

Monique Garcia (editor)

*"I wouldn't want my kids to go through that":  
Glover Young's Memories of a Native American Boarding School*

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California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).

The Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History.

Project: Indigenous.

O.H. 0570.

Oral Interview with Glover Young, conducted by Christine Valenciana,  
April 22, 1971, La Mirada, California.

*Introduction*

The oral history interview transcribed below belongs to a collection held in CSUF's Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History (COPH), titled "Indigenous." The interview with Glover Young was conducted by Christine Valenciana on April 22, 1971, in La Mirada, California. It lasted 1 hour, 32 minutes, and 37 seconds, and is archived as a digital recording/audio file at COPH. The verbatim transcript edited here was prepared in 2020 by Monique Garcia.

Glover Young was born in South Dakota, on the border of the Rosebud Reservation and the Pine Ridge Reservation; however, his Indian registration would state that he was from Pine Ridge, South Dakota. His family later moved out of Pine Ridge and lived in Bennett County. Unfortunately, Young, much like other Indigenous children, was separated from his parents at a young age and forced to attend a boarding school in Pine Ridge, more than 80 miles away. Once he had completed the eighth grade, Young moved back with his mother. His parents had divorced in the 1940s, and his father did not live at home. Young did not attend high school as he felt it was his responsibility to help out at home. At the time, not only were his parents no longer together, but his brother had been recalled to the Army. Thus, Young quit school and helped with the family's cattle. Young also worked for ranchers around the county until he joined the Air Force in December 1945. When he was discharged in 1947, he went back to his family, farmed, and took on various jobs. Young eventually got married and had a son who passed away in 1953; he later had three daughters. Young then decided that it would be best to move to California with his family. He had heard from his brothers that California was a good place to live, so he went to the relocation office to begin the steps of moving to California. After his arrival in California, Young was able to use his extensive work experience to get different jobs. He also used the money he had saved from serving in the Air Force during World War II from the G.I. Bill to buy his family a home in La Mirada, California.

Despite experiencing so many hardships and living an unconventional life due to the United States' treatment of the Indigenous, Young, in this interview,

remains unphased and positive. He expresses detestation for the traditional Native American ways, as he feels that one will not be able to survive in the world without adapting. The Native American Boarding School that Young was placed in as a child seems to have succeeded in its objective, as Young has assimilated to American life. Young does not express any ties to his Native American heritage and roots, which demonstrates the cruelty of these boarding schools.

Glover Young's oral interview provides a personal narrative and a grassroots perspective on the experience and livelihood of the Indigenous in the United States, specifically during a time of war and conflict, the impact of Native American boarding schools, and life on a reservation. His oral history addresses the mistreatment of the Indigenous throughout their history and examines the importance of family—in fact, of the many distinct moments featured in this narrative, the forced placement of Indigenous children into boarding schools, which made Glover Young realize the importance of family, is probably the most haunting one.

*ABOUT THE EDITOR: Monique Garcia of Whittier, California, earned her B.A. in History and Chicanx/Latinx Studies at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) (2021), where she is a member of the University Honors Program and the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship. She is the 2020/2021 vice president and the 2021/2022 incoming president of the Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society). The primary-source edition published below originated in the "History and Editing" course offered by CSUF's History Department.*

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#### *Verbatim Transcript (O.H. 0570)*

LAWRENCE DE GRAAF CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

NARRATOR: Glover Young [GY]

INTERVIEWER: Christine Valenciana [CV]

DATE: April 22, 1971

LOCATION: La Mirada, California

PROJECT: Indigenous

TRANSCRIBER: Monique Garcia

CV: This is an interview with Mr. Glover Young for the urbanization of the Indian Oral History Project. The interviewer is Christine Valenciana. The

interview is taking place at La Mirada, California.<sup>1</sup> The time is 10:45am. The date is April 22, 1971. (pause) Um, Mr. Young where are you from originally?

GY: Uh, Pine Ridge, South Dakota.<sup>2</sup> The Oglala Reservation<sup>3</sup> I was—I guess I was born in Rosebud, South Dakota<sup>4</sup> but, uh, my family's home was on—more or less—on the border of the Rosebud Reservation and the Pine Ridge Reservation. Uh, I guess, uh—I guess my registration as an Indian would be at, uh, Pine Ridge, uh, South Dakota. It begins (?) there, we of course left. We lived, uh, what's, uh, now Bennett County<sup>5</sup>. This is really in that area the only organized county in that part of the state down there.

CV: Mm-hmm.

GY: Yeah, you had the Rosebud Reservation on the East and the Pine Ridge Reservation on the West end of that county. But, uh, we were—went to school at Pine Ridge, at the boarding school<sup>6</sup> it borders the state. Well, the whole school year September, I guess until May. You know?

CV: Who operated the school?

GY: It is a government owned or—and not owned. I guess you could say owned but government operated or run by the government. And, uh, I guess probably the Indian department, that I don't know for sure, but I think so. I started there when I was probably six years old—five or six years old.

CV: And you actually boarded there?

GY: Right.

CV: Mm-hmm.

GY: That was quite a way of—that's quite a thing for—uh, kids. Poor kids, you know. Take a—I can imagine my own kids. Five or six years old, when they take them, and they stick 'em in a school up there—

CV: Yes.

GY: —at that age when we all went through it, my brother, my sister, uh, at that time—at that time, I guess there were six boys at one time, there were six of us boys and, uh, one girl, she was the younger than me, but, uh, I think there was five of us led by the (inaudible). I wouldn't want my kids to go through that—and the fact is I probably swore at one time or another that

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<sup>1</sup> City in southeast Los Angeles County, California.

<sup>2</sup> Place in Oglala Lakota County, South Dakota. It is the tribal headquarters of the Oglala Sioux Tribe.

<sup>3</sup> Reference to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. It is an Oglala Lakota Indian Reservation in South Dakota. The Oglala Sioux Tribe is the poorest Indian reservation in the United States.

<sup>4</sup> Reference to the Rosebud Indian Reservation. It is an Indian Reservation in South Dakota that has a group of the Lakota Tribe.

<sup>5</sup> County in South Dakota. The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation encompasses Bennett County.

<sup>6</sup> Established by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. These schools were established to assimilate the Indigenous population.

- my kids would never go through that, and that's one reason we've brought them up the way we did or tried too.
- CV: Mm-hmm. It must have been quite an experience for a child
- GY: Oh—oh yeah, I can remember it.
- CV: [breaks in, audio is inaudible as GY is talking]
- GY: I know what I went through, and I know this goes on, yet you know, to a certain extent. But you, uh, maybe—this was back in the 30s of course, when I—when I—went there. I'm, uh, forty-three years old right now so that goes back a way, you know. Some of the first weeks of school still stand out.
- CV: What was it like when you first got there? Do you remember?
- GY: Well, of course. It was the fall of the year after having lived in the—as you should live with your folks all summer. We were out—way out moved up here. We were. We were way out in the sandhill county. The part that I lived on was not (?) our own country. It had (?) a river and horses and cattle and stuff. You know, we just had a ball (?) all summer fishing and swimming all summer, and we'd come from there sunburned, uh, to the crisp. You know?
- CV: Mm-hmm.
- GY: And—uh—then get us up in that school where you had all kinds of rules and regulations you had to live by. And a lot of it was pretty strict, you know, as far as, well, I guess they had to do that. So, uh, it seemed like there was a lot of them that were pretty hard on us, you know, the kids. But I guess they couldn't have chosen them to be to—act like your parents could, you know. But, uh, no, it was quite an experience. You got pretty homesick, there was kids crying themselves to sleep at night (laughs) (?) at night, every night. You know?
- [00:05:10]
- CV: Mm-hmm.
- GY: And, uh, all those years we—wore on and seems we'd get a week off about Thanksgiving<sup>7</sup> then about, uh, Christmas. We'd get, uh, I think two weeks. And uh—
- CV: And you didn't get to go home any other times?
- GY: No, only on a special pass or something like that. Your folks could come up and see you anytime they wanted to, or they could. But now we were actually, uh—my folks, or their own place was about, uh, probably around 80 miles from (inaudible). So, in those days, the 80-mile trip took—
- CV: Yes.
- GY: —you know, I mean, you wouldn't do that, like you would now.
- CV: Did they have a car?
- GY: Oh yeah, most of the time. Yeah.

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<sup>7</sup> Thanksgiving is a day of mourning for Indigenous Tribes.

- CV: Mm-hmm.
- GY: I'd say just about all of the time I guess—a car.
- CV: Mm-hmm.
- GY: But, like I said, that was a long drive, you know. The fact is, when we used to go to town, or we'd go to the market that was like 25, 30 miles away. You just didn't do that, uh, every day. You might go over there on a Saturday or something. That was always a big thing as a young kid you get to go to town. Yeah, uh. that does seem like a long time ago. I guess it is.
- CV: Um, did you—did they give you any reason as to why you couldn't go home?
- GY: Well, no.
- CV: The school (?)—
- GY: Oh, you mean, uh, no—no, I shouldn't, uh, say. I couldn't go home. But, uh, to the in—this school they had, uh, the boarders, which—which I was in with my family or my brothers and sister were—we were part of the boarders. They stayed at the school. They lived there. You know? And then there were the kids, the kids they called the day pupils, the day scholars. I guess they called them at that time. They would, uh—they lived in town or around—right around the town of the Agency—within. They had busing systems where they'd bring them in from the—the bus would drive up into the country and pick-up kids and bring them into school and then they'd take them back out in the evening. They were within probably a certain radius of Pine Ridge. And, uh, some of them lived right in Pine Ridge and town. Uh, we could go downtown. I'm told, well, the older kids, you know, the high school kids they could go down there every day as far as I know (?). Uh, my grandparents, my mother's folks lived in Pine Ridge.
- CV: Mm-hmm.
- GY: I mean, yeah. I guess they—they moved in there in, uh, oh, uh, probably the middle 30s or something. I remember when they moved in to Pine Ridge. Oh, uh, weekends we could go down there. Have—and then we'd have to walk down to—downtown. That was where the churches were. So, every Sunday morning they'd dress us up in our suits, and we'd walk down to the—down to church in the morning. After church, if you had relatives in town, there, well, then you could go over and spend the afternoon with them sometimes. Saturday you could go down there. Uh, I'll say this, they always had pretty good recreation for the kids. You know, they were shows. Uh, I don't remember how many now, two—a couple of times a week or something. Yeah, I think it was two. And there was always basketball games, football games, track, and baseball. We had some really good teams out of Pine Ridge. They still do in fact. Indians are pretty good athletes.
- CV: Yes.

GY: They really are. And, uh, the fact is, I think just a year or two ago, that school actually that—they don't call it Pine Ridge Boarding School,<sup>8</sup> it's Oglala Community High School.<sup>9</sup> That's the name of that, that, uh, that school.

CV: It's still operating?

GY: Oh, yes. Yeah.

CV: Mm-hmm.

GY: They've, uh, built, uh, quite a few new buildings up there now, and I really haven't been up there for, uh—so that I could really look around—for quite a few years. I drove up there a couple of years ago, when I was visiting my brother. He worked there at the time, but I didn't go around the school too much. I—but I would like to again to have uh—there some real' beautiful buildings there now, and the grounds are pretty. That, of course, is one of the older areas for the Indians, you know, the Oglalas used that area for a long, long time. You know? Uh, I think, uh, they talk about the, back in history they talk about the Indians camping on the White area.

[00:10:12]

GY: They call that, the—that area, I believe, was known as the Whiteclay Creek<sup>10</sup>—the Whiteclay area or something. And that was one of the major camping areas for them a long, long time ago. And I guess that why they built the Agency there. I have no idea when that Agency was originated or anything like that. I have no idea. It goes back a long time. That was the home of Red Cloud.<sup>11</sup> You know the chief Red Cloud. The fact is, I went to school with boys and probably some girls by the name of Red Cloud. And they're still there, some of their ancestors. One time it was known, I think, as the Red Cloud Agency, because of Chief (inaudible) [audio breaks off] I don't, there's, uh—[audio breaks off]

CV: Okay, now you're talking about your friend Red Cloud—

GY: (laughs, long pause). Yeah. (baby crying in background) I just said something about the Red Cloud Agency.<sup>12</sup>

CV: Yes. You were talking about—you were talking—telling me about your high school.

GY: Actually, High School don't come into it. I never—I didn't give you the High School. I stayed at school through the eighth grade. And I, uh—I don't even remember what year I left there. No, I don't. And I, I left there in about

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<sup>8</sup> Also called Red Cloud Indian School, established to assimilate Native American children.

<sup>9</sup> Located in Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

<sup>10</sup> White Clay Creek State Park, located along White Clay Creek in New Castle County. It is a Delaware State Park that was established in 1968.

<sup>11</sup> Chief Red Cloud was a prominent and influential leader of the Oglala Lakota from 1868 until the early twentieth century.

<sup>12</sup> Established in 1871 in Wyoming. Oversaw the Oglala Lakota, the Cheyenne, and the Arapaho people.

March, I think, you know. I went back home and finished the eighth grade down at one of the schools in Bennett County, and I graduated through the—with the eighth-grade class in Bennett County there. But then I got that idea during the summer that I wanted to go to high school in Canada, you know.

CV: Uh-huh.

GY: That's an all-Indian school, you know. I transferred from the United States to go over there. So, uh, through, this is Whirlwind Horse<sup>13</sup> (inaudible). She was a—had something to do with, uh, I think she worked out of the superintendent's office, the Indian superintendent. Indian school, you know. She was kind of a coordinator or something I don't really know what her real title was or anything like that. Later on, I guess, she got to be pretty important—pretty important in that, in the school system—

CV: Mm-hmm.

GY: —for Indians. And I went up to talk to her, and she put in a recommendation, one thing or other. I went to Canada that fall (?). I only barely started in the ninth grade. I guess at the time, it was the legitimate excuse. I liked school, I meant to go back, I never did. My, um—I stayed out there, and I went back down to my own place down after (inaudible).

CV: Why—why did you leave the school?

GY: Well, at the time—when I got—as I recall my brother was in the Army, and he got one of his only furloughs, and I met him in Kansas City.<sup>14</sup> And then decided from there I would go on back while he was on the furlough. We got back down home, and Martin left that area, Pine Ridge. And I found out that—well, I should go back a little bit. My oldest brother had a bunch of cattle. He had, I don't know, near 20 head then, I suppose, at the time. And there was no one down there to take care of them. You know? And this was in the fall of the year, uh, October, November time. (child coughing in the background) And there was no one down there, my mom wasn't able to take care of them. So, I decided I'd better try to take care of it, them. After he went back on furlough, my older brother (child screaming in the background, inaudible) So, I went back for a while (?). My oldest brother was in the Sioux (?) he was in T.V. there. He was in there, I think something like three years—four years. But, uh, so I talked Mom into letting me stay down and take care of the cattle until somebody could come around and take care of them. As it turned out, we didn't even probably look anywhere or for anybody else to look at. I took care of them by myself. I never did get back the next fall, and I didn't—I kept putting it off. I guess nobody pushed me to go back to school. I just wouldn't go.

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<sup>13</sup> Sioux Indian.

<sup>14</sup> City in Missouri located on the border of Kansas and Missouri.

- CV: Mm-hmm. Uh, you know, the first school you went to, you said, you went there almost up till the eighth grade.
- GY: I went almost through the eighth grade.
- CV: Yes, uh, were there just Indians attending this school?
- GY: I'd say yeah. Yeah. There may have been a few, very few that weren't. There were very few. If they were in there, they were—if they were going to school—it's because maybe they were an employees, you know, some of the faculty or something like that.
- CV: Mm-hmm.
- GY: But other than that, there was primarily Indians (?). And I think at that time you had to be registered (?) down at the Agency, and to be registered, I believe, it required a quarter. You had to be quarter Indian or Sioux or—I registered, I was able to register my kids in the Agency, and they still are. Even though, I don't know how that works out. I don't know. But I knew I was able to register them. Um, my wife is, uh, I guess either must be almost a quarter or an eighth Cherokee,<sup>15</sup> the rest is Sweden.<sup>16</sup>
- CV: Um, why did your parents send you to this school? Was it by choice? Or why did they decide to send you to that particular school (?).
- GY: Well, I think I really don't know. I mean, they could have, I suppose, it is probably circumstantial. Probably mostly circumstantial. Because, actually, where we lived, their home place, where they were living was, uh, I don't know five miles to the nearest public school or there were little red schoolhouses out, there little red schoolhouses (?). And I know we were five miles from the nearest one, which is at our post office, which is (inaudible). I suppose transportation was easier. And while we were in the boarding school we were fed, so, and had our health taken care of. I'd say circumstance. Yeah, I'm sure it be circumstance. It'd be pretty hard to go five miles. I mean, I suppose they could have moved into town or something, but they did have their living (?) in a couple of places. Farm ranch, you know, they had cattle, chicken, ducks, and foals (?). And it worked in that area. I suppose that everyone is in the same boat, and maybe, uh, I guess, the folks were probably lucky to have a place their kids could go to and be cared for—
- CV: Mm-hmm.
- GY: —and back in the 30s. Pretty rough, pretty rough years. You know with the drought those years (?). They always have, well, that ranch and farming takes up most of your time. I don't really know what he did during the wintertime. Of course, we had cattle. I'll say it, when we were home, we never really wanted to move. We were pretty lucky and happy there.

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<sup>15</sup> Indigenous people from the southeastern United States. They were geographically distributed to Oklahoma.

<sup>16</sup> Scandinavian nation, country in Europe.

Always something to eat even though it wasn't very easy. I'd say we had a pretty good life. You know during the summer and everything they lost a lot of cows (?) (children making noise in the background), always had chickens.

CV: Did your parents own the land?

GY: Well, this, uh, was what I'd say was a land – it was Indian land granted to its, it was a plot land reservation. A lot of land (?).

CV: Oh, was it part of the reservation that you grew up on?

GY: Yeah, it was a lot of land. And at that time, that whole area, right in that area the biggest share of the land down there was Young, was owned by a lot of Young. Although there were very few living down there. We were affected, we were the only ones down there, but the land adjoining ours and around it were owned by Young, I mean was allotted to the Youngs. But at that time, it was leased out to farmers and ranchers. Eventually it has been sold, all of it, except at one it was section 360 acres down at the river there, the old place. And that is because I mean, the reason it hadn't sold, is because there is too many heirs to it they can't find, they can't get all the heirs to agree to sell it –

CV: Oh wow.

GY: – so it would be tied up. I mean it's still there.

[00:20:55]

GY: I mean, I know that at this time it's leased out to a rancher. Uh, kind of jumping around a bit, we lived on (inaudible). And our first two children were born out there. We left there in the spring of 1950 (?). I should say that's when we left there by. I guess since that time, we've leased it out to a farmer or rancher. It's very good land. Some farm lands. I mean, there's a quarter section down by the river that's (inaudible) –

CV: Sounds like a pretty nice place.

GY: – but it was way out in the country, I mean, way out. That country has some mighty severe winters, you know. Growing up, it got pretty rough, we could just, didn't have it to make a living, I guess, they didn't use – I guess I wasn't serious enough. I think we left there in about May, about May of 1950 (?) was when we left there. I went to Pine Ridge and worked at Pine Ridge for a while around town worked at filling stations.

CV: Did you think – did you leave um the (inaudible) because you didn't like farming –

GY: No.

CV: – because you said you thought maybe you didn't.

GY: Well, I guess it got to the point where we didn't have the money and I had to work for somebody, and had I used my G.I. Bill.<sup>17</sup> I had been brave and used it at the time. We probably would have still we'd probably still be there.

CV: Didn't you think of it?

GY: Well, I had good advice. And I was young, stubborn, I guess, or know-it-all or whatever you want to say, but I didn't want to use that advice. I didn't look into it, and I eventually used that G.I. to buy this home. I very well could have used it back there, it would have set me up pretty good. I just didn't look into it. Once I started working out at work, I guess—we were married in what year? In—was it '48? Okay. October of 1948.

CV: Mm-hmm.

GY: I'm not much good with dates but we were, uh, left, I got out of the Army in 1947. And I started leaving (?) right after I got out of the Army. I worked with my dad down there for a while, farmed together. We farmed horses. I've been jumping around for a while.

CV: Why don't you go ahead and tell me the, the thing in the Army, the service?

GY: Oh yeah. Well, I, uh. (pause) Well, I should say the—I left, I went in the Army in 1945, December of 1945. Maybe I should go back a little further than that after I left, I told you I left the school.

CV: Oh, okay.

GY: Yeah.

CV: Why don't you go from there then when you left Tassel.<sup>18</sup>

GY: I left Tassel (?) in about 19—must have been 43—no it must have been 1944. Well anyway I lived, uh, a batch down the river near this complex. I took care of cattle. And then, when I could, I would stay with some of the neighbors there. (inaudible). Some of the most wonderful people took me in. I suppose they (inaudible) But I stayed with them. They had. (inaudible) (car engine starts) I, uh, worked for the different ranchers around the country there in the summer. Breaking horses, just general ranch work for the different ranchers. I did a lot of that type of work and, uh, I broke horses for this one (inaudible). Then, in 1945, I went into the Army in December. And, uh, I was an Air Force,<sup>19</sup> I got put in the Air Force.

CV: Were you drafted or did you—

GY: I was drafted, yeah. At the time, the rancher I was working for at the time (inaudible), he said, at the time, you can get a deferment<sup>20</sup> because (inaudible). He said that he could easily get a deferment for me. I didn't

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<sup>17</sup> The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 provided benefits to veterans returning from World War II.

<sup>18</sup> Name of several Cherokee chiefs.

<sup>19</sup> Service branch of the U.S. Armed Forces

<sup>20</sup> Postponement.

want to do it. If I was going to go in the Army I might as well get it over with. As soon as I became, uh, eighteen, I was eighteen in September, and October I went in for my physical, and in December I went into the Army. (inaudible) Fort Snelling, Minnesota.<sup>21</sup> From there, I went down to Sheppard Field, Texas,<sup>22</sup> for basic training. I went from there to, uh, Radio Operators' School in the Scott Field,<sup>23</sup> Illinois. I didn't like being a radio operator. They had a 16-week course. And I went 14 to 16 weeks. But there was no way I could get out of it. I mean, there was no way you could walk out. There was no way that, if you made bad grades, it just set you back, right? Not that I tried to or anything. I made good grades. You know, I've kept up with the class, I understood what I was doing. I sat in there for six hours or whatever, it was six or seven hours ago, with those darn earphones on, it just about drove me out of my mind (mumbles). Anyway, I heard about the deal. At that time, they quit drafting.

CV: Mm-hmm.

GY: So, they were after the guys that had been drafted. They were after them to get them to reenlist in the regular Army. So, they give a bonus thirty days if you'd reenlist from being a drafty to being in the regular Army. So, I went on for thirty days and received (inaudible). I got over there, and I was lucky enough to, into – well, I pulled guard duty and K.P.<sup>24</sup> And at that time, they had the Jap prisoners there.<sup>25</sup> Well, I got stationed in Guam.<sup>26</sup> I guarded prisons there for a while. And then they opened a school on Guam, and evidently I had the right IQ. They put me in there as a full lab technician, and I didn't mind that at all. It was interesting.

[00:30:08]

GY: I guess I was overseas for a little over a year, and then I came back. I got discharged (?). Got the good conduct medal (?).

CV: (says something but it is inaudible)

GY: I played a pretty – yeah, I was pretty – I was happy there. I enjoyed it. I wanted to get out. You know, I mean, when the time was up, I really had a ball – (door closes in the background) I really had a lot of fun because I've always, I guess, enjoyed meeting people. But then, as I say, well, when I got out of the Army, I went right back ranching. Working for ranchers and for farmers. (inaudible). And, uh, my dad at that time was back in the country. I should mention that, uh, my folks were divorced in the 1940s (inaudible).

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<sup>21</sup> Currently a National Historic Landmark and former Army base near St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>22</sup> Sheppard Air Force Base, located in Wichita County, Texas.

<sup>23</sup> Now Scott Air Force Base in St. Clair County.

<sup>24</sup> Kitchen Patrol.

<sup>25</sup> Japanese prisoners-of-war during World War II.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. island territory in the West Pacific.

That is one of the reasons for my leaving school. It took—if they would have been together, I probably would have gone through school. That is just a good excuse for me to go on to taking care of that, you know, figuring I had a pretty good responsibility to take care of those cattle down there, and this and that. Uh, so I get out of the Army in '47 and farmed for two years down there. Raised corn and wheat, barley, and a pretty big vegetable garden down there, raised potatoes you know, for our own use. It was a good life. It really was. It was rough during the winter time. Of course, for the first year or so you—I had a small income from the Army, you know. They had that 52-20 Club,<sup>27</sup> or whatever they call it. Where you got a hundred dollars a month if you were in the military.

CV: Oh, I didn't know that.

GY: Yeah. That is, I believe they call it the 52-20 Club. Where you got 20 dollars a week for 52 weeks. But being on the ranch they paid it to me, they mailed it out every month. I guess I got a hundred dollars in the mail. Paid expenses (?). But I left the farm (inaudible) in 1950, in May and worked in Pine Ridge for a little while. And then I heard about—this was right at the outbreak of the beginning of the Korean War,<sup>28</sup> you know. And there were ordinance that went (?) back, their Black Hill<sup>29</sup> (?) ordinance that worked (inaudible) out there. I went up to the mountain (?) and went to work there. August—August 1 or something like that, 1950.

CV: Mm-hmm.

GY: And I worked there until 1956. Had various jobs there. Spray painter for a while and a truck driver for a while. Warehouseman for a while, and then I got into, uh—in 1954, I believe, it was I got in a post engineer (inaudible). And worked as a building maintenance inspector, and I was there till '56. Which was a good job but (inaudible). And uh I should say that at about '55, '56 a couple of my brothers were living out here in California. One of them was in the Navy out here, and I guess one moved down to Oceanside. And they were going on about how great it was in California. They kept saying that I should go out and come out here. My wife got the idea that there wouldn't be any better place to live. I really believe if I had three boys instead of three girls, I never would have moved to California. I would have stayed back there. We, uh, we had a boy our oldest boy, we lost him in 1953, but having three girls, well, I couldn't see where it mattered that much, a small town or a big town. And the wife said (inaudible). I eventually gave in and moved down here.

CV: How'd you go about coming here?

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<sup>27</sup> Some states offered veterans \$20 a week if they worked and followed other regulations.

<sup>28</sup> Conflict between North and South Korea (1950-1953).

<sup>29</sup> Mountain range located in South Dakota and Wyoming.

GY: Oh, I should mention that too with—they, uh, they had this program of relocation.<sup>30</sup> I guess they call it relocation. Yeah, it was relocation. Uh, even though I was working—and I have—I should mention, it was a very good job at this ordinance center (?). I was set for life as far as a job, you know. I was proud. (child coughing in the background) I was a permanent grade twelve step four, that was as high as I can go in that grade—(child coughing in the background) a very good chance for advancement. I was the youngest, uh, in that department, there were eight I guess of us in that department. (child coughing in the background) And I was youngest by twenty years.

CV: Goodness.

GY: And I had, uh, I had the ability—and I have the ability, actually, I was able to do the work and get along well with people. I just had the feeling that, uh, eventually I would have a very good chance with that (?). But anyway, a lot of them told me I was crazy when I left. Well, maybe I was. Uh, once I made up my mind and heard about this relocation and looked into it we decided that it (inaudible).

CV: Where did you hear about it?

GY: Well, through relatives and other Indians working there at the ordinance depot. There were a lot of them that worked there. But it's a good chance to make good money and permanent job (inaudible). The fact is a lot of the better job go by Indians here (?). A very good job. Uh, heads of departments. One relative over at the renovation department, a very good man in his field, an explosives operator. A very good man. I understand he'd been sent all over to Japan, all over to Britain. But I know there were—are other Indians there that did a very good job. Uh, I've never found that being an Indian hampered me in any way. (inaudible). I believe maybe I'm getting into another subject. Anyway, I heard of this relocation, so we looked into it, and they moved us to California. We, uh—I quit, I gave notice on November 19, 1956, that that would be my last day there (?). About the first of December we moved to California. We got to Los Angeles.

CV: What did you have to do to get into the relocation program? Did you have to fill out any forms? Did you have to apply for it?

GY: Oh, yeah. Mm-hmm.

CV: What did you have to do?

GY: We went to the Agency at Pine Ridge, and they had a relocation office there. We went and turned in our application to an employee at the company (?). I guess they (inaudible), they had to compete physically—the whole family had to compete physically. I guess they'd check out your uh eligibility or something like that, the opportunity officers. But, anyway, they paid for my, you know, they paid the trip out here. I was fortunate. I had a pretty

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<sup>30</sup> Resettlement.

fair, uh, car. You know a car good enough to drive out to California. Pulled a trailer (inaudible). [audio/recorder cuts off] They uh—they never really tried to discourage me in any way for quitting that job out there. I don't know. I guess that really, what they—well, I don't know what—there would be no reason to discourage. I guess what they did, they tried to let me know that I may get a job out here that was, that maybe wasn't as good as the one I had back there.

CV: The Relocation Agency?

GY: 'Cause, it was a good job, you know, no two ways about it.

CV: So, they didn't encourage or discourage you?

GY: Right. I made it, I guess, when they found out that I really had made the move out here to California. That I had liked to move to California. A lot of it is, I wanted to—I wanted to, uh, prove to myself that I could. A lot of them would tell me that, well, I'd hate it out here and others (inaudible). You know the opportunities were there. There is no doubt about it (?). If you've got your ambitions or at least a willingness to work. (inaudible). I was pretty determined to stick to (inaudible).

[00:40:42]

GY: But this life in—when we first moved here, we didn't like it. I had never been to Southern California.<sup>31</sup> I'd been to (inaudible), I just had never been to a big city before, never anything like this. We got to Los Angeles on a Sunday night, coming down the San Bernardino Freeway,<sup>32</sup> with the traffic jammed up.

CV: Oh no!

GY: I was about ready to turn around and go back. All confused, and this and that. I suppose I was confused for four years. It is pretty rough. (inaudible).

CV: Los Angeles.

GY: Yeah. They had a relocation center there. I can see their way of, uh—it was pretty rough having some of the people come out from the reservations. I felt sorry for some of them that had never been off of the reservations, you know. Uh, at that time, there was one other family from South Dakota being processed down here, and they were all from a farm, you know, they had never lived in a town. Well, it was pretty bad for them, but they're also, I got to know, one family personally, a Navajo,<sup>33</sup> a young couple. They've never been anywhere. You know, I mean, she couldn't speak English.

CV: It must have been awfully hard for them.

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<sup>31</sup> Region in California; its largest city is Los Angeles.

<sup>32</sup> Interstate 10, also known as the Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Highway, stretches from Jacksonville, Florida, to Santa Monica, California.

<sup>33</sup> Native American Tribe, relocated to parts of Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico.

GY: Oh man. The first job that I went on here was a (inaudible) for the Los Angeles Reserve—Los Angeles Times<sup>34</sup> (?). And this Navajo boy you know worked there at the same time (?).

CV: How did you get the job? Did you—

GY: Through the office. Through the Indian—yeah, they helped me. Through different employment offices. You see, they would have a housing department, a clothing department, furniture department, and you say they would help you get these things. First of all, they'd helped you find an apartment (?) or some place to live. Well, I was, again, more fortunate than a lot of them because I had my own car. The ones that come out here on a train or bus or something, they were hurting when they get to Los Angeles. Can you imagine?

CV: (mumbles something)

GY: You know, well, I—they'd naturally have a city map. And they'd say all right, you're going to live here. And this is how you get to our office. If they had one route, you know, they'd fix it, so it'd be a pretty direct route. Well, they'd not show up on weekends, so some would kind of look around a little bit and eventually get lost in the (mumbles). But I was going to say, that this family didn't have a car. And, uh, that would be a rough thing, living in Los Angeles without a car. You can't do that. So, the families would move out here on the, they'd come out here on the train or the bus or something. That's a real rough road (?).

CV: (inaudible)

GY: And yet they do, you know. I've heard them tell you, "Be here at eight o'clock in the morning," or something. I don't know what time they have to be—well, with us, they moved us, they found us a house in Bell Gardens.<sup>35</sup> Well, now, at that time now, or even now, I wouldn't know how to get from Bell Gardens to downtown. You know from (inaudible) anyway they'd tell them. Can you imagine what time they'd have to leave home to get there at eight o'clock? But then they sent me on different interviews, places I'd never been (?) I had no—I didn't have too many problems with getting a job. Uh, because I was pretty well experienced in a lot of that type of jobs that you'd find all over the warehouses. Truck driver, driving any type of truck, the forklift, and things like that. I was a great painter, although I do look into (inaudible). I couldn't—that was one job I couldn't keep back there. It would affect my, uh, skin. I mean, I don't know I was maybe allergic to it or something. (inaudible). But anyway, they got me a job in this production plant. I worked there. Well, I shouldn't say worked, I was on their payroll for thirteen months. And I still say that, out

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<sup>34</sup> Newspaper based in El Segundo, California.

<sup>35</sup> City in California, located in Los Angeles County.

of that thirteen months, I lost a good five months (inaudible). At that time, we went on strike.

CV: Oh yes, I remember that. That was when Chrysler<sup>36</sup> (?) went on strike.

GY: Yeah, they were. I went to work just before Christmas. And I think I worked two nights, and they laid us off for a week. We got hit hard. It is terrible, you know. And they were leading up to the strike at that. So, one night we'd go to work. Something had happened up the line. The Union would say we'll walk out—we'll walk out for four hours. We'd picket for four hours. So, the next night, we'd come to company workers where we'd work for a couple of hours and then send us home. And this went on, and you'd never get a whole paycheck. Luckily, another thing that (inaudible), that had been a civil service job back there. It took a while to get the paperwork done. I had an early retirement (?) for this company. But I got that. And, you know, being on relocation you have to be sure that—well that you're on a job. So that they can't help you too much unless you're desperate—the most desperate situation, which we weren't (?). If you made short paychecks, you could make it on that. Anyway, we lived in Bell Gardens, and we weren't happy there. It wasn't our type of a town, not at all, but one of the things that we made up our minds on was that we had that retirement money plan and also the vacation pay that I had—we took this money, and that's how we got this house. We made it. We could buy a house and pay to make the payments cheaper, and we could pay rent, and we'd also have something pretty decent to live with, you know. (inaudible) So, January we got a new house (?). And we moved in, I believe, the first part of March 1956. And the day we moved into the house we went on strike for Chrysler for six weeks. (laughs) But, uh, luckily, like I said, we did have a little money in the bank. You know, but that went away right away, because when you're working and when you're on strike, there's no one that's going to hire you, knowing that you were working at Chrysler. But I scrounged around and got a couple of part time jobs. Contract with remodeling houses (inaudible). And, uh, that, uh, summer I went to work—I should say while we were on strike, I finally went back to the relocation office. That is, I should say this is, I mean, I must say that this is the only time I've ever got a job because I was Indian.

CV: At Chrysler.

GY: Well, no, not that job so much. I went back, and this guy that was interviewing—the employment—the guy that had to do with the employment that was interviewing and, uh, he got on the phone and called this guy. He found out I had a ton of experience. So, he called up a plumbing and heating group (?), a pretty well-known place in West L.A. He told me they had needed a plumber, and at that time plumbers were pretty hard to

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<sup>36</sup> Automobile manufacturer in the United States.

come by. He had got in contact with the guy advertising in the papers. Anyway, the guy said, "I've never seen an Indian plumber." He said, "I've never known an Indian plumber. Why don't you send him out, I'd like to interview him?" So, I went out there. The guy hired me. You know you don't have to be interviewed, I guess, he wanted to see if I could do it. No, I got the job, and I really liked that type of work. I did well. (inaudible). I catch on fast. They hired me.

[00:51:02]

GY: I mean, I—they, uh, they said I had a job as long as I can stay there or if I can get in the Union—the plumber Union. Uh, I never, I went down to see the Union. They wouldn't take me in as an apprentice there because of my age. Uh, anyway, I had to give the job up because I couldn't get in the Union.

CV: That's too bad.

GY: Yeah it was a good job. I liked that type of work. They were building new houses up in Hollywood—apartment houses I should say, I guess I worked for him until August or something. Went back to Chrysler for a little while. And then, in 1958, I went to work, we were laid off again by Chrysler. I went over to a friend of mine, uh, here in La Mirada. I guess he's a plumber for a (inaudible) company downtown, in Los Angeles. So, I went down. His wife and my wife were real active over at the school, you know, Saint Paul High, said her husband was doing a little hiring—

CV: Mm-hmm.

GY: And the wife (?) said her husband is doing work (?) so I went down to talk to him.

CV: (inaudible) What's his name? (?)

GY: Rob Wilson (?). So, I went down. And just (inaudible) — I went down to talk with him. He took me on, part time at first because things were slow. (inaudible) early part of 1958. But I eventually got on their schedule, uh, and, uh, at the time there were just (inaudible). And, uh, I worked for Western Union<sup>37</sup> about six and a half years. And, uh, I got to be, uh, a building operator. I guess I was a roller operator, about six years ago, no five and a half years ago. It was a real complicated piece of machinery. It's a pretty good piece of machinery. We made aluminum. I rolled it and rerolled it (?). Anything from a hundred thousand thick down to two and a half thousand. Well, anyway they went out of business because of Chrysler and this and that. Too many things were involved. They moved to Sacramento<sup>38</sup> and gave out (?) eventually, I guess. Through a friend, I was recommended, uh, the job I have (inaudible) in 1965, April, I went to, uh,

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<sup>37</sup> An American financial service and communication company.

<sup>38</sup> State capital of California.

work with the Pacific Union in L.A.<sup>39</sup> Uh, there's a (inaudible). Actually, I got my experience for Miller Lite (?) work probably through the ordinance where I worked as a building maintenance. I mean repair maintenance not, uh, scrubbing floors. The actual installation of the doors, anything that had to do with (?) the repair of the building and, uh, and naturally (?) my employment experience out there, working for this plumber out here (inaudible). I had the maintenance secure with machinery, this was quite impressive, uh. a lot of quite types of big machinery. And, uh, mechanical (inaudible) it was a pretty nice building I have to say. To be (inaudible) its naturally (inaudible) you're mechanically inclined or not to do it.

CV: Was it easy, or?

GY: Well. Uh, I've been very fortunate about what's happened. In fact, it was the only job I had where (inaudible). Uh, I suppose a mechanical awareness would do the job (?), uh, I find that if you don't have that you won't be able to work anywhere. You got to have at least awareness (?). I guess attitude that's the main thing. You have the right attitude on the job (inaudible). Mostly (inaudible). And you know in every job just to be yourself (inaudible). Anyway (inaudible). That goes without saying (inaudible).

CV: (inaudible)

GY: Well, they tried to, but that don't work. You see there's a (inaudible) lacking a person that's faster than anything (?). (inaudible). [audio/recorder cuts off] They, uh, I was there a year and a half, and then I (inaudible) for a year, and then I went on a (inaudible), and I've been on (inaudible) for three, four years. (inaudible). But, uh, I guess they had, well, I had, uh (inaudible). They never—I never tried to get a reason. (inaudible). We would (inaudible). But its—it's all in (inaudible), you know, you work for yourself, I guess.

CV: Uh, you were telling me about when you first came to California you had contacts with other Indian People. Did you have contact with one familiar (?) Navajo family?

GY: Uh—yeah.

CV: (inaudible) Did you have any contact with your old friends (?)? The ones you spoke of earlier (?).

GY: Not really. Uh, we lived in Bell Gardens for a while. And, like I said, this couple, this Navajo couple lived right across the County Court area (?). We lived in, I don't know, a multiplex type of house. There was two or three of them down there, and they lived directly across from us, and I really felt sorry for them, especially her (?), because he'd be gone to work, and she'd be stuck in the house. They had this little baby, and they had it on, uh (?), and she'd (inaudible) strap it on the board. The really old ways (?). (inaudible).

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<sup>39</sup> Presumably a reference to Union Pacific, the largest railroad in the United States.

[01:00:00]

GY: I often wondered if they actually stayed in L.A. (?). As far as I am concerned they were out of place (?) (inaudible). I don't really know if they really wanted it, or if someone talked them into it, or what (inaudible), especially her, I could never picture someone like that living (inaudible) in Los Angeles. They were rural, as far as (inaudible). Maybe that's just the old ways of talking about it (inaudible), I mean, that I've talked about (?). I just can't picture it because she worked all day, uh, a lot of the Indian people that lived that way, that adopt that way of life (inaudible), as far as I'm concerned, will never be happy in Los Angeles (?). It never (?) (inaudible). I'm not (inaudible) and it took me—oh we have been out here for fourteen years. I would tell you that ten of those years I couldn't say I was happy. I mean, I never felt really settled in the sense, there was always some thought there or wish or (inaudible) whatever you want to call it. (inaudible) It was a good life (?). But then I say, in the last four or five years, I have finally begun to realize that this is home, this is where my kids will grow up (?). I never had in these fourteen years, I have never seriously doubt thought about South Dakota.

CV: (inaudible)

GY: No, I would say at first. Well, I shouldn't say that probably too because, you know, a few times when we were broke, out of a job just like everybody else. In the 1950s, that area(?), I think, there was a recession. It was a slow time, a lot of money was taken (inaudible). No, I don't think we really thought about that. (inaudible) I might have said it sometime or another (?). We never really seriously, uh, kept the (inaudible). There were times that we were in danger of moving. I don't know somehow, someway we were able to get back down. We might have payed—we might have payed late charges for ten years. We always (inaudible). I think this house was (inaudible). It had something that we strived for. We had—I don't know what it is. It began to become a symbol or something like that. Our kids, all three of them, go to the grade school over here and they went on through Saint Paul High,<sup>40</sup> and I have never been through anything. But for me, compared to what I know of other people (inaudible). (inaudible) You had to watch your, uh, you know, uh, and, uh (inaudible). Credibility, uh, no two ways about that. Very poorly managed (?) (inaudible). I know that we wanted our (inaudible). Basically, I think that's all, that's all you can do. Basically (inaudible). Uh, I kind of went off topic (?). So, uh—

CV: Why do you think you were able to (inaudible)?

GY: Well, that's a tough one, speaking for other people that I have known about. I don't know, maybe I was little more determined. I know jobs are, I've had jobs where I've started out on the very bottom. You (inaudible). (inaudible)

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<sup>40</sup> St. Paul of the Cross School in La Mirada, California, a private Catholic school.

way down there. Too many people had missed them. They can't stand that, and maybe I, maybe I wasn't looking at trying to do good work (inaudible), and maybe (inaudible) start at the very bottom and get the same opportunity. I don't know. It started to go down and everybody that I know of got the same options. Some people are natural, [audio cuts off] but they don't have that, I would tell you that the average person was looking over the fence and was starting off with too much money or was expecting more than they should.

CV: (talking in the background, inaudible)

GY: Yeah.

CV: (talking in the background, inaudible)

GY: But, uh, if anyone asked me about the (inaudible). (inaudible). I'll tell you the, the, uh, I worked the day shift, and I drove out to East Imperial from Los Angeles every day. And there were days, so many days, where you'd be so tired coming back. Especially in the summer and fall, when it's so hot. It got so hot in the traffic I'd almost want to jump out of my car and run down the side of the road screaming. You know that, I think (inaudible) that's something really hard for me. I'm sure it affects other people out here. I was remembering one morning (inaudible). (door shuts, child crying in the background, background noise). (inaudible). [audio/recorder cuts off] Yeah, I think everyone remembers, yeah, I mean in a situation like that. You know where you're going (inaudible) that's the (inaudible) (shoveling in background), that was, uh—that day-to-day traffic will get you. I mean it will get you good. Of course now I don't have that problem. Because I work the graveyard, I'm going against the traffic (inaudible). Uh, you'll naturally (?) try and get away from it (?). I mean (inaudible), your job just every day to day, every now and then (inaudible) try recreation. Probably not going to have much recreation (?). (inaudible). That's one place you can go relax and really forget yourself. (inaudible) It's close, well, get down there. I think's its twenty miles from here down at the beach (?).

[01:10:11]

CV: Yeah, (inaudible).

GY: Uh, we've been, uh, I should say I've been camping a few times (inaudible). We went as a family (inaudible) and went a week or so to the mountains. But that (inaudible) has always been (inaudible). Last fall, we went (inaudible). We got to (inaudible). I spent the whole part of two different weeks (?) out there. I have been up in the Sierras,<sup>41</sup> you know, camping. No one else around for miles (inaudible). I think (inaudible). (inaudible). (inaudible) to get back.

CV: Do you (inaudible)?

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<sup>41</sup> Sierra Nevada, a mountain range in California.

GY: I am sure. Yeah, they went (inaudible). Uh, I don't know if this is the (inaudible) or what. I spent a few years before I got married (?) being down here alone and (inaudible), uh, I don't know how long I could take that now (?). To get away for a few days (inaudible). I suppose you could (inaudible). Although, uh (inaudible)

CV: Do you have any contact now with (inaudible)?

GY: No, no other than, uh, talking to, uh—uh, I should say no, because I've talked to (inaudible) who came down to see our situation. They settled down here. No, I haven't been in contact with anyone. I've seen a couple of films on the T.V., and they clearly are in support of a lot of them (?). We have never found (inaudible) long distance (inaudible). I don't know, it seems that we were occupied pretty well up until now we've had time pretty (?) well taken care of. (inaudible) Activities with our church, school, and this and that—[audio/recorder cuts off] We've got some very close friends here in this area some (inaudible) and, uh, before I had a relative that moved out here and lived in La Mirada for quite some time, I guess he bought a home over here, within four, five blocks or, you know, within a real short radius (?) from here. I didn't know, I found out through a mutual friend that he was living here in La Mirada, and we went over to their house a couple of times, and then he—they moved back to South Dakota. They didn't live out here for (inaudible) other than that I don't know about anyone. I have nothing against gatherings and this and that. I guess, having been out of touch, I never know what's going on, maybe I just haven't been that interested. I don't know, I just (inaudible) probably (inaudible). Uh, I enjoy talking to when I do. The times that we have been back home, we've been back on vacation a couple of times. I've talked to these people (inaudible) back there (inaudible). 'Cause I said before one of my brothers is living in Pine Ridge, and one of them lives on the reservation in Oglala (?). He works for the government and another one (inaudible) moved back in to Rapid (?) City here<sup>42</sup> (inaudible) a year or two. I guess there, building a home in Rapid City. (inaudible). My mother lives in Rapid City (inaudible). Uh, they, uh, I guess, uh, my mom was out here for a while, and she went back quite a few years ago. My sister lives around here (?). And I can think of any number of people I have been around on the relocation program for different areas (inaudible), the ones that I at least knew about at the time they went back.

CV: Do you think this relocation program has been good? Or bad?

GY: Well, it was a good way for us to get down here. I wasn't—I wasn't too happy when we got out here. It was lacking something (?), I don't know what it was. I felt it was pretty cold to some of the ones who really needed the help. I feel, I still feel that when we came out we would be like the

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<sup>42</sup> Located east of Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota.

average, not the average but any race around here, any culture or anyone moving to California, would be confused and going through the same reaction (inaudible). We, uh—but some of these people, the Indians that moved out to L.A., I could see why they didn't stay (?), they knew nothing else. They weren't trained for any particular job, but I understand that they put them through schools, uh, I don't know. I never looked into the school situation. With the Indian program (inaudible). I guess, uh, we were pretty determined to make it when we got out here. We were pretty determined to be independent, I know that. This is what I think it's supposed to accomplish in the long run anyways, to get the Indians away from dependence on the government, if you will. Uh, other than going through that school I can't ever really feel that we were dependent on the government (?) I mean, personally. They, uh, other than, uh, I don't want to say that the benefits weren't there. They've helped me, they've helped us. With hospitalization, health care, and any number of times that I needed it, they've helped, they've cared (inaudible) when I've needed it. After I got out of the Army, I was in the hospital a couple of times. (inaudible) I was born in (?) Pine Ridge Hospital (?) Well, I guess they—the relocation program was supposed to accomplish to get you away from being dependent (inaudible). I still take the credit for (inaudible). Finding jobs after (inaudible). I say that from 1958 on we've been on our own. But we've, if we've accomplished anything, we've done it on our own. By ourselves.

[01:20:09]

CV: You mentioned something before we started, actually, the interview about prejudice when you started your service (?).

GY: Oh, well, uh, I think I said that I have never actually found prejudice against me in too many ways. I know that it was there, there's no doubt about it. Uh, the only time, not the only time but the only time that I can remember I should say, is back, uh, oh, I was young. And, uh, being away from the reservation in the Army. You'd go into the bar and get a drink when you felt like it, or sit there and have two or three beers. One time, I got off of the train in a little town there, a border town. I say border town between South Dakota and, uh, Nebraska<sup>43</sup>. Well, I got off the train and went with somebody, and they said, "Let's go have a beer," and I said fine. And I walked in, and they turned me down because I was Indian, they refused to serve me. And I was in uniform, but I know about this happening to quite a number of guys. Uh, I knew how I felt at the time, and there's nothing you can do about it. I was confused (inaudible), uh, but, uh, that law was changed back in about 1954, uh, I think it was for the better. But I really haven't, uh, I know it's there, no doubt about it, but I personally have not

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<sup>43</sup> Midwestern U.S. state

run into (inaudible). I know I have never felt that at my job as far, any job. I'm sure it goes on for other races (?). And I'm—maybe if the guy was backwards a real loudmouth Indian—how should I put that? Someone would just come off to him. Some of them are backwards, they don't give as much as a (inaudible). You may not find it here as much as you find us in South Dakota or possibly other states (?). I am sure you (inaudible) I know they have different protest groups going around, uh, I understand they picketed up at Mount Rushmore<sup>44</sup> and Black Hills somewhere last summer.

CV: I hadn't heard about that.

GY: Well, it's pretty much the same group that had been up at Alcatraz.<sup>45</sup> That, I don't know, I suppose they're still there. I am not sure. (inaudible) I remember in that situation, some of the people that were involved (inaudible) went to school. But, I guess, the students (?) have been pretty outspoken. They've always been pretty outspoken. They (inaudible). (inaudible). And I can't say they have no reason to be. As far as we've been, we drove across a couple of reservations in Arizona, New Mexico, just as far as I'm concerned it's all desert. There's nothing. So much different from what we had back home. They have their way of life, and we have our own. Two different types of people altogether. Yet, I guess they have a lot of problems (inaudible). Trying to blend into society.

CV: Are you glad that you left the reservation (inaudible)?

GY: Yeah, I am. Like I said, uh, I really haven't felt like I lived on (?) the reservation for many years. At one time (inaudible) There's no doubt about it. But I think at the time when I went into the Army I was (inaudible). Uh, now that hadn't (inaudible). Some of them (inaudible), some of them went back. My youngest brother is married with four. I don't know if Carol (?) is full-blooded, or mostly I think she is full-blooded. They've adapted, they kept, I shouldn't say adapt, they've kept that way of life. Uh, the reservation with kids that's the way they live. One other brother, Art, uh, he married a girl from California. A Dutch girl, I guess she is Dutch. And they're so much, I guess they'll never live on an Indian reservation. Onita and I got pretty close to it when we got married, a lot of (inaudible). Uh, one brother lives at Pine Ridge, he lives (inaudible). (inaudible). I guess he—when he lived in California, in Los Angeles, he could do anything he wanted. You know, he's the type of person that could fall into any job and do it well. He worked from operating machinery to bartending, and he just got the

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<sup>44</sup> Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a sculpture carved into the Black Hills region of South Dakota of U.S. presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln. It is a controversial monument as the Black Hills are sacred to the Lakota Sioux.

<sup>45</sup> Alcatraz Island is located in San Francisco, California, and is the former location of a federal prison. Native American activists occupied Alcatraz Island for 19 months (1969-1971).

personality, I guess he just chose back there and (inaudible). I, uh, I really feel now when I get back on a reservation, especially Pine Ridge, I get uneasy. When I get to Pine Ridge, I feel I don't care for it, I don't know what it is about it. The people, I don't like the people there. It's just something about that (inaudible) maybe, uh, I'll (inaudible), I don't know what it is. But I wouldn't go back to Pine Ridge. I probably would never go back to South Dakota. But if I would, it wouldn't be Pine Ridge, it would be, uh, Black Hill. If I were to leave California, I doubt that we would go back to South Dakota. We like (inaudible). But I, like I said, I have no plans of leaving. It took many years to realize that though.

CV: Yeah. You started to talk about the, uh, the, uh, the incidents that had been happening at Mount Rushmore and the Alcatraz. You think they should carry on with those things, or you think they should stop it, or what?

GY: Well (mumbles), the deal that they had at Mount Rushmore, I'm not really familiar with what they were trying to accomplish there. I know now they are having, they are talking, according to the paper, the Rapid City (inaudible). They talked about going to this new mountain (inaudible). It sounded to me like they were in favor of that. (child crying in the background) They had some folks (inaudible). Uh, Alcatraz, I really—I don't know, they must have had a point. I'll be honest, I don't really know, I don't see what they accomplished. Other than proving they could stick together, I guess, that's probably they were trying to prove that they could unite with a common cause, I don't know. Like I said, I've been pretty wrapped (inaudible) with family. Maybe that shows how far I've gotten away from (inaudible). Yet, I feel very strongly about (inaudible). My ancestry (inaudible), but maybe not strong enough. I don't know. It seems like I've for a long time now.

CV: You've said quite a few things. Do you think you have any of your Indian (inaudible) left, since you've been gone for so long?

GY: Oh, yeah, I am sure I do. To pinpoint, I found out that I have a lot of feeling (inaudible) when I get out. Last fall when I was (inaudible) I really enjoyed that a lot of the things I hadn't thought about for years and years, and then get out (inaudible). I remember they all come back. It's second nature. Yeah. I don't know what else to cover.

CV: I think I really enjoyed talking to you. It's been wonderful talking to you.

GY: It's been good.

CV: I guess we can end here.

[01:32:37]

END OF INTERVIEW