Hazel Thornton Interview

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SC: [00:00:00:000] And you live in North, South Carolina?

HT: [00:00:00:000] Yes.

SC: [00:00:00:000] How far is that from here?

HT: [00:00:00:000] About six miles from here.

SC: [00:00:00:000] Okay. Have you lived there all your life?

HT: [00:00:12:000] Yes, and around that community all my life.

SC: [00:00:12:000] And you were born there?

HT: [00:00:12:000] Yes.

SC: [00:00:12:000] And I think I heard you tell Chris that you’re eighty-three?

HT: [00:00:24:000] Eighty-three.

SC: [00:00:24:000] So what year were you born?

HT: [00:00:24:000] 1928

SC: [00:00:24:000] Okay. Tell us a little bit about growing up in the area.

HT: [00:00:36:000] Well, when I was growing up we did have no electricity, nothing. It was entirely different than it is now. We had, you know, draw out the water from the well.

HT: [00:00:53:000] And you know I remember my grandmother, she used to tell us when we was children, that her grandmom was a full-blooded Indian, and we didn’t think nothing of it.

HT: [00:01:11:000] You know, we just thought that was the story that she would tell us. Later we found out that it was true.

HT: [00:01:23:000] Back then you didn’t want people to know that she was an Indian. You know, back in them times.

HT: [00:01:37:000] Looking back, I enjoyed myself, even if we didn’t have that much. What questions do you want to know?

SC: [00:01:59:000] Let’s back up. Your grandmother was full-blooded or –

HT: [00:01:59:000] Her grandmother.

SC: [00:01:59:000] Okay, her—your grandmother’s grandmother?

HT: [00:01:59:000] Yes.

SC: [00:02:12:000] Did your grandmother say where her grandmother came from?

HT: [00:02:12:000] No. She didn’t say where she came from.

CJ: [00:02:12:000] They grew up in Sawyerdale?

HT: [00:02:23:000] Oh, it was around—you know in the area my grandma, you know she never did live but about five miles or something to get there, so it had to be in that area.

CJ: [00:02:23:000] About between the two hedge stones [?]

HT: [00:02:23:000] Yes, between the two hedge stones [?]

SC: [00:02:44:000] You remember your grandmother’s name?

HT: [00:02:44:000] Lula.

SC: [00:02:44:000] Lula?

HT: [00:02:44:000] Lula Bolin.

SC: [00:02:44:000] How do you spell that last name?

HT: [00:03:01:000] Bolin. B-o-l-i-n.

SC: [00:03:01:000] B-o-l-i-n. and Lula?

HT: [00:03:01:000] Yes, she was my grandma.

SC: [00:03:01:000] She grew up in the area?

HT: [00:03:01:000] Yes, she did.

SC: [00:03:16:000] And she didn’t know if her grandmother had lived there all her life or if she had moved into that area?

HT: [00:03:16:000] She lived in the same area.

SC: [00:03:27:000] Same area. And when she—she called herself Indian. Did she say just Indian or did she say Edisto or a tribal group or did she use the word Indian?

HT: [00:03:42:000] Yes.

SC: [00:03:42:000] And your family farmed?

HT: [00:03:42:000] Yes.

SC: [00:03:42:000] What did you grow?

HT: [00:03:42:000] What did we do?

SC: [00:03:42:000] What did you grow? What did you grow on the farm?

HT: [00:03:53:000] Cotton, corn, and, you know, sweet potatoes. Stuff like that, you know, back then.

SC: [00:03:53:000] So you said that your—that back then people didn’t talk about being Indian. Is that right?

HT: [00:04:14:000] Didn’t talk about what?

SC: [00:04:14:000] Being Indian. You didn’t tell people.

HT: [00:04:14:000] They really didn’t. Seemed like they didn’t want people to know they were Indian.

CJ: [00:04:25:000] Would they be treated differently if they had identified as Indian?

HT: [00:04:25:000] They would.

SC: [00:04:25:000] So when your grandmother told you that her grandmother was full-blooded Indian did she tell you in confidence? Did she tell you not to tell anybody?

HT: [00:04:41:000] No, she didn’t.

SC: [00:04:41:000] Did she tell—

HT: [00:04:41:000] It was just understood like that. She didn’t tell us to, you know—

SC: [00:04:53:000] Did she tell people outside the family? Did she tell the neighbors or did the neighbors know that she was Indian?

HT: [00:04:53:000] Yeah, they knew.

CJ: [00:05:05:000] Were many people in that neighborhood also Indian?

HT: [00:05:05:000] Yeah, there was.

CJ: [00:05:05:000] It was a large Indian community?

HT: [00:05:05:000] It was.

CJ: [00:05:05:000] And mostly families related to them lived there?

HT: [00:05:05:000] Yes.

CJ: [00:05:05:000] How many families, about, lived down there, would you say?

HT: [00:05:18:000] Lived in the community?

CJ: [00:05:18:000] Yeah.

HT: [00:05:18:000] Oh it was—I would say over half. People that lived in the community.

CJ: [00:05:18:000] And were there a couple hundred?

HT: [00:05:18:000] Yes.

CJ: [00:05:18:000] A couple hundred at first?

SC: [00:05:33:000] The other folks—they were white or black or…?

HT: [00:05:33:000] It was mixed.

SC: [00:05:33:000] And the—well, you talked to somebody about the school, didn’t you? Did you go to school there?

HT: [00:05:49:000] Yeah, we went to school at Sawyerdale.

SC: [00:05:49:000] Okay. Was that—?

HT: [00:05:56:000] You know, my parents went there too. You know, it was just a country school. Went to sixth grade. It was just, you know, out in the country.

CJ: [00:06:10:000] Two rooms with the boys on one side and the girls on the other or one big classroom? What was it like?

HT: [00:06:15:000] They had, um…first. They had first and second grade together. Third and fourth, and then fifth and sixth. You know, they had three, three classrooms.

SC: [00:06:31:000] Each room had a teacher?

HT: [00:06:31:000] Huh?

SC: [00:06:31:000] Did each room have their own teacher?

HT: [00:06:31:000] Yeah. And they had two grades in each room.

CJ: [00:06:42:000] How did you get to school? How far away from home was it?

HT: [00:06:42:000] Well, about three miles. Now, when I went there I rode the bus.

CJ: [00:06:56:000] You rode the bus?

HT: [00:06:56:000] When my parents went there they walked. You know, they didn’t have no way to get to school.

SC: [00:07:09:000] Did they get time off during the farming season? I know a lot of schools in South Carolina, you know they’d have the summers off, but they’d also have time off if you’re growing cotton and the whole family has to go out and pick cotton. Did you do that in the summers?

HT: [00:07:25:000] No, they just had the regular—when I was going we had regular nine months of school.

SC: [00:07:25:000] Yeah.

CJ: [00:07:25:000] Did you work on the farm?

HT: [00:07:25:000] Yeah.

CJ: [00:07:37:000] What did you do?

HT: [00:07:37:000] What did I do? Anything that there was to do, you know, on the farm.

CJ: [00:07:37:000] So tell us stories about that.

HT: [00:07:48:000] Well, you know back then you worked with the mules. You didn’t have tractors and stuff like you do now. And so, uh, we had cotton. We had, you know, corn and cotton. You know the corn—you know you just had [inaudible] by hand, too. You didn’t have no machines.

CJ: [00:08:27:000] How old were you when you first went into the field? Were you just a little girl when you went into the field?

HT: [00:08:27:000] Yeah.

CJ: [00:08:27:000] School girl age?

HT: [00:08:27:000] I was small.

CJ: [00:08:27:000] Could you team up the mules?

HT: [00:08:39:000] No. [laughter] My brother could.

CJ: [00:08:39:000] Could you walk behind them and hold onto the reigns?

HT: [00:08:39:000] Oh yeah, but you know I couldn’t work, um, plow. Plow.

HT: [00:08:59:000] They trained boys to do that. You know, the boys in the family. The girls in the family just did the hoeing and picking and stuff like that.

SC: [00:08:59:000] How many did you have in your family? How many boys and girls?

HT: [00:09:14:000] It was four boys and six girls. And my grandmamma, she had fourteen. [laughter]

HT: [00:09:14:000] Yeah, she had fourteen.

SC: [00:09:33:000] And do you have children?

HT: [00:09:33:000] Yeah.

SC: [00:09:33:000] How many do you have?

HT: [00:09:33:000] I’ve got six.

SC: [00:09:33:000] Okay. [laughter] And grandchildren?

HT: [00:09:33:000] Yeah, two boys and four girls.

SC: [00:09:49:000] So where did you fall in the ten? Were you younger or older?

HT: [00:09:49:000] I was next oldest.

SC: [00:09:49:000] Next oldest.

HT: [00:09:49:000] My brother, he was older than me.

SC: [00:10:00:000] So did you have to help with the little ones? Help take care of them?

HT: [00:10:00:000] Oh yeah.

SC: [00:10:00:000] So, with the ten of you working the farm, and I guess your parents, did you have to hire other people? Or did other people help outside of the family? Did you have neighbors or cousins help on the farm?

HT: [00:10:20:000] No, not normally. We had enough.

SC: [00:10:20:000] You had enough help. Did you get any kind of allowance or pay for doing it or were you just expected to do it?

HT: [00:10:33:000] No, we didn’t get no pay or nothing.

SC: [00:10:33:000] [laughter] Okay.

CJ: [00:10:33:000] You got dinner.

HT: [00:10:33:000] Yes.

SC: [00:10:33:000] [laughter] Tell my daughter that. Well, you said corn and cotton and what else?

HT: [00:10:52:000] Lettuce. Sweet potatoes. That was most of what we planted.

SC: [00:10:52:000] Did you sell any of that? You sold the cotton, I guess.

HT: [00:11:03:000] Yes, we sold the extra cotton. And corn, you know, keep that. We had to keep some back for the mules and the hogs and the animals. And so we didn’t sell all the crop corn.

SC: [00:11:25:000] And the sweet potatoes? You keep those?

HT: [00:11:25:000] Mostly kept them.

CJ: [00:11:25:000] Where’d you store those? Were they stored in a barn or underground?

HT: [00:11:35:000] No they had a place that—a shoveled out place.

HT: [00:11:48:000] You put straw in and then you put your sweet potatoes in there. Then you put stakes up and make it look kind of like a tent.

HT: [00:12:03:000] Put the straw down and dirt and them sweet potatoes kept all winter.

CJ: [00:12:03:000] All winter that way.

SC: [00:12:03:000] Did you cover them up?

HT: [00:12:03:000] We put stakes up kind of like a tent and you put your straw down there. You put your dirt on it.

SC: [00:12:22:000] Oh the dirt, okay.

HT: [00:12:22:000] Up on top of the straw.

SC: [00:12:22:000] Yeah.

CJ: [00:12:22:000] That’s like out in the open somewhere?

HT: [00:12:22:000] Huh?

CJ: [00:12:22:000] That’s like out in the open or in a barn?

HT: [00:12:22:000] No, out in the field.

CJ: [00:12:22:000] So just wide out in the open?

HT: [00:12:22:000] Yes.

SC: [00:12:34:000] And they call the potatoes stack [?]

HT: [00:12:34:000] Sweet potatoes, stack [?], yes.

SC: [00:12:34:000] I’ve heard something similar but they call it banking, potato banking, or potato bank rather than stack [?].

HT: [00:12:46:000] Yeah, I’ve heard sweet potato bank.

SC: [00:12:46:000] And would they start sprouting? Start with the eyes? Start growing or rooting?

HT: [00:12:46:000] No, they stayed good until we brought them in the farm to eat.

SC: [00:13:05:000] If you left [inaudible] of day and you put them in the cabinet or the refrigerator they’ll start growing right away. You start getting those little eyes on them. You say you ate sweet potatoes. What else did you eat? What would be a regular Sunday dinner for you?

HT: [00:13:26:000] Well, back then they growed their own meat, their own cows and calves for milk. And the chickens for their eggs and meat. And you always had a garden, even in the summer.

SC: [00:13:45:000] What was in the garden?

HT: [00:13:45:000] Well, in the winter it was turnips and mustard and collards. And then in the summer they grow mostly peas and beans.

SC: [00:14:02:000] Did you grow tomatoes?

HT: [00:14:02:000] [coughs] Oh yeah.

SC: [00:14:02:000] Do you need a drink of water? Want some water?

HT: [00:14:02:000] No. [coughs]

CJ: [00:14:15:000] Did the men hunt and fish?

HT: [00:14:15:000] They did.

CJ: [00:14:15:000] Did they do that a lot?

HT: [00:14:15:000] They did.

CJ: [00:14:15:000] What’d they hunt?

HT: [00:14:21:000] What’d they hunt? Well they hunted in the winter time opossums and stuff like that. And squirrels and rabbits. They didn’t do that much hunting in the summer.

CJ: [00:14:44:000] Any deer?

HT: [00:14:44:000] We didn’t have no deer.

CJ: [00:14:44:000] No deer. What about fishing?

HT: [00:14:44:000] Yeah. We fished.

CJ: [00:14:44:000] Go after lake bass and brown and that kind of stuff?

HT: [00:14:44:000] Yeah.

SC: [00:14:58:000] They do rod and reel fishing? Or they do any net fishing?

HT: [00:14:58:000] Most of them just have poles. When I was growing up you didn’t have a rod and reel.

CJ: [00:15:15:000] Yeah, cut a cane pole?

HT: [00:15:15:000] Yes, cane pole.

SC: [00:15:15:000] Just from the bank or did they go out?

HT: [00:15:15:000] Yeah they had boats.

SC: [00:15:15:000] Oh they went out in boats?

HT: [00:15:15:000] They had boats for fishing.

CJ: [00:15:27:000] Did you ever know anybody to make their own paddles? Like their own paddles for boats? Because in some parts of the lowcountry Indians made paddles and oars.

HT: [00:15:27:000] Yeah, they had. That’s the way they got around. They didn’t have no motor. They just had the paddles.

CJ: [00:15:27:000] Did they make them themselves?

HT: [00:15:44:000] Yeah. And the poles.

SC: [00:15:44:000] And they probably made the boats.

HT: [00:15:44:000] Made the boats and the paddles.

CJ: [00:15:44:000] What did those boats look like? Wooden boats?

HT: [00:15:53:000] Looks kind of like a canoe, you know.

CJ: [00:15:53:000] Low and flat?

HT: [00:15:53:000] Yeah. Low and flat and would take about anywhere from two to three people in the boat.

CJ: [00:16:11:000] Do you remember people in your family making boats like that?

HT: [00:16:11:000] Mhmm.

SC: [00:16:11:000] Was it a solid tree trunk that was hollowed out?

HT: [00:16:24:000] They had sawed it into lumber and they made a boat.

SC: [00:16:24:000] They made it out of boards? Out of planks?

HT: [00:16:24:000] Yeah.

SC: [00:16:34:000] And were there certain people who were good at making the boats or could anybody?

HT: [00:16:34:000] No, there was certain people in the community that did that.

SC: [00:16:34:000] You remember any of those? Any names?

HT: [00:16:34:000] No.

CJ: [00:16:51:000] Do you remember doing any sort of activities that were [inaudible]. Did you practice any sort of traditional healing or anything like that?

HT: [00:16:51:000] No.

CJ: [00:17:05:000] Did you celebrate the harvest or any activities like that?

HT: [00:17:05:000] Holidays, yeah. We had Thanksgiving, Easter, you know, them holidays.

SC: [00:17:22:000] You talked about having hogs. Was there a special time that you’d slaughter a hog?

HT: [00:17:22:000] Oh yes.

SC: [00:17:22:000] When would you do that?

HT: [00:17:30:000] In the winter time they would do that. They would pack meat in salt and cure it out. That was some meat.

SC: [00:17:52:000] What they packed in salt—were those mainly hams?

HT: [00:17:52:000] Yeah, hams, shoulders, and the sides.

SC: [00:17:52:000] Did they do anything with the other parts? Did they make like a hash?

HT: [00:18:03:000] They made sausage and pudding.

SC: [00:18:03:000] Oh okay. How’d they make the pudding? Did they make a hash dish at all with barbeque over rice?

HT: [00:18:19:000] Oh yeah, they made that too.

SC: [00:18:19:000] Did they have that pudding pot where they throw in everything?

HT: [00:18:19:000] Yes.

SC: [00:18:19:000] That’s something.

HT: [00:18:19:000] Yeah, they had one called pudding pot.

SC: [00:18:33:000] Yeah, yeah, is that where…they say everything but the squeal goes in?

HT: [00:18:33:000] Uh-huh [laughter]

SC: [00:18:33:000] Was it a—there are some folks who I know in other parts of the state they’ll only slaughter a hog on a full moon or a new moon. Do you remember any of that?

HT: [00:18:50:000] No. They just kind of went with the weather. When the weather was cold, that’s when they did it.

SC: [00:18:50:000] That’s when they did it. How long did the hog keep? The ham, the sausage?

HT: [00:18:50:000] How long did it keep?

SC: [00:18:50:000] Yeah.

HT: [00:19:07:000] Well, when cured in salt, it kept.

SC: [00:19:14:000] Were there special occasions where—would you have that for breakfast all the time or for dinner or is that something you’d save for special occasions?

HT: [00:19:14:000] No, we just had it for breakfast and dinner.

SC: [00:19:31:000] Was there anything you would eat on special occasions, holidays, birthdays, or anything special?

HT: [00:19:38:000] Yeah, I remember—you know around Easter it’s kind of cool, cool weather. And they would, well we didn’t call it slaughter, we called it butcher.

SC: [00:19:51:000] You called it what?

HT: [00:19:51:000] Butcher.

SC: [00:19:51:000] Ah, butcher, okay.

HT: [00:19:51:000] You ever heard of that?

SC: [00:19:51:000] Oh yeah.

HT: [00:19:58:000] Yeah, and they’d get one that weighed about 100 pounds and they’d catch that for Easter. You know, because we didn’t have no way of refrigerating or nothing, so we could mostly eat that up [inaudible].

SC: [00:20:23:000] How did they cook that?

HT: [00:20:23:000] Mostly sausage and stuff like that.

SC: [00:20:23:000] How about cakes and pies, birthday cakes, or Christmas? Did you ever eat anything special?

HT: [00:20:38:000] Yeah.

SC: [00:20:38:000] So what’d you have?

HT: [00:20:38:000] Yeah, they’d celebrate at a birthday. You’d always have a cake.

CJ: [00:20:55:000] What else would you like to tell us today about your life down here and being an Indian?

HT: [00:20:55:000] Well, seems like it’s kind of [inaudible—adjusting mic] parent. And looking back, I would like to have known that when I was growing up. I had to lie.

CJ: [00:21:30:000] At what point did you find out that you were Indian? How old were you?

HT: [00:21:30:000] Oh I was…Betty? Um, you know I didn’t know I was Indian until they helped tracing it back.

CJ: [00:21:49:000] Oh, so you found out recently?

HT: [00:21:49:000] Yeah, you know, my children had always [inaudible—children screaming in background].

SC: [00:21:58:000] Did you feel any different?

HT: [00:21:58:000] It seemed like I did. Yeah, it seemed like I felt different.

SC: [00:21:58:000] What do you think changed in terms of society where people were—you said it’s now more like an honor. What do you think caused that change?

HT: [00:22:18:000] Well, you know, it’s changed.

SC: [00:22:27:000] Something completely different, something I meant to ask you a minute ago when Chris was asking you about healing and so forth. When you were a kid, what did you do when you got sick? Where’d you go?

HT: [00:22:38:000] They had things that had been passed down through the Indians. They had all kinds of remedies to use, like make tea and stuff.

HT: [00:22:53:000] And we never did go to the doctor when we was sick. They just treated us and we were fine.

SC: [00:22:53:000] Do you remember any of those teas? What they were? What they tasted like?

HT: [00:23:07:000] Remember what?

SC: [00:23:07:000] Do you remember any of those teas?

HT: [00:23:07:000] They used to make one called Cherry Bark Tea.

HT: [00:23:15:000] I remember that and they’d take the bark off a Cherry Tree and they’d have to let it sit so long, which they don’t got to do anymore.

HT: [00:23:38:000] And they’d do that for colic and different stuff for the baby’s head. And it worked.

SC: [00:23:48:000] Do you remember anything else for the flu or cold or anything?

HT: [00:23:48:000] No.

CJ: [00:23:48:000] Thank you Miss Hazel.

SC: [00:24:07:000] Thank you very much for talking to us. We appreciate it. [children screaming in the background]. I hope we can come back and talk to you some more sometime if that’s alright with you.

HT: [00:24:07:000] [nods]

SC: [00:24:07:000] We appreciate it.