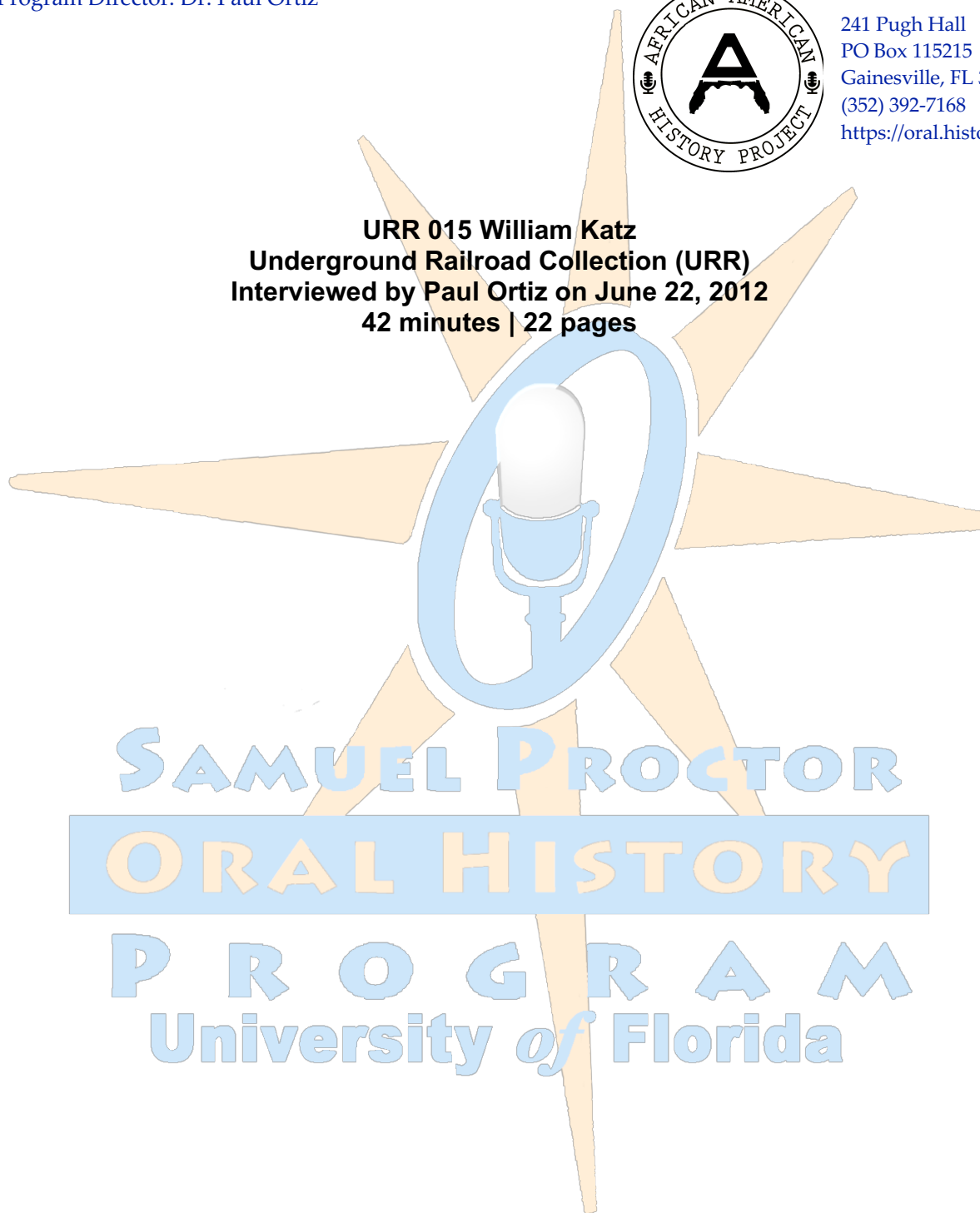


Samuel Proctor Oral History Program
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Program Director: Dr. Paul Ortiz



241 Pugh Hall
PO Box 115215
Gainesville, FL 32611
(352) 392-7168
<https://oral.history.ufl.edu>

URR 015 William Katz
Underground Railroad Collection (URR)
Interviewed by Paul Ortiz on June 22, 2012
42 minutes | 22 pages



SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
PROGRAM
University of Florida

URR 015

Interviewee: William Katz

Interviewer: Paul Ortiz

Date: June 22, 2012

O: All right well first of all, Bill, thank you so much. It's a real honor to be able to sit here in the same room and talk with you. I have to tell you I've admired your work for years and years, even before I went to graduate school. I think I was mentioning to you that I read an essay by Ishmael Reed, one of the great writers of our time—

K: Right.

O: And he said there's a book that I go to sleep with literally—it's on my nightstand—it's called *Black Indians*. So thank you so much for being with us today. I really appreciate it.

K: Well Paul, thanks for having me. Your project contributes to education and that's what I've devoted my life to both as a teacher and a researcher.

O: All right, well thank you. So can you tell me why you're here at this conference and what this conference means to you as an educator?

K: This conference means an awful lot to the United States. It means a lot personally to me, I'll get that in a moment. The Underground Railroad is a glorious institution that all Americans should be proud of because it was one of those great moments where we came together. Didn't matter what religion you were or what color you were. You were cooperating in a fight for liberty that was initiated by people who were enslaved—taken from their land, enslaved—and simply wanted to be free. They wanted the American dream. They wanted to live in liberty, with their families. Grow up their children. Take care of their elderly. Feed. Have a piece of land, and so on. And they were prohibited from doing that.

They had to escape. The Underground Railroad was the opportunity of escaping with the help of people who were there to assist them. The lines that ran northward, they were very important and it was very important that there were White people at the border lines and some of them even went south to bring people up. There were also Native American nations that helped—that people could escape to. But this conference focused—I think quite rightly, unlike the previous ones, on the routes that went South. I would like to say why this is so important.

O: Mhm.

K: The routes that went south at no point touched a free area. They were in enemy lines from beginning to end. It was like our fliers who escaped a Nazi camp after they parachuted and were captured. To flee, they had to flee entirely—even if it was France, it was occupied France, or occupied Poland, and Germany, or Austria, whatever it was—and this was the case of the indigenous people who were enslaved and the people of African descent who enslaved. They were constantly—so there were no stations here. There was no Harriet Tubman to go and get them. There was no Levi Coffin waiting at the border of Indiana or Ohio. Frederick Douglass up in Rochester. Or David Ruggles in New York. Black people, White people. I best described it as an escape. It's almost like a moving slave rebellion. The other thing is, it was treated that way. It was treated that way by the White people that did not want to lose their labor supply, and thought they were superior and slaves belonged in slavery. Anybody could report it and anybody could take up guns and fire at these people. So you really had an

horrific situation and yet people persisted. They moved from the various southern states, primarily the Lower South states because they were furthest from the northern border. It made more sense to go south because you could get to Texas. You could get to Florida, which had this whole long tradition—began with the Spanish—of loose control.

O: Mmhm.

K: And so on. And the very topography and geography of Florida made it an easier place to hide. You also had there the Native American nations here and there. I believe that one of the reasons the Native American nations were moved out in the removal that began in the 1830s, that was sanctioned by President Jackson and carried out by President Van Buren, is because these nations had become a harbor—a safe haven—for slaves that were escaping.

O: Mmhm.

K: And the reasons were very clear. It had nothing to do with some similarities, skin color, it had nothing to do with that. It had to do with the same common enemy. The first people enslaved here in the Americas were Native Americans.

O: Mmhm.

K: When Columbus came over he said on his first day, October 12, 1492, I took some of the natives by force. It's in his diary. The others—Balboa and the others—came around. They all—and the English—did the same. So there was some experience of the Native Americans, with what the Europeans were up to. The Africans that were brought in a little bit later, starting around 1502 in Hispaniola, and then we know about 1619. The Africans were then fed into a

slave system in which there were already Native American unwilling participants. These two people mixed in the slave huts and the fields, plantations, and the big houses of the New World, and soon, very soon, they were husband and wife, sisters and brothers, children, aunts, uncles, loved ones. And so they escaped. And we know that there was important difference and distinct difference between the two peoples. When the Native Americans escaped, they had a base of operations to go to. Their people were nearby in villages or towns, and they escaped there but then they came back for their African mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, brothers, and so on. On this basis these two people began to help one another and this was really—our first rainbow coalition. These were our first great freedom fighters. I've been able to trace this back to the era of Columbus, 1502, and a letter of Governor Ovando to King Ferdinand complaining his Africans fled among the Indians and could not be captured. Could not be captured. Those four words are saying something about what's going on in the hinterland out there. The Native Americans are not only taking them in, but they're keeping them.

O: Mmhm.

K: That's the beginning of this Black-Indian community that I write about. But I'm also here because the escape south was not only more dangerous, but it had other elements of an incredible nature. It had an international nature. First of all people escaping often would go to Mexico. There were thousands of people of African descent from the United States living in Mexico by the Civil War. They weren't just born there, they came south from the United States.

O: Mexico had abolished slavery in the 1820s.

K: In 1829 it was abolished by President Vicente Guerrero, who was himself a Black Indian. And he knew. He had fought in the liberation struggle. Those who escaped into Florida, in the colonial period of course, they were escaping first the British colonial rule and then the attempts of the Americans under President Madison and then Monroe—that allowed slave catchers to go in—but they were by that point embraced by the Seminole Nation. The reason was that the two peoples had formed an agricultural and military alliance because the people of African descent—many of them were there before the Seminoles, who were a break off segment of the Creek Nation and came around 1776—the Africans were already there before. The Africans had taught them methods of rice cultivation that they had learned in Senegambia and Sierra Leone, Africa. On this basis, this alliance was formed. Once again, nothing to do with skin color. Had to do with who's your ally, who would stick up for you, who would refuse to enslave you and not let anyone else do it.

O: Mmhm.

K: This to me, is an Underground Railroad network. It's actually a loose set of networks. It's actually not organized. It's often spontaneous. Sometimes it's well-armed. Sometimes it's without arm. But it's an incredibly brave, American tradition that I maintain goes back before the first Thanksgiving and is more important because it's a fight for liberty and it's a fight for justice. It's a fight to be real Americans. Free Americans.

O: Mmhm. Now you are known as a great scholar and teacher of these topics. But what did you learn so far in this conference as you listen to the panels and to people interact?

K: Well, it's been first of all an emotional experience because I've had a chance to meet many people whose ancestors I've been writing about. Phil Poppy Fixico, for example, who introduced me I've been in touch with him for many, many months now, and we never met and embraced until we got here. To learn that he and others—I can't even remember the name, William "Dub" Warrior, I know is one—have embraced my work and feel that I've made a contribution to bringing out the story—the great heroic story—that was created by their ancestors is very moving to me and inspires me to go on and on. I've also learned various aspects of the story. I can't recite them all now, they're still swimming in my mind.

O: Yeah. Right.

K: This is only the second day of the conference [Laughter] and it's still going on each day. But, it's just incredible. Hearing the archaeologists and anthropologists talk about what they have dug up and Fort Mose and what they have dug up at the 1738 first official town, and all of this. I'm still absorbing these things.

O: Mmhm.

K: But at this point, as I said, the primary impact has been actually meeting the ancestors of these stories. And finding that—course when I wrote this I was unable to do the traveling and seek out people. I had to go by the written record, but that was all right too because I wanted to be convincing to the entire

American population, and I was able to document my material. That they found basically that I had been right about this, that, and the other thing.

O: Mhm.

K: It's been very gratifying.

O: How did you start your intellectual odyssey into these fields, which were not well traveled before.

K: They were not well traveled, and in a sense I would have to admit sitting here as a White man, they were not well traveled particularly by my family except in a spiritual sense.

O: Uh-huh.

K: I happen to grow up in a rather unusual family. In the 1930s my father fell in love with jazz music and he—let me put it briefly rather than go into a whole long story about it—so I was probably one of the few White kids in the world to fall asleep listening to the music of Bessie Smith, Louis Armstrong, King Oliver, Billie Holiday. And wake up surrounded by books written by Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, E. Franklin Frazier, and so on. So when I started teaching public school in 1955, I was appalled by the textbooks that showed people of African descent—if they showed them at all—they were simply slaves picking cotton, and the story line was, they didn't mind it.

O: Um.

K: The curriculum reflected that, the textbooks reflected that, and the teacher training—my fellow teachers didn't know any of that. I began introducing materials. I used a 1920s phrase—I bootlegged what I knew about African

American history into the classroom. I found an interesting thing, Paul. I found that it wasn't just the Black kids that liked it. There were a lot of White kids that liked it too because what I was teaching was a kind of people's history—

O: Yeah.

K: That was in sharp contrast to the generals, and the great inventors, and the presidents, and Supreme Court justices that ninety-nine percent of the kids knew they would never become. But here were people they could identify with. Here were people who were fighting for freedom, keeping their family together, learning to ride a horse, some became cowboys. These are things these kids could relate to, and that was one of my first revelations. I knew I was on the right track when I was doing that. So I began actually introducing materials into my classroom—and I taught school for fourteen years. I taught seven years in New York City, Junior High School 52, and then I taught seven years in the specially integrated—racially integrated—district in Westchester County. That's where I developed my materials that became my first book.

O: Wow. So literally, your first book developed not simply in the archives with documents, but out of your teaching experiences.

K: Yeah. And what was missing in the curriculum. And started with the books on my father's shelves. And I also—I mean I did have the experience. My father was an activist. A political activist at the time. He was also a self-taught scholar.

O: Mhm.

K: He would go up to the Schaumberg Library. The great Schaumberg Library in New York City. African American History and Culture. And he would bring me up

at—I think I must have been about eight, nine, or ten—I don't remember—there.

To him it was sacred ground, and he introduced me not only to the materials and to the visuals—he particularly focused on visuals, as my books do—but he introduced me to the idea of research, and that you use research to bring material out that people didn't know. To educate. I followed in that tradition, which led to my forty books on various aspects. Now if you want to know how I got to the area of Africans and Native Americans together—

O: Mmhm.

K: I can speak to that. I was writing a book called—well my first book came out and it was called *Eye Witness* and was eye witness accounts in African American history. I used a lot of documents and I used some writings by a number of people, and I think everybody knows if you use somebody's writings, you've got to get their permission.

O: Mmhm.

K: So one of the people I wrote to because I was using three writings of his was the very famous poet, Langston Hughes. One night I was cooking my supper back in late 1966 and the phone rang, and oh my God, there was Langston Hughes.

[Laughter]

K: On the phone saying Mr. Katz I have your letter here and about your book, what kind of book is it? I said, oh Mr. Hughes it's prepared as a school text. I developed it for my classroom. He said one thing. He said Good, Good. Don't leave out the cowboys. Don't leave out the westerners. I said kind of defensively, oh no, no, I didn't. I have two chapters on them. And then he said, good, good.

That's very important. And he gave me his permission. Well I had more than his permission actually.

[Laughter]

K: As all wise people do, they give you a lesson. And if you're smart, [Laughter] you pay attention to it. What he taught me is he was speaking to the point that the Western tradition, the mixture of Africans in that tradition, the mixture of Africans with Native Americans who were part of the Western tradition was as American as apple pie, went back to the earliest days, and for that reason children should know about it.

O: Mhm.

K: For that reason actually, all Americans should know about it. His life proved it. He went to school out in the West, in Kansas. He can trace his ancestry back to Pocahontas. So he was both proud of his African ancestry and proud of his Native American ancestry. He was named after John Mercer Langston, an uncle of his who was a frontier lawyer out in Ohio, and defended his brother Charles, who was a leader in the Underground Railroad. So here are people of African, Native American descent helping slaves escape. Putting their lives on the line. And Langston Hughes grows out of this even though, where does he get his reputation? He comes to live in Harlem.

O: Harlem.

K: And he represents urban America. This phase of urban America. Of course, you know, the Harlem Renaissance and so on.

O: I can see another dimension of where—and I have to confess, I have read you talk about this element, and one other element that you bring out is the fact that for young people especially the cowboy—

K: Yes.

O: Is a larger than life character who in many ways personifies these ideals of American freedom.

K: Absolutely. And individual initiative, and being on your own. Community coming together or defending community. Bringing community together. You know, Langston Hughes was saying, Black cowboys have to ride across the pages of history just the way they rode across the western plains. And for that matter, the southern plain, since I know here in Florida you also had cowboys.

O: Yeah.

[Laughter]

O: When you were teaching, during the fourteen years of teaching, did you at times encounter resistance from school districts or from . . .

K: Yeah. I always felt what I was doing was part of giving an honest American history.

O: Mmhm.

K: I did run into trouble with at least one White parent at a time when I used some quotation of Abraham Lincoln to show that he was not favoring equality of people when he was running as candidate against Douglas in Illinois in the 1850s. He made some statements and I handed them out to my class and one parent came in and was very upset and I said, I'm sorry, but Lincoln said this. Luckily he

changed his mind. He moved on. But you know this is part of our history, and I teach it accurately. I didn't run into difficulties other than that, and actually by the time I got out of the New York City system, into the special district, a number of the teachers that I taught with were innovative, open to suggestion, and used my materials. And the administration was actually—in the Greenburgh District Eight—was willing to circulate my materials and you know they certainly didn't block it. They didn't take the approach in the New York City system, which treated Negro History Week—I remember there was a notice the principal put up on the board saying it's Negro History Week. Spend one hour talking about famous Negro leaders. That was the way it was handled. I wasn't under that kind of restriction as I moved on. I didn't have to bootleg it any more. I could use it. And as I said, once again, the response I got from students, Black and White, was—I did not expect that. They were interested, because this was a people's history they could relate to.

O: They could relate to it.

K: Yeah.

O: As you think about now the teaching of history, the writing of American History textbooks, which seem to be in the crosshairs of a lot of controversies, so on. How would you—actually let me ask a different kind of question. If you're looking at the American History textbook now, that a standard high school student is—

K: Right.

O: Has to read in high school, what would you change about that textbook?

K: Well, I first of all would change the idea that you should use one textbook. I think school systems, and I use them first because I think teachers are far more willing than school systems to be creative about it, have to take a creative approach. You can use autobiographies of people who lived the life. I think that has an enormous impact on young people, and actually brings them a living voice of those who went through the experience. Gives them a chance to not only learn, but identify with the struggles that people had. I think that the textbooks for a long time after the Civil Rights Movement responded so slowly. They started injecting just little pictures. I remember seeing textbooks that simply put in pictures of Black people—which is nice—but I [Laughter] will also tell you this, I'm looking at a chapter and there's a picture of a Black mayor, say of Chicago or Detroit, and it's not even in the right chapter. So there was some very hasty work done. I think the work has improved, but I think we constantly have to evaluate and put material in. By the time I was writing *Black Indians*, which came out in 1986 originally, there was nothing about Black Indians. Of course the whole idea of racial mixing was called by the nasty name miscegenation, and was taboo. It didn't even appear in movies until you got to movies like *Posse*. And my good friend Woody Strode—I don't know if you remember the movie—he sat there at one point in the beginning and one point at the end and he just talked about a number of the characters I had written about in the Black West. Woody and I by the way teamed up in 1990 and 1991—he with his book **of mine** and we did book tours in California jointly because we really hit it off. He was fun guy to be with. And here's a guy—I mean his life is a perfect example of that. He is a man

of African descent. He is of Blackfoot, and Cherokee, and I forget what other nation descent, and he is the first Black man to actually make it into westerns. John Ford, famous producer of westerns, took a liking to him so he appears in something like forty Hollywood movies before he even got to *Posse*. He even played Genghis Khan in one movie. He played Native Americans which was appropriate, and he played African Americans. Sergeant Rutledge in a film. He's quite an actor. He was also in *Spartacus*. He played a very key figure there. He also told me a story that I think is important for young people to learn. He turned to me one time—here's a man who's magnificently built, very strong. He integrated the National Football League out in California, with Jackie Robinson. He integrated Hollywood movies. And he said to me [Laughter], Bill, he said you know, he said I think if I had to integrate heaven, I don't think I'd want to go. It was that much of a strain. See we don't realize what people went through. And of course, he wasn't in any of the riots. He wasn't in any of the police clubbings or the savage dogs that came out of Birmingham, Alabama and so on. But the toll it took psychologically on Black people, people of color that had to break the color line and face enormous opposition, whether it was those nine lovely children going to Little Rock, Arkansas. The high school there and so on.

O: Yeah, I think of his the roles and the characters and the dignity that he portrayed, I mean, Sergeant Rutledge. I remember watching him with my father about five or six years ago and we were just completely blown away. I mean it was just incredible.

K: Yeah. Yeah. He held onto his dignity. You couldn't get him to do step and fetch.

O: No.

K: And, you know, he had that great dignity and he could play cowboys because he broke the barrier. I remember Suzanne de Passe was able to produce *Lonesome Dove* two, in which there were cowboys slouching around with Native Americans and wearing those ten gallon hats and riding the horses. And, you know, **it** was able to produce things like that that now are far more common.

O: Yeah, and I remember—the other thing that I found distinctive about Woody Strode too was that very few actors learned this—it seems like people who come through the stage learn this more is, you didn't have to speak to portray a role.

K: Exactly—

O: His presence. He had a way of—that's really difficult because usually now you see actors and they have to be brash and loud. You think of a lot of westerns—I mean Sergeant Rutledge is a contrast to a lot of those westerns where people are just booming and you know—. [Laughter]

K: You're absolutely right, Paul. He conveyed a lot with just his motions and just as you said, his dignity.

O: Yeah. Wow. How has—if you don't mind me asking you this—the first edition of *Black Indians* was published in 1986.

K: Yeah. Right.

O: Now I understand now—have you revised that book recently or do you . . .

K: Yes.

O: I apologize for not keeping up with this.

K: No, no. That's fine. It's an important question.

O: What are the revisions? How has your understanding of this area changed since 1986? What have been in important, in your mind, kind of new things?

K: Right. A lot of new material has come to me. Actually [Laughter] let me just start by saying the new edition, which just came out this year, is—first of all its expanded vastly. It's about thirty percent larger. I've got something like twenty or more pictures that replaced some pictures. Just added new ones. Whereas the original edition just kind of stopped with the 1890s, 1910s, I now deal with current issues that are going on. What are the relationships between African Americans, Native Americans, in the Civil Rights Movement that developed in the [19]40s and [19]50s? And what about the current controversies and current alliances? Because Native Americans and African Americans were brought together by Dr. Martin Luther King, who was himself also of Native American ancestry. Lot of people don't know that. Lot of people don't know that about ninety percent of African Americans have a Native American branch in their family tree. He brought them together in certain ways—for example, in the Poor People's March, with Cesar Chavez—he brought Hispanic Americans, Puerto Rican Americans and so on, as well as Asian Americans, and so forth, because that was his nature and his goal. And so there has been—I also trace in the new book the whole focus on whether Native Americans and African Americans have always walked in the same direction, in the same march. Because they didn't. Sometimes there was conflict that had to be resolved and sometimes they took very a different face. For example, the modern period a lot more Native Americans empathized with Malcolm X than Dr. King, once they got started. They empathized with his

militancy and with his idea that we're not going to fight our way into White society. You know we don't trust you to begin with. Why integrate into this air-conditioned nightmare that has left us out for so long. So there was a lot of sympathy and empathy with the Black Power movement of Stokely Carmichael and the others. So I kind of deal with those questions. I don't have my sheet with me of the difference. I also go and add new material in many of the chapters because also they both suffered grievously and sharply at the same time after the Civil War, when Native Americans were accused of aiding the Confederacy and that was used by the federal government to take away their lands and sell them for twenty-two cents an acre or something like that. Mainly to White speculators, not even settlers. And of course African Americans lost out after the Civil War after they gained their freedom and fought—200,000 plus strong fought for the Union Army and Navy. Then after a brief period when the federal troops were withdrawn, the Ku Klux Klan White supremacy returned, and they were denied the ballot box and reduced to a new form of slavery. All of this happened both to Native Americans and African Americans at the same time. This sharp reduction just when people felt they were going to make progress. 1876 was the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and that was also the year of Custer's Last Stand and the White nation got furious that a group of Native Americans had so defeated one of their generals. They completely ignored he was invading their territory and even disobeying the orders of the President of the United States.

O: Mmhm. So you feel that the revision or the updated materials you have been able to address a broader range of issues, perhaps?

K: Yeah.

O: Kind of bring it up more—closer to the present?

K: I've definitely brought it up closer to the present. I've definitely intensified the look at some of the conflicts that developed for both of them and how they handled them, whether it was similar or dissimilar. And get into some of the figures that played—I talk about George Henry White of North Carolina for example, who's a former slave. He's of African and Native American descent and he's the last person who had been a slave who was elected to the U.S. Congress. Serves two terms and he can't back and serve again because by the time he leaves the Congress in 1900, North Carolina has passed a law saying Black people cannot vote. Can't run for office. It's as simple as that. This man, by the way, is brave enough—he's the only Black man in the last of his two terms in the entire U.S. Senate and House of Representatives—and he introduces the first federal anti-lynching bill, and that infuriates people. I mean here's a man who has to get up there, like Woody Strode had to try to try to integrate things, and he has to endure these darky stories that his fellow Congressmen and Senators are telling. And yet he gets up there very calmly and introduces this anti-lynching bill and he says you know something, lynching is such a horrible crime that guess what, I think it should be treated the way we treat treason. With the death penalty. Well that didn't endear him to many—[Laughter]—people. And of course his bill, as he said, slept silently in the Judiciary Committee.

- O: I remember reading the final speech that he gave.
- K: Yeah, magnificent.
- O: Just incredible. He has a sense—that he says you know you've got rid of me in the short term but we're coming back.
- K: We're coming back. [Laughter]
- O: Yeah. It's just incredible.
- K: That's it. We will rise again. Yeah, he was a magnificent orator. He was self-taught. Was well educated. He got a White judge to train him. In those days you didn't have to go to law school if you got somebody to train you. There he gets elected twice to the U.S. Congress.
- O: Well, Bill, I know you have a busy schedule but just a couple more questions if I could. One, what are you working on now?
- K: Right now. First of all, I'm delighted to be at this session where I can share my work with so many people who were interested in the first edition of *Black Indians* and showed them what I have in the second. Of course, meet so many people who are represented in the book and that I wanted to hug and that that they wanted to hug and shake my hand.
- O: Yeah.
- K: At this point I'm not thinking much beyond as I'm trying to get the second revised and expanded and updated edition out there before people [Laughter] who maybe say, oh we have the book. They have to know that it's quite a different book now. If you add a hundred pages to a book—. [Laughter]
- O: Right.

- K: Especially if it's only a two hundred page book to begin with.
- O: Exactly.
- K: You've done a lot.
- O: Wow. Kind of thinking about a wrap up question, how would you advise the National Park Service as it continues to hold these conferences on the Underground Railroad? Where should they be in your estimation? What should they be emphasizing? Where might they go next? How can they keep this a vibrant educational experience for people?
- K: First of all I want to say I'm tremendously impressed with what they've done. That they have gotten around to the Underground Railroad that moved south, as in this conference. I just today heard that the next conference is on the Underground Railroad during the Civil War. Well I happen to know a lot about that and I happen to know that it was really—it was a flowering because you had a lot of help then. There were Union soldiers moving around and a lot of the Confederate's people who were running plantations were off to war, so you had a very vibrant Underground Railroad. I know I've written about it in several books, and because of the time there's a lot of pictorial documentation. There are photographs and so on, so I think the National Park Service is definitely going in the right direction. I applaud them. I hope I'll be included in some of the plans because I do have a lot of material, visual and documentary material, that will fit in. I don't know what else to recommend as a matter of fact. As I said to you, I'm so impressed with what they've done here in this conference and particularly that they've involved the descendents of those who participated in the history so

they're getting a fresh look from the horse's mouth, so to speak, of what really happened. People heard it as kids from ancestors and so on. I think that's an excellent approach. It's not just scholars that have scribbled this and that, and guessed at this and that, they have to mix with people who say, wait a minute my family said this and that. I love that kind of people's approach—

O: Yeah.

K: To things. And as I said, the topic this time and the topic next time, if that's the direction they're going well I'd have to think hard to think what else they should do [Laughter] next. I mean I might, but I'm not ready to offer anything yet.

O: Okay. Any final thoughts or issues we haven't talked about that you'd like to kind of throw in?

K: Just briefly I think I'd like to say that our history is important. For a long time we swept a number of things under the rug. We felt if we talked about slavery, we'd make Black and White people angry at each other. But, I think we all remember when the mini-series *Roots* came out.

O: Hm.

K: It had an enormous impact not in the Black community, but in the White community. People looked at it and for the first time they said, wow, we did that thing? You know, there's something here we've got to look at. It's important—if you go into battle against an enemy, say, you at least have to know what they have. You have to know their weaponry. You have to know your own background. You have to know what you have. We have preceded in this country with blinders on. We have not trained our children what to expect from each

other. We haven't trained them what to face often. We threw them out in the armed forces and without knowing the kind of enemy they were facing. What I think we have to do is we have to continue this kind of people's education that brings children up to speed on what really happened in their streets so they'll become decent citizens who can make the kind of decisions that are correct at each time. We have made incorrect decisions at times. We have committed blunders. We have to learn from them. If the Pope could apologize for slavery, I think a lot of other people much lower than the Pope could apologize or at least a look at things in order correct them. We have to look toward the future. We have to get information and knowledge, and we certainly have to prepare our children if we want better citizens and a country that survives.

O: Mhm. All right. Bill, thank you so much for sitting down with us today and I really appreciate it. It's been very educational for me.

K: Well Paul, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity and for your interesting questions.

O: All right. [Laughter]

K: I really enjoyed it.

O: All right. Great.

[End of Interview]

Transcribed by: Erin Conlin, November 29, 2012

Final edit by: Ryan Morini, March 3, 2019