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Interview with Glenn Spray

Glenn Spray

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Interview by Jessica Carney and Seth Swihart with Glenn Spray in his home at ----- on Thursday November 19, 1998.

Note: Only portions of this tape relevant to the Living Together Project will be transcribed. The specific excerpts will be referenced by the tape counter number at which the excerpt begins.

006 Glenn Spray: . . . There is a misconception among a lot of people that these were all points to be shot at something. They weren't necessarily. Smaller ones could be, but a lot of them were thrown. They were thrown as a projectile. Or they were just lashed on to a stick and used as a knife. And then, just as a regular knife, it need sharpening every once in a while. The only way that they could sharpen was to re-chip it. Well then as they re chip it they wear them down. A lot of times you will find them broken, especially this type. But that is what an archaic metal is. .

014 Seth Swihart: Are these [arrowheads] all found around here?

GS: I'd say ninety-nine percent of them are from Knox county and I would guess at least eighty-five percent are from are just from this township. I didn't go very far to do my hunting. They are still out on the farm around here see. And the way you find them, you work the soil by either plowing or. . .and then after it rains it washes them off a little bit and then you can walk out and it is easier to find them that way. You can find them every once in a while in dry ground, but they don't show up like they do after it has rained on them. And I find them from the tractor occasionally too.

037 JC: How long have you lived here?

GS: Dad bought this in 1940, well we moved here in 1940. And I have live here all but about two, two and a half years of my life. I lived in Columbus a little while, but just before that I was in the service. And when I came back we got married and lived in Columbus and then I came back up here. This is the house we did live in and this is the new one dad built.

129 GS: Maybe they put that there and used that to split a chunk of wood or a stick or something. A lot of this is speculation because people didn't live back then -- I mean the white man didn't.

171 JC: How long have you been collecting?

GS: Since 1940.

JC: What got you started?

GS: I, when I was a kid in West Virginia I saw two or three arrowheads and I thought, "Ohh those things are pretty." Well we moved up here in 1940 and I found out that they were layin' all over the fields out here so I started hunting them.

JC: Do you know anyone else around here who collects as well?

GS: Ohh ya, several people.

185 JC: When you go out looking do you go out on purpose just to search or do you. . .

GS: Oh a lot of times, a lot of times. Ya.

189 SS: What about these arrowheads is kind of, why do they intrigue you so much?

GS: I don't know. . .

SS: Just that they are old?

GS: Ya, ya Indians used to have them. Indians made those. I guess that is the main attraction. Plus the beauty of some of them. And any more it is getting that if you bought them back several years ago they are worth money now.

JC: Have you learned a lot about Indian culture in your collecting?

GS: Ya, quite a bit, quite a bit.

328 GS: I have to tell you a story on this, not to be bragging or anything but, a fellow told me he had a spear. I said, "Well, I'd like to see it." He said, "Well come on down sometime." So I went down one Sunday afternoon and he was just getting ready to eat lunch and he said to go in and have a seat. Well, you know how you sit down and you are looking around. Well there was a flower pot with this [arrowhead] in it, broken. I thought, "Ohh my land!" Well I bought that for forty-five dollars. And I probably paid anywhere from forty to sixty, this is several years ago, to have it restored. So I have got about a hundred dollars in it. I turned down \$2000 dollars for this. That's why I say, I don't do this to brag but I just want to show you the value of some of these. I've got several dollars in some of these.

388 SS: Have you ever talked to anyone that, with like Native American heritage, or anything, that would be, that has kind of grown up with arrowheads or anything or anyone that's kind of had more of a family tie to any arrowheads or anything like that?

GS: No, because, well you see I am seventy years old, and anybody, even if they were eighty or hundred, Indians were gone out of here by then. Now, I know a fella whose younger than I am, but he can remember his dad or grandad telling about the last Indian in our township, an Indian woman. And that would have been in, probably back in the 1850's to 70's or something like that. That's just my guess. But, there wouldn't be too many people alive that had any relationship to Indians in this area unless it was somebody that had come back as an Indian relative, or a relative of Indians. But they wouldn't necessarily have any connection with arrowheads or stuff like that. Now there are a lot of Indian people that come back when we have shows and stuff like that, and

they try to raise a fuss, and so-on and so-forth.

JC: Are they against, do people who have Native American, tend to be against. . .

GS: They're against, they'd call people like me grave robbers and something like that, you know, wealth. That's because several years ago, people used to dig graves or mounds. Now it's illegal. And it should be, because they shouldn't be disturbed. Now another example of what can be done is if someone is putting up new buildings, or something like that, and they're clearing ground and run into one, then they will try to bring someone in that knows about it and help excavate if they have the time to do that and then they'll take that history down and what they find and so-on and so-forth. It's cataloged and it's taken care of that way.

401 GS: I don't know what I am going to do with my collection, but, the boys, I've got four sons, they aren't as interested in it as I am. But, if I die before I get rid of them, why they will get them somehow, or have a chance at them. Personally I would like to see them sell to see how they sell according to what I paid for them. That is what would interest me. I've got a lot of money tied up in them. Just put in a little at a time you know, get one here and one there and. But, I'd say in the last thirty years real good stuff has doubled or tripled or more.

JC: Is there new interest in it? Are there more. . .

GS: There is more interest in it because it field finds you know. A lot more people go out and hunt them then they used to. Well, they are gettin' where they are worth some money. They are worth lookin' for.

414 JC: Do you know other people in the area who collect as well?

GS: There are a lot of people. One of them, who has, if you want to see a lot of good stone stuff, as person who has them is Kenneth Black. . .Used to be every farmer had a shoebox full or cigar box full, something like that.

JC: Do you know are there any people who are of Native American descent who are actual collectors?

GS: Ahhhh, might know one or two somewhere, but I can't think of them off hand. I really don't know. Probably I would know them but maybe don't know that they are part Indian.