

AN INTERVIEW WITH
ARCHIE SAM
AUGUST 30, 1976

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CAPERS: All right. Is that working? Come in and sit down, Hank.
Mr. Sam... Do you think I can be heard on this.

HOLMES: Sure it's very sensitive.

CAPERS: Okay. This is Mr. Archie Sam one of the last, if not the
last, how about that Mr. Sam how would you...

SAM: Well, I consider myself the last of the Natchez that's
involved in researching and studying the history of the
Natchez. When I was young, it was stressed to me that I
was Natchez. However, Natchez had been absorbed into other
tribes and their heritage have been lost. Some things
were taught in family that indicated to us that we were
Natchez and we grew up believing that we were Natchez.

CAPERS: Now where did you grow up?

SAM: I was born at Braggs, Oklahoma and I went to school and
from there went to Bacone College, Muskogee, Oklahoma
for one year, after that I went to Connoes State College,
Warner, Oklahoma. In 1940 I went into the military service.
I was just right for that war coming on and I went in the
service.

CAPERS: What branch of the service were you in?

SAM: I was with the Army [Army Air Corps] and then branched
over into the Air Force. I remained in the service for
twenty-one years. After I got out of the service, I went
to work for the United States Post Office and completed

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thirty years in Civil Service. I've been retired about five years. That gives me time to put effort into preservation of my heritage. I mainly work in the areas of the ceremonial dances and songs. I'm hitting around ninety-five percent of my songs and dances. Fortunately, I suppose, the Natchez people have been studied, wrote about, by every writer that came into our country, starting way back in 1680 up to 1940. There were a series of people coming in, collecting legends, history, languages, and songs. Natchez aroused a great deal of interest during this time and certain amount of material collected, now stored in various parts of the country. We need to get the materials and reconstruct the history, and information about the tribe.

CAPERS: I think that is most interesting Mr. Sam. Let's see if we can back up, now you were born in Oklahoma. What was told to you about how the Natchez people who were your ancestors got to Oklahoma?

SAM: Now going back to an area of 1729 or 1730, when they were dispersed. We mentioned it few moments ago, where the major portion of it went into Louisiana and was captured. Fragments of people were stranded in the area but the major portion was shipped out. There were units, I call it units or band or groups, that dispersed further east and were absorbed by the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Cherokee tribes. We're the Natchez that were absorbed by the Cherokee tribes.

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- CAPERS: Your Natchez unit was absorbed into the Cherokee tribe.
- SAM: Yes, we're in the Cherokee nation. We're the ones, that were absorbed into the Cherokee tribe.
- CAPERS: And your ancestors were absorbed and you don't know in which direction before they got to Oklahoma. I mean like say, 1720, what would that be, your great-great-great-great-grandparents?
- SAM: Probably so.
- CAPERS: Right. So you could trace roughly you would assume that your great-great-great-grandparents at the time of the dispersal?
- SAM: Well, I don't think it would be traceable at all. Even on "The Trail of Tears" when they were forcibly removed from the Carolinas and Tennessee, most of the individuals were reluctant to put their names on a piece of paper. If they did put their names on a piece of paper it was in tribal name. Probably scribbled out long names that can't be read. No simple names like John Doe or John Smith, they were Indian names.
- CAPERS: This interests me as a parallel to the way we do research backwards, you know family history say, if it's not traceable in a documented form so it comes down by word of mouth.
- SAM: Well, it is possible, that I may be able to trace my people back to Carolinas. Since I've retired I've been engaged in researching ceremonial dances full time and I haven't delved into so-called genealogy.

CAPERS: I can certainly understand. I think it's fascinating what you're doing. But now, what are your sources for ceremonial dances? Is that a word of mouth tradition?

SAM: Well, I consider myself very fortunate. I'm sixty-two years old and in my early life I was exposed to and was part of ceremonial functions. By involvement I became knowledgeable in ceremonies.

CAPERS: Oh! Mr. Hilliard this is Mr. Archie Sam.

HILLIARD: Mr. Sam, Elbert Hilliard. So good to see you.

SAM: Thank you sir. Glad to know you.

CAPERS: And we're all being taped, say something scholarly.

HILLIARD: I'm just astounded here. I'm at a loss for words.

CAPERS: We're delighted. I told Mr. Sam, he's our guest of honor and he appeared as if by magic.

HILLIARD: Here sit down.

SAM: Thank you.

CAPERS: We're discussing his principal interest in his research which is ceremonial dances and songs. And we just disposed of genealogy which he's not been terribly interested in and had not had enough time to devote to that, but I was asking how he determines the authenticity of the ceremonial dance. He was explaining that he was part of it. Go ahead.

SAM: Yes, as I began, in my early days, when I was old enough to attend functions I became part of it. Tribal customs and traditional subjects were taught in homes. There were many traditional homes but traditions, history and ceremonies

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were taught in few homes. It appears that knowledgeable people in few homes conveyed information to the younger generation. My home was part of the traditional homes and I was told things and later on I was exposed to the actual rituals. By experience I remembered the songs and dances. So I have that much knowledge by absorption. I went away to school and never returned to my community.

CAPERS: Where is your community?

SAM: I lived in Oklahoma City. It's about a hundred and fifty miles from Greenleaf Community. I have told about anthropologists, historians that have trekked through my country and gathered Natchez material. In the same action have recorded songs and dances. Songs are stored in different places and some songs need be identified and labeled.

CAPERS: Do you know if it is a Natchez song?

SAM: Well, can't say it's a Natchez song but, I can say, it's a southern song. All the songs being sung actively, in eastern Oklahoma today belong practically to all Southeastern tribes. In other words one tribe knows the song of the other tribe. We know the songs and we just become part of the action and that makes it enjoyable. So you cannot say that's a Natchez's song. There is one dance, which I think is very much Natchez. That's Mosquito Dance. Our grounds is the only place where Mosquito Dance is performed. We do it just to keep the dance alive.

CAPERS: Do you have tape recordings available to us to copy of say the Mosquito Dance, things like that?

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SAM: Only ones available is my song. It's the one I sang.

CAPERS: Well, could you sing for us, I mean could we tape it?
What are the circumstances that would make you sing?

SAM: Well, usually pure knowledge and being able to sing it.

CAPERS: Would you mind doing that for us? We'd like to have it.

SAM: Well, I'd like to tell a story about it. So you'd know what it's all about, why we have Mosquito Dance. It's useful, and entertaining. I don't have no accompaniment on any kind so it will be dull in that area. I'm the only surviving singer that knows the Mosquito Dance song and I learned it from my father. My father was a good singer. He probably received same kind of training from his father, that I received from him. So I inherited his trait. I was exposed to it and I heard it frequently. He would sit on the front porch and sing. We didn't listen, but we heard it. And we'd go off to play somewhere and we'd come back and he'd still be sitting there singing. That was his way of transmitting his singing knowledge to us.

HILLIARD: What was your father's name?

SAM: His name was White Tobacco.

HILLIARD: White Tobacco.

SAM: Yes, there's that Natchez again. White Apple...

CAPERS: White Apple.

SAM: White Flower, all the with white connotation.

HILLIARD: What was your mother's name?

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SAM: Mother's name? My father's mother's name?

HILLIARD: No, your mother's name.

SAM: My mother's name was Aggie. A-G-G-I-E. Aggie Cumsey and she was full-blooded Cherokee. My father was Creek and Natchez. I gave one of the clerks a newspaper write-up of me. I hope you get to read it.

CAPERS: I will.

SAM: Let me continue my story. The Mosquito Dance was part of our dance functions and it was especially useful. Long time ago when Indian people had dances, they had all the time. And things needed for the dances - there was no social pressure to interfere with the dances. Everybody seemed to have plenty of time to perform and enjoy the dances. So they used to have dances four nights straight, one night, next night, next night, and next night. Third night people began to get tired, loss of enthusiasm and just don't have the real zip after second or third night. They began to sit and relax much more than the first two nights. This lack of enthusiasm gets more and more and the ceremonial priest sees the situation where there are few dancing and more sitting on the side. He has a dance that can be called on, when dance starts those sitting around half sleep or dozing, gonna wake up. That's what they are going to do, they are going to get them enthused, gonna get them involved. So the ceremonial priest tells the singer, we're going to do Mosquito Dance. Singer starts singing. Women only dance in Mosquito Dance. The women dance

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and hum around the fire, like a mosquito, (humming sound) when he's about to bite. They imitate that. On the cue from the singer, dancers yell and disperse among the crowd. Women came to the ceremonial grounds that night with thorns, lately straight pins, the kind you buy at the store, they have the pins in their hands, they stick dancers in the rear to simulate mosquito bite.

CAPERS: And they go galloping around?

SAM: Yes, mosquitoes disperse among the crowd and start jabbing the sleepy dancers. After that everybody will get in the action and dance the rest of the night. That's the purpose of the Mosquito Dance and we used it when we need it and it come in handy whenever we need to use it. The singing goes like this:

(CHANT) MUSIC ON FOLLOWING PAGE 8A

CAPERS: And I can do that.

SAM: See how useful it was? It had its purpose.

CAPERS: Well, Mr. Sam, how do you know, what are your sources for how the dances were actually performed?

SAM: By common knowledge.

CAPERS: By common knowledge, because we, I mean you can tell by the music I guess. Was there any instrument or was that all...

SAM: Well, as I said earlier I'm going to sing it dry because I have no accompanying instrument.

CAPERS: Did they have instruments?

SAM: Yes, we have hand rattles and drums. We have what the

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anthropologists call a wet drum. They are earthenware crocks. Many years ago we used pottery formed drums and later on used hollowed out tree trunks. Now we use porcelain crocks.

CAPERS: Yes.

HOLMES: This song you just sang, could you give us a rough translation of the words?

SAM: There's none. I am always being asked, what are the words? What are you saying? Our elders said our songs and dances are very old, must never forget them. It is hard to put a date on the songs and dances. We don't know the words we're singing.

CAPERS: Well, would you think the words you just sang are Natchez words?

SAM: It could be.

CAPERS: Now that would be interesting you know to have the recorded sound of the Natchez language, whether you knew what it meant or not.

HOLMES: Was it a repetition of the same words?

SAM: The song is repeated over and over, it's a very short dance, because everybody has left the area in a hurry.

CAPERS: They better get moving. They wouldn't last very long.

SAM: I like to tell this story to give a picture of what did transpire at ceremonial dances in 1830s. The one that I like to tell has something to do with the Mosquito Dance. When we had our dances there was a white man who always came. He had a place to sit in a clan bed.

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Permitted to sit there because he was a friend of the community. He didn't dance. In his livelihood he was a cowboy. He had a horse and a coffee pot on his saddle. Probably lived out in the woods. When he came, he'd stay all night, at daybreak with the breaking up of the ceremonial dances, he'd go home. He'd sit, and hardly ever talk to anybody. I think though all this time he learned the Mosquito Dance the hard way.

(LAUGHTER)

The funny part is when the dancers get the cue from singer to arouse the laggards, all the mosquitos go after the cowboy.

(LAUGHTER)

He learned. Soon as the singer starts singing you'd hear him. He had spurs, the kind that had the big rowels.

CAPERS: Yes, big rowel!

SAM: When singing starts, you'd hear ping, ping, ping, he was gone.

(LAUGHTER)

CAPERS: He needed to go! Goodness.

SAM: I like to talk about it because I was so young then. I missed it so much. Let me emphasize here that all the songs and dances that I'm working on are the songs and dances of my grounds. Songs of other grounds are similar to ours, with minor differences and dances are performed with different movements. So I'm working to

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preserve my own.

CAPERS: What is the name of your own ground?

SAM: My ground is Medicine Spring, Medicine Spring Ceremonial Ground. When Natchez closed out their ceremonial grounds at Murphy, North Carolina, they took all precautions in moving the Sacred Fire to new home. There is a written history on preparation and movement of Fire to Indian territory. It appears that they knew where they were going, and the Fire was moved, hardly anybody knowing that it was being moved. It was moved ahead of the tribe. Only selected men knew what was transpiring and only dedicated, strong and physically able men were selected to go carry the Fire. The Fire was divided into four parts and chances being one of the four will make the journey across to Indian territory.

HILLIARD: And the Fire you're speaking of is like the Perpetual Fire like the Commaches had?

SAM: Yes, I have a strong belief that in 1730 the actual Eternal Flame was snuffed out. The Fires of other tribes had already gone out and had gone into the Sacred Ashes concept and Fires were being relit during the ceremonies. At the time when the Sacred Fire was carried to new home. Sacred Ashes was carried across the trail to Indian Territory.

CAPERS: They would not carry - they would not attempt to carry the lighted, anything like the Olympic torch?

SAM: No such thing.

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HILLIARD: They were carrying the Sacred Ashes.

SAM: Yes, they had gone into the Sacred Ashes concept. In 1730 the Natchez Eternal Flame was snuffed out. That was the end of the Eternal Flame of Natchez. I haven't seen no written records of sacred fires of the other tribes, so I have no idea, when they went into Sacred Ashes concept. Sacred Fire was seen at the Grand Village by French writers. So that gives me a clue that Natchez's Fire was authentic. When Indians moved west, Fire was handled with all due respect and moved ahead of tribe.

HILLIARD: When you say, they, you mean the...?

CAPERS: The strong picked people.

SAM: The four men.

HILLIARD: To which tribe?

SAM: Natchez have been absorbed into the Cherokee tribe and had ceremonial ground at Murphy, North Carolina. Writers say there was a mixture of Cherokees and Natchez, but the ground was strong Natchez. Natchez had intermarried Cherokee. Natchez lost their tribal entity when absorbed by Cherokee tribe. So they were considered as part of the Cherokee people when the Cherokees were being moved west, Natchez closed out their ceremonial ground and picked up the Sacred Fire and moved it west. The Fire was handled, by the people capable of moving the Fire. Not just anyone can pick up the ashes and move the spirit of the Fire. The heart of the Fire may not follow you because, you may be profane.

CAPERS: It's the concept, it's the priestly concept.

SAM: Yes.

CAPERS: It's the way you deal with the Holy Communion...

SAM: Yes. These people had to have the proper training, go through the cleansing ceremony so that everything was pure and clean and prepare Fire to travel.

CAPERS: That's exactly about the religious concept of the Roman Catholic Host.

SAM: Right. It's about the same thing. The people were picked by their training, dedication, to move the Fire. I don't know if all four people got through or not, I never did learn that part, but if anything happened I probably would have heard about it.

CAPERS: I'm still relating. Just like the children of Israel and the Ark of the Covenant, they carried it all through...

SAM: I've been asked to explain to religious people, high up in the hierarchy and they all agree there are a lot of similarities.

CAPERS: Very much. You can take any religion and go back and they do the same thing, they have the...

HILLIARD: Are any of these Ashes still in existence today? Still being preserved? In containers?

SAM: We have the Ashes.

CAPERS: Can you keep them, can an ash just light forever being burned over and over?

SAM: Yes.

HILLIARD: You have it in a container?

SAM: No container.

HILLIARD: You don't have it in a container.

CAPERS: It would have to be the ashes and then the...

SAM: The original Fire came from heaven and it was given to the Indians and Natchez had their's burning at the Grand Village at the time and when they were dispersed and they took the Ashes into the Cherokee country. I don't know but it would very likely to be true if I said the other groups, that went to the other tribes carried their Ashes too. I wouldn't say for sure, but it is very likely that's what happened, I don't know, but we do know that the band that went to North Carolina did take their Ashes with them. Did rebuild their fire. About that time Southeastern tribes weren't able to maintain their Prepetual Fires. Their communal farms were gone, so the tribes didn't have the usual food supply. When they had plenty of food in storage, men could attend preparation of ceremonies and provide men to tend Prepetual Fires. The social economic pressure wouldn't allow the tribes to continue their former practices. They went into what most of Southern tribes do when they have some hard decision to make. So they went into their traditional method, seeking advice from the other world. They did receive the instructions that, "This is the way you'll have to do things from now on. You can't do things like you used to anymore." Even natives in Oklahoma went into the mountains to fast

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and seek advice from the heavens, the outside world or whatever. Things have happened but there is always one person picked to receive the message and he usually can't interpret the message. He will take it to the wisemen. Just like we do today. Have a big conference to decide the answer. Such practices have guided Southeastern tribes for years, in about 1900, federal law abolished Southeastern tribes in Indian territory. Federal laws moved in and traditional practices slowly dried up.

HILLIARD: I had never thought about that, very interesting.

SAM: She asked about grounds that I belonged to. I related up to the point where four men carried the Sacred Ashes across the trail. When Fire was carried into Indian territory and finally located at a natural spring that had sulfuric water. At first water has a different coloration. After awhile it boils down into a very clear water and it is potable. When the Fire was relit in the Indian territory the ground was named natural springs. It is called Medicine Spring. Dr. John R. Swanton famous Indian historian for the Smithsonian - he came to Medicine Spring in 1900 and wrote about it in his ethnology reports.

HILLIARD: Were there any stories handed down through your family of the Natchez Indians at the Grand Villiage or in relationship with the French at the Natchez area?

SAM: I can tell a story in Natchez. It's in pure Natchez.

HILLIARD: Can you tell it for us.

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SAM: Natchez had a belief that legends should be told in certain times of the year. Legends were usually told after a frost. Stories were entertaining and some funny. When anthropologist came to Braggs he recorded a story in the pure Natchez language, recording were lost, in Williamstown, Michigan. The recording had the following story in pure Natchez language.

(SEE 16A)

The interpretation, the name is "The Turtle in the Rain" that's the name of the legend, and it says: A turtle came out of the water was sitting on a rock sunning itself when he looked up and saw rain coming. He said, "Oh! it's going to get me wet!" and he jumped off into the water.

CAPERS: That's wonderful, the Natchez had a sense of humor.

SAM: The story was recorded in 1931. Anthropologist stayed about a year in Braggs and recorded the story. He took people to a recording studio and recorded stories and songs.

CAPERS: That's wonderful!

HOLMES: Where are these recordings now?

SAM: I don't know where they are.

HOLMES: Still in that small town?

SAM: I don't know.

CAPERS: We should, that will be valuable to us to know.

SAM: When I started out doing research on songs, I knew people had come through my part of the country. I had seen some of them, but I have never knew them by names.

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Turtle And The Rain

?olo du hanadayak

Lemp kulajah choojooneh

Naska sik tik

Nuksosuhuk kaleedu

Pajakhanilis neeseesuk.

Kunakus kahupoksiktin

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Forty years later, I got interested and I'd ask about them. Nobody knew. I asked the family where anthropologist stayed during his field work. They said, "We think his name was Rice, R-I-C-E." Well, I looked for anthropologist named Rice. Record showed there had never been an anthropologist by the name of Rice. I continued my search. I checked out every lead. Oklahoma City, under the heading of Indians, I found newspaper clipping of this person I was looking for and man's name was Victor R-I-S-T-E, Riste, not R-I-C-E, see how close it sounds. Well, it happen in 1931 and I was doing my research in 1965 and it is a long span of time. People thought that he was dead.

CAPERS: Go head we can listen anyway.

SAM: People thought that this man was dead. I didn't know what to do. I knew that he was from Chicago. So I looked in the telephone directory and found Riste listed in Chicago telephone directory and this was Rose, R-O-S-E Riste. I wrote her a card and she answered.

CAPERS: And this was in the telephone directory where?

SAM: Oklahoma City.

CAPERS: Oklahoma City.

SAM: Yes, it's a Chicago directory in Oklahoma City.

CAPERS: I see in the library.

SAM: Yes, I got an answer and she said, "He is my brother. He's dead now." She remembered the records. She thought the records were at her sister's. She lives in Williamston,

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Michigan. She gave me the name. I wrote to her and she wrote back and said, "Yes, we could see the records." One of our people went there and made a tape recording. Since then the material has been turned over to Voice Library at Michigan State University.

CAPERS: Well, that's valuable.

SAM: Isn't that something!

CAPERS: It sure is.

HILLIARD: When did you and Mr. Neitzel first get together?

SAM: Well, way back about six years ago. He made a search through Washington and Bureau of Indian Affairs at Muskogee, he was told two grandsons of Creek Sam were living in Oklahoma City.

HILLIARD: Your grandfather was Creek Sam.

SAM: Yes, Creek Sam.

HILLIARD: And your father was White Tobacco?

SAM: Yes. Mr. Neitzel wrote me a letter and we started corresponding. He was searching information for, Smithsonian's Southeastern Indian Hand Book. Later on I visited his home in Marksville, Louisiana. I want to mention here that, Dr. Charles D. Van Tuyl of Bacone College, a linguist is interested in writing Natchez grammar and dictionary. Dr. Mary B. Haas professor of linguistics at Berkley, the foremost expert in Natchez language has written some Natchez language material. When Dr. Haas left Yale University, her first job was to go to Oklahoma and talk to my uncle, Watt Sam.

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He was knowledgeable in the Natchez language. Dr. Haas worked with Watt Sam two occasions.

CAPERS: Now where is she?

SAM: She's at Berkley.

CAPERS: She's at Berkley.

SAM: Yes, she's the head of the Department of Linguistics. I suppose she got what was required. She is very knowledgeable in Natchez language.

CAPERS: It will be a marvelous contribution. I'm going to have to bow out because I have an appointment with Laura Drake Satterfield Harrell Sturdivant and we shall look forward to seeing you later and tomorrow and the next day, provided that you are here. So I'm sorry to leave, I didn't know you were coming. I was delighted to meet you.

SAM: It nice talking to you.

CAPERS: See you later.

SAM: Sure.

CAPERS: Thank you. Bye-bye.

SAM: There is an effort being made to write grammar, and a dictionary.

HILLIARD: That's utterly fascinating.

SAM: Isn't that nice. From my knowledge of Natchez material. I'm not confident. Linguist have seen the material. He is enthused about writing Natchez material. I mentioned earlier that Natchez grammar and dictionary will be compiled. There is sufficient data for the

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dictionary available. Anyway there is an effort being made, and I'm going to help.

HILLIARD: May we keep these papers?

SAM: Sure, I brought it for you.

HILLIARD: What was your attitude Mr. Sam towards archaeology? You read that some Indian people or tribal groups are taking a stand against archaeological investigations on the grounds that this is desecration of family...

SAM: I kind of have an odd feeling toward that because of my belief and my knowledge of how the Indian feels about this sort of thing. It is very sacred to us and we hope that this will come to an end. Some things that were taken out should be put back. Especially if they were bones. Of course there are artifacts and other materials that has its place in museums. As far as bodies, bones of the body or skull, things of this sort I think that an exact replica made for display will serve our needs. I think the original bones should be put back. At least we can do that. I think we have ability to do this.

HILLIARD: Institutions put the skelton back where it was found.

SAM: Right, where it was found. I think the Indian people would be highly pleased because a lot of things are happening now, it's really going against their grain.

HILLIARD: I believe I was asking about the attitude toward archaeology. Meaning the people - some groups have taken the position, some cases you know it has really caused a

confrontation at times about archaeological excavations.

SAM: I have a positive attitude toward archaeological excavations. It has been said that, if we are going to understand the people of today, we will have to study the people of the past. Archaeology will supply the needed information, about the past. Archaeology is very important to us. It is sad, that some Indian activist groups used archaeological sites as means to express their grievancies.

HILLIARD. Let me ask you, are you a Christian?

SAM: I practice my native religion.

HILLIARD: Talk about native religion.

SAM: We know that every group of people, race or ethnic group that has ever existed in any part of the world has had its own religious practices. Each group has adapted its own way to live a full life, somewhat in compliance to its concept of that there is to be done on earth towards the Supreme Being, which is God. Every race has their own religious practices. Therefore Indian people have had their own religious practices for a very long time. There is a story that tells how Supreme Being or Messenger came from heaven to the Indians and gave them the word of God. How they were to live. How they were to work with each other. Live in the communal life. If they do this, they will be blessed. In order for them to have their prayers be heard a Fire was provided as means of communication to heaven. So they prayed before the Ceremonial Fire.

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All participants must be in pure state spiritually, mentally, physically and morally. Since everyone is in the same physical condition, a strong communication formed via Fire. If one is profane it will disrupt the communication. This is the reason why, non participants are not allowed inside the sacred square.

HILLIARD: What's your schedule now? How is your schedule working?

SAM: Well, my schedule is that I wanted to come in here and meet with you. I've been sort of promising I'd drop by for a long time. So I came in yesterday around three o'clock.

HILLIARD: The security guard was over this morning and told me that you had been here.

SAM: Oh! You already knew that I was here. Well, anyway I talked to some elderly man, very impressive looking man.

HILLIARD: That's Mr. George over there.

SAM: I was here and I found where your office is, so I wouldn't be spending time today. I came directly. I stayed out in a suburban area last night. Today I would like to go through the archives. Tomorrow, I want to go to Natchez. I want to have some time to visit the area. Next day I'll co-mingle and I'll start the ceremony.

HILLIARD: Start the ceremony, right.

COLLINS: There's a lady in Natchez who works at one of the radio stations. Her name is Jenerette Harlow and she thinks that she has corresponded with you in the 1950s. She was real interested in talking to you on Wednesday.

Do you have any objection to visiting with any of the people from the radio or newspaper in Natchez? They're all invited.

SAM: I'd be glad to if I can be of some help.

COLLINS: She was especially interested. She said, "I'll bet he's just great."

SAM: Yes, if I can be of help.

HILLIARD: I've got two calls I've got to make. Do you want to keep talking about the religion?

SAM: Okay.

HILLIARD: I've got to get these calls and I'll be right back.

COLLINS: Okay.

SAM: If you write that name on a piece of paper so I can refer to it.

COLLINS: She's going to be there Wednesday, but I'll get that for you.

SAM: We will start talking about religion, I don't remember where I left off. We branched off into something else. Anyway I was talking about how the Indians got their message from heaven. They were told by a messenger how they should live. This is in comparison to Jesus Christ who came to the people over across the waters, in another land. It appears that somebody did come from Heaven to the Indians. If you search out the history in the other parts of the world, people have had their own messengers that came to their areas. All people look towards one Supreme Being, but each have their own religion, and

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so the American Indian fits right in like the rest of them. They were told this is the way God wants you to live, and worship. Use Fire as means of communication. You do this and you are following the word from heaven. So they practiced this way of living. As time went on different tribes formed different religious ceremonies. Southern Indians are pretty much alike in their practices, but where you examine ground it has different procedures of doing things. There's a differentiation between one tribal ground from another but over all they're almost alike. Indians were told, that whoever it was that brought the Fire, also brought the message among the Indians, and has said, "This is the way God wants you to live. This is the way you are going to ask for blessing." Whenever you ask for blessing is similiar to white man going to church and praying. When Indians were following laws from heaven in the native way they were blessed many ways. They shared their blessings with the world. Like for instance the greatest contribution that a man has ever made to the world was made by Indian. Surely the white man has made contributions: tape recorder, telephone, typewriter, cars, trains, atomic bomb, tanks, and airplaines, but that's not the greatest. The Indians have contributed over seventy-five per cent of all the food that the world lives on today. When Indian was living under his religion he made that contribution. He made contributions in other areas like medicine, art,

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song, and utilitarian goods. All these things that the Indians gave to the world, but he receives no credit for it. Of course, maybe someday when white man settles down gets rid of all his busybody things, maybe he'll recognize things and give credit. Maybe, maybe not, right now he's so busy discovering, making changes in all kinds of work for a better livelihood. What I want to stress about this religion is that Indian living under this religion got his blessings because he did things like he was told. He shared his blessings with the world.

COLLINS: Do most Indians think that the bad things that came to them you know, the white people did to the Indians? Okay, they had lived through their laws and they had given I'm sure, is it a religious feeling? I'm sure they felt like they've gotten nothing in return but hurt. Do they feel like there's a failure anywhere in their religious beliefs?

SAM: Yes, there is a feeling of failure of their practices, but it really shouldn't be normal that way but it's mostly economic and social problems. What does it take for us to exist. It takes work. We have to work, for us to have a place to eat, a place to sleep and have clothes to wear, medical service when we need it. It's an economical pressure. For an Indian to survive he has to change his Indian ways. He has to compete like a white. That confuses you doesn't it?

COLLINS: No, I think that's true. I think that...

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SAM: My teaching is this, I think it's God's intention for any person, whether he's black, white, or red person is to maintain his identity. A person should feel good about himself and whatever he does, he should do his best in doing the job. I encourage Indian students to be competitive and aggressive. Learn a trade that you can perform. If you don't have pride, and have ill feelings about yourself, no matter what kind of training you have had, you will not achieve your goal, since, you have to be totally committed to your endeavors to achieve success.

COLLINS: Have you always been aware of yourself as an Indian?

SAM: Yes, writer asked me if I was aware of my identity or aware of my being Indian. I said, "Yes." I think people recognized me as an Indian. One of the most intriguing things that ever happened to me was when I was on a special mission in Northern Greenland. I made friends with Greenlanders, they are part Danish and Eskimo. They were employed at Thule Air Base. Greenlander, speak both languages and they have access to Eskimo villages. I got acquainted with them and they usually ask me to go to the villages. When we were visiting Eskimo home, there was a little old Eskimo lady kept looking at me. She picked up a picture and showed it to me. I nodded my head and she grinned. It was a picture of an American Indian with a war bonnet. That Eskimo woman recognized me as an Indian.

Before I went to Greenland I read books on customs of the Eskimos. They are like every one else, they are losing their old customs. I was reluctant to accept invitation to Eskimo homes, since I did not know their customs and not used to their kind of food. I'll tell you what happened to me. I was invited to go on a hunting expedition with the Eskimos. I appeared at the departure place, with the best arctic gear that the modern science can provide. I had on arctic clothes that the United States Air Force provided for its people in the frozen country. They said, "You can't go in those clothes."

COLLINS: You had to put on their...

SAM: Yes, I had to put on their clothes before they let me go on the hunt. The catch is this, their clothes, has been proven. They know what their clothes will do in the cold, but they didn't know mine. They weren't going to be responsible for me going on that trip with untested arctic clothing.

HILLIARD: Untested by their standards.

SAM: Yes, untested by their standards. So they went and got me some fur clothes and I had to change into their clothes and everybody was happy.

HILLIARD: You know I wanted to ask you do you have plans for lunch?

SAM: I do not know how long I was going to stay here today. It all depends on what we do. I'm here to visit with you people.

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HILLIARD: It's about five minutes to twelve so...

SAM: Sure, whenever we can go that would be fine with me. This was my first trip on the ice. We had dog sleds and I was on one of the sleds. We'd make a kill and bury it and go on, until we make the last kill. We put our last kill on the sled and go to the lodge area, where all the hunters go to rest for the night. The driver didn't want me to touch his dogs, he told me in sign language, there was no voice communications between us. Sled team consist of team leader, king dog, a female, and nine male dogs. When dogs were unhitched from sled, king dog and female were staked down at one place and rest at another place. The king dog, in command all the time on the hunting trip. You never mistreat your king dog. He's going to save your life some day. You may be lost in a snow storm, the dog will bring you back home. So you're going to be nice to him. So the king dog gets the lady. The others just look. Nine males are always fighting for king position. Someday one of them is going to be the king dog. So there's always a fight with king dog. If king dog ever gets dethroned, he's shot. Not fit to be on team. That's the way the system works. Dogs are always jockey for position to pull next to the lady. You'd be surprised how that system works. It works beautifully.

HILLIARD: You say you buried the kill?

SAM: Yes, we buried our kill, last one killed before going into

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lodge area was taken with us. The lodge is a big cave where hunters converge. All the hunting parties in the area converge there for the night. There has to be three sleds in hunting party for a small game, and in a bear hunt is has to have five sleds in a party. It is a custom. This is to ensure that someone may get back to the village to relate any lives lost. Arrived at the lodge to rest for the night, and dogs unhitched and stacked down for the night. Driver pulled a seal off the sled and chopped it up with his knife in chunks. The king dog and the lady get to eat first. Then the rest of the dogs eat next. We eat last. That's the custom, driver chop off a piece of raw seal and handed it to me.

HILLIARD: They eat it raw?

SAM: Yes, after the dogs, you are given your share of the supper, a hand full of raw seal and they're watching you. "Let's see what this guy's going to do. Is he going to reject or is he going to eat it." Rejection or acceptance by hunters is in your hand. They're watching you.

HILLIARD: What did you do? Did you eat any of it?

SAM: I ate it. I learned before I went there, by reading about the people who had been there said, you eat it. I ate it and from then on nobody questioned who I was or what I was doing. I was one of them. See how the system works? Raw meat went down slow and almost came back up.

HILLIARD: You didn't ask for a second helping!?

SAM: NO! (laughter) I was hoping my Eskimo friend wouldn't

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give me anymore. I got away far as I could. I had survival rations. It is called pemmican - an Indian product and full of energy. Take a little of it and can go for a day. I had canned goods in case of emergency. I went to Greenland with a scientific party that does research for Air Force. Air pioneers said, many years ago, if there is a global war, it will be over the north pole. We were looking for a way to operate out of North Pole. How can we operate on ice. How can we land airplanes on the ice. How long can we stay, before the summer sets in, and ice begins to deteriorate and flow away. Experiments and research had to be performed in that dreaded and frozen north, and I was part of the team. I learn how to live in frozen north from the Eskimos. In case of emergency, I had enough experience and knowledge to survive. Simple: if Eskimos have been living in frozen north for thousands of years, and have survived, I can survive too. The Eskimos told me, "We don't understand why airplanes come over and go down on the ice then standing on millions and millions of gallons of water and die of thirst." And we're suppose to be of the most advanced nation in the whole world. They're confused about us.

HILLIARD: That's right.

SAM: Yes, I don't want to interfere with your lunch plans.

HILLIARD: Let me make some arrangements here and we'll got to lunch.

SAM: Good. Do you want me to shut this thing off?

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HILLIARD: We'll shut 'if off. Let's see how. Just keep your seat there Mr. Sam. Let me shut this thing off. It's stopped now.

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Example I

MOSQUITO DANCE

Archie Sam ^{a'}
Duration 35 seconds

$\text{♩} = 152$

First system of musical notation. The vocal line (treble clef) begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a half note F#4. The piano accompaniment (bass clef) consists of a steady eighth-note pattern: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F#3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F#2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1, F#1, E1, D1, C1, B0, A0, G0, F#0, E0, D0, C0, B-1, A-1, G-1, F#-1, E-1, D-1, C-1, B-2, A-2, G-2, F#-2, E-2, D-2, C-2, B-3, A-3, G-3, F#-3, E-3, D-3, C-3, B-4, A-4, G-4, F#-4, E-4, D-4, C-4, B-5, A-5, G-5, F#-5, E-5, D-5, C-5, B-6, A-6, G-6, F#-6, E-6, D-6, C-6, B-7, A-7, G-7, F#-7, E-7, D-7, C-7, B-8, A-8, G-8, F#-8, E-8, D-8, C-8, B-9, A-9, G-9, F#-9, E-9, D-9, C-9, B-10, A-10, G-10, F#-10, E-10, D-10, C-10, B-11, A-11, G-11, F#-11, E-11, D-11, C-11, B-12, A-12, G-12, F#-12, E-12, D-12, C-12, B-13, A-13, G-13, F#-13, E-13, D-13, C-13, B-14, A-14, G-14, F#-14, E-14, D-14, C-14, B-15, A-15, G-15, F#-15, E-15, D-15, C-15, B-16, A-16, G-16, F#-16, E-16, D-16, C-16, B-17, A-17, G-17, F#-17, E-17, D-17, C-17, B-18, A-18, G-18, F#-18, E-18, D-18, C-18, B-19, A-19, G-19, F#-19, E-19, D-19, C-19, B-20, A-20, G-20, F#-20, E-20, D-20, 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C-291, B-292, A-292, G-292, F#-292, E-292, D-292, C-292, B-293, A-293, G-293, F#-293, E-293, D-293, C-293, B-294, A-294, G-294, F#-294, E-294, D-294, C-2

Handwritten musical notation for the first system. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 3/8 time signature. The lyrics are "a ni gu ya ha ne" followed by "ha ni gu ya ha ni". Above the second measure, there is a handwritten "a²". Above the third measure, there is a handwritten "b³". The piano accompaniment is in bass clef, showing a simple harmonic accompaniment.

Handwritten musical notation for the second system. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "ha ni gu ya ha ni" followed by "ha ni gu ya ha ni". Above the second measure, there is a handwritten "b³". Above the third measure, there is a handwritten "b⁴". The piano accompaniment continues with the same harmonic pattern.

Handwritten musical notation for the third system. The vocal line has the lyrics "he ha". Above the second measure, there is a handwritten "c" and the text "Scale used". To the right of the vocal line, a scale is written: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5. The piano accompaniment shows chords for "he" and "ha".

MDAH

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