tom Ration (Navajo)
Geronimo Alexander (Creek)
October 10, 1968
Interviewer - Terry Carroll
Side One

THE TALKING GOD, THE
SIGNIFICANCE OF RAINBOWS,
THE "FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES"

- A. Sometime they have to tell you where they come from, see most all my story is from the north, from the north part around say as far as back to the Rocky Mountain. The Rocky Mountain in Navajo they call it (), that means the Rocky Mountains. In the Rocky Mountain area there is alot of story about the Navajos. From there on comes from this one. See, like these old ruins here, most of these old ruinspeople they come from the south down where the warm place is.
- Q. How far south would you say, Tom?
- A. Well, it's way deep in Mexico, way in Mexico along the coast mostly.
- Q. Along the coast?
- A. Uh huh. Well it's a place where they call () that means a land that's never been known, something like a lost land, that's the way it's called.
- Q. Is it still lost?
- A. No, no, I don't think it's lost. I don't know, but I don't know where it is, that's what they say. When they got back here to this part of the country when they going back to the

lost land over there it used to take him pretty near two months to reach back where they started and sometime they talk about water. Maybe it was the time when they used to sail across or something like that or the land used to be very narrow place. That's what they call () it means a narrow land. That means land from North America to Mexico between there, the ocean is just pretty near together. And now I think they got it made that could come together, you know, that's what the American made where they sail across.

Q. Tom Ration, this was on the Pacific Ocean, an area right near the Pacific Ocean?

A. Right near the Pacific Ocean, yes. During the time see alot of these, all the songs that they sing in there that story, I trace the story in the song. Same way with the sand painting if I go to some ceremonial doing if they have great big sand painting, I start from the east side and then I go around and take a picture of it, the sand paintings that they make and I ask the medicine man what kind of a chant is this, so they tell and they tell me just where to start. When one of the spirit stands up holding something in his hand, that's where it starts there is where the story starts on both hand and down to the bottom of the feet. The story, you have to trace it inch by inch. The meaning of all the paintings that they got in that sand painting, it's a story. Something that you might tell a story how people used to go about, like they might have sickness here, it tells right in that sand painting. There's

I suppose to be, I think 8 different kinds of different kind
 of sand painting that's stripped like this. Or that might
 mean a certain kind of wind like tornado came through or they
 might meet the tornado....alot of them kill off. That's the
 way the story goes on that sand painting. You have to trace
 it by the arm and by the wrist and by the different kinds of
 strips that hangs down. There's a meaning to it, there is a
 story, it tells a story. Those little lightening, what they
 call a lightening travel, it's a little thing, just like a
 red, white and blue; red, white and blue. You know, it's on,
 sometimes it lays under the foot, sometimes it lays under
 the hand, that means when they have what they call flood times
 you know, during sometime they have alot of rain sometime they
 have alot of grass, sometime they're stocks are increasing
 or something like that. The story that you go by all these
 sand painting. It takes a long time to learn that. See, I
 learn it by the song of how words used to come about. There
 used to be words, different kinds of words that Navajo used
 to talk like saying a snake, when you saying the snake you
 says () but today the Navajo says ()
 that's the snake's name now. Long time ago they used to call
 it () and then the, she is called () and
 today we call it (). These words that it came way
 back, I don't know how long ago, the word that is been said
 how they used to be pronounced a different kind, like our body
 or rain or a cloud, they used to be different names. They're
 all forgotten now. All we know is by the song that they sing

like there is a song it sure took me long time to trace it. It started with () it mean rain is coming, the grass is coming up.....()...it sounds like the Laguna language. You know the Laguna talks, when Laguna says hello, he says (), that's the Laguna word for hello. And then if he says hello back to the person, he says () The song goes like that, that means that Navajo, part of the Navajo used to be Laguna tribe. So we think that and we found this out from Laguna man, from Laguna people, the old people that are still using medicine herbs or different things like that. We talked to them, and with them, that's the way we find our words. The songs that we used in the Navajo songs, it came from Laguna. Part of the song came from Laguna. See that means they call snakes back in those days like this, like the song goes....()....that's snake. Laguna...() that's snake used to be long time ago, but now it's different. That's the way I trace it on and then finally I want to a good story. Alot of those songs are stories. So, that's the way I trace the story and tell you in English what happened. They used to kill deers by oh, you know these they are mixed with cactus , soap cactus, you know what they call them to use you wash you hair with it?

Q. Soap?

A. Yeah, saop, cactus weed soap, they call it weed. And then it tells you on the story, it says they used to use cactus weed with certain kinds of herbs to make poison, to shoot any kind that are mean like, like they might be shooting a monster.

Q. A what?

A. A monster, they used to shoot, that's way the story in the song goes and I trace that and that's the way I tell it now on the tape recorder.

Q. Tom, is there different types of poison of animals?

A. Yeah, types of animals. There are the different kind of poison comes in. They boil it with, mix with different herbs and make poison out of it. I can make one any time if I want to, if I see the herbs I can mix them together.

Q. Do these herbs grow in this area?

A. Yeah, some of them are living in the, some of them are found in the mountains. Mt. Taylor, some of those big mountains like Zuni mountain, we found some of them over there. So, this is the way things came about, some of them they used to shoot giants with, giant man you know, they used to be alot of them. Those giant man, the Navajo claims that there used to be a certain kind of weed that used to grow long time before man's time.

Q. What did this weed look like?

A. Well, I see one down here they call it () it grows between Cubero and Chief Ranchos, in that canyon there, I'll show you the weeds and that's the weed that they used to eat long time ago and that makes them grow, I don't know why or what makes them grow.

Q. Were these giant just ordinary people at one time?

A. One time they were just ordinary people.

Q. And then they ate the weed?

A. And then they ate the weed, then they start to grow bigger and then finally they made each other the way they grow and then from there on they give birth to giants, from there on. There used to be giant woman too, a lot of them, during the time when this Pueblo Bonito old ruins time, there used to be giants wandering around here and there, and I can show you places where they used to eat kids, you know, little kids. They used to carry kids away, small boys and girls used to carry them away and eat them and the people used to be afraid of them. And there is where the Laguna people connected with churches there, that's the story that goes together. Long time ago this Laguna people and Acoma and some other Pueblos, they used to hate priests, they used to hate Catholic priests. They used to kill them off, they didn't want them around. But when the giant comes around they always scared away. One time there was a priest came to Laguna that was way around say about 500 or 600 years ago. There was a Mexican priest came in from Mexico and then they saw him coming. At the same time they say the priest coming at the same time they saw the giant. And they scared away, hide under the rocks where I think they made a hole there. They went in there. And then the priest stayed there, finally they watching the priest walking towards the giant and they had a cross holding on their hand and then pretty soon they said that the cross spark out just like shining something away.

Q. Rays?

A. Yeah, spark rays all over. And then finally the giant got blind

on that, the cross and the giant was blind out and some of them, they die wandering away. And from here on there was some of the giant was last seen. And there is where the Laguna people and all other Pueblos they like the Catholic. So, most of the Catholic and the Pueblos are good friends from there on. From there on they tell the Catholics come on build me a church right here and tell us some more stories about what you know cause you chased the giant away.

Q. Was there just one giant?

A. NO, two or three, maybe ten, maybe fifty, I don't know, alot of giant used to live long time ago. But they ran away and then that time the Laguna here, all Laguna where they have their village here, that's the time the Laguna and the priest got friends in September 19th during the month about 500, 600 years ago, there's where they made friends in September 19th. From there on they keep the date holy on the 19th of September, so they have to make a feast for the priest and there was where they started friends with the preachers and that's the way they have these ceremonials in a certain month, the time when the giant were chased way and when the priest help them they do all these things,.....that's the way some of these Pueblo tells me about, that's the way they make friends with the priest. From there on it's Catholic all over...the same way with this Navajo, but the Navajo wasn't living like these other people, Pueblos, the Navajo used to live here and there wandering around here and there. There was no sickness among them. While they wander around they get more started, they

get more stronger, that's the way the Navajo belief is. When you live in one place in the village, that means sickness, you see. when you live in one place, one person gets sick from something, the other fella gets it and then it goes around the camp, around the village and that's why the Pueblos die so much, something kills them, disease or something like that. It kills them off, that's why they don't increase. But the Navajos they wander around here and there, that's why they're overgrowing their reservation.....that's what the Navajo says themself.

Q. They've outgrown their reservation?

A. The reservation lays over here about around just this side of Gallup the reservation line runs there and we're way out here, clear out to this side of Albuquerque, you know Canonicito? I was planning to go to Canonicito this morning, but I didn't have enough gas to go on. In Alamo there is another Navajo tribe, in Ramah there is another Navajo tribe over there on Zuni Mountain, on the other side there is a Navajo tribe, all the way down to St. John, that's outside of the Navajo reservation and clear down to Torreon, this side of Cuba, that is where the end of the Navajo people lives, that's where the Checkerboard area started from.

Q. The what??

A. Checkerboard area, you know the land what they call the checkerboard area? One belongs to the Indian and the other belongs to the government, thats what you call a checkerboard area, it starts from way down from Torreon back towards the Navajo reservation. And they are overgrown up to Weffermore Mountain,

there's alot of Navajo live around. And some of the Navajo people, lives over in Utah. See, it's part of the Navajo reservation on this side of Utah, just barely went into Utah. But there is some more over and they live even as far as Winslow, Arizona and Williams along side the highway. See, they have overgrown the reservation now and some of them are overgrowing towards Farmington, Shiprock, they live all around that area. So, they claim there is about 100,000 Navajos today. See, during the chairman vote, the Navajo chairman vote, they counted most of these votes, that they got into 100,000 and there is some more still increasing.

Q. Tom, did you ever know John Collier?

A. Yeah, John Collier, he is the superintendent down the other side of Grand Canyon. There is what they call a Blackfeet Indians, he's the superintendent over there now...with one of our Navajo boy from here, his name is.....do you know Tom Dodge, Jr.??

Q. Oh yeah, I know him, I don't know him personally.

A. He is over there with John Collier now.

Q. Tom, did you ever know John Williams at the BIA, you know him? He's a creek Indian.

A. Yeah, he's creek Indian.

Q. I asked him the other day if he knew you and he said he thought he did and i described you and he said, oh yeah he knew you.

A. Alot of them knows me, alot of these old timers.

Q. He's an old timer....Can you tell me anything about the Creek Indians?

A. Well, the Creek Indians is way too far off. They once had a little war between the Navajos, but that was not for what they have done to each other, but it was between the Ute Indians first with the Navajos, yeah the Ute Indian was fighting the Creek Indians and the Navajos helped the Creek to fight the Ute. So, the Ute and the Creek they get along fine, they were not very bad enemy, they didn't fight much, they used to but since the Utes, since the Ute Indians were winning against the Creek and the Navajos helped. That's where the partnership came in with the Creek Indian. From there on, some of these songs from the Creek songs, alot of these Navajos they know alot of them. They go by their songs or the way the drum beats. According to our drum beating in all the tribe there are different song the way they beat it. So, the time when they have the ceremonial over there in Gallup we just know which is coming by the drum.

Q. You can actually tell?

A. We can actually tell, yeah, there is a whole different kind of way of beating drum. It's just like you telling somebody, you talking to somebody, the drum goes like that. The Navajo and the Cheyenne used to talk to each other by the drum a long time ago. When there was a Cheyenne coming they'd start their drums to tell the Navajo a Cheyenne was coming to visit or to talk about something. They give the drum some sound. And some of the Navajo scout, they used to scout around way maybe 10 miles away. And the scout, the one that scout around, he knows all these song sounds, how the way it should be heard of

the drum. He could tell that's what they say, it used to be like that. So, he could hear the drum a long ways, especially when it's wet like this he could hear the drum long ways. Sometimes they used to tell by the dogs, you know. They claim the dog, the earth, that the dog used to hear a long ways, from miles away. And this is when the dog hears the drum way off maybe 20 miles away the dog always jump up and start to bark.

Q. Tom, do you know any stories of dogs giving away the position of the Indian? Tell me some of those.

A. Well, long time ago what they call in the Navajo, what they call a Talking God, he used to own a lot of dogs, different kinds of dogs, maybe big dogs up to tiny little one. You know some of those tiny little dogs used to not grow too big, just about so high and so long. They call different kinds of names, some are (). they got different names just like you white people name dog. In those days there was a clan called Talking God.

Q. A clan?

A. A clan, yeah, it came from out of a clan what they call a Talking God. they used to own, they used to like dogs. Just like the cat story. The cats got the same story like the dogs do. This Talking god, used to eat dogs, just like we eat sheep. They used to raise dogs a long time ago and then finally the clan came, in different kind of clans like Bear Clan and Rain Clan, Lightening Clan and Mountain Clan, Water Clan, Salt Water Clan, Deer Clan, Beaver Clan....it start to growing out different clans. And here is where the Talking God start to give their

dogs away in order to because these dogs, they ate too much and there is nothing to feed the dogs. And he thought, he think about maybe some of these days this dog will be eat me up for supper. So, I might probably give him away somewhere. So, they had a big ceremonial just like they got in Shiprock. This ceremonial was set up where they call Black Canyon, it's way on the west side of Shiprock. There is a great big wall of rock that look like a black canyon. It's black with the water mark you know, the water mark, it makes black on the water, I mean on the rock, the water does. That's where the ceremony took place. So, he took all his dogs over there and then he hold them there just a little ways from the ceremony, and one of the runners went down there to tell te people that the Talking God was coming with his dogs and he wants to give dogs away. So, he told a certain kinds of people he appointed them, we'll give you a dog and we'll give you a dog, and all the dogs are named a certain kind of name. And there's where the dog was given away, in that Black Canyon. And then from there on, whoever the dog was given to, they left their dog and the Talking God was.....the Talking God just took the little one, he took the little white puppy, the little one, that's the only dog he's got today. That's what the story goes by the same thing as when the dog has been given away a long time ago. And these dogs, the one that we see here and there, there is a different kind of dog....we can tell which dog that used to belong to a certain clan, like the Eagle Clan has a beard, a dog that has alot of beard, you know just like a ()

that's Deer Clan dog. An eagle dog has a smooth head and a long nose. Most of these dogs have been told that way, that used to be a Deer Clan dog and that's the way the dogs are called now. That's the way dogs been given away, the ceremony took place say about somewhere around a little over 1,000 years ago, maybe 1,500 years ago, maybe more, nobody knows. The story comes from about 1500 years back when the talking god gave dogs away, that's where all the dogs came from. Before that, nobody didn't have no dogs around their camp since the Talking God camp.

Q. The god of all the dogs, no one else had a dog?

A. No one else had a dog.

Q. And he gave them away to different clans?

A. To different clans, Eagle Clan, Navajo Clan, Mountain Clan, Bear Clan, Water Clan, Salt Clan, there are alot of different kinds of dogs, but he kept a little one and then later on he sent that little dog away. Long time ago this Acoma, Acoma people they used to have all kinds of jewelry pretty jewelry and they don't want to give their jewelry away. Well, this Talking God make magic to the dogs and he sent the dogs to the Acoma people, see, something like this coming. And then he sent it away and he told the dog you go to the Acoma Village. And stay around there, the people will like you. And then the first day there they put a turquoise around your neck and you bring the turquoise back. That's the way he talk to his dog and talked he went away. And he went to Acoma and the little puppy, he told the little puppy, if they catch you up, you stand

on the rainbow and the rainbow will take you overhead. The Acoma people will be walking under you and then you can be over passing by the rainbow. So, that's the way the dog went. This is a magic story that we have got back, that's the way their belief is. See, when you see the rainbow you don't have to point it with your finger, you have to point it with your thumb because long time ago, before this was ever happen, they used to point at it with this finger, see, there is a rainbow over there.

Q. Would it have to be in the right hand?

A. Yeah, with the first finger.

Q. They have to point with the first finger.

A. That was a long time before the dog was ever seen up there.

Q. Inaudible

A. Yeah, now today it's the sun. It's all over the reservation, you don't point with this finger, you have to piont with your thumb. You pointed with it that's this bad luck. You point it that way that's called riches, you get rich. And sometimes the rainbow will drop over you, drop over your head. Sometime it does it just once in a great while, but when it does, it don't ?. Every place you look it might red, you look this way it might be yellow, you look this way it be purple, you look this way it be blue and then that's the time when the rainbow is on you, every place you look it will be different colors, on the ground towards the sky or towards the clouds, it will give you different kinds of color. Everywhere you look.

Q. When it passes away it gets bad luck like you are right now.

That's the time, a rainbow gives you luck and then you get rich in no time.

Q. Do you know anybody that got rich?

A. You know, there is a fella named by Arvistan. He lived on.....

Q. Arviso???

A. Arviso, you know, the man that used to be one of the great interperetor, Jesus Arviso? His boy.

Q. His son?

A. His son, yeah, you know the Arviso that died just recently about a year ago.....he had the rainbow problem on his head once and then in no times he got rich. He went up to, I think it was two thousand head of cattle, from there on the whole flat on this side of Tohatchi, you know all the way down the San Juan Country.

Q. Tohatchi to San Juan?

A. Yeah, he used to own all that land.

Q. That's thousands of acres isn't it?

A. He used to have cattle all over that place there and then he split them up to his boys. Some of them cattle are still over here at Torreon. His youngest son, Arviso's youngest son still got somewhere around about 200 head maybe more, maybe 300 head over here at Torreon. There are still some growing there....

(A LARGE PORTION OF THIS TAPE IS INAUDIBLE-RECORDING GETS PROGRESSIVELY FASTER FOR THE NEXT 10-15 MINUTES)

GERONIMO ALEXANDER

A. Here is a lady that is the outstanding American Indian. She got the award this year at Sheridan, Wyoming.

Q. Sheridan, huh??

A. Sheridan, Wyoming, she works here....she is Otoe, from Oklahoma. Here is the address, call her at, this is her residence phone number.

Q. Oh, she lives in town, good.

A. Yeah, she works for the Indian service, that would be the woman to get ahold of, she can tell you a lot of things about Indians.

Q. Good, do you want me to keep this?

A. No, a fella in there may want to read it see.

Q. Yeah, okay, I'll just keep part of it. Indian princess Fern Thompson Fisher of Albuquerque, Outstanding American Indian award. Mrs. Fisher believes that she is one of the first women to be honored by her, is the first woman to be so honored by her people. Tribal Safety Officers in the branch of Safety, Bureau of Indian Affairs in Albuquerque. Mrs. Fisher has been in Albuquerque a year and present job for two years.

A. You know, it's surprising how you get to talking and you just lead right into these things, you know these valuable things. Liek, you tell about...that picture there and I'll show him this....that's how they are usually punished, my people when they break a law or something, whipping them, they tie them to a tree like that and they give them 25 lashes and these people

here represent something, all these people here.

Q. What did this person do for 25 lashes, was that the standard punishment?

A. Yes.

Q. Just 25 lashes?

A. If he does it again, breaks the law again, they give him 50 lashes.

Q. Oh.

A. The third time they used to shoot them, that's the history. I don't know myself.

Q. Do you know of anybody that....?

A. Isn't that what they used to say? It has to be something bad you know.

Q. What crime would they do that would rate 25 lashes?

A. Oh, maybe steal a horse or things like that. And show him about those three sitting over there, see those sticks there, everytime an Indian gets hit, he's counting them see. He picks up that stick and lays it over there, everytime he gets hit 25 times. And these two people here are watching them so they don't want him to make a mistake, maybe he might be getting more than 25 you know. Probably his relatives you know watching, also these people in the wagon here probably his son or nephew, see, they just watching, and waiting.

Q. Do they have the wagon to carry him back?

A. Yes, see this fella here won't even look toward this boy here.

Q. Maybe that's his boy?

A. Maybe that's his son or you know, related. when they get through

whipping him he's probably passed out. They load him up in the wagon and take him home and take care of him.

Q. Did they ever have any punishments that merit just 5 lashes, the minimum punishment was 25?

A. 25.

Q. That's pretty bad about that.

A. And they had a trial, you know it like a court you know, tell him to show up in 30 days or 60 days and send him home. His word was his bond, when the time was up he'd show up, he would show up. He wasn't under a bond like we do now, \$10,000 bond or something like they do now, they just send him home.

Q. Is that what they used back in Georgia?

A. Georgia and Alabama.

Q. Did they ever use this out in California, I mean Oklahoma?

A. Not that we know of.

Q. OH.

A. See, we are the five civilized tribes, Creek, Cherokee, Seminoles Choctaws, and Chickasaws. And we were, they had their own government before Columbus landed here, their own laws.

Q. why did they call these Indians the Civilized Tribes, do you know that?

A. We were more advanced, if you read history, we had our government and everything. That's why they gave us this name when they moved us from the east coast to Oklahoma.

Q. Did they call you the five civilized tribes before they moved you?

A. About that time I think.....

Q. Did the whites call you civilized or did you call yourself civilized?

A. They did.

Q. This is very interesting, this flogging.

A. And these were the lawyers you know, these the spectators probably.

Q. Did they do this very often, how often was somebody whipped?

A. Not very often.

Q. Would people tend to repeat their crimes or did this reform them?

A. No, this straightened them out. Oh, there were now and then, but you know how most people are, some are a little bit ornery.

Q. Yeah, I know. What kind of tree would you say this is, Geronimo?

A. I don't really know, they just are natural born criminals. What do you think? I don't know...what kind of tree that is. Oklahoma is mostly black jack. No, that wouldn't be an Oklahoma tree, that would be a southern tree it looks to me like. The way the branch and leaves....

Q. Where in Oklahoma does Fred Beaver live, Geronimo?

A. Ardmore, he's really from around Ufallah, near Muskogie.

Q. John was saying that he goes to the Gallup Ceremonials every year.

A. Every year, he usually spends two, a couple of days here with us, we are good friends. You show him some pictures of him that you took? No, not yet, they just got here. I'll get them out later. There is a Seminole picture there, Seminole woman with a baby.

Q. And Fred Beaver painted that one too?

A. All of them, all this.

Q. could you describe this picture for me, what's going on here Geronimo?

A. Well, she's probably just sitting there putting her baby to sleep, singing you know.

Q. How do you know that is a Seminole picture?

A. By those dresses.

Q. What is distinctive about the dresses that makes you think that's a Seminole?

A. Well, that's the kind of costume they wear.

A. Becuase of the hairdo too.

Q. The hair do also?

A. That's the main thing.

Q. That's the main thing. How come this Indian that is doing the whipping here and the other one is just wearing a loin cloth while the rest of them are fully dressed. Is there any significance to that?

A. I don't know myself...here, the way they're dressed you know.

A. OH, I imagine it's awful hot and tired while he has to go through all that. Uh huh, more for coolness.

Q. I wonder how they determine who does the whipping?

A. Well, they probably know how many times he's been in trouble and the kind of trouble he's in. And they really have two or three people you know, they don't, not just one determines it like they do here, the judge.....probably have 2 or 3 people.

Q. How many judges do they usually have, would you say?

- A. Oh, I'd say about 2 or 3 to go over the crime and the time...
- Q. Like say if a fellow would steal, say steal a horse from this guy, the one that he stole it from, I wonder if he had anything to do with it.
- A. In some way.
- A. Don't you think maybe that's why they were called the civilized tribes because they try you know, to keep law and order?
- A. All people, able people have to work. They took care of the children and the old people first. All able-bodied people have to work.
- Q. What was the reason for moving from south to Oklahoma?
- A. The white settlers wanted their land so Indians start grabbing.
- Q. And the government just said we're gonna move you someplace else?
- A. Jackson, used to go down there and engage in wars with them and finally they just drove them out.
- Q. That's Andrew Jackson you're talking about?
- A. Uh huh, that's why the Creeks don't like him.
- Q. What have some of the Creeks said about Jackson?
- A. That he was heartless and didn't care about the Indians lives. There was an awful lot of white people just went and killed them off, that happened time and again. Dust that off, look that's getting.
- Q. That's okay.
- A. That's why ? came down through the years and they told them. I never did like him.
- A. Well there's good and bad people in ?

Q. Would you say Jackson was one of the bad ones?

A. Inaudible

Q. Actually Jackson was just doing what the people wanted him to do, the people wanted the land.

A. The government.....

A. There is still land claims pending. they haven't paid off the land that were taken away. See, we're still, through all the years they're paying and still over over 100 years.....

Q. John was telling me that even when the government does pay off the average Indian doesn't get very much. Say, they make a settlement for a couple million dollars, but the average Indian will only end up with two or three dollars.

A. Oh other times maybe, but the Creeks always get a little bit more, see it's according to the population too, John is an Otoe, not very many of them.

A. You mean John Williams?

A. Oh, John Williams. Now he's white, half white. He naturally doesn't get as much. The full bloods, if they are on the rolls, they get more. But heirs, maybe his mother was on the roll and the three of them, naturally they end up with less. And my folks were full blood just two of us as heirs.

Q. Were you born in Oklahoma?

A. Uh huh.

Q. Are you a Creek also?

A. Uh huh, I'm a Creek.

Q. Where were you born in Oklahoma?

A. South of Tulsa on a farm.

- Q. South of Tulsa, how much land did you have there?
- A. My mother had 40, she had 150 but she had it sold off by the time I was born.
- Q. We're not on reservation right now, we don't have reservation.
- A. No, they have what they call allotments, but we didn't get anything, we were considered new born.
- Q. After a certain date they didn't give you anymore land?
- A. Uh huh.
- Q. When was the cut off date for that?
- A. 1907.
- Q. 1907?
- A. Uh huh.
- Q. The land that your mother had, was it good land or marginal land?
- A. It was rather rocky.
- Q. Rocky?
- A. Uh huh, part of it was good, my father used to farm. And he had his own allotment too near. Red west of Tulsa. Somebody told us that.....
- Q. Was there oil underneath his land?
- A. I imagine so but no one was drilling at that time.
- Q. Did you ever raise any crops to sell into town?
- A. Uh huh, that was our living.
- A. Cotton and corn.
- A. Cotton and corn, farming.
- A. His father was a big time produce farmer, he raised wonderful crops.

A. He raised watermelon, some of them weighed 70 pounds.

A. What they call arnomelons.

A. White, stand up that high, some of them.

Q. How much land did your father farm Geronimo?

A. 120 acres.

Q. Do you ever hear any people talk, did you ever hear of people talking about their being evicted from their land and moved to Oklahoma. Do you know any stories about that?

A. Well, just stories handed down from my parents and grandparents from generation to generation.

Q. Any of those stories that you know that you want to tell me, I'd be interested in hearing, if you can think of anything. Did anything happen while you were being moved from.....to here?

A. Some died on the way. Back in those days some of them were traveling by wagons horseback, some foot.

Q. Did they move everybody all at once or they move them in groups.?

A. In groups.

Q. Did they bring them by water or wagon or....?

A. Wagon, mostly wagon.

Q. When they moved you, did they say we're going to Oklahoma, or did they say, did they just say we're going.

A. They called it the Indian territory.

Q. That's what they called it then. Did anybody in the tribe ever have...had anybody in the tribe ever been to Oklahoma and say we don't want to go there?

A. They didn't want to go, but they made them go.

- Q. How did the government go about making them go, did they come to the individual houses of the Indians and?
- A. Rounded them up with the army.
- Q. With guns and bayonets? Anytime you want to ask questions
- A. There's a few that ran away and didn't want to go, they're still down in Georgia and Alabama.
- Q. You **all's** parents did they live in Georgia.
- A. It was my grandparents, my parents were born in Oklahoma.
- Q. Your grandparents, did you ever hear them say anything?
- A. I never knew them.
- Q. What's the population of the Creek tribe now approximately?
- A. About 18,000 I believe. I have a book here which at one time before they move them, they said they were about 25-30,000 Creeks.
- Q. You mean there's less Creeks now than there were before, is that right?
- A. And according to the book in 1944 they maybe was ? said about 11,000 population.
- A. The full bloods are all about gone, they're all intermarried now.
- Q. These five civilized tribes were among the first Indians to begin to intermarry with whites, weren't they?
- A. Uh huh, and our tribe started intermarrying before they left the eastern part of the United States, Georgia and they were intermarrying with French, the Spanish and all the Creeks are white, Spanish, negro, they're all mixed just like they're a big ? ?.

- Q. After the Indians were moved to Oklahoma did they like Oklahoma?
- A. Well, when they found out how fertile the land was, they started settling down, built a cabin. But there is always that liquor question.....
- Q. In the Navajo the liquor, whiskey is really doing alot of damage to the young Navajo youth, they're lazy and don't care anything. Is this same thing happening to the Creek youth?
- A. Well, there used to be quite a bit but I don't think it's as bad now.
- Q. It's not as bad now?
- A. No, they're going to school more, getting educated. Although in the old days like I say that drunk element was always around you know trying to get their land and they would. But the older people have more control over the young and the young respect the old people more and it was bad at times but not too bad. While I was growing up I see about 4 or 5 I guess, that were pretty bad out of the whole group...and yet they didn't beat up their wives or you know things like that. I know the Navajo beat up their wives at the ceremonials.
- Q. Did you go to the Gallup Ceremonials this year?
- A. Oh we just passed through, stopped for a few minutes and went on to Tohatchi.
- Q. Tohatchi...do you have some friends up in Tohatchi, who is that?
- A. Uh huh, that is Ray Beardsley and his wife, a teacher at Tohatchi, and she was a clerk.

- A. He's a Laguna and married to, his wife is a Pawnee from Oklahoma. He's principal there.
- Q. Do you know Tom Ration, he's a Navajo? He lives just north of Thoreau, Smith Lake, I talk to him about once a week.
- A. No
- Q. Do you know any stories at all about that your mother, either one of your mother may have told you about what life was like for the Indians, any story whatsoever that you want to tell me?
- A. Well, it was a hard life trudging in the country, the man have to go hunting and there were transports hidden on the Oklahoma country. Naturally they had to leave a place where they live for days to scout around looking for animals, find out what kind were around. And the woman had to work hard, everything was by hand, pound corn out the different foods, they'd have to skin animals and they'd have to teach their young. And in those days seemed like they'd use rock and wittle stick certainly for....until they started buying knives you know from traders. But I think they were pretty well advanced along that line after you know the American white man.
- Q. Did they intermarry, when they married did they keep it mostly in the tribe or did they hesitate to marry into other tribes or....?
- A. It was mostly in the tribe, but you couldn't marry within your own clan, but like I say they started marrying with the whites before they were moved to Oklahoma. The MacIntoshes were mostly white.
- Q. They're Scotch aren't they?

A. And Irish.

Q. The McIntosh that was the leader of the Creek, the one who led the Creeks when they signed the treaty to move and sell the land.

A. They killed him too.

Q. They strung him up too, didn't they?

A. Yeah

Q. Shot him?

A. So to this day most of the full bloods still say that McIntosh you know, sold them out.

Q. Sold them out, well isn't there a McIntosh now that's the head of the Creeks?

A. Yeah, he's the warrior Creek, but you'd think he was a full blood the way he acts.

Q. What do you mean, the way he acts?

A. He goes to all the Indian doings and tries to imitate the different ways like they have a certain sound they call gobbling, it sounds like a turkey and all that's dying out see, but and he's learned that and he taught it to his boys. I guess he's just a quarter Creek and his boys are an 1/8 now, his wife is white. And they used to gobble like that after a good ball game if they win or if they're dancing and someone would win a contest you know, just a good feeling you know they.....

Q. Hoop and gobble

A. Yeah, hoop and gobble.

Q. Just something similar to a cheer

A. Uh huh, yeah...and if you hear those sounds you know something

good had happened. Or I guess in times of war way back when they fought the enemy and overcame them, then they'd do that.

Q. Did the Creeks back when they were in Georgia in there, did they do much fighting among themselves or with other tribes?

A. No, they were considered peaceful, peaceful people.

Q. Did the Creeks build houses while they were back in Georgia?

A. Uh huh, yeah, little shacks you know.

A. Log houses.

A. Uh huh

Q. Log houses? I bet you some of these houses were actually better houses than what some of the frontiersmen built, because some of those places were just shacks. When they brought you to Oklahoma did the government pay you anything for moving or take care of you in anyway after you came to Oklahoma?

A. It seemed like they were rationed I think, potato, meat, flour until they were settled. They were suppose to pay so much an acre but like I say it's still pending through the years with small payments my folks get that we get about 12 years ago. And there is more land that is still paying and they're paying at the rate of the going rate 100 years ago.

A. The value 100 years ago. \$1.00 an acre or something like that.

A. Uh huh and the Seminole, Geronimo is part Seminole, not much, they're still fighting with the government and never have signed a treaty.

Q. Some of these treaties were broken you know by the government, treaty after treaty, they didn't live up to their treaty.

- A. That comedian, oh he's on a panel show all the time, Henry Morgan, he's a Jew and he says the U.S. government has broken every treaty with every tribe in the United States. We're what they call Creek Nation we're....we consider ourselves as a nation, that's why they always talk about a Creek nation, not tribe but a nation.
- Q. Well getting back to this decrease in population, now the way I understand it the reason the population is decreasing is because of intermarriage after you become say 1/4 Creek or something, like that, well you're not counted as a Creek anymore then, is that right?
- A. 1/8....of course 1/4 that's still counted.
- Q. But then from 1/8 well then they're not.
- A. Uh huh and then alot of them die with smallpox too, you know.
- Q. Did the government keep any sort of infirmary or sick bay or hospital amongst the Indians when they were moved to Oklahoma?
- A. Not at that time.
- Q. They never sent in nurses?
- A. That's why, no, that's why so many died of smallpox.
- Q. Could you tell me a little bit about, you know they call the march the Trail of Tears, at least the Cherokee do, do you know any stories that would justify calling it the Trails of Tears?
- A. Oh yes, see they weren't used to marching and being out in the open for days at a time and they'd get sick and no medicines you know.
- Q. What if they wanted to stop, how would the army look upon

somebody that wanted to say, sit down on the rock and rest five minutes?

A. No, I think they had certain times to go, the older ones I guess rode and the strong walked, but they say it was terrible, said they started you know

Q. What year was that, 1907?

A. Well, the first was 1828 and then the second was 1836.

A. 1832, in there.

Q. Well the states like Georgia wanted the land too, they sort of put pressure on Jackson was the hero of the frontiersmen and he wouldn't go against their wishes.

A. So, out they went.

Q. It's a very cruel thing to do and the government should pay alot more.

A. I don't know why they don't, it's been over 100 years.

A. That's part of the settlement right there, the treaty, old Jackson claim of the...that's part of the land that took from the Indians in Alabama, and to this day they haven't paid it yet, paid off the Indians yet.

A. They said that our tribe had everything pretty well down pat. They took care of the old and the young and in case of wars they were always ready but they didn't go out looking for war. When the enemy came they were always ready. That's why they call the Creeks peaceful people, they didn't mess around and if they did they were all organized.

Q. Which was the most numerous of the five civilized tribes?

A. The Cherokees.

- Q. The Cherokees were the most numerous. Alot of them stayed up around North Carolina.
- A. There's still a bunch there.
- Q. They sort of walked to the side of the road when they were being
- A. And they hid out in the hills and they didn't get them all, they didn't get them all. That's why they are still back there, real pretty country they say in North Carolina, Cherokee in North Carolina.
- Q. There is a town, there is a town called Cherokee, North Carolina isn't there?
- A. North or South I don't know which, but they put on a play every year and it's well known.
- Q. I think I've seen it on TV
- A. I'd like to see it. I went to school with the Owl family Charlotte and her brother.....educated Cherokees She was quite a piano player, I went to school with her. And they were a well known family out there, all are college educated.
- A. Owls, and there is some Choctaws in Mississippi.
- Q. Did the Choctaws still remain in Mississippi.
- A. Yes, those that hid out, just like Seminoles, there are still Seminoles out in Florida.
- Q. Yeah, I know about the Seminoles down there. Now these Choctawsm Geronimo in Mississippi, do you know anything about them? Do they own land there or do they work in factories or do they have their own land?
- A. They have their own land, it's a reservation I believe, they

have a reservation there. They farm, raise cotton things like that.

A. Well, it seemed to me that I read in the Florida Everglades there is a big tribe of Seminoles, yeah.

Q. Yeah, there is one big tribe there. They never signed a peace treaty with the United States and they are still officially at war with the United States. Technically they don't go out on a war parties or anything but they are still at war with the United States technically.

A. And those white contractors and builders, they want their land now and they going to court to get them to give up certain parts and they won't do it,....now Geronimo is part Seminole.

Q. Oh he is, part Semionle?

A. Here is a little write up about Seminoles.

Q. Seminoles win land suit which may net 40 million dollars, Seminole Indians tribe won a...see this is June 11, 1967 won a multi-million dollar court of claims victory in their fight to have the federal government pay them for Florida land taken from the tribe more than a century ago. The area encompasses 32 million acres or more, or about 90% of the state. The payment, still to be determined, could run as high as 40 million dollars to the Seminole in Florida and those that have resettled in Oklahoma. And that will depend on calculations to be made by the Indian Claims Commission. In an opinion by Judge Collins, the claims court upheld a commission decision of May 8, 1964 which established Seminole ownership of the land and ordered the Indians paid for this, thats pretty interesting, 40 millions dollars.

- A. Well now look at that, how many million acres is it?
- Q. Well it said it includes area of about 90% of Florida, the state of Florida.
- A. Well I think it mentioned the acreage there too which wouldn't be very much per acre. 32 million acres at 40 million dollars, how much would that be an acres?
- Q. I don't know, mathematics is not my field.
- A. Around....
- A. \$1.25 an acre is what it would amount to.
- A. \$1.25 an acre
- A. \$1.25 an acre, that's what it would amount to.
- Q. Well if they paid them according to the present evaluation...
- A. The country would go broke.
- A. Well it seemed to me like in the everglades is where they were planning this big airport which will be, is something for the future, you know something that will take care of these super-sonic planes and it's suppose to cost a tremendous amount of money. And I think this belongs to the Seminole land and they are very pleased because they are going to be well paid for this, for this land. I read something about that in the paper the other day.
- Q. Did the Creeks ever fight the French, you know the French moved in from the south and established New Orleans and Mobile.
- A. I don't remember whether they did or not, I know it started with the British at one time, some of the Creeks.
- Q. What about during the Revolutionary War, what,...did they fight the for the Americans or for the British? I know the Iroquois

fought for the British.

A. Maybe they fought with the British, but like I say they were peaceful and no one bothered them very much until later one when they were exploring more.

Q. Did they ever trade very much with the English out of Charleston. The Americans out of Charleston?

A. I think so.

Q. What did they trade mostly?

A. Well, they liked to drink coffee, whatever it was, tea or whatever it was and sugar, see mostly they ate meat, they hunted.

Q. What did they give to the English for the Americans in Charleston?

A. Corn and squash.

Q. Did they every give them hides and furs?

A. No

A. The Creeks did alot of farming even when they were in Georgia.

A. Uh huh, farmers, they hunted when they had to. They didn't just go out and kill just to be killing food. Everything was used.

Q. Did you all have horses when you were in Oklahoma, did the tribes all have horses?

A. Uh huh.

Q. What part of Oklahoma were the Creeks settled in?

A. Well northeastern and gradually went south, they followed and mostly around Muskogie and Tulsa.

Q. Where is there headquarters now?

A. Used to be Muskogie, that was what they called the Indian agency.

Q. It's still here, isn't it, Muskogie.

A. Uh huh, but they're beginning to send them out here now, centralizing them here in Albuquerque, all the officers from here.

Q. Do they have their own governor and their own government, don't they?

A. In small way, uh huh, we have a tribal chief but he really does not do much, he's more a figure head.

Q. Just a figure head.

A. Uh huh.

Q. McIntosh is the chief. The leaders out here are called governors like.....

A. Pueblos

A. Among the Pueblos they are called governors, the chief, back there among our people they call it chief.

Q. When I go out to see Tom Ration who is a Navajo he calls me chief all the time, let's see.....

A. President of the United States, he is a chief

Q. Yeah, the Creeks, did you ever hear about the battle of Horseshoe Bend when Jackson went tearing in there and won this great victory over the five civilized tribes? Your parents ever mention anything about that?

A. No, they never.....

Q. While these soldiers were transporting you to the west to Oklahoma, did they treat the Creeks and the other Indians, were they cruel to the Indians in any way?

A. I really don't remember especially that fourth march you know.

Q. Well maybe they were cruel in the fact that they just kept them

going, kept them marching. It would be hard on me if they marched me from here to Oklahoma.

A. Yeah, now we'd probably fall by the way side or else we'd just slip down.

A. Good way to slim down, well it would be good for Terry.

A. It'd be good for me too.

Q. You did have to put that tape on, the....do you know any stories regarding horses, or anything in Oklahoma or back in the south?

A. Oh just that my grandfather raised cattle and he had alot of cowboys that used to work for him and my dad was a good horseman..

Q. What was your dad's name?

A. Sam Mayharkey.

Q. Sam Mayharkey.

A. Mayharkey and they used to tell what a good rider he was, he broke broncos.

Q. Did he trade horses too?

A. Oh my grandfather did. My father was kind of a spoiled brat he was only son, and he went to school only 6 months in his life. He didn't want my grandfather was a rancher, had plenty of cattle, horses. He ran cattle around reservoirs near the Arkansas river. He was a fine business man. He used to have ledgers where he would put everything down, what he paid his cowboys.....and food he bought.

Q. Would he have white cowboys or Indian cowboys or a mixture?

A. Indian

Q. Indian cowboys, did they make pretty good cowboys?

- A. Yeah.
- Q. What would they do in line of being a cowboy and....?
- A. Well they took care of the cattle and had to brand if you want to sell cattle you have to round them up, pick out the best.
- Q. How many cattle did your father have?
- A. I don't know.
- A. Several thousand I would guess.
- A. I imagine so because it's big country and you know and not very many people.
- Q. Was your tribe spread out or was the concentrated in one neighborhood or how much land were you give when you came to the territory?
- A. Well, they weren't given anything until oh, I guess several years when they decided to allot so much to each region and years later and like I say they were around Tulsa, Muskogee, the eastern part.
- Q. Back then, did you have a get together where the tribe came together for a ceremony?
- A. Oh yes, they call them Stomp Dances.
- Q. How long did it last?
- A. Oh sometime.....

END OF TAPE