

UL 30A
SUB: Earl Brooks
INT: Lew Barton
Oct. 30, 1980
JF

B: This is November 10, 1974. I'm Lew Barton interviewing for the American Indian Oral History Program of the history department of the University of Florida at Gainesville. Today again we are privileged to be on Broadway Street in Baltimore, Maryland, at the American Indian Studies Center, and very shortly we will be interviewing one of the, one of the executives of the education department here. And I'm going to ask him to tell you his name and all he's willing to tell us about himself and his duties here. Would you do that for us?

S: Yes. My name is Earl Brooks. I am the son of the late John J. Brooks and my mother, Lela. I was born and raised in Pembroke, went to Pembroke State College, where I received a B.S. degree in 1959. Immediately after receiving my degree I left Pembroke with my family, came to Baltimore and began working as a teacher in the Maryland Training School for Boys. I worked there for approximately seven, eight years, and then taught in the public school system in Baltimore County for one year. And at that time I chose to leave the teaching profession for a time, and I got myself involved in real estate and construction business. And at one time I had approximately (30) pieces of property here in Baltimore. Along about 1971, in the fall, had an occasion to meet a graduate student from American University who was an anthropologist and wanted to teach a couple of our Indian people here in Baltimore to read. He was aware of the illiteracy which was so prevalent among some of our people here. So I brought him down into the community here, his name was David Petchee by the way, and we started out to, to begin an adult basic education program with two or three people, I believe Peace Locklear (?) and one or two others started out with us initially. And this thing grew and grew until about a year later we had approximately (25) people involved in this program. It was about this same time that they started talking about the Indian Education Act, and of course the Indian center here had applied for funding under those provisions, and I was selected as the director of that Indian education

S: program. And of course, why, I began work here at the Indian center about a year ago, in fact a year ago this month, and attempted to continue the work I had been doing along with the other duties and responsibilities which were ~~in~~ come about as a result of my employment with the Indian center. The Indian Education Act, of course, is part A, which we're dealing with, is basically concerned with those children who are yet in school. And we have what I believe is a very good program going at this time. We have a tutoring project which is what I feel is our basic and perhaps the most important program. And in this program we use approximately (25) high school and junior high school students to tutor our Indian children in the lower grades who may need some form of special help or even just some special attention to let him know that someone is really concerned about him and wants to see him be successful. Our tutors are doing an excellent job and we're beginning to identify some future leadership, and of course we're giving a considerable amount of attention to this, the development of this leadership. One gal who comes to mind immediately is Patricia Strickland and of course her sister, they're twins, and they've been doing an excellent job.

B: By the way, we'd like to, are fortunate enough to interview one of your tutors and I was wondering if I could get at least a short interview from a couple of the others, you know?

S: Yeah, I'd be happy to have you talk to any of them you'd like to, Lew. In fact if I can help you in locating some of them, why, feel free to call on me. Did you have anyone in mind?

B: No, no particular one ~~as~~ as many as you can spare, you know, if, we're sort of breaking in on your schedule here and everything.

S: Now they'll begin coming in here about 1:00. Most of our kids are on a half-day schedule in school and some of them go from eight in the morning until 12, 12:30 and they usually get in here about 1:30, and then there's another shift who goes from 1 until 4:30, so ~~it~~

B: This, I understand, ~~I understand~~ it has been a very successful program and perhaps you could point out some of the things you've learned ⁱⁿ ~~and~~ developed ⁱⁿ ~~into~~ the program and so forth that might be helpful to others along the same lines. As I understand this is the same sort of problem, is universal, you know. For many years minority groups were not privileged to have as good schools and so forth and there are programs that sort of help them catch up. ~~But~~ ^{And} this is an excellent way of doing it, and ~~if~~ anything you could tell us about your success or problems you've encountered would certainly be appreciated.

S: ~~Mr~~ Lew, I don't feel that there's any particular method of tutoring that is the best method. I feel, Lew, that the most important thing about the whole program is that you establish a good relationship with this child, who may be having some problems in school, and make sure that he is aware that you're concerned about him, that you care about what he's doing. I think this in itself does more to kind of turn him on and get him started, and get him back on the right track than anything else. Now once you've kind of made these conditions right, why, he's ready to do anything to please you. So we do capitalize on this relationship and, ~~we~~ again, I feel we've been very successful in this method. We've changed the attitudes of a lot of kids and we have brought up their reading levels a year or more in the very short time that we worked last year. ~~Mr~~ I must admit that the program is brand new last year and was a learning situation for all of us.

B: Sort of playing it by ear.

S: Yes, that's right. We made some mistakes and we'll no doubt continue to make some, but I believe that only those people who are not doing anything are going to, not make any mistakes.

B: Right, ^{exactly,} ~~right.~~ I wanted to ask you about things. I was interested that you are using students to do tutoring. Perhaps ^{they're} ~~there~~ somewhere along about the same age group or . . .

S: Not necessarily, Lew. These kids that we're using are high school students who help the children in the elementary grades. Now I've arranged to get some tutors

S: from a couple of the local colleges. One of them is a girl's college, Goucher, which is a pretty exclusive college, it's certainly out of the reach of most of our students here if they had to pay their own way. But getting back to the tutor, I feel that one of the most important things in this relationship is the fact that these tutors are Indians, and ~~these~~ children who are being tutored have no difficulty in relating to these people, because they know that they're talking to someone who knows what he's saying. Where he may be quite reluctant to discuss his personal feelings and problems, etc., with his teacher, he doesn't feel that in talking to me or one of the tutors or one of my aides. Because he can quite readily identify with these people. ~~It~~ ^{is} incidentally, I'm finishing up a master's degree at American University in Washington, and I had a very able professor over there, Dr. Paul Leady, who kind of bears out my statement that I just made about new method. He says that you teach reading with love, and ~~to~~ I kind of agree with that. So we have found that once you ~~do~~ let these children know that you're genuinely interested in him and his success, and don't think he don't know if you're for real or if you're just kidding him. B: _____

S: yes, indeed.

B: You ~~will~~ will pardon that ~~an~~ expression. I wanted to ask you about an attitude -- is there a tendency among our students to harbor an inferiority complex, maybe because they've been, what we say among ourselves, held down for so long?

S: Unfortunately, Leu, I believe this is true in a great number of cases more than would normally ~~it~~ would be prevalent, I believe, and I believe also that this may extend on into our adult population, and it might account for the lack of the adult population taking part in and participating in programs which are readily available to ~~them~~ ^{of} within walking distance ~~to~~ their homes. Also I believe that the possibility that they may be identified as blacks sometimes contributes to their ^{being} reluctance ^{to} to participate. I know many of the community action agency programs in the years just recently past went practically begging for Indian people to

- S: become involved in ~~them~~^{them}, that we've sent many people to these programs, but for whatever reason they just didn't pan out. And I personally believe that ~~in~~ the fact that most of the participants in these programs were black and also most of the time ^{with} the instructors or persons administering the programs were also black, that our people have had such a hassle ^{about} their identity for so many years, ~~and so~~^{until} I believe they're very sensitive about this.
- B: I can imagine this would, would create something of a problem. About how many, did you say, about how many students do you, does this entail? ~~_____?~~
- S: Well, we have approximately 500 kids in school, here in the Baltimore city public school system. And one thing that is, is quite alarming to me, ^{why} is that by the time these people reach ^{twelfth} 12th grade, why, we only have about one, two graduates. We desperately need some type of a program to follow these kids through high school. Well, they even start to fall out of school in sixth, seventh grade, you know, or start to, they lose interest school, start getting in trouble in school and start staying out, and then he's going to get in trouble if he's on the streets. And by the time he's (16) he's totally turned off with school. Of course (16) is the legal age which he can drop out, and many times when . . .
- B: There's nothing you can do about it.
- S: No, not unless the parents are willing to take some steps, or make some effort to keep him in there, and many times he's so far behind at this time that ~~on~~ it's pretty difficult to get him back in to school. Also, along those same lines, I don't believe it's even worthwhile to throw him back into the situation that he just left and had him totally turned off anyway. Now I do believe that ~~with~~ our tutoring program or whatever method could be expanded to deal with this situation. In fact, I feel like I'd like to take that problem ^{on} ~~home~~ if I had the staff to handle it. We've been doing a little bit of research on absenteeism among our Indian kids, and I found that last year from November, that's when our ^{program} started, so it must have been ~~in~~ sometime early spring that we started kind of keeping tabs on kids. And we took one school, ~~in~~ School 27, and I believe that

- S: was about 53 kids who chalked up over 1000 clock hours of absenteeism in a very short period. Now this is about five years of school, if you start looking at it, that somebody lost. And just this year we started to look pretty closely at some of our high school students who are missing a lot of time or more than a reasonable amount of time, and since I am in constant touch with most of them, why, I'm going to speak to them about it, especially those who are tutoring, because I feel that if they're going to be tutoring, certainly they should be able to set some kind of an example for the children that they're working with.
- B: But in the matter of our identity, the fact that we are a special people, this does enter into it, doesn't it?
- S: Definitely. Well, I think this has been pointed out by the president when he appointed this national advisory council on Indian education, and a further confirmation of it was the fact that Congress appropriated funds for the special needs, you know, of Indian people. I've been working recently with ~~the~~ people at the state level to try to get them to come on and follow suit, and give us a man at the state level who is responsible for Indian education. Now I feel that it would be the responsibility of this person to assess the resources of the state of Maryland, and kind of see that it trickles down to the Indian community or else point them to it, and say, hey, did you know that so and so was available to you. Now this is one of our greatest problems in getting this Indian education program off the ground, is the fact that we didn't know who to go to for what. Now I feel that in light of the president's actions and the further actions of Congress, that it's incumbent upon the various states and also the local school boards to see that these people are in the proper places to see that their programs are more, made more effective for Indian people.
- B: One question occurs to me as we go along. In your duties do you ever find it necessary to consult with the teachers of Indian students, maybe to explain something to them or point out certain things that they may not have known? Maybe if

B: they didn't have Indian students in their previous experience.

S: Yes, I have, Lew. In fact this was one of the first things that I did when we started to get this program organized was to try to meet with the various teachers in the schools where our kids were in attendance. ~~Wh~~ Wh this was done by showing up at one of their regular faculty meetings to tell them about the program and what we were doing, and how we hoped to accomplish it. And at the same time, though, we tried to follow the teacher's suggestions and recommendations for each student because while he is an Indian and has his Indian characteristics and idiosyncrasies, ~~that~~ I feel that this teacher is in the best possible position to recognize any academic difficulties that he may be needing. Now the fact that this Indian tutor is working with him, and the fact that he can see other members of my staff entering into his life, perhaps on a daily basis, and he is aware of our concern for him. For instance, right after we started gathering data on some of our high school students who were missing more time from school than I thought they should; I confronted one this last week, and said, "What about so-and-so, when you were out of school?" She says, "How did you know that?" This girl was getting ready to go with her family down to North Carolina this middle of the week now so, well, now you've already missed five days of school this year. So she wondered how I happened to know all that, see, so... ~~---~~

B: You do keep tabs, don't you?

S: Yes I do, and I've said to all of my tutors about a month ago, now when you get your report card I want you to bring it down here. I want to see it. ~~Now~~ I says, now I want to see your card and I'll sign it for you. But ~~up~~ I was not so much checking up on them and being nosy as it might appear, as I am concerned that I do want to know if they get into any problems that, see, sometimes they'll try to conceal this information from me. ^N Now last year, at the end of school, I found out that there was at least three or four of our tutors who had failed a subject or who had done rather poorly in certain areas, and I thought that this year I'd try to not let that slip by me.

B: Well, then getting organized, of course, it's so difficult to get exactly the right people you want always.

S: That's true.

B: But ~~Mr. Brooks~~, you know one thing that strikes me, impresses me very much, Mr. Brooks, is the fact that everybody ~~that~~ you have working around this center is very special kind of person, a very specially qualified person. Take yourself for example...~~---~~

S: It takes a certain breed of cat (chuckle).

B: You're so very well qualified, ~~Mr.~~ your broad, your well-prepared, your great education, and you have so many admirable characteristics. I wonder if it is difficult to get people of your caliber. I think you've, you've been fortunate so far.

S: Yes, I have, Lew. Mrs. Amos, who is my able assistant, ~~is~~ that gal can do anything, she's a Cherokee, married to a Choctaw (chuckle), and ~~is~~ she is very much concerned about our young people, and she's very active in her church and community work, and she is a real asset to my program, she really is. In fact all of my people are.

B: Our students relate well then to other, other Indian people no matter from what group?

S: Yes, I've found this, I've found this to be true. It doesn't have to be a Lumbee to relate to a Lumbee. I feel that Indian people are, have gone through pretty much the same types of problems, and are still suffering from some of those problems, and ~~is~~ while we do have individuals, ~~who~~ we ~~is~~ again have pretty much the same problems. As one fellow put it, we have all the firsts that nobody else wants, like the first alcoholism and the heart diseases, and ^{all} this kind of thing.

B: Well, it's certainly encouraging that you have this very ~~special~~ special program. It's a plus thing, it's a positive thing, just in your approaches they're positive. Everything I've observed here has been along positive lines.

S: Well, I guess I kind of got this attitude from my father, Lew. He was a man who had a tremendous respect for education. He was (21) years old, he was still in the

S: seventh grade. And believe it or not when my wife finished college in 1949 he was picking up a B.S. degree in the same class. Now that takes a lot of guts.

B: He had to ~~do~~, I can understand that, because our students, oh, virtually all of our students, you used to have to stay out of school about half the time to make enough money to go the rest of the time, ~~farming. Not a part of thing.~~ ^{I don't know} ~~they'd let~~ ^{which,} ~~you,~~ ^{uh} what particular problems were there but, I know that this is generally true, especially farming played such a prominent part in our, in all our lives.

S: Right, that was about the extent of it. I remember when I was a youngster, I didn't remember anybody having any job to speak of unless it was saw mill or something like that, working on a farm until the war years when everybody started working at Fort Bragg. I guess they were making about a dollar an hour or something. That was big money.

B: I was talking to Commissioner Blue, Commissioner Brantley Bue the other day and we were discussing something about our background and Brantley said, ~~uh~~, you know, I told Brantley that I was proud when I was making fifty cents a day, felt lucky if I could collect it, you were under great pressures. (chuckle) Brantley said, "Well, believe it or not, Lew I've worked for less than that." I believe he came down with 35 and maybe even 25 cents, ~~any~~ I said "Brantley, how does it happen then that you are now an appointee of the President of the United States?" (chuckle) I wouldn't want to be in his _____ he laughed, he said, "Well, I scratched my way up." (laughter)

S: Well, ~~I~~ I knew Brantley very well as I worked with him, been to several meetings with him over in Washington since I've been in Baltimore, and I would like to attribute his success, just like many other of our people, to education, Lew. Now, true, he may have still had to scratch despite the fact that he was educated . . .

B: Even to get the education.

S: Yeah, but if he hadn't had the education he would have never had that opportunity. And I feel that really a lot of our problems are going to be solved through education.

- S: When I say education I use that in its broadest sense, not reading and writing as the old saying goes.
- B: Our people have been preaching what we call "preaching the gospel of education" for a long time now. Somebody's been listening. 'Course that somebody's been adopting those methods.
- S: It's a kind of a thing that kind of grows on you, Lew, or at least I've had that experience. Now in '65 I walked out of the school and I says, well, that's the end of it for me. That's when I started getting into real estate, and doing some construction work. I like to work with my hands. And ~~was~~ I just couldn't stay away from it, you know, and then I met this guy, Dave Pechee, and he and I started to work, and I found myself caught up in another degree.
- B: I know what you mean, There is a special lure, education does hold a special lure for so many of our students. Somebody was complaining the other day among some of our Lumbee friends around Washington and some news reporter had written an article. They described some of our people as the elite among the Lumbee, and ~~at~~ this was a little bit resented, I think. I said, well, we're lucky to have a Lumbee. ~~_____~~. We're the only ^{fruitful} ~~fruitful~~ American Indians that I know of that have a solid middle class.
- S: Yes, I guess you're right, now I'd never really thought about it like that, Lew. That must have been some of our good friends over there in Prince George's county. (laughter) Of course we have ~~them~~ ^{them} over there in Montgomery County too, all around the capital over there. A lot of our people working over there now. I've talked with Pernel Sweatt, I believe he's director of Part B of this Indian Education Program now, yes.
- B: That's on a national scale.
- S: Uh huh, and Dr. Bill Dummerit ~~is~~ has the other part, part A over there. Both of ~~them~~ fine men. I've dealt with both of them.
- B: Our people have done so marvelously well in so many areas. I've been so proud of

B: them wherever you go. For example there's a complete colony of our people, government workers in Washington and around Washington. They have their own club that you can [?]_____.

S: Right.

B: This is so marvelous. We're getting an opportunity perhaps for the first time, but it was real rough to begin with.

S: Had an occasion to attend ^athe conference on this Indian education, perhaps about a month ago over in Washington, at the Hilton over there I believe, and met some of our folks from home. Mr. Hunt, Albert Hunt, and Locklear, ^{there} were several of them over there, Weldon Lowery, and it was kind of good to run into somebody, you know.

B: I know what you mean. Our people are scattered out all over, and wherever I found them they are doing well.

S: Yeah, ~~they~~ they work hard. Those of them that I've had an occasion to work with, why, they're extremely hard workers and they don't mind going the second mile at all.

B: That's great. Do you find that being Lumbee or being Indian is an asset or liability, [?]~~is~~ (chuckle)

S: Well, you know right now it's kind of popular to be Indian. (laughter)

B: It hasn't always been like that has it?

S: No, it hasn't, Lew. I have been on both sides of the fence. Right now, of course, we're enjoying this recognition that we are receiving. But certainly years ago it was quite different and ~~uh~~ I know that we've been discriminated against in the areas of housing, and jobs, the whole smear, but hopefully the situation is getting much better now than it once was. But I had an occasion to tell somebody just recently that I was kind of proud of my complexion, being a little bit black and a little bit of white. Because I take advantage of it, if I happen to be traveling with some blacks, I'm black as they are, and I'm accepted that way. And if I'm traveling with white people they accept me as white people, and there's nothing

S: said one way or the other. (chuckle) So ~~to~~ I get some good mileage out of it.

B: Oh my, ~~that's~~; that's horrible.

S: So again, it depends on how you look at it, Lew. I try to play it positive if it can be, you know. Why let it make it work against you when ~~it~~ it can be turned around and make it work for you. Somebody said that's turning your lemons into lemonades. (Laughter)

B: I haven't heard that expression, but I sure like it.

S: I don't know whether you're aware of it Lew, we have a man here, Herman Hunt, we call him our Indian Commissioner for the state of Maryland, of course he's not really that but he is on the commission of Afro-American and Native American Historical Society. He's been working real hard to help us get the recognition that we need here. In fact, one of the projects he and I've been working jointly on is to get the state to establish some form of identification for Indian people, especially ~~with~~ those of us who want to be identified. It's true that many of us have been assimilated into whatever race, whites, Italians, or whatever, you know. And because of this ~~is~~ there's many, many of them who are not receiving the benefits that are available to them under ~~the~~ this Title IV legislation, the Indian Education Act. So just about two weeks ago I was in Annapolis talking to Dr. Glenwood Brooks, incidentally he's black, I don't know if he's my relative or not. (chuckle) But, anyway, he is chief of Maryland's desegregation program for post-secondary education. And he tells me that this project is ~~to be~~ ^{to be} funded July 1 by HEW, and also that we had approached him at a very opportune time. I have pointed out to him that we can't really take advantage of the program that he is proposing regardless ^{of} which way it went, because our kids are all being stifled before they get there, you know, and he shunt it off into some other direction. So he is working right now to get myself, Herman Hunt, Dean Jim Neal over at American University, and been talking to W.J. Strickland over at Cena about this thing. He's very much concerned about it, so hopefully in the very near future

- S: we're all going to sit down with the Superintendent of Education at the state level who is Mr. ^{W(?)} ~~St~~insinbau, and we're going to try to get more of our people into higher education. So ~~we~~ we keep busy, there's always something to do.
- B: I know what you mean, and I think our people ~~our people~~ are happy doing pioneering-sort-of work, you know manual ground work.
- S: I can't, I can't stand a humdrum routine.
- B: You like something to challenge you.
- S: I have to have something to keep me challenged and motivated, Lew. I just couldn't sit behind no man's ^S desk, you know, for day after day.
- B: It gets, the routine gets a little dull, doesn't it?
- S: Yeah, well, fortunately in the job that I have, I spend perhaps half my time behind the desk and half of it on the street or wherever, in the school, wherever my, wherever it takes me. You know, if you get yourself involved in what I call a people business, you may be called on to do anything. I have been called on to get a lunch card for a child who's father had been out of work for several months. And at the same time I may be dealing with the chief of desegregation for the state of Maryland. (laughter)
- B: That's great.
- S: So we do keep busy, and I like it that way, I wouldn't have it any other way.
- B: It's marvelous. I like to ^{do} work in virgin territory, create new things. Perhaps much that you've learned here could be of use in other areas, after all we ^{are} about the smallest _____.
- S: Yes, I would imagine so, Lew. For instance the Baltimore city school system is the only system in the state of Maryland who has taken advantage of the Indian Education Act, and I've been raising some ~~case~~ ^{case} about that too.
- B: How about the, aren't the Mohawks in Maryland? What groups are in Maryland?
- S: ~~Oh~~ we have a group of the Scataways down in southern Maryland, Charles County, Saint Mary's County, and Prince George's County. I believe that ~~maybe~~ perhaps the

S: largest group now. Most of the Indians have ~~an~~ kind of lost their identity, and this has come about, I believe, because the state hasn't really made any effort to help them maintain their identity. For instance, to give you a perfect example of that, when my wife went to the hospital to give birth to our youngest daughter who is now 14, nobody asked her about her race, they just look up and they say you're white, you're white, if you're black, you're black, and nobody knows the difference until the birth certificate comes from the office of Vital Statistics and you find out you're white. (chuckle) Now I had the same thing happen to my daughter when she went to get a driver's license in this state. They sent her ~~her~~ driver's license which said that she was white, and of course she was a little unhappy about that, and she sent it back and had ^{them} correct it.

B: I wonder, do they give any trouble about doing this, I mean?

S: Well, it depends on the area. Now here in Baltimore city, they ~~are~~ have been, pretty generous about doing this. I don't know if generous is the right word. At least they've went along with it and done it. Now with some of the work we've been doing with the people down in southern Maryland, they have flat refused to do it. ~~My~~ my good friend of mine, Bill Tayhack, has been working down there to try to get an organization going, and he has done a real good job. I believe he's got about 150 ^{people} that he's working with down there, and he just started, I guess ^{about} three or four months ago.

B: Well, you've set a precedent here, sort of, and you can always refer to the attitude over here and say, now, ~~if~~ they do it and so what's your objections?

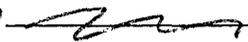
S: Yeah, well the lawyer for this corporation that they've formed down there has indicated that he's going to have to go to court to establish a precedent, and after that perhaps it won't be so difficult for them to do their job.

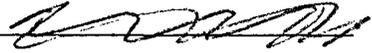
B: Oh my, he sounds stubborn. (chuckle) Knowing the determination of Indian people I would say he's fighting a losing battle. (laughter) Oh, I was amused the other day, Mr. Herbert Locklear took me out and we looked at this very lonely looking Indian statue ^{out} there at the park, what's the name of this park?

S: Patterson Park?

B: Uh huh, "On the Trail" is the title of it. I said, well, this would be marvelous if they would just let you bring it over here where the Indians ^{are} and I said, yeah, it ^{looks} lonely out here. This would be the appropriate place for it, this is where the Indian mess is, but I don't think it's going to change, do you?

S: No, no, not in our lifetime, Lew. It's going to take a lot of work.

B: Maryland's always going to have Indians who are cautious of Indians. 


S: Right.

B: They are, I think when people are faced with the prospect of losing their identity, for example, some of the intergration process, I think that if they haven't thought about it seriously before they begin to think maybe.

S: Yeah, I think this is true. This is what had happened down in southern Maryland, I think there was only two families down there that my friend had identified, and once he started to work with them, and talk with them, why, we found that there may be hundreds or even thousands of them down there who have kind of been assimilated into the other races.

B: Does it usually, well, it works different in different parts of the country, you know. It said that there are at least 200 groups, Dr. Brewton Berry counted at least 200 groups of Indian survivors ^{ers} along the eastern seaboard.

S: I think I've read that somewhere, Lew, that there's more than there's more than 200 of them, yeah.

B: But not all of them are doing...

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- B: Mr. Brooks, we were talking about the 200 or more groups of Indian survivors along the eastern seaboard when we were so rudely interrupted by the expiration of the tape, which is something nobody could prevent. Would you like to go along with that idea a little bit further? These are fascinating groups.
- S: Yes, as I said, they are called Wesorts and if you look at these people you're seeing Lumbees really. If you pick [^]them up and set [^]them down in Robertsons County, ^(?) they'd be Lumbee. And they've gone through the same things that we have gone through. From what I can find out, the way that this name happened to come about was that in the days of segregation that a group of people might be talking or whatever and they'd look around, and the whites or whoever was beginning to dominate the scene, and someone would say, "Well, now, we sorts of people don't belong in here." (chuckle), Now I haven't done any research on that to see how it did come about but this is what I'm told talking to some of the residents.
- B: Yes, I've heard this, this is certainly tradition, but I rather like that, "we sort of people." But this is true of the American Indian generally, you know, Mr. Brooks, was pointed out recently by Richard Lecourse, who is director of the American Indian Press Association in Washington, D.C. The Indian has never referred to himself as Indian generally. The Cherokees are, when we use that term, it's ~~it's~~ simply to identify ourselves when we're in the presence of non-Indians, because this hasn't been true since Columbus came and we all know this, we are not Indians, American Indians are not Indians. We prefer the term native Americans, which is much more accurate, but as he pointed out, when we're talking among ourselves, and I think this is interesting, and we, this holds true for us, we say the Lumbee people or the Cherokee people or the Sioux people or something like this, or our people. We hear this very frequently among ourselves, "our people." We do recognize that we are different, and I think it's fascinating when you go into a religious service and you hear, you hear the minister or somebody get up and he says, "children," or "our people," the way they refer to each other. We are all . . .

S: Always separate and distinct, yes.

B: We don't worry so much about those terms and those labels which have been attached to us; we know ourselves, who we are, what we are. We might not be able to trace our ancestry in every case, you know, back thousands of years, but we do know that we are a distinct people. And if we didn't know it, it would be made obvious to us by other groups, you know, sooner or later. I think it's a beautiful thing the way our people stick together, and this has been referred to so often by scholars who wrote about us, you know, ^{our} ~~how~~ clannish^{ness}. This is one thing, one part of our reputation that no one can deny. Do you think this comes about by our feeling of a need for mutual protectiveness toward each other, or brotherhood or what?

S: I think that, that it's a little deeper than protectiveness, Lew. I really believe that there's a feeling of brotherhood here. It's true that wherever we go we tend to kind of seek each other out some way or other, and this is, no different a situation here in Baltimore. You'll find that the great majority of our people are right here in this area, within a mile in any direction of this center.

B: Sometimes it's difficult, even for me to identify some of our people unless I talk to them. I was going past ~~was~~ even in Robertson County, I was going past this home with my wife several years ago, it was before we divorced, and I asked her, I said, "Are these ~~they~~ are these Indian people, or are they black people?" She said, "No, they're black people." But we had to stop there, and ask for directions and when the lady came out and, with a child with her, she hadn't spoken half a dozen words before I knew she wasn't white, she was one of ours, she was "Wesort" of people.

S: Yes. (laughter) Well, you know, Lew, it has been in my lifetime and yours too where we all knew each other just about, you know. We could look up and say, well, we knew if you was Indian or not, if he was one of us. It was just seemed to me some type of an instinctive thing that we had that we knew who we were.

B: There's a feeling there too.

S: Yeah, right, and as you said you don't have to talk to him more than two or three minutes, and you can tell right away.

B: You're at close range. This is marvelous to me. Once we start talking I don't think our language is all that distinct, distinctively different, but there is some difference. I sort of like this, ~~the~~ the way, what we do to bes, be, the infinitive to be. When I get home in the afternoon I ~~be~~ so tired I can hardly move. I be, he be, and she bes, they be, instead of saying I am, I be. And I've never found this being, you know, something of a student of the English language, I've never found this in any other area except among our own people, in those areas where our people are.

S: Well, Lew, I ~~would~~ ^{can} see some of these tutors are coming in, and I believe you said you'd like to talk to some of them, so if you like, why, we'll stop here, and I'll try and see if we can't have you talk to some of them.

B: All righty, I certainly would appreciate that. I want you to know how very much we appreciate you giving us this interview, and sharing these things with us. And I want to wish you good luck and ~~God's~~ ^{godspeed} speed in whatever you attempt to do; I get a lump in my throat when I meet people like you and others who are working so diligently and happily, by the way, you know.

S: I thank you for those kind words, Lew, but as I've said earlier I enjoy the work. I like to work with the Indian people, and I wouldn't have it any other way, really.

B: Well, good.

S: They can work the grief out of me and I'll still keep coming back for more, (chuckle).

B: We do have that reputation, we are working people. Thank you so very much.

S: Thank you, Lew, and if there's anything at all which I can help you with, or say or do that might be of interest to you, why, feel free to call on me before you leave.

B: Well, thank you so very much.

S: You'll give my regards to my mother when you get home.

B: I certainly shall, I'll be glad too, I'll certainly do that.

S: She's probably still out there digging in the yard with those flowers, you know. And she's kind of like my brother said to me one time, I was trying to tell him he ought to come up here and get him a job teaching at school, he says, "I've been everywhere I want to go, I'm staying home," (laughter).

B: He likes it at home.

S: And my mother's pretty much like that, I believe. You get her around ^{the} ~~those~~ poor, _____ flowers, and digging in the yard, or visiting with the neighbors there, and it's hard to get her up here. She's been up here to see me a time or two, but . . .

B: It's a special sort of heaven, isn't it?

S: Yes, well, you'll call her when you get back, and tell her that we were talking.

B: I certainly shall, and thank you so very much.

S: And thank you.

B: Bye.

End Side 2A