

SHADES OF L.A. INTERVIEW PROJECT
INTERVIEW SUMMARY
GLENDA AHHAITY - 8/3/94
INTERVIEWER: SOJIN KIM
1 CASSETTE TAPE

SIDE A, TAPE 1

000 Silence

003 Introduction

006 Born in Phillips, Texas. Parents went there with Phillips Oil Company. Family from Kopea(?) and Dewey Oklahoma, Northeastern Oklahoma. She is Cherokee, French, and English.

010 Father was Cherokee. Grew up in rural farming community where the main industry was oil. Her grandfather had been part of the beginning of the oil industry. During WWII, her father was in the navy and met her mother in California. Her mother was French. They married during the war, returned to Oklahoma, and then went to Texas. They moved to California with Union Oil.

020 Father worked in oil industry from the beginning. He was a roughneck in the oil field. Phillips oil built their first chemical processing facility in Phillips, Texas. When Union oil was building their first chemical nitrogen processing facility in California they were recruiting people with chemical backgrounds. Her father was part of the industry when it began to diversify and develop other products from oil. Union Oil became Union Carbide. They built their first facility in Brea. In the 1970s or 80s, her father went to Kani (?), Alaska when they were building another facility.

034 Her whole family came to California in 1954--mother, father, brother, step-sister. Came before the real boom started. Orange County was still orange groves. Beaches weren't crowded.

040 Had a difficult time finding housing at first. Housing tracts had not been built yet. A year after they came to CA., her parents bought a home in one of the first tracts in Orange County. The house was located in what is now downtown Anaheim but at that time it was in the middle of orange groves.

047 Glenda was in junior high school at this time. She went to Fremont Jr. High school for one year, then she went to Anaheim High school. There was only one high school,

Anaheim Union High School, in Anaheim. Students were bussed in from all over the area. Now Anaheim has 7 or 8 high schools. She was part of the last class to graduate in Anaheim when there was just one high school. There were 1500 students in this class and they had to hold the graduation at Anaheim stadium because of the size. After this the school district was divided up.

- 058 Family had been planning to leave Oklahoma to go to the Middle East. Father had interviewed with an oil company, the family made all the preparations to go to Lebanon. There was a major uprising in Lebanon and there were pictures in the paper of oil company employees hanging from lamp posts. Her father took a job in California instead.
- 066 They came to California crying because they hadn't wanted to leave. Southern California seemed like a strange place: they went to the beach on Christmas day--it was 90 degrees. She now loves California. But her family visits Oklahoma 4-5 times a year.
- 075 Didn't really have any expectations prior to moving here. She fell in love with the ocean and surfed at Huntington Beach, Dana Point. She would surf with her father and her brother. This was before surfing was a fad.
- 087 She began with body surfing. Her father worked a rotating shift--grave yard, evening, day. When he would come off grave yard shifts, he would have 4-5 days off. He would let Glenda cut school and they would go to the beach together. When she got to college, she set up her classes so that she would always have a couple of days off to surf.
- 097 Surfing was a natural extension of loving to go to the ocean. This was before it was a fad. They used long, wooden boards. People she knew then were the same people who built some of the first fiberglass surfboards.
- 110 Father had rode rodeo for a while, she had played football with her brothers. She was more of a tomboy. Surfing was quite natural for her. She felt comfortable surfing with the men. When the population at beaches picked up, had to find other places to surf. Waves were best up towards Northern California, down towards Dana Point, and at some places around Huntington Beach.
- 143 Body surfing in Laguna Beach almost drowned when caught in a rip tide. She didn't enjoy the ocean as much. After she got married, had children, started working, she didn't have time for surfing anymore.

151 Started working when she was a junior in high school at Disneyland. The park had just opened and all the kids wanted to work there. Disney had let old bit movie people have stores in the park. He provided work for a lot of old people who didn't have work anymore. A man named Bill Wilkerson owned the Indian Village store and was only hiring Indians to work at it. He didn't believe Glenda was really Indian, but it turned out that his father knew her father and grandfather, and he hired her.

She worked at Disney through high school and through two years of college. There were a lot of young Indian people from around the country who worked at the park in the summer time. She met her husband there.

The entertainment management didn't have a lot of respect for the Indian performers--they were paid less than the performers in other productions. Eventually, they organized and struck. Indian Village was closed down and Bear Country was built.

202 Disney was fun when Disney was still alive. He had wanted the employees to have as much fun as the customers.

229 She met her husband when he was paddling canoes at Disneyland. Her husband is Kiowa and Comanche and he is originally from Laughton, Oklahoma. He came to California in the Marine Corp. After he got out of the Marine Corps he was a journeyman plumber. He contracted lung cancer as a result of cutting asbestos pipe. He was a very fine dancer and continues to do beadwork--he does the beadwork for the costumes of their children.

258 Since she has been married, all of her social contacts have been among Indians. Prior to working at Disneyland, she had not had much contacts with Indians--there were no Indian families living in the area of Anaheim where she grew up.

290 Some of the customers at Disneyland were obnoxious, others were very interested and kind. It was the experience of working with the other employees that was so enjoyable.

305 After she graduated from high school she went to Fullerton Community College, which is Fullerton College now. Left Disneyland after she got married. She went to work at a greeting card company (Buzzacard?) for ten years. Some other people who had worked at the Indian Village also were working there. Then she went to work at American Can Company for nine months.

318 In 1972, she got a job at Rockwell International in Downey. She worked on the last Apollo (specific name?) launch

through space shuttle development. She went back to school and got a B.S. in Public Administration. She got an A.A. in Computer Science. Worked a while as an on the board draftsman, worked in Engineering business management. Started working in Public relations and government relations. Worked with American Indian Engineering Society (AIES) and Indians in the Federal Government. Her son is the lead engineer on the space shuttle main propulsion engine systems. Her children grew up very exposed to the engineering field. If she had her choice she would love to work on the next generation of space vehicles.

- 349 She has worked with the L.A. City County Indian Commission for the last three years. She worked 15 years at Rockwell. She also worked 6 years at MacDonald-Douglas--worked on C-17 missile systems.
- 356 Her involvement with the Indian community is not so much through organizations--it is an all encompassing part of her personal life. She now works professionally in an organization that serves the Indian community. She would rather do something different so that she could relegate the things that are personal back to the personal side of her life.
- 363 She got married in 1960. Her family lived in Anaheim and then Garden Grove.
- 365 How the events surrounding Vietnam and the Civil Rights movement affected her life. A lot of Indians served in Vietnam. Her husband was called back to service during the Bay of Pigs. Most Indian men of that generation served in the military--in the Marine Corp. A greater proportion of Indians than any other ethnic group serve in the military today--especially among the Plains Indian tribes that have a warrior tradition that continues today.
- 380 Vietnam was hard for everybody. There was a growing militancy among young Indians. At a pow wow in Albuquerque, there were protesters who were wearing the flag upside down, around their shoulders. A lot of Indian people, particularly those from Oklahoma, were so upset that they left.
- 393 Although Indian people are conquered people in the United States (within their own country), their country is very important to them. All Indian events begin with the American flag, the singing of the flag song, and prayer. At the end of events, warrior songs honoring military veterans are sung. These songs speak of ancient battles as well as contemporary ones (including the Tet Offensive in Vietnam). In general, Indian people responded differently to the war--

this is based on their feelings about their sons. The Indian community honors its veterans. Non-Indian veterans are often very moved by this.

- 427 When she goes to the V.A. hospital with her husband in Mira Loma, she sees the veterans that are quadriplegics and have essentially been abandoned by their people--finds this shocking. She very much opposed what the U.S. was doing in Vietnam but she didn't oppose the servicemen who were there.
- 448 For Plains Indians, the warrior is the highest honor. There are Women's Warrior Society Auxiliaries. There is no analogy in the rest of society for this. Veteran's Day dances--some are women's dances. The women wear some of the men's war gear. The significance of this is very emotional: mothers and the sons they lost, pride, honor.
- 487 In the Indian community there were some people who were protesting the war. There was a real division between the generations; young Indians on college campuses--their protests weren't necessarily "culturally connected." Different perspectives between people on how the role of the warrior was viewed. The war did not make sense. Many people of her generation did not return from the war.
- 524 She was in labor during the Watts Riots. She watched the news coverage while in labor. Her daughter was born on August 14, during the Watts riots.
- 549 When she worked at Rockwell in community relations, worked with people who were helping to reconstitute those communities. She did work in Watts and the Compton School District. At Rockwell worked with people who had been very involved in the Civil Rights struggle. The Indian community's experiences were different. It was more of an issue of survival. Black activists contacted Frances Sweetwater, one of the elders in the community, and wanted to join with them. Indian community supported their efforts for civil rights but they felt they had no commonalities. The Indian community did not want to be white or be a part of the American scene. They were only compromising the society as much as they had to to survive.
- 588 Now the community is at a crux of change. Does the ethnic integrity of the community survive as many people assimilate into the rest of society. Tribal and cultural integrity is at stake.
- 598 In Los Angeles there are many tribes and many different types of Indian people: those connected to other Indians, those who are assimilated, those who lead fragmented lives--live in two different cultural contexts at work and at home.

Cultural organizations/activities: 18-19 Indian churches in the area, athletic leagues, pow wows, traditional religious experiences.

The challenge of how to address the needs of the community is how to address the diversity of Indians in L.A. Many cultural differences between tribes.

- 644 Outside of work, most of her life involves her family. Her husband is one of the finest Southern Plains singers in the country. Her children have all grown up singing and dancing. They have a drum group called Red Tipi--travel around for dances and pow wows. They also have a business called Red Tipi that does cultural performances in schools, fairs. She has four children and three grandchildren.
- 672 Importance of carrying on culture. She is Cherokee, French, and English. Cherokee have different cultural customs. They are matrilineal. Her husband's people--Kiowa and Comanche--are very patrilineal. They have been married 35 years and she has lived in his world. When she talks about "cultural," she is referring to Southern plains life.
- 695 Importance of presentation of culture. Perhaps because she is mixed-blood and light skinned she has spent a lot of time talking to non-Indian people. Many Indian people would not be inclined to share their personal lives with others. Most of the problems that Indian people face today result from the fact that people are ignorant that Indian people survive. The public is not aware of American policy towards Indian people--still not viewed as human beings.
- 731 Question about Rockwell International
End of SIDE A, TAPE 1

SIDE B, TAPE 1

000 Silence

- 001 Rockwell International built the Space Shuttle. When she started working at Rockwell, they were doing the last of the Apollo Space Launches with Russia. Initially was working in Community Relations. Worked in an Engineering release and configuration control (?) At this time women who had degrees in engineering were classified as secretaries. They fought for technical presence for women in engineering and benefitted from this. She went to MacDonald Douglas when it seemed there would be no more future growth. MacDonald Douglas was expanding the C-17 program. She enjoyed the technical challenges but wasn't as excited about work--straight forward military weapons program. She likes technology and engineering environment. She would have

stayed in that environment if the programs hadn't been cut and she hadn't been laid off.

- 033 She is now the Executive Director of the Los Angeles City/County American Indian Commission. Description of the Commission's work, services.

-----Photographs-----

S-007-073

- 044 The photograph is from the 1940s--prior to when her family came to live in CA. The photograph shows Glenda with her pet chicken in Bakersfield--this was the only chicken to survive after a dog got into the chicken house and killed the baby chickens. Her French grandparents lived in Bakersfield. After her mother died, she spent time with both her Indian grandparents on the farm and her grandparents in Bakersfield.

- 056 Her grandfather was in construction. He was one of the main contractors when China Lake was built. Bakersfield was wide open then. She was in Bakersfield for the first earthquake there.

S-007-069

- 076 [cut off of beginning of statement]
Cerritos Air Crash memorial pow wow

S-007-054

- 084 Daughter was selected as Princess in Pawnee, Oklahoma by the Veteran's Association.

S-007-043

- 091 Myron and Virginia Denatdale (?) at first community relations activity at Rockwell.

- 110 End of Interview
Remainder of Tape is Blank

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SHADES OF L.A. INTERVIEW PROJECT
TRANSCRIBED EXCERPTS

ACCESSION #:

INTERVIEWEE: GLENDA AHHAITY
INTERVIEWER: SOJIN KIM
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 8/3/94
LOCATION: LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
ETHNICITY: AMERICAN INDIAN (Cherokee, French, English)
OTHERS PRESENT: NONE
TRANSCRIBER: SOJIN KIM

INTERVIEW NUMBER: SH-
NUMBER OF DAT TAPES: 1
NUMBER OF CASSETTE TAPES: 1

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Note: Interviews were recorded on DAT (Digital Audio Tape) and transferred to standard cassette tape for transcribing and listening purposes. The three digit numbers are indexed from the cassette recording and not the original DAT recording. In some cases, the numbers on the transcript may not correspond exactly to the counter readings on the cassette player.

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003 Introduction

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and Dewey Oklahoma, Northeastern Oklahoma.
She is Cherokee, French, and English.

010 Father was Cherokee. Grew up in rural farming
community where the main industry was oil. Her
grandfather had been part of the beginning of the oil
industry. During WWII, her father was in the navy and
met her mother in California. Her mother was French.
They married during the war, returned to Oklahoma, and
then went to Texas. They moved to California with
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020 Father worked in oil industry from the beginning. He
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Texas. When Union oil was building their first chemical nitrogen processing facility in California they were recruiting people with chemical backgrounds. Her father was part of the industry when it began to diversify and develop other products from oil. Union Oil became Union Carbide. They built their first facility in Brea. In the 1970s or 80s, her father went to Kani (?), Alaska when they were building another facility.

- 034 Her whole family came to California in 1954--mother, father, brother, step-sister. Came before the real boom started. Orange County was still orange groves. Beaches weren't crowded.
- 040 Had a difficult time finding housing at first. Housing tracts had not been built yet. A year after they came to CA., her parents bought a home in one of the first tracts in Orange County. The house was located in what is now downtown Anaheim but at that time it was in the middle of orange groves.
- 047 Glenda was in junior high school at this time. She went to Fremont Jr. High school for one year, then she went to Anaheim High school. There was only one high school, Anaheim Union High School, in Anaheim. Students were bussed in from all over the area. Now Anaheim has 7 or 8 high schools. She was part of the last class to graduate in Anaheim when there was just one high school. There were 1500 students in this class and they had to hold the graduation at Anaheim stadium because of the size. After this the school district was divided up.
- 058 Family had been planning to leave Oklahoma to go to the Middle East. Father had interviewed with an oil company, the family made all the preparations to go to Lebanon. There was a major uprising in Lebanon and there were pictures in the paper of oil company employees hanging from lamp posts. Her father took a job in California instead.

GA: 066 So he took the job in California and we came out here crying. I mean, we didn't really want to leave. And this was such a strange place. We got here during the winter and Christmas day we went to the beach; it was 90 degrees. And we would do crazy things like drive around Long Beach to smell the oil wells. All the fresh air was shocking. It was really quite a change in environment. So it took some getting used to. I love California. I like Oklahoma. My family goes home 4 or 5 times a year. But I very much love, even as crowded as it's

become, the environment that we live in.

075 Didn't really have any expectations prior to moving here. She fell in love with the ocean and surfed at Huntington Beach, Dana Point. She would surf with her father and her brother. This was before surfing was a fad.

SK: 087 What was your first introduction to surfing?

GA: Body surfing to start with. My dad loved the ocean so we started...He worked a rotating shift where he would work a graveyard shift, an evening shift, a day shift. When he'd come off graveyards, he'd have 4 or 5 days off. And he would let me cut school and we would go to the beach together. So when I got to college, I set my classes up so that even during the winter I had a couple of days free and could go surfing.

097 Surfing was a natural extension of loving to go to the ocean. This was before it was a fad. They used long, wooden boards. People she knew then were the same people who built some of the first fiberglass surfboards.

110 Father had rode rodeo for a while, she had played football with her brothers. She was more of a tomboy. Surfing was quite natural for her. She felt comfortable surfing with the men. When the population at beaches picked up, had to find other places to surf. Waves were best up towards Northern California, down towards Dana Point, and at some places around Huntington Beach.

143 Body surfing in Laguna Beach almost drowned when caught in a rip tide. She didn't enjoy the ocean as much. After she got married, had children, started working, she didn't have time for surfing anymore.

151 Started working when she was a junior in high school at Disneyland.

SK: 159 Tell me about your experiences working at Disneyland--when you started and what you did?

GA: I started working when the park first opened and that was very much a part of living in Anaheim and going to Anaheim High School. That was like a one upmanship type thing. It was the greatest thing in the world to work at Disneyland. Everybody wanted to. So I did things like climb over the fence, which everybody was doing. And went out there every Saturday begging

for a job. I mean, everyone wanted to work there.

Disney had allowed a lot of old bit movie people to have stores and shops. The gentleman who owned the Indian Village store was named Bill Wilkerson. He was an old silent movie actor who had worked with Disney. There were a lot of characters like that who were no longer productive or couldn't work. There was a silent movie star who actually picked up after the horses on Main Street. I mean, those people were all over. He provided work for a whole lot of old people who weren't surviving so well. But Bill Wilkerson had paid hard cash for the Indian store and he literally--he said he was only hiring Indians and did not really thing that I was, and if I could prove to him that I were Indian, then he would hire me. So he wanted to know who I was. And I told him that I was from Kopea (?), Oklahoma--a lot like our same conversation--and who my grandfather was, and he said "I'll be damned"; his father, he knew my grandfather and my father. So he hired me and I started working out there.

I worked there through high school and through two years of college and that's where I met my husband and a lot of friends. There were a lot of young people--Indian people--that came from all parts of the country who worked at Disneyland during the summertime. And then as years have passed, I've met them other places where they've gone back and were tribal chairmen and were doing other things with their lives. So that was really quite a neat time. There were a lot of Indian people who worked at Disneyland and who were a part of that at that particular time.

Unfortunately Disney never really treated the Indians very fairly. And even when I was there when the park was first opened, it was like they didn't--the entertainment management didn't have much respect for the Indians who were performers. And they paid them less than they paid the people who were dancers in some of their other production shows. There are other people like Dennis who can talk to you about that because he was a part of what happened next. But they organized, and they went on strike, and when they had the audacity to strike Disneyland, they closed the Indian Village and built Bear Country--eliminated it. So there have been no Indians at Disneyland since the Indians went on strike. And as close as they can get--which is very racist--is their burning house, and when they go around in their steamboat they tell them "Look out, look out, wild Indians are attacking."

SK: 202 What was the Indian Village like when you were working at it? What was it that you did there and what was it like?

GA: I worked in the shop and there were a whole lot of Indians who were dancing and who were singing. And there were some wonderful people who came out from the Navajo reservation, weaving rugs and doing sandpainting--just wonderful people. There were a lot of old movie people who had been silent movies

and others who did bits and pieces. They would bring out whoever the latest crowned Indian America was from the Sheridan roundup and she would spend the summer there. It was just really grand. All of the guys paddling canoes were actually Indian. It was just really fun. Disney was fun when Disney was alive. Disneyland changed after Walt Disney died.

SK: What year did he die?

GA: I don't remember. But when Disney was alive--I was there during that transition. He wanted the employees who worked at Disneyland to have as much fun as their customers. And if the employees were having a good time and enjoying themselves, the customers would too. When his brother took over, his brother had the business mindset, and the whole park changed. And the Disney management became more like the gestapo; running around taking pictures of whether you had too much makeup on, and all kinds of other constraints that have become a part of how Disney operates.

227 Disney strike occurred in the 1970s. She suggests that Dennis Tafoya relay the events of this period.

SK: 229 Tell me about what your husband was doing there and how you met him?

GA: He was paddling canoes and I had changed jobs, I was then working in the bazaar in Adventure Land. And one of the gentlemen who worked there at the park by the name of Jim Hellingcrane had told him about me, and then told me there was this real good looking guy he thought I'd like to meet. And so he dragged him over and introduced him to me. And I thought he was the cutest thing I'd ever seen. So that's how I met him. And then I dated him for several years before we got married.

SK: 235 Can you tell me a little bit about who he is and where he came from and why his family came to California?

GA: He's half Kiowa and Comanche. He's from Laughton (?), Oklahoma. And he had come to California in the Marine Corp. When I first met him he was in the Marine Corp, though I did not know that for a couple of years. Having lived in Orange County and in Anaheim and worked at Disneyland, I had great disdain for marines and did not date them. So he kept that a secret for a bit. And I thought he was just another Disneylander. And he was going to college at night. He was going to community college in Orange County. When he got out of the Marine Corps he was an apprentice plumber. So for a number of years he was a journeyman plumber in Orange County. And then due to cutting asbestos pipe, he had lung cancer and fought a major battle and has been disabled for quite a number of years. But he was a very fine dancer when he was young, does magnificent, beautiful beadwork.

In the photographs you saw, all of the beadwork that my children are wearing were things that he made. That's very much a part of your collection.

258 And it was really because of marrying him--when I married him, we did not have any social contacts that were not Indian. From that point forward, all of the friends, everyone that I knew were a part of this Indian community. I mean, I am of mixed background and had a mixed background in how I had grown up, but my husband and I have been married 35 years and from his life point, I did not contacts except with Indian people. Which is really kind of phenomenal. Perhaps there are similar ethnic experiences, but for me at that point in time, the only contacts I had with non-Indian people were those that I happened to be with at work. I had to friends, no social contacts, no things going on in my life that did not have to do with Indian people.

SK: 273 How about prior to working at Disneyland, did you have a lot of contact with other people who were American Indian.

GA: Not really. I mean, after we moved out here, I don't recall where we lived in Anaheim there being any Indian families at all. There was another...Let's see, Phillips where my Dad worked with, about 5 years after we came the employees went on strike and Phillips broke their union. And people that he had worked with were broken back in pay and salary and position. So there were half a dozen of them that he helped get jobs for here in California, so they relocated from Texas to California. Among those was a family that the lady was also Indian. But other than that and their children, I didn't know any Indian people nor did I know that there were any Indian cultural events or activities or really a community until I started working at Disneyland and began to meet other Indian people. I mean, I was already involved in the cultural aspect of the community before I met my husband but that was because of working at Disneyland and there being so many Indians there.

SK: 290 What was it like dealing with the people who came--the tourists, the people who came to Disneyland? What sort of response did they have to what you were doing?

GA: They were usually obnoxious...generally. I mean, the only Indians they'd seen were in cartoons or the little bit they knew in history so you had to...some people were very interested and some were fascinated, and others you had to put up with many ha-ha jokes and all that kind of stuff. There were a lot of people who were very kind, of course, there are everywhere. But it was more the environment of all of the Indians who were working there together--

SK: --that made it so great.

GA: Right. It was great. And that was really--there were so many young people as well as some older people, but there were all these indian people there. So really, it was kind of like, the tourists or whoever came there really didn't matter. It was more the environment that was created because there were so many Indian people in one place.

- 305 After she graduated from high school she went to Fullerton Community College, which is Fullerton College now. Left Disneyland after she got married. She went to work at a greeting card company (Buzzacard?) for ten years. Some other people who had worked at the Indian Village also were working there. Then she went to work at American Can Company for nine months.
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- 365 How the events surrounding Vietnam and the Civil Rights movement affected her life. A lot of Indians served in Vietnam. Her husband was called back to service during the Bay of Pigs. Most Indian men of that generation served in the military--in the Marine Corp. A greater

proportion of Indians than any other ethnic group serve in the military today--especially among the Plains Indian tribes that have a warrior tradition that continues today.

380 Vietnam was hard for everybody. There was a growing militancy among young Indians. At a pow wow in Albuquerque, there were protesters who were wearing the flag upside down, around their shoulders. A lot of Indian people, particularly those from Oklahoma, were so upset that they left.

GA: 393 It's kind of mixed thing. You know, Indian people are conquered within their own country but there's nothing more important to them their country. So there isn't an Indian event that doesn't begin without the flag and the flag song being sung. Nor does it not begin without prayer, nor end in both ways. The American flag begins any Indian event. And at the end of it they usually sing warrior songs honoring military veterans. Warrior songs that are sung talk about ancient battles but they also talk about all of them from WWI forward, and in their words they'll talk about the Battle of the Bulge, or they'll talk about the Tet Offensive in Vietnam. So for Indian people there's really quite a different response to all of that and it's more based about how they felt about their sons. When the rest of the country was dishonoring their veterans, the Indian community was honoring them. So it was totally different for the Indian veteran who served in Vietnam. There were a lot of non-Indians who came to...maybe to Santa Monica to our arts and crafts show and were profoundly moved because of the honoring of the veterans. Because in their time since they had returned from Vietnam, they had not been treated very well. And to be honored in such a public way--because when they sing the Veterans' song they are honoring all of them--was profoundly moving to them.

427 When she goes to the V.A. hospital with her husband in Mira Loma, she sees the veterans that are quadriplegics and have essentially been abandoned by their people-- finds this shocking. She very much opposed what the U.S. was doing in Vietnam but she didn't oppose the servicemen who were there.

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the generations; young Indians on college campuses-- their protests weren't necessarily "culturally connected." Different perspectives between people on how the role of the warrior was viewed. The war did not make sense. Many people of her generation did not return from the war.

524 She was in labor during the Watts Riots.

GA: Then, they didn't have television 24 hours a day and they broadcast the Watts riots all night. And my daughter was born. I was in labor. It was very hot. And we lived in a little apartment building in Anaheim. We didn't have air conditioning, everything was open. And I remember watching Los Angeles burn while I counted my labor pains. My daughter was born the 14th of August during the Watts riots.

And it was very shocking. We lived in Orange County. Somehow it didn't seem like it is now with the freeways and going from place to place. I mean, now, no matter where you live in Orange County or L.A. County or Ventura, we're all one big community. And I know this time with the riots, it was much more...globally affected everybody.

549 When she worked at Rockwell in community relations, worked with people who were helping to reconstitute those communities. She did work in Watts and the Compton School District. At Rockwell worked with people who had been very involved in the Civil Rights struggle. The Indian community's experiences were different. It was more of an issue of survival. Black activists contacted Frances Sweetwater, one of the elders in the community, and wanted to join with them. Indian community supported their efforts for civil rights but they felt they had no commonalities. The Indian community did not want to be white or be a part of the American scene. They were only compromising the society as much as they had to to survive.

588 Now the community is at a crux of change. Does the ethnic integrity of the community survive as many people assimilate into the rest of society. Tribal and cultural integrity is at stake.

598 In Los Angeles there are many tribes and many different types of Indian people: those connected to other Indians, those who are assimilated, those who lead fragmented lives--live in two different cultural contexts at work and at home. Cultural organizations/activities: 18-19 Indian churches in the area, athletic leagues, pow wows, traditional religious

experiences.

The challenge of how to address the needs of the community is how to address the diversity of Indians in L.A. Many cultural differences between tribes.

644 Outside of work, most of her life involves her family. Her husband is one of the finest Southern Plains singers in the country. Her children have all grown up singing and dancing. They have a drum group called Red Tipi--travel around for dances and pow wows. They also have a business called Red Tipi that does cultural performances in schools, fairs. She has four children and three grandchildren.

672 Importance of carrying on culture. She is Cherokee, French, and English. Cherokee have different cultural customs. They are matrilineal. Her husband's people--Kiowa and Comanche--are very patrilineal. They have been married 35 years and she has lived in his world. When she talks about "cultural," she is referring to Southern plains life.

695 Importance of presentation of culture. Perhaps because she is mixed-blood and light skinned she has spent a lot of time talking to non-Indian people. Many Indian people would not be inclined to share their personal lives with others. Most of the problems that Indian people face today result from the fact that people are ignorant that Indian people survive. The public is not aware of American policy towards Indian people--still not viewed as human beings.

731 Question about Rockwell International
End of Side A, Tape 1

Side B, Tape 1

000 Silence

001 Rockwell International built the Space Shuttle. When she started working at Rockwell, they were doing the last of the Apollo Space Launches with Russia. Initially was working in Community Relations. Worked in an Engineering release and configuration control (?) At this time women who had degrees in engineering were classified as secretaries. They fought for technical presence for women in engineering and benefitted from this. She went to MacDonald Douglas when it seemed there would be no more future growth. MacDonald Douglas was expanding the C-17 program. She enjoyed the technical challenges but wasn't as excited about

work--straight forward military weapons program. She likes technology and engineering environment. She would have stayed in that environment if the programs hadn't been cut and she hadn't been laid off.

033 She is now the Executive Director of the Los Angeles City/County American Indian Commission. Description of the Commission's work, services.

-----Photographs-----

S-007-073

GA: 044 My French grandparents lived in Bakersfield. My mother died when I was eight and I spent a lot of time with my Indian grandparents on the farm and with my grandparents in Bakersfield. And my grandparents had chickens and that particular year they had had a whole lot of baby chickens and a dog got in the chicken house and killed everyone except for one. So that chicken I took and made it my pet, and it followed me everywhere. I mean, that chicken acted like a dog. If you put your hand out, it would put its head so you could pet its neck.

054 The picture is from the 1940s before her family came to live in California.

GA: 056 My grandfather was in construction. He was one of the main contractors when China Lake was built. So I spent more than one summer out on China Lake when they were building the military facilities out there. And then he had a part in building a lot of the major construction projects in the Bakersfield, San Joaquin Valley.

SK: What was it like in Bakersfield then?

GA: It was wide open. I was there when the first earthquake hit in Bakersfield. You know that particular one when there were bricks flying all of the place. My grandfather had bought land really on what was on the outskirts of Bakersfield--now it's in town, and built a street full of houses one at a time. There were no other children around except for some cousins that would show up once in a while.

[...]

076 S-007-069

[cut off of beginning of statement]
Cerritos Air Crash memorial pow wow

084 0-007-054

Daughter was selected as Princess in Pawnee, Oklahoma by the Veteran's Association.

091 S-007-043

Myron and Virginia Denatdale (?) at first community relations activity at Rockwell.

110 End of Interview
Remainder of Tape is Blank

Community News: Southeast

HUNTINGTON PARK

A Rare Look Back at Indian Life

Melvin Ahhaitly sorted through piles of photographs, stopping occasionally and smiling when he came upon some of powwow season in Oklahoma, where he grew up.

"I miss the powwow season," Ahhaitly said. "It was a chance for the different Plains Indians to get together at these gatherings."

Ahhaitly, whose ancestry is Comanche and Kiowa, and wife Glenda, a Cherokee, gathered up their family photo albums and brought them to the Huntington Park Public Library for "Shades of L.A.," an ongoing project in which volunteers are chronicling the county's ethnic groups through photos.

The library began the American Indian project last October. It has conducted similar work with Latino, African- and Asian-American families, but the task of chronicling Indian life has been particularly daunting, said project coordinator Carolyn Kozo.

"American Indian photos are so rare," Kozo said. "What is so special is that we have photos taken of American Indians by other Indians."

Like others involved in the project, Glenda Ahhaitly, 53, said she was initially apprehensive about sharing her past.

"The Indian community is very private by nature, so we don't share many of these things with each other, let alone with the public," she said.

During a session this month at Huntington Park Library, volunteers made copies of about 500 photos, including several hundred from the Sherman Institute in Riverside. The institute provided photos of Indian children attending government boarding schools.

After the photos are catalogued, they will go on exhibit this fall in the Central Library. The Indian photo collection will then travel to the Huntington Park Indian Resource Center.

For Melvin Ahhaitly, 56, the photos were a reminder of his own experience at a government school in Oklahoma. "I was lonely much of the time I was in elementary school," he said, recalling the day his parents took him to a government school.

Also among the photos to be included in the library's collection are several from Karina Walters' family. Walters, 29, said she recently discovered the photos her mother kept stored in a tin box.

"I just found these a few years ago," said Walters, whose ancestry is Choctaw and Irish. "For me growing up, I was connected to the Indian urban community. So this [project] makes the history more understandable because in Los Angeles there is so much diversity."

—SANDRA HERNANDEZ



Part of the "Shades of L.A." photo collection includes a 1986 portrait of Lorraine Notah on a Navajo reservation and a 1930s shot of two Hopi girls.



BELL GARDENS

Ombudsman Job Remains Unfilled

Nearly three months after the City Council approved hiring an ombudsman to investigate residents' complaints about city employees, the position remains vacant.

"Under normal conditions, a project like this would probably get off the ground because it's not that complicated," City Manager Charles Gomez said. "But the people involved in this are involved in a million other things, and [panel members] probably put this issue

on the back burner and inadvertently left it on the back burner."

The ombudsman is intended to ease tensions among council members and residents who have repeatedly clashed during council meetings.

The council appointed a six-member panel of residents to look into hiring an ombudsman. But the council was not satisfied with the panel's recommendation to set up a community resource center headed by an ombudsman who would provide information to residents and look into their complaints, Councilwoman Rosa Hernandez said.

The committee met again Monday and finalized a proposal that was to have been submitted to the

council Friday, according to Victor Vaillette, a member of the ombudsman committee.

Hernandez said the new proposal will include a plan to seek funding for the center from the county instead of the city, which the committee believes would allow the center to operate more independently.

"The role of a community center will be to gather and disseminate information about services available to residents," Vaillette said. "How will someone in this community find out about an ombudsman if there isn't an information center? They certainly won't find out about it by going to City Hall."

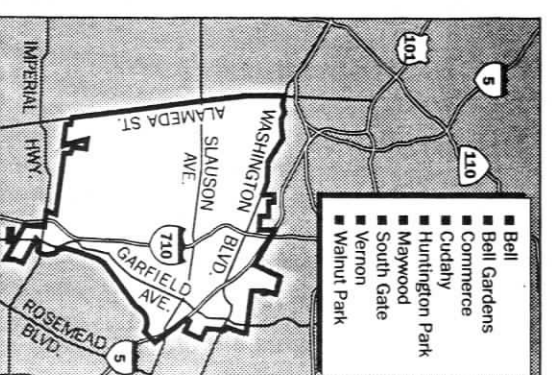
The committee planned to submit a proposal to the county's Community Development Commission's Block Grant Division for funding by Friday, which was the deadline for grant proposal applications for fiscal 1993-94.

—SANDRA HERNANDEZ

BELL

Anti-Gang Effort to Use Student Mentors

Javier Morales says he knows little about gang life. But the Bell High School student says he is



gang members.

Morales' aspirations are not to join a gang, but to join a program under which student leaders would act as mentors to gang members and at-risk youth.

"You have to get the barriers down so they can see another part of life," Morales said.

Morales, 15, and other Bell High Student Council members met last week with Adrian Punderson, a Bell police officer who works with the Metro Gang Task Force in Bell, South Gate, Maywood and Huntington Park and has proposed the peer mentoring program. Punderson said he hopes to start a test program at the school this summer. "The thought behind this is that it's hard to get kids to look at the police as role models in this day and age," Punderson said. "So what I thought was that [students] could be mentors."

Under Punderson's proposal, mentors would receive training, and students with whom they are paired would receive counseling if needed. Eventually, they would all attend a one-week retreat at Lake Mead.

Punderson said he is talking with a Nevada recreation company that has offered to pay transportation costs for the mentors, and additional funding is hoped to come from local businesses. He estimates that the first trip will cost about \$6,000 to send 10 mentors and 10 at-risk teens to the retreat.

Punderson said he has been mulling a peer mentoring program since he first began working with gangs seven years ago. However, he said some of the idea came from his own background.

"I was very poor when I was growing up and I received a lot of support from friends and adults," he said. "I saw what a difference it makes when someone your own age and adults take time for you, not because they necessarily know you, but because you're another human being."

Police estimate that there are about 8,000 gang members in Bell, South Gate, Maywood and Huntington Park, ranging in age from 12 to 23.

—SANDRA HERNANDEZ