

W. BRUCE HOLT INTERVIEW

Interview by Steven H. Henegar

We began talking about the area around the house, while I was setting up the tape recorder. Mr. Holt described the surrounding valley and noted that it was an ideal habitat for primitive tribal groups. He, then, showed and explained to me about several stone artifacts that have been located while land around the house was being cleared.

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Steven Henegar: Well, have - have you taken - much of it out?

Or are you--

Bruce Holt: Out of the ground?

SH: --taking your time?

BH: Only as it exposes itself. No, there's no digging out there. You see, because that's digging into someone's grave, regardless of the time, because spirits live forever.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: So, it could be - it could be bad. Ah, even before this turned up, I knew there was something out there. And I would go out, and I'd look, and I'd walk [pause] and I'd look. And then Brian [his son] just turns it up and hands it to me.

SH: [softly] Uh-huh. Sure.

BH: And I was telling this Shawnee medicine man about this, and he says, you were looking too hard. See? So I knew it was there; I knew something was there, but I was looking too hard.

SH: Were there any particular signs, or was it just - the feel of the area?

BH: Oh, the feel. Oh, yeah, the feel. It's like I know a boy from Chapel Hill - he can be riding along, and he'll feel a hawk. You know, "There he is." You know, you get to where you know each other. You see, my thing's rocks, and his is [slight pause] more than I can imagine. [pause.] You know this Indian tribe over here, these Okaneechees (??)?

SH: Um-hm.

BH: They're getting back together about two miles, three miles, over here. They had their first pow-wow last fall - this fall. It was - August the - 12th, or something like that. It's unbelievable, the people that turned up, and the best vibes any place.

SH: Uh-huh.

BH: You know, from people all over, and it was just complete harmony.

SH: What - what size group was it? Do you remember?

BH: I would say there had to be three hundred people there.

SH: That's a good size.

BH: For the first year. And they expect it about, you know, to increase by about fifty percent next year, because of the word about how well it turned out. [slight pause] And this at Mary's Grove Church right over here at the - it's - was afounded, I guess by - right after the War.

SH: Okay.

BH: You know. And - I think maybe the woman's name was Sarah Morrow (?), something or other, but - founded the church and the school for those - "black people?"

SH: Um-hm.

BH: You know, course some of them's white as I am, but, ah - very nice, a - a proud people.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: And the people, some of the Okaneechees came back, and there's one woman that - I know over there, a Alovey Whitamore(?), is from the, um, the Indians of Person County. So they've pretty much kept themselves Indian. And Mr. Bass is from Person County, Joel Bass.

SH: Now, which tribe is that?

BH: The Okaneechees, they--

SH: Still, Okaneechee?

BH: --started in Hillsborough. You know, the Okaneechee - you know, everything out there is Okaneechee Restaurant, or Okaneechee this and that. But there was a tribe that had a legitimate reservation, and then their reservation was annexed, dissolved. And they went North, up to Virginia, and some of them stayed behind, and then married, and I guess, probably farming. And then, later on, they returned, the ones that had gone up to this Christiansburg, Virginia. And had come back. And looked up their relatives and settled back down. [pause] So that's a good thing, that I've - moved down here. And that's - you see, I used to have to run around and go to pow-wows here and there - to some kind of fellowship, and here's a tribe forms three miles away [smiles and laughs], come back. [chuckles]

SH: Well, do you have a tribal connection then?

BH: Uhh, different ones.

SH: Okay.

BH: One is the Hadadare (?), down at Bunnlevel, or Dunn, in that area. And, with the Lumbees. And the Cherokees - the Iroquois (?) Federation down in Florida. [chuckles] And the Cherokees of Georgia. So all over, all over. See, I stay out of politics, and I'm accepted by all.

SH: [laughs] I see; okay.

BH: See? But - no, get around to what your interested in.

SH: [quickly] No, I - I am interested in this. In fact, we can come back to it here, later on, but - maybe we're heading back with the proper direction. What I was kind of interested in starting out in, is, ahh, where you came from, or where your parents came from.

BH: Aahh--

SH: Tell me something about your parents.

BH: Daddy was - Daddy was one of those families with two hundred year histories up at Mr. Herman Church (?), which is over in Alamance. It's about seven miles due south of Graham.

SH: Okay.

BH: Right off of Eighty-seven. You know, in that Bass's Mountain area.

SH: Right:

BH: See - now, his family had been there, right in the church, for two hundred years. And, Momma's family were pretty much Indian, and they had - poor people there's not much history of - They just moved around, you know, tenent farmers and rented. And never made any issue over their history, except their Indian

ancestry. And I've known that from - from my very first memories of Momma telling us that. And they were dark people, very dark. But they just - moved around. From, well - from - my grandfather was a well digger, [laughs] so, how well that paid off, when half the people were still using springs. Yeah. That [his heritage] just came through, and I never got away from it. But it's like a cancer, I guess, you know [chuckles], once you got it, you got it. It just gets bigger. But it's brought me a lot of pleasure, I guess. You know, it has at times a little bit of pain; not being able to do what you feel inside of you. But when I became fifty - the wife said, why don't you stay home with the boys. So I've been home with them for five and half years. [pause]

SH: What - what sort of stories would she tell you, when you were a child, about--

BH: Ohh--

SH: --about the background?

BH: --of the plants that they used, and ah, for remedies, and stuff like that mostly. And Momma, was a - a mild form of healer. You know, we'd burn ourselves, you know, and she'd whisper [he holds up his hand, palm toward him and demonstrates], and blow on it three times, and you could forget it. And, absolutely, I have burned so that the skin would be slicked over and hard, but it would not peel off until later, after it had healed. But all of the pain was gone. And my uncle, that I used to follow around, that told me about the plants and things like that, and they -ahh- they even fried toads and took the grease, and put it on arthritic joints. And they did the same things

with earth worms; they fried earth worms and put it on aching joints.

SH: Okay.

BH: And - they used pipsisawa (?) and lard for burns. You know it healed the burn; it took the pain away. And she used tag alder (?) teas. And sometime it was a tea, and sometime it was bark soaked in white lightning, for pains. And - burdock for boils. As a blood purifier.

SH: Okay.

BH: And -umm- they used the burdock. They used - they made their own cough syrup, which was mullen, and wild cherry bark, and pine tops, and - a little honey. It was as good as you buy cause you got your creosote out of the pine tops, you know, and the mullen is a decongestant, so working together - it was fine. And you smoked rabbit tobacco for asthma.

SH: Which is what, now?

BH: It's Life Everlasting (?), its - right now it's just ready for harvesting, it's ohh, it's about this tall [indicates about two feet]. And the bottom leaves kind of dry, and you could strip it off and make little cigarettes. And it absolutely worked as a decongestant, just like the mullen. Mullen is one of the best things you can use on - as a decongestant. And bruises, aching joints. [pause] You know what mullen is? It's a tall--

SH: Right, right. We used to live out in Washington state, and they grew just to be huge out there--

BH: --maybe six or eight feet tall.



SH: We never knew what they were used for.

BH: Yeah, well, the reason I'll tell you the name, so you'll know I'm not pulling your leg - Joann Venible (?) came up here, and she had slammed a door back against the bridge of her foot, and had bruised it all the way through.

SH: Okay.

BH: So - she's a good friend, Nancy knows her, and she came about her foot. And laid down on the couch in there, and I said, well, I'll work on that. And I wrapped her foot in mullen leaves, and at that time of the year, which is the spring - the leaves are this long.

SH: Um-hm, right.

BH: And, wrapped it with a hot damp towel, hot compress. And I changed the towels, maybe a couple of times, and she looked at it, and all of this yellow-purple discoloration was gone. Except there was one little spot - I put my finger on that, and held it just for a few seconds, took it off, and it was gone. And she worked her foot, felt of it, and she said, "The soreness is gone." She said, now I'll be able to go to some dance they're doing in Durham.

SH: [laughs] Uh-huh.

BH: But, that fast. And I'd say the whole thing maybe took [not] more than forty-five minutes. It was gone. [slight pause] Brian got kneed by - playing football with no equipment on.

SH: Right; of course.

BH: And he had such a hematoma, that the doctor thought his leg was broken. And we put - mullen on it, and hot compresses.

And he couldn't drive his bus. [Brian drives a school bus.] See? And, so he was out - he got a substitute. And he called the bus superintendent, at the middle of the day, and he said, I want my bus back tomorrow. And it was gone. But you see, what I'm thinking is that plants - you see your Bible teaches you that everyone has one talent, and some has five. I see plants as doing the same thing. Some plants only heal one thing, and others heal five. See?

SH: Um--

BH: And - hm? No, go ahead.

SH: I was just wondering where mullen fell into that? Into that division?

BH: Well, look at it.

SH: Is it a five, or is it a one?

BH: I don't know. You see, only the mullen knows that. See? [pause] But, you know, we've used it on bruises. We can use it in the cough syrup. We can also smoke it, you know, as a decongestant. You can also smoke it to get off of tobacco. So, we already got four.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: So, I don't know what the fifth one might be. [long pause]

SH: When your mother was telling you these stories, and she was taking the fire out - of the burns. Did she talk about anything else? Was there anything else that she--

BH: No. She, she whispered; she whispered.

SH: [softly] Ah.

BH: And I don't know what it was, but - I have achieved the



same thing with, you know, you can come up with your own, because someone dreamed it up to start with.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: Or it was told -mm- by a little voice in their ear. And now, I've taken and blown the fire away. Burn myself, you know. And I'd whisper to it and blow over it, and I'll say, "spirit of the fire go away, and I'll call you back another day." And it's gone, see? So, I don't know what it is, but I think the thing - you have to be sincere. The next time I build a fire, I have to call the Spririt of the Fire back, so I've kept my word. See? So, we need our credibility all over. [pause] See, even the plants understand, and the fire understands; everything understands.

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BH: And, you know, you can't be selfish. You know, life, as you become less and less selfish, and you have more - you have less and less material things, then you have more spiritual things. So there's no loss to it. It still stays in balance, you know. [pause] So, right now I have - an invitation in Florida; one to Viriginia; one to Alabama - two in Virginia. To good people to - to go study with.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: And one of them in Virginia, that I still don't - I don't know what he does. But, I was getting ready for a pow-wow, and I had<sup>to get</sup> everything done, so I <sup>wouldn't</sup> <sub>Δ</sub> leave something undone. And I was using a Weed-eater. And, you know, this time of the year

there is - the crabgrass has seeds on it. And that thing threw a seed, went right under my eyelid. So, I was in a hurry, so I just left it under there and kept on working. So, naturally, that thing is going to stay under there and keep irritating. But I didn't have time to stop either. And - then when it got time to stop, I went and got some - in front of the mirror, and got it out. By then, it irritated my eyelid. And I went to this pow-wow. Up at Greensboro, or Jamestown, Uwori (?). And my eye just kept watering; it was just pouring out. And I had rubbed it, until it had become almost, you know as you say, chapped, you know. And this - I'll tell you a name, so, you know, won't think I'm making them up.

SH: Sure.

BH: And Raymond Grace, Raymond said - that's the first time - I had met him once before - and Raymond said, "Maybe I can do something for that." And he looked me right in the eye, and he went [Mr. Holt leans forward, reaches up and grasps the air in front of right eye. Then, he throws this downward and away from him.] And threw it away; my eye stopped watering instantly. It was gone. I saw him do the same thing to a girl sitting on a bench with a headache. And it had been a long day; you know, you don't eat right, and stay up. And just - and he took and worked his hands around her - her head. [Mr. Holt moves his hands on either side of my head, close to the surface.] And all at once, he just grabbed it up like that! [He moves his hands as if wadding up a rag.] And threw it in the fire. [He throws this away and downward.] And it almost - you could almost see the fire go,

"Wwocomp!" [Difficult to reproduce-it begins with "w" shape, then becomes guttural, and indicates the fire consuming it.] And she was sitting there. And she said, "It's gone!" [slight pause] I think he is rolling up, you know, that he's visualizing whatever - now everything<sup>is</sup> working together - and he<sup>is</sup> taking this - like an aura. And just jerking it away. It's gone. But that's one of the invitations that I have. But he's never - and he is so humble, and he is just mild. You have to listen to him and hear him speak. . . . But those people know things that's just - it's unbelievable. But they don't learn these things without giving up something first. [slight pause] As long as you're interested in your - your ego, and your own materialistic gains that's all you've got. Absolutely. You'll never grow. You might amass a fortune, and still be empty inside. [long pause] And you have to give first. And it has to be in the right spirit.

SH: How so?

BH: You can't give - you say, "Man, I need a hundred dollars." So you give away fifty. See? [smiles] So, you can't do that. You have to give with no expectation of anything, not even a thank-you. You do it just because someone needs it, someone is suffering. You don't even give it a lot of thought about if you will need it later. You just give. And things come back to you. You know, like you give (it all?) away. [chuckles] It's just the spirit of you. You can't do it intentionally. Like a kid came down from - he came from Nevada - no, he was from Colorado. And he was on a 'vision quest'. And - he came and asked my permission to have

a sweat lodge. He had no sage. [slight pause] And - he said - he just asked my permission, and gave me a pack of tobacco, which Indians never approach an elder - which to me, he's maybe twenty-five years old and I'm fifty-six, fifty-five - and he bought me this tobacco and this . So I gave him sage, and an owl's foot. The owl I picked up over in the middle of the road; it'd been hit by a car.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: To take into the sweat lodge. Well, he had everything he needed without ever asking. See? And I didn't know - you know, I just gave to him, and I was giving him what he needed. And it seems like, if we will - live life this way, our needs will always be supplied. [pause] And there's no secrets. The Bible is full - it's got ever answer in it you need. And I'm not even Christian. See? All the answer's there. It'll tell you anything you want to know. "Ask and you shall receive." Says, "He hath knowledge of your needs before you ask." And if I don't take care of my own, who will? You know. It's full of all - all of the wisdoms. [pause]

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[This continues a discription of the Bass's Mountain area, where Mr. Holt grew up.]

Tape 1  
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BH: . . .the graduating class had, I think, had thirteen people in it.

SH: Okay.

BH: It's a real small school. And - before that I went to E.M. Holt school, which was a big, rural school. It was - in 1935 it was voted, or in some way it was determined, that it was the most completely equiped rural school in the U.S. Now, it's one of those little middle-schools, or whatever you want to call them today.

SH: Um-hm. Well, what was it like when you were there?

BH: I was in it until I was in the eighth grade. Oh, it was - it already had a labratory, and everything. And a cafeteria, and all kinds of things that was not known in rural schools. Then when I moved to - up the road, and Daddy bought another farm, and it was just a small school. I think the whole student body was like two hundred and sixty-five. Some of the grades were so small, they had two and three in the same room. But, it was a good school, it gave kids what - [sighs] - the people thought they needed at the time. But, you know, times change so that - some kids got left behind. You know, when they pass - they let kids out to farm, you know. School would start maybe two weeks late. You know, and other kids would be out and miss days and days. . . They just let kids float through school. You know, and all at once, in the next ten or twenty years, everything changes and you're left without - the proper education for making a traditional, which I'm taking as contemporary life, you know, it kind of messes you up. Some schools made it too easy on the kids; and, I guess, some made it too hard. . . .

SH: Well, what sort of things did they think that you needed to know at that time?

BH: [pause] Probably - the emphasis was sports.

SH: Ah, okay.

BH: See? And they had more trophies for such a little school. You know, they just - Walter Williams and Graham, you know, just hated to see them come to town, you know. Really - the kids started playing basketball before they could hit the rim with the ball. They's get the ball down between their legs and they'd throw it, you know. And it'd go - and it didn't even touch the rim or nothing. They'd have somebody out and tossing it back. But they'd get in their little circles, and they'd come by and they'd shoot at the goals. It was that halfway - oh - it was just coasting. [slight pause]

SH: Were there any other - were there any activities, say, that happened at the school, or around the school, outside of classes and things like that?

BH: They didn't allow it. It was a Quaker settlement.

SH: Okay. How did that affect things?

BH: Oh, Quakers [chuckles] well it kind of curtailed the activities. There was no dances or anything like that. And so when they - they did a grand march a couple of times. And then someone went back to the church, and said, those kids were holding hands, and dancing around out there. And that even stopped that. But - they wouldn't allow anything that - and I know one girl, who used to have to play basketball in sweat pants so her legs wouldn't show. And they - they did as much - well, tradition is the enemy of progress, so progress is also the enemy of tradition. So, I don't know who came out ahead, [slight pause] but - the community did not change alot.

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Tape 1 SH: Well now, how soon after you moved here did the -  
Side 2 reservoir situation come up?  
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BH: At the - well, you see the drought of sixty-eight was the first new mention of the Cane Creek Reservoir, but I had heard that some studies had been made way before that. You know, like some archeological digs, you know, just checking. I don't know what they found. But - people usually find [slight pause] what they're told to find. Or, not to find, what they're told not to find.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: You know, if you want to build a shopping center, and someone's bought the property, and they say, "Don't you find any graveyards." And they say, "There ain't no graveyard on that property." You know, it was like you was talking about history, when people write history, they write it from their perspective. And - and in sixty-eight, it didn't take long before there were people out studying and looking. And - and the reservoir, the big thing, got kicked off - I think the people who were going to lose land were informed I'd say maybe in sixty-nine. But - I know things can't remain the same. But I think that people are chasing a rainbow, you know, it's like a dog chasing its tail. And - Chapel Hill is going to grow, and it's going to destroy the very thing, the growth will destroy things that <sup>brought</sup> people there to start with. Absolutely. And the area's going to do the same thing. It's like, you know, these resort areas, that people move in until after all of their privacy's gone, and all of the tax has gone up, and the expenses have gone up to where - the whole thing collapses. And think that - the village image of Chapel Hill, that the UNC - the Chapel Hill



area will only become part of the Research Triangle, if allowed to grow, you know. And it then it winds up that Chapel Hill is not Chapel Hill, but only an ingredient in a bigger thing.

SH: Um-hm, okay.

BH: And this area will probably - do the same thing. You know, Johnny Lloyd up here has a hundred and twenty-five acres. Jimmy Thompson, over here, has five hundred and some. The (Stanfords?) are already losing part of theirs to the dam. The Teers are going to lose some of theirs. And after a while, the tax will get to where you can't hold on to property no longer. . . . There's a run down in the paper yesterday. I think that Research Triangle is 65,000 jobs, or something like that, and then they're expecting by the year, - in something now, it's giving a fifteen year projection - the year 2000, and it will grow by 50%, and all that kind of stuff. Well, you know, when you do that, people don't think about how much waste - people generate. Not just hazardous waste, everything in general, from sewage - the ground will become saturated, if you use septic tanks. And, if you use city sewers, the streams, man, the Indians look at the streams as the blood of the Mother Earth. Well, you know, the more you make the Mother Earth sick, the sicker society gets. So, you know, it's a terrible thing to happen. Because your poisoning the whole earth. You know, and it just can't go on. They were talking to a man down at - Oriental (?), and he said they would come down, and they would dredge out the middle of river. And, he says, the first big rain - he says, everything upstream comes down. And he says, we will have a 'red tide'; that the fertilizer, all of these other chemicals, the insecticides, get

into the stream, and he says, it kills everything. And, he says, you can just watch the red tide, out at the end of this channel. [slight pause] Now, is this - is - and it seems to be that that's the only way we can find to <sup>get</sup> rid of sewage is dump it in the streams. They need to really - they need a population redistribution. Not these centers. You know, they had the ten most -ahh- I forget what the term was for it, but growth-rates for ten areas, and the Research Triangle Park was one of them. And that's where the projection, oh, it was in Money magazine - Nancy gets that here, because she's the one with the money [laugh]. But, the more they publicize that, the more people flock into those areas, and the worse the situation gets. . . . But, I guess - Indian woman says, it's all laid out. It kind of gives you a - a good feeling in one way. It probably makes people feel kind of - hampered - in another to know that all of the - it's all laid out. I'm glad it is. I wouldn't have the wisdom to guide it. [slight pause] I wouldn't. Like this man from Oriental, he said about the rains bringing all that stuff down from the West, which is in this area [central state in general?] And he said, "It's a good thing that the rain ain't up to me, cause them farmers up there wouldn't ever get any rain." You know, so our minds are too small to accept that kind of power.

SH: Speaking of power, how do you look at this idea of - of OWASA and the people here? Did you get involved in either side of that situation?

BH: Well, I made a half-hearted showing, knowing the way farmers are, see? I know the way Indians are, see? They're too

independent to ever really make any progress. Well, farmers are the same way. You know, they don't get their heads together. You know, they made a half-hearted effort. They're not politicians. They don't make connections for the same reasons. You know, it's entirely different. And the farmers do not stand a chance. Just like Indians never stood a chance. Absolutely didn't; no way! [pause] You know, they'll sit around the store, and spit on the stove, but - they have their little factions, the different churches. Man, they don't really support each other, you know?

SH: Um-hm.

BH: So, as long as you've got that, you have City Hall, which I'll just say "all other politicians", and they will work together. They're [politicians?] working - I think, part of it might be a genuine interest in the community. But, I think a lot of ego gets into that; there's a lot of power, power plays. And when you get people struggling like that, it's almost like Nixon and his efforts to stay in power. And the things that he got people to do in order to keep him there. [pause]

SH: Can you think of any specifics that OSAGA or--

BH: OWASA?

SH: OWASA did?

BH: Well, the most - the worst thing that I know of - Now, I know they're going about this legitimately, legal, you know. The laws, - they - if you want a law you've got to - connections. You kind of get people to reappraise and relook, you know. And - but I don't like this slipping in on private property and surveying.

That turned me off against that whole movement. Now, I gave them permission to survey mine, because, well you know, "It's good to know where your property is." Well, that's true. I know they was going out there. But they went in, these surveyors, and they got down to my corner, they didn't stop. They went right on down Johnny Lloyd's, too. Without his knowledge, see? And there was trees with nails in them and flagging tape. They came over to Charles Best's, and they were surveying his property, after they had been told not to survey it. And Charles ran them off. And I think he kept their transit for a few days, and then let them have it back. That kind of stuff. Now, that shows me where the farmer stands, when it comes to politicians'- viewpoint, you know. So it's our reservation; "we'll go out and survey it anyway, eh?". And who gave them the orders to survey that property regardless, when they did not have a right to. They had been told to stay off. And then a judge, I think his name was Hobgood (?) or something, says, "Well, I think that they should - have a right to survey it, because, then each side knows where their property is and how it will be affected." Which that sounded good. And it was good. [long pause] But not to slip on.

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Tape 1 SH: Do you find - do you find any of that respect - between  
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598 like this area and Chapel Hill, in this reservoir situation? Is  
that --

BH: [deep breath] That respect? No, I don't. Absolutely.

Because, I tell you what. I could not see doing to land, what they're doing. Absolutely, total disruption. Now, what with a beautiful, free-flowing stream that is coming down through this Cane Creek - and we went up there just to look, and everything had been destroyed, and I mean - well, not everything, because even the earth's alive; the rocks are alive. But it had all been disturbed, you know. It had been moved around; it had been bulldozed under; it had been driven over; stomped on. And - and every form of degradation. That is - usually when we cut down a Christmas tree, I will set out another tree to take its place.

. . . unless life is respected, it caves in on us. And we all - we all suffer together then. You know, it's like I went to this seer, and she said about "karma"; she said, we also have a collected karma. And I have to help pay for your misdeeds, too. You know, I can pretty much work on my life, and - and try to do as little harm as possible. But you see, they have certain momentums, and I get caught up in them, too. It's just like driving your automobile, and you're polluting the air. Okay? When I drive mine, I'm polluting the air, too. Same air. Well, you know, we get trapped into this - mode of transportation. Living twenty miles out of town, you have get back and forth to town now and then. The only thing you can do is minimize your trips.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: So, we do have things that we can do something about, and we have other ones we can't. [pause] So maybe, they feel that they're in the same situation. Maybe they feel they can scrape off an scar the earth, and get by with it, because that's

the way things have to be. I don't know. But, there are some things that I don't have to participate in - that's one of them.

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[Mr. Holt and I have moved outside. The rest of the interview takes place as we wander about the yard, or sitting at a concrete table.]

SH: Tell me - tell me the name of this - that small - ?

BH: Stag-horn sumac.

SH: Yeah?

BH: There's one right here in the flower bed that I - you see, plants - special plants I cannot bring myself to - to hurt them, you know, destroy them. [long pause while walking] Absolutely, cause you never know when you're going to need it. And you don't want to offend the plant either. Now, this is stag-horn sumac. See those little black-red berries?

SH: Um-hm.

BH: Now taste one. [pause, while I do] Now they're hard.

SH: And a little sour.

BH: Yeah, so you can make a little drink out of it. And it'll stop you from weeing in bed. [I had asked about this, because an early mention took place off tape.] Also, you can make a dye out of them. And it goes from - practically black to a reddish-black.

SH: What would you use - for dying [with] something like that?

BH: Uhh - making baskets.

SH: Uh-huh.

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BH: To - to dye your splits. [unintelligible due to passing car] But, this area is loaded with wild plants. Now, even that. Momma told me about using that. It's called "Cat-gut". Ah - and was used - or "devil's shoestring" - and used it on their hair to prevent split-ends. And I think that was in association with those things are so strong and tough, that if you use something that's tough, as the Indians say, you take it's medicines. And if you want to be tough, you find the toughest thing. Or if you want courage, you take something that's courageous, you know. Or an owl - night vision, wisdom, and so on. You may - eat a bit of the owl. [pause while walking] . . . Hear that Kingfisher?

SH: Yes.

BH: I don't know, this - that sow thistle, and there's several other plants, that have a milky sap. Latex? And I think it may have - a little opium in it. Now, there's certain things that do. There's some of the milkweeds - milkweeds that have a calming effect.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: And - which I kind of stay away from those things. Cause I know of <sup>some</sup> ~~of~~ them can really- now, I smoke some jimsonweed for asthma, and it will releave your asthma. I mean, I just - but you can over do it. And - you get a feeling - you'll be talking to someone, and it just feels like you slide back. And you - you know I've heard the word, "spaced out".

SH: Uh-huh.

BH: And that's exactly what you do. [laughs] Just like you draw back like that. But , that's one of the side-effects. But,



absolutely, it will dilate your bronchial tubes. [pause] So, you can see things grow quite well here. . . . Some things you use the root, because they store certain things in the root. Now, yellow root - is magic when it comes to - treating a sore mouth or sore throat. And - Micheal came back for the beach [dog, who has been pushing against us, shoves closer] Now, go away dog! [he does for awhile] He came back with a terrible case of strep-throat. And, I went over to Dr. Sombers, and got some yellow root. And, he chewed that, and puckered up his face, and just - oh! - and, that was about seven 'o clock , I guess, Saturday evening, Saturday evening. And the next day, he lay in bed late; and went over to Hillsborough, and got a McDonald burger at - and then over in the evening, went and got some Kentucky Fried Chicken. And before that, he couldn't drink - he could not eat anything. And Brian used it, and Mike Teer used it. But you know, they sell the leaf powder, and the root powder at the Harmony Food Store.

SH: Oh yeah?

BH: Here in Chapel Hill. But it's amazing, things that people are going back to. And it's a - healthy thing. Like old Chicato (?), the medicine man, that I visit down in Jacksonville, Florida. He says, you know, he says - one day he was telling someone about it - he says, you could eat that whole tree, and it wouldn't hurt you. But you can separate that into chemicals, that'll kill you. You can concentrate stuff to where - you could walk over there and start eating bark, until you couldn't hold anymore, and not hurt yourself. But you could take and distill the tannic acid out of it, and eat your insides out. So, nature has a way of balancing things

to where there's very little things that's toxic. [slight pause] Now, that yellow root is bitter, I know. But, I've got one of those books, it's Living Medicine, but they try to break it down into telling you what particular - ingredient in the plant that makes it cure a certain thing, but I think it's the whole plant. You know, they'll tell you that it's a certain alkaloid, that does this, but, you know, I just prefer the whole plant.

SH: Um-hm. [pause]

BH: But, we used to take, when we had poison ivy, take red oak bark, and boil it. And put the - tannic - which you know is a diluted form of tannic acid on it. And it eats the top off the little blisters. Jewel weed grows down there that you can - just crush jewel weed and wipe on poison ivy. Or even a scrape, or a razor burn, and it'll go right away. It's just like a - an anesthesia.

SH: I'm glad to hear that. I've suddenly developed an allergic reaction to poison ivy, just this last summer, after my whole life.

BH: Yep, you sure can. But, jewel weed is - it grows along marshy places. Now, down there, there's very little left. Used to be just lots of it. But, it doesn't get the amount of light now, you know, so it's disappeared. But, usually you can find, along a stream, you can find a jewel weed and a poison ivy growing side by side. [dog returns] We used to use plantain leaves, that you see them - like the bigger green leaves over there. You crush those and put on your poison ivy. [dog pushes closer, and pushes us] And it would actually make the little blisters weep. It would just - weep, you know. And once you get that serum out, then it dries up.  
Dog!

SH: When did you - did you hear about that one from you mother?

BH: Oh, yeah, when I was a kid. Oh, yeah, I was always in the woods, always had poison ivy.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: [long pause; dog pushes closer] We had an old dog, that got bit one day. And - go away! I'm going to hit you! [Dog pauses, and trots nonchalantly over to wall of house to lay down. We watch him for a few moments] He really listens - to never been hit. [we laugh] But, he knows I'm not mad at him. Our old dog came in with his throat hanging all down. And a copperhead had bit him right under there. And Daddy, went out to the barn, and picked some cocklebur leaves. You know what they are?

SH: [slowly] I think so.

BH: You know, they have a little burr about this big, with little spines on them, and it gets in dog's hairs and all. And he crushed up that - those leaves, and put them in some milk. And he worked it around. He put the leaves in a rag, you know, and squished it around. And that milk turned into the greenest, slimiest old looking mess. And gave it to old Buck. And, I'd say, no more that thirty minutes, [laughs] he was up; tail up over his back; round just like nothing was wrong. His throat was still hanging down from the swelling, but the sickness had gone.

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SH: [quietly] How - how do you think this is area is -

going back here-for a minute - how do you think this area's going to get changed? [slight pause] You seem to feel that the reservoir's going to go in.

BH: Okay. This will, you know - will bring in more people. [pause] You see, it's hard for me to appraise the situation, because I see it from a different viewpoint.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: Now, if I was still working, and was --- expecting to politically become something, then I would be glad to see the area grow.

SH: Um-hm.

BH: You know, but - my values is so that I can't really say - I can see it as a lot of uncaring people coming. Because it just - like, you know, when the people came over from Europe, what turned out to be the pioneers - never gave any thought to the virtues of the Indian. And, actually destroyed the people, and his beliefs, and the things that he believed in. You know, it's like - "Okay, we'll get on the train, and we'll ride out through Oklahoma, and we'll shoot buffalo." See, never giving it any thought that the buffalo was alive, plus [chuckle] he was also someone's livelihood. . . . And that's what bothers me - if the people - if they set down and they thought about - the people that will come - if they thought first, that the dairy farmer will have to lose his dairy. And not that it's the money; it's a - a way of life that we're going to destroy. Is it worth it? When I can make - when I can survive in the North, or wherever, you know, and I can survive where I am

and not disrupt anybody else's livelihood. Do I have a right to move into another area, and cause his livelihood, and his way of life to be destroyed? And - that's what I think bothers me most.