

Narrator: Sam Robinson (SR)
 Interviewer #1: Donna Sinclair (DS)
 Interviewer #2: Katy Barber (KB)
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Note to auditor: I have checked the spelling of names that are not highlighted.

One audio file, 119 minutes, 55 seconds = ca. two hours of audio

Time Code	Transcription
	Audio File, 119 mins., 55 seconds
0:00 –	<p>DS: Okay, this is Donna Sinclair and I'm here with Katy Barber in Sam Robinson's home on November 25, 2011, and we are recording an interview for a Chinook oral history project.</p> <p>Here you go, Sam. [handing him the microphone]</p> <p>Okay, so usually the way that we start is by asking you to state your full name and place and date of birth.</p> <p>SR: Okay, my name is Samuel V. Robinson, and I was born in South Bend on 10-20-56.</p> <p>DS: What does the V stand for?</p> <p>SR: It's just a V, you know, it must have been the flow. I have a feeling that my great uncle on my mom's side of the family, his name was Virgil. But I don't think they put it in there so they just put a V in there, so it's, yeah. But I've got a feeling it might have something to do with Virgil. And Virgil lived in Bay Center. He wasn't Native but he lived in Bay Center and he was kind of a fixture in Bay Center for years.</p> <p>DS: Oh, okay, I always wondered that. [laughs]</p> <p>SR: Yeah.</p> <p>DS: Well, if you wouldn't mind just sort of tracing your genealogy for us on audio. I know you've done that a little bit before but if you'd go back as far as you know, that would be</p>

wonderful.

SR: Yeah. Okay, my father's name was Scott Andrew Robinson. And then his mother was Dora, Dora D. Clark, and then her mother was Annie Hawks, and then John Hawks was her father. And then his father was Thomas Huckswelt, you know, last chief of the Willapa and signer of the Anson Dart Treaty in 1851.

DS: And you grew up in South Bend? You were born in South Bend.

SR: I was born in South Bend and I lived there probably until I was about three years old, and then my grandfather [Clarence Andrew Robinson] decided he was going to build a berry packing plant and a cold storage in Ridgefield, and so we moved up by the Ridgefield area, actually towards the fairgrounds and eventually settled in La Center by the time I was in first grade. We were in La Center, and lived in La Center until I graduated from high school.

But, spent a lot of time down at the coast. Bay Center was our go-to place, always.

DS: Who did you go to when you went there?

SR: Well, we'd go down there; of course, we were always visiting Phil and Clara, you know, and we'd stop in at Aunt Anna's, my great-aunt, you know. And Clyde, Clyde Clark, one of my great uncles. And we'd sometimes go over to my Aunt Edna over in South Bend. Those were the people that you truly knew were Chinook people, because you know, they—my great aunts and uncles, just they lived it, you know, they lived that period of time. They knew about the fishing right battles and they knew about the issues with the Quinalts and you know, so a lot of that talk was coming out in Bay Center.

One thing I know about, especially in the spring and the fall is when we'd go to Bay Center is, as soon as you got off the highway and started coming in to Bay Center, you start smelling all the smoke houses going. You know, you just come in and everybody was smoking fish. And it was great, you know. So you'd come in there and you'd say, "Hey is the fish ready? Is the fish ready?"

"No, no, it's got a couple more hours." So you're patiently waiting for them to open up that smoke house and dole out some fish. That was one of my memories when I was a kid is always pulling into Bay Center and smelling that fish, yeah. Yeah.

	<p>DS: Can you tell us about some of your great aunts and uncles? What you remember about them. You mentioned your Aunt Anna, Aunt Edna, and uncle.</p>
4:00	<p>SR: Aunt Anna, she lived in Bay Center and she was married to Uncle Rufus, Rufus Rhoades. And she was a character. She was just funny. She was great to talk to. I remember that as she, you know a lot of times it was the adults were having the conversations but we were listening in, you know, and getting a little word in every once in a while. But she had a laugh. I mean she was, always you knew it was her. She just had a laugh and she was just funny, and she just loved telling, talking about the old times, you know.</p> <p>Then Uncle Clyde, he was a little more serious, a little more serious guy. But he had been a fixture in Bay Center forever. I mean there's a lot of stories that go way back about Clyde and his brothers, you know, they were kind of a rowdy group. You know, Bay Center in general was kind of a rowdy place. In fact, my dad was telling me one time that Clyde and I think it was Uncle Scott were down in the, at the tavern there and getting drunk, and just the old, "Hey, I can still kick your ass!" Next thing you know, they're in a big old brawl and they're like going from yard to yard. I think my dad ended up having to hit Clyde in the back of the head. He told his friend to hold the gate open. He hit Clyde in the back of the head with a two-by-four and ran. [laughs] But it broke up the fight, you know. But it was a pretty ugly fight, but it was just one of those annual traditions. Nobody was going to give up.</p> <p>But Clyde, you know, he had seining rights on the Columbia River. He had some old rights and Clyde was kind of instrumental when the government came by; they wanted to get the blue cards from my dad and my uncle and he said, "No, give those to me and I'll keep them. We're not going to give them up."</p> <p>Because the government came in and said, "Well, if you give us the blue cards, we'll give you <i>the new</i> version," equivalent of, you know. And Clyde didn't trust them. So, he kept them and then later gave them back.</p> <p>I can remember being fishing when I was a kid, out here, you know we'd go out and do some trout fishing or something and the gamey would come by and he'd ask for our license. Of course when we were kids we didn't need licenses, but my dad would whip out his blue card and they'd look at him and he'd say, "Well, hope you catch a lot of fish. Have a nice day," you know, and left him alone. So he was still fishing on a blue card, you know, as a sports fisherman. So it was important; Clyde knew. He knew you couldn't trust the government, so he made sure they didn't</p>

give those up. I have the blue card today. So, just kind of kept it in case we need that as evidence down the road. Yeah, of course we need more. I can't see how we need more evidence, you know. We've given enough. [chuckles wryly]

So then, Aunt Edna, she was a very nice person as well. She married Uncle Oly, Oly Olson, and they met at a logging camp up in Alaska. You know, she was in a cookhouse and that's where they had met. And then moved back down, settled in South Bend. And I think Ray [Gardner] was a little more, he was closer to Edna because they lived like within blocks of each other up on the hill, in South Bend. But Edna was very, and Oly were very nice people too.

And it was always, always warmth, always warmth amongst the families. I didn't know Scott. I don't know that Scott was alive. I think he may have passed away before me, and then my grandmother, Dora, she had died when I was about a year old. So I didn't get to know her. But I knew a lot of people that did know her, and they had nothing but good words about her. They said she kind of, she was kind of "Hollywood," you know, kind of exerted this royalty, you know, type. And I've got some pictures of her that shows that a bit, too; you know, she's kind of a glamorous person. And she lived in Bay Center and in fact, there's a little kind of bluish house—when you come into Bay Center as you're heading to the tribal office, about a block from the tribal office, that was her house. And that's where she lived.

DS: Oh, okay.

SR: Yeah.

8:00

DS: What did your dad tell you about her? About his growing up, I'm curious about it.

SR: He had left for a little bit and then came back. Him and Charles came back to Bay Center to live with her and I think, I think, you know, he would always tell me about her cooking. She was a great cook, and just some of the styles and so forth. But overall, I think my dad was just kind of out on his own you know, in Bay Center, doing his thing.

Lois, she stayed in Pasadena when my grandfather moved down there to be a fish salesman; you know, before he came back to build the cold storage. So she was actually raised down in California, with the half-sisters, Camilla and Pat.

DS: I actually interviewed Lois and she told me about that. So, I didn't realize that your dad and

	<p>Charles came back.</p> <p>SR: Yeah, they came back, yeah.</p> <p>DS: Earlier. So, quite a bit earlier.</p> <p>SR: Mm-hmm.</p> <p>DS: So they actually grew up in Bay Center.</p> <p>SR: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, they knew the whole clan down there, and Rufus and there were stories, there were stories like Rufus, you know, Rufus Rhoades who was married to Anna, he was a character. He was one of those guys, they would go out and they'd do a lot of racing down there. In fact, I saw a picture when I was down in South Bend and I wanted to buy it but I didn't. I figured I'd get it eventually. And it shows these guys racing these old jalopies, you know, out in the muddy field. And then you see this crowd of people standing like almost in the middle, watching them. And I started looking at that picture and the reason I wish I had bought it—and I know I'll be able to get a copy of it—but these guys standing in the middle clearly, clearly are Indian; you know, and I started looking at it and I'm thinking, 'You know, that kind of looks like Clyde and that might be Till and Scott,' and you know, all the uncles, standing there. Then later on Charles, he told me that yeah they used to race right across from the boondocks in that field where they got that little hotel, two-room hotel type thing. That's where they were racing down in there. So my dad, I've got pictures of him, he used to be working on those jalopies and stuff like that. So they had their entertainment down there. But yeah, Bay Center. Bay Center had its thing going.</p>
10:00	<p>SR: Then there was a huge population of Japanese in Bay Center, you know, working in the oysters and everything. My dad remembers the day they all vanished; you know, they sent them off to internment camps. He said they were all there, and then pft! One day they were gone. You know, he also remembers in Bay Center they were doing some war games or some maneuvers down in the bay area. He was telling me about this one time they had some vehicles that they couldn't get across because of a high tide. They kind of got stuck. So somebody, with one of the dredges took some bad [?], these like barges they would have, and took them over there and put</p>

the whole convoy on there and brought them back across the river, you know. So there was a lot of activity going on in that bay during the war, you know.

So there's different things that were happening down there. But there was a lot of fishery going on. A lot of oysters and stuff going on down in Bay Center. It was much bigger than it is today. There used to be another long dock that went way out and it's all just kind of vanished over time.

DS: Do you recall going out on the dock when you were a little boy?

SR: That dock was gone, but you know I used to spend time on the docks down there. We'd go down there and Sammy Pickernell grew up with my dad, you know, they were like childhood friends and all the way to the end. We'd go down there and that's another person we'd visit. We'd always visit Sammy, you know, and spent a lot of time with Sammy and their family. Sammy, we'd go down there and see what he was up to. You could see him, he'd either be working out in the oysters, dredging, or he'd be out fishing. You know, he'd go out trolling or crabbing. But then in his spare moments he might be out there hunting seal, you know, because there was a bounty on seals at the time. He'd get five bucks a nose if he shot them in the Willapa. And if he shot them in the Columbia he'd get ten bucks a nose. And all you had to do, you'd cut the nose and the whiskers off, to take it in to get your bounty. [chuckles] And he would actually take those Willapa ones over to the Columbia and get the ten bucks you know. It was worth it, you know, gas was cheap back then.

But I can remember going out with him, and you'd go out there and you'd say, "Wow, is that an island or sand spit?"

He goes, "No, those are seals." It would be just so thick out there. So they had to control them some way, and they were allowing them to control them through this bounty; which they should bring back, you know. But unfortunately they haven't yet. Also, later on in life, you know probably about mmm, six/seven years ago we took Sammy by canoe over to Long Island; you know, so he could tell us what it was like living on Long Island. And he was telling us about in, I believe it was 1935, that he remembers his great—he lived with his *Chitcha*, his grandma, his *Chitcha* getting a letter from the government saying they got one year to move off. "We're turning it into a refuge." You know, and he lived in one of the last eleven or twelve villages on that island. He lived on that. He would tell us stories about when he used to, he used to seal hunt back there as a kid. So it was in his blood, and he, if you wounded it then you had to dive in and

chase it, chase it down. But you know, he told us stories about that, as well.

I remember Tony and Gary [Johnson], myself and a few others had taken him over there just so he could talk about it. But yeah, Sammy was quite the character, Sammy Pickernell, yeah. He was pretty well tied in with that Bay Center. He was also, he had a lot of land on the Quinault Reservation because a lot of brothers and sisters had passed away, so he was kind of a land baron up there. He also traded fish up there and I'm sure he traded—he was illegally taking booze up there as well, you know, probably trading it for fish, you know. [laughs] But he was a good guy. He drank a lot, unfortunately, but overall he had a pretty kind heart.

DS: How long ago did he pass? It hasn't been that long, has it?

SR: It hasn't been that long. He passed away probably about three years ago, maybe four at the max. Yeah. And he looked good all the way up to the end. I mean he was out there on the dredge. We'd be up there sitting at Phil and Clara's house looking out the window and he'd be out there dredging away on the *Skanoentl* [phonetic, Skadoodle] or one of the other dredges that had been around for generations. You know, some of those dredges have been around forever. And they're still using them out there.

DS: Is that the name of a dredge? The *Skanoentl*?

SR: Well, the *Skanoentl*, oyster yeah, it was a deep haul dredge. It wasn't the flat ones like they have now. And the guy took that to Ilwaco and he totally, he refurbished it and he was going to take it to Nahcotta, but for some reason he ended up taking it back to Bay Center. And last time I was in Bay Center it was down there. So, yeah, so a lot of those have been around for many generations, you know, you just don't give them up. They work, they work well.

16:00

DS: One of the questions I had for you—you mentioned Clyde and Anna. Were they both Chinook?

SR: Yeah.

DS: Okay, and what Clyde's last name?

SR: Clyde Clark.

DS: Clyde Clark? Oh, okay so he was the—

SR: He was one of the, well there's thirteen children. Three of them had passed at birth, and one of them died at youth. In fact, I was looking at that earlier, the list and who all is on that list of Anna Hawks' children, yeah.

DS: Right. So those who you knew were Clyde—?

SR: Clyde, Anna, and Edna are the ones that I knew personally, yeah. And we'd visit them for years, you know. Great people.

DS: You mentioned once, I remember hearing you talk about having seal oil on, is that right?

SR: That was kind of recently, yeah.

DS: That was recently.

SR: Yeah, well, yeah, well one of our fishermen was out and unfortunately, you know, the seals are always munching on their nets. One day he got fed up with that and popped a seal, and his daughter was asking if anybody wanted a seal, and we knew somebody that wanted it, took it, you know, and rendered it out and kept the seal oil to use for, not only for cooking but also to use for when he was making things; you know, the seal oil bowls and stuff, you know. So it worked good.

And it's kind of like, I mean nothing's going to go bad. Every bit's going to be utilized, so I kind of wish they'd let us continue those old traditions, because you know, it's not like we're wasteful. We're not going out there and just popping these seals for trophies or anything. I mean there's use for the whole item. And when he was cutting that seal open, he thought it was kind of—the first thing, the blood and the meat is just like black. It's kind of, it's real rich but it's real black and he says the smell is just like the ocean. It smells just like the sea air. But yeah, so I've had a little seal oil.

	<p>DS: And that's something that was used traditionally for a lot of things, right?</p> <p>SR: Yeah, yeah, you know, I mean, Margaret, you know Phil's sister, she said that they used to hide <i>Chitcha's</i>, you know they'd put the oil in a seal bladder and keep it that way. And they would hide it because <i>Chitcha</i> wanted to put it on everything. She'd put it on berries, whatever, because you were eating season and you'd plug up if you didn't. So oil was in your diet. So they made sure that they got oil. I think that was probably a reason that my dad said when he was in school, they'd line up all the Indian kids and they'd make them take cod liver oil; just the Indian kids, because they must have felt that they needed oil or something back in the day. But he said all the Indian kids got oil, cod liver oil. None of the other kids did. They just gave it to the Indian kids. Why they did it, who knows? But it might have been because they thought oil should be in their diet but I imagine if they were living in Indian houses they were getting plenty of oil, so then again maybe they were just torturing them. I don't know. [laughs]</p>
19:00	<p>DS: Did your dad go to any of the boarding schools?</p> <p>SR: No, he didn't, no. He—yeah, I was talking to Charles about that. I thought that he may have gone to an orphanage for a little while but I don't think that he—Charles didn't seem to remember that, because they ended back up in Bay Center, hung out there and survived. No, Lois did for a while, but yeah, Charles and my dad didn't. Then eventually Charles went in the Navy. My dad went in the Army. So they were probably about seventeen when they did that. So, they pretty much worked, either worked in the oysters and then worked, went to California with my grandfather when he was selling fish, and then moved back up and continued to work out on the bay, making whatever you could on the bay. They never got into any logging or anything like that; you know, some of the people went out and got into the logging industry, but they pretty much lived on the bay, you know, there's plenty to do.</p> <p>DS: Did you have a close relationship with your grandfather?</p> <p>SR: Um, you know, fairly close, yeah, because he was local, so it was easy to go visit over there at the cold storage. And today it's kind of funny because I, being on the board at Ridgefield [Wildlife Refuge] and I was talking to people from Ridgefield. So many of them tell me, "Yeah, I used to work for your grandfather when," you know because they keep trying to get that</p>

connection, Robinson Cold Storage, and Robinson. “Yeah, I used to work for your grandfather when I was in high school,” or whatever, a lot of people. Because he employed a lot of people in the summer time, because they packed a lot of berries away.

A lot of berries and then later on they packed a lot of fish. They had big tunnels in there to where they could bring in the big fish and dip it in the water and instantly, pft! case it in ice, you know, freeze it, you know, and keep it fresh that way. So he processed a lot of fish over there. My dad was talking about sometimes they’d even, it was back in the day when you could bring in those twelve to fifteen foot sturgeon and process them, and cut them up, you know, and so yeah there were—and my grandfather, he had a lot of land over there so he grew a lot of berries as well and had to hire people to take care of the berries. So he had about a hundred and ten acres, and a majority of it was in berries of some sort; you know, so. I’d go over there and pick berries as well, you know, and make some money.

I never worked for him in the summertime, I think because probably, mm, I don’t know why I never did. I think my dad just probably didn’t want that for some reason. He didn’t like my, didn’t really like his stepmother, you know, that well. So there was some of that going on there, so. Although we would visit them every once in a while but not very often. We’d visit my grandfather. I’d be over there at the cold storage, maybe not at the house as often. So, yeah.

DS: How about your mother? What’s your mother’s name?

SR: Harrison. Clara. Clara’s her sister. That’s why Phil’s my uncle and my third cousin; you know, so—

DS: Okay!

SR: Yeah, because he’s you know, through Clara, being my uncle and then through the Indian side, yeah.

DS: So did they meet in Bay Center, your parents?

SR: Yeah, they did, actually, and I think Lois was telling that story, because I think she was down there with Sammy. He was down on the beach with Sammy and somebody else and Charles might have told me this story. It could have been Charles or Lois. But anyway, and my

mom and some of her friends were down there, and my dad saw her and just said, “Hey, I’m going to marry that woman,” you know, they got married. Eventually, not too much after that. And then they built a house in Bay Center, and, but like I said they moved because of work, you know, work was—to help build the cold storage and my dad worked there until he retired.

DS: He worked for his dad.

SR: Yeah, yeah. That’s probably why we didn’t visit that often, because he was there. [DS laughs] Especially in the summer. Summertime he would be there sixteen hours a day, you know, because the berries were coming in and had to be processed. That’s probably why we didn’t visit quite so often, you know.

And my grandfather was a good man. He was well known in the Clark County area, you know, I mean, he was friends with like George Propstra and other people in the area, because of his business. You know, the Holland Restaurant would be coming over and buying berries for pies and sorting stuff, you know. And he knew people in First Independent [Bank] beaus he belonged to Royal Oaks [Country Club] back in the day. He was one of the early people that belonged to Royal Oaks. So he knew a lot of people in the community as well. But he, he was a pretty [good] guy.

24:00

SR: I remember my grandmother, you know my [step-grandmother], she would complain, because he was the type of guy to be out on the tractor, you know, doing whatever, wearing his best slacks. He didn’t care. He didn’t wear blue jeans, you know, he had slacks. [laughs] You’d see him wearing the Stetson hat and the slacks, he’d be out there working in the tractor, you know. Yeah, so he was kind of like an L.A. farmer or something, you know. But he was a good man. He was a good man, yeah.

Like I said, my step-grandma, she was a little different. I didn’t feel that I didn’t—not get along with her but I don’t know if you could have trusted her a hundred percent. And that was real evident when my grandfather passed away, because all of a sudden his will was gone and nobody knew where it was at, and money’s were being kind of—because he was worth quite a bit when he passed. But unfortunately.

DS: What happened to the cold storage business? I know it’s still there, right?

SR: She sold it.

DS: She sold it.

SR: She sold it to a guy who tried to run it as a berry packing plant, and it wasn't too successful, and that guy ended up selling it to the current owner. The beauty of it is, you know, they still have pictures from the old days when they were processing berries and fish, in the cold storage as well. And it still carries the name, so, you know, it's real good.

DS: So for your dad, I'm curious about the connection to the tribe. You would go back and spend time in Bay Center with family members.

SR: Mm-hmm.

DS: Was your dad involved with the tribe at all? Did you go to annual meetings or anything like that?

SR: Not really, you know I think he pretty much found out things through, you know through the family members. When I came back, when I got out of the military, that's when I started connecting with the tribe and I think my dad started connecting a little more. And then once I got on council of course, he was there all the time; you know, but overall. Yeah, and a lot of times when I first started, you know, in '79 when I decided I was going to go and see what was going on with the tribe. And I attended the monthly meetings. They would usually be in the old Chinook school. There might be about five or six people in the audience, and hoping that you had a quorum of council members show up. So there wasn't a whole lot going on then.

And generally, I mean and the Lagergrens were always there. So they were always deeply involved. That's where I got that connection with them, and till the annual meetings you didn't see a large group of people. I can remember the first annual meetings that I went to, the very first one I went to at the old, they held them at the gym at the old Chinook school. When you walked in the door, there was an off-duty sheriff on either side of the door, and there was a lot of yelling and screaming going on in these meetings. It's like, "Whoa!"

DS: What were people fighting about?

	<p>SR: Well, it was back in the day, we used to have a bingo parlor and it was making some decent money, you know, and we had hired some, well we didn't hire it, the chairman, had hired someone to take care of it—it was his girlfriend, and there was monies that were being lost; you know, and unfortunately, eventually we had to get rid of the bingo parlor and file bankruptcy. But, yeah, there was a lot of screaming and yelling going on in there and people all, you know, not only about that but other issues, you know. I think the council wasn't even cohesive at the time, so it got pretty radical, you know.</p> <p>One thing I didn't, you know, I mean the good thing about those meetings too is I connected with a lot of relatives back then. So, like Steve Meriwether, who is a Catholic priest down in California. He was a cousin, you know, and different people you'd be able to get introduced to these people. So that was my new connection to a lot of people that I hadn't met. Then, eventually, you know, council started mellowing out. It was probably about—</p>
28:00	<p>SR: I was trying to figure out when I came on council. It had to be about eight or nine years ago. There was a position came open because a council member had to step down because of illness, so they left six months on the position and our bylaws said, council could appoint somebody to fill that position until the election came up. And so they interviewed three people and decided they'd put me on. I thought this was just a great way for me to get my feet wet, you know. And I had been involved a little more and more. Then, so I did that six months and I said, "Okay, well I'll stay with it."</p> <p>And then nominations came up at the annual meeting and I was nominated and so was the incumbent that I filled her position because she was well. But she stepped down. She said, "No, no, I want Sam on the council." So she stepped down, so there was no vote there. And then the next two years, of course now I'm you know, for vice chair, and currently for vice chair. I was nominated and then there was a motion to close the nominations, and then a vote, so it was like, "Okay." So I don't know what's going to happen this next go around. I'm hoping somebody runs against me, because the first time that they closed the nomination I didn't even get to give a speech. I said, "Hey, can I say something?" [laughter] Because they're moving on to the next position, you know. "Can I talk?" You know, we'll see what happens this coming year, because with Ray stepping down [as chairman of the tribe] we'll have to see who gets nominated for that.</p> <p>DS: When will that happen?</p>

SR: In June. The third Saturday in June. So, not too far away.

DS: No, it's not, is it?

SR: No.

DS: Well, you mentioned that when you first started going to the, it was the council meetings that you went to—

SR: Yeah, I was going—

DS: —were just a few people. So, like the Lagergrens. Who else was there?

SR: [sighs] You know, Gary was there, of course. And the crowd, let's see, who would be out there? It didn't, you know, it was pretty slim. It was pretty slim at those meetings. Like I said, they were worried that they were going to get enough people there to actually have a quorum, and then eventually someone would pop in. And back then there were, you know, they were still working with the recognition process; you know, they were still trying to finalize that.

It was kind of interesting, you know, when we had our recognition there for that short period of time, then all of a sudden you start seeing more and more people. I can remember an annual meeting where we had about six or seven hundred people there. It was like, "Wow, okay. Cool." But I think they were all there to get a piece of the pie, [laughing] you know, more than anything. And then once the recognition got yanked, it dropped back down to the, you know, the normal two or three hundred people. So it was kind of interesting. I don't know why we can't just get more tribal involvement, especially from the communities in Bay Center where people are there. You know, we're having a meeting in Bay Center and you'll see like thirty people show up. It's like, "Where are these people?" And then every once in a while somebody will speculate something and we'll have to reel them in, and we'll tell them, "If you come to council meetings, especially the ones in Bay Center, considering you live here, you would know more." [laughing] So, yeah.

DS: About how many people tend to come to council meetings?

	<p>SR: On a monthly council meeting?</p> <p>DS: Mm-hmm.</p> <p>SR: Uh, probably other than the council, probably about thirty, you know. So, annual meeting, maybe two/three hundred. And we get people that come from Florida, you know, further away than the members. But you've got to remember also that we have quite a few of our members that are enrolled Quinault, you know, so they probably just feel that that's their place to hang, and they tend to worry about that more than anything because they're getting some kind of benefit from the Quinaults, you know.</p> <p>We were talking about fisheries a while back and talking about how seventy-five percent of the, well probably seventy-five to eighty percent of the fishermen on the Quinault Reservation are Chinook, you know, because obviously the Quinaults don't know how to fish. And there's probably only a handful of them anyway that are, got the true blood line, you know.</p> <p>And then the bear hunters, I think there are, out of the five bear, people that give bear tours, there's four of them are Chinook.</p> <p>DS: Bear tours?</p> <p>SR: Yeah, they take people up on the reservation and take them out to hunt bear. They're like guides, bear guides. Doc Lorton's one of them. He's a bear guide.</p> <p>DS: Oh, yeah, I think I did hear that.</p> <p>Do you have questions Katy?</p>
33:00	<p>KB: I'm interested in hearing a little bit more about the meetings. So the council meetings, about how long are they? Is it just an evening that people get together once a month?</p> <p>SR: Currently?</p> <p>KB: Mm-hmm.</p> <p>SR: Council meetings last about an hour and a half, two hours, once a month, yeah. There's a lot</p>

of communication via Internet and so forth, so we can talk, you know. And one of the things, since I've been on council, a strict thing that we go by, is that we don't vote on anything not in front of our members. Because back in the days there were some votes going on and stuff going on in executive sessions, and unfortunately that wasn't—I mean, it may have been, you know, they could have done it, legally or whatever, by our by-laws they could have. But to do that and then something come back to you; we prefer to do everything up front. We may have executive sessions and discuss something on how we're going to do it and then when it comes to our council meetings, the reason they're so fast is because we've already had our discussions and then we just come up and vote.

KB: So was there a sort of reform effort that led to that greater transparency?

SR: You know, I think it was just something, once our council became more cohesive and we weren't arguing like the old council, and you stopped; in fact, I don't remember, it's been several years since we've even had a sergeant of arms at an annual meeting. Usually we announce who our sergeant of arms is, who's going to drag you out if you get too rowdy. But we haven't even done that in the last five/six years, you know. So I think it's because we're a little more online, a little more cohesive that we're able to do that and just bring it forward. The other thing, I don't know, people probably will notice it eventually, and it's not so much this year or last year but for a while there, out of the nine council members, probably seven of us were Hawks. [laughs] You know, so pretty ruling family. Now we got more Elliotts and other people on there.

That's the other thing is that the Elliotts are coming back. For a while there, I think the Elliotts got kind of driven away and I won't say by whom. But they got driven away, and now they're starting to come back. So now you're getting more of the connection with Pillar Rock, you know, and Cathlamet, and Skamokawa. So we're getting more of the river people coming back in and showing interest of what's happening with the tribe. And that's good. That's real good.

You know, I think you'll get—there'll be some family squabbles. Somebody gets their feelings hurt and they move on, but you hope that they come back. But the Hawks family, you know we're a pretty big family to begin with, pretty predominant in the tribe; even if you took all of us and put us together, we're still out there pretty [strong?], and always has been. I think it's just traditional.

KB: And then for the annual meetings, how long? Do they last for a day or is it?

SR: The annual meetings; you know, we start out with our first salmon ceremony on Friday. That's a way to get people together and get them to socialize, and then the annual meetings, it's a one day event. Usually sign-ins are about nine o'clock and we're usually out of there about three or four o'clock, depending on how long people socialize, you know. We have our elections. You know, we have nine positions, so three people are elected every three years. And elections seem to go fairly, fairly quick. Then all the committees give their reports, and talk about what's been going on for the year, you know, update people on what's been happening. So they probably last about four hours of actual meeting, unless somebody's got some real squabbles, and we haven't; you know, it's been pretty clean, pretty clean lately, so yeah, no fisticuffs or anything. [laughs]

Yeah, I can only imagine what it must have been like before they brought the sheriffs in, you know, that they felt that they had to bring the sheriffs in, because even with the sheriffs there it was pretty radical, you know. [laughs] It was like, "Whoa, okay," a lot of yelling and screaming going on, tempers flying.

KB: And a lot of people, it sounds like, take that opportunity to come back and sort of reconnect with people if they're from California, or as you say, Florida.

SR: That's the beauty of it, is the best part of it is the lunch break, you know. So you can go out there, you know, the lunch break's usually supposed to last about an hour; it usually draws into an hour and a half or so, you know, and then you have to bring everybody back in. We do vote before lunch, though, and then some people kind of filter out there a little bit, but yeah, the lunch break and the before is always the best.

You get to see all the faces, you know. I know I'm going to miss Oma [Woodcock Singer], you know. I mean she's always right there in front row, telling good stories, but it's always a good time to connect with the relatives you haven't seen in a long time, you know. Some of them are so close you wish you'd see them more often. But it just, you know how it is, you just kind of—I guess if we went out there and wandered around Bay Center and knocked on doors, you know, [laughing] or go clam digging, you'd probably see more of them.

KB: And if you have two to three hundred people, where are you holding the annual meeting

	<p>now?</p> <p>SR: We held it at the community center in South Bend last year. We shift around, you know, we're thinking—I'd like to see us do it again at the gym in the Chinook school, although it would be real crowded and I think the kitchen facilities are a little small, but I think it'd be okay, you know I think we could survive doing that. Just, because they've remodeled it and I think it's going to be pretty nice in there. But it would be nice to do it there. We've held it also in the South Bend School; they've allowed us to use—we used to do it in their cafeteria. But then it got kind of big, so last year we did it in their gym and then went over to the cafeteria to eat.</p> <p>Yeah, it's, and you know, of course once you get restoration it'll be back up to five/six hundred people, or more. You never know, so it depends on who—and there'll be people wanting to be elected, I'm sure. [laughs] There'll be a lot more completion there. Of course, hopefully people just remember the faces that they've seen all along that was battling the battle, so. Tony, he's always afraid that there's going to be a big influx of people coming off the Quinault Reservation, but I can't see that because we're not going to be really settled in enough to offer them healthcare and all that stuff that they're up there for, you know, right off the bat, and we're not going to have those fishing rights. Well, it depends which way we go now. We're not going to immediately have those fishing rights.</p>
40:00	<p>SR: I felt that the restoration bill was the best thing for the government and the community, you know, but if they force us to go back into recognition, then, you know, we can go for those fishing rights, you know, and say we're going to commercial fish. You know, and I don't know if they realize that. They should have passed the bill, you know, and took care of it, instead of prolonging it, and then our people might say, "Hey, let's battle the battle." You know, let's go into <i>U.S. versus Washington</i> and forgot where—and it's probably also good for the upper river tribes, you know, because they agreed to the bill. They thought the bill was okay once they found out that those three hundred fish wasn't going to be coming out of their allotment. So, yeah, so yeah, it's just, we're kind of right there trying to figure out which way we're going to go.</p> <p>And you know, we've been talking with Cantwell and Murray's people, you know, but at our last council meeting we haven't ruled out Jaime Herrera. We think, you know, she seems really approachable, and maybe we'll go in there and say, "Hey, we've been working with these Democrats for a long time. They haven't done anything for us. What do you think those</p>

Republicans can do?" Other than Bush overturning us, but you know, maybe she'll be; you know, because she's from Camas. She's got to know our story. So maybe we just start working that avenue as well.

The thing I see with the senators, unfortunately, is that you'll see them for about a year when they're running and then they disappear for the other five. It's like, "Oh!" So it's kind of a sad scenario. But we've been really working with both senators' staff here in Vancouver, and you know we invite them to our salmon ceremonies and the Clark event, and we get them out there to see what we're up to. And I think that's really, really working, you know, because you keep in the people's eyes.

Then they're the ones that're the voice back there. And I talked to them about, you know, when we're out there talking and they say, "Yeah, we know when you guys are out there," beaus they get the big push of letters. I was talking to them also about our friends in Pacific County and Wahkiakum County. They says, "Yeah, we know you've got great support over there." So, I feel that we just need to get out there and talk some more. We're actually working on an e-petition that we can get out there, not only to our people but to our friends all the way across the United States. And then also I brought up the topic of Twitter and Facebook, you know. Just, spread, you know spread it big time, you know. We're working on the e-petition right now. Trying to get the verbiage down and then people will be able to just click on it, click on a link, find out who their representatives, and shoot it off to them as their support. It's a lot better than walking around and trying to get a petition signed, because you're going to hit a lot more people. So that should be coming out soon.

KB: That's sure a difference from 1979.

SR: It is. You know back in the days, you know I remember when we had petitions down in the stores, you know, like in Ilwaco and places, you know, you'd hear stories of the crabber, some crabber would walk in the store. He'd see the petition, he'd tear it up and throw it on the floor; you know, there was that, because they thought we were going to come in and take over their fisheries. And that was a lot of work we had to do with Brian to settle that out, because Brian had a huge support from the crabbers; you know, and that was his number one issue was, "What are you going to do about fisheries?" And we settled that out pretty smoothly and all of a sudden we had support from the crabbers, you know.

44:00

I don't know. Like I said, that's restoration. Recognition's a whole other story, you know. Unfortunately, recognition is like, recognizes you from the time, that date that it's signed, and it doesn't grandfather everything, where at least restoration, a lot of the stuff will get grandfathered; you know, and the Cowlitz run into that with their casino and the fact that, of course, some of the things they can't do because of recognition. And I don't know how they're getting, trying to get property in trust in La Center, because you know, I mean obviously recognition was at that time, and of course they're going back to 1850. They're not going back to thousands of years ago. They go back to, "We were there in 1850!" And that's still up in the air. I've got a feeling they're going to get it.

DS: The casino?

SR: Yeah. I've just got that feeling. I'm wondering why it's taking so long.

DS: It sure is taking [long]. It's been going on for years.

SR: Well, the BIA ruled that they could have it but there was another battle, so.

DS: A lot of local opposition in La Center.

SR: Yeah, but you know, La Center now is kind of signing an agreement with them on updating their sewage system to accommodate the casino, and they're going to push to annex the land out towards the freeway. So I think La Center's, is trying, is preparing just in case. So I don't know. Their standing is tough. I remember when they were first meeting with La Center. It was kind of funny, because I went to one of those meetings in the community center there, and I must have got there about five/ten minutes late. The place was already packed, you know, and they were already talking. Of course, I made sure they knew I was Chinook. I had my Chinook coat on, Chinook hat on. I walked in and I see Dennis Whittlesey, who used to be our attorney when we were going through recognition was their attorney. And Beckham was sitting there and somebody else was up there at the front table getting ready to talk to pole about it. And I walked in and said hello to a few people in the front row. I went around back and said hello. There's a few Cowlitz people around there and then I came around and I sat down in about the third row, because there was a chair open on the other side, and I sat down in about the third row and

Beckham was *looking at me* and trying to figure out who I was, you know. And about, oh well probably about three to five minutes after I got there, and they had already been going for a while, you know, he passed a clipboard around for people to sign in; you know, and I was in about the third row. It came to me and I looked at it and I didn't sign it. I passed it on. Then finally some other people were signing, but I think he only passed that around because he wanted to know who I was. So.

And there was strong, there was strong [sentiment]—"This is Chinook territory!" Not to say that they would support a Chinook casino, but that was their reason to keep the Cowlitz out. You know, they were saying, "This is Chinook territory. This was never Cowlitz territory." You know, so.

DS: Well, you grew up in La Center.

SR: Yeah, yeah, right.

DS: So what do you recall about that, being Chinook, did you know Cowlitz kids or, you know was there any discussion about that?

SR: Yeah, no I don't think Cowlitz ever came up in our vocabulary, as far as the tribe. No. But Chinook did and we knew the Chinook people were around, and La Center is really, really rich in artifacts out there. I mean, some of these little arrowheads, those little projectile points that I have, those I found in La Center when I was a kid; because I'd go down by Catfish Lake down in the bottoms and after a heavy rain and it would settle down a little bit and then you'd look down on the water right at the edge and you could find crystals and arrowheads and stuff laying around down there. I remember having a neighbor that, they must have lived, on their property was probably some kind of a gathering spot, because they found a lot of bowls, pestles, projectile points, you know, all kinds of stuff on their property. So, La Center was, you know it was definitely a gathering spot off the Columbia River, probably for Cathlapotle. Just being able to scurry right down there and get back to the Cathlapotle. So, yeah, but definitely Chinook, definitely Chinook territory and people knew it was Chinook.

DS: Well, growing up in that area, did you learn about the Chinook in school? I mean I know you had your relationships at home, but what was school like?

	<p>SR: School was like school was when my girls went to school. “Oh, you’re doing Native studies today. What have you got?” Well, about three pages, very general, didn’t talk about the local tribes, you know. Said, “Oh, that’s pretty sad.” You know, it was done in a day. So really, yeah you didn’t, but you know, I knew I was Chinook and like I said when we’d go down to Fort Vancouver I was always proud to let people know that my ancestors traded down there, you know. So there was the connection, there was a connection, that this was Chinook territory, this was the Columbia River. You know, I didn’t know the history as much, obviously as a kid, but later on, learned more and more about it and still learning. But yeah, we let people know we’re Chinook. Yeah. And there was a couple of other Native kids there. They weren’t Chinook, you know, they were Southwest in school. Not too many, though, because I graduated with fifty-four kids in my graduation class and thirteen of them I started first grade with. You know, so it’s like the school was small at the time. You know, it’s much bigger now, but it was small, yeah.</p>
<p>49:00</p>	<p>DS: Well, what prompted you to reconnect with the tribe in 1979? You were in the military.</p> <p>SR: Mm-hmm.</p> <p>DS: And then you came back. What prompted that? Because you said your dad wasn’t really involved. That’s fairly early.</p> <p>SR: No, he wasn’t. I think a lot of it had to do with just, you come back and you start, you know, you’ve got a different value on life after being in the military for a while. And you go back to Bay Center and you start talking to those people, and then you start learning more about the politics of the tribe. I just got kind of a feel that, I just kind of want to see what’s going on, connecting. Most of it at that time was political, you know. And then eventually we kind of swayed over to a little more cultural, so that made it even more enticing, you know, to be hanging out as we started to see more of the cultural stuff. I mean, obviously people had these things like Catherine George’s baskets and stuff like that in their houses. You saw that and you were able to share that, but nobody was really practicing a lot of the old ways. Then of course, once we got our first canoe back, or our more recent canoe, <i>squakwal</i>, then that opened up a whole new avenue of us to do.</p> <p>And I really, you know I talk about Lewis and Clark, you know, or Clueless and Lark, as I</p>

like to refer them to; you know, I mean they didn't do much for us two hundred years ago, but two hundred years later they did a lot for us because they really made people want our culture, and so it made us step up to the plate and start learning more; you know, so getting our songs out there and being in the canoe and traveling. It gave us the canoe, gave us the Plankhouse; you know, it gave us a lot. And then it inspired people to actually get out there and do these things, and now we've got more of an interest; you know, more people making paddles to get in the canoe. And more people wanting to learn how to gather and weave and more people making drums and drumming songs and, you know, so I think two hundred years later they did, they gave back to us. I'm appreciative of that, because had they not commemorated that, what would have happened? Would we have just stayed the same? Would we not have gotten out there?

So, and then having that canoe, of course, opened up the pathway to the journeys you know, and I wish we'd get more people involved in the journeys and I'm hoping that gets stronger. It's tough for people to take two weeks off to go travel, but you know, like I tell 'em, I said, "If you can do two days, three days, one week, whatever," you know, I mean, "just connect." And I think, the other thing that we lack, what some of the other tribes have—we're a landless tribe, so we don't have a reservation for people to gather; you know, people aren't being supported on this reservation. They're all over the place. So like Canoe Family meetings, if they're on a Tuesday night in Bay Center or Shoalwater, how many people are actually going to be there? I'm not going to travel there, even though I consider myself a Canoe Family member. You know, I just can't do it. But you want my input, email me something. But I'm willing to get out there and pull and paddle, and support the Canoe Family.

So, that's one of our dreams is, you know, we've always dreamt about getting a reservation and getting a reservation that could support our people through jobs, whether it be through logging or fisheries or light industrial, or even doing, you know gaming might be in the picture but it's not going to be a huge part of the picture. But something that will get people jobs to come back to Bay Center, or to this reservation. And then really thrive on the culture. You know, they can really—and culture can be part of our business as well, you know. So, I think that's what we need. You know, reservation tribes had that already established. Of course, they have all the other problems in the world, like alcohol and drugs and you know, just a ton of things you know. But I'm hoping that we can be stronger than that, being we're already out there. We're pretty well diversified in our jobs and our knowledges, that we can come together and then go into the cultural aspect on top of that.

	<p>KB: Is there anybody in particular who helped to instigate or bring more awareness about the cultural aspect of it?</p> <p>SR: I think Tony, Tony Johnson was, you know, one of the first ones and I think a lot of that had to do with his, you know, back [sighs], he had worked for the tribe early on when he was a kid because we got some STOW money, grants to go out and interview elders. So he was able to do that process and record elders and language and keep that alive too, and then getting the canoe family going as well. And then his connection with Grand Ronde, you know, that helped. Now his connection with Shoalwater helps out a bit, you know. But also there's other people now that, over the last probably four or five years, that kind of just stepped up and started contributing their little piece of the culture and the history and the stories, and you know, winter gathering was all about telling stories, but its grown so big that we don't have time to tell stories, unfortunately. So we've, last year we actually had a function a month later down at Fort Columbia, where we got together and told stories. So it was still in that winter phase, where we can tell stories and it wouldn't be taboo. So, we're starting to do that, you know, and it was okay last year and I think we're going to grow on it to be more and more stories that would be coming out and songs, and family stories, not only just stories of, you know traditional stories, but family stories; you know, talking about your aunties and your uncles and relationships to different areas. So there's more and more of that coming out. And that's something we don't get enough of; you know, being able to hear about what our aunties and uncles were up to.</p>
56:00	<p>DS: How long has winter gathering been going on? I know it's taking place at the Plankhouse now. Can you talk about that?</p> <p>SR: We brought that back about three years before the Plankhouse opened. We used to do it at Fort Columbia, and then we eventually moved it to the Plankhouse. Yeah, so it was that time of year, so like I said, you could tell those stories, get them out and gather and we just have good friendship with people and get family members together. And at that time it was pretty much mostly Chinook people; you know, obviously then once we got into the Plankhouse, we started inviting other tribes. That's where, you know you run out of time quickly, especially if you're the closest tribe, which is us. So we end up right there in the dark, you know, basically. Got to get the Cowlitz not to talk so long, though. [laughter] Last year they went on and on and on. It was like, "Really?" Of course, talking about, "Oh we didn't need maps."</p>

And I kind of like wanted to say, “Yeah, we didn’t need maps. We just put some skulls along the river and you guys would stay up the river.” [laughs] Because you know, they’re still trying to say that that’s their area.

It’s kind of funny, you know, because I’ll—at the leadership summit, you know, I’ll run into Mike Iyall and he’ll say, he’s one of their vice chairmans. They’ve got two of them. They got two chairmans too, because they’ve got a pretty screwy government up there. They’ve got one that’s kind of casino people and then you got the other people that’s kind of head of their general council, so it’s like, but, “Yeah, I looked at your bill and you got that clause in there about where you’re going to give your people this and that, and you mention Clark County. You’re really stepping on our toes here, you know.”

I’m like, I said, “Well these areas overlap. These service areas overlap, Mike. You don’t have to worry about it.”

But you know, “Well, it’s going to be taking from some of our funds. If you ever want me to look at that for you.”

“Yeah, right Mike, okay.” [laughs] “Calm down.” Yeah, so they think we’re stepping on their toes. Of course, obviously, they make sure people know that we represent—and I do too—you know, that we represent the Lower Columbia River, that this wasn’t our traditional area here. But it was Chinook and it’s kind of a no man’s land and Grand Ronde can’t do anything about it, even though some of the people here were ceded to Grand Ronde. So we feel that it’s much more our say of what’s going on in this area than theirs to begin with. So it’s like, “Just back off,” you know.

Yeah, Cowlitz, you know, I don’t know. And they’re that way all the way around. It’s not just this area. They kind of, once they got recognized they started bullying all their neighbors. So we don’t feel that we’re exceptional. They really—and I remember going back to D.C., you know, Brian Baird said that he’d much rather see us come back there than the Cowlitz, because every time the Cowlitz go back to D.C., they’re just bullying the people. [laughing] It’s like “Gee! That’s not the way to do it.”

Yeah, we hope to be—we’re friendly.

59:00

KB: I was actually, in my brain, trying to figure out the dates of your military service and I didn’t come to it. [laughs]

SR: Oh.

KB: You said you went in when you were seventeen, right?

SR: I went in when I was eighteen. Actually, I signed up on the delayed entry program when I was a senior, so I actually did sign up when I was seventeen but I didn't go in until I graduated, so I went in from '75 to '79.

KB: Okay.

SR: Yeah, so, and then it worked out okay for me in the fact that I went to Fort Ord, [California] and it was the last of the brown boot basic, and it was pretty hard core basic training. There was no—it was the time where drill sergeants knew that these people that they trained were people that they were going to be taking to Vietnam, so they wanted to weed out the weak. So I remember one guy, he's laying alongside the road, you know, with a side ache or something, the drill sergeant booting him in the ribs, telling him to "Get up you low life," whatever, you know. There was that; they were trying to glean them out, you know.

And then they sent me to Fort Polk. [Louisiana] for three months, to acclimate because it's real humid down there so you can kind of get used to the jungle life. Then they sent me back to Fort Ord, because they pulled the Seventh Infantry Division out of Vietnam. So I ended up with the Seventh Infantry Division at Fort Ord and spent my time down there living in Monterey. So it wasn't too bad. [laughs]

That's where I met Mildred down there. She was an Army brat. She was actually born at Fort Ord. I always tease her because I said, "Yeah, you know," I did my urban assault in the old hospital where she was born. [laughs] Because they had built a new hospital. Yeah, so I was fortunate. It was kind of an interesting, I mean it was interesting being there with all these guys who just came out of Vietnam, beaus these were the guys who decided to stay in, you know, and they were pretty hard core, a pretty interesting group. And they hated peacetime Army, because they hated playing all these Mickey Mouse games. They were used to kind of doing their own thing, you know. But I felt pretty good with them. I mean if we got called out I knew these guys were [pause], would keep me alive!

And I went in for three years and then when I got in—I went in as an Eleven Bravo, or not Eleven Bravo—I wanted to be a dietician, because I used to work in a restaurant and I figured I'd go be a dietician in a hospital someplace in the military. So, you know how it is, you get

recruited and you sign the paperwork and then the next thing you find out you're a pancake turner; you know, it's like "I don't want to do that." So I said, "Well, what are my other options?" So my other options were combat arms. And two of the guys I went to school with went in the Army and went through basic training with me at the same time, so I thought, "Well maybe I'll just switch over to Artillery," because they were going to be in Artillery up at Fort Lewis." And I say, "I can be a cannon cocker. That would be fine."

They said, "No, it's all filled up." So all they had was Eleven Bush, Straight Leg Infantry.

So I said, "Okay," but I had to extend for another year, for four years to be in Combat Arms; which was okay because they gave me a health bonus and I bought myself a brand new Oldsmobile Cutlass and drove it down to Monterey, you know. It was like, "Yeah," paid cash for it.

And so now I'm a, what we called a "grunt." You know, you walked everywhere. There's no mechanized, not air support or anything. You just walk twenty miles, dig a hole, live in it, you know, retreat back and forth. I can remember the first day that I reported to my permanent duty station. Well the first day I got my gear, me and this other guy came in, we got our gear. The next day they sent us out to the field, you know. We're out there and I'm attached to this corporal and he's just, "Stay with me, stay with me."

"Okay," so I stayed with him and we're attacking this hill. We're doing some training and we're attacking this hill and they're laying down tear gas and smoke and all this stuff, and we come across this Constantino, ribbon wire that's about this high and the guy throws his body across it and tells me to run over his back. [laughing] It's like, "Whoa!" You know, these guys are pretty hard core here, you know. [laughs] And yeah, so that was my first day of my unit, to find out what they were all about. But they were good guys, they were good guys.

There was issues, you know, in the military back then. You know, I mean, about nine months later the TOW Missile System came out, which is the wire-guided, anti-tank weapon. And they didn't want to give it to the old 106, the gunners, the old anti-tank gunners, because that whole platoon was pretty much strung out on heroin, you know. They had gone through ADAD [stands for?] treatment and stuff like that a couple times. So they went out and they chose sixty people out of the whole battalion to be this new platoon, and I got selected to do that. So now I'm with this brand new missile system, and you know, eventually because you're short on people, I'm an E-4 filling an E-6 position and I'm in charge of two TOW Missile systems, you know. And it was cool. You know, I mean you didn't have to walk anywhere because you had vehicles to carry these systems around. You felt bad for your buddies because you come driving by in your

	<p>jeep, you know, and you got empty seats in your jeep, but you couldn't give them a ride because they had to walk everywhere, you know. [laughs] And when you're supporting them, but every time you squeeze the trigger on that, there's like a two or three star general there, wanting to see these new awesome weapons, you know.</p>
<p>1:05</p>	<p>SR: So I did that for, I must have done that for about a year. I was coming back from the field one day and my First Sergeant, it was about two o'clock, he goes, "Robby, what are you doing here?"</p> <p>I said, "What do you mean, what am I doing here? I just came out of the field, Top. Can't you tell?" You know, I'm all dirty and everything.</p> <p>He goes, "You had a meeting with the Command Sergeant Major of the division at one o'clock to be a Chief of Staff driver," or something.</p> <p>And I'm like, "Oh, I'm late." That's not a good thing. So he sends me down there anyway, and I'm like, "Oh, man. I don't want to go down there," you know. So I go down there to division headquarters and of course you got all this brass running around, and I'm looking like I just came out of the field, you know, waiting. And the sergeant major wasn't going to wait for me, so I had to wait until the end of the day when he came back. And he takes me back in the office, looks at me and chews me out, sends me on my way, you know. And I waited three hours down there for that. So I said, "Oh well, I didn't get the job. That's fine. I didn't even know I was up for the job, let alone you didn't get the job." It was driving for some full board colonel.</p> <p>And so about a month and a half later, First Sergeant goes, "Robby. Remember that chief of staff position?"</p> <p>"Yeah."</p> <p>"Well, the guy who got the job, he got orders to go to Germany so it's open again and I'm sending you down there."</p> <p>"Okay, okay." This time I got some [heads-up]. But this time you need to go talk to the brigade sergeant major before you go down there, beaus you know how shit rolls downhill in the military and he must have got chewed out by the division sergeant major, you know, so. Everybody hated the brigade sergeant major. They just could not stand him, you know. I mean the guy's in charge of like sixteen infantry units, you knew, but they hated him.</p> <p>And it's like, "Oh, no, I gotta go see Tillman, Man."</p> <p>So I go down there and he goes, in not so many words he goes, "So, Robby, you want to be a driver, huh?"</p>

I said, "Well it does sound like a pretty good job."

He goes, he goes, basically he goes, "Screw that colonel. You're driving for me." I thought, [laughing] 'Whoa...' So I end up, you know, he didn't even have a jeep. He had to commandeer the chaplain's jeep because he was supposed to ride with the colonel. So he commandeered one of the chaplain's jeeps and so I ended up driving and coordinating for this command sergeant major of the brigade, you know, for the rest of my military career there.

And it was a pretty gravy job, you know. I'd bring him down to places and, "Why'd you bring him here?"

I said, "Well, because he's a command sergeant major and he wanted to be here," [laughing] you know. [laughs] But like I said, we had like sixteen infantry units and three combat support units and a couple headquarters units that we were in charge of, so we had plenty of training to look at. So I'd go upstairs and see what everybody was doing, figure out what my suggestion was on, "Hey, here's what I say. Well, let's go see these, these, these, and these guys."

"Okay." Cool. We'd drive. Sometimes you'd drive off into the boonies, you know, you'd be out there and pull up on an old dirt road someplace, look around and say. He goes, "Are they supposed to be here? Nobody's here."

And I said, "Sergeant Major, I can call Artillery in from twenty miles away and land it on this spot. They're supposed to be here."

"Okay." So then we got to go back and chew somebody out beaus they were in the wrong spot, you know, some lieutenant or something led them off to the wrong spot, but he ended up being a great guy. He was from Georgia, he had a sixth grade education, but he just, you know he was a military man and getting ready to retire. He retired, so I thought, well 'that was the end of that. I'm going to go back to my unit.' The new sergeant major came in. His name was Sergeant Major Sing, he was a seventeen year special forces. He spent three years in Vietnam prior to the conflict, training the Turks, and then spent the entire Vietnam [War] over there. And the guy was just like, whhhp! well decorated man. And had two teenage boys and he decided he wanted to keep me on, so I ended up driving with him and supporting him, and it was good.

And you know, I always talked about moving back up here and everything. So, they didn't really bother to harass me about reenlisting because they knew that I had something better than to stay in the military and that I probably wasn't going to reenlist, so got out. So I spent my last, the last couple years at a gravy job, you know. Yeah. Didn't have to make any formations.

Didn't have to do—yeah, it was pretty easy. It got down to where I wasn't living in holes in the ground. I'd come into an area that we were getting ready to set up and the first sergeant would

	<p>come over to me. He goes, “Sergeant Robinson. Where do you want your tent?”</p> <p>“Right over there.” [laughs] Because it was not only my tent, it was the sergeant major’s and a couple other high-ranking NCO’s you know, that were in there. So we’d come back and there would be like an eight man tent set up, stove going, cots out. [laughs]</p> <p>KB: Nice.</p> <p>SR: Yeah, come back out of the field. “Ahh, someone’s going to clean that up,” you know. I didn’t have to hassle with all that. So it was cool. It was good times. And people took, even though there’s certain things you had to take care of, you know like your weapons and your vehicles and stuff like that, you had certain maintenance you had to do on them, I took care of those people so that I didn’t have to do that, you know. I mean, like weapons, you know I was telling someone the other day that, because they were trying to clean them up and I said, “Yeah, I can remember standing in line for an hour or two to turn in your weapon.”</p> <p>And the guy looked down there and would say, “Oh, there’s a speck of carbon. Take it back and clean it,” you know. [laughs]</p> <p>And when I was working for the sergeant major, it was like, a couple weapons that looked like they were just drug out of the dirt or something, you know. “Here you go. Thank you.” I’d walk up to the front of the line, hand it to ‘em, you know. Because down the road these guys knew that if they needed something that I could make it happen. You know, I can remember my motor, the guy that took care of my jeep, you know, he said, “Oh man, I need a five-day pass to go back to Tennessee and they’re only giving out three-day passes now, and I have no vacation.”</p> <p>And I said, “Okay, I’ll make it happen.” You know. “See ya,” gone. “Bye,” you know and everything was okay. So I’d take care of them. They’d take care of me. So, yeah, it was good. So yeah, those were good times.</p> <p>But like I said, they gave me a different kind of a look. That’s kind of why I got attached to the tribe, you know, and wanted to see what was going on. [pause] Get back to my roots.</p>
1:11	<p>KB: Did you know that you were <i>that</i> tough when you went in? Or did you have to find that out? When you were in the training portion of it.</p> <p>SR: Um, I think, you know I was always raised to work hard and had good values and stuff, so I think the team thing was always there, always inspired me. Maybe that’s the tribal portion of me,</p>

you know. I mean, you know you're there for the team, yeah. And it wasn't all bad. It wasn't all bad, you know I mean the survival portion of it. It was unique. [chuckles] It was unique, you know, living off sea rats and whatever, you know, it's like, I mean you're eating food that was packaged for the Korean War. I mean our sea rations actually had, when you got them they had the little four-pack Pall Mall flip box in them. I didn't even smoke so I traded those off to people for food. [all laugh] "You want some stale cigarettes?" [laughter]

Yeah, so, but no, it was good. I think the teamwork and maybe that kind of helped me on council, too, because you know, some people—people have different styles on council. You know, some people are a little more "in charge," type people. Some people, some of the newer people, you know, have got a lot to learn so they don't step on people's toes. And I think the military kind of teaches you how to exist with all these different personalities, you know, to where you can kind of—I kind of try to stay neutral and listen to all sides before I speak. You know, I don't like to just bark out. So a lot of times, even at council meetings, I'll absorb it and then give my piece. Because you want to, if you hear where everybody else—you don't want to be the first one to speak. So that way you can kind of get a feeling for everybody, you know you want to respect everybody's views, even though some of them might be wrong and you might have to let them know that somewhere along the line. But I think the military is good training for that.

1:13

DS: What were your plans when you were coming back here? You said you knew that you wanted to come back here. What were you planning to do? You were bringing Mildred with you—

SR: Right, right, yeah. Well I knew it was a great place to live, but I had no plans as to actually what I was going to be doing, you know. I mean I was unemployed for about a month, and a friend of mine, Erwin Doolittle [sp?] was working for a place called Calvert Company. He said, "Hey, we're hiring." So I went to work for them and I've been with them for thirty-two years now. So, I've done everything from managed both plants, scheduling, shipping, you know, so I've been with them for a long time. Spent some time, went to Clark College on the GI Bill for a while, you know, and Mildred went to PSU. She had gone to school down in Monterey, MPC [Monterey Peninsula College], and then came up here and went to Portland State and got her degree in criminal justice. Unfortunately, it was right at the time Ronald Reagan was cutting all the programs, so she never went into that field, you know, and she had been working with Ben

Franklin, you know, in the banking, and has just stayed with banking ever since, you know. But never got to use that criminal justice degree that she got.

DS: What's Mildred's background? Her cultural background.

SR: Both her parents were born and raised in San Juan Puerto Rico.

DS: Oh, okay.

SR: Yeah, so. Yeah, so there's some tribal stuff going back there, way back in the day, but yeah, and then her dad was in the military. That's why he liked me. He retired military. And he was in the Korean War and the Vietnam War, and yeah, they lived in—she pretty much lived in Monterey most of her life. When she was real young she lived in Germany for a couple years. Then she lived in Monterey for most of her life, except for her last two years of high school she lived in Hawaii; you know, so.

DS: Nice

SR: Yeah. [laughing]

DS: Really nice!

SR: That was good, yeah, yeah. She can remember going out with her older sisters because eighteen was the drinking age, you know, when she was a senior; you know, "Here you go." Sloughing off to the bars in Hawaii. [laughs] But yeah, it was good, yeah.

DS: So, when you came back you got involved with the tribe. And I'm just curious, because I know Mildred goes to a lot of events with you and things, and so, being Chinook obviously was important to you, and it seems like it's been part of your family culture.

SR: Yeah. You know, the tribe's really accepting of people that want to help. And I think Mildred realizes that. It's just, it's a pretty warm feeling to be around and of course she's well-accepted as a spouse of a tribal member. And she enjoys being at the events and enjoys getting

	<p>Destany, now, out to the events, and helping, and always working, you know always helping and volunteering with the tribe. Some people look at her and think she is a tribal member. But, and I think that's probably the reason I'm able to stay on council is because she's so supportive, you know. I mean I don't know how you could be on council and not have a supportive spouse, even though some of the council members you never see their spouses. But they must be supportive in some way, you know. I think Mildred likes the feeling, the family feeling that you get when you're around tribal events, and you know, she understands all that. Yeah, she's, I don't know of any even that she's ever said she didn't want to go to, [laughs] you know, or help with. So, it's good.</p>
<p>1:17</p>	<p>DS: That's nice. How many children do you have?</p> <p>SR: Two girls.</p> <p>DS: How old are they?</p> <p>SR: Cassandra—age—</p> <p>DS: What year were they born, maybe.</p> <p>SR: Yeah, [laughing] even worse. Rebecca just turned twenty-one and I think Cassandra just turned twenty-five. Yeah, Rebecca goes to school up at, she's a senior now up at the University of Washington. She's in pre-med, so a lot of math and science. You know, she was able to take a couple fun classes. She took a Marvel Art class and one other class when she was up there, and after that it was all phwww! math and science, math and science. A lot of math. I said, "How many algebra classes can you take?" It's like, "How many are there?" I thought there was only one. [laughs] It's a lot of work, you know. Unfortunately, she hasn't really taken advantage of her Native culture, you know, because I said, "You gotta connect with the different groups up there." I said, "You know, you can get mentors." I know it's all possible because as soon as Rebecca decided that the U. was the place that she wanted to be and they accepted her, about the year before that, that was a leadership summit. That's when they first started the Tribal Leadership Summits, Mark Emerick did and they were looking for people to be on their Native American Advisory Board, so as soon as she said she wanted to be there, I've been on the Native</p>

American Advisory Board ever since, so I know [Sheila Edwards?], the head of the Diversity Program, the president, know all the people, you know the head of the counseling and whoever. I said, "I know the people, the who's who of these people." I said, "You need to take advantage of them," you know. I said, "Go in there, connect, you know, and help you out, and especially when you decide you're going to want to shoot for grad school," you know. "It's going to really, really [help]," you know, "You don't want to end up having to go to grad school elsewhere. You want to go up there."

And they've got a pretty good recruiting program for Native students. They're pretty proud of their numbers that they get. You know, I think last year we successfully recruited a hundred and eighty students, so they try to keep, to get their numbers up as far as how many students they have and the retention of those students as well. You know, right now there's a huge campaign going on to raise, I think it's around six million dollars to build a longhouse on the University of Washington [campus], and it's a beautiful longhouse. It's more Coast Salish, it's the one long sloping roof and there's going to actually be two buildings there, and it will give a place for students to be able to go in there and study. A place for them to go in and have presentations, and there's even going to be a place, I think Marv Oliver's trying to raise the million dollars for one area where there's going to be carving, an area for carving as well. So it's going to be a really nice facility. You know, we've blessed the ground, but there's still monies to be raised, so we're, keep our fingers crossed. But I knew it wouldn't be done by the time Rebecca was done with her senior year, but maybe while she's in grad school she'll enjoy it.

Yeah. And you know, a lot of it, you listen to the kids talk, make 'em be comfortable away from home. I remember one kid who is the president of their Native student organization up there. He was Quinault, and he was talking about how it was hard for him, you know, coming to Seattle, because when he went to sleep at night he couldn't hear the waves crashing on the shore; you know, so to have a place where you can come in and then just, you know, connected with other Native children, you know, it's good.

1:21

DS: So, whose daughter is Destany?

SR: Cassandra.

DS: She's Cassandra's daughter.

SR: Yeah.

DS: And she's now six, right?

SR: Yep, she's six, yep. Yeah, six going on whatever, I don't know. [laughs] Yeah, she's a good child, she's good. Yeah, she really, really likes tribal events and getting out there. I need to work a little more with her on—she's kind of faded a little bit on her signing. I gotta get her a little up on more singing, and it's part my fault that we should just do it every, they come over every Sunday. We should go through a couple songs every Sunday. And I also want to work a little more on language with her, to help me too as well, beaus I need work on language more. But I think she'll absorb that. She'll be up for it if we make it fun. This year was the first year we took her on Tribal Journeys and she just loved the Tribal Journeys. You know, out in our backyard we have a beach, you know a little area that we call our beach, you know. We got a lot of stuff that we found on Johnson Beach or Rhodesia Beach or different places like that. And we got that out there and so she had to bring like three water bottles full of sand from Swinomish, because she wanted to put it on our beach. So we put that on our beach, you know, so. But she was able to connect.

One day we were underneath the big awnings, we were out on the beach and she was playing on the beach, doing her thing, and the Blue Heron, Mike Evans' and the Blue Herring crew where out there practicing their songs, getting ready for protocol, and there was one song, *The Bear Dance*, that they do. They've done it at some of their ceremonies and they were getting ready to practice that one and that's one of the community dances where they go grab people from the crowd. So we happened to be there, so we went down here and joined in, so now she's all in to the bear dance since she knows it. Yeah, she's good for that, you know. I like to see—and that's the hard part about being so far away from the coast is that you don't get a chance to practice some of the dances that this canoe family's doing, although you can jump in on them and join in but on the journey she was able to get out on the floor and do a couple of those community dances, you know, the blue heron dance is, it's a song that all the tribes know.

So, when we were there at protocol one night, one of the tribes did that song and so people were coming down from the audience to do the dance. I think by the time they were really into the song there was probably about a hundred and fifty drummers in the middle of the place and there was about six hundred people dancing around the outside. In fact, it almost stopped moving for a while, there were so many people. [all laugh] So she was able to get down to do that. I

	<p>think she got down and did the frog dance, you know, and a couple of those dances out there in the protocol tent. So, it's good. Yeah.</p> <p>DS: I saw her do the bear dance at the canoe gifting ceremony.</p> <p>SR: They did, yeah.</p> <p>DS: That was really cute.</p> <p>SR: Yeah, so she likes that. But I've got to get her into a couple more songs. She knows a few songs. She knows how to sing <i>Happy Birthday</i> in Chinook, so. [laughs]</p> <p>DS: You mentioned language. I actually have a couple of questions, that—I don't know how long you're willing to talk, because I think we can keep asking questions for a long time.</p> <p>SR: I don't have a whole lot of plans today.</p> <p>DS: Okay. So, you mentioned the language. I'm curious about two things: one is when you started getting involved in the language and learning more Chinook. And then the other is, I'm curious about your art. So maybe start with the language, because I know that you make those beautiful paddles, and that you make art also, Chinook art.</p>
1:25	<p>SR: Language, you know the language portion, I think where I got kind of tied into that is when I was attending Lifeways classes over at the Grand Ronde office in Portland. So there was a language class, some basic language going on over there, so I started taking some of the language classes over there and then I got more into, a little more into the art. It was kind of hard for me to [go], because some things were going on some Wednesday nights, some Thursday nights. I can't travel over there every night. So, it's like, yeah I had to choose what I needed to do and I kind of—at one time they were doing all of that stuff in one night, but it got so big that you couldn't do it all in one night. So I think the language suffered a little more over the art. But I think now, if I get over there often, I mean I try to get over there on Thursdays, but I haven't been over there for over a month because I'm always preparing for something else, and I think I'm going to get to a phase where next week I'm actually going to go over there and start</p>

working again. And you knew, I could probably sit there and talk to Greg Archuleta or Greg Robinson. We can do some basic talk in Chinook, type stuff, you know, and get that going and I think that'll help. Because that's where you're going to learn is just conversing, you know, just conversing and I'm gonna get the new dictionary from them and I can go through that and maybe look at that and look at some of the sentence and just start working on Destany on some of the things, you know, that you know everyday things that we do that I can talk to her. I think that'll help, too, you know it'll be a lot easier. But I'd really like to learn a lot more language. I don't know, I know *naika cumtux tonooosh [sp?] wawa*, "I know just a little wawa."

One of the things that I was kind of happy learning and you know these guys would talk so fast over my head, so I finally said, I said, "I need to learn something here," so I said, *wik naika cumtux mika wawa* or "I don't know what you said." [all laugh] I thought that was, that was pretty good. So it sounded like I knew what I was saying but I didn't know what they were saying. [laughter] So they had to slow it down, you know, but yeah I would like to learn a lot more. It's just finding time to be able to do that and I think through talking to Destany might be the best bet; you know, just conversing with her—

DS: Well, children learn quickly—

SR: Because she's come a long ways, you know, it used to be, it's always been *Chupi* and *Chitcha* for Grandpa and Grandma, so that's easy. It used to be "*Alqi*, Destany, *Alqi*," you know, "Later." And then we've worked our way up to *alqi ntsayka wawa nayka shiksh* or "Later we talk my friend," so you know, so she's got a little bit going there but need to get some more, you know, get her out, come over here and sit, you know, different things, you know, just simple terms, yeah. And she knows yes and no, of course, *wik, wik* [laughs], *dret, dret*.

DS: Were there any Chinook words used in your household by your dad?

SR: Nope, not really. And even, Phillip, you know, Phillip would speak that Chehalis-Chinook dialect when he was kid up until Kindergarten. But I don't think that he today, even though he's got the great memory I don't think he remembers any of the language, you know, which is kind of odd. I thought that he would remember language, but he remembers history more than he did the language itself. And you know, that language that he was speaking is a little bit different than the Wawa that we speak today, but they're still, you know, there are still some words that I'm

sure click with each other.

DS: And the art, so you started, you took the art classes over there too.

SR: I started doing some are over there. The paddles, the paddles, though, you know I would make paddles. When we got that first canoe I started making paddles, and then I started making the little paddles because, you know, as people were building the Plankhouse, they were putting a lot of hours in, you'd see the same people all the time and obviously, I mean other than you know, Tony would be there occasionally. Greg Robinson and I would be there. We were probably the most tribal members that were there. Most of the people were from the community that were building this house and I wanted to do something to honor those people that put the hours, you know a hundred plus hours into the house. So I actually took a piece of the bottom of the wealth pole that's in the house today, and I made them cedar paddles, you know, necklaces. Of course cedar wasn't the best thing, you know, because that wasn't traditional for our paddles and then down the road when I was making big paddles I thought that I always had these wood scraps and I needed to do something with them.

So I started making the necklaces out of paddles that, you know, either I traveled on the journey with or you know, been at salmon ceremonies with. Since then, I don't know how many I've made, hundreds of them, you know they've been—I've talked to people who gift them to people in Japan. I sent some off to Norway recently. All across the United States, you know. So I continue to make them and dabble in them. I make a little bit of money in them, you know, to subsidize my other paddles or you know, buying the beads that I put on them, you know. And earrings, make some earrings. I'm currently working—I ran out of rattles, so I'm making some rattles. I've got a couple paddles that I'm working on. I've got a canoe, a little canoe I'm working on out there. I've got a bunch of stuff on my bench out there—you'll have to go out and take a look—that I'm just kind of dabbling in right now. This bench that I made on the front porch, I've got two blanks out back and I want to make two, probably about a foot and half to two feet longer, and try to sell them, you know. So that's my—but I'm making tools to make that with, so I've got a D-adze that I'm working on because I want to make sure I use more traditional tooling on it, so I can maybe make more money on the bench itself, you know. So, it's like Eh! kind of—gotta hurry up and get going on it! [laughter]

DS: You're a busy guy, Sam!

SR: Well, yeah, yesterday was the first time I actually go the time. I took about two hours just to get things started. So I got all these things started and then I realized I've got a paddle sitting there and I'm going, "Oh, I should really cut out two paddles," because then if I'm going to start sizing them down, I could do two at once. And I've got this other function that I'm donating one for an auction; you know, it's like, yeah, yeah, I better get—so now I'm going to have to blank out another paddle so when I get ready to start shaping them down that it's easier to do two or three at the same time, if you're going to drag out all the tools, you know, to do it. And today's kind of one of those great days, because I like to set up my stuff out in the middle of the yard so I don't have to clean it up, you know.

DS: Yeah, it's beautiful out.

SR: Yeah, it's going to be a good day for throwing some chips.

DS: Could we talk for maybe ten or fifteen? Ten more minutes?

SR: Yeah, I'm good, I mean, like I said, I'm in no hurry.

DS: I know you— [laughter]

SR: I mean it's your guys' time that, you know, I'm concerned about.

1:32

DS: Well, we're fine. [to Katy] It sounds like you have some questions. I wanted to about how the first salmon ceremony started again, because I know you've been doing it at Fort Columbia, I don't remember exactly how many years.

SR: Oh, it's been quite some time, yeah.

DS: How did that come about? What was your involvement in it?

SR: You know, my basic involvement was to be in the canoe. I mean, I think the organization of it, you know, was done through Tony, making sure that that ceremony came back; you know,

Ray would go get the fish and, and it was rather small. It was a small event at first, and its grown over the years. But you know, just to be able to; you know, fish were so important to us. You know, I mean people associate us with salmon even though sturgeon and smelt were probably a heavier diet. We did eat salmon but just to have that ceremony. And other tribes do the same ceremony but they do it differently. You know, how they kill the fish. It's all geared to [you?]; in fact, even when we do our first salmon ceremony we talk about how people wanted to kill the fish by rubbing sand in its eyes. But they didn't do that on our side of the shore up here. They did it over on Fort Clatsop side; you know, that's the way they killed the fish over there. Over here we kicked the fish. You know, so each area had their own little taboos on how you did certain things, you know. So to bring that back and be able to let people hear the stories and hear why coyote made the, you know obviously the animals set all the rules down, and to be able to relate those rules to the Chinook people, of today as well as it was done yesterday, is, it's great. And you know, it's grown over the years, and this coming year it's going to even be another experience for us in the fact that we're thinking about, right now we're putting the plans together to probably stay at the Plankhouse overnight and then two and a half days before the salmon ceremony, head down the Columbia River. Then maybe stay in Skamokawa and a couple other sites on the way down, and then come around that corner on the half day and deliver the fish from the mouth of the Columbia River. So we're going to think about a little mini two and a half day journey.

KB: Nice.

SR: In the works. Well, we got more canoes now. We can put a lot of people in the water. Figured *Klmin* will hold sixteen pullers and six passengers. *Ituxt*, Ray's canoe, will hold twelve pullers. *Squakwal* can hold six pullers and then there's family canoes. So you can put quite a few people in the water, you know, for a few days.

DS: *Ituxt* is here, isn't it?

SR: *Ituxt* is in Washougal right now, yeah, yeah.

DS: It's in Washougal. Is it down by where you work?

	<p>SR: It's in, I got it in a curtain van at work, yeah, keep it out of the weather, yeah. You know, today would have been a good day to get out on the water, but it's going to take a little planning, kind of watch the weather and then just put out emails or phone calls. I'm sure I can get nine to twelve pullers like almost instantly, because people want to get out, you know, and I think I've got enough paddles. I've got some of Ray's paddles here. I gotta count paddles, because I had to retire a couple, you know. But yeah, so <i>Ituxt</i> is up here. I brought <i>Ituxt</i> up because you know, as part of the fundraiser for the refuge—we had a fundraiser in October. I auctioned off ten seats on a journey on the opening weekend of the Plankhouse. So we have people we'll put out at Ridgefield on Lake River and then paddle down past Cathlapotle and if the water's real good we can shoot over to the Willamette or up into the Lewis; you know, it doesn't matter to me. The water's always pretty calm around here, compared to the mouth of the Columbia River or on the journeys, you know. It's like, ehhh, ain't nothing going on on this river! (laughs)</p> <p>So I always tell people it's pretty calm. Then I show them pictures of us in the water, you know, when it's rougher, or it looks like it's rough to them, you know, and say, "Yeah, you know, it was just another day. I've seen worse." [chuckles]</p>
1:36	<p>DS: At what point did you get involved with the journeys?</p> <p>SR: Uumm, I think it was the second year that we were traveling, about six years ago. We've been traveling on the journey for seven years. So, I didn't catch the first year. It came too quickly. Unfortunately, with the journey planning, we don't get the dates early enough, you know, when we're leaving and all that stuff. So it's kind of hard to put in for your vacation. Like, Mildred and I, we usually put in for some of our vacation by January, you know, so that you gotta plan ahead. What had happened, in the early journeys is that we would start at the beginning, and we'd only take a week, you know, so you never made it to the final protocol. So now we're at a point where we start in the middle and make that final destination and are able to spend some time at the final destination. It's easier because we know when they're landing. We just don't know when they're taking off, you know, so it's easier to plan our vacation that way.</p> <p>And next year is Squaxin Island, so it's going to be rather close to home, you know, so even early on, you know let's say I take a week of vacation later, I can still meet them someplace on the weekend and pull for a couple days. I don't know where we're going to start, you know, we have a lot of options. We could start at Neah Bay and come down to the Olympia area, or go up to Lummi and come on down, but what I would like to see is us start at Celilo, because the</p>

Umatilla and the Warm Springs both have canoes now. Well, Umatilla should be done. And we could come down from Celilo. I'm sure Grand Ronde would probably want to host again this year at Chinook Point over—and then come down and Cowlitz will probably want to host us on the Columbia River, and then move on down to the mouth and then just portage up to someplace up to that area. Because I think Tony signed us up to help; you know, we're kind of related to a lot of those people up there at Squaxin Island and I think Tony has volunteered us to help out with some of the stuff that they need to do to get ready.

But I'd like to spend some time on the Columbia River. It would be pretty mellow. Yeah. [chuckles] Yeah, pretty nice to connect with those ancestors. And that's one thing about the journeys is the presence of the ancestors is so, so strong, you know, not only when you're out there dancing but when you're on the waters, you know, you know they're with you. There's been times where you just strongly know they're with you. Like when we left Tacoma to go to Seattle, you have to go through the [Tacoma] Narrows, and the night before we would always have a skipper's meeting. And what the skipper's meeting usually is, it's all the canoe skippers meeting with the local people, the local fishermen that fish in that area that know the waters really well, and tribal members from that area that know the waters really well, and they talk about what to expect the next day on the journey.

And they told us that it was pretty much mandatory that everybody wear life jackets when going through the Narrows, because of the steep canyons, the water boils when the tide comes in and out and it's pretty rough. And we were pulling, and unfortunately you could see the bridge for like hours before you get there. [all laugh] You keep digging and digging, it's like, "Yeah, there's a bridge, there's a bridge." And just before we reached the Narrows, you know, there was this light fog on the water and that light fog on the water is our ancestors that travel with us, you know. And when we got to the Narrows it was like a lake. It was flat. It was glass, as we went through there. So we felt that our ancestors were with us, you know, that day, as we went through. Of course later on that day—and it was a beautiful day. It was sunny. It was real nice. After about six hours in the water that day, we were moving pretty fast, because we went an extra mile so we can get a narrow channel and get really good pull from the tide. We were ripping along about eight miles an hour and we thought, 'Wow, this is cool,' you know, we were really hauling.

And I look up there and I go, "Tony, I think it's raining up there," you know. By the time we get up there, we get ready to turn the corner and come into this huge, the shipping channels in Seattle, the tide had changed and a nor'wester came in and it was chop. It was just, for three

hours, just chop. [laughs] Poor Phil. I think Phil and Tony almost had hypothermia when they got out of the canoe. But the water was coming over my lap and I was up to here in water, you know. We traveled light. I think there was only five of us in the canoe, maybe, yeah probably five of us in the canoe. So it wasn't like someone else could stop and help bail, so Tony's back there trying to bale, steer, paddle, you know. But yeah, I think he probably baled about three canoe loads of water out, but we made it. Next day got up and did it again.

DS: So it was you and Tony and Phil, and who else was in the canoe with you?

SR: Let's see, who was in? There was a gal from Grand Ronde who had never been in a canoe before. And it was kind of funny because, yeah, she was one of those—she was from the horse side of the Grand Ronde community, you know, not the canoe family. And it was kind of funny because early on when it was like nice and flat and everything, she was getting a little queasy, so they were giving her a little Dramamine or whatever to help her out, you know. And she didn't complain when we went through the shipping channels, you know. And it's kind of unique. The shipping channels is really, you know, that's when you really know you're small, because you're just this little twenty-six foot canoe, and there's like freighters and ferries and barges and all kinds of traffic that you're trying to avoid out there. You know they can't see you; you know, they might see the flag on your support boat and at that time our support boat wasn't much bigger than us. [laughs] Yeah, you know you're small. You know you're small out there.

1:42

DS: Well, one of the questions I have is, you've been working for a long time towards recognition or restoration, and you had the experience where you were recognized. I just wonder, how do you keep doing this? What sustains you in continuing—

SR: Yeah.

DS: —to move forward on this? Because it's got to be difficult.

SR: I tell people, you know, I'm the third generation working on this, and unfortunately we're rapidly losing that second generation, you know. And you know, you do it for, you do it for your youth, you do it for your ancestors and your elders. And it is a tough battle. You know, you just gotta have faith it's going to happen, you know, and you feel better when you see the public's

eye really looking at you, you know, in a good way. Unfortunately, you know how things work in D.C. and the politicians and you know, we're looking at all kinds of different avenues other than just the politicians because it doesn't seem like you can get much out of D.C., you know. It's tough, it's—although you gotta keep pushing that route. Like now, we're working on Maria Cantwell to request a letter from Stanley Speaks, who is a regional director for the BIA. Now Stanley wrote a wonderful letter in support of the Chinook people at the time that he felt that we were going to be restored, talking about how—I haven't seen the whole letter. I mean I've only got snippets of it, but basically the letter talks about how he's in full support of the Chinook Restoration and that they're ready to stand by and help us rewrite our constitution and set up our reservation plans. I mean it's a great letter of support, you know. But it never made it out into the public's eyes, because the restoration didn't go through. So, Michael Mason had told us that all it takes is one of our congressional people, or senators, to request that letter and then it will be public. So, we're working on Cantwell right now to request that letter.

Now, rumor has it is that she's requested it. Now why we haven't seen it, maybe the BIA's still a little reluctant to give that letter up, but we want to get that out so we know that that strong support was there. Then we can—we also have the feeling that, Michael Mason was at a meeting in Portland one day and [Larry] Echo Hawk [Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs for the Department of the Interior as of 2009] and Stanley Speaks were standing there together and he happened to have a chance—Stanley called him over and was talking to Michael, and Echo Hawk had asked Michael when he was going to get this whole recognition and restoration thing taken care of; you know, that he felt that it should happen. And his, what he came out of the conversation with is that Echo Hawk is thinking about looking at some of the injustices that happened during the Bush Administration and maybe overturning some of those things, you know, as far as things that happened in the BIA and we're at kind of the top of the list. So getting this letter out in public would free up the opportunity for Echo Hawk to, and you know, through the Interior, take care of us. And then we've also asked, we're looking for executive, you know, from [President Barack] Obama, so we sent him a letter and Michelle a letter. So, we want to make sure that happens, you know we get that avenue.

But I'm kind of hoping that, you know I think, unf—you know, the Echohawk thing will bring us, will bring us recognition, not restoration. So like I said, then we'd be in court all the time. But it's not to say that tribes aren't in court all the time anyway. I mean there's tribes that've been, you know, always recognized and they're in court. You're either in court or you're in D.C., you know, so that's another [thing]. Then it's going to get super busy. Once either one

	<p>of those happen, you know, we're going to be setting up healthcare and reservations and you know, it's going to be a super busy life. If I was busy before, I mean I have a feeling—well, our positions will have to become paid positions because we're going to have to give up our daytime jobs to be able to make this all happen, and happen quick. I know when we were back in D.C., every time we're back there we run into some Grand Ronde folks back there and they said, yeah, they were back there so often that they were thinking about buying a condo, because they spend so much time in hotels and stuff; you know, that it's cheaper to buy a condo. You always have somebody back in D.C.; you know, you gotta lobby. So, lobby for—</p>
<p>1:46</p>	<p>DS: How many times have you been there?</p> <p>SR: I've only been there three times. The first time I went back there was kind of interesting. The Fish & Wildlife sent me back there to get an award from the Secretary of Interior for my work on the Plankhouse project. So that was interesting, you know, to go back. That was my first time back in D.C. and every time I go back it's kind of a whirlwind tour so you don't get to see everything. And I still have that certificate, because it has that I'm a Chinook council person, you know, and it's from the Secretary of Interior, even though they don't recognize us for benefits or anything.</p> <p>And then the next time we went back, it was to lobby. Now Elizabeth Furse said, "Don't hire a lobbyist." Only Chinook people could tell the Chinook story, so Michael Mason and Ray and I and Phil Hawks went back to D.C. and never had been in the Senate or the House, started knocking on doors, you know, going around knocking on doors, talking to people. Luckily Michael had worked back in D.C. and he knew a lot of people, so that was great, he was able to work that angle and we were able to educate the people on the fact that we're being restored, not recognized, because there was a real taboo on recognition in D.C. at the time; you know, and we're telling them, "This is restoration," and that it wasn't ancient history, that the Cow Creek was the last restored tribe and how we, how the Western Oregon Termination Act, that we're the only tribe that hasn't been restored yet; you know, and we were pretty well received on that. So that was good.</p> <p>Then the next time to go back was the time to testify before Natural Resources Committee, and that was a packed house. That was kind of interesting. You know, they expected, you know on the committees, usually when you get a committee going you'll see about three members show up. I think there was probably about six or seven and a couple people that dropped in and</p>

	<p>out. So it was kind of an interesting process, you know, and then the real interesting part about it was, is that—</p>
<p>1:48:52</p>	<p>[break in audio – recorder fell under Sam’s chair]</p>
<p>1:49:23</p>	<p>SR: The interesting part was is that, you know everybody gave their opening, that’s all the congressional people that were sponsoring the bills were able to give their opening words; you know, they had five minutes. And Brian did a pretty good job, you know, he did a great job. Of course he all tied it into Lewis and Clark and us saving them, and did a pretty good job. And then right after that we broke for a small, a small recess there, and the other tribal leaders were coming up to us saying, “Wow, he’s good. Can we borrow him?” [laughs] And then they invited all the sponsors to come in; you know, congressmen to come in and sit on the panel at any time. Brian had told us that he had a pretty busy agenda, that he didn’t know that he could make it back for the hearings throughout the day. But he was there, and about a minute into it, it would be like [makes electronic sound d-d-d-d-d], and boom! Brian would appear out of nowhere and they’d put his placard up there and so he was able to ask questions; you know, so he was able to ask questions of the BIA, you know, and the BIA basically, they didn’t really have a leg to stand on and nobody there, none of the people on the committee could stand the BIA, you know,</p> <p>It seemed like, they all had some issues with the BIA. In fact, one lady says, she goes, “I have a tribe in my district that has mineral rights and mining rights, and they’ve been trying to negotiate with the Interior for years and meanwhile you guys have negotiated with non-tribal people five years ago. Is the BIA like a black hole where things come in and never come out?” And Brian had excellent questions, and I think by the time the BIA was done they were just happy to escape with some skin on their body; you know, it was like—</p> <p>[Nick] Rayhall [Chairman, Natural Resources Committee] says, “Well, what’s your recommendation?”</p> <p>“Our recommendation is that Congress take care of this,” you know and they, like, ‘We’re done with it,’ you know, even though we know we have to deal with the BIA down the road, you know, once we are restored or recognized.</p> <p>And then, we had made pretty good connections when we were back lobbying, with Josh Petri, who was Rayhall’s top assistant, you know, and it was kind of an interesting meeting because I know as, you know we were out knocking on doors and this was like day three of knocking on doors and Ray wasn’t feeling too good and he told me, “Sam, I think you’re going</p>

to have to take this one.”

And I said, “Well, gee, this is the most important one. This is Natural Resources Committee,” you know. So when I walked in there it was to meet with Josh and we walked in there and the first thing I noticed was that all their fabric was a Pendleton design that had a lot of petroglyphs on it. So I was able to say, “First thing I’d like to say is I see our ancestors are here with us today,” and I was explaining all the artwork on there and made a really good connection with Josh. Through that connection with Josh, we had really, you know leading up to the hearings we had a really good connection. In fact, the day before we sat down with Josh and tried to figure out *how*, because when you go before committee you go by panels, so it’s like waves of testimony. So, you know like for instance you have the congressional people giving their word first, and then it’s the BIA and then it would have been us, and then it would have been the opposition; you know, so you don’t get the final word in.

He was trying to figure out, “Yeah, well we’ll work on something. We’ll figure out how to make it so you can get the final word in.” Because they felt it was really important, especially once we, you know at the last second we found out the Quinalts were going to be showing up. At the very last second. So the next day when we showed up and we found out what the layout was, the layout was that they were going to put the opposition and us on the same panel. So, Ray was sitting right up there with Fawn Sharp and you know, all the other tribal leaders were sitting—and actually I don’t think any of the other tribes had opposition show up. So, and then with Brian showing up and grilling Fawn, you know, heavily, you know, and making her flustered and everything.

And they never really—nobody had any questions of Ray, so finally Brian had to say, “Do you mind if Chairman Gardner says something?” And I don’t feel that the committee actually really had any issues with our restoration; you know, that’s why they didn’t ask us any questions. You know, but he was able to at least say something. And it was such a, it was a full house there and they opened up an overflow room, you know, for the hearing. So it was something that they normally don’t have to do, you know, on Natural Resources. Yeah, so there was a lot of interest. But unfortunately things kind of came down to a grind. Once we got grouped up as all four tribes in one bill that really hurt us hard. We did try to pull away right there the last two months, but by that time things just came to gridlock in Congress and even [Congressman Jay] Inslee told [Washington State, 1st Congressional District] Brian that if we pulled the Chinook out of the bill that he would support it and he did. But it didn’t make any difference. It was too late. Yeah, so. I don’t know. I don’t see a bill coming out of the Senate, but

	<p>you can only hope. You gotta work it, [softly] you gotta work the—</p> <p>DS: It sounds like you're trying all the avenues.</p> <p>SR: Anything we can, yeah, anything we can, yeah. Meanwhile, like Ray always says, "We don't need the government to tell us we're Indian. We just need them to give us some support," you know. We know we're here. You know, we're still out there in the waters and we're still traveling. We're still doing our Chinook things [sound of dishes in the background] and people know we're out there, but it would be nice to have that government support so we can go to that next level.</p>
1:55	<p>SR: And you know, you also, you're looked at as less-than by other tribes sometimes, you know, unfortunately. That's why my dad would tell me that him and Sammy Pickernell, one time, were up at Lummi, you know, and it was like, I don't know, it was the wee hours of the morning and now, my dad didn't drink. Sammy drank a lot but my dad didn't drink. I think that's why he was kind of chauffeuring Sammy around and whatever, and they were in one of these longhouses and people were in there trying to sleep and stuff and everything. I don't know if they were trying to find a place or settle down or whatever, but basically they ran them out because they said my dad was a half-breed, you know, [quietly] so you're kind of stuck in between you know.</p> <p>DS: Did you experience anything like that at all?</p> <p>SR: No, no. Yeah, I don't think there was much of that going on. Even when, you know in the military when my dad was in the Korean War they would segregate. So it was kind of funny, my dad has said, "Yeah, they—" they looked at him and being Northwest Indian, not Southwest Indian, they looked at him and they go—they put him in a Filipino outfit [laughing], you know, because they thought he looked more Filipino than anything, so yeah.</p> <p>DS: Wow.</p> <p>SR: Yeah, he was in Arbor Division with the Filipinos.</p>

DS: Huh. [questioning] Katy?

KB: I have questions that probably should be held for a second interview.

DS: That's what I was thinking.

KB: I hate to say that at the end of a first one, that I already have a list. They take us back into some things.

DS: Yeah. Well, because we talked about potentially scanning some images and things.

SR: Mm-hmm.

DS: Do you still have time for that?

SR: Yeah, I do.

DS: Okay, okay, I think that would be a really productive use of our time too. If that's okay with you, because I do too [have questions] and we won't immediately ask you to set aside another afternoon, but if we could do that I think that that would be, that would be good and then we can be fresh to start. Because I'm sure we both have a lot of other questions.

Yeah, because I'm thinking about moving back to earlier, too, so I think there's a lot of thing. We could start now and we could probably sit here for another hour but I think scanning might be a better way to spend our time.

SR: Well, it's kind of like when I used to go out and talk, you know. The first couple times you're doing public talking you kind of like write things down. If it doesn't work after the first time, you just throw that away, you know, because the story's so lateral; you just go and this comes here and that comes around to this; you know, especially when you start dealing with the Quinalts and you know you're dealing with this. It just, it could go on for a long time. So finally I just stopped doing that and I kind of get an idea what the people are expecting. You talk a little bit and then you stop, open up for questions, you know, because you might be talking about the recognition process and how the Quinalts appealed it but you don't want to have to go

into that whole history because that could be a whole ‘nother conversation; you know, but then eventually somebody will ask you, “Well, what’s with the Quinalts anyway?”

“Well, okay. Well, here I’ll give you the small snippet of it,” you knew. So it’s a, yeah, it’s a big story. And you know, luckily I’m able to learn that and I’m still learning it. The beauty of it is that people do have such an interest in this. So I learn from people, you know, outside the tribe, that are researching us to help us know more about us, you know, that’s why this website’s going to be fantastic for our people—to learn more about them.

DS: Yeah, we’re excited about it.

SR: Yeah. I keep telling people, I say, “Yeah, this website.”

They say, “Oh yeah, I’ve seen your website.”

And I say, “No, no, this is a good website.” [laughter] “This has got some updated material.”

DS: So how shall we move forward?

SR: Did you want to take these—we put this thing [referring to case holding baskets and arrowheads] on sliders so we can pull it out in case you wanted to take a picture, like Catherine George’s basket or anything. You said you might have some interest in that. A lot of the other baskets we have in there. There’s one that my grandmother made, and—

[decision to take a break, end of formal interview session, 1:59:55; audio collected as pictures are taken of baskets and materials are scanned]