

Interview with Frederick (Fred) Dakota

Baraga, Michigan

January 30, 2012

Russell M Magnaghi (RM): Okay, this morning the interview will focus on the life and times of Fred Dakota. Fred, you don't mind that I call you Fred?

Frederick "Fred" Dakota (FD): No, I'd rather be called Fred.

RM: Okay, Fred my first question is what is your birth date?

FD: My birthdate is June 10 1937.

RM: Can you tell us about your background and have you always lived in Baraga?

FD: Well I've always lived on the Reservation. I was born on the reservation, I've lived here my entire life. With an exception of, you know, I went to Chicago, well and I went in the military for a while, you know things like that

RM: Um-hmm. Could you tell us a little about when you were growing up. What was life like for yourself, Native Americans in the, in the Baraga area here?

FD: Well I was. My mother was about 16 years old when I was born and you know times were very, very tough on the reservation, although it was very, very tough throughout the country. And my grandmother is the person that actually raised me until I was 5 years old.

RM: Just an interruption, your mother's name and your grandmother's name?

FD: My mother's name is Rose Dakota and my grandmother's name was Mary Curtis Dakota Beson, like that.

RM: Okay, Beson?

FD: Beson

RM: How do you spell that?

FD: B-E-S-O-N

RM: Okay so back to life on the, life here at that time.

FD: Yeah, it's very difficult for me to try to remember that, although I try real hard to remember that. Umm and I'm not even quite certain if I was 4 or 5 when my grandmother died, but I do remember in the bedroom of the little log house that we had in Zeba and she died of tuberculosis, T-B. And I can remember the last few days or I think, that before she passed away she would not, she would not let me around her and I thought, you know that this was really strange, that she was kinda even mean to that. But now I realize that, you know she didn't want me to catch T-B.

RM: Um-Hmm

FD: So yeah she, I can remember her in the bed telling me to stay away, stay away, stay away, stay away. And well subsequently she died after that. And I can remember after that there was an old gentleman. He was kind of a crippled guy, his name was Tommy Newton. And he used come over and visit my grandma and you know at home. So I did know him and he took me over to the orphanage. I'm thinking it was 1942, but I don't have the records, so I'm thinking it

was right around 1942, I'm thinking I was either, I think I was 5 but I'm not quite sure either.

Uhh anyway I...

RM: And this is the orphanage at Assinins?

FD: At Assinins yeah, it was a Catholic Orphanage. I believe it was funded by the, I don't know, the government, I'm not sure who really funded it. But you know at that time it was the policy to, to take the language away from you and to make citizens of the United States out of you instead of a tribal person. But you know I was very young then, but I can remember he walked me into the orphanage and I was in a room with some, I believe one of the nuns or a priest come and talked for a while. And he promised me he was going to be right back, but he never come back. And it seemed like I, it seemed like I was in that room for, for many hours, waiting, crying and that's what I remember about my early, early childhood. And I remained in the orphanage until 1949, so I was in there for several years. And then my mother came back and picked me up and I used to see other children that would be at the orphanage and people would come in and would adopt the orphan, but apparently they knew I wasn't an orphan and maybe there was word that you cannot adopt this child. I really don't know what it was. There was people who were interested in me too, but was never, ever able to _____ [go?] And then my father came and visited me a couple of times, he was from Baraga here.

RM: And his name?

FD: His name was Fred Dakota, uh Fred Cote, C-O-T-E. And he came and visited me a couple of times. And then my mother came back, you know, and she visited me for, for maybe one year, then she come back like the next year. And then eventually come and picked me up.

RM: And that was in 1949? That you left?

FD: Yeah, and she was with my stepfather. His name was Wesley Hobinen. H-O-B-I-N-E-N. And they eventually picked me up at the orphanage. I can always recall the, my mother and him would get into arguments occasionally and I would over hear them calling, you know, saying that they cost 800 dollars to get me out of the orphanage. I had that on my mind eventually I paid my step-dad, as I got older. But anyway I can recall that and then went to school in Minneapolis, Detroit, Sault Sainte Marie. My step dad was a travelling sales-man, he sold magazines and things like that and vacuum cleaners, you know that kind of thing. No regular pay-day, just whatever you could sell and find a profit on. That was his way of life. And eventually I ended up in Sault Sainte. Marie. And I'm going to tell you everything. Okay? Well in Sault Sainte Marie I'd say quit school and I was setting pins, bowling alley pins. And I was also working at the local Coca-Cola factory, making the coke products, helping to bottle and handling and washing trucks and all that kind of stuff. But anyway by and by I was able to get ahold of an old car and you know not knowing anything about mechanics or anything like that. You just start it up and you go, so I was doing that. And one morning I'm going down the street and its starts getting off to the side of the road and it just starts going slowly, slowly and I turned the wheel a little bit and it wasn't coming back. And eventually there was a telephone pole coming up and I had to pump my brakes three times in order to stop, I only got it twice till I hit the telephone pole, broke the telephone off. And I guess I must have gotten a ticket from the police but anyway, you know, I had no money or nothing, my family didn't have anything either. And I was ordered by the court to, I think it was pay a certain amount of money for that telephone pole for its repair and stuff. I can't remember what it was, but by that time I was 18 years-old and I didn't know what they were going to do with me, I figured they were going to lock me up or something I certainly never had the money to pay for the damages. So I went

down to join the Army, so I get down to the Post Office where the recruiting station was, and there's no Army guy there to, that I could enlist with. I was going to go by myself, but I met five other guys down there, and I think three of them were tribal members from the Sault Sainte Marie Band and naturally I knew them because we hung around, in the pool halls and things like that. So anyway I knew them. And they said why don't you come with us? We're going to join the Marine Corps. So I found out that the Army recruiter wasn't going to be there that day so I went in with them guys. So you know I think there was seven of us that went in at the same time.

RM: Ohh, Okay. Now was that during the Korean War?

FD: No, I went in September of 1955. It was just after the Korean War.

RM: Oh, Oh. Uh huh

FD: And in fact the Korean veterans were getting, when they got mustered out of the military, after they put their time in. They had mustering out pay, well since the Korean crisis was over. I joined after that, little did I realize that when I going to get out I'm not going to get a little lump sum of money, I'm going to get unemployment benefits, so there was a difference there. But anyway I was in until 1958 got out in 1958. And went back to Sault Sainte Marie and eventually ended up back here on the reservation. My mother and my step dad was still living in the Sault when I got out of the military. And then we, eventually we moved back up here on the reservation to the old house where my grandmother lived and so that was, that was kind of the beginning days and then I come back to the reservation.

RM: A question for you here; when you had gone to the orphanage and gone through that process and all. Did you, was your Native American culture then taken from you? Did you still

you know, have it? Was still there some connection? Obviously there was to a point when you came back here.

FD: Yeah there was. Yes that orphanage itself was, it had three floors. And the second and third floor had young boys on one floor and older boys on the other floor and the same thing on the other side with the girls, it was the same thing. You know young ones and the older ones upstairs. And we actually were made to go to church three times a day; you had to go in early morning, before breakfast. And then again at noon, and again in the evening. I didn't really know a heck of a lot about my culture or my language because I was relatively young. Like I said I can't remember exactly when I was there. But I do know that, I'm thinking that at that age kids are learning their language. And I'm thinking that probably I did too and, but today I can't recollect a whole lot about that. But who knows it was quite traumatic to be put into that orphanage, and I suppose they do a lot of things with your mind, and try to put it out or whatever. I don't know, I really cannot say. But I didn't retain any of that language or the culture. But they, you had to speak English and the traditional Catholic stuff you know. That amount of religion and...

RM: Now can I ask you were you a Catholic or a Methodist coming from Zeba?

FD: My mother told me I was a Methodist and I did return to the Methodists when I got out.

RM: Okay. So then so you came back after the, after a time in the Marines, and here did you serve during that time, overseas?

FD: When I was in the Marine Corps yeah I had my boot camp and advanced infantry training in California. I had cold weather training in the high Sierras in California and don't let anyone believe or tell you that it doesn't get severely cold in California. I spent the most miserable-est

days that I ever spent in my entire life in the high Sierras. We had to live in the snow banks, make our snow house or make a cave. And you were supplied with a candle and you lived that way for eight days and continually harassed every night, several times a night. And you had to have guards up all the time. They were training you and they were training you well.

RM: So there were like, there were two camps? You were like facing an enemy?

FD: No they had the enemy that was their duty, was to come and harass the recruits. So it was kinda like that. It was very miserable. You'd be, you had to be real careful for, or you would get a foot disease if you were too lazy to stop and change your socks. Because you had real warm boots, you know they're very warm, and they kept you moving, they kept you active so you didn't freeze that way. But at night it was pretty cold. It was real interesting. And that was, I had my training there. And then I went to, I was stationed in Japan. I was at North Camp Fuji, it was on the slopes of the Fuji Mountain. I was only in there for probably a short period of time, I can't remember just a few months. And then came along the Suez Crisis, and it was on the Marine Corps Birthday of that year that we were supposed to have, we called them "Round Eyes" they were military, military, United States Military women, that were coming up from other parts of Japan and the bases there to our mess-hall and were going to have a big Marine Corps Birthday type thing. Well that morning, this was supposed to happen in the evening, well that morning we were all confined to barracks, that was the beginning of that Suez Crisis for us. So we were there all day long, they were making a new, I don't know if you'd call it an attack team or whatever it was, but they restructured the whole base. I was what they called a B-A-R Gunner, It was an automatic weapon and it just worked out off of a tripod in the front of the barrel. I was carrying one of those, they were quite heavy too. But after that whole thing was done, they all of a sudden made me a machine gunner, light 30 air-cooled machine-gunner and

also a water-cooled light 30 machine-gunner. So they loaded us up aboard ship in Yokohama that very night, we traveled by truck down to, you know down to the ship. And I believe, I think that the riflemen carried their rifles with them, and you know whatever rifles there was but when I got down to the ship there, they told me that few days out from port, you know we had to clean up the guns, had to take all the Cosmoline off. They were brand new but you wanted, they were protecting them from rust and corrosion. So they were gooped up real good, it's very, very difficult to get off. And I had to do that and I had to go to the back and make sure everything worked off the fan tail, you had live ammo and everything make sure everything was working. And that became my weapon from that time onward. Well nothing did happen but it ended up that we, they ended up as a good will tour. Is what they referred to it after. I seen several, several countries took, had liberty in Hong-Kong, Karachi Pakistan, Bombay India, the Philippine Islands, we had a landing at the Philippine Islands. And then like that, and when we got done with that tour we were stationed in... Okinawa, yeah then I finished up my tour of duty in Okinawa so. It was an eighteen month tour so when I get out of Okinawa I was stationed in Quantico, Virginia. By that time I'm, I'd been a private, and then a private first class, and then when I came back to be stationed in Quantico, Virginia I apparently upset the person that was on duty. I didn't get my corporal stripes, an old gunnery sergeant an old tired or crabby old guy he tore up my stripes right in front of me, he told me you didn't get a haircut for it. Okay, that's fine with me I'm just going to do my three year term anyway. So...

RM: Yeah

FD: So it ended up that I was or, until I got out of the military we used to have to look at the bulletin board every day to find out where we were supposed to be and at what time the next morning. And by that time I was a full machine gunner, so we would go out on details and your

military captains and, well they weren't captains, they were boot camp lieutenants second louee's I think they referred, and they also had FBI agents that they were training at Quantico, Virginia at that time. So we'd get our detail of what to, where we were supposed to be doing for the week so they pick me up in the morning at seven, eight o'clock and run you out to where you were supposed to be and tell you what you were supposed to do, what you were supposed to be looking for. And it was training for the other people, so I did that until, until I got out. When I got out and I come on back to Sault Sainte Marie. Then...

RM: Then you came back

FD: Then I came back here, yeah.

RM: Then when you came back to the Baraga Area, the reservation and so on. What did you get into at that point?

FD: When I got out, there was no jobs to be had. You couldn't get a job if you wanted to. But anyway the lady down at the unemployment office that I was drawing my unemployment from being in the military. She asked me if I could climb. And I didn't know what she was talking about anyway, but she offered me a job building towers, an iron worker. So sure I guess I can climb. But anyway my M-O-S, that would be what they referred to as what they trained you for, was really of no value to me. The only thing she said that you could possibly qualify for would be maybe a prison guard or something. But there wasn't anything like that around here that I could find a job with so I ended up going to climbing for tower construction. They we building an addition to a tower up in Herman, they were putting another hundred feet on it. So I got into climbing and doing some, some high iron work. And I guess prior to that I was also cutting pulp,

cutting logs, skidding with a horse. Stuff like that, I've been a lumberjack, and a timberjack, and a everything. So...

RM: Kind of typical of people from the upper peninsula, finding employment?

FD: Yeah. Anyway I went to, I followed that tower construction. They needed somebody to drive the truck that they used for work, and I didn't have a vehicle or anything so I got to drive the truck and we, I ended up in. Oh I don't remember where in the heck it was, Iowa somewhere. What we were doing was we weren't building at that time, we were just torquing the bolts and making sure everything was there and then repainting so we did that. I was doing that. And then I had lost my partner in between time, and the people I were working for they were looking for help for me on the job. They couldn't find anybody, because people would come out there, they wouldn't come back the next day. So I can't remember where it was, but it was out west there. I had been in several towns and like that and I went and had some sarsaparillas one night. And I got homesick and I left everything there and I got on a Greyhound bus and I came home. So I came back to the reservation.

RM: So you were working then, you didn't have a partner or anything, so you were working alone?

FD: By myself, yeah

RM: On these high towers?

FD: Yeah Um-hmm. So then...

RM: So that was about what year then?

FD: Ohh gosh that had to be in `59 or like that, anyway I did get married to my first wife, I believe it was in `59 and in the meantime I had signed up to be relocated in Chicago, Illinois when I was single. So I signed up with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. At that time they were sending Indians off the reservation, relocating them so that they maybe they won't come back. I think that's what they were talking about. But anyway I did sign up and I signed up for Chicago because there was some other people, some other people here that relocated down there and they had jobs and like that so. So be the time I finally got my call to go, I had a wife and a child. So well I went to Chicago with my oldest boy.

RM: So did the whole family go then?

FD: Yeah, the whole family

RM: Now do you want to add your first wife's name?

FD: Yeah her name was Amelia Schwartz. S-W-A-R-T-Z and...

RM: And your son?

FD: My son was Dale, my oldest son. Anyway we ended up in Chicago and they weren't ready with that paperwork, so. I have a telephone number I got to call. When I get to Chicago and let them know that I'm here. So we get into the train station down there, I make my call. Go out to the area they told me that they'd pick me up, so when I get in the car, I got a family with me. So they take me into the office in downtown Chicago, in one them big buildings. And they have to do a lot of changing work, changing records and stuff...

RM: Because of your family?

FD: Yeah, yeah. Anyway their job was to get us off the reservation and to find us a job. And relocate us to the mainstream I guess...

RM: Okay

FD: Okay so they did get me a job in, just a little suburb outside of Chicago. Clarendon Hills Illinois, in the big city now! They found me an apartment, they bought me furniture, they treated us real well. I had never seen that much money before, let alone have it in my hand. But everything was budgeted. They told you how to spend every nickel that you had. I got a job in Clarendon Hills in a bow and arrow factory of all places making bow and arrows. So I'm there, and I'm not making very much money. They had, they have a budget for you, this is how much you're going to get paid, this is how much you're going to take home, this is how much it's going to cost you for your train fare to get out to the job, and this is what it's going to cost you, how much for cigarettes. I was smoking at the time. And everything was budgeted all the way down the line. So there was very little left for anything, let alone trying to buy a vehicle or anything. So I work in this Clarendon Hills factory for probably a few months. And every once in a while, you know you can feel when somebody's looking at you? Well the customers at Clarendon Hills that were ordering the product, they would show them up. We got an Indian working here and I could feel that.

RM: Oh, oh

FD: I could see people looking, I didn't know what I was doing really, I just was trying to do the best I could, the way I was told. I was no expert by any means. I was a machine gunner! So anyway I knew some people in Chicago and we hooked up with them. There was a guy by the name of Dick Veeker, he was married to one of the ladies here on the reservation, Loretta Hugo

and we met up with them and he was a labor foreman on a construction company. So he says why don't you come and work for me Fred? You know you can make a lot more money there. And so naturally I did go there. And then I lost contact with the Bureau although they did come up and see, every once and a while and make sure that, um I don't know, if someone was still there, if I'm all right. I don't know what. I was doing alright. I had enough money to buy a car and I could drive back and forth to work and like that too. And then I stayed there and I worked for that company for quite some times. And they we built a shopping center, after the...we were, I got hired working at the, for a big nuclear facility there. I can't think of the name of it for now. But it's still going, in the outskirts of Chicago there and then we finished up at a shopping mall, built a shopping mall. I was a laborer for carpenters and then I got laid off. And I got homesick and I come home. So when I get home, jobs are still real hard to find, there isn't much going on, so it was back out in the woods, do some pulp cutting. And I almost starved to death out there too. There used to be some Finnish gentlemen from Aura that I heard of, didn't know them that well, very nice people. I'm out there cutting pulp and cutting logs sometimes and having problems with falling trees sometimes. And sometimes my power saw gets stuck in the cut and I'd have to go find one of them old Finn guys and say, hey can you help me out? And they were very nice, they would just laugh. And it seems to me that every time I seen them, they were drinking coffee and eating rolls and I'm sweating to beat heck. I'm not getting anywhere with this thing, and then when I go look for them, that's what they're doing. And come payday they're making twice as much as me! So I guess I must have realized that this probably isn't my way I should go. I was driving tractor by then too, skidding logs.

RM: so you were working with this, then Finnish workers and what not?

FD: Yeah, yeah. Nice people, they'd just laugh and come and cut me out. You need any more just don't worry about it, come and get me, pretty nice people. Anyway after that I was able to get a job at Pettibone, so I worked in there for nine years, didn't make a whole lot money there either, but kept the wolves away and was able to feed my children, I had several children after that. And eventually there was a chairman, he was of the tribe. He took a job with a new organization that was just being put together. It was called Michigan Intertribal Council.

RM: What was his name?

FD: Kelly Perault. P-E-R-R-A-U-L-T, P-E-R-A-U-L-T. I think that's what it is. And he was a good friend, he was a little bit older than me, he was a good friend of mine too. He and George Curtis, George Curtis would be a relative of mine, cause my grandmother's name is Curtis. And he became the chairman of the tribe and the other one, Kelly Perault he had to resign because he was going to be the head of the Michigan Intertribal Council. And them were the early days of tribal organization in Michigan. They asked me if I would fill an unexpired term. And I think this was in 1967 or 68 it was something like that. So I say I suppose, game for anything. Yeah I'll do it, so I was sworn in to the council to fill someone's unexpired term. I don't even remember who it was. And I went on the council, I was working for Pettibone, and so in 1969. They asked me to be chairman of the tribe. The guy that was chairman at that time was George Curtis, and he asked me, he says I want you to be chairman. So I did I took it. And all of a sudden, the Indian Health Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, they're calling me all the time! Christ, they won't leave me alone, every day somebody calling me, the EDA or somebody calling me all the gosh damned time. Because you know, I signed the papers on behalf of the tribe. And they're calling me at work, I told them you've got to call me at home in the evening cause I can't be answering the phone at work, well they never stopped. So I had worked for

Pettibone for nine years prior to that, out of the woods and everything. And they just couldn't take it anymore, they said Fred, you're going to have to work for the tribe or you're going to have to work for Pettibone. So I weighed that situation out and I packed my tools and I put them in the trunk of the car and I went home. And that was from then on, I think, I don't even know if I could draw unemployment after that, can't remember, maybe I was. It's hard for me to remember that. But after that the tribe said they'd put me to work on a, they had a program for home improvement. So there was a small pay check there for me to at least feed my family and keep...

RM: So the tribal position was not a paid position?

FD: No it never was, never was a paid position. The only time it became a paid position when they had a, when the government was giving the states and cities money to create work. They called it a Comprehensive Training Employment and Training Act. Do you recall that? CETA they called it? Then the tribe put together a proposal to pay my position, and some other positions, maintenance workers and stuff like that. But, because by that time we had relocated the tribe into the old orphanage I was in before. By that time, by the next time I was, I was the priest in charge.

RM: I guess it would be important for you to add something here. At that time, as you had mentioned earlier, sort of tribal government was just emerging, evolving. And this is when, this is what you're talking about and I think at that time there weren't many what, recognized....

FD: there was four recognized tribes in the state of Michigan.

RM: In the state of Michigan, in the UP there were?

FD: In the UP there was Hannahville, Keweenaw Bay, and Bay Mills. Yeah, those were the early days, and then they had Mount Pleasant down-state, and that was the only ones.

RM: Okay

FD: Yeah. It's uh...

RM: Because I think that's an important point, as you're talking here.

FD: So I forgot where I was.

RM: So you were, you were then working for the tribe on construction, home construction.

FD: Yeah, well actually I was being the chairman.

RM: Yeah

FD: Administrating stuff. But that was, that was where I think I got my first paychecks for a few months. I suppose they were trying to feel sorry for me. And from there it went into the CETA employment program. And from there, I worked there for, I think I worked there for several years, as chairman of the tribe. That was, I think I was getting 5.50 and 6.50 an hour at the that time, of course that was good enough for me. Along as I had enough to get by I was happy, I was happy. And after that, I'm forgetting something in between here. Yeah well I wasn't working construction, I was overseeing a home improvement program, I was not doing construction.

RM: Oh oh, Okay

FD: Yeah, and then what did you say?

RM: No, and that, that's where we left it. And then you were saying you got a lawyer or something?

FD: Oh yeah. When Kelly Perault worked for Intertribal Council, the Federal Government, was, they were funding community action agencies throughout the country. And when he took that job, they were, this would be the first community action agency for the tribes in Michigan. And the reason I say the tribes in Michigan is because we had to join a unit in order to qualify with the population to get any money. Each tribe could not do it by themselves. So that's when we went to the Intertribal Council. So I get a call from Kelly Perault one day and he said the campaign for human development, it's a Catholic organization. They are funding attorneys, and he says, I want to give you a heads up, and he says I'll help you do it. And he said, it really it's not, it doesn't have to be a proposal. It has to be just in a letter, explaining just what your needs are and what you want to do with it. And he said I'll be up this weekend. He was working out of Escanaba, or not Escanaba, St. Ignace because that was kind of a central location for all the tribes. So he came up that weekend and we put a letter together for the campaign for human development asking for an attorney, money to hire an attorney. And sent it in, gosh darn-it we were successful. And it was a three year program really. So we advertise in the professional paper that lawyers have, I don't know what the name of it is, but you know. But we advertised in there looking for a lawyer, and. I think we had a couple of applications, but then I get a telephone call from a lawyer and he says, I'm interested in your position. And I'm up in the area. I'm racing snowmobiles up in South Range, or no not South Range. Is that South Range Dawn, I mean Doris? Doris is that South Range?

Doris: The one that was (inaudible)

FD: No the one oval track. It's just outside of Houghton anyway, just outside of Houghton

RM: Atlantic Mine?

FD: It's not Atlantic Mine

Doris: But you were doing that were you on a snow machine?

FD: Yeah, anyway I says I going to be racing snowmobiles tomorrow and that's where I am going to be at. So he come up and his wife tracked me down so he gets me, I just won an oval race. I got off first and everybody's there looking and all that type. And so introduced himself that they're the people that made the application to be our attorney. And I said well where are you staying? He said we're staying at the L'Anse motel, well give me your unit number and I says I'll, when I get done with this I'll meet you this evening down there. So, said Okay, so I got done and I went down there and had a good visit with. His name was Garfield Hood. Got to be very great friends. And he wanted the job, he had just graduated out of Law School and he didn't have his license to practice law yet, but he said I'm going to be taking the Bar real quick. So I think we had a meeting the next day. So I go back to the council and I said, this guy applied for it and I really like him. He seems real interested, seemed to have the right political connections and I want to hire him. So they said go ahead, so I hired him. And he remained with us I think for three years. And then after that he was on retainer and he was always willing to help us, all the time. And then in the mean time they would only fund for three years, the campaign, so we did the same thing for Watersmeet. So they went through the same thing, and they didn't get recognized they were part of us yet, but we wanted them to be...so...

RM: You wanted them to be separate?

FD: Yeah, yeah-yeah. So we did the same thing for the group in Marquette to do the same thing, but they never became a group of their own. They were just scraping all the time. There isn't, you had three people in the room and they had three different decisions, so they could never get it together. But Watersmeet finally did get it together after a while with our help.

RM: Yeah

FD: But that was when we had Garfield Hood, and he went on to be district Judge and stuff here, I think he's retired now. Yeah, and he helped the tribe a great deal. We went from that time, we went from the State was enforcing its laws on the reservation and it was, it wasn't right. By this time I'm starting to read up on a lot of things and being told a lot of things at workshops and stuff like that. And I realized that the State had just assumed jurisdiction, and that was all mulling around in my mind. In the mean time I get, I have a child that's killed by a car. Run over on a bicycle killed by a car. And the newspapers and everything prior to that was, ohh so-and-so, he skidded in the ditch and had eighty feet of skid marks and we believed he was going this much over the speed limit, and given him a tickets and people are paying fines for that kind of stuff. But all of a sudden when my kid gets run over, you got a hundred twenty foot of skid marks, and they don't know how fast he was going. So I got quite upset with the state police and with the sheriff's department because the kid was, I mean every bone in his body was broken, sad, a very sad situation. So that upset me quite a bit and put the cogs in motion, you know maybe this isn't right, we should be doing this ourselves. So that kind of motivated me to go ahead and push that we get our own police system, we get our own judicial system, as it is supposed to be. Not just let somebody come in and assume and push. So we were able with the help of Garfield, a lot of help with Garfield, because he read it too and he interpreted it, no you got to do this yourself. So we were able to convince the Bureau to get on their funding cycle, but

it takes three years to get onto their funding cycle. You know, for police force and judicial, but I didn't have time for that because I'm already pushing before they could get in the three year cycle. So anyway we were able to get the funding from L-E-A-A, I don't know what that acronym sounds for sounds like, legal enforcement, it was a federal program. And we were able to convince them to give us some funding for two police officers and that's a scary deal. Trying to transform this thing. But I was very, very fortunate that the State Police at that time and the Sheriff knew what I was going through, because I was able to talk to them and tell them I was really afraid of this, but this is the way it has to be because this is the way it's supposed to be. We have a treaty with the United States Government this is our reservation, it creates this reservation. We have a responsibility to do the things we're supposed to be doing. And they agreed with me, and they said I'll help you for these three years if you absolutely...we hired two police officers with that LEAA money and that was just so many hours a day. We tried to...we worked the heck out of them. And they were very dedicated people. And the state police and the sheriff helped when I needed some help, they were there to help. Until we got this thing, after the three year funding we got into the Bureau cycle. Then we were able to get started and able to improve on it each year.

RM: About what year was that?

FD: That had to be in, oh probably, mid to upper seventies, like that.

RM: Now was the Keweenaw tribe the first to, to do that?

FD: Yes

RM: In Michigan?

FD: In the state of Michigan and now they got it in Wisconsin and everything. There was only one tribe in a three or four state area that had law enforcement and that was Red Lake, Minnesota. Because it was not a Public Law 280 state. Michigan was not a Public Law 280 state, Wisconsin was a Public Law 280 state, and Minnesota was a Public Law 280 state with the exception of Red Lake. By Public Law 280 means that in the Fifties the Federal Government said to the states that had reservations, you will be able to assume jurisdictions on the reservations, if you want to. And it's, we as a Bureau have to get their approval. So the Bureau went around in Michigan and Wisconsin and Minnesota, with the exception of Red Lake, and asked would they go along with the State doing jurisdiction on the reservation? And most of the tribes did. In fact they became 280 states, that means they don't do their own, it's done by the state. And you made the decision to do it along with the state. But the Keweenaw Bay Indian Reservation here, my reservation, I'm very proud of, made the commitment that we do not want Public Law 280. Okay, there was only four tribes in Michigan. The other three tribes in Michigan voted to go with Public Law 280. But the State of Michigan always has been and always will be probably. That if they don't get all the Indians, they don't want none of them. So we held out and in, subsequently, nobody is now Public Law 280, we got our own jurisdiction....and that was the same thing for, they had a termination era, where they were terminating tribes. And tribes all over the United States that were terminated, including the one big one in Menominee, over in Wisconsin. Chose to be terminated, so they got some money on top of it. And that was a big tribe, it was a whole county I think. And they learned that they didn't want it, so we, other tribes that weren't terminated, we helped them get back the status. So this tribe has been very, very instrumental in preservation of the, not only of the culture of the jurisdiction very much so.

RM: Do you, is there, do you have any reason, reason for that. That there is that strong awareness that they are...

FD: I think we have strong leadership, that's what I think. Yeah, I... There's, we had a flood in L'Anse one time and the tribe had their records in the courthouse and we lost a lot of our old records. And then a lot of the tribal chairmen from the past retained the records that happened when they were there and we never got any of those things back. When I became, when I became chairman and we moved up to the tribal center we retained every record after that. Not because I was so smart, but because somebody told me I should do that. So...lost track again.

RM: Wait a minute, one minute... Okay Tape two, interview with Fred Dakota. Fred I think it might be good at this point to just point out to the listener that, the era that you're talking about was not the year 2012 and so a lot of this tribal government and areas that you're going into were all new, they'd never been done before. So a lot of what you're talking about was all new, I think you kind of mentioned it, and I wanted to reinforce that, this was all new.

FD: yeah

RM: Umm you were talking about... you had gotten help from the state police and the sheriff's office and so on. Did you have to convince them to give you the help or they just worked with you, and was it that you have a community here, a relatively close community where you have non-Indian people and Indian people, did that help to, kind of bridge the gap between?

FD: No, not really it was pretty difficult to try to get that through, because the state had assumed and they had been arresting, even for hunting and fishing and everything. And it was very difficult to convince those people, the general public, plus the officials. It was not easy, but with

the help of our new attorney he was able to convince them that, yes this is the way it is. This is the law, this is the way it has to happen.

RM: Was there kind of a feeling at that time, it was something that I kind of remember, that when these new things would come on the scene, people, white people would respond that Native Americans couldn't do it? Like enforcing fishing, fishing laws, or even preserving the culture, there was just kind of this prejudicial reaction, or ignorance that Native Americans couldn't do it, was that kind of part of the argument?

FD: Yeah, yes actually it was. And there was another thing that happened and that was the Jondreau Decision and I believe that was in the mid-seventies, that decision came out. And there was an attorney by the name of Andrew Wiski, from Houghton that handled that case for the Jondreau Decision.

RM: Now how do you spell Wis, wis?

FD: I don't know, it's in the phone book though, because he's got children who are lawyers too. He passed away.

RM: W-I-S-K-I, I'm assuming.

FD: Anyway he handled our case, it was called Jondreau Decision and that spelled out quite a bit about what was really the law, not just because somebody was enforcing it and able to get convictions. And specifically what it said is that the tribe retained the right to hunt and fish. And fortunate part of it was they were on the reservation, if it would have been off the reservation it might have been a little bit harder to prove. But it was on the reservation and that case, that case took eight years, from the time it started till the time that it became law. I think it

was sitting somewhere, waiting for something to happen. Because then I'll tell you a little story again, this is in between times. We had, we started having a lot of Indians putting a net out for their-selves, some of them were commercial fishing out here. And the conservation department, we had our numbers on there and everything, our tribal number and all this kind of stuff. And we, our name was on there. And the conservation would go and pick up them up at night and we'd never hear nothing one way or the other. They would just take your equipment. So I had the fisherman call me up one time, I was chairman at the time, call me up and said whenever that's happening let me, let me know. So I get the telephone call, they're coming, they got a big light and they're looking for plastic jugs on the water. So they came, and like...this is crazy. I did do some crazy things in my life, this is one of them. I took a single barrel shotgun, no shells. I don't know if that was good or bad either, but I didn't trust myself I guess either, ya know.

What I did was I took that shotgun, empty one, and I took a plastic bottle and I tied a rock on it and a string and when the boat was coming I could see it way down there, and I seen it coming. I threw my bottle out with the string and the rock and sure enough when they got in front of me I was behind a big rock, it was dark. I don't know what time it was but it was very dark. And here they come. My jug is there, and I heard them say there's one, there's one. So they come in with their boat, and I stood up with my flashlight, I had my flashlight and my shotgun. And I says you're all done stealing Indian equipment, you're not stealing any Indian nets again. Now if you're going to take nets and you're going to charge them, give them a ticket or whatever you're going to do, that's fine, but you're stealing nets! And that's wrong, and this is the end of it, you're not going to do it anymore. And I knew the guys that were on the boat. One guy's name was John Schneider, and he had a helper there, I can't think of what the name of his helper was. But John, John says Freddy, Freddy, Freddy!! And I says John, you can't be stealing these, all

this equipment! I said people pay big money for those nets, and we're waiting for the decision to come down from the state supreme court, the Michigan State Supreme Court. And it's been a long time, it's not coming down. So that happens and in the meantime, the boat is in closer to shore and there's some of my buddies up on the hill, throwing bean rocks at the boat. And they'd hit the boat, and it's go Boing, and them guys are trying to get the motor started, they're pulling and pulling and pulling...and that damned thing

RM: So between you with the shotgun in front of them and then

FD: And them guys throwing rocks, and they're trying to get the boat started, and the boat won't start so they start rowing. And they finally get out past where they can't hit them with the rocks anymore. And then they left and I left. By that time I know that I'm in big trouble, I'm in very big trouble I know that. So I go home, sitting at the kitchen table and by the corner right there I had my shotgun in the corner, I didn't know what was going to happen. It didn't seem like it was too damned much longer, but it must have been five o'clock in the morning or something like that, I get a knock on my door, Bang, bang. Bang, bang, bang! Who is it? Sheriff Aikinen. What do you want? I've gotta talk to you Freddy. I don't want to talk to you! Said I got to talk to you about last night. I said I don't want to talk to you about last night, you've got no jurisdiction here in the first place, get the hell outta here! He says Freddy, I'll knock this door open. I says well Sheriff, I've got the same shotgun I had last night, and it's sitting right in the corner right by me here. If you want to take that chance, you go right ahead. But it was still empty. You just go right ahead and do whatever you have to do. Pretty soon he left. About eight o'clock in the morning I called up Wiski I said I think I'm in big trouble. What happened? I told him what happened. He said holy cripes, I guess you're in big trouble! He says, he says, let me call the Sheriff and talk to him and see what we can do. So sure as heck, he called the

Sheriff and the sheriff said ask him if he can scare up, I think it was seven or eight hundred dollars, and send somebody down here to pay the bond or whatever it is, I don't even know what they refer to the legal term. And we won't come out looking for him. So he called me back and says do you know anybody? And I says, my brother-in-law, Jerry Schwartz, he passed away now. He's got some US bonds and maybe he can go down and see Jack Peterson from Swede's Bar, maybe he'll take them and give him the money so that you can come and pay that. So that's what happened, he did that. And so life went on, but it was, it was, I think it was seven or eight days after that shotgun incident, the decision came down. And we won the decision, in the Michigan Supreme Court we won that decision. I think someone was sitting on it, to see what's going to happen. You know, maybe...It's just a theory from me, but that's what I think. And sure as heck, a day or so later here comes John. He says I got a net from you too Fred. He put, he finally got to tick me off ____ [If he can?] and it was still mine too. And he says I got it in the trunk of my car, I'll set it on the lawn for you, and he says if you want me, if you want me to straighten it up for you I'd be glad to do that. So by that time I said no you don't have to do that, I'll do it myself. So John and I became good friends after that, very good friends. He used to stop and we used to have coffee together and visit together often, and so along with some of the other conservation Officers Dick Beech was the same thing, it was...

RM: Okay so we ended with you not having any legal problems and the, then interacting with the DNR officers and so on and things, things worked out then?

FD: Yeah, everything worked out quite well. It was a matter, not only educating the police and conservation and all that, it was a matter also the general public. Because I was working at Pettibone when a lot of this stuff was going on yet,

RM: Oh, this was before you made the,

FD: yeah, yeah. Was chairman, but I was working down there. But anyway it was a hard thing to do the general public and stuff but...

RM: Now just to, again in the proper perspective, when these various incidents, events took place, this usually got into the newspapers.

FD: Uh-huh. Yeah, big time.

RM: And then it was usually kind of, and that would be the mining gazette and the mining journal and was usually and they were not, well, this is my interpretation, you correct me if I'm wrong. They weren't very, they always write we're with you, but with Native Americans, we're with you but you shouldn't be doing this, this, and this. So as soon as I see that utter however, I know it's going to follow. It's always followed that way, so this is kind of what's happened, so when there'd be an incident like you're talking about it would make the papers and you were the bad guy.

FD: Oh yeah, yeah. It was pretty much like that, for most of my...I don't know I guess when you try to do things or start doing something new it's, it's sometime good, but most of the time some people don't like it, and usually they're the ones with the pen, they're the ones with the ink. But you just kind of, kind of keep going, there's been a whole lot of changes in my lifetime. Indians have come from being, like in the state of Michigan, they have always assumed jurisdiction without anybody ever questioning it. And they didn't want to give that up very much either, and they still don't, they still don't want to give that up. And so everything is difficult and they always have to be reminded, and I like to remind them that, we're the only people that live in the United States that has a treaty with the United States Government, and it

was not us that got anything from the government, anything we got we retained. And that the rest of it all belonged to us, we gave it to you, you didn't give it to me! We gave it to you! And people forget that, because they think that they, they think that when they hit these shores that there was nobody here, and the sad part of that thing is that they don't tell about it! They don't tell about their own history! They're making the same mistakes right now, United States is making the same mistakes right now that they were making then because they don't know what they did. They don't know what they did to Indian people. We've had a holocaust in this country that'll surpass any other one in the world. Nobody wants to talk about that! You know it was warfare, alcohol, they took the culture, everything! Nobody wants to talk about that. But we still are the only ones that are indigenous in this United States of America and they like to forget that, and I'm not going to let them forget that, because the truth is the truth. And if you don't quickly start teaching the truth of what happened in this country, it's going to happen in other parts of the world, and it's happening now. And they call it, somebody's trying to take your freedom. How in the hell's somebody over in Iraq trying to take my freedom? Only damned ones trying to take my freedom is up there in Washington D.C. and the state, Lansing!! Anyway that's a different story...

RM: Yeah...No it's all part of it, I mean it's important. Did, then, were there any, how did the, I don't know which one to go at first here. I'd like you to talk about the whole, your involvement with the casino, casino gambling and so on, and did that come before, then before the blowup with the tribe? Which would you want to talk about first?

FD: Actually the, it did come before the blow up.

RM: The casino?

FD: Yeah, yeah.

RM: Okay. Talk about that, that's a fascinating story.

FD: Okay, well. Kind of what happened was we were building our own, we had a training program that was building houses and stuff like that. But we never had the capability, because we had very few carpenters, no electricians, no plumbers, no brick-layers. These are trades that are passed down by the other people. We didn't do that, we were basically hunters and gatherers. And so, we all live in houses now, and so we were trying to create work on our reservation by training people to do those things. We were able to get a grant from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to do that. And we had instructors from the various unions that were there to teach us, and we were doing quite well but we are still a political animal. We're still all very political and I'm probably the worst one, because he's so and so's son I know you got him as a carpenter, and he doesn't know how to do carpentry work and he might be a little bit, a little bit off. But he needs a check too, so keep him on. And there was enough of that going on that we were spending money that was supposed to go to somebody who knows what was going on, so we lost, jeeze, I don't know, like a hundred and seventy thousand dollars. Because we were trying to help people at the same time, but if you want to be a construction company, you'd better be in there to make a profit or else you're not going to last and we didn't, we didn't last. But that was the reason why we had originally got in trouble financially, because we didn't have nothing to begin with anyway we'd get a grant and spend it and like that but.

RM: I guess at this point to, just to bring it up to date. The tribe didn't have any financial resources?

FD: None. None what-so-ever, no.

RM: So any money you're getting for these projects you've talked about came through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

FD: We had to hustle it, we had to hustle the money

RM: Or grants or something

FD: Anyway we lost a lot of money and first thing you know, the vendors started to call Washington. Hey what's going on? Start calling HUD, and subsequently we started feeling the heat here. And we, we went into Chicago HUD office and were able to get some relief, but we didn't get all the relief we needed. So we get back home and we're getting bombarded once again, but we're rectifying our position because those people aren't there anymore. They're, we got good people there now, at least trying real hard to get the job done. And it's, we...we were still short and so there was a tribe, the Shakopee Tribe in Minneapolis, there was the tribe in Green Bay, but actually everything started from Florida. It's called Bingo, Big Bucks Bingo, in Florida they would charge a hundred dollars a pack to win thousands of dollars in prizes, so, but they were making money, and of course they were making money. Seminoles, name was Billy Jack, yeah Billy Jack? I don't know it's the chairman down there, I can't remember. But anyway we got ahold of them and I got ahold of the people in Shakopee, and Green Bay, and I said how do you do that, how do you do that? They said, well what you have to do is you have to change the laws on your reservation allowing bingo and what the standards are for it. So we got together, and we did a code on bingo, you know, simple as it sounds, it's really not all that, you gotta have the rules and regulations for it, so we did do that. And I've got an old lady by the name of Helene Welsh, very good friend of mine, she was on the council, so she. I mean she could make a council meeting last for hours and hours and hours, because she was a smart old

lady, but she liked to talk about everything. But she said, you know, she says Fred, why don't we add casino gambling on this code? I don't see why not, I'm just trying to appease her, you know. So we added that onto our bingo code and we sent it into the Bureau, and the Bureau, in the past, I don't know how it is right now, but in the past we'd get stuff and it'd probably sit on somebody's desk forever and they'd never do anything with it. But in our constitution it says if do, if we modify and make a code that the Bureau has to look at it, and they have to approve it, but they have to do something with it within fourteen days, two weeks. You've got to say I want to look at it further, I have received your, your code, but if you do absolutely nothing with it, zero, on that fourteenth day it becomes law for the tribe. And that's what they did, so that's sitting on the books. That's was from in the seventies. Alright? That was from in the seventies...

RM: This regulation _____(inaudible)

FD: That's yeah, the bingo thing. So we made enough money through the bingo to pay off our debts. And we....

RM: Ohh okay, so bingo started in the seventies?

FD: Yeah, yeah...

RM: But on the code, in the code was casino, casino gambling? It just sat there?

FD: It sat there. So anyway we paid our bills and we got everything done. And then all of a sudden, I used to always have at least seven people who would vote for me for chairman.

Chairman term runs up at once a year, every year. But you have to have at least seven votes.

But I used to always get all of them for the most part. But this time, I didn't have seven votes, I

only had five. So I'm not the chairman. So I draw unemployment for about a year, and in the meantime I resigned the position. You know the hell with it I'm not going to go there. So I'm drawing unemployment and I'm looking for work and all of a sudden it's magic time. No more unemployment's coming up real quick. I got five kids to feed, what are we going to do now Fred? So anyway I'm thinking back, and I says, I'm going to ask to see if I can get a casino license. So I go up to the tribe, and by that time these people are, you know they're , they're a lot of them had liked me, but you know some of them didn't. So I went and asked for a casino license, and I told them where I wanted to put it, it's out in Zeba in my brother-in-law's two car garage. They all kind of snickered and laughed and sure you can have one of those license Fred, so I got one. I was out of money, very few checks left if I had any at all, there wasn't much. And I had spent what I could to revamp that garage, so I go see the local banker Dan Lazarri, Superior National Bank I knew cause I'd met him out in the woods hunting and I see him fishing on the streams and stuff, very nice guy and you know we always chatted friendly. And I had asked him, can you take a little ride with me today? He said no, he said I can't take no ride with you today Fred, but I can take a ride with you tomorrow. I said let well let me know if you can or not can't. So about eleven o'clock he says, I can take a ride with you Fred. I said I want to show you something, so I, I pick him up at the bank. He jumps in my car, we take a ride out to Zeba, and in the garage I'd bought some chip board on the walls inside the garage, it's all insulated and stuff. And we started making a little bar in there and I asked him I says...

RM: Okay [Tape 2 Side B begin]

FD: And I said I got a license from the tribe to open a casino, casino gambling and I want to start with a couple poker games, poker machines, and a black jack table. And he said I don't know about this, he said I got to go see the board. So, so he must've went and seen the board, I

don't know maybe it was within that week or the following week. He said Fred, I'm going to give you a personal loan, give you a personal loan, for ten thousand dollars. He said will that help you? I said sure will. So I had enough money to finish the job, and I build my own black jack table, just bought the green from Las Vegas. I'd seen what a black jack table looked like, not much more than that and some bar stools and what the hell else you need, you know. Stand up down there to deal, you got to have chips and you got to have a chip tray and I understood all of that. So I do that, and so pay my second wife, we're practicing dealing black jack and we had a bar in there. I went to Wisconsin and got all my liquor and my beer and everything else because I didn't have no license here, I couldn't get none here, so I just went over there and got it. And supplied the bar, and I woke up, I mean I opened up on New Year's Eve of '83, that'd be the first year, would be the next day of '84. So I opened up that night, my wi... The theory was my wife's going to bartend and I'll deal black jack and then I'll bartend while you deal black jack, when you want to take a break. We had only one table, so we did our advertising by, by putting fliers in the grocery store on the bulletin board, put fliers there, and then we put fliers on people's, this is mimeographed too, on people's windshields. Casino's going to be opening up in Zeba, this is the location, we're going to be opening up and, on, on New Year's Eve. Scary, very scary. So I did it, I didn't know who was coming, I didn't know if the FBI was coming, the U.S. Marshals, State Police, Sheriff, I had no idea who's coming. But I do know I'm going to do this because I believe in sovereignty, you know sovereignty, you don't order yourself a cup of sovereignty or a bowl of sovereignty, you exercise sovereignty. And that was what was in my head, and a little scary sometime but, anyway that's what I did. And that New Year's Eve I had a full table and I had people waiting to play, and my wife, she gets chicken by that time, she won't deal, she'd rather bartending. So anytime I had to take a break to go to the bathroom I

would have to tell these guys on the table, watch my chips. And this is what I did for chips and cards. I went down to the drugstore in L'Anse and I bought playing cards, probably a deck or two, and I bought plastic poker chips, the ones you get from the drugstore. That's what I was using for chips, and they had different denominations on there but you could, I think you could only play for, I had it limited to amount of money that you'd pay for, I think it was probably a dollar or two, wasn't much. Because I didn't have much of a bank to pay for it if I got my butt kicked. But anyway we went the whole night, and then in order to pay the people off I had to take the chips off the table, the money off the table, and then they'd give me their chips and then I'd pay them for whatever, whatever I had and whatever was left was mine! So that's what I did for a long time when I first started, but eventually I went and got some more professional cards and I went and got some more professional chips, the ones made out of clay and stuff. Because what was happening was I was afraid that people were going to take that chip, and they're, it'll be, and I told them, I says I don't know what denomination this are going to be tomorrow, I'll tell you tomorrow, I'm not telling you tonight. If you take anything home you don't get nothing, you have to cash them in tonight, because I'm not going, well of course, then I'd have to count my chips too. They all fit in a case so I knew that they were all there. And if somebody didn't turn it in, I'm sorry I don't want it no more, it's done, it's over. So in order to change the denominations, in them early days, I would repaint them. It was always a surprise when they'd come in, and we'd take the, after a while we had more tables than that, you know. I had my daughter and her boyfriend dealing first for me and I'd take the boxes home, and by that time I had a few dollars, that I could pay to them when I closed up. I closed up at two o'clock and so I always took them home, and I remember the first night I made a thousand, I had the money like that and I went "P-choo", money was coming down like this, and I took a picture, well I didn't

take a picture somebody else took a picture. I can't find that damned picture, I can't find that picture. And it was, it was difficult, I mean hell I only had an eighth grade education, and I don't count twenty one that damned quick and I'd imagined I made a lot of mistakes, but you know at the end it was, I did alright.

RM: Yeah, yeah

FD: You know, so...

RM: Now did you have any, now at that you had the casino was over in Zeba?

FD: In Zeba, yep.

RM: When did you move, then you had, you opened one here. Wasn't that in the spring of '83?

FD: '84.

RM: '84...

FD: What happened see, I opened, I say '83 because it's actually was, 83...it was the last day of '83!

RM: '83...oh okay

FD: So I stayed open over there for, till they built this place over here.

RM: Right...

FD: The new one, because I asked for a lease on tribal land, and I used the tribal construction company to build it for me.

RM: Ohh so over in Zeba you weren't on tribal land?

FD: It was tribal land, but it was my brother-in-law's garage, built in my brother-in-law's garage.

RM: Oh it was tribal land, yeah oh oh yeah.

FD: So you know I wanted to come over here, where there was more people, and the fourth of July was coming '84, Fourth of July was coming. And I wanted to move over here, and I just assumed that I could take my license off the wall and move it over here. But by that time, it'd be prior to that before I built the place, I went back to the bank and I said I'd like to build a new place in Baraga, I need 60,000 dollars and this is what I'd like to do, just, I had it written up and this is what this stuff's going to cost. And they looked at it and stuff, but by this time the banker had said you have to meet with my bank board. I said sure.

RM: Now you had paid the, the initial loan off?

FD: I had paid it off, oh yeah. I had paid it off in a hurry. And he says you're going to have to talk to the bank board, so I get up there and the bank boards all there, they're all very happy because I'm depositing. So I asked for 60,000 dollars, they said you sure that's what you need Fred? I said I think so, I think that's all I need's sixty thousand dollars I just want to do this, that, and the other thing and. They said you'd better take a hundred. I said OKAY, I'll do that. So they gave me a hundred thousand dollars, so come to open up on the Fourth of July, I'm just going to take my license off the two car garage, move my equipment over there, by that time I had money to buy more tables, plus a big craps table and I had the building all wired for slots. So they said you have to have a license to open up over there. Are you crazy I got a license. That's a license for that place, that isn't a license for that place over there. So they sent the tribal police over there to tell me that, well you know, I thought I knew it all, I was smart, you know,

and that was a mistake. I said the hell with you, I'm just going to open up, and I'm my license over there, so that's what I did do. Lo and behold, that week that I opened up my tribal council called the U.S. Attorney, and I had no problem with anybody bothering me before this. I had been open for six months over there, easily for six months, nobody but nobody bothered me. So them guys up there, I'm not on the council at that, they called the U.S. Attorney and said we've got an Indian over here, one of our member's opened up a casino. And he doesn't have a license, well you outta see how quickly the government jumped on that! That was there in, I don't know what they would've done if that didn't happen. Things could've been a lot different and a lot better for tribes, but that's what they did and that was then they were talking to me about, you know, I'm doing wrong and, you know, and by that time I had an attorney from Calumet, Hunter Watson. And then the tribe had Garfield and telling them that we can do this, you got the license from us and you know, but they said no, they going to Assimilated Crimes Act and every damned thing they were going to throw at me, going to really get me good. And finally they worked it out where, see if they would've charged me with all those things, they would have had to give me a jury trial. We had the laws that said that we could do this thing, I believe. It turned out to be that way too, because we believed that the State of Michigan issues a license for casino gambling for non-profit groups, National Democratic, National Republican, Boy Scouts, Legions, they can get a gambling license for three days out of the year that, providing that they buy their supplies from the state, but it's only for three days for each group that puts in for. So therefore it's legal, and our theory was, that if it's legal in the State of Michigan, it's legal on a reservation. And not for three days, three hundred sixty five if we so desire, because there's nothing evil about it, you already license and regulate it! So you don't have jurisdiction here, but you do it, and we're within the State of Michigan, I guess, so we can do it. So that's what we

were telling the U.S. Attorneys. So I had the option, are you going to charge me with a misdemeanor or are they going to charge me with a felony? They had lots of charges, so lawyers convinced me that, let's just go for the misdemeanor in federal court. So that means you just have the Judge making the decision, you don't have a jury of your peers, and that's when he finally he, and it didn't take seven or eight years like it did the Jondreau case, I was only in operation for eighteen months, from start to end. They told me you got to stop immediately, and that you're wrong and the reason you're wrong is because you're doing a profit. Legally I won! Why do they have the option of saying profit or non-profit, if it's legal, it's legal! So anyway by that time when all of this was going on, the other tribes in the State of Michigan there was, I think there was one or two added, during this interim period, and they all decided that, and they read the case and they decided that hell, we're non-profit we can open up. So the U.S. Attorneys were trying to scare them guys too. It went up and it closes another one down there, and they all looked at them and said, then do it! None of them went after any of those tribes, and subsequently they're still going, and not only that they're still going all over the United States. But the reason I say this had to happen in Michigan is because it was legal in Michigan, licensed casino gambling. Maybe only three days, non-profit, but it was legal. But you know, by that time the politicians and the attorneys through the United States seen what was happening, so they were able to convince a Federal Judge that lottery tickets are casino gambling, that's how the other guys got ____ [Legal? Inaudible]. And that's totally wrong!

RM: Ohh, so all, so all the stated that had lottery gambling then were...

FD: Open to casinos, but that's totally wrong! There's no, not even. _____ This whole system is so gosh damned corrupt that it, you know, it's crazy. In the meantime a little old Indian from Zeba's here got to get his butt kicked, and I did. I wish I would have been open

another year or two, I wouldn't have to worry about it, but I had to go back to work. Story of my life!

RM: Now you opened that over here on the Fourth of July, 1984? Okay. Because I just...

FD: And I operate, maybe a year!

RM: Over here,

FD: Eighteen month is the only...that's the longest I was in business! Totally!

RM: Now was there some point there, I remember either reading about it or something, that eventually casino gambling on the reservation, controlled by the tribe was legal, but not by an individual?

FD: That was the decision, because they could do it non-profit, the tribe was non-profit.

RM: Was non-profit,

FD: A Indian was not, he was in it for a profit.

RM: Ah I see, that was the point of law that they were getting at.

FD: Yeah

RM: Now when did the, when did the tribe open the casino here?

FD: They actually should have been the first, to open in the State of Michigan, but it ended up that Bay Mills was the first.

RM: Ohh..okay

FD: Down there, yeah, they were the first.

RM: And what was when, about what era?

FD: Ohh god, that had to be in '87 or so?

RM: 87. So then do you

FD: Maybe 88, might have been 88 or 89, it was within that three year period.

RM: Now do you consider yourself, as some people say, as the father of casino gambling in the United States?

FD: I would like to say that, yes. I would like to say that because it's the truth. And it's all, do you believe in sovereignty or don't you? If you believe in sovereignty you exercise sovereignty. If you don't you're going to let somebody else do it before you, and that's what's happened. Other people have to do it for other people within the state and like around the country. Somebody's got to break the ice and it takes a lot of guts.

RM: Now with, how did you come to that? I mean, you know, you're thinking there's very sophisticated, you said you didn't have a, a....

FD: I had five children at home to feed. That's why.

RM: Yeah, but I mean you went and developed the whole idea of sovereignty, I mean that's really getting into Indian relationships with the government and so on. And this was just something that you developed and so on, from what you were reading. You said you went to various workshops,

FD: Seminars, yeah

RM: Seminars and so on, and that's how you developed and have this focus.

FD: Yeah, Um-hmm.

RM: And do you think the other part of it was, it seems from what you've been saying that you had this very, from your early life, you know, you were kind of going from place to place and then when you were growing up you moved from city to city, but you always had this very strong tribal connection. Would you think, would that be part of the, you know, part of what got you thinking this way about tribal sovereignty and _____ of the tribe?

FD: Yeah, I got, I got to thinking back you know. After you go to some workshops and stuff like that where they talk about various things. The orphanage part and the Indian schools, that was supposed to take care of that problem for them. You weren't supposed to think about that, but it actually helped me because I began to realize who we really are, we are or were the owners of this country. We were somebody, it was taken from us and it was not granted like the treaties that they talk about. I would assume they all had a rifle to their head when they signed. And the, you know the....survival instinct will come to anybody that that happens to, and I believe that's what happened here. If you're going to survive as a people, you have to succumb. And that's what happened, you know. Who knows what's going to happen next? So if you don't push the button, nobody's going to push it for you, you have to do that yourself.

RM: Right, so do you think some of this kind of developed when, from the time you were a youngster in the orphanage? These ideas?

FD: Yeah, I think so yeah. Maybe I didn't recognize it but it was there, it was there.

RM: So it's sort of the whole idea to assimilate the Indian children at least backfired and enhanced your view of yourself as a Native American?

FD: Yeah

RM: Now after the, Okay, after the casino, time and so on, then did you get back to being, how did you get back to being tribal chairman and then, that episode

FD: Okay, after, you know it's closed down and everything I had to work again. So I spent fourteen months, I don't remember the sequence of it. I spent fourteen months in over in Watersmeet because they were starting a casino. And they were looking for somebody to teach them to run it. And there was...and they hired one of our members from here and he was actually a forester from, he was educated to be a forester, Michigan Tech. And then he decided when he went down there and worked for, I think a week, and he decided he didn't want it. Our tribe was the one who was hiring that person, so I was second in line. He beat me out of the vote, and I was second in line and he asked me if I wanted to go down there. So I said yeah, in the meantime after I got closed down from casino, I had started a used car lot. And went around buying auctioned cars and stuff like that. There wasn't a lot of money in that, long ways from being a casino owner.

RM: Yeah

FD: But it filled in for a while, and then this other job opened up down there in Watersmeet, so I took that job.

RM: So you were like accounted, you were consultant?

FD: No, no actually I was a manager.

RM: Ohh you're a manager, ohh okay.

FD: I was the manager. And they kept me down there for fourteen months, and they said sayonara Fred, we know how to do it now. Which is good, that's the way it was supposed to be. But too bad for me, so now I'm back to selling cars again. And every car I sold I had to guarantee for the rest of its life, and it had to be cheap! So I wasn't a very good car salesman. Used car guy, I sold a few. It kept the wolf away, and so it's, it worked out alright.

RM: Now this would have been about what year?

FD: That had to be probably in, eighty...eighty-six, eighty-seven? Hard to keep those years...

RM: Yeah, yep.

FD: But I think that's when it was. Start me again.

RM: Well, you had left the casino management job, you got into the cars, but you were going to get into, get back into tribal leadership position.

FD: Okay, yeah. So I decided there was a new election coming up and I didn't, even though I was running the casino down in, down in Watersmeet. My residence was here, I didn't have a residence down there, I traveled back and forth. And stay several nights in, for a while I was staying in motel but then I couldn't, they didn't pay that much, so I was staying with a friend down there that was in the orphanage with me. Name was Freddy Scott, so I was living with him down there and then I'd go home whenever I had the chance weekends I probably not so much. It was a very, very tiresome job because I would open the casino and I would have to close it and make sure the paperwork was done properly, you know you count the money, you had three people and what you do is you're tallying it. And all three people have got to agree with what

that is and they all sign a paper and it goes for all of it. So days were very long. We used to open up at...I think we used to open up at three or four o'clock in the evening and close at two, because the, we served liquor in the casino and so we had to close at two o'clock. I suppose we could have left the gaming open but we didn't. I wouldn't have been able to do it anyway because it was many, many hours. It was, took very little time off. I was kind of glad it was over because I was getting kind of bored, frazzled. So I come back and I decided that I'm going to run for council so I ran for council and I won pretty heavily, and I became chairman again. And by that time, we're getting some money in the treasury like that...

RM: So now this was after the tribe's opened the casino?

FD: Yeah, we had opened up the casino. When I got closed up, I offered the tribe everything I had down at the building; equipment, chips, building everything, because I can't afford it no more. There's no way I can afford that. So they decided to punish me a little bit more, so they never did it. So I tried to operate it as a, as just a bar. And pretty soon my bank account for the casino was closed, because I just kept everything in the bank, and when you got payments every month, just take it out. And finally that came to an end, there was no more, no more left. So I couldn't even make enough money to pay for the damned insurance for the bar, even though I was working my butt off. I just closed it down and I offered it to the tribe, but they wouldn't do it, they were building a bowling alley up there now. It's up there now, they were building that so they decided they're going to put casino gambling in there, by that time Bay Mills is already open, I think Sault Sainte Marie was already open too, and Traverse City, so a year or so had gone by, punishing me. But they decided they wanted to get into the gambling business when that other building was done so, they bought all my equipment, they bought all my tables and chips, and you know everything else. They could've took the whole damned building really, but

they didn't. They had to punish me more so. It ended up that, even hired my people that I had trained to do, to run the casino.

RM: So then you went into, so you went back, you got back into the tribal council?

FD: Umm Hmm, I got back on the tribal council. And then people decided that they wanted something out of the casino....

RM: Tape three, Fred Dakota interview. Okay

FD: I tried to appease them, because they were looking for money. And I said this is one way that we can do it, because by this time the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act is in full effect, and you can only do certain things and other things you can't. So, so I thought this up myself. I said why don't we sell stock, or you can be a member of this, this corporation, but you have to buy into it. Because the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act says that if you hire people that are going to bring their slot machines into you, you can pay them up to either 28 or 30 percent of the profit off that machine. And if we had enough machines in there, we could use that profit to pay the stock holders. Stock holders would have to reside on the reservation, they would have to be a member of this tribe on the reservation, and they had to be at least eighteen years old living on the reservation. And that's the only way it can be legal, because I had even asked the B.I.A. if we were to do this could we do this for our members? And they see nothing wrong with it, but you have to buy in you just can't say we're going to do this for you. You have to buy in, you have to have some skin in the game, otherwise all you're doing is a per-cap payment and per-cap payments are outlawed in the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, if you don't pay everybody that's a member. In other words, you live in Hawaii or California, belong to this tribe, you get the check and the way I look at it; hey you left, you want to come back and be part of it, that's fine but you

left and we're not going to give you anything if you left. That was my theory, that was the Fred Dakota theory. So I was trying to sell that and it upset a lot of people because they all wanted money, and they didn't want to pay anything. I said you got to pay a thousand, pay a thousand and you can be a member. And if you don't have the thousand right away, we will loan you the thousand, but you're not going to get any per-cap payments until a thousand back, paid back to the tribe, then you'll start getting you per-cap payment. As a, you know, being an owner in the corporation, and nobody understood that. Did you just understand what I just told you? Well I didn't have any problem with it either, but a lot of apparent people did have problems with it. And they thought I was giving them a beating of some kind. You know, why the hell should have to pay to get money from ourselves? Well, it's Federal law, Indian Gaming and Regulatory Act is federal law and this is the way it has to be. I already got it approved by the Bureau, so then they decided they're going to put it on the referendum vote. Okay, that's fine. Well the referendum vote lost, said no. And then we start this thing up at the tribal center there, you know, the takeover and all this other kind of....

RM: Now by this time were you tribal chairman?

FD: Yes

RM: Okay so you're on the council and then you became tribal chairman?

FD Umm-hmm, yeah I had been tribal chairman...god. I was on tribal chairman, I was tribal chairman for 22 years and I'd been on the council probably about 36, 38 years. And a lot of times I wasn't on the tribal council too. So anyway, that's, we had some problems and you know it made out to be a whole lot of different things. But I, I seem to be able to get back on the council.

RM: _____[Inaudible interruption]

FD: I did some time too, you know, on you know, slot machines they...I had to go to Federal Court, they had about 25 counts against me that they were...Federal.

RM: Was this at the time of the casino? That when you were running the casino or something else?

FD: No this is when, I was not running the casino, I was chairman of the tribe, you know, I was chairman of the tribe. And they did convict me on the misdemeanor charge, that was when the judge said you're guilty. I think if I would have had a jury of my peers, they would have seen it much differently.

RH: Ohh

FD: And I believe it would have been legal. Because I still think it's legal, because we're still operating, so I had to have something going for me. But anyway, they, they had a whole bunch of charges against me and finally they convicted me of kick-backs and income tax evasion and I got a thirty month sentence. Yeah I got a thirty month sentence. And I'll still tell people, I'll still tell people that I was in the military, I didn't like it when I was in there. But I'm glad it's done, I'm glad it's over and I feel the same thing about Federal Prison. I'm not...I'm glad I experienced it because I know what it is, I wouldn't have known without experience it. And I'm not sorry for anything I done, and I still don't think I'm guilty for any of the things that they said. After all, you look at Washington D.C. they got all that special laws, they can raise money like that and they can get elected and they can feed their families, but you know Fred Dakota can't because he's a Indian on the Keweenaw Bay Reservation. And they, the Judge, said I was guilty, there wasn't a jury of my peers it was a Federal Judge. And guess who they now nominated for

life? That, that's crazier than hell! I think half of them guys should spend their god-damned time in prison, hell they do a lot worse than I ever did. And so you know...

RM: Which prison were you at?

FD: I had started off in Oxford, Oxford Federal Prison in Oxford, then I went to...

RM: Mississippi or?

FD: Oxford, Wisconsin

RM: Wisconsin, ohh, okay

FD: Yeah, but I was punished terribly by keeping me in county jails. I was in Marquette for quite some time, during the trial and this stuff.

RM: Ohh!

FD: And it was all over, my kids said let's go hunting dad. After my case was done and I was a felon. Said let's go hunting dad and I said I can't hunt, you know. I can't own a gun, I can't do anything. They said well you can chase turkeys into us. So I said well yeah I guess I could do that. So that was the thing about it was. I was going to go and walk along the side of the fields, and if there were any turkeys that were walk out in the field, you'd be able to hunt them. But that, that didn't work out so well for me because we didn't get any turkeys, but my two boys and there was a tribal police officer that owned a farm over there, that's where we were hunting. They agreed that they were going to get a corn-fed deer and bring it home, cause up here they eat brush, but down in Escanaba they eat corn. So they were going to get a corn-fed deer. So he, I brought, I'm in the truck, it's my truck. So I'm driving this way. And the kids took a shot at one, maybe a trifle at dusk, or maybe you could call it dark I suppose, I don't know. It was very

close there. So he thought he hit it, he says go out there and he says I, you know, we'll probably find it and bring it over there. Well I went out there and I parked, waiting. Who comes up but a, a deputy sheriff from the Escanaba, I don't know if you're fa, from the Escanaba office. He's got a house there, he was apparently hunting deer from a stand, so he came over there and. Geeze he kept us there forever because he had to hurry up, he had to get ahold of a conservation officer. So we stayed there and many hours. Finally a conservation did come and, and then they'd, you know, we told our story and he told his story. And the guy says, well you guys go ahead and take off. So we took off, damn it if he didn't then, if he didn't write me a ticket after, that I was hunting and I was charged with transporting a gun, and a felon. But there was only, I didn't have a gun. There was only so many guns in there. There was me, my kid, my two boys and another guy that was, that owned the farm. And they had guns, I didn't have no gun, there was no extra guns in there. So anyway they, they come and got me from my house. I used to live on the lake, just down there a little ways. And by that time there was stuff in the paper and every damned thing else. You know, felon and you know, guns and all this craziness that they put in anytime they wanted to about me. And U.S. Marshalls came and got me on New Year's Eve. What was ____ was that Dot, I mean Doris?

Doris: [Inaudible]

FD: They got me, no they got me, they got me at Halloween. Halloween and they come and knocked on the door, and we were in there, you know, we let them in. And Doris says well he hasn't had supper yet! And they said we'll feed him supper down in Marquette! So anyway it was pretty much dark, anyway he said if you have a wallet, if you have anything here maybe you should leave that at home. So they put the cuffs on me, put them on me like this. And then they're walking me out of my house and I look around and there's all kinds of heads, rifles, and

shotguns and everything, you'd thought they had Al Capone I think. They had all kinds of people out there!

RM: Ohh this was the, the federal marshals

FD: Yeah, yeah, yeah!

RM: Oh my!

FD: They had State, Sheriff, they had everybody there! They were all there, I come outside and I look. Holy Christ! The hell's going on? So they put me, they put me in a, in the wagon there. I don't know what the heck it was a suburban I think, black Suburban like they drive around in. And there was two Marshalls, and I was like this. And the two Marshalls, one was pretty friendly, he talked to me, knew me because, I had been around the Federal Court and they knew me, and they talk down there. And we get out to the Covington Junction, and the guy that wasn't driving tells the driver pull in there. Well the guy knew what was going on, he said pull in there. So they pulled in there, he asked me to get out and he frisked me all over again and he put my hands behind my back, this way, leg irons, and a chain around my belt. And the other guy said, you don't have do that to Fred, for god-sakes. He says, I'm doing it. And then they load me back into the car, in the vehicle, take me down to Marquette, and I had to gimp to walk into the god-damned jail. I mean really, really, I mean what the hell they think.

RM: yeah, yeah

FD: But I mean I thought this was so overbearing, I mean for god sakes, they should do that to frigging politicians. It's crazier than hell

RM: I thought maybe they'd went and they took the handcuffs off. I mean you're already in the, in the car, you're not going to go anywhere.

FD: No they made it much worse. And the cuffs were tight too, I don't know what I ever did to that other Marshall, but I did do something to him apparently. But the other was good, he said you don't have to do that. He says pull over, and I knew I was in trouble! I knew I was in big trouble!

RM: Yeah. That sounds like it, it's a little scary, when these things happen. Kind of wonder about the Marshalls...

FD: yeah, yeah, yeah

RM: So then you went, so then what was the outcome of that? Did you have a trial or?

FD: Yeah, you mean the Escanaba deal? Yeah, I went into this is real, real story too. I'm set up for trial in Escanaba because of that incident over there. And I know that will give me another five years, I'm told that, this will get you another five, the state will take their five or else the feds will take their time and then when you get out of there, you'll do the other five.

RM: So a total of ten?

FD: No, no, not besides. My, I got eight, I got three, ahh I got three, I got thirty months to begin with. After that, yeah I got thirty months. This was after the other one, but this other one could have gotten me five! And depend who in wants the first bite, I don't know what's going to happen then, but. That's what I was told so, they take me out of Marquette jail, after so many weeks. I can't remember the number of weeks, but it, after so many weeks they took me outta there and they brought me over to Escanaba and when I got out of the police, the sheriff's car

and got in the Escanaba jail where they book you. You know they have to do the prints and pictures and all that kind of stuff. And then, while they're doing that there's a guy that walks in the back of the garage like this. [Cellphone interrupts] OK what did I say?

RM: You were...

FD: Ohh, this guy was walking by in the front there. And I'm standing at that, at the desk there and they were booking me I guess. And they guy back there he says you're Mr. Dakota aren't you? I says yes sir I am. He said how's it going today? I said it's not going real good. So he, he didn't say anything, he just kept walking. So I'm in, I'm in the county jail waiting to be arraigned, I'm in there about a week. I got no place else to go, it's either going to be there or Marquette anyway because they're going to take me to my destination federally. So I go into court with my lawyer and lo and behold, the guy that was walking back there, was the Judge, he was the Judge! It was sitting up in the damned desk! And these guys are, you know, all trying to hang Fred Dakota and, and so it gets over or just about over and the Judge asked the guy that was out in the field, holding me there. You know the, the Marshall, not Marshall, but...

RM: The Deputy?

FD: The deputy, yeah. And he asked the deputy, he said you got him charged with transporting and having a rifle and everything else, and hunting. So he said did you ever see the wheels of that truck turn? He said no, he said if you didn't see the wheels on that truck turn, why are you charging him with transporting? Holy Christ, ya know? And he said you guys better get together and get together with something. So he recessed for a while and the lawyers got together so they ended up with charging my two kids and I of hunting, no guns. They didn't charge me with that felony stuff because, would you, would you just plea to a hunting charge,

take care of that? Well my lawyer says, I'd agree with that, so I did and so I only had to pay a fine and my kids only had to pay a fine, but I didn't get five years. But that guy that walked back there, he says are you Mr. Dakota? Yes sir, I am. You know, how's it going? I says it's not really going very good for me. That's all I said.

RM: Yeah, yeah

FD: And that's all I said, and he's up there, sitting on that bench up there. I can tell you that was a godsend!

RM: Yeah, I should say. So then after, after that. What, what happened?

FD: After that they took me back to Marquette and then

RM: All wrapped up with the leg irons and what not? No?

FD: Umm, no.

RM: Well because the trial's over, you're, you're not guilty. I mean that's, that had ended

FD: No, but I was still cuffed. I was cuffed. One of the sheriff's deputies brought me _____[inaudible] and let me smoke a couple of cigarettes on the way back.

_____ [inaudible] But anyway, uhh. What is that?

RM: Oh that's me, I'm just not going to. It'll stop. Okay

FD: Anyway they then, by that time I've already got my sentence federally because I was already was a convicted felon, when they said I was, had a gun and all this kind of stuff.

RM: So, now you had to go through a federal?

FD: No now I'm just waiting to, to do my time in federal.

RM: Oh oh you had the_____ [inaudible]

FD: I've already been sentenced

RM: Oh oh this was in between the trial and the sentence. Okay, got you.

FD: yeah, yeah. I mean that's too, to come over and that was only because of the press, the presses were constantly. And subsequently I did what I had to do.

RM: so then you had to serve, had to serve the 30 months?

FD: Yes I did, and I had to pay a fine, and they accused me of taking \$130,000 from the tribe. I paid them back the \$130,000 that I didn't take to begin with. And I, the way I did it was, I had bought 66 acres up near the college, that was within the boundaries of the Baraga village. And, and that was, that was valued at a hundred thousand. It was valued at a hundred thousand. And I asked the tribe could I donate this? No, could I give you this? And the tribe, I still got the letter. And the tribe said you don't owe us anything Fred, you don't owe us anything, but if you want to donate that to the tribe we will gladly take it. And I said I'd like to, you could have, you know a small golf course there. 66 acres ought be able to do something. And then I paid them a check for the remainder of money, so I paid that before I even got locked up. And the fine that was like 30,000 or something like that, I paid that. And then because of that hunting incident, that's why they come and got me and had I not done that, I would have been just able to drive over to, over to Oxford, Wisconsin and turn myself in. See all that other crap caused all this other stuff to happen. So I had to go to, I went to, they they, the feds brought me down to, it's outside of Grand Rapids...

RM: Kalamazoo?

FD: No, it was a small town that they had a contract with the jail. I spent Thanksgiving there I got a little dab of potatoes and some lunch-meat turkey, half a spoonful of cranberries. One thing about these jails; they all had brand-new equipment. It's the law, they all had brand new equipment, it's staying brand new because they jobbed their meals out. Some organization will bid on meals. That was my Thanksgiving meal and that's what the rest of the gosh-darned prisoners got in there.

RM: That's the, the low end. Usually they give, they give those contracts to the lowest bidder.

FD: yeah, it's absolutely crazy! Why do they have all that brand new kitchen equipment? I mean it's so crazy. Let's see some of these politicians in the State go and do that. Maybe they ought to take a trip and see what's going on for god-sakes, why do you waste money so foolishly? If you ain't going to feed them out of there, why don't, why do you give them the money? But anyway, that's another story.

RM: So then, so then you got out of jail, I mean you were done with the prison, the thirty months.

FD: yeah, yeah it happened.

RM: And then you came back, and where did we leave off? Were you then, were you back on the council? Or no?

FD: I'm back on the council right now too.

RM: No, but I mean then. When you came back?

FD: No, no, when I got out I had, I had three years of probation, got three years' probation. So I couldn't run for council until 2003. So in 2003 I ran for council and I won, so it come time to swear in, the council up there said you can't do this you're a felon. You can't, yeah. So I said, no one says I can't be on the council, it says nothing about felons in the constitution. And then they say, it must say something about this on your probation. So they didn't, well actually they did swear me in, but they were going to wait till Judge Bell, we call him bye-bye Bell, people that's been in call him Bye-Bye Bell and that's what I call him too. Even though he's an ex-Marine, probably an officer. Anyway they were going to call him and find out if I could be on the council or I could be on the gaming board. Because the gaming board and the council were the same body. So they got a hold of him, and he told them Fred Dakota paid his fines, he paid his dues to society, and if he wants to be on the council, he can. If he wants to be on the gaming committee he can. So that part was good though. And you know I can walk all over the Upper Peninsula and people will recognize me. They don't have a bad thing to say about me. I haven't seen if they had anyway. Yeah it's bad, yep. So that's kinda, I know what happened, I'm sitting on the council right now. I've been trying to be council chair, but or not, yeah council chair, but that was more of a threat to _____. But I haven't been able to get much more than two or three votes, but times are changing up there too. But I don't want to work anymore, I'm tired of work, I mean I'll sit on the council to be there to make sure that they don't sign any treaties with the State of Michigan. And you know, the State of Michigan will call them agreements and all this other kind of crap, but it's a treaty and when you have Indians sign something, it's forever. And we can't quit doing that.

RM: Well I think. You're really enhancing the council with your institutional memory. Probably, which is probably greater than probably everybody on the council if they haven't been there for a long time.

FD: Its...They, at first they had a hard time with it, but now there's no problem with it. They listen, you know. I uhh, I got, I got a little trouble with one of the attorneys, but that's not here nor there either.

RM: I guess part of your, part of your quote problem is that you do do take a very independent, aggressive position.

FD: It's starting to listen pretty good.

RM: Are they?

FD: Yeah, it was kind of a tough nut to crack, but after you spend so much time talking to them, it starts making sense to them of how things happened. Where they happened and all that kind of stuff, but it, they're a little bull-headed once in a while. But you know I did live the life.

RM: Yep, yep certainly did.

FD: On there, and I lived the life and you know, you guys should learn and they're beginning.

RM: I think what happens with a lot of this is that people, and that's why we kind of had to bring this in a various times, the people tend to look at the present and not that this was a whole process that goes back, and like you said, most times you didn't know where this was going when you opened a casino and so forth. Was it going to work, what was going to happen? And I think people forget about that, they sort of look at the end and, don't think about the sort of good things you did and the whole process of entering into the unknown that way.

FD: It's, well it's like I said before. There was four tribes in the entire state, now I believe they got thirteen, thirteen. And there was always thirteen. Where were you before gaming? Why did that all of a sudden become something for you? I'm not saying that it's good or it's bad but still, the question's there. But you know, they're nice people, they're, they're richer than we are that's all. I'm a little bit jealous about that. Their location isn't as good for hunting and fishing, but damn it they got it all over us on population and money.

RM: Let's see there's one, the Bay Mills tribe wants to open a casino in Lansing. I guess that's the way this...

FD: That's Sault Sainte Marie.

RM: Sault Sainte Marie, Okay

FD: Sault Sainte Marie, yeah. There's a lot of people that want to do things, including our tribe but I can't for-see that happening, you know, in the real near future maybe, maybe on down the road but you know. In order to do something like that you got to have your ducks in order, you got to have a good lawsuit, you got to have a lot of people trying to help you in terms of professional people, you need to have the politicians both in Lansing and in Washington D.C., and the lobbyists to help you with that. That's the only way you're going to do it, it's nothing about being right and wrong about anything. It's about who's, who can you buy and who's going to try buy you. That's what it's all about. And you know, nothing about sovereignty.

RM: Because I think now the argument seems to be coming from, the tribe that, Mount Pleasant. They're upset, and so it's not a non-Indian issue but it seems to be an Indian issue and they invading the other's territory or something. Seems to be that way.

FD: That's, that's a...they were, they had bingo too, you know after we started ours here, then they got it down there. And they were quite happy with bingo, they were making quite a lot of money, they got lots of population there, but they didn't even want a casino. The council at that time did not want a casino, but I knew the CEO from down there, he was from L'Anse, good friend of mine. He said Fred, would you come down and talk to my, my bingo board. It wasn't a gaming board, it was the bingo board, they were going to call themselves the casino, no I mean they were going to call themselves the gaming. Will you come down there? They don't want to start, they don't want to do no casino. Will you come down there and talk to them? So I did, so you know I went down there, and I says even if you don't want to do it, the magic day is such and such that the Federal Gaming Commission says that you have gaming on your reservation you can continue to do it. If you don't have casino gaming on your reservation as of this date you can never do it. So he says will you come down and talk to our people? And I says yeah I'll come down there. So I did go down there and I was able to convince them that at least put one table in the bingo hall and start dealing black-jack. I said because you got to at least cover this law, and you know they got all outta whack, you know you got a bunch of people that are dry-drunks or whatever. They said there's too much liquor coming on the reservation and this and that. I said Christ, Friday night drive down that road over there and see how many bags are coming this way on the reservation. I said what do you suppose is in there? I said, them are six-packs! You ain't keeping no liquor off the reservation. And I said besides that, you should have it there because people are more calm if they had a couple of drinks and they're liable to spend a little more money if they got a couple of drinks in them. But anyway it turned out that they did do that. Of course now, they know everything about it. They didn't even know how they started really.

Unidentified male voice (U.V.): I remember the third richest tribe in the country... Bay Mills, I mean Mount Pleasant.

RM: Which one?

FD: Mount Pleasant

U.V: The third richest tribe in the country.

RM: Really? Because the big one's in the Pequot in Connecticut

FD: That's the big one, but I don't

U.V: There was three, Pequots in Connecticut, and then the tribe over here in Minnesota, by Minneapolis,

RM: Ohh

FD: That's Shakopees

U.V: Yep and then it was them.

RM: Ohh, that's interesting

U.V: And to think they didn't even want them.

FD: They didn't want to! They said they got enough, they were not good enough, yeah.

U.V: There aren't a lot of people that know that.

FD: And you know what? The Pequots they weren't even a tribe when I opened up that garage. They were calling me at the garage, when I was bartending. Let us talk to you, how did you do

this? I was...Canadian people calling me. Yeah, Pequots weren't a tribe! Christ, when they first started I only think they had a dozen people, and that was after I opened up in the garage. So you know it had an impact all over the country. You know, all of a sudden, and the best part of it is, they don't even know their own history is. Don't you know why you can do this? They're talking about some tribe in California that was doing poker, and they're talking about Public Law 280. Ain't got nothing to do with gaming, they're crazy, but you know damned if they won't give, they won't give anybody enough credit about nothing. It's a shame, it's a damned shame. Ahh let me come over, I'd like to have bag of money ah, but I'm not looking for anything, at least know what your history is!

RM: But with you, the record, the record's there and you should be proud of that.

FD: I am! I'm very proud of it and it makes me more proud than anything that because I believe in sovereignty, that much. That much that I'll put my butt on the line. Do you think any of the other people did that? I don't think so.

RM: And that's one thing that comes through in the, in the recording here. Is that Fred, the sovereignty of Fred is very important.

FD: People are, people are, at least this tribe here's beginning to learn, I don't know if they will ever digest this totally but. I've just been very fortunate that I've been able to, since I got out of the Federal Prison, to stop them from signing any agreements with the State. I had a farm off the reservation, I had a couple of horses and a couple of cows and some turkeys and some chickens and growing wheat, and I mean oats and stuff like that. I tried farming after I got out, I had to move back to the reservation. I liked it out there! I had to move to back to the reservation and I had to get back on the council, crazy, I had to. Didn't have any choice, I mean when you feel it

in your heart that they're doing something wrong, you got to do something about it! You know they may ridicule you and think that you're nuts and all that stuff, but sooner or later it'll kick in, but that's why they're here.

RM: Okay, well. At this point, very good.

U.V: Did you explain to him how you started to open up the water decon...

(End of recording)