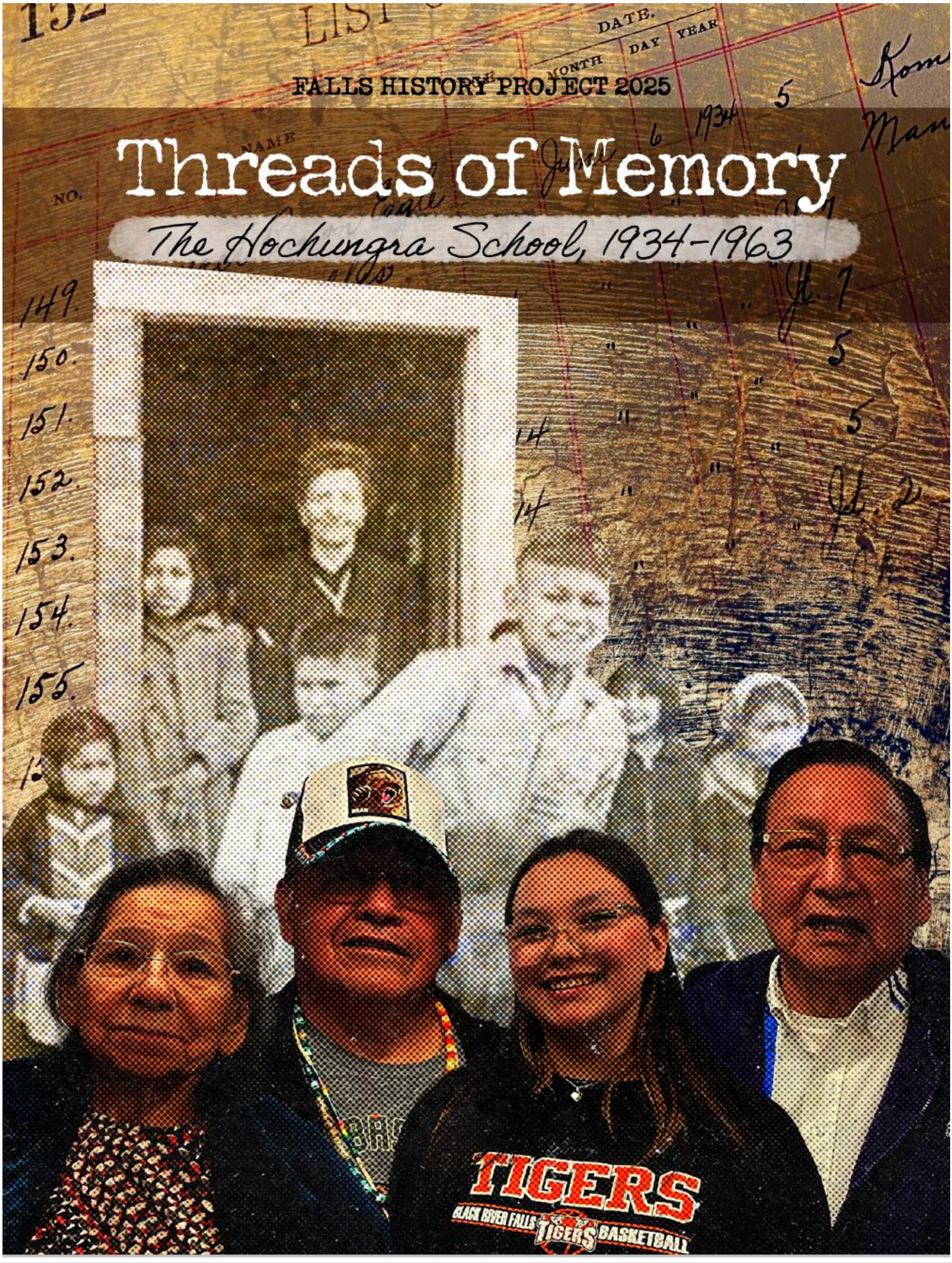
FALLS HISTORY PROJECT 2025

Threads of Memory

The Hochungra School, 1934-1963



"Education is much more a matter of the heart than of the head."

Gordon Thunder, Ho-Chunk Elder

About our cover page: Thanks to Julie Tiedens, Student Media Advisor at BRFHS, for designing this year's cover page. The background image we utilized (below) offers a glimpse of what the school may have looked like at the end of the school day or during a recess break.

Preface and Acknowledgements

In July 2001, I attended a seminar at Amherst College, Massachusetts, hosted by the Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History. David Blight, an expert on Civil War memory, and historians Jim and Lois Horton led discussions on several topics, including the Underground Railroad. Blight's insights on how communities reconstruct and interpret their past—known as public history—inspired me. During my drive back to Wisconsin, I developed the idea for the Falls History Project. That fall, history colleague John Pellowski and I envisioned a project to engage students and the community. From the start, we focused on building an archive highlighting local stories and resident interviews to benefit future students. Over 24 years, the archive has grown to include 23 projects, nearly 100 interviews, and a collection of papers that explore fragments of our community's rich history—an achievement we're truly proud of.

Our 2024-25 project once again explored our community's shared history -- a complicated story that often goes unnoticed. Indigenous and Euro-American people have lived side by side for generations, yet separation remains. Schools have served as a meeting ground for nearly a century, evolving alongside the civil rights movement and broader societal shifts. The Hochungra School reflects this ongoing history, offering insight into education after the 1928 Merriam Report. As an experimental school, it operated under both federal and state funding while remaining part of the County School system. Rural school consolidation in the 1950s and 60s led to its closure after the 1962-63 academic year. Twelve years later, longtime teacher Emma Olson published *My Years in the Winnebago Community School*, sharing her perspective on the school and her experiences. Through this project, we aim to continue that storytelling by weaving in the voices of tribal elders who studied there as children. In many ways, we are living history, shaping its narrative without always seeing the full picture.

As always, our thanks to those who contributed time to this year's project. Our intern, Karolann Mann, plunged in and enjoyed the challenge of learning more about the Mission community. Thank you, Karolann, for your passion and willingness to collaborate with us this year and all the best going forward! Our three interviewees, Wilfrid Cleveland, Larry Garvin, Sr., and Bernice Blackdeer graciously offered their time and unique memories of the Hochungra School, and we

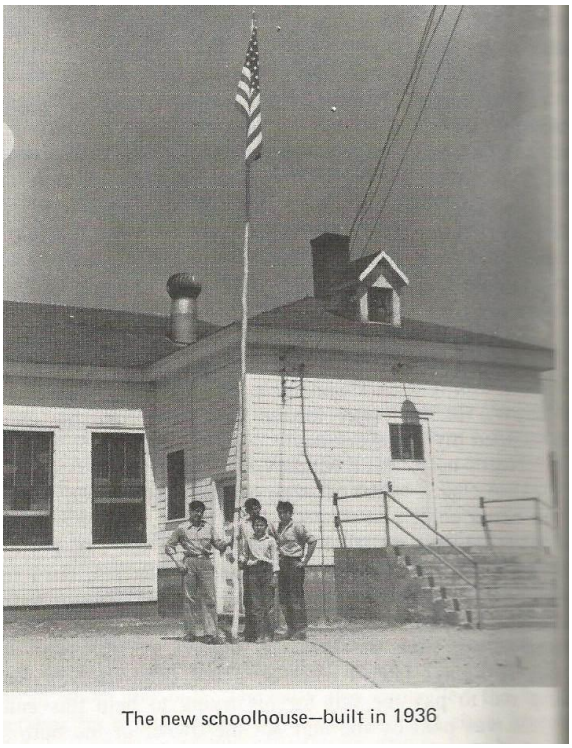
offer them our thanks – pinagigi! To Mary I. Murray Woods, director of the Jackson County History Room, thank you again for your help with sources for the project. Finally, thanks to my co-director of the Falls History Project, Eli Youngthunder, for his continued interest in sustaining this effort. Eli and I have worked together for many years on any number of projects and his insights are invaluable.

Two dedicatory thoughts regarding this year's project. First, to Nancy Oestreich Lurie (1924–2017), an American anthropologist known for her expertise in North American Indigenous history and culture, particularly the Ho-Chunk people. Born in Milwaukee, she earned degrees from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, the University of Chicago, and Northwestern University. Beginning in 1944 and continuing for the remainder of her life, Nancy spent a portion of each summer at the Mission east of Black River Falls. Ultimately adopted by Mitchell RedCloud, Sr., she worked tirelessly to further the public's knowledge of Indigenous people in our state. As a young lad growing up at the Mission, Eli has vivid memories of this uniquely talented and quirky lady. I had the great fortune of working with Nancy on various curriculum-based projects for more than twenty-five years and am forever grateful. Second, we dedicate this year's project to the hundreds of students and several teachers affiliated with the Hochungra School during its generation of existence. Ho-Chunk children born between 1920 and 1957 may have experienced the school as part of their educational experience, and we must try to imagine how they felt entering school and how their experiences impacted their future. The teachers, of course, have all passed and their personal memories are lost in time, beyond the book we have from Emma. They too were marked by the unique nature of their time at the Mission.

Finally, a quick story. On a cold late winter day in 1962, my father, Thor Rykken, took me—his five-year-old son—to visit the small school at the Indian Mission east of town. We had recently moved from North Dakota to Black River Falls, where he would spend the next ten years as

pastor of Evangelical Lutheran Church. As we entered the building, Emma Olson, a gregarious teacher, greeted us warmly. She was used to welcoming visitors to the Hochungra School, which had been operating for twenty-nine years. The room reverberated with the sounds of children talking and laughing, their voices creating a lively atmosphere. Their faces, full of energy and curiosity, stood out to me—many of them would later become my classmates. That moment remains clear in my memory even after all these years. Before my father passed in 2013, I asked him why he had taken me there that day. Though we had discussed the school visit before, he offered more insights during one of our final conversations. He talked of his own childhood—born in 1924 at Bethany Mission in Wittenberg, Wisconsin, where his father was the mission pastor, he spent his early years alongside Ho-Chunk, Oneida, and Brothertown children. He wanted me to understand that part of his life and the connections he had formed.

That visit is an example of a flashbulb memory – a moment that stays sharp and detailed despite the passage of time. As I looked deeper into the history of the school and its role in our community, I realized, once again, how much of our local history fades into the mists of time. Though our work here is far from a complete story, we hope we added new layers to the story of the Hochungra School.

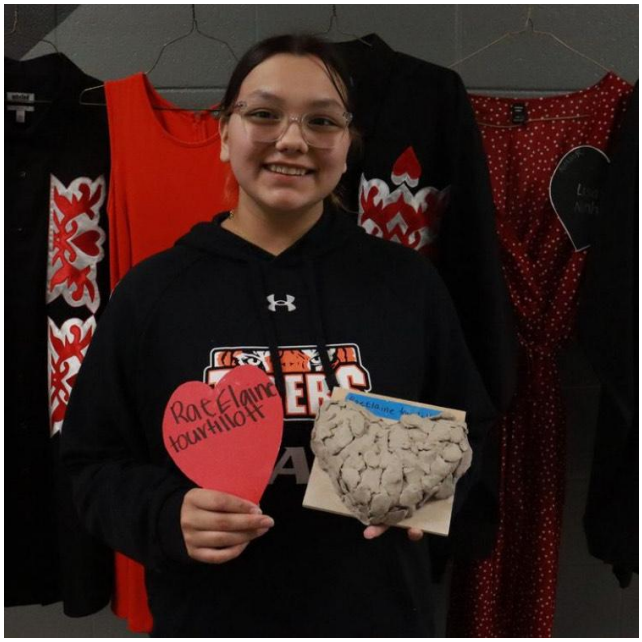


The new schoolhouse—built in 1936

Enjoy exploring our project!

Paul S.T. Rykken
Falls History Project Co-Director
June 2025

Reflections From FHP Intern, Karolann Mann (Class of 2025)



The Falls History Project will always have a special spot in my heart. This project has made me learn new things about the Ho-chunk community as a young person who is in the community myself. This was one of my favorite things to do for my last year of high school, I am so glad that I took on this project because I got to meet new people, who have been living longer than I have been. To hear their stories and their favorite memories that they have made along the way whether that's when they were in elementary school in the Ho-chunk school or if it was high school or even later in life, it was always nice to talk to the three elders that came in and got interviewed (or just elders in general). I will always cherish the time that I gave this project. I am glad to leave my mark on this history project, I couldn't ask for better people that helped me make this project so thank you Willie Cleveland, Larry Garvin, Bernice Blackdeer, Mr. Rykken, and Mr. Youngthunder. I hope whoever is reading this enjoys this year's project. I worked hard on it.

Thank you,

Karolann Mann

Senior Karolann Mann has worked hard throughout high school. She was a member of the basketball, swimming, and track and field teams. She was also involved in band, Wąąkšik Wacek, hand bells, and Science Club. As Karolann moves on, she will miss her sister the most. "What I will miss the most about my school years is seeing my sister in the hallways. Even though we live at home together, it's nice to see her throughout my day," said Mann. After high school, Karolann plans to attend UW-Platteville for forensic science.

Threads of Memory: The Hochungra School, 1934-1963

(By Paul Rykken)

"All historical experience must be imagined before it can be understood." (David Blight)

Introduction

Noted documentary film producer Ken Burns once said, *History is not really about the past – settling old scores. It is about defining the present and who we are.* Teaching high school history for more than 45 years has prompted me to remain grounded in practical questions that define our lives: Why are things the way they are? How did we arrive here? Such questions reflect the premise that no clean break with the past exists -- what happened back there is continually being played out in our lives today and into the future. Within this framework, local communities grapple with public memory, a crucial component of an evolving collective identity. Finding common ground in that memory is a consistent challenge, particularly when dealing with contentious issues that have a history within the community. The race divide, one such issue, is analogous to two people looking at the same image and each seeing something entirely different. Multiple paths to the present make for a rich and diverse story but can also prompt clouded perceptions. Perhaps no clearer example of this exists than the educational experience of American Indian children over the past several generations. That story is varied and complex and intertwines with the broader story of the Federal Government's approach to tribal nations across Indian Country. To study the educational experiences of American Indian children then, is to recognize it as a microcosm of race relations, a topic that marries institutions and experiences, realities and perceptions, facts, and emotions-- all of which create a vibrant community.

The Context

Black River Falls is an old river town in west-central Wisconsin. The Ho-Chunk people, formerly known as Winnebago, have been in this region of the state for centuries.[1] They are one of 11 federally recognized tribes in Wisconsin and considered original to the region, along with

[1] The term "Winnebago" is derived from a French misinterpretation of an Algonquian word meaning "people of the stinky water," a reference to the area near Green Bay where Ho-chunk people lived. Ho-chunk people referred to themselves as *Hochungra*, meaning "people of the big voice." With governmental reorganization and the new Constitution of 1994, the Wisconsin Winnebago officially adopted Ho-Chunk as the tribal name.

1873 Birdseye View of Black River Falls
Herman Brosius

the Ojibwa (6 bands) and Menominee. Three tribes migrated into Wisconsin from the east – the Potawatomie (Michigan), the Oneida, and the Stockbridge-Munsee (both from New York). There is another tribe in the state known as the Brothertown, although they have not been federally recognized (made up of people from New England and New York). Based on the 2020 census, about 144,000 people in Wisconsin (out of 5.8 million) and 1,500 people in Jackson County (out of 21,000) identified as American Indian (including mixed race).[2] Euro-Americans ventured into the area as early as 1819 and established a permanent settlement by the late 1830s.[3] The earliest settlers were second-wave New Englanders, soon to be followed by a mix of people with European ancestry. Consequently, indigenous, and non-indigenous people have co-existed here for nearly 190 years, or eight generations. The relationship between the various cultures represented in the region's history is an important part of the city's identity. It is a relationship that at times has been contentious, congenial, or ambivalent. Though not often discussed, the city's inhabitants seem to assume a shared, though complicated, history. And, though the groups interact naturally and regularly, a de facto pattern of segregation persists, primarily due to where people choose to live.

The Public School System

Schools never operate in a vacuum, and the Black River case study is no exception. Integral to the life of any small community, the public schools are the one place where everyone must

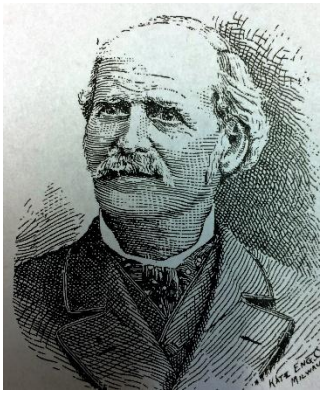
[2] These numbers vary depending on sourcing. I drew these statistics from a December 2023 article in Wisconsin Watch, accessed here: Is Wisconsin home to 12 Native Nations?

[3] The earliest interaction between Native and Euro-Americans is well documented in an unpublished thesis by Lawrence Onsager titled, "The Removal of the Winnebago Indians from Wisconsin in 1873-74." A copy of Onsager's thesis can be accessed at: https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/library-pubs/81/

interact.[4] The 1,634 students in the Black River system attend one of four schools: Forrest Street Elementary, Red Creek Elementary, the Middle School, and the High School.[5] More than one-third are non-white (the second highest in the region behind Arcadia), and 20-25% of our students are American Indian, primarily members of the Ho-Chunk Nation. 2013 marked the 50th year since the schools of the district became fully integrated. It was in the fall of 1963 that most young Ho-Chunk children boarded a bus and walked through the doors of previously all-white schools. By the spring of 1976, Ho-Chunk students were graduating potentially having experienced all 13 years of their primary and secondary school experiences within the Black River district. Those early students are now in their early 60s, and their story and the shared experience they encountered with non-native students are significant.[6]

The Background: Education in the Post-Removal Period

The first school in our area dates to February of 1847, prior to Wisconsin statehood. Jacob Spaulding hired Massachusetts-born Calvin R. Johnson as the village's first teacher. Johnson taught for several months prior to enlisting to fight in the Mexican American War, returning to teach several more terms when his military service ended in 1848.[7] Public schooling continued in the growing village during the tumultuous 1850s and into the Civil War years. Union High School, built in 1871 and considered one of the premier schools in the region, signaled a more formally structured school system and represented a golden era in early Black River



Calvin Johnson (1822-1897)

[4] Relevant to this discussion is the fact that since the 2006-07 school year the district has operated within a "grade-centers" model. Prior to that time, a high percentage of native students attended Gebhardt Elementary (K-5). Full integration, therefore, did not really occur until the Middle School years (6-8). The move to Grade Centers (PK-1, 2-3, 4-5) means that students experience the fully integrated environment for 13 years.

[5] In the fall of 2014, District voters approved a building referendum and Red Creek Elementary replaced two other buildings (Third Street and Gebhardt) as a combined 2-3, 4-5 grade center elementary.

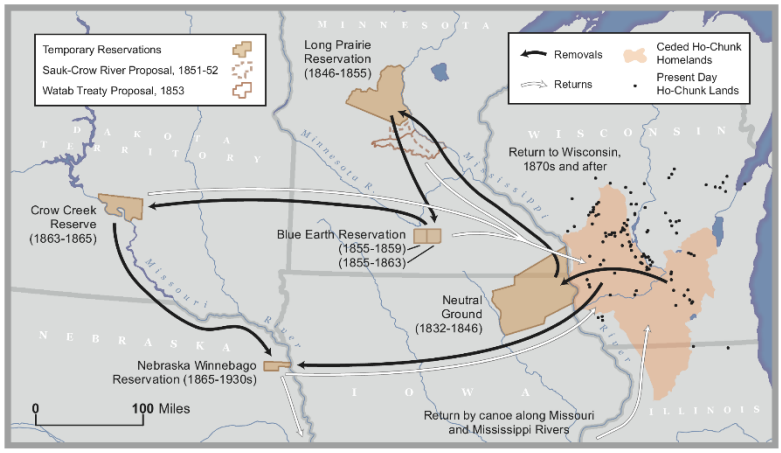
[6] Graduation rates among Ho-chunk students remained low throughout the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, with significant increases beginning to occur in the 1990s and early 21st Century. I will be documenting that story more fully in the next installment of this paper.

[7] Johnson's story is compelling. Among other things he was employed on a whaling ship out of New Bedford at age 18 before venturing west in 1844. Eventually he became an attorney working with William T. Price and held several elected positions both locally and at the state level. He returned to soldiering during the Civil War, raising and organizing Company I of the 14th Regiment drawn from the men of Jackson and Clark Counties. He returned to Black River Falls where he lived until his death in 1897.

educational history.[8] For the children of the Euro-American settlers of the region, primary schooling became the norm, and secondary level opportunities also became available.

By the early 1870s, however, Ho-Chunk children and their parents were facing an existential struggle to remain in the land of their ancestors. For more than a generation, Federal authorities had been engineering Native removals from Wisconsin. The controversial Treaty of 1837, signed between Ho-Chunk representatives and the Van Buren Administration, ultimately caused a division within the tribe due to the nature of the negotiations and the final treaty provisions. One faction of the tribe, the treaty-abiding faction as they came to be known, begrudgingly accepted the flawed treaty that called for the tribe's removal from Wisconsin, while another group – the non-abiding faction – spent the next 37 years resisting removal. By the middle 1870s, the latter group, in an astonishing act of resilience, overcame multiple obstacles and obtained land grants in the area east of the Black River, among other areas of the state. Their resistance and the assistance they received from various members of the local white community remain an under-appreciated and misunderstood part of the region's history.[9]

Relocations of the Ho-Chunk Tribe



Removals Map Courtesy of Cole Sutton

The situation of American Indian children in this disruptive post-removal period was precarious, and various religious denominations stepped in and attempted to educate the students in mission schools. In the post-Civil War period, for example, the government began to provide

[8] Black River Falls Union School was considered a premier public school in northwestern Wisconsin during those years. Built at the cost of $20,000 with bricks from the Spaulding Brick Yard, the building remains an iconic feature of the city's landscape today.

[9] Beyond the references previously mentioned, historian Mark Wyman documents the removal and resistance story in Chapter nine of his 1998 book, The Wisconsin Frontier. City founder Jacob Spaulding and his relationship with the native people is particularly interesting in this regard, something I have documented in an essay titled "Spaulding's Funeral," available at: https://pstrykken.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/spauldings-funeral-updated-2019.pdf

direct support to schools operated by missionary groups through something called the Peace Policy, first initiated by President Grant in 1870. So began the complex era of the boarding schools. From 1871 until well into the 20th Century, a patch-work system of boarding schools emerged across the country. Many of the schools had a religious orientation, while others were simply an arm of the state. In most cases, the goal was the full cultural assimilation of the native children and, consequently, the destruction of native culture in the name of *civilization* and *progress.* Within the past generation, volumes of literature have addressed the nature of boarding schools and how generations of American Indian children were negatively impacted by their experiences in such schools.[10]

Reverand Jacob Hauser (1845-1931)

The full story of boarding schools, of course, is complex and has yet to be fully documented. Well-intentioned missionaries often provided much-needed assistance to children and their families at a time of extreme deprivation at the hands of federal authorities. It was in this context that the Reformed Church established a mission seven miles east of Black River Falls with Reverend Jacob Hauser serving as the first missionary beginning in 1878. By 1882, the Church constructed a chapel and, two years later, Jacob Stucki arrived as Hauser's replacement. Stucki served at the mission for 46 years and established a fledgling school there in 1917. The education of children was a natural fit with the missionary activities, and, by 1919, Stucki and his son, Ben, solidified a boarding school in Neillsville that some Ho-chunk children attended. Others enrolled at Bethany Mission in Wittenberg, Wisconsin, established in the latter years of the 19th century by the Norwegian Lutheran Church, while others went to the Tomah Indian Industrial School, a federally sponsored boarding school established in 1893. In all cases, Native children experienced the challenges of being away from home and family for portions of each year. The federally sponsored

Reverand Jacob Stucki (1857-1930)

Reverand Ben Stucki (1893-1961)

[10] Richard Henry Pratt's autobiography, Battlefield and Classroom, offers excellent insight into the original concept of the boarding schools. Pratt was a long-time army officer and the founder of Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Historian Robert M. Utley's introduction to the 1964 edition of the autobiography is especially helpful for understanding the position of the Federal Government during the latter years of the 19th Century.

schools, in general, tended to be harsh and draconian in approach, while the church-sponsored schools may have been somewhat more culturally sensitive to the needs of the children and their families, though each school's story was unique.[11] We also know that during the 1920s and 30s, some of the Ho-Chunk children attended various County schools including the Clay School in the Hatfield area and Sandy Plains Elementary east of Shamrock.

The Impact of the Meriam Report of 1928

Henry Roe Cloud (1884-1950)
Winnebago

It was amidst this patch-work system in the post-World War I era, that voices both within and outside the government pushed those involved with American Indian education to rethink their approach. In 1926, Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work called on the Brookings Institute at Johns Hopkins University to conduct a thorough investigation of Indian affairs, including educational policy. Published in 1928, *The Problem of Indian Administration* (better known as the Meriam Report, named for Louis Meriam who headed the investigation) sharply criticized the boarding school model. W. Carson Ryan Jr., an activist in the Progressive Education movement, wrote much of the education portion of the report with help from Reverend Henry Roe Cloud, a prominent Winnebago educational leader.[12] The Report's criticism of culturally destructive practices common in many boarding schools led to dramatic changes in philosophy. In 1930, President Hoover appointed W. Carson Ryan Jr. as director of Indian Education, and Ryan promptly promoted a three-pronged approach: to develop community schools, support federal-state contracts to place Indian children in public schools, and gradually phase out boarding schools.[13]

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[11] Historian Betty Ann Bergland has written extensively on this subject and offers a concise analysis of the Bethany Mission located in Wittenberg, Wisconsin. She provides a balanced appraisal of the complexity of motives and methods in "Settler Colonists, 'Christian Citizenship,' and the Women's Missionary Federation at the Bethany Indian Mission in Wittenberg, Wisconsin, 1884-1934" (Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960, 2010). On a personal note, my grandfather, T.M. Rykken, served as a teacher and missionary at Bethany from 1920-1930 and his story illustrates much of what Bergland discusses in her research. My father was born at Bethany in 1924, and I was able to learn much about the Mission from him prior to his death in 2013.

[12] The timing of the Meriam Report is significant because it coincided with the Progressive Movement in public education at the time. Influenced by the teachings of John Dewey, progressive educators emphasized culturally responsive curriculum and teaching methods.

[13] Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder document the work of Ryan and others in Chapter 8 of American Indian Education: A History (2004).

The passage of the Johnson O'Mally (JOM) Act of 1934 further solidified Ryan's approach by authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to enter into contracts with states to pay them for providing services to Native children. The practical effect of JOM was that states began promoting the education of American Indians in public schools across the country.

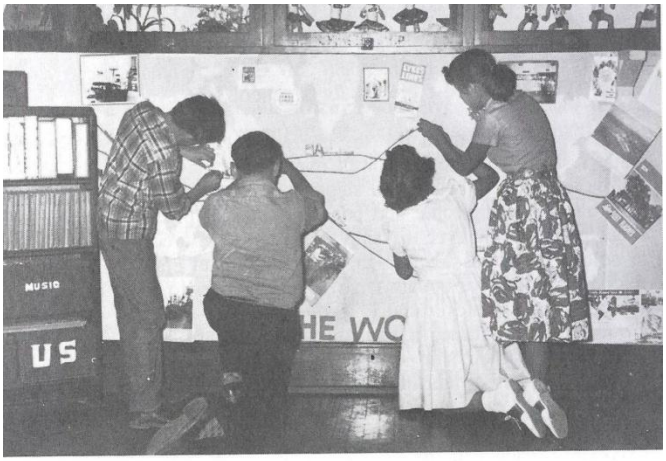
The Hochungra School: 1934-1963

The UCC Church was the site of the first school in 1934. The school outgrew the space quickly.

Prompted by these developments, the school district of Black River Falls opened an experimental day school at the Mission within the framework of the numerous County Schools of the period. Norma Krametbauer was hired as the first teacher at the K-8 school (1934-35) which operated at the Mission Church. In 1936, the district constructed a new building and hired Emma Olson as principal and teacher, roles she held for the next 27 years. Olson recounted her experiences at the school in her 1975 book, My Years in the Winnebago School and Community. Her lively account documents a vibrant and healthy school and one that was progressive for its time.[14] Among other creative approaches, Olson took the 8th grade students on annual trips to Madison where, on one occasion, they received their diplomas from the State Superintendent in the Capitol building. Trips to Milwaukee were also a regular occurrence and introduced students to a world far beyond the boundaries of Jackson County. Herman and Alma Gebhardt provided financial support for these trips, and, beyond the thrill of riding

In response to public radio's "Ranger Mac" program, and in conjunction with the Conservation Department, students planted more than 600 trees as part of a school forest project, one of many outdoor learning activities.

[14] Larry Garvin and Anna Rae Funmaker were both students of Emma Olson and we had the opportunity to interview them about their experiences at the school. Anna Rae spoke highly of Olson and indicated that she was a gifted teacher who had a sincere interest in Ho-Chunk culture and traditions. You can read the Garvin interview at: https://fallshistoryproject.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/2009-standardized.pdf and Anna Rae's at: https://fallshistoryproject.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/2011-standardized.pdf



Locating Lykes ship — putting in routes and cities

the train, students attended Milwaukee Braves games and visited the Washington Park Zoo. Another example of her creative approach was the annual "adoption" of an ocean-going vessel, an idea Olson got from a women's organization in New York. Students wrote letters to the ship's Captain and tracked the vessel for a year, learning about world geography and shipping practices in the process. One senses from reading Olson's book that she understood how important it was for native children to maintain a keen sense of their cultural identity. Ethno-historian Nancy Lurie who began studying the Ho-Chunk community in Black River Falls in 1944 by living with the people for a part of each year recognized the singularly vital role the school played in the mission community. Nearly everyone had a child, grandchild, or other relative attending the school, and it is clear from Olson's book that parents were in and out of the school on a regular basis while in session. While Native children had experienced education prior to the school's opening, the Hochungra day school was unique and allowed community members to have a vested interest in the various activities associated with their children's education.[15] The school operated as a K-8 building until the middle 1950s, at which time it became a K-6 school. Upon completing their years at the Hochungra School, some Ho-Chunk students enrolled in the public high school in Black River.


Ethno-historian Nancy Lurie (1924-2017)

The Beginning of Integration

Spurred by the emerging civil rights movement and especially the Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954, public education in the United States was moving toward an integration model

[15] Dr. Lurie was interviewed in 2009 as part of "Voices From the 1960s: Integration and the Black River Public Schools," an oral history project sponsored by the BRFHS History and Social Studies Department. Her interview and others can be accessed at: https://fallshistoryproject.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/2009-standardized.pdf

in the early 1960s. Liberal-progressive voices of the time argued that full integration would mean greater opportunities for students of color, a discussion that impacted some areas of Indian Country, including Jackson County. Officials from the Indian Agency (later called the Bureau of Indian Affairs), the Department of the Interior, and the State Board of Public Instruction made the decision to close the Hochungra School at the close of the 1962-63 schoolyear. Their decision coincided with broader consolidation efforts going on within the Black River district for several years, efforts that closed the doors of many one-room schools in the county. Like any school closure, the loss of the mission school was emotionally difficult for parents and staff. The debate was legitimate: Where would Ho-Chunk students best be served within the infrastructure of the public school system? Reverend Mitchell Whiterabbit, UCC Pastor and one of the leading voices within the tribe at the time, for example, favored the move toward integration. The Black River Falls School Board received two petitions from members of the Ho-chunk community prior to the closure urging them to keep the school open, but to no avail.[16]

Post-Script

In 1963, young Native children boarded yellow school buses and traveled to Gebhardt Elementary, marking a turning point in local public school history. Early school experiences shape children's lives, and for Native students, integration required them to navigate two cultural worlds. The impact of integration—both expected and unexpected—still challenges communities in the 21st century. Those first students, now in their late 60s, have grandchildren entering the same schools, making their stories, along with those of the non-Native students who first experienced integration from the other side, crucial to understanding this history.

Historian John Lukacs reminds us that the “remembered past is a much larger category than the recorded past.”[17] Integration remains a complex thread in public school history. The 2024-25 project builds on research from 2009, which explored the early years of integration. Larry Garvin, Sadie Winneshiek Garvin, and Nancy Lurie provided valuable perspectives, with Lurie’s insights drawing from her experience with the Ho-Chunk people. At the time, Tina Boisen, the District’s Native American Student Services Specialist, analyzed the challenges American Indian students faced in the early 21st century. There is still much more to uncover.

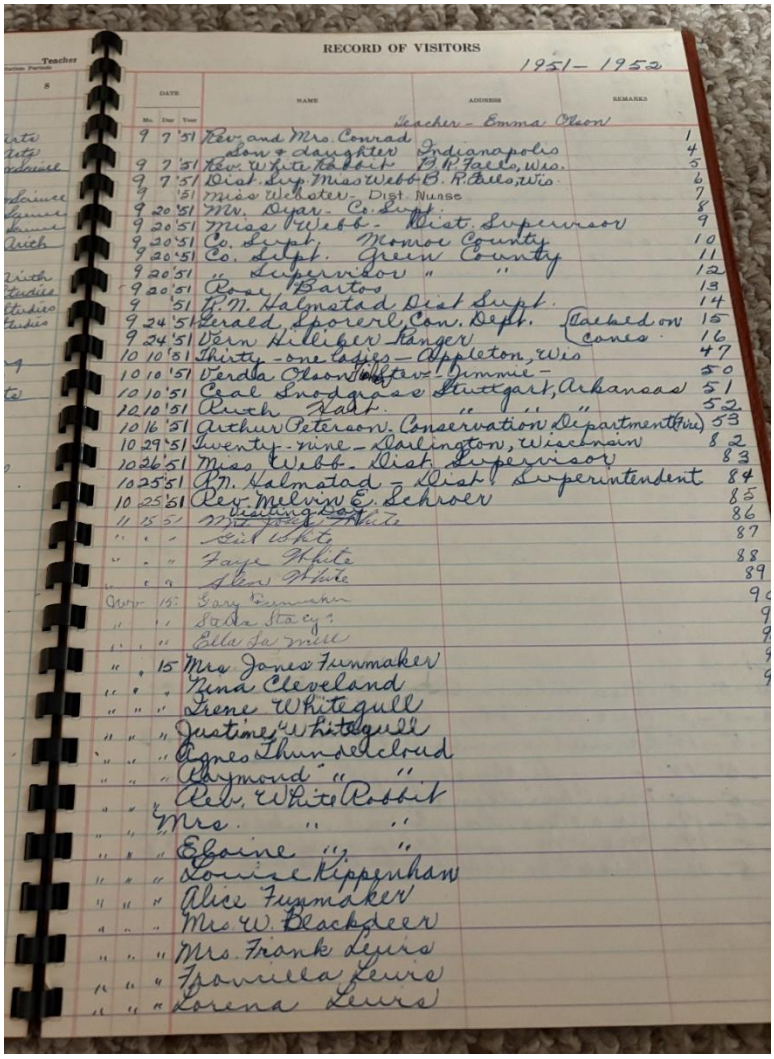
[16] Ibid. Lurie offers a cogent analysis of the decision to close the school in her 2009 interview.
[17] The Lukacs quote comes from his 1968 book, Historical Consciousness of the Remembered Past (1968).

RELEVANT DATES

1870s	The first public schools in Jackson County date to the pre-Civil War period but become more formally organized by the 1870s. Union High School, built in 1871, was considered a premier school in the region. A faction of the Ho-Chunk people survived a series of removals at the hands of the Federal Government, the last one coming in 1874. In the post-removal period, the Ho-Chunk people in the Black River area were in a major struggle for survival. It was during this period that boarding schools began to be prevalent.
1878-1921	Jacob Stucki establishes the first “Mission” school. In 1921 the school is relocated to Neillsville. Many Ho-Chunk children attend these mission schools.
1884-1950s	The Norwegian Lutheran Church establishes a school at Bethany Mission in Wittenberg, Wisconsin. This school goes back and forth between federal and church control. Many Ho-Chunk children attend Bethany.
1893-1935	The Industrial School for Indians is established in Tomah.
1924	The Indian Citizenship Act is passed.
1928	The Meriam Report is published. The report chronicles the dire situation of Native children in the US and prompts reforms that were played out in the New Deal period.
1934-1963	The Hochungra School is established at the Mission and is jointly funded with federal, state, and local dollars. The school operates within the Black River District for 29 years. As part of the District’s consolidation of county schools during the 50s and 60s and prompted by the Civil Rights Movement with its emphasis on school integration, Ho-Chunk students were bussed into the city schools beginning in the fall of 1963.

Further Exhibits

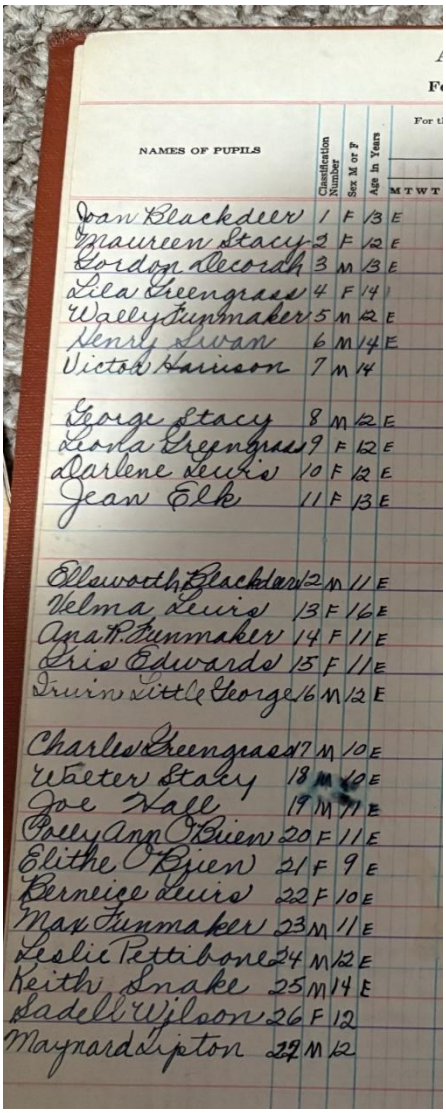
Throughout our research, we were able to locate random records from the Hochungra School, including class lists and visitor logs from various years. Notably, records indicate that over the years many people from around the state and local community visited the school due to its unique nature. The visitor log on the left is from 1951-52 and offers a window into that aspect of the school's history. Clearly, the school was an active place, and parents played a crucial role day to day, especially during lunchtime. The list on the right is from Emma Olson's 1947 grade and record book. Grace Webb served as District Supervisor for Elementary Teachers and visited regularly as part of her duties.



RECORD OF VISITORS 1951 – 1952

Teacher – Emma Olson

DATE	NAME	ADDRESS	REMARKS	
9 7 '51	Rev. and Mrs Conrad	Indianapolis		1
	Son + daughter			4
9 7 '51	Rev. White Rabbit	Black Falls, Wis.		5
9 7 '51	Dist. Sup. Miss Webb	B. R. Falls, Wis		6
9 '51	Miss Wheaton	Dist. Nurse		7
9 20 '51	Mr. Dyar	Co. Supt.		8
9 20 '51	Miss Webb	Dist. Supervisor		9
9 20 '51	Co. Supt.	Monroe County		10
9 20 '51	Co. Supt.	Green County		11
9 20 '51	" Supervisor	" "		12
9 20 '51	Rose Bartos			13
9 '51	P. M. Halmstad	Dist Supt.		14
9 24 '51	Gerald Sporer	Con. Dept.	Packed on Cones	15
9 24 '51	Vern Hileiber	Ranger		16
10 10 '51	Thirty-one ladies	– Appleton, Wis		47
10 10 '51	Verda Olson	Stev. Pimmie –		50
10 10 '51	Coal Snodgrass	Stuttgart, Arkansas		51
10 10 '51	Arch Hall	" " "		52
10 16 '51	Arthur Peterson	Conservation Department (Wis)		53
10 29 '51	Twenty-nine	– Darlington, Wisconsin		82
10 26 '51	Miss Webb	Dist. Supervisor		83
10 25 '51	P. M. Halmstad	Dist. Superintendent		84
10 25 '51	Rev. Melvin E. Schroer			85
11 15 '51	Visiting Day			86
" " "	Mrs. Jack White			87
" " "	Bill White			
" " "	Faye White			88
" " "	Alex White			89
Nov 15	Gary Funmaker			9
" "	Sadie Stacy			
" "	Ella Jay Mill			
" " 15	Mrs Jones Funmaker			
" " "	Zina Cleveland			
" " "	Irene Whitegull			
" " "	Justine Whitegull			
" " "	Agnes Thundercloud			
" " "	Raymond " "			
" " "	Reb. White Rabbit			
" " "	Mrs. " "			
" " "	Elaine " "			
" " "	Louise Kippenhan			
" " "	Alice Funmaker			
" " "	Mrs W. Blackdeer			
" " "	Mrs. Frank Lewis			
" " "	Pamilla Lewis			
" " "	Lorena Lewis			



NAMES OF PUPILS	Classification Number	Sex M or F	Age In Years	
Joan Blackdeer	1	F	13	E
Maureen Stacy	2	F	12	E
Gordon Alcorn	3	M	13	E
Lila Greengrass	4	F	14	
Wally Funmaker	5	M	12	E
Henry Swan	6	M	14	E
Victor Harrison	7	M	14	
George Stacy	8	M	12	E
Leona Greengrass	9	F	12	E
Darlene Lewis	10	F	12	E
Jean Elk	11	F	13	E
Ellsworth Blackdeer	12	M	11	E
Velma Lewis	13	F	16	E
Agnes Funmaker	14	F	11	E
Iris Edwards	15	F	11	E
Irwin Little George	16	M	12	E
Charles Greengrass	17	M	10	E
Walter Stacy	18	M	10	E
Joe Hall	19	M	11	E
Patty Ann O'Brien	20	F	11	E
Blithe O'Brien	21	F	9	E
Berneice Lewis	22	F	10	E
Max Funmaker	23	M	11	E
Leslie Pettibone	24	M	12	E
Keith Snake	25	M	14	E
Isabell Wilson	26	F	12	
Maynard Lipton	27	M	12	

Emma Olson received a farewell gift from several tribal members in 1963. Presenting her with a specially made buckskin outfit, from the left, Mrs. Flora Elk, Mrs. Nellie Wallace, and Mrs. Agnes Thundercloud. (June 1963)

This excerpt is from a 2011 interview with Anna Rae Funmaker who attended the Hochungra School as a child. She is commenting here on her interactions with Emma Olson. You can read Anna Rae's full interview in the 2011 Project, available on our website.

I learned English when I was in the first grade. I started with the Dick and Jane series, and I didn't really speak well, or understand until I was like in the third grade. Then I became an avid reader. I could read and understand and comprehend, they always used that word comprehend, that's what I did. But it took me three years of Dick and Jane and all those. I enjoyed it. I liked it, but actually we were moving a lot at that time because, that was in 1942, when I started, and I started at the Indian mission school. All Indians, all Ho-chunk, so nothing but Ho-chunks so that left us with a lot of our traditions intact. A lot of it, and I think we probably one of the only Indian communities maybe in the state of Wisconsin that had that.

Rykken: That's interesting. Who was the teacher there at that time?

Funmaker: Well, my teacher was Mrs. Olson.

Rykken: Emma Olson?

Funmaker: Yes and she was very good -- very positive . . . And she knew students and she knew she probably right up on the culture because she made us very positive thinkers that way. She knew how to teach us, anyway for me she did. We didn't know anything about art. We didn't know anything about music, but like I said Dick and Jane and she would bring in a newspaper every morning and show us the news of that newspaper. Nobody else, I've never seen anybody else do that, but she put a lot of extra work, I think, into teaching and she probably was the best teacher that we could have had at that time. She was a teacher. I mean you know when people are in their professions you can tell.

Rykken: She was there a long time; in fact she was there until the school closed. I've talked to other Ho-chunk people and I guess one question I have about that -- were you able to use your language at school, or did you speak English at school only?

Funmaker: No, I don't remember her ever saying that we couldn't speak it. I think she just let both go, but I don't know maybe other people remember something else, but at the time I was going I could speak English and then I guess we went outside for recess, or something and we would probably speak Ho-Chunk out there.

Indians Have a Lasting Reminder for Their 'Substitute' Teacher

By BETTY EPSTEIN
(State Journal Correspondent)

BLACK RIVER FALLS — The bell of the little Indian Mission school, seven miles east of Black River Falls, will no longer call the children of the mission to classes, but it will always ring loudly in the memory of Mrs. Lawrence Olson, the substitute teacher who came for a day and stayed 29 years to teach the Winnebago children.

The school, which is a part of the Black River Falls school district, will not be operated next year in a move to integrate the Indian and white children at an earlier age.

Sense of Pride

But the loss of Mrs. Olson as teacher, friend, and counsellor will be keenly felt in every household—not just those who have children in school, for there is hardly a family living in the mission which has not at some time had children in the school while Mrs. Olson was teaching.

Emma Olson has taught far more than school subjects and good behavior to her children. She has instilled in them a sense of pride in being Winnebagoes. The naturally shy, creative children of the Mission have become excellent performers, but almost always in Indian dress.

When Mrs. Olson started at the Indian Mission school, she had 68 children in an eight graded one room school. Then a second room was built, two teachers operated the school. Two years ago, the seventh and eighth grade students were transported to Black River Falls junior high school. Last year, the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades were transported, leaving 28 children in the first through fifth grades.

Lasting Reminder

How does one say "thank you" to a white woman who has devoted so many years to the education of Winnebago children? The mothers decided a buckskin Indian costume would be a lasting reminder of their gratitude and friendship. Many former students of the Mission school contributed for the materials and a group of women made the two piece outfit. Others contributed gifts of beadwork necklaces, bracelets and earrings to complete the costume. With the remaining cash, the women purchased a blanket as a gift from her friends at the Mission. The outfit was presented to Mrs. Olson at the Memorial Day pow wow which she always attends in order to see many of her former pupils and friends.

"We hope that you will remember that we are your friends and that you will come back often to visit us all', said the Rev. Mitchell Whiterabbit, pastor of the Evangelical and Reformed church at the Mission, who made the presentation.

Note of Cheer

There will be a note of cheer, however, when Mrs. Emma Olson starts teaching fifth grade in the city elementary school next fall. Her present fourth grade students will be among her fifth graders.

But the future years of teaching will never erase the sound of her children's lovely singing voices, the tom tom beat and the chant of the Indian dances, or the devotion expressed in the memory of many pairs of sparkling dark eyes. And she will recall the Winnebago farewell "May the Great Spirit put sunshine into your heart today and forevermore."

June 1963

This article by Betty Epstein appeared in the Banner Journal in June of 1963. The school's closure came in the context of the school district's consolidation process during those years, and was also motivated by a push for integration, as noted in the second paragraph of the article.

Wilfrid Cleveland

Interview Date: 7 November 2024

Willie Cleveland was born in the Mission where he then dedicated much of his life serving his community. Willie has served as Ho-Chunk Nation president twice, pushing for our people to connect back with their culture and language. Among some of his accomplishments, Willie has been honored by GLITC (Great Lake Intertribal Council) for his work within the community and its broader connection to our state and people.

Karolann: Well, you already know me I'm assuming, I am Kakes or Karolann as he said before I am the intern and so these questions are a little broad, they're just mainly, do want to see them, I can show them.
W: oh no that's alright
K: Tell me a little about your family
W: I was born in 1949. The hospital used to be on Main Street in Black River Falls here. That's where I was born. Our home was over by the powwow grounds and chee-podo-kay (round house) sat there. So that was my first home out there. Then we moved out to the mission. I don't know who you're familiar with, my brother Herb, but he lives, that is where he lives. That's where our first home was in the mission. And so then, then we moved from there. Well, then I went to kindergarten in the church basement at the United Church of Christ, there in the Mission. And one of the questions that was asked of me was, how did I learn to speak Ho Chunk. And so, I learned that as I was growing up in the home, just because my parents and everybody else who were in the mission spoke Ho Chunk, so you had to learn if you wanted to know what they were saying. So that's how I learned, and I'd start learning English when I went to kindergarten and school.

I have nine brothers and sisters, and my father passed away in 1962 so my mother was probably about 42 years old, and she had all of us children, and she raised us as a widower in the Mission there. And it was, it was kind of, I don't know if it's unique or different, but my mother never knew how to drive a car. She said she tried to drive one once, and that was one time that she ever (tried), otherwise she didn't. But she managed to, because of the communal type of place that Indian communities are, she had help, like if she had to get into town to buy whatever tools or food or whatever, but so she managed to raise all of us at that time. I was about, I don't know, when my dad passed away, I was about 11 or 12 years old, and I had two younger sisters and two younger brothers and so that's kind of a long period of time that my mother raised her children by herself. She managed to raise us all.

I grew up in the mission. And the only time I would out of my 75 years, I would say, the only time that I left the mission was when I joined the service in 1968; I was in the service for three years,

and then in about 1980, somewhere in the early 80s, I lived in Louisiana as an ironworker for two years, so that was away from home. So those five years was about the only time that I didn't live in the mission or Black River Falls area. So that's kind of where I learned a lot. I guess that's just where I live. That's just what I chose to do. Because I was in Louisiana, and there were relatives passing away, and I was working down there, and I couldn't always make it back. And so, I was thinking about that, and I decided, well, I could have probably then been financially set as an ironworker, but I chose to come back to Black River Falls and live. Then I became involved with our spirituality type of thing. But anyway, from first grade to sixth grade, I was out to the Mission school.

K: Do you have any like memories from the Mission School, like, any good ones, bad ones?
W: Well, I don't know, yeah, they were all different. I don't know, maybe it was… It didn't to me, it didn't at the time, but I think about it after years later, like it was. It was kind of, I don't know how it was with other country schools, but there was, it was all like from age six, from first grade to sixth grade. They were all country schools all around the area, and so in, so living in the mission, it was just like walking distance to school. And then they brought our lunches from the high school out to the mission.

There was the school, the school building, then there was a separate building with a dining room. So, they bought the food over there. Then there are some, some of them, they hired cooks from the community, you know, to make sure that everything was done in a dining room. And they had, well, see then, the Mission School was in two parts. There's one big building and it was two parts. So they had this section on the east side was for first, second, third, and then west end of the school, the building was fourth, fifth and sixth, then we moved up to the at the time was called junior high, from seventh grade to graduation was at the third street school.

I mean, like memories because I was, I didn't really feel any different. But when I was in like second grade, I was reading like fourth and fifth grade material, and so I was a pretty good reader. I guess I understood, however. There was, at the time, a lot of hands-on education types of things like we had different outside projects that we did outside the classroom, around the school, around the school building, like we had rocks. We made United States out there kind of large. And then we did that with Wisconsin. We had just put them out there and clearing up, like the United States, clear all that area, the grasses around where the United States was, had those kinds of things. And we had a Christmas program that we put on. So, it was lot, lot of it wasn't just sitting in a classroom doing math and English and geography, those types. It was like a lot of art, the teachers incorporate a lot of art into their classroom activities or roles as teachers. So that was, to me, that was kind of different. There was a lot of different activities, they come up with a lot of different projects for students to do, which at the time was, was to me, I was just learning, but thinking hindsight on it like kind of unique, unique way of teaching us. And then we did little like skits, or sometimes like the school or administration building for the school would send out people to visit our Hochungra school.

There were two teachers, one, then the first, second, third, and the other teacher was 4th, 5th, and 6th, so there were two teachers out there, and they had little skits. So when, like, sometimes the superintendent would come up to just to kind of look at what's going on in the school, and we do, we'd have different activities that that we did for him when he came over, just to kind of show projects that we're doing and like playing.

Like one of the things that I remember was, okay, what do you want to do and what do you want to be when you grow up? So, everybody in the class picked something that they wanted to do. So, when the superintendent came around, she wrote up some kind of little, oh, my name is

Wilford Cleveland, and when I grow up, I wanted to be a minister. And she had different kind of like and then somebody wanted to be a baseball player and kind of different things like that. And she set this all up so each one of us would take turns coming up and introducing ourselves in that manner to the superintendent. Like a lot of innovative ideas that these teachers had for us at that time. That was pretty cool.

So yeah, otherwise it was, I don't know that. I never really had any bad experience. One kind of funny that sticks with me is I was in like, I just went from third grade to fourth grade, then our bathrooms were outside. We had outdoor bathrooms, and so we'd have to go to the bathroom outside then come back in. And there was a little place where we washed our hands, and in the morning time like we was playing outside, okay, you come on in, and sometimes we wash our hands, wash our face, and dry off and come into the classroom. And so we went, all of us, outside, for some reason, I came back in and I washed my face, and when I dried my face, I was like this, and I had a towel, I must have went like this and brought down in my head, my hair came into a little peek like this. And the teacher thought that was funny. So, when I went into the, when I went back into the classroom, she goes, oh, hey everybody, wait, wait, we got a new student here, and he's got a nice hairdo. And she thought, I don't know, she thought it was funny, because when I wiped my face like that, it came down to a peak. I was, I don't know if I remember it because it was kind of embarrassing or, but anyway, that little time never, never left me. I always remember that.

K: You said that after you went, I think it was after you went through the Mission School. You went to Third Street?

W: It was a high school and junior high. I think that was a three-story building. There was a top floor, like for the seniors and juniors, they had you divided up into floors as far as what grade, what grade you were in.

K: I think so, because there was the basement, and then the main floor, and then the top floor.

W: Yeah, then that round, like, when you go through that side door, and then you go down the steps, and then the boy's locker room is right there. Then you go on then the girls, then you go up the stairs again, and there's another hallway down this way, and that was where the seventh and eighth graders were, in that area. Then ninth and tenth graders were up on the other floors, and that top floor was like the juniors and seniors,
K: Yeah, because when I went to school there, it was only for third and fourth. Yeah, third and-- no second and third, and then you would go to Gebhart was for fourth and fifth. And then you'd go to the middle school, and you'd come here. But then they built Red Creek. So, I finished at Red Creek.

W: I got kicked out of school too, after the mission. That was after the mission school that was in about 1964 when the Beatles first came out, and we had an industrial arts class. And the guy that owns Inwood Supper Club, he was the industrial arts teacher. And so this one day I used to have, I used to comb my comb hair to have a little wave in it, right here, with short hair. And so then I liked, kind of, what's up when the beetles were coming out. So instead of combing my hair, I pushed it down and I cut it straight across, so I had bangs right above my eyebrows. And so, then he told me, I couldn't wear my hair like that. He kicked me out of class. Kicked me out of industrial arts class. And so, I just never went to that class. And finally, the principal called me, and so we kind of had a disagreement. So I had to comb my hair the way I had it before, what it was like before all this.

I don't know what I'd call it, all this freedom that a student has in school now, it is more strict now. Same way when I was a freshman in high school, I got kicked out of English class for the same reason. So, then I was like, I knew the gym teacher, and so I went down to the gym, and there was a basketball there, so I was just shooting, shooting buckets at that time. And the gym teacher came walking by. Then he asked me why I was doing this, and I told him I got kicked out of class. And so then that was like, for about four or five days. Every day I'd go down and there'd be a basketball there, so I would just shoot buckets for that whole period of English class. Finally the teacher saw me one day and said, “Hey, you better get back in the class.” Yeah, that time there I didn't have to change my hairstyle.

K: Were there any sports teams, like we do, like we have now, like basketball and stuff like that.

W: Yeah, there was. It was no different then as far as the sports. We had, yeah, we had basketball, football, baseball, and those were the four main athletic teams that we had. Then, probably when I was a sophomore, I think, then, no junior, they started wrestling.

K: What thoughts did you have when they integrated the school system?

W: See, that was it was I was thinking about that after I talked to Eli, and I was going to come over here. I was the last class that completed, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, out to the mission Ho-Chunk school and that then the following year is when they closed all the schools. So, I made it. I went through all the all the classes, and a lot of the lot of the younger ones never had the opportunity.

I graduated in 67; must have been about 64, maybe 63, somewhere around there when we came to the city school. And it was kind of strange. It was because I never, really, never really mingled with non-natives and so, but I know that some of the, some of the people, some of the Ho-Chunks, live up in the Brockway area, so we all went to Gebhardt then, so I knew there was integration there.

And I was like, never, or rarely, came into town as a child. We just stayed home, and our parents would come, like I said, once in a while we'd come into town. So, it was different. When, when the first day arrived, I remember the first day, the only part that sticks out in my mind when I went from mission to Ho-Chunk school to high school was at lunch time. Like the first two days, you had to, well we got free lunch because we lived on trust land. I didn't know. Now, I wasn't aware of that at the time, but that's kind of, we just assumed that everybody got free lunch. The first two days, for some reason or another they didn't provide, didn't provide lunch for the whole school. And so, then we had to figure out what we could do for lunch. So, I walked over to by that side road where I was talking about, I was there, I was just standing there. And then this Indian, this Ho-Chunk dude came by, and he asked me what I was doing. So, I told him I what I was doing, well he said come with me. And he was like, at the time, he was like, maybe a junior or senior. And so I went with him. And then there was a grocery store right where the auto parts store is going up toward Brockway on the right side. There used to be a grocery store there, and his parents had an account there. So, we went there. Well, then we, then one of his friends, it was a Ho-Chunk friend, had a car. So, we jumped in that car, and we went over there to that place, to that store, and he bought some lunch, lunch meat or whatever for us to have something to eat.

And then, where the Chamber of Commerce is, that used to be a swimming pool. There used to be a swimming pool there and like a park. So, we went down there, and there were about four or five older Ho-Chunks, and we all congregated together, and we had lunch together, then we went back up to the school. And so, when they got up there, he was telling me

that, okay, tomorrow, I'll meet you at the same place, and we did the same thing, and I thought that was pretty cool. Otherwise, I wouldn't have known, I didn't know that I could bring my own lunch or about what had happened. I didn't know, but that was a good, good experience of sorts, that he didn't know me. I mean, we lived in mission. Maybe he knew me, but then he was telling these guys who I was. He asked me who I was. I told him. And so, he went. And then he was telling those guys at the swimming pool who I was, and so the next day, then the same thing happened again.

So, I thought that it was an experience coming into a totally foreign place and then finding somebody to kind of look after me for that period of time that was, that was a good, good experience. Got to know a lot of people from the Mission School that integrated into high school. They knew, knew the hardship, the difficulties that we had and integrating with the non-natives at the school. So, they kind of in that manner, these guys kind of helped me.

But the Mission School, the mission school like I don't know how long those teachers were there, but there was one teacher. Her name was Emma Olson. She was the fourth, fifth, sixth grade teacher, and she did write a book about her experience. And I don't know if you've ever seen that.
K: Yeah, you, you showed us during First Nations, yeah.

W: yeah. So that kind of shows you, the pictures show you, where the school building, then the dining room I was talking about showed that separation of the classrooms.

Youngthunder: Questions about differences in education today versus then?

W: I don't know about the elementary school, but like I was saying they had more, the teachers, had more freedom to do other things besides just basic English. It was probably unique to the whole school system, that there was this Indian School, that part of the public school that that was there, so there would be a lot of like different, like the Rotary Club, or some organization like that, within Black River Falls that would come out there. I was saying these skits that we do, and we do them sometimes, and different people from different areas would come visit and see what, see what we do. And they took walks outside to where I was saying those projects that we had going outside, we'd come out there and show them what we do out there. And part of geography class, I guess that was what it was. Was mainly, mainly like basic reading part of the English class, and the math and art, they did a lot of art with us because I couldn't, I wasn't an artist, but everybody in the classroom was artists, probably except for me. But they did have a lot of art projects that we did as part of our as part of the elite learning tool, I guess,

K: Was there a lot of native culture at the Mission School? Were you allowed to speak our language?

W: No, no, that was, that was all part of . . .

K: Like the 1800s?

W: There was that. Like, well, I guess that's where we changed from like learning, like speaking Ho-Chunk coming into the classroom, like from first grade, like in kindergarten. The teacher was a non-native so, so she did a little bit of…nothing, nothing real dramatic or drastic about changing from the Ho-Chunk language to the English language. But there was like, learning basics, basic stuff about speaking English in kindergarten with different projects, but mainly it was to know we spoke it. We spoke in Ho-Chunk to each other, but coming into the first grade,

then, like in the class classroom eight till four o'clock or whatever time in the afternoon, then that teacher would be speaking English to us and teaching us English with their books and so forth. So that was like the progressive change from the Ho-Chunk to speaking English. Every morning, every morning there'd be like, we were in, let's say I was in second grade or third grade, and then every Monday morning or every morning, then we'd all go outside and they'd have a flag raising. They never sang no songs or nothing, but they just raised the flag, and two of the older students would raise a flag, and then in the evening, before school was over, we'd all go after it, and they would take the flag down and fold it up. That was kind of something that was done every day for whatever patriotic reasons. I guess.

K: Do you think we should still have our own, our own school where it's just Native Americans?
W: It would be nice. It would be nice now, because of the way that we are as Ho-Chunk people, but it's got to be -- It's been talked about, been talked about for a number of years, ever since we had the Wisconsin Winnebago Business Committee, but the location was the big factor, and all that because of the way that the Ho-Chunk people are situated in the State of Wisconsin, with all the different communities, like Black River Falls. Where do you want it? Where are you going to have it? How are you going to get this to be, similar to a boarding school, and because of all the experiences that some of the older people, like my parents or my mother's generation, their experience in boarding schools probably wasn't the best; and so there was that, stuff that used to be the big kind of hindering block to as far as putting, or having the school because of the travel. How are we going to get the students there every day? Or are they going to stay there like it was a boarding school? You take your kids over there on Monday and pick them up Friday, Friday afternoon? How's that to work? Kind of all those logistics problem. And if we wanted to have a good education institution for our young ones, then, can we afford to build a school in every community? Are you going to have like, from kindergarten to high school type of building? How would this be in every community? What's the financial cost of all that? I imagine in the long run, it would be, it would be good. But just at the moment, the financial factor kind of plays a role in that decision.

I don't even know what year the Ho-Chunk school building was built, or when, when that all started. But I know there were people like Maxine Kohlner who wanted to do that. She was here, that group of that age, that group of people who went into the mission, into the Mission School. So, she's probably 10 years older than me, and so they all went to that school. So that was still there. I don't know if it's being used or not. But, yeah, that was, it was probably the first, one of the first public schools that was in Ho-Chunk.

K: I just know how to word this question but here at the high school they offer Ho-Chunk as a language class, do you think that is a benefit for us as the next generation and the future generations?
W: It's, I think it's important for young people to speak the Ho-Chunk language fluently. What would, to me, what would happen if we lost our language, if we didn't speak it anymore? We'd just go into the mainstream society. There would be no Ho-Chunk, just maybe just a history of us. Language keeps us unique from other nationalities. So, I think it's important that we learn the language. A lot of times when I talk, I always encourage the young people on their own to learn, to learn the language. I know there's a few people that are quite fluent, that learn the language on their own, from their grandparents, who teach them, take the time to teach them, and the young person wanted to learn. So those things happen. But I yeah, I say, I think it's important, very important, that the Ho-Chunk nation at all, at all costs, provide ways for us to continue to speak the language. There was this man that I was on the Wisconsin Winnebago Business Committee with, and there was this man that came before us, maybe 91 or 92. So he told us of the language beginning to fade, so he wanted us to have a division. He wanted to

have a Ho-Chunk language division. And so, after his explanation, he was granted that. He asked that request and the language division was, was put together. Then there was, at that time there, I can't remember how many fluent speakers we had, but there weren't any teachers. Our fluent speakers were just tribal members, older people that had the same interest, and so they had this program to teach language. So, they taught the basic numbers, colors and that type of thing, nothing, no structural sentences that were, I was the director out to the old community building out there where the casino used to be.

And then this one elder came in, and hey, brother, he was talking Hoocąk to me, hey brother, I'm supposed to come here to teach all the workers Ho-Chunk language. All right, so we got things ready for him, and he came in at specific hours every day and taught them different words. So I was, I'd go in there and I'd listen to him, and he was saying, hey, you know all this, all this that I'm teaching so you don't have to be in here. You can go and do what you got to do. And sometimes he said, when, when we advance, when we our language program advances to where we're making sentences, then maybe you can come in and kind of get better like speaking better and speaking more fluently. Oh, alright, that kind of stuff stays in my mind because they just had a book that taught those basic, basic Ho-Chunk words of what something is, all that kind of thing. But they never advanced from that so that's all that he did, kind of year-round, different areas or maybe different buildings, and teaching language, like going to the health office or out to the community building, kind of that thing, and just teaching. And so, we were stuck. The Ho-Chunk nation was stuck with that. They didn't, or they couldn't advance. So once I was to talking to one of those, what are those ones that are called out there, just learning the language? The apprentices. There were two apprentices that I was talking to. So, we were talking about this, about the language program, and how it was and so then we were saying, well, this is all that we have to work with. We haven't got nothing to advance because we can't learn it at home, because our parents don't speak at home all the time, and only time that we hear the language or is, if we go fluently or all constantly, is we go to the ceremony. That's the only time we hear the language spoken consistently, otherwise at home or every day, you know, it's very rare that two people sit and converse in Ho-Chunk.

So that's when I, I became the president of the Ho-Chunk Nation. And then so I, I spoke with others; how can we get this if that's the case, how can we move it forward? Well, we need somebody here that knows how to how to make programs, to set up programs to advance to another level. And so, I gave the Cultural Resource Department, Heritage Preservation Department to go ahead and set up, set up programs. So, they hired an administrator for the language program that was educated, and that type of, that type of field of administration, to make a program. So that kind of, then it moved forward beyond learning the basic language, and now they have, I haven't even kept up on how they've been doing them. I was talking to some, some of those people that advanced from the apprentice program into another level, where they have, like using the technology to have all sorts of different programs for tribal members that know how to use a computer and can go into more advanced learning of the language, but to me, that's kind of very one of the most important parts. We are at a rather critical point in our Ho-Chunk Nation, that if we lose our language. To me, we're done for, were done for as a people. We would be part of, just a part of the mainstream society.
K: That's all I have so thank you for your time.
W: I enjoy this kind of I'm not very good at history, but I enjoy talking about what I know about us as Ho-Chunk
K: Do you have anything?
Y: Thank you.

Larry Garvin

Interview Date: 10 December 2024

Larry Garvin is the oldest in his family, which inspired him to value and dedicate much of his adult life working for the Ho-Chunk Nation. Larry has worn many hats during his tenure with the Nation, some of which include working as an Executive Director of Heritage Preservation, his push to acquire ancestral lands for the nation by putting said land into trust, and giving time to various language projects, all of which have been done to benefit future generations.

K: I'm going to start off by introducing myself. I'm Karolann Mann. My dad is Matthew Mann and Gaga Joanne Mann or Joanne Falcon. I know you. I see you in the community all the time. I work at Walmart if you didn't know that.
L: Oh that's where I have seen you.
K: We're going to start off simple and just tell me a little about your family.
L: My family. I grew up with my mom and her sisters. Annie was the oldest. My mom was a wįįhą. And then she Edith, Genevieve, Catherine and the males, Russell was the oldest. Virgil was a second. Hilda, Heeną Gavin with the haaga and Leslie was the Nąąğųnų. We grew up about, I guess, about a mile and a half from, the from the mission. If we go through the path, if we go through the highways, it's about four or five miles. And of course, the primary language was Ho-Chunk. And whenever they talked to us, they talked hoocąk to us. But by that time, by the time that I was going to school, my mom had gone through the Neillsville Indian School. She finished eighth grade, and then I think she went to school there, with Annie, the oldest. And I remember the other ones going there. They learned how to speak English, and my uncles, my *Teggas* Russell and Virgil also went through the Indian School. So they knew how to speak English. So that's probably where we learned how to speak English with me and my brothers, me and my brothers Cecil and my brother John. Cecil is a year younger than me and John I think was a few months younger than me. And then we had my *cooka* John swallow that lived below the hill from where we lived towards Morrison Creek and my mom's mother was lucy my *gaga* and Pete Pettibone was her dad my *cooka.*

That's where I grew up, I grew up with *Cooka* John Swallow, *Cooka* Pete, my *gaga*, and my mom and her sisters and her brothers we lived in like a house that had. There weren't separate bedrooms there, I guess there were 4 rooms that they used for living room, and sleeping quarters, and then they had added on. My grandfather, *Cooka* Pete, added on the kitchen to the house. So that was a separate area that was the eating area, there was a kitchen range, a wood burning stove, and we didn't have any plumbing and no running water, so it was the boys

responsibility to get the water from the spring which was down the hill, there was a spring down there Levis creek that though there. So that's where we would go to get our water, the drinking water, and the cleaning water, our washing water. And we didn't have any plumbing so we had an outhouse. Like we did at the school, Hoocąk Indian school. And that is kind there weren't any kind of formal games that we played. We just played with each other, the boys, my brothers, and I.

Cooka John Swallow would also kind of be our guide, we would go to his house, and we would spend the night there sometimes. And he always had quarter cut potatoes. I don't know if he baked those or fried those, but they're kind of like the potato wedges we have nowadays. So that's what we would eat. And of course, when we went there, we could have coffee, and we can put as much sugar as we want in a coffee. We liked that part.

Of course, there was a house down there too, and I remember him, he would go shopping, *Cooka* John Swallow. He'd walk up the hill. I think he'd walk up the hill every day. And then I think about once a month, you go shopping downtown to get his supplies for the month, and he always had toilet paper. And up at our house, we didn't have toilet paper. We had a Sears catalog. I remember those days. My *Cooka* John swallow. I think he didn't want to spend money on toilet paper. So one time he told us he just took out a square piece of the toilet paper, and he folded it up. He said, You can do it, fold it like this, fold it in half and fold it in a quarter, and that's all you need. You don't need a whole bunch. So we go, yeah, okay, but then we always took a whole bunch anyway and went there because he didn't go with us to go to a restroom. And then the winter nights out to the outhouse. If we had to go, it was cold, it was snow on the ground, the wind would be blowing. It seemed like every time I went and I used to wish there was a fireplace there or something that would kind of keep me warm. But that never happened. So I got out of there as quick as I could.

It seemed like in the summertime, my Gaga always was cooking. No matter what time I woke up in the morning, I'll go outside, and she would be outside and open a fireplace, so either be frying bacon, or she'll be making breakfast or something. It seemed like no matter what time I got up, she was always out there. And she was our primary cook too during the time that we were there, mom knew how to cook, too, but I remember my Gaga, doing all the cooking.

And I don't know how we got to school that first day. Somebody drove us. I think maybe there was a car there that my *cooka* and *gaga* owned, a model T, that somebody would have borrowed and taken us to school that first day. But after that, we walked from the mission to our house, going through our path. I remember the path -- when we left the mission schoolhouse, we go by Funmaker's house, and we go down the hill, and there was always a bridge across, I think there's Levis Creek. The Black Hawk's lived near there. So one of those guys would always put a couple logs across the bridge. The handle was on top. And then we went another couple 100 yards, and the Decorah's lived there. Emma Decorah and Marie Lewis -- now they live there. So that was the next house that we went through. And then after that, we went up the hill and we were home. I can't remember how long it took us to walk from the mission to our home, but eventually, maybe in fifth or sixth grade, in the summertime, I would be playing with my friends, and then all of a sudden, I realized it was dark out, and I still had to get home because nobody's going to come pick me up. So, I learned the path. Just remember the path that we had to go through, and that's where I would go. I walked home at night in the dark. I never had a flashlight, no street lights, of course, but I got used to that some nights, the walking home, if there was a moon, when it was dark, it was not a problem, because your eyes get used to the dark, and you can see where the path was and then, but then when the moon was out, then you can see all kinds of shadows. Now it's scary for me, because I look through the woods

and I think, oh, man, what do I see? A bear or something. And I thought that scared the heck out of me, but I never saw anything like that. So I was lucky anyway.

That's how we kind of grew up with a large family and talking Ho Chunk and learning English some way, somehow, but learning enough so that when we went to school, I was eight years old, and I waited for my brothers to become old enough to go to school. So we went to school that first day, and the only time we ever ate was when we sat at a table. That's where we ate. So when we got to school that first day, all the desks were filled up. So the teacher had to sit up front at a table. And I'll tell them, my brothers, they're going to give us something to eat. I'll tell them, talking to them and Ho Chunk, they're going to give us something to eat because we were sitting at a table, but nope, they gave us Dick and Jane books. And that's what started our first grade, our journey into first grade.

So that was our growing up years. Was just spent across the creek, we call it, and playing with sticks that we use as pistols and guns, and then just kind of making little forts out of bushes where there was a little opening we kind of cleared away inside the bush, and nobody could see us when we were inside that fort. We kind of like that. So that was our kind of entertainment. That's how we interacted all that time. So anyway, on the first day of school, I don't remember exactly when we got our own desk, but we eventually got our own desk. I don't know how that happened, but the part that we were in was Clara Johnson section, where she taught the first, second, third and fourth grade, and then Emma Olson taught the higher grades, fifth through eighth in the other section of the school. And we learned very quickly that we had to raise our hand, one to urinate and two to take a bowel movement. So, whenever somebody raises their hand, you know what they're going to do. But that never discouraged us. You know, we always say to go out, and then I don't remember how I think the older guys, the seventh and eighth graders, that were responsible for getting the water. We had a pump that was tapped into a well that the older guys used to get the water for us to wash our hands and for. Drinking and for lunch, I remember we started the kid would start lining up to wash their hands about 15 minutes before our lunch. Our lunch was prepared by a local mom in a separate building called the dining room, where they would go and get the meals ready. I remember Emma Olson would get there in the morning on the bus, and she would unload the groceries, and some of the guys would be there to help unload and put them in the dining room. So that's where the mother cooks were. I think that there was only one, always one cook.

So, we would clean up, then line up, to go to the dining room. And in the dining room, the higher grades had a certain section they did that they sat in. I guess it was kind of two separate rooms, one for lower grades, one for the higher grades. Now that I think about it, because the seventh and eighth graders were always in one corner, and then fifth and sixth graders here, and then the first through fourth grade were in another section, and those were booths, and these guys had tables with chairs and the cook, I think would be the one to, I can't remember, she would come out. Maybe she come out and serve, dish out the stuff, soup or whatever. It Seemed like it was soup and sandwiches most of the time that we had.

So that was our routine in the morning. Then we had a 15-minute recess in the morning and one in the afternoon. And on the way over here, I was thinking, I don't remember what kind of equipment we had to play outside. All I remember is that we would go outside, and we'd just either walk around or run around the school building. We didn't have a basketball hoop. I think maybe we had a bat, ball, a softball, and a couple of bats that some of the kids might have used. I don't remember using that myself, but that was our form of recreation back then. And then, when we got to the fifth-grade side, I remember we would play football with those guys, the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

But back to first and fourth grade: clean up, eat lunch, and then we get a short break before we went back to our classes. And I remember the classes that Clara Johnson would have. She would call one class for a certain subject, so they'll go up front at the table, and then when they got done the next group would go up. First grade, then second grade. So that was pretty much the routine during the time first through fourth grade. The day consisted of getting to school and hanging up our jackets and coats and whatever we had, and then having lunch, and then having a break after that. On the other side (the 4-8 group) they were separated. I remember the rows by the windows were the eighth graders and the inside rows were the fifth graders, and the routine there was, was the same in terms of each class going up front with Emma Olson and learning and reciting or whatever they had to do for that particular class.

And once a week, I don't remember what day of the week, maybe it was a Tuesday, that Emma Olson would have a radio program we listened to. They called it Ranger Mac. And he had certain subjects about the forest, or just the wildlife that he would talk about. And sometimes we would draw something, or sometimes Emma Olson would have us make something relevant to that, that Ranger Mac topic. And I remembered other times she had a Victrola (record player) And she would have dance sometimes. She didn't make us dance all the time, but she liked what she called the Virginia Reel. I don't know if that's the name of a dance or name of a song, but she would have us dance to something like that, just to become acquainted with another way of dancing besides our pow-wow.

Then we had a furnace that was used to heat, and I remembered one of the parents being responsible for that, for lighting up the furnace during the colder months, and then the guys would be responsible for keeping that fire going through the rest of The day.

And I remember the seasons for some reason, I always remember Christmas being one of the more active months. Emma Olson would have us play our tonettes. I don't know if they play those anymore, but this little black instrument about six, eight inches long, and she would have us start practicing Christmas songs that we were going to play, maybe in November or maybe after Thanksgiving, maybe the first of December. I can't remember the date, but she would have us practice songs that we're going to play, because the parents were going to be invited to a Christmas, I don't want to call it a Christmas play or Christmas party. So that's why we would have to play. And she would have the older guys decorate. I don't know where they got the branches. We have pine trees there. Maybe that's where they got them, but they would put up Christmas decorations. There was, I remember that the two the two units were separated. There were some steps (risers) used during the Christmas program that they use for different parts of the program. I remember we would always kind of sing like a choir. We'd line up on those steps, and that's where we would practice our songs. And I can't remember now who was responsible for they handed out little brown bags of Christmas candy with nuts in them for the Christmas program. They would hand those out to the people that attended the program, and she would have us make posters that were about three or four feet long and about 18 inches wide. And she would have us with whatever design we put on it, we would recite. Somebody had to put their face through that thing that we cut inside that hole. We didn't want to do that, but she had to do that. But that kind of good practice, because we kind of learned how to speak so we would do that. Everybody had spelling on Christmas. I can't remember what all they were, but I remember C, it was for Christ, and H was for whatever, and spelling out Christmas. So the kids all had different designs on their cards that they use. So on the Christmas program night, they would flash their cards.

K: How did you feel when they integrated the school system? (This happened after the 1962-63 school year).

L: Oh, I guess I didn't really think about Hoocąks being integrated with the public school. I kind of liked it because it was different from what we were used to. We were sitting in one classroom, in one building, and here we're coming into seventh grade. I started going to different classes for different subjects. And then we had a time limit on those. I thought, this is not too bad. Of course, I didn't know all the people. Immediately, I didn't go around and introduce myself, and they introduced themselves to me. I knew so and so's name and so and so's name, and then the routine was okay. It was different, of course, getting to the bus stop in the morning and then riding the bus to school and getting off there and going into the building knowing that this is where we're going to be doing the stuff that we're destined to be doing. And so I wasn't really affected by the environment. I kind of liked it. I liked the idea of going to different classrooms and seeing different people. It wasn't always the same people that I sat with. And of course, the lunchtime was lunchtime. Time was, some people didn't like the lunch that they served, and I always liked it, whatever it was, chili and cheese or whatever they had. I was able to eat it. I didn't complain about that, but I always kind of felt special because they gave us a card that said Indian lunch, and that's what we had to show when I went to the cafeteria. “This guy's going to eat a free lunch.”

K: What were your thoughts on the school closing the Mission School? What were how'd you feel when you heard it closed,

L: Oh, I guess I didn't really have a reaction to that. because I didn't even wonder either, what are they going to do with that building. I didn't think about that at the time, but my younger brother had gone through there, and I think maybe he was the last one that went from my family that went to Ho Chunk school before they closed it. And one of the bigger things about that was the class trip that they got to take. I think they went to Milwaukee. I remember the eighth graders before that, they would get to they would ride a train to Milwaukee and spend one or two nights in Milwaukee as part of their graduation.

Of course, I don't reach that level, and I never reached that eighth-grade level, because I started school at the Black River Falls school when I was in seventh grade. But some of the people that went there, like my uncle Leslie, he went on the Milwaukee trip when he was in eighth grade. But I guess I wondered, you know, what happened to all the stuff? Because we had projects that we put on display at Emma Olson's class. She had some glass cabinets in the back of the classroom that she used to store some of the stuff that we had made. And then, oh, I never really looked at her, at her stuff to see if any of my stuff was up there. But I remember she would keep some of the stuff that we would make. And then one of the things I remember, either the first of May, or sometime in May, they had what they called at the fairgrounds, at the Black River Falls fairgrounds, all the small schools would gather that one day and they will compete in different things. (Larry is referring to something called “Rally Day,” an annual event in Black River for a number of years). I remember one year, Davy Crockett was a popular TV show, and Mrs. Olson decided that our school was going to put on a pageant about Davy Crockett. So we would practice what we were going to do. So she had me dressed as David Crockett. He had a coonskin cap. I had a buckskin jacket, I think. And the guys that danced, I remember Truman Lowe was one of the drummers. He didn't even sing a song. He just beat the drum and the guys would be dancing with whatever kind of regalia they had. I don't know if they had a headdress or whatever, but anyway, that's what we put on at the annual gathering at the fairgrounds. We put on that little pageant. I guess we did okay. People liked it.

K: Do you think we should have our own school, like when the Mission School was open? Do you think that is a good idea or not?

L: I think it's a good idea to the extent that Ho-Chunk are going to learn their culture. It's probably okay for the non Ho-Chunk also to learn about the culture so that they can understand why we do things the way we do. Because there are certain things in our culture that the tradition people do that like they call it Medicine Lodge**,** and people don't really understand why they do that. And the people that do it don't really understand why they're doing that, because they were taught this is how we do the things that we're doing, and nobody ever asked, why? Why are we doing it like this? And that's irrelevant. The main thing is that we learn to do the things that they were taught to do, and not to question, what is the reason? What is the rationale for doing that, so it'll be important in that aspect, but at some point, we had to have that integration so that we know what it's like in a non-Ho-Chunk, non-Indian society, and what they believe in. So, it's kind of a joint venture, I guess, in terms of integrating. Non-HoChunk people are integrating with us instead of vice versa, because they want to learn about us and they are integrating because it was always my understanding that it was only HoChunk that can join the Medicine Lodge and but now there's non Ho Chunk that joined the lodge.

So, yeah, it's not really an issue for me to separate the Ho-Chunk from the non-Ho-Chunk, because at some point they're going to interact with each other. And it doesn't matter if it doesn't an environment where there is strictly HoChunk education system. We had to learn those ways.

K: That's all I have, do you have any questions?

Y: Any stories or memories that you wanted to share, something that you thought about these last couple of weeks?

L: One thing I want to share with you is that the first day of school, where I'm telling my brother that they're going to give us something to eat, and we were handed the Dick and Jane book, and that started our formal education. Maybe there's something Emma Olson taught us -- we weren't supposed to speak Ho Chunk. And she said, if you find yourself talking HoChunk, she says, I want you to come up front. There's a bar of soap up there with the red pepper on it. It's one of the yellow soap. I don't know what kind it was, but she said, “you come up there and you rub your teeth on that soap. So, one time, one of my classmates purposely went up there. He wasn't even speaking Ho-Chunk. He just went up there. He pretended he was putting that soap on his teeth. And Emma Olson must have been watching him, because she said, “Come over here.” When he started going back towards his seat, she called him by her desk, so he went over there, so open your mouth. He opened up, and it was not his soap in her she said, “Okay, here, I'll show you how we do this, she said. She took that soap, open him out, and she wore that soap out of his mouth. He didn't throw up or anything like that. But we all thought that was so funny, but we couldn't laugh. So we all kind of giggled and looked down and we thought that was pretty funny. But he didn't think that was funny. Nobody ever really got into an argument or fights at school. Everybody got along. There was never anything that anybody did that caused them to be punished.

Oh, there was also one time we had to say a prayer, and at lunch time, she would call on somebody to say the prayer. Real simple prayer, thank you. *Thank you, God, for the food we eat. Thank you, God, for the birds that sing. Thank you God for everything. Amen.* Anyway, one of the guys got called upon to say that and he goes, “Thank you for the birds we eat. Everybody started laughing and she told everybody to be quiet.” So anyway, somebody helped him say it, and then he said it okay, but those were a couple of things I remember that happened that was

kind of funny. Other than that, every day was a normal day, I like doing school, and today, that building is still used for Head Start, so it's still there. But it was a lot different from what it was back then.

K: Okay, yeah, I'll just let Mr. Youngthunder know, and then he'll get a hold of you. Yeah. So, yeah.

Y: What do you say?

K: Thank you for coming in. Thank you for giving your time.

L: No problem. I am glad it was short! Ha!

Bernice Blackdeer

Interview Date: 10 December 2024

Bernice Blackdeer is an elder from the Black River Falls area. Born in Clark County, Bernice and her family moved from Clark County to the Millston area, then to Black River Falls. While in Black River Falls, her family spent much time helping the Stacy family with the Church in the Mission, which became a central tenant within their value system. Bernice later became a prominent member of the Clan Mothers, which focuses on helping our younger generation of young ladies become a better version of themselves by learning the teachings of our elders.

(Note: Karolann Mann and Eli Youngthunder both sat in on the interview)

B: Look at that, Mrs. Olson. Here's Mrs. Olson right here. And this is the younger sister. She taught five to eight and she had one to four grades. Oh, these are, I think this is kind of like the younger ones. It would be her class. I think both of them are. And then there was also another article where it said that some kids' names came up, and they used to go on eighth grade trips to Milwaukee. I was on one of them too, and my sister, brother and sister were on that one trip, and there was eight in my class. I'm the only one left out of the eight from eighth grade out there.

So, yeah, I think there's one of them here, right here that's Kunu George. That's what we called him when we were kids. Kunu George

Y: Gaga Helen, whana-geeda, zhe’ e he-guy-day shoe-new. (Translation: Helen, his mother who has passed on, used to call him that)

B: You know one time we had what you call it, a store where you took baskets of beads in there, they would buy them. But, I mean, it was just a little, kind of like a little country store, or whatever you call it, and they sold just milk and pop and bread and meat, just cans of pork and beans, whatever it is. And I was kind of into everything when we moved here, because I was kind of old enough to understand some arithmetic and stuff. And I used to be able to cut cheese, and it came in a great big kind of old barrel, like I used to be able to cut a pound at a time. I had it figured out, they bought how much and I'd slice it. And they had a cash register where you get numbers. And I really wanted to wait on people so I could run that cash register. And it had kind of a typewriter looking thing, and then the door would fly open.

Anyway, some kids broke in, and I didn't know about it. I used to go over there, and sometimes I'd help put shelves of food different things up for the ladies that would be running it. And here, I don't know all, they must have caught who it was, or they must have told on each other. And one of them was Kunu George and the dad went and bought one of the things that were stolen. That's what kids wanted, was ice cream, candy, and pop, pop is what they used to say back then, that's what they took and in order to punish him, that was his way of doing it. So George got ice cream, and he bought, I don't know how big a container, but he ate, I mean what, what size? And Eli made him eat this ice cream. And he got to the point where he couldn't eat anymore. And pretty soon he had gotten just enough so that he wanted to quit and he would just practically say, “Eh!,” like a vomiting sound. Eli said, you wanted it, you stole it, you're going to eat it. He said, I don't know how much more he ate, the container he ate, but that was his punishment. Sometimes today when I still see him, I wonder, do you still like ice cream? I don't say this to him. I mean, that's what I would think. But I don't know if I would bring any memories back, or he would remember,

Y: You know, the few stories he shared with me. He's always laughed about some of the things him and the boys did. So I think after this, this afternoon, I'm going to have to call, I will have to ask him if he likes ice cream.

B: The store was a co-op store, or co-op or something, you know. And different ones, Mable, and Arvina, they ran it, Liliann ran it. There was different people that ran that, depending on who was available.

Y: When did it stop? Because I was trying to find a little bit more information on that, but I wasn't able to find much. Where was it?

B: Where the church sits now, it was just a little bit aways from there. That's where the store used to be. And the church was moved from where the cemetery is, the church cemetery. That's what the Church used to be, and they moved it sometime before 1952.

Y: Yeah, I remember Irene Keenan was talking about that. She said when they moved it was quite the site. She said, all kinds of people from the mission were out watching it because she said it was just amazing to see how they put it on the logs.

B: They rolled it, yeah, yeah. It came all the way from there, and it moved over there. And my dad was the kind of janitor, like he made sure that it was warmed and there was a hole in the middle of the floor, like, if this was the pews would be right here, and the pastor would be up here. There was a hole right here, and that down in the basement was just a little place where the wood would be, and then there was a big steel or whatever, stove, and that's what he would during the winter, like even if tomorrow was church, tonight he'd go build a fire, and then early Sunday morning he'd go back and he'd feed some more wood in so that that's the only place there was no fan or nothing. And then there was a register there, and it was real pretty, kind of etched like, and that's where the heat came from. And then the windows, are now they put screens in there because there were some people breaking in.

So we grew up going there, and we were the ones that cleaned it, and then we would ring the bell on a Sunday. Saturday evening, we would ring it and at six o'clock, and then on Sunday morning, we'd ring them twice one hour before the service, depending on what time it was, and then when the service started, we'd ring it again. And we always used to try to, of course, with me, I always wanted to be the one that would beat somebody, that I would, you know, do the highest of whatever. You know, I was just kind of scheming all the time. And so one time we

were ringing that, and the rope kept getting shorter and shorter. So my older brother used to go up into the belfry, and we would ring it. Sometimes two of us would get a hold of it to ring it, and the rope was going around the bell, and that's why it was getting shorter. And I would start over, and my gosh, somebody came to church one time and she said, I remember a long time ago, when I was a little girl, she said, I used to remember that we could set our clocks to it. My dad had a pocket watch, and that's what he used to use to make sure that the radio would tell the time or something, and that's how we ended up doing this, and that was our job, and we had to go in there and make sure that the doors were locked and everything.

And so at 12 years old, all my brothers and sisters, younger than me were baptized. Well, at seven years old, I was baptized out there, and the ones younger than me, but at 12 years old, we were confirmed because my dad said that on the trip that Jesus took with his mom and his dad, they lost him in one of those chapels or tabernacle, or whatever they were. They found him after two days searching for him. And he said that if Jesus was 12 years old and he learned how to, he learned how to listen and talk to the teachers, priests, or whatever, that we would we would be right in there. So all of my brothers and sisters, I'm in the middle of nine children, were baptized.

And then they used to have them for one year, but other churches out there, in an outer area, different ones, like, there's a lot of names of different churches; Methodist, Lutheran and all of those, supposedly, they go two years. But ours are one year, a few years ago, and quite a while, I put three, three young people from our congregation, I put them through confirmation. And of course, we don't have any youth that go every Sunday. We have one that will be there for a lot of Sundays then all of a sudden drop off, or either they get old enough to go away, to go to school or get married or whatever, they just kind of ditch us. They don't, we don't see too many kids that come.

Y: I was reading that it's kind of nationwide where a lot of younger people aren't attending church. I don't know what that's like in some of our other Ho-Chunk areas of life...

B: Yeah, because I kind of found two different things that I'm doing: finding different people that we're related to or my family's related to it. And I found one that was a Lonetree, and she helped me do different things. And she comes from the Wisconsin Dells area, that's where she goes, and she said that she teaches the little ones at head start. I think it might be, what she might be doing. And she said that youth are not real active like they used to be. Long time ago, they kind of got away from it. And I think once, they'd rather stay up all night and watch a movie or something, but they can't get up in the morning, she said. And that's not to be, because many years ago, we didn't live like that. You know, we had to bring the wood in and the water in and everything. And now, if you want to go to the bathroom, you just run to one of the bathrooms. Sometimes, some houses like us, we have two bathrooms. I mean, kids grow up like that. We have one son, and when I talked about different things, he says, Oh, I don't have to sit and listen to those Abraham Lincoln stories because he learned by a lamp or a candle lamp, or some kind of a lamp that they use. And then I said, well, it's time to talk about Abraham Lincoln. One time he said, I'll listen, but I'm just going to use one ear. He said he'll only listen to half of it because he already has to go to school. But I think life is different. It's nowhere to say. I turned 88 on September 7.

So I don't know if you have kind of a, like, a little questionnaire or something that you might want to do.

K: I do have a few questions. So do I start? Okay, so you kind of already did this, a little bit of it already. So my first question to start this off is, tell me a little about yourself and a little about your family.

B: So I had come from a family of nine children. My mother wanted six boys and no girls, because she said later on, the reason that she wanted boys and no girls was because she didn't want to be a grandma to all kinds of Hinus and Kunus, because, you know that every time you start over. If you have a family, if each one has a different father, you start all over with a Kunu or Hinu. So she said she didn't want all kinds of hinus and kunus anymore. But later on, after she got older and she wanted to not do a whole lot, what she taught us, she said, came out better than if she didn't have us three girls.

I come from a family of nine children, and I'm right in the middle of it, and two brothers, I don't know, because they passed away before I was even born. And I was born, we were living in Clark County, supposedly, when my mother was expecting. My dad was working for a place in Clark County where they were making cement culverts, and they used to make them there, I don't know, machinery or whatever. And then he even helped load and unload. Sometimes he'd even get to go on a trip to deliver culverts and different towns and cities and stuff. And so he wasn't able to be home, because where we lived was, there was one, two, about five families, but the John Stacy family, the one that came and did the preaching at our Indian Mission church, they had a kind of like a homestead, and then he had Martha and John had, what are they? Maybe three girls or something, and maybe two boys.

Anyway, that was one family. And then my mother had an aunt who lived not too long, not too far away, from a walking distance. And then a half sister that she had, and then there was an older man across the street from them, and his name was Henry Johnson, and that's all the Ho-chunks were in that little place where we lived, and that was Greenwood.

And now I call him Skipper. I think Sid Louis, yeah, here's the only one I think that lives somewhere around there. I think he's even living in, maybe his, his mother's, since she passed away. So he was raised by his aunt. And of course, everybody is either a Nani or a Jaaji, you know, in that case, but then Myrtle always says that there's no cousins, because you use your name that was given to you.

And so I was born at a basket stand, and I was delivered by someone, a lady that lives later on in Millston, and she's the one that was going around delivering babies. And my mother had, I don't know how many of us, maybe three of us, or three that I would have had, brothers or sisters or something. She sent my grandma to the fair in town here, so that she could, you know, have the baby she was expecting. She knew she was going to have this baby in a day or two. So they went after this baby was going to deliver. And so she was by herself, and she was making baskets, but she said that the other story that Velma started was that I kind of the patent of the fruit basket. My mother was making baskets, and they were called sewing baskets. They were round, and then they had a cover, and she had all the material that was ready strips, but cut everything and pile them up. She was making those. And she said that she actually was making them before she went into labor. And she said that after she got all done and had gotten settled down, I guess she was going to go back and finish that, because the fair people came back, and I just found my birth certificate, kind of an affidavit, or whatever.

My real birth certificate must have got lost somewhere, because we moved so many different places and different times, and I found it in there, and I was born at 12:30 in the afternoon. Kind of midday? Babies now come more at night. It seemed like, anyway, she said that the basket

that she had started, she had to just put it aside. And she said it was just a few hours later. She was going to finish it. She said it wasn't even worth it. It was kind of dry or something. She just said it was just dry and just kind of spread out a shape like so she had. She said, Well, I'll just dunk it in water and still finish it. But she got lazy, and I must have been fussy or something, she said she just couldn't make too many baskets. But she did later on make them, and she said they sold like wildfire.

And I have a sister who was born the day that this became real, or something like that. Here it was in a newspaper here quite a while back. I can't remember how long ago it was. There was a little article in there that the fruit basket was I kind of, I came along with that makeup. So anyway, that was on Highway 12, going to Merrillan, and that school that is now Wrightsville school, you hear them making announcements for toys and different things, and like tomorrow, they're going to have free breakfast or something, or chili or whatever they do there.

And that's where I went to school, because I grew up old enough to live in Greenwood, long enough until our dad moved us here to Black River because we had to go to school. And Spencer and Velma are older than me. They're my older brother and sister. They went to school at Neillsville, and we used to go visit them. And every time we would go visit them, I wanted to stay, but I would even just cry and want to stay, but they said that I was too young, and Velma wouldn't be able to take care of me because we were just four years apart, and that she would if I scraped my knees or something and I cried, or if I had a headache or something, she wouldn't be able to, you know, take care of me. So they said that I couldn't stay there. So I never did go to school there. But one thing that I really remembered, that I looked forward to was they had a great big dog, almost as big as a little horse. His name was Bump, and he had kind of long hair, and he really liked all the kids, because it's all that was around. And so when we would go there, he'd be sitting up on the steps before you walked to the school. And I would stop and visit them for maybe five minutes or so before my mother, there's a little waiting room, and that's where Velma would come. And by the time they took her out of whatever class or something, I would go in. And then the dog would sit, since I was sitting there, talking to him and everything, he would go to the window at the door, and then he'd have an old stick in that window, and I try to go out. My mother would say, we come to visit your sister, we didn't come to visit a dog! But we always had a dog, and we had a dog of our own, and my dad dug out the inside of the tree, cut it off, and that's where that dog used to sit. And so we always had one, I still think that big dog was just fascinating. I used to think a person could even get on his back and ride it, get a hold of the hair and still be able to hang on.

But we ate there one time, and they served everything already served like I think it was breakfast or something, where mashed potatoes we had or something, and it girls came and they served you. And even with us being company, we were already served our potatoes and whatever, or oatmeal or whatever we might have had. It was already in bowls. And then, I guess the boys used to, Earl went to school there, and then he said that they used to peel potatoes or either wash bushes. And then the girls had different jobs that they did. And then, but I learned everything that I probably would learn from my mother, as far as you know, home stuff, but nowadays, kids don't have to have jobs, even when we were going to school, my mother would have a board and she'd have jobs, slips of paper that was in the little envelope. She'd take them out, and then she'd put them along. We had little slots by our names and our board. And then one week we would wash dishes. Another week we would mop floors. And then the boys had to bring the water in and take the water out with the dishwater and stuff like that, the pail that we dumped it in, and then different things that we had. And so my mother never had to say, you do this or you do that. Maybe she'll go by and she'll say, it looks like we need some water. That's all she'd have to say. And whoever had that name on there, on that little board, would run to the

pump where something used to have a wagon. And then my dad bought a milk pail, like, or not the pail, you know, those tall ones. And then, they had the handles. We used to put those in the wagon.

By that time John Stacy had moved to what is now called the parsonage. Of course, it burned. That's why the church is in that place. And so we were kind of organized. But every Sunday morning, we didn't have to be told. We just got up, put our Sunday clothes on, and had breakfast, and my mother would put the dinner in the oven, and off we would go. It just seemed like we didn't have to be told. We just knew. Then when we came home, we took all our clothes because we didn't have a lot of real good clothes. I mean, if you had three or four good changes, that was a lot. I mean, good clothes, good shoes, and everything. And then they were just kind of for a person on Sunday or maybe some kind of meeting or something that we would have to go to or something or go visiting, and my mother didn't want us in rags or whatever.

And what's fascinating me nowadays is when these people are running around with jeans, with their knees and their cut and everything, they don't fascinate me because we were so poor, that's what we wore. And my mother did a lot of patching and everything. But she had the boys had, and she really liked to sew, so she used to be able to make, you know, patch stuff up, or either she made us our blouses, and then the kids out at the mission used to make fun of us when we moved here, and that we should be missionized because we were trying to act like white people, or whatever they called us. And my mother used to go to this Waughtel's Grocery Store in Brockway, which is now where they buy supplies for cars and stuff, you know, wipers and batteries and different things that they sell. Now that used to be a grocery store, and then there was a few pieces of other things, like radios and cooking stuff, but the flour that she would get would be a great big bag because we did a lot of baking. We didn't go to the bakery all the time, and we had to make our own stuff to eat.

And at 12 years old, I would learn how to make bread for the family. So I would make loaves of bread and biscuits. And then my mother had a bread box. It was a metal one you had opened the door, and that's what the bread was. She'd keep track of that. And then if there was too many that didn't get eaten and crust stuff, she'd make bread pudding and, I really sometimes wish that I could, you know, just I even threw a couple ends of loaves of bread away yesterday, because the garbage went out today. And I keep thinking I could make some bread pudding; she used to put raisins in it or eat peaches. And she did a lot of canning too.

So when I moved by myself away from home, I learned to do it at home. So I even tried one time to make, to can tomatoes, and I did a pretty good job. They didn't blow up or anything, because they can, because my brother George, they can tomatoes all day, worked on it. Here at night they heard something explode or something. And here they put the jars on a table in a kitchen, and here they blew up. Middle of the night they were cleaning, and it was a rented place. She said you'd be surprised how many of those jars blew up. So I don't know, there must have been something that they did wrong, but I did pretty good. And then I like fresh beads. And I used to make bean soup. And now I made some one time. And now my son, Tim, really likes it. So every once in a while when I get kind of ambitious or something. It takes a while. I get green beans, and I snip the ends off, and then I chop them up, and I boil them with pork steak or pork roast or something. And then at one time, he won't eat onions, and I used to tell him that it was celery, until he caught me. I was trying to make them real small, to make them look like celery. And here he said, that's what I've been eating. He said the onion I was trying to make them and then. But now I use celery salt if I know, if I really had to, and I don't have celery on him. So anyway, he really likes that. And so every once in a while, I'll make that. But my really,

biggest thing that I do, I like doing it, but I tried it a few months ago, I make squash and corn soup.

Oh, that is a hard job, and they don't only ask for a little kettle of it. They want a Nesco. And so either I have three sizes of Nesco, and I use the middle one, and that's still a lot, and I use butternut, and butternut is in our stores, but I faked it, and the minister didn't know the difference between different squash the kind that we use. And so he thought that was really good, because I took it to a funeral and it's because that's what they wanted. So then I didn't have that buttercup, so I went to the store and I found it frozen, but it's real mealy, like it doesn't stay whole. You're kind of eating really kind of soupy, like I didn't mash it, but no, you have to really be careful and not really work. And so he really liked that. So I made it again here not too long after that, and I gave some to him, and he took it home, and he said he was he couldn't wait to get home. He said, I wish I had a spoon with me. He comes from Galesville, so Larry Littlegeorge is kind of his right hand man. So when he can't come. Larry is in charge of our service and stuff.

So back to church at 12 years old. At 13, I was teaching Sunday school already, so that's quite a job, you know, to get ready for that. So anyway, my mother was 10 years younger than my dad, and at 17, my mother had my first brother, Spencer, and after that, we were all two years apart, just around the clock. Every two years, one of us came along, nine of us. well for my mother, she to me, was an extra special lady at nine months old. Her dad passed away, and she said that when she was nine months old, I don't know how many people were living with her or whatever, how many brothers or sisters or whatever at that time, but she said that she was sitting in her mother's arms, and a lady came and she, said that he she put a blanket on my grandma, pulled it over her, and my mother said she was nursing, and she had to crawl underneath that blanket in order to get her meal. And my mother asked my grandma, what happened? Why did that happen? And she looked at her, and she said she just couldn't believe it. And she said, you remember that? I guess. So anyway, he said you were only nine months old. And how my mother remembered that to this day, just still puzzles me.

The other thing that she was born with four teeth, two on the top and two on the bottom. She already was a partly grown kind of person. I mean, these things happen when you're older. And the other thing is, she had indentations all the way from her top of her ear, because I seen pictures of women wearing jewelry and stuff, and they had the other day, and on the TV there was a girl that had earrings kind of all the way through, and he or she said that they were, they didn't have holes and but you could tell that they had cone shut, but that you could just teach them. I guess when she was a baby, later on, she said that they kind of shut the ones that they gave her. She went to school at the new school, and somehow or other, she got into a fight, or somebody yanked on her, or something pulled her earring off and pulled it right through. And so Mr. Ben had to do something to make it so that she didn't have her ears, you know, two pieces, or anything. My sister, Mary Ann, was only one that had pierced ears. So anyway, the doctor wouldn't pierce my ear because he said that I would make my own decoration. I guess I had an aunt who would do girls, she would put earrings in them, and the one that I heard from that I wanted to do that was when you go to the beauty shop, they said that they can put the earing right in there, and then all you do is to grease it or whatever, and you move it or something. But he didn't recommend that.

So anyway, we moved from Greenwood to Black River when I was six, five years old, we moved to Wrightsville, or the little community where I was born, and my mother sent me to school at six years old, and that year school started.

I was born on Labor Day, on September 7. I wasn't six years old, yet I was seven, and she sent me to school because I was six, but I wasn't six years old. Not six yet because of those few days, and so she sent me home. My mother got upset, but I stayed at home, and she said I terrorized my brothers and sisters another year. So I didn't start until I was seven years old and I graduated in the school downtown, and one of my classmates, I see him once in a while when he's out eating, and he always worked at the casino with our son, Tim. And so he always says to me that I was one of the older ones, but I had no choice. I mean, but they say that girls learn faster than boys.

So anyway, it didn't really matter. I got caught up, and I really, really liked reading. I said here a while back that I would, but now that my eyes are getting weaker, I am not so good. I would read night and day. I used to bring books home, and then I would take my dad's light, he always had a couple of flashlights, and I would take that flashlight, and I would take it under the blankets, and I would read there. And a lot of times I would fall asleep and then the battery would run out. So my dad had to hide the flashlights so that I couldn't do that. So I guess my mother said that she just didn't have no idea what to expect out of me, because I was just wanting to be the only one that would win something I was just kind of real forceful like, and I'm a wee-huh (second born daughter). And when I say that I'm a wee-huh, people just kind of say, Oh, you just kind of hear words or something, because wee-huhs are more outgoing and get into stuff, and they want to be smart and then I guess I lived up to my expectations of that.

I was born under the Virgo, and the Virgo is a perfectionist. One time I was getting hollered at, because if something wasn't done right or just right; I even went into a house one time and I straightened out the rug. Then I really wished I could have went and fixed a picture that was crooked, but I didn't dare, but the rug was just all crumbled, and I straightened it out, and I felt just real dumb, because they must think, what did she do? But you know, when you go into somebody's house, you always kind of picture yourself in your own and then the one you went into.

But one of the things too, mother taught us girls different things, is when you enter somebody's house, like if I go into your house and then if you were to greet me, you would make something to eat, or to give them water or something, but she said that it's our way to give them something. So I usually have like a little piece of material or something or either I had a casserole or something; I would, you know, give them a bowl, or something that was old that I could share, or something antique, or whatever. If it's a lady and we had a meal and she envied something I would give her, whatever we ate out of or maybe give her a jacket or something, and if they're too big or too small or wasn't the right color, maybe I would give something brand new, sometimes still hanging in a closet. And then sometimes they come with a little boy, or a young boy, a boy or something, I would even, you know, just give that to them, because it's new. So I usually try to keep my tote, like with all of my blankets and pillows and different things.

One time I was gone for four days, so the phone must have went out the day that I left here and Earl (my husband) was going to eat cereal one day, and here the milk was sour, and here the refrigerator had gone out. So Tim and Linda, my daughter in law, had to bring him food daily so that when I got home they said that I didn't call home. Well, he worked with the telephone company, and so he had, at that time, he had a card, and then it had numbers on there, and then you can use that on a phone. So with a phone booth that was, it didn't work in a room. I was in Atlanta, Georgia. I've been there a couple of times for meetings, and it did work in the room, and they had a pay phone, and that was just used constantly. And I used all the change that I had trying to call home, and then by the time I would feed that in sometimes, I was a nickel or a dime short, and they would cut me off. So I wasted all my money. Anyway, I got home and

here, Tim took me to the store and he got me a little flip phone, and that's what I had, but I wished I had that now, because the one that I have now it just won't ring.

And then I belong to the clan mothers, and they gave us a tablet, and we had a meeting on Wednesday.

(shows pictures) And here Verona that comes from Madison, she was on there. And here's Reverend White Rabbit. Here's Mrs. Olson, and here is Ben Stuckey, the one that ran the Indian school. And here are the clan mothers.

Y: So you said you started school when you were seven, and would that have been kindergarten? Okay, what was that transition like from church? Moving from home life and annoying your brothers to school?

B: Yeah, it was just a lot going on, and I had a lot to learn, and a lot in fact. I got a reading circle diploma because I was taking books home all the time. And one time it rained, and I knew that school was out and that I couldn't be sitting at the school because the teacher left and everything, and I went home and it was wet. The place where I was born, the next place had a mailbox. Back then, they were small, but they had a good sized mailbox, because I think he even added a piece of wood in there for like, packages or whatever. And then I was standing underneath there to stay dry, because it was just rain to beat heck. And I guess we lived not too far from there. And then my dad said to my mother that we better go get we-huh. She said she must be soaked somewhere. And here they were driving along. And there I was with my books and everything, standing underneath that mailbox there. And then she said, Oh he-nook hock-xji (my girl). She said, you're really smart. She said, I never would have thought that. She said, I would have just got all wet, he said. I said you have to be pretty smart to get away with some of those things.

So then we moved to the mission, because we were in an area where there were farms. My dad was a farmhand, so when we moved the mission, it was different, having all these houses close to each other and kids that were always running around and cars honking and dogs running around and everything, that was quite a switch. It just seemed like a different world, and we weren't used to that, because we were out in the country and we had our own little area, although they were always kind of rented ones, but mostly my dad would work someplace, and we would get some housing of some kind.

And my dad was also was caregiver, or caretaker for Castle Hill; that's one of the places we lived, and my mother worked in the kitchen, and then he used to wax floors and load the truck when it would come in, he unloaded and put things away, and then he mowed the lawn and different things that he did. And then my mother worked in the kitchen, because they fed food, just like they do now. Then when we moved to the mission, of course, he became the guy to take care of the church. So we were always in there doing different things. And then when I graduated, I wanted to be a minister, because through being a Sunday school teacher, I learned all the different things we had used to have leaflets, that's what we call them for church. That's what we would teach from.

And so I went to take a test at Mission House. It was called Layton, and here I didn't pass the test. Oh, I so disappointed. Reverend White Rabbit and my mother and I went to take the test. I did about 10 questions and I knew that I wasn't going to be a minister, but I thought to myself, I know what my Bible is. If I really, really wanted to, I could, you know, make a sermon out of it, whatever that I picked. In the holidays, of course, you know, we did all of those. And so I stayed

home for a little while, and one day, Reverend Whiterabbit came over, said that he had an idea, because I was so disappointed that he thought that he would try to calm me down, and it just kind of bugged me, and I didn't want to get mad at God, because I didn't make it. It was my fault. Because he even said that maybe if I didn't take four years of home economics, maybe if I took some different subjects, he said that maybe I could have even been a little smarter in some ways.

And so I did graduate, and the diploma that was supposed to be signed by Schwalenberg, he was the one that was supposed to sign it. And they said we were told, when we were practicing our marching in the gym, that we shouldn't open our diploma on stage or whatever, because they said that we may not get our own because it might have got mixed up. But to go, don't go by exchanging it in the middle of everybody. You can always do it afterwards. You know, we had a room where we were changing and left belongings in there. And so I really, one of the first things I did when I got offstage was I opened it and I seen his name on it, I slapped it together, and then I had to go down the stairs and get back into the into the line, because we were all in line, we'd shake hands and then put on the steps and come back into the gym.

So anyway, he said that there was a school in Phoenix, Arizona that was Cooke Christian Training School. I went there, and I went to school with 22 different tribes all over the US and Canada, and that was pretty neat. There was even a girl that was from the Grand Canyon, and her mother told her that her grandfather was born there. She never left. She never went up on higher ground. She always stayed down there. So the villages down there, they have their own gardens, their trees and everything. It's just like farms everywhere else. And of course, they go down there with little donkeys. And I would never, you couldn't pay me to go down there.

Y: Was that a little different meeting people because I suppose the Mission School was mostly Ho-Chunk?

B: Yeah, and they had different languages. And of course, a lot of them spoke their language. And of course, I wasn't real fluent, but, I mean, I knew I could understand and I would be able to talk to somebody. And they had these twenty hours that they were doing here a while back. I don't know if they're still doing that, but I asked somebody who was running it, if they could come over and do something for me, and she said that's not what they're for. She said that they were supposed to, like, visit elders and or either they would take them to a meeting where they were going to learn how to cook or learn a language or different things like that. That's what they were for, that they weren't out there to clean floors and clean garbage or anything, she said.

So anyway, they get paid for that, for those twenty hours. And I thought that was going to neat, but I came home and I worked in our church, because I, since I wanted to be a minister, well, I could have went four years. It's a four year place, and you could run, you could be in the pulpit. And when I came home, I ran Sunday school. I worked with the ladies aid, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the youth, and story hour.

And I was busy all the way through, but my mother was so sick that she couldn't even get to the table. She was bedridden, and I just couldn't imagine leaving and not knowing what was going to happen to her. So, all I got in was my freshman year but that didn't stop me. Every place I went. We moved all over with my husband's job. Our first move was over in Lake Michigan, Manitowoc rivers, over on, right on you could hear the lake, the waves and everything coming in. And they called it a cool city. You didn’t need any air conditioning. We did have a window air conditioner. We took it along. And one day, one time it was so humid that we had to put it up,

because I put clothes out on a clothesline, and they never tried because and then the house felt just real sticky like so my dad dug that out. One time Tim said, Dad, I think we better put the air conditioner in.

Yeah. So anyway, I went to Cleveland, Ohio, I don't know how many times, because that's where our UCC church, that's where it's kind of the branches out and we have a calendar that has each state and their names, like ours is in Deforest. Deforest is where ours is in Wisconsin. And when we moved to Sun Prairie, from Two Rivers to Sun Prairie, that's where I went to church. And when we were in Two Rivers, we were there for 13 years. So I even took off vacation just to teach Bible school. And I got to team-teach every other Sunday because I wanted to be in church. I never had communion or listened to a sermon because we had Sunday school. And then so I had Tim teach, and then I would every other Sunday, and then I would be at church.

And then with Earl being traditional, that didn't change him, but I asked him one day if he wanted to go with me, and he kind of thought about it, and he said, You know, it's funny that you asked me this. He said, because they had a meeting one time, and his boss asked, how many of them do different things? He kind of liked an interview, and people got to know each other that worked together. And here he kind of required that they attend a church because it would be a good example for the people that he's working with. And so he did the ushers. He was in charge of the ushers, and he got people to sign up, and then he made sure that they would be there, and then they would give out greeters and ushers were together, and that's what he did. So Tim and him would stand, and he'd have programs, and then he would take the people to wherever they were going to sit. After a while, though, when people know where they're going to sit, they just walk over there. Tim was an acolyte, that's where they come from the back with a pole to light the candles. And there were two of them. And then they come and they light the candles. And then afterwards, after church, they would also put them out. That's what he did, and he was confirmed there, but his membership is still there.

Y: When you guys were going to school out at the Mission School was that part of the programming? Learning about the bible and church teachings?

B: Yes it was. Well, at the Indian School in Neillsville you could go the whole eight grades there. And like Hattie, I think she went there almost every year that that it was possible, because, of course, they lived by the Black River, and she would have had to walk up the hill to go to the school. And then, of course, she went to high school here, and she would come by, and then I would walk with her for the rest of the time to the bus. But Mrs. Olson used to have us pledge allegiance, and then different holidays, like Christmas, Thanksgiving and all of that, she would observe all of those because she said that when she first started teaching, she even had somebody that was almost 20 years old that went to school. So she was there teaching all, all grades. And then when I was gone from here, almost 20 years, just a few weeks minus when my husband took us out on our road. She has a lot of experience of different grades, different families, and she also knew the different ways of worship.

The Clan Mothers. This is only part of them. (shows picture) Like Earl was in Traditional Court. And they have 12 people there, one for each clan. And these are also, each one is a clan, and the things that Myrtle brings up is a really good learning experience. And one lady said, just the other day we had our meeting, and she said that as many figures as I've done, some of this stuff and my parents teaching us, but she said when I comes here and we have to talk to the person that we're mentoring, she said, I always learn something every time. Because each person that we have that comes there, they have a different reason to be there, and sometimes they're

court ordered, and so that we have to make sure that it's all confidential, so we can't, you know, go home and say, “Hey, today we had a girl that came and she cried and she cried, and she had two kids, and she can't have them and stuff.” A lot of them have children that they have to get back, but they have to attend so many classes and stuff.

So I think as far as the age that I am and experiences that I had in life, nobody can take that away from me. You know, everybody has their own little thing that they do and whatever thing that they belong to, and then you could always switch jobs or something in the stream of your life, like one of Ruby’s grandsons went into. I even found a piece of paper that I saved, he's going to school to become a nurse. So that those things kind of happen.

But it just seemed like I once, once I got kind of hung up in teaching Sunday school. I guess I just, we sent money to a church who needed money, and then we got a letter back, but I had to take it to the library and somebody had to interpret it because it was in a different language, and they sent a thank you card or a letter. And I thought that was really exciting, that I was able to even do something like that. And then during a time when we didn’t have a minister I was a part of the (unable to make out world) member of a trustee for quite a few years, and I even resigned because I was too many, too many things that I was on. I was on seven boards at one time, and Elsie had to stay home by himself all those times. And I really enjoyed doing things like that. And then the consistory, we had to do the service on Wednesday nights, and we had a lot of people that came. And now I enjoy going. I always think that the week isn’t going to be right if I don't go. So no matter what the weather, I can afford to get in that car and Tim and Linda always say that maybe you shouldn't be driving if you can't see but of course, I can't drive at night.

But I feel as though that I wasn't out to accomplish anything. I just wanted to be myself and whatever stirred me, that's what I wanted to be in charge of. I always think nobody can tell me something that I might not be able to believe, but I won't shut anybody out, because it's going to help me in any way. Or if somebody asks me something, I do my best to let them know what the answer might be. And so it has really helped to understand other people that we mentor,

Y: Do you think Stucki, Stacy, or Miss Olson had an impact on you?

B: They were all my mentors. I was baptized by Ben Stucki, and then I was confirmed and got married in our church, and so we had different ministers (interrupted by the bells)

Yeah, I was baptized. And then everything else happened there. And then when I went to a different church, I went to the Two Rivers ones, and then I went to the one in Sun Prairie. That's where Earl retired from. I always took my membership along, and then when I would leave, I would take it out and take it with me, and then I would have it sent to the next church. So I, I really felt like I belonged, because I'm part of that family. And so, when I came back, I wasn't back very long, Hattie asked me if I would help her with bingo. And so we had elder bingo, and here, because we were getting coupons from the casino, we had to sign for, we weren't licensed. We didn't have to pay anything, but we had to have a license stating we were handling money. And then we gave all the elders in our area $50 at Christmas. And I thought that was pretty neat. Elsie always said that I didn't know how to say no, but I said, If I said no the first thing I would know is that I kind of cheated somebody out where I could help.

Y: You know, when I was young, we used to go to Sunday school every now and then and then, you know, they would come around the holidays, especially Christmas, and drop off some gifts. Was that something the school did for you guys, when you guys were young as well?

B: When we were kids, a truck would come from Neillsville and Mrs…, somebody, would use every family. They would make sure that there was a mother and a father and children like if they were 2, 4, 6 years old. She would turn those names in, and then that truck would come and then they would fill the whole entryway with bags and bags, and your names were on there, and that's what's really exciting. And not only that, we'd get a bag of candy, apples, and oranges, or cookies in a little separate little bag; other than the and then we'd get probably socks, maybe a sweater, or maybe even if they had a shoe size, maybe somebody would even get shoes.

And Elsie went to school there too. And he said that they used to wear shoes called “stogies.” They were kind of a little-army looking things and then we used to go over there, and my mother would make baskets and sell them there. And then we would go up to the room where this Jack Gruther’s, mother, he was one of the pastors that used to come to the church too. And they had clothing, and they were piled, you know, boys were here and men were over there, the girls and then babies and different things. One of the first things that I would dig into was felt hats.

And I made canoes. My class ring was $18.12 and I made canoes enough to buy my own class ring, and I wasn't going to be without it so I wore it until I, when I started working in the factory, we couldn't wear rings. So a lot of times, some of those things I remember.

There are sometimes graduation names, and there's names aren't on there, I mean pictures. And then my mother paid for my pictures. And just one day this week, I went through a box. And here there's pictures of all of my brothers and nieces and nephews; pictures in there. And to think that nowadays you can have those things, but back then, we had black and white cameras. And when I went away to Phoenix, I had…I took the family camera, and it was a little one called a brownie. It was a little box, and then you held it, you know what, I was going to take a picture. I have to really zoom in and then snap it. But now I have a couple of cameras, but you can't even buy film anymore, because everything is on a phone. And I took a picture of something, and here, I don't know how many times I go across the pictures that come up in here, I take a picture of my feet or my purse or something. I don't know how I must have hit the wrong thing, and I must have. (Laughter)

I think this whole month is Native Heritage or whatever. That's what I found in that paper. And I don't even know which paper it was in, but I thought it would be kind of interesting to have some of these things. So you might be, if you want to keep some and get them back to me, you can, you know, go through them and if there's anything that interests you, you can use them. (Bell rings)

Y: All right, she has to catch the bus in about 10 minutes. So do you have any final questions you'd like to ask her before you Skedaddle out on us? I'll get a picture of you two.

K: No, I think she answered everything. Well, what about having a Ho-Chunk school?

B: Well, for what I've been through and what I know, I think it's good to have them intermingle with different ages that they are, and to learn each other's culture. It doesn't hurt for them to learn about us, because one of the things that happened here quite a few years ago was when one of the pastors, it might have been…, or whoever it was, gave us money. That was, they said we were here first, before the natives were here, and we were given money. But a lot of times, money isn't everything. It helps. But see, we don't even get per cap anymore, and then they give us this money that we have, that they give every month, but it gets a little bit of

something. And my husband left me with a pretty good living that I'm doing, and I only go to the casino once a week to play it my free play.

And since I married traditional I thought really, really that I was going to get out of having all those things that they do to the spouse. I couldn't go anywhere. I was stuck in the back room for those four days, and one of the men relatives of Earl even had me stay home for 10 days after the funeral. I couldn't even water my own plants. I couldn't eat the food that they were eating every night, and I could just smell fry bread, and I couldn't have any. So Elena gave me, she was the one that stayed with me, and then Bubba and Val's daughter stayed with me at night and then, but it was different. And I guess maybe I could say that having a different lifestyle and growing up in a different way of seeing the world, but now I was only given six months. Would have been November.

I have cancer in my lungs or my esophageal cancer, and then I have a place where there's obstruction, so there's certain foods that I can't eat, and I had a month of radiation a year ago, and in April, I had another week of it because some of it came back. So I'm, I'm fighting, but I don't, I try not to let it bother me. And I made it past my six months. And so I, I guess I wake up every morning and I thank the Creator that he had me live another 24 hours and so that that's something that I'm kind of thankful for. That's one of the things that I, even the women, can't believe the age that I am, and a lot of the women that come in have, like, almost all white hair. I still got all my, most of my black hair. I'm not going to have black hair or anything anymore. But my mother must have had only about 10 gray hairs when she passed away. She was almost 90 years old, and my sister Velma didn't have any gray hair. She was 87
and so now I lost my brother George, I mean, Harold here a month or so ago, and so he had black hair.

And George is in the middle of the catastrophe that hit the first floor of the condo that they were living in. It's all wet. Everything is damaged down on the first floor. He’s been in contact. I mean, he's been a legislature and a president, and he knows all those things that you can do and can't do, and who they will help and everything. But he was fully compensated for Agent Orange. That's why he's in Florida. And he's in place where the storm hit. And then when my sister Mary Ann passed away, they had a storm, and they hit both of them going and it settled down for 24 hours, and then it quit again, and then it hit again. So it's hard when you don't live in your own place. And he worked for the county for 20 years, and so he knows all about plowing and all of that, and he said, It's nice not to have that, but it's not worth it because you don't have your family.

I enjoyed all my time that I spent with, you know, family and friends that I had and still have.

Y: Well, thank you for coming and sharing your story. We really appreciate that.