

INTERVIEW, INTERVIEWER, INTERVIEWEE

TOPIC: Bilingual Program

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FULL NAME (INTERVIEWER): Doris Stewart Plain Feather

FULL NAME (INTERVIEWEE): William Stops

INITIALS (INTERVIEWER): DSP

INITIALS (INTERVIEWEE): WS

No introduction by Interviewer, it begins with William's own introduction.

Interviewer: Doris Stewart Plain Feather [DSP]

William Stops [WS]: My name is William Stops, graduated from Lodge Grass High School '65, graduated from Monterey Peninsula College, Civil Engineering in '67, uh graduated from Eastern Montana College '73 and my Masters in Mathematics in '78, and so I've been interested in education to help our children, improve our economy, which is nonexistent. Umm I've been working in the school system since '67 and [in?] surveying but I started in the bilingual education program in 1971 at Crow Agency and I was an Evaluator for the program and, then, the next year I was promoted to Director of Bilingual Program at Crow Agency. At Crow Agency, this is the staff that we had: Dr. Hugh Matthews from MIT, he's a linguist and he's still working writing the Bible in the Crow language, he's half way done on that one; and the two boys that we sent to uh MIT was Dale Old Horn, Sonny Joe Reed and they have their Masters in Linguistics from MIT; we had Una Rose He Does It, Crow Language Specialist; Lawrence Big Hair, Crow Language Instructor, er, Illustrator; Dr. Sally Old Coyote, Curriculum Specialist; Joy Toineeta, Cultural Specialist. Umm, in the 1940's uh Crow language usage was approximately 100%, in the 60's, the language usage was down to 80%. This was influenced by marriage to other tribes. Today, the latest survey I saw was uh 13% Crow language usage on the reservation. The elderly Crow still use the Crow language and our children are learning English. Some of the books that are out, Randolph Grazinski[?], 1942, he has a book out printed by the

Library of Congress um, 2017 we had the Board of Regents of Nebraska print a book, uh his book. We have a Bilingual Materials Center, 1986. The Wycliff Bible Translators, 1981, put out a book on Crow language, we have a Bilingual Development Center that put out a book in 1981 and, also we had Rose and Steve Chesarek working on the um Materials Development. Umm What I have here is also a Dictionary of Everyday Crow, Crow and English Translation, um this was put out by the Hardin School District 17-H in Hardin, Montana and this is a kind of an Intermediate Crow Language Pronunciation Spelling from Crow to English and this is probably the only one we have that completes not only the spelling, pronunciation but also definitions of some of the words. Umm when we started the Crow Language umm Program, uh we found that umm the Crow Language had 200 or double, double the language from English. In other words, we had a very descriptive language which I know most of them by uh that's what I used when I was going up. And so a lot of these things are affected by economics and uh the fact that uh we didn't our own school system on the reservations when the state came in and put in a school system for us and it was all English. We couldn't teach Crow in the system. In fact, today, there still is hardly any umm Crow language in the curriculum, the state curriculum. So, again, that kind of falls on the tribe to develop a uh center paid by the Crow Tribe and also people trained by the Crow Tribe to look in to the change of language from Crow to English because, right now, it's not processed in the standardized way so we're learning the English language in an unorthodox way and, also, we're losing our language because we have to communicate in English most of the time outside of the reservation. So, we're in a kind of a bind right now where we're looking for ways to bring back the language. Like I said, the latest survey I saw, there was only 13% Crow language usage, that understand the language and the rest is English or a mixture of Crow and English. The best book out right now is the one by the Hardin School District. It is an accumulation of uh all the work we've done, uh, including Doris here. She was in on the teaching and the translation and development of these um programs. But, again, uh I try to work with the tribe in, like, like I said, we need to develop a Development Center of Education ourselves, permanent, not change every four years because I give a lot of talks on the reservation on education because it's important. Our children need to uh go to school uh, high school, go to college, come back and start some businesses. That's how we will come out of the um socio-economic uh depression that we're in. Uh it's difficult to uh have a uh viable community when you do not a economy that's there. So, that's what we're trying to do the few people that still teach the Crow language or want to preserve it, uh we have people that are hired in the districts to teach the language. In fact, I was offered to teach at Crow here to teach the language but I think that it's a lot of work and it needs to be a uh organized uh office people and we have educated Crow people to work in these centers and develop a program um materials to teach the kids at the appropriate stages. Because in mathematics, I

know that you have to teach the very basic, even beginning at the first grade until, finally, the children can learn statistics and calculus. They cannot learn the higher math if you don't teach them the very basic because I've had people come talk to me about teaching them calculus and statistics but, actually, all they need is trigonometry, algebra and geometry. If they learn all three, they can do the higher math and it's the same way with the language here. You learn any language, you have to know the language, the words and the meaning before you can use the language. Also, to use the proper translation so this is where we're at is we're trying to look at the uh appropriate pronunciation, spelling of Crow words and how to apply that in uh the dominant society uh in the education field. Because we do have the people that are here on the reservation that are trying to do better but, again, there's no place to really give them the statistics on what they're trying to do. Uh I did a dropout study um back in '94, 1994, um right after I taught the Bilingual or directed the Bilingual Program. At that time, what I was trying uh find was what was our dropout rate in high school on the reservation? Uh we have the six districts, we have elementary and umm we have a high school at uh uh Pryor and Lodge Grass. But here is what I found during the study because I'm always interested in the numbers. Again, I was just trying to find out the high school dropout rate in 1994 and what I found was, I used the tribal roll book so that I have every Crow umm person in the book so I know how old they are. And I also contacted all the school on the reservation, off the reservation that our Crow people go to. And what I was able to calculate was uh in 1994, high school dropout rate for the Crow Tribe was 57%. Now this is 1994 so you can imagine what it is today. I figure our dropout rate's about probably 70% now. But, back in '94, it was 57. So, ever since I had the information, I looked at the dropout rate for elementary school, first through eighth grade, and then Head Start. I wondered if the Head Start had dropout rates. Well, here's what I found. High school dropout rate was 57%, elementary dropout rate ages six to thirteen was 23%. They quit school. Head Start had 47% dropout so half of our kids didn't complete Head Start. And I have the total number of enrollments and numbers and...in fact, I thought this was interesting that, back in '94, we had a 57% dropout rate and they haven't done a study on that. And I also did a study on all the Crow people with college degrees because I tell people that we do have Crow people with college degrees that want to work here. And so I did a study on what type of degrees our people were getting uh and there was all a mixture but the most college degrees were in elementary education, 26%. Remember this was in '94. And then we have people in social work, we have people in art, physical education, rehab, business administration, uh nursing, uh education business, history, general business, English, psychology, high school administration and agricultural production. And they were all low numbers. So, again, I did a study on and we do have Crow people with college degrees. We just need to get uh some kind of structure together uh that will tell us what kind of numbers we're looking at. And back in

'94, I found it interesting that umm in the Crow Tribe, uh up to six years to twelve years old, that was our largest group in '94. Our next largest was 30 to 39. These are the kinds of things that we need to look at as we try to uh bring about a change in our education system. So, those are the studies I've done and this is what I found, this is what I share with people, um, I have a little handout on our uh Learning Center we had going uh, again, this was back in 2002. And these are parts of the things that we've done to help continue with uh Bilingual Education. Of course, we need the Tribal uh, not only financial tribal help but personnel tribal help. And uh we need to develop our own education department because I see that we have Title I, Title II, Title IV uh III, that try to help with programs on the reservation. Um one of the big programs was Title VII, the Carl Perkins Grant, Johnson O'Malley, 2002 that was one of the bigger ones we had and uh, we had all kinds of uh programs but they're not permanent, that's our downfall. We need to have tribal structure so that these programs are umm permanent and also to adjust the problems that are current. We don't want to talk about what's gone on and happening. It's already happened and we need to look ahead and I still have request to teach on the reservation. In fact, uh I'm willing to teach on weekends if I can get a building and, of course, equipment to teach. I would teach on weekends. I have people from elementary to high school to adults that request my setting up a center. I'm working on it but it's difficult. So, anyway, this is kind of a small overview of our bilingual education and um we're losing our language, we don't want to lose it but, as we know if you lose your language, you lose your culture. And we're, we're at that point where we need to do something as a tribe because nobody is going to help us. We have to help ourselves. We have Doris here working and getting some of these trainings going and, hopefully, we'll get a center going on. And I keep on trying to work with the tribe. If they ever get me on there, I'll work on the education portion of it and try to work on our economics because this uh, we have a bad situation here we're, we're in deep poverty. We need to pull ourselves out of it. I'm still working on trying to get it out but, as I get more older, I get more tired. So it's hard for me to get up and go sometimes. And, so, this is my small talk on the bilingual program. It's a good program and, again, like I said, we have this book out that's available at the Hardin Museum. They charge you fifteen dollars for it but it's a Crow-English and then English to Crow. It's a very good book, it has all the words, spellings, uh, translation and uh all the correct uh language program to teach Crow to anybody. So, again, that's my small presentation so...is that it?

DSP: Um. That's it.

WS: Thank you.