Jack Daughtry

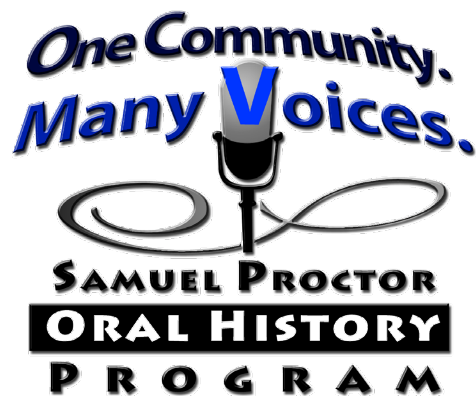
Poarch Creek Project

CRK-002

Interview by:

Dr. J. Anthony Paredes

April 1972



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CRK 002 Jack Daughtry
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project
Interviewed by J. Anthony Paredes in April 1972
1 hour, 27 minutes | 58 pages

Abstract: Jack Daughtry recalls the history of schooling in the area, beginning with the bussing of children in to the Indian Consolidated School. He speaks of his own education up until the third or fourth grade, and the educational discrimination his children faced. He then discusses the construction of one-room houses and the history of the grant land he was raised on. He speaks about the history of the founding families of the community, and the intermarriage of Indian and White people. He then recalls square dances that were hosted in the community, and the music that was played. He speaks land sales and purchases in the area, and about the religious history of Poarch. He talks about his job history, and once more recalls struggles surrounding educational access.

Keywords: [Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Lynn McGhee; Alabama--Poarch; Education; Discrimination]

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program University of Florida

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P: Testing, one, two, three, four, five, six, grants and support 1972, Summer Institute in Visual Anthropology ACLS Grounds, Ford provides varied support.

P: Just go ahead and say your name and the year you were born.

D: I'm Jack Daughtry, that all right?

P: That's fine, yeah.

D: Yeah, I'm Jack Daughtry, and I was born in 1901.

P: To begin, you've just said that things were a lot different when you were coming up, and Indians have it pretty good today and hopes that they realize that. Maybe you could pursue that point a little bit, and talk about how things were when you were growing up compared to today and things that have become different. Okay?

D: Well, the way I see it now, I hope they'll see it different, because when I was coming up, it was rough back at that time. We just didn't have—well, a lot of people just was . . . I don't know they're just too good-hearted, something or other. They just didn't realize all what it's about, see, 'cause now, you take us, we most all of them was raised in a one-room house. Majority of them was raised in one. It had a kitchen off of the house, and maybe, you know, it was . . . the first school I went to, we paid a dollar and a quarter a month for the first school we went to. See, it's been rough with us all our lives.

P: Your parents paid a dollar and a quarter per child?

D: Yeah, a month. So the other schools, then, they had all schools that wasn't a half a mile from our schools, see? Going to school. And you take now when this bussing finally got it up to getting the . . . had to have it go into a lawsuit to get to school from about right out there where that schoolhouse is. Oh, they hauled them in here, children from Huxford Grammar School, brought it by McCullough School, and brought them on and put them in a house right out in front of that Episcopal Church now, right across from where that big house, the big old brick house—that's where they put them, out there.

P: That's where they put what?

D: Put the children out over at that schoolhouse there.

P: From Huxford?

D: Yeah, from Huxford.

P: Rather than take them to the McCullough School?

D: Yeah, to Huxford School. See, they picked them up around Huxford School.

P: Oh, there was a Huxford School?

D: Yeah, they'd pick them up, then the children around Huxford School, bring them by McCullough School, and bring them down and put them in the house.

P: At the Poarch School.

D: Yeah, yeah. Well, that had that Indian Consolidated then, you know. See, I bought a bus and I hauled them from up there. I never drived the bus myself, but I owned the bus. Dan McGhee drove it awhile and then I finally—the county bought it from me, see? So, at that time, the county bought it, and then they built that school, and they had an Indian Consolidated school. Now that's why—going on with all this about bussing children—our children was bussed all the time, from way up there, all around are schools.

P: To bring them to the Indian Consolidated school?

D: Yeah, yeah. Bring them down and, let's see, they'd come the Huxford School, by McCullough School, and up to where that Baptist Church is, schoolhouse right there. Three schools, they brought them, and brought these Indians where we put them at now.

P: Now, when you were a boy and your parents were paying a dollar and a quarter, was there state support for the school at that time or was that just a—

D: No. Finally, finally they did get a county teacher there. Finally, I think we finally got them one, and then Ms. Moore and Ms. [inaudible], **Masie Bates**; they taught them until they—well, they taught the whole school from time to time, till they changed up here lately. Yeah. Well, I went to school on both of them teaching me.

P: How much education did you have?

D: I went to about the—best I remember, only third or fourth grade.

P: All those grades were paid for by your parents at a dollar and a quarter?

D: Up to, maybe the first year or two years I remember, I couldn't tell you exactly right on that. But from then on, then the county starts to paying for it, in the church house.

P: What year was that about then?

D: That must have been back in, oh, way back, because it just began when we first started school. I must have been six, seven years old, then you have to be then on about ten to go to school, you know?

P: So it was about when you were just beginning school when the county started paying for it?

D: Yeah, 'cause we got our birth certificates from up to county court, and that's what we got on there when we first went to school.

P: That's when the county started paying money for the school and the parents didn't have to do it all.

D: Uh-huh.

P: Well, so then at some point along the way, there'd been the first problem at the schools that you've talked about is, that there were Indian children not only at Poarch, but at Huxford and other places, and they were bussed past some schools that were white schools to go to the school in Poarch, which was an Indian school?

D: Yeah, and the Indian children were going in these same schools, too. Yeah. You know mixed, just like I'm not a full-blood, see, I'm just a half, but they would go out there around Huxford School, and [inaudible] and different things, and McCullough, and over there at Bates-Moore School, what we called the Moore Schools. Three schools brought the children and put them out in the house.

P: And you're the one who got the bus to do this.

D: Yeah, yeah.

P: If you hadn't done that, would they have gotten to school some place anyway?

D: Well they had a little ol' school at Huxford, see? They had a little old school off over there, little church house back there. Bill McGhee lived up there at that time, which is my mother's first cousin. They had a little ol' school up there. And he had to get his children out and send them a new route to send them to school.

P: You spoke once before of standing in the road with your children to stop the bus. Now, what was all that about?

D: Well, that was after they got us these laws, see? And they was gonna transfer these children from here to the sixth grade, see? After they got the school built, see? So, they passed all the other schoolchildren around behind here over on what they called back in—back behind me over there, and come out by and passed all them children and then, when it comes by, I just got out on the road with both of my children, twins, got one around one hand and one by the other

and stood in the road. And he stopped, and when he stopped, he opened the door and I just told the children to get in there. So that wound that up.

P: That was to get kids to go to the Atmore School?

D: No, they were going to McCullough.

P: They were going to McCullough.

D: See, I tried to get them to put it to twelfth grade school, to start with me and Tracy Rolin. And they didn't want the children to get off, you know? Wouldn't take care of them. And I told them, I said, let's don't stand for nothing but a twelfth grade school. And they finally got it down to sixth. Now, I always will believe they done tore McCullough School down to keep them children from going up to sixth grade. And they commenced transferring them all to Atmore then. I always will believe that, I'll never believe nothing else. 'Cause they didn't go up there long before they . . . they had been discriminating up here right and left till these colored children, last two years when we went to haul them, bussing these colored children with these others. They even had two special buses coming there to pick up them there white children on the road there. 'Cause my brother knows, since he went to driving, he went to riding in it. Boy, it's been rough with these Indians here.

P: Well, so, if I understand correctly, what happened was that sort of in the history of this, is that when you were about six or seven years old, the county stepped in and started helping to pay for the Indian school. And at that time, the Indian children were brought in from Huxford and all around.

D: Yeah.

P: And then they got a school at Poarch, county-supported school at Poarch?

D: Yeah.

P: And then, I don't sure I understand what happened between there and the time they started coming into Atmore. When did that first happen, that they started bringing children into Atmore?

D: After that, well, then they got to—let's see, it might have been another year after that before they commenced to bringing them all, you know, except for the small one, now, they kept that little smaller school out there.

P: Which was how many grades?

D: Up to sixth.

P: That was up to sixth. The little one out there.

D: Well, they broke it up just last year, I believe, maybe a year before last. They kept them out there to this kindergarten and then this, property, whatever they call it, Head Start, started. Well, then they commenced to moving them all over there and putting them in different schools.

P: And the time you stood out there with your girls i the road to stop the bus, you were, trying to get them over to the McCullough School?

D: That's right.

P: To go to which grades?

D: They were going to sixth grade.

P: Oh, they didn't have sixth grade where you . . .

D: No, they couldn't let, they finished the sixth and go to seventh . . .

P: Oh, they were going to the seventh, you were trying to get them into the seventh at McCullough and the busses weren't picking the kids up, right?

D: Right, that's right.

P: Buford said something about you had to sell your land or something because of that and you—

D: No, I didn't sell it, I didn't sell it because of that now. I just sold it '**cause Jack Stallworth told me**. Said, Jack says, the best way to get out of that is just sell your place out there and get out there, see. He's a good friend of mine. Which, I didn't want to get in no trouble out there, see, but I done stood all I could. And so I just did that, see, left from out there. I didn't sell it on count of . . . give it away, but I just sold it 'cause, just to get out of it, see.

P: Uh-huh. And you came here?

D: Well, I went to South Florida and then I lived here, too, and yeah, I've been living here now ever since [19]50. Not this particular place, but in Atmore.

P: So it's [19]50 what?

D: In [19]50.

P: In [19]50 you came back here?

D: Yeah. I went down South Florida stayed down there quite a while, that's when I sold the place. I just wanted to get out, didn't want to get in no trouble. Then I moved back to Pensacola and stayed down there a while.

P: What kind of trouble do you think you could have gotten into?

D: Well, I just didn't like the way it was going and I was fixing to hurt somebody. And so Mr. Moore, after I put my children on the bus, he comes down by the house—me and him's friends too, good friends, and I've been around him ever since **he was** a little bitty kid and his wife was teaching school at that time, she taught me. And so I asked all over Jack, well, I was so mad, it was pitiful. If it hadn't been, I'd probably got in trouble with him.

P: You said you were, had done so much stirring up anyway. What were you doing, when you were stirring up? What kind of things were you doing? Were you talking to lot of people, or what was going on?

D: Yeah.

P: Just a minute ago you said you already stirred up so much trouble.

D: Yeah, yeah.

P: What were you doing? [Laughing]

D: I was, well, these others were coming around to see what was gonna go on, you know? They'd done passed their children, you know? Got over there, wanted to know what was going on. Well, I'd done already stirred up over it and I tried to talk to my uncle and them about it, well, somehow another, yes.

P: Talk to who?

D: To my uncles. And they're just gone quiet, you know, don't have much to say. But I done stood all of it I could, you know, so when Bates comes down that morning, I just absolutely told him, I said, now, Bates, it's a good thing this happened, 'cause I was fixing one of us was going to go out of the picture about it.

P: Bates, now, who was that?

D: Bates Moore. He lived right up there, the side of the church house up there, see.

P: Was he an Indian or . . . ?

D: No, he was a white man.

P: And it was his wife that was teaching school there?

D: Yeah.

P: When you first started talking, you mentioned that the kitchen was separate from the house. Was that a separate building?

D: Yeah, that's kind of the way that everybody did it back then. They'd build a little cabin or a house, you know, maybe one room or two rooms, and on average,

they'd build the kitchen off and have a walk to go to the kitchen, see. And about two rooms, then, is the biggest they had, and maybe sometimes they'd have a hall to it, so they can stick and dirt the chimneys, and . . . You take myself, my mother, she had a brother and sister, we were raised in one little room, see? And the many of them was raised in a one-room house and then they got to building the kitchen off kinda sideways from the house, didn't have a porch. But the majority of the folks all out through there was raised in one room house.

P: What were the houses made out of?

D: Well, there's most of them, the majority of them was logs, and then they got to getting lumber. They split, most of them, back, I remember when I was a young boy, they'd split the boards down. They'd take them logs, you know, and they'd fill that up with mud. See, them logs that had a crack in them, they'd seal that with mud, see? Then they'd split them long boards and put all that over that there. And they made them chimneys out of sticks. They'd split them sticks, you know, and cross them and tap it with that mud.

P: What kind of floors did these places have?

D: Well they finally got the—they had wood floors . . .

P: Do you remember if some people just had dirt floors?

D: Well, some of them was raised, but I, I kind of got over that. But I seen dirt floors. Yeah, yeah they had dirt floors. You take Lawrence McGhee's children out there, now, they had a little old house built right there where that overpass comes from

the chief's, there. Now, they live right there in a little old log thing there and they was raised on a dirt floor, but that there's several of them houses around. I couldn't, you know, go way back and think about it way back there, but that particular one, I know it was a dirt floor.

P: When was the—well, of course, you've been in town here and away, but when was the last one of those old log houses torn down?

D: Well, let's see, now. Last one . . . That was even Uncle Fred Walker's time. I just remember what year he built that old house over there on that old grant. See, we was raised on that. I just remember what year that was when that's the last one as I know anything about tore down.

P: You said you were raised on that grant.

D: Yeah. On that all old granted land, what they call the Lynn McGhee Grant. I'm on—

P: Could you tell me about that grant land a little bit, what you know about it?

D: Well, I don't know too much about it. It was given to the Lynn McGhee and his heirs as long as the grass grows and the water runs, see? But, later on, the state got involved in it somehow or another, they was having a law suit or something another. But anyhow, the state, they wasn't getting no tax out of it, see. And they kept on dabbling with it. And so Uncle Will and Old Man Fred Walker and Richard Walker—they's all heirs to it, see? But they just had a different daddy, there. So Neil McGhee at Huxford, he was a part of it up there and they kept on tampering

with it and Neil, the best I remember, somebody say he borrowed some money on it, see? And he was pretty smart, Neil was, and he was like myself; he's half, you know? Half Indian and half White. He was pretty smart and he borrowed some money, that's what started the wheel rolling, the best I could understand it coming up. So, the state wouldn't get no tax out of it, you see.

D: So, they fiddled around with it and kept dabbling in it. I think Old Man Fred McCauley, he had got involved in it, you know? And some of them. Then they got to assessing it. Well, Uncle Will, he assessed eighty; Uncle Fred, eighty; and Uncle Richard Walker, eighty . . .

P: Dollars or acres, eighty?

D: Yeah, eighty acres. Eighty acres. See, that's how much it was there, you see. Then the other one was up at, well . . . Neil assessed it, see. Well, several times it come up for it, but they didn't pay their tax, you know; they didn't think they had to pay no taxes. I reckon somebody go up there and pay their tax, you know, and then they come back and stir up something else about it. And that's gonna get it in for the taxes, you see. But they filed it in, got it and passed where they could pay their tax and then the land got a little bit valuable—just as valuable then as it was today, but **they** never did realize it. So, at that time, well, they got it and they commenced paying tax on it, tax on it, and on down the line. So, that's what wound up, and then I think maybe some of them owned some of it after, yet.

P: But, eventually, it was sold off or lost for taxes in some cases, or—

D: No, no, never lost for taxes. It had to redeem itself, they had to go pay the taxes, fifteen cents on the dollar for that.

P: But the grant land, eventually, was most of it sold off or do you think there might be some people still on some of it?

D: Yeah.

P: Who might be some people that have still kept on to a piece of the grant land?

D: There's Eugene Sells' wife's on it, Willie Lee and Martin, and the one that's got the store . . . Martha J. Jackson. Now, she was a McGhee, but she owned some of it yet, and that's about all. I think **Joe Barr**, his wife still owns some of it. That's about the **cap** on that grant. And then, up at the Huxford, Neil's oldest boy owns that up there.

P: Neil McGhee?

D: Yeah, Neil McGhee, his oldest boy bought all the rest of them out of it, so he still owns that up there.

P: Was that grant land given to the Indians by the state of Alabama or the U.S. government?

D: By the federal. General Jackson gave that to Lynn McGhee piloting through this country. He give it to them, see, to pilot him, keep him from getting killed. And they came in around, I think, about the Spanish fort, he got away and went back in the woods—

P: Where is the Spanish fort now?

D: Down there at Mobile.

D: You know, just before you get to Mobile, that big—

P: I've never been to Mobile.

D: If you ever go down there, when you get there, you'll remember, 'cause it's steep down there, right down to the . . .

P: The reason that there are Indians here is what? Because of Lynn McGhee, or how did that all come about?

D: Well, it's got to be like that 'cause, see, when they won the war, they told them all they could go if they wanted to and then we all could all stay if we wanted to. The Colberts and the Rollins and McGhees, they stayed there, right down that Headapadida branch there. Stopped right up the other side of the church house, way up there, they call the Headapadida. They all had houses, right down, slide across over there to [inaudible], they had houses. Log houses, every one of them was a log house. Yeah.

P: Were any of the original houses still standing when you were born that you can remember? Back from, you know, like in the 1800s, way early 1800s?

D: Yeah. It was all back there then. Old Man John Rolin, Old Man Alec Rollin, Old Man **Samson** and my granddaddy and Calvin McGhee, the chief, he built him a log house. There's part of that one out there now, anybody can go on down. If you ever go out and see—

P: I saw the roof of it, I think I was out there one day and—

D: Yeah, well, that's where he started off, building that old log house. I hadn't thought about that. But all them old houses is back there.

P: Speaking of old things, when you were a boy, do you remember ever hearing any people ever talk in the Indian language?

D: No, never have. A fella asked me that the other day, about that. I said, no, I never heard none. I said, now, if some of them get mad, you can't understand what they say.

P: [laughter]

D: But, actually speaking, they speak just about as plain as us you know? Never heard any of them talk.

P: Among themselves, the older people ever, they didn't—

D: No, sir. And I was right up with some of the oldest one. **Aunt Pinky**, she's an old Indian doctor. **Aunt Loll** and all them back there, Aunt Martha, Aunt Nancy and all them old people back then.

P: You think they knew how to speak it but just didn't talk it or—?

D: No, they didn't know anything about it. If they did, they'd probably talked it, but they didn't know about that. That's all come up since they left this country. As long as I remember, see, Uncle Dick, he wasn't old, he went and fought the war over in Old Man Steadham's place, got wounded, see.

P: Which war was this in?

D: That was the old first war.

P: Oh, World War One?

D: No the first war they had here.

P: Oh, the Indian War here?

D: Yeah.

Unidentified woman: [inaudible]

D: Yeah, Uncle Dick went and fought the war in Old Man Steadham's place, see. He was a young boy, I don't think he was twenty-one neither when all that happened. But Old Man Steadham married his sister, see . . . or taking up with her, I don't think they's ever married. He got Uncle Dick to go fight the war for him, see. Dick, then, he got to be one of the big wheels in that war, [inaudible]. He got wounded see. The reason I can remember so much, I was just a little boy, see. I lived on that place where his daddy left for him. **Richard McGhee** left for him and the boy, see. I was just a little boy, see; I don't know, four or five years old, running that walk from that kitchen to the . . . He had a little old dog, how come I can remember him so good. I'd come up and he'd tell that puppy, say [inaudible], and that pup would take after him. I never did forget that dog and I'd hit that walk with him, never forget.

P: You remember, then, the sons of Lynn McGhee? They were living when you were born, the sons of Lynn McGhee?

D: I don't.

P: Are they grandsons?

D: I don't get that now, but, see, Uncle Dick and my granddaddy was Lynn McGhee, was they granddaddy.

P: I see.

D: See, Richard and Bill, I think I just remember now, as I don't think he had but two boys and this one woman, and I forget her name. But I don't think—the best I remember was Bill and Richard and this particular woman, and I believe he called her Mary, best I remember. Now, Richard was Uncle Dick's and Aunt Nancy's **grandchildrens.** And my granddaddy Bill and Joe McGhee . . . I believe that's Aunt Lizzy, I believe it's four girls and . . . two boys. Richard, Uncle Dick, Bill. I believe that was all the boys.

P: These were all, you said, grandchildren of Lynn McGhee?

D: Yeah, great-grandchildren. But, now, Uncle Dick and Bill and Aunt Nancy and all them was related to Lynn McGhee, was their great granddaddy.

P: Just a moment ago, you mentioned a woman named Pinky who was an Indian doctor. What was an Indian doctor?

D: Well, they doctored and they knowed herbs and stuff like that, see. That was Old Man Alec Rolin's wife. She cured my brother with the blight disease—the one that died, just passed away a while back last year. Made medicine, see, made pills, copper and different things, get them herbs and make medicine.

P: Is that what—

D: And she was a granny woman, too, all of them were grannies back in them times.

P: Were what?

D: Granny women.

P: What are granny women?

D: Fetch these babies when they're born.

Unidentified woman: Midwife.

P: Oh, I see. Midwife.

D: We call them grannies then, you see. You take all my children; all four of them, was a granny woman caught them. Yeah, old colored lady out there at the **Freeman.**

P: Is that what people would call Ms. Pinky, was Indian doctor? That's what they called her.

D: Yeah, she was an Indian doctor, yeah.

P: Speaking of doctors, were there ever any not-Indian doctors from the Atmore that would go out and help people or . . . ?

D: Well, there was Doctor Moore, see. He got in with them out there somewhere. That's Bates Moore, right above the school house now, you go by that church right up there.

P: That Baptist Church.

D: In that place right there, that's Doctor Moore's old place. He got in there with them, seeing he's a white doctor, see? And they just worshipped him and whatever he said was it, see?

P: How did the Indian doctors learn their trade?

D: They were just born in them, I reckon.

P: Just born in them?

D: Yeah.

P: Are there still any Indian doctors today?

D: No, not now. We had [inaudible], we called him medicine man, he believed in all that old crap, you know. He'd go around, and we'd call him medicine man. He passed away last year, before that, now.

[Break in recording]

P: While you're rolling.

D: If I understand it right, see, all of them was Lynn McGhee's daughters and some of them just married back into that Rolin bunch and most on down through there. Francis, Martha and . . . but, now, Aunt Pinky the doctor, she was a Boone, but she married Old Man Alec Rolin. Old Man John, I believe married--Old Man Sam, I believe, married . . . yeah, I believe it's Francis. See, that's one of them, Uncle Dick's sisters on down. Old Man Bill Rolin, he's one of them come in there.

P: Was Rolin Indian?

D: Yeah. They were sure enough full blood.

P: Where did they come from?

D: They were here, too, they were already here. They were here when I come here. They were here. Really, they must have been here, 'cause, now Lynn McGhee was a white man—or had some white in him—and he married into the Indians. That's the way they come on down through there, see, come through by Lynn McGhee, as Lynn McGhee, see?

P: So you think the Rolins were here before the McGhees were?

D: I would say so. **Because we ain't come here, see.** 'Cause the history gives him—Calvin had that history down—that he come here, see? It might have been in that war him, something, that got tied up with them or something. But anyhow, this was a friendly type, see? That's the reason they called them **the Friendly Creeks**. See, the white man didn't **whoop** the Indians, the Indians joined in and helped whoop the Indians, see. That's what happened, see. The white man couldn't whoop them. The Indians just, they got all messed up and they just went fighting, they didn't care who they fought, see.

P: Other than Rolin and McGhee and Daughtry, what are some other important family names in the Indian community that are big families in Poarch area?

D: Well, let's see. The **Rackards**—

Unidentified woman: The Presleys.

P: The Presleys, well, they come in on the Colberts side, see?

[Break in Recording]

SPOHP 2012: This is an editor's note. End of Tape A, Side 1. The interview continues on Tape A, Side 2.

D: Well, let's see. The Rackards, and—

Unidentified woman: The Presleys.

D: The Presleys, well, they come in on the Colbert side, see? The Presleys.

P: On the what side?

D: On the Colberts,' and Rackards,' **and got them through McGhees, too**. Bill McGhee had some boys and I don't know all them. I just remember his daughter, Aunt Betsy, and . . . Bud Adams, but I believe she's named Mary. Well, they were sisters see. Bill McGhee had some boys too. Some of that bunch in Poarch come through that side, two brothers.

P: You were saying you were just half Indian and I was wondering, over the years, have the Indians from the Poarch area often married whites or is that something that's been more—

D: Yeah, there have been more of them married up whites since I've been here, yeah. Married, I think, to whites.

P: When you were a boy, were there many Indians that who were married to people that didn't have any Indian blood at all?

D: Oh, yeah.

P: There were.

D: Yeah.

P: When you were a boy?

D: Yeah. Take Steadham, see? He was a white man. He married Uncle Dick's sister. Best I remember, I don't ever remember seeing Old Man Steadham, but Old Man **Pete Cruitt** and Old Man Jim Gleeson and **George Emmons** . . . let's see, Old Man Cruitt and Pete Cruitt and Old Man Gleeson and Old Man George Emmons, I believe them was about the oldest—and I don't remember seeing Dr. Moore, see, he was a white man. He was in this country that time, if I can remember, see? Then, Old Man Carney come here, that owned all the land and bought all this land up, see? But them, I can remember them, see?

P: Well, I can't understand, maybe you can explain it to me, how whites for years now have been marrying Indians and were still discriminating against the Indians, I don't understand that. How did that happen?

D: I don't know either. Now, there's one fella out there, let's say, went to sign up on this Indian money, fella **Nolls**. He'd fought the Indians so bad that his children asked him about for him signing up. He said, well, I die, I tell you I'd that way. I don't know why in the world they had it hard [inaudible] an Indian. When there's all mixed up there. I believe me and Calvin way, back then when we got the school business going and got all into that school business, that went on years

and years—well, it's like [inaudible] goes. State of Alabama got eighty-five percent descendants.

P: Eighty-five percent of the people in Alabama? [Laughter]

D: Yeah, Indian descent.

P: Wow.

D: But, see, lots of folks didn't know. They wouldn't tell them, see. Now, you take like McCullough there, all the Indian children going to McCullough School. You got Steadhams, there's a lot of folks around up there that had Indian in them just like we did. And in Huxford, too. **Womacks** and **Kelleys** and all them folks going to school up there. But they'd pick up these other Colberts and MCGhees, like Littles' children and them Colberts and—

P: Well, how did they, in the Huxford, McCullough, how did they make the distinction between the ones that were allowed to go to school there, or the ones that had to be bussed, on what basis did they do that?

D: I don't know why it was done, but they just wouldn't let them go to school.

Unidentified woman: They wouldn't claim to be Indian, that's the reason.

P: They wouldn't claim the Indian?

Unidentified woman: They wouldn't claim any Indian, the Indian blood they what they had in them.

D: We never known—now, you take back . . . I can remember them old two slaves over there; now, that Indian graveyard up there at the back of Moore's. Them two colored people buried in that graveyard. For years and years, I never could never figure out how that one acre of ground was set off there. Well, these two old slaves, Aunt Serene and Joe, well, see, the McCulloughs up there at Huxford give them that hundred and sixty acres land because they bought them, see. They give that acre ground to Lynn McGhee then back there for that cemetery. They buried in our cemetery. I see them at church in morning, when we're at church together right over there.

P: These old slaves?

D: Yeah, yeah.

P: I did want to ask you, too, about if you could just describe for me about the few years ago how people would get together for square dances and things and who got the bands together and how those were run.

D: [laughter] I'll tell you the truth, now. That was something back then, but they'd sure did get together, I tell you the truth. They'd dance all night, too, boy. Next morning, Sunday come, they'd be going strong right on you. They'd get that moonshine and corn beer and stuff and **nackem** and they'd just have a time.

P: Nackem, what's that?

D: That's cane skimmings. They made syrup, see, they'd save that skimmings. Lot of them make liquor out it, see. Some of them drink it straight, just drink it and let it sit up for a while, drink it.

P: How do you make corn beer?

D: Just take corn and syrup. Get your corn or meal and put it in your five-gallon jug or something or other, some container. You just put your syrup in there, put your corn in there. It'd work up and boy, it'd make you feel high, too. I'd drank many, many gallons of that stuff. [Laughter]

P: How was a dance organized?

D: Well, they just give them out; say, like we're going to have a box supper, something or another, sell something. A cake raffle or something like that, you know?

P: But who would do this, who would sponsor this?

D: Well, maybe say down there at what we call Hog Fork at that time, they was gonna give a square dance down there. Well, all around Bell Creek and Huxford and every place, we'd go there for that Saturday night or Friday night or whatever night. Maybe next time, they'd give it up to what we call Headapadida. They'd have a sale, you know, a get-together and they'd put it on.

P: Was this in somebody's house or what?

D: Yeah. Yeah, they'd take the bedstead down and move the chairs and the backboard and you can almost hear them, see them little houses rocking with them.

P: Were people that came to these dances you're talking about, were they all Indians or would there be white people?

D: Oh, white people and all, all over the place. Everyone around, they'd come you know? They'd come from everywhere around here, square dancing.

P: You were a fiddler, right?

D: I used to fiddle a little, but I was never no expert. I saw them [inaudible]. We had some sure enough fiddlers and they could play them fiddles, yeah. Uncle Buddy, he was a banjo picker. All of them could play music then, ain't none of them now that takes no time with it. They could play too, boy, they just gifted to them, see. Make them banjo, they get a piece of maple and make the neck of it. Then they get them a square syrup can—they had square syrup cans then, something like that long, maybe that wide. They'd put that hole through that neck there, come on back there and they'd fasten it here and they'd put them a bridge on that and **silent** post in there and then select their own keys and they could play them things too, boy. Oh my, oh me. Oh, me and them boys used to get Uncle Buddy, and boy, he'd pick all night long.

P: Would it be basically the same group that would play for all the dances or would it be different groups playing for different dances?

D: There was so many different, you know, back then, different ones. Like my daddy would take all of them, all would head to my place there, don't you know, for we got a bout side. And later on, they'd play first, you know, and young ones got to picking, too, you know. Then, later on I learned how to call, I'd be writing so much and nothing to do, I had to call some for them. Me and **Levy** McGhee and about the—well, he was older than I am. We was about to come now to the point that he and I about the onliest two to call, put it in back then, you know. Yeah.

P: Well, up before, somebody was telling me about a straw man, or somebody playing the straw or something like that in the band or—

D: No. What they did, see, some of them some them carried a fiddle, you know, and you'd get them two straws and they picked it. Just like I was playing that fiddle, he'd have had them two straws beating on that fiddle up there by fingers where I was on that fiddle and he'd be beating it with them two straws, keeping it going. Just like a band, see? They'd beat with them straws at that time.

P: So, two people would be playing on the same fiddle?

D: Oh, yeah.

P: So, you had fiddles and banjos and what other instruments?

D: Well, they finally got able enough to get guitar, they did. That was automatic to me, but they finally got them. The banjo and them two straws and that fiddle about it, then. Boy, you take a fiddle with a fiddle to play, you get on there after

they got looped up, too, they didn't pay no attention to them, they was just going then. [laughter]

P: Does anybody around here still ever have those dances like that?

D: Well, there's lot of plucking through this country, if I know a thing about it. They have a few at these big places every once in a while, you know.

P: When did they stop having them out there in the Poarch area?

D: Oh, it's been some time. I just couldn't count the last time we ever had that thing get out there, yeah.

P: You mentioned, to change the subject a little, an **armed fort.** You said that originally all the Indians had settled along Headapadida there. I wondered how it is that, now they're Indians over there, at Poarch Switch and that area, when did they start moving into there?

D: Well, now, Old Man Joe McGhee was Richard McGhee's boy, Lynn McGhee's grand-boy, see? Old Man Carney gave him a homestead down there the Hog Fork, and that's where that bunch originally come from. And the Gibsons out on Bear Creek. See, they was right down through that area too, you know. Then, up at what we call the Headapadida, see,that's where Uncle Dick and Richard and a bunch came on down through. All them girls were his sisters, see? Huxford, well, Bill McGhee—he had Lynn McGhee gave that, see, and that was in the grant. That's where that Huxford bunch come in, I think.

P: Now, this Carter that gave some land, I forgotten the name you said. Was he a white man?

D: Yeah.

P: He just gave some land to the mayor?

D: He give it. He gave them homestead there. He used to have a lot of sheep, see? Then Old Man Joe McGhee see'd after them sheep for. He give him a homestead there, and so fine Old Man Curtis, he was a white man, and he found a fit around and got all that land off him. I checked on him last year, six months ago, I reckon. Right out about that cemetery out there. Old Man Curtis and his wife gave Old Man Joe McGhee that acreage for that fence.

P: Which cemetery is this?

D: It's down there where the chief's buried.

P: Oh, at Hog Fork.

D: That's the name that goes by, Hog Fork.

P: Where'd that cemetery over there at Headapadida come from? How did that one come about?

D: The slaves.

P: Oh, that's the slaves?

D: That Old Man Joe Foley gave that acre ground for him to be buried in it. I remember them, I's just a little old bitty kid, but I remember.

P: When we first started talking, you suggested, it sounded to me, that maybe some of the younger people today don't realize how much has been accomplished and I wondered is that what you were saying, and if so, what do you mean by that, really?

D: My way of seeing it now, they have come a long ways. They sure have. 'Cause now, you take me and my children, living like millionaires now to what we was back at that time, see. Now, millionaires were living like about like I am now, back that time, but now they've come a long way. They've built bigger things and better things. Back then, they didn't have no gas and all that kinda crap. We had to use fat lighter splinters and so forth like that, everybody have a pile of fat lighter splitter about this long. Boy, you could scratch a match and touch them, almost like gas—with that stuff, you're gonna get it, just like they wanted. They didn't get nothing half, they got the best. 'Cause there's plenty of wood there for them to get that stuff, see.

P: Well, are there still some poor people out there in the Indian community?

D: Yeah, you better believe there are. Sure, yes.

P: Do you think they're much better off than people were?

D: Oh, I know they are. Yeah. Sure do. I just talked with them here a while back. I said, I hope don't nobody mess with them, now. Now, today, they're getting out of

something, see. Boy, they've been . . . and I've been right in there with them. But I was fortunate enough—I didn't steal nothing, didn't beat nobody out of nothing. Just a pretty good man, somehow or another. Let me talk about that bunch out at Poarch out there. They went with C.C. Huxford out there, some of them old ones, and C.C. Huxford [inaudible], I think. He had that car and land lease and he'd be up there at them houses in the quarters, what they call the quarters. I don't know if you know anything what they call the quarters, what they call the turpentine quarters. Had a commissary there. Well, later on, in the **whole was a wood riding place**. They got them convicts in over there, they got the state farm; Huxford sold that to the state. And they had a prison farm over there. He had all that in charge over there, too, I think. But then we got to working with them, see, the Indian people, digging out stones and so forth. Then they went to see to dipping boxes and dipping turpentine. Later on, when all that went dead there, **Hall**, C.C. Huxford sold that Poarch, what they called Poarch, right out there where the railroad crosses. And around where that Church house I worked at was, was a line there, and the rest of that was Carney land all back out there. Well, he got it all under his thing, Hall did, see, and they farmed there with him and they just came to settle right there. Right there where that church house built, first one bought a piece of land on that part of the land there. To build a house. I showed you that old chimney out there, didn't I? That chimney sticking out—

P: Yeah, you did. Yeah, right behind the church.

D: I built that one day, was of the coldest days I believe I ever been part of. Started one morning, got through about sundown, and I built that old house there. I think I had sixty-five dollars in that house, you could tell by how much I had in it, and when I got ready to leave I told fella, Dave Pressley, and I said, just give me sixty-five dollars. He bought it, I think, from Tyler Holden. Gave me sixty-five dollars. Well, then, just one then [inaudible]. I bought it, see. Well, I moved out, I sold that there and moved. And I went up and trade for this place right in front of **Martha James' store**, right across the road from there.

P: You were born and grew up in the Headapadida area, right?

D: Yeah, that's right.

P: And you were the first one from there to buy land in the Carney?

D: On that place right there.

P: But before that, there hadn't been Indians living in the turpentine quarters over there.

D: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, for years. Back in the Depression, in the [19]20s, and all back in there.

P: What year did you buy that piece of land over there, do you remember?

D: Oh Lord.

Unidentified woman: [inaudible]

D: It might have been before the [19]20s, but I think we married in [19]22. It must have been in [19]25, except [19]20. . . yeah. It was in the twenties.

P: Could you tell me about the religious activities in the community in the early days among the Indians?

D: Well, back when at first it was Free Will Baptist and Methodist . . . I believe that is it, up at that time. Then—who was it named that church after [inaudible] to Bell Creek, was that Old Man Curtis?

Unidentified woman: [inaudible]

D: Was it a Free Will Baptist or Methodist?

Unidentified woman: It was Baptist.

D: Yeah. Well, that's about the church. Well, then later on, then the Episcopalians come in here. That, right where that church house every day—I mean, what we call him Steadham, but his name is **Ebert Rolin**. He didn't have no children, I didn't have none. We would go out there in the woods, and I would have a mule and a wagon, we went out to cut them blocks. I think, best I remember, about that, maybe two and a half foot high of great big blocks. We cut them logs for that church house and then we went up there, where Headapadida is now, and we cut the blocks and haul them in our wagon. Preacher Edwards, he come in there then. And [inaudible] give him the lumber to build a house with, because he's Episcopal. He just give him that thing.

Unidentified woman: First he come in, with only Mason, [inaudible].

D: Yeah. Miss—what was his name?

Unidentified woman: Mason.

D: Mason. And her, they come in here, and then Preacher Edwards, they got in and—young preachers. Something come up for me, now. Dave, after I left, he sold that place.

P: Dave who?

D: Dave Pressley. See, I sold this place of mine there, where the church house is, to Dave. Mr. Gray didn't give that acre land to him, see. Yeah. They tried to let Dave have it. See, I turned it back Dave and sold my part after Dave. The house, I just wanted the money back of that house, I didn't care nothing about that land because I had to pay for it all. At that time, you didn't have to pay but a dollar an acre. If I'd knew what I do now, that much money I could own the whole country, I think. Paid a dollar a acre. They'd rush you for your money, all you have to do is just pay them when you could, because the land then—you could hardly get that land, any. Never did think it would be prosperous. The government condemned that out there. Right there where Martha Jane got—they condemned that land right there. And now sold that land there before they got there. He gave twelve hundred dollars for it and it sold for twenty-five thousand.

P: Wow.

D: Way they condemned it. Now, it's the best land there is. Pasture, so forth.

P: What happened to the Episcopal Church, where the Holiness Church is now. What happened there?

D: Well . . . so, Dave Presley, this preacher caused all kind of confusion somehow or another. I never did learn too much about it. Something come up between him and he just told him, get out, he just didn't want him back no more. Later on years, in the Holiness—he's **hollered with**, the best question they ask the newcomers. Preaching Holiness here. They come in this country, making arbors and so forth. Got to preaching, so they just joined them.

P: Then when did the Pentecostal come in? That Pentecostal Church out there at Hog Fork?

D: Well, see, what they done, see, down there they added that new home church, now, see. Brother Macy went out there now, see, they're Free Holiness. So this bunch up there at Hog Fork, now, I pulled out from that bunch and went down there.

P: What was the reason they pulled out, do you know?

D: I ain't never knowed. I ain't never knowed.

P: What is that little church—it's just down the road from the Jackson store, it's called the Poarch Community Church or something like that.

D: That's what we call the Mennonite church is here. They are different belief altogether.

Unidentified woman: They might built it, but I know the lease come in there.

D: Yeah. I think they're just leasing that there.

P: But it was built by the Mennonites?

D: Yeah.

P: And then I noticed there's one near the Holiness, there's a little wooden house that says Church of God of Prophecy. When did that come in?

D: That just come in here last year. All them folks there, right there where that big church, everybody out there participate in that big church right there where we been working.

P: All those right around there participating in that? Well, who goes to the Church of God of Prophecy?

D: There's just a few. Right around there.

P: How'd that get started, do you know?

D: I don't know. You take that Baptist Church up there and right on the corner, two three, doors up there.

P: There sure are a lot of churches in that community, it seems like.

Unidentified woman: Almost as many Churches as members.

P: Almost as many Churches as members. [Laughter]

D: Well, I told them, I said, the Lord ain't got nothing to do with that. Tearing up a Church, I said, that ain't a thing in the world but a trick of devil, pulling them out,

pulling them out, that's exactly what it is. Because the Lord don't tear up churches, he builds them, and the devil tears them up. That's what **Phillip Moore wrote about**. It all used to be right there at that big place, around them arbors and so forth, and they built them churches.

P: Are all the Freewill Baptists gone, there's no more left?

D: Well, they got what they call the—we went to one down here, to a singing the other night. They said they're the free will, I don't know.

P: But I mean out there in Poarch.

D: No, huh-uh. No, no more of that out there, now.

P: No Methodists either out there?

D: No. I don't know what Baptist that is, but it's a Baptist Church out on what they call the Freewill, or what kind of Baptist it is.

P: So, it seems like people have changed their religious affiliations fairly often out there. Is that true?

D: Way I see it, they just ain't got it. Lot of them. See it, lost it high in the smoke.

P: Well, one final thing, I guess, and just as sort of general information, and that is—could you just very briefly—you started talking about it a while ago, just very briefly when I guess I cut you off, talk about, through the years, the way you made your living and things like that. The kind of jobs you've had and so forth.

D: Well, I started off when me and my wife first married, farming. Was a farmer quite a while and made a pretty good success at that. I got off in the pulpwood business and I sold wood a long time. Then I felt like getting me a job of filing **saws and foreman**. I didn't know how to file a saw and he said, well, you've got to learn. When I got out, now to all those colored fellas **thought too much of you**, and I'd file it and hand it to them, he'd go up, he'd come back laughing. I just kept on to the filing, file a one way cut and I just went the improvement. So he gave me fifteen dollar weeks straight time and that was big money, boy. I had this old lady and them twins and that boy. Years come on and I went to picking up Irish potatoes and got off in there. Then I went to contracting potatoes. I picked them up a long time and they couldn't get no help, and I was fortunate enough to be pretty smart, getting around most people [inaudible]. Had a lot of confidence, you see. I got to contracting potatoes. Then a guy come in during the war, Ed Merkel, he had always thought a lot of me and he always had a lot of respect about me trying to manage and seeing that the crew had some—and, anyhow that's where I kind of started learning how to handle **Haines**. So, I worked for him a long time. Boss man you know. Cooked for him and done everything. I just was a handyman for him. So I just split up from it. The time he made me mad, I just left him. I said, you can run your job yourself, I'm gone. Well, this fellow Martin, he's a [inaudible], and he come down and he bad drinking off and all. I pick up a lot of time with him. So I bought a truck and **put them on credit**. So you couldn't get the boy to cut the wood. I cut up a bunch and got that old truck and it'd go **down to Baldwin County and back**. I just cut

wood for him. Then you had to paint it up and put pieces in one, put it up in there. I got lucky enough to have ten or so of them fellas hauling wood, that's when hauling wood [inaudible] . . . they just couldn't get nobody, the wood. I had me about ten or so guys, and it wasn't long before I just had the wood scattered all over the place. It's a hard matter to put a—being six foot two, see, you had to carry your stick. You just could not get them six foot two, just now . . . and then you'd get them six foot two. See, I checked wood for this fella—

P: You're talking about sticks of wood, now?

D: Yeah, Billy painted it up high, see. I learned that while I was working with this old man give me that fifteen dollars a week, see. It was a hard matter for them to get one six foot two. You'd made it on the low side, see, that's what I had to do for him. So they wouldn't shorten him, see. That was the hardest thing in the world to do, is get one six foot two. You can't tell I had to put two more pieces in. I had to clean that up for a long time and so I doing so good for the [inaudible] Presley. I was working under him and he put in to help me out. Well, I gave this old truck to my brother-in-law—

SPOHP 2012: This is an editor's note. End of Tape A, Side II. The interview continues on Tape B, Side I.

D: —and it was long and steel then. I had maybe a little bit of money then, and you had to have a little bit to buy anything you want to. I bought an old truck there from him and I forget how much I gave him for it, didn't gave him much. One of my school teachers—I used to go to school under **Miss Mays**. She was parked

over on that street, I think it was three dollars, and I had enough to make payment on that truck. I saw it, I said, you got any money? She said, how much you want? I said, I need three dollars. I went over and made a payment on the truck. I got the truck and looked around and it had no tires on it and I said, boy, I got to have some tires on this truck. Well, I figured out another deal and wouldn't have to go back this one. They had another part of it, they got on some tires now and I was supposed to pay him so much a week for them tires. Well, now, World War I or II come along, I believe it was World War I—II, I believe it was. Everything got on boom. Now we doing good with the shop, I come up and told him, I said, Jack, you better get your new truck to go on free this truck. I just bought a truck, that's my way, you know. This fellow, Presley, he let me have anything I wanted to because I was producing for him, see. Making him money and he didn't mind **showing it to me**. I bought a new one. Well, come around then, these fellas couldn't get no **pay to hip**, see. I managed up because I got two big nice trucks, you know. That's where I got to started contract potatoes. Digging up potatoes so much a sack. One time, I handled and hired three hundred hands in Baldwin County. Just me and one **foreman,** though. I just furnished my crew for they have a two row digger, thirty dollars and a one row digger, fifteen dollars. I'd always be a little bit short handed and then they give me two, three dollars apiece for the extras you know. Small crew. Twenty-five hundred dollars a week, three thousand dollars a week. I had to give my brother a thousand dollars a week.

P: Wow. Well, how long was potato season?

D: See, there was no tax, nothing coming out of it. See, when got that money you had it, it was all money.

P: How long did the season last?

D: It lasted over . . . we start along May 1 and it lasted way near about some time up in July, about three months, see. But it's every day though.

P: Did you have many hands from the Poarch area out there?

D: Yeah. Every one of them folks out there worked under me or worked with me . . . like it took me a while back. I said, y'all can figure out, I never tried to beat you on anything. Coming out there, say, might be work for me, I've always paid out. Out at this place, Old Man **Fountain** up there, out on that big farm there we had twenty acres of strawberries and I just one foreman. They were hanging out and the old lady died back then, eighty-eight years old, eighty-seven, she used to pick strawberries, all that old and tired, but . . .

P: I'll be.

Unidentified woman: [inaudible]

P: Let me turn this over here.

[Break in recording]

P: Just to retrack for just a minute, what kind of work were you doing when you got involved in that school? At what time, is that when you were contracting potatoes or what kind of work were you doing?

D: Not when I was into the school business, no.

P: You're not up to that yet or we passed that already?

D: Yeah, we done passed it already, yeah.

Unidentified woman: [inaudible]

D: Yeah, [inaudible].

P: Logging, [inaudible] things like that? So, then after contracting for hands in potato fields, what was the next . . . ?

D: See, I'd go back to the wood job, you see. I had so many trucks get potatoes and so many hauling wood, see. At that time I had, I think, four or five trucks to haul the wood, see . . .

P: Did you do anything else between when you were doing that and the time you went to South Florida? Were there any other kinda jobs you did?

D: No, I'd sold out, got out it all, see. Seemed like my health got bad and I got out of it. I got out, and I just went down there looking around with the boy of mine. So I decided to stay down a while. So, I wrote my wife, told her to sell the place and she sold it and come on down down to stay.

P: What were you doing in South Florida?

D: Picking fruit.

P: Picking fruit?

D: Yeah.

P: And you were there for a number of years?

D: No, I didn't stay long after that. I moved back to that store [inaudible]. Then in [19]50 we moved back up here.

P: What kind of work were you doing in Pensacola?

D: I wasn't doing anything. We just have some rooms out there.

P: You lent rooms out then?

D: Uh-huh.

P: Since you've been back here, have you since then retired or—?

D: No, I've done all kinds of work. I've worked on the 65 out there and helped build that new road out there, construction work. I retired off of that, off of that 65.

P: Off building the interstate?

D: Yeah, that's why I retired.

P: Well, I guess you feel like you've come up a long way from a one-room house? [Laughter]

D: If I see it straight and its right, that's the reason I say. Come up the way we live with my young'uns and grandyoung'uns now, living like millionaires today, way millionaires lived in our position now. They've come a long way 'cause

[inaudible]. Make homes and electricity and mash a button to open the door and all kind of crap.

P: Are there a lot of people like this out there that have come a long way you think?

D: You better believe that. It ain't only Indians neither. Lot of these white people from around out there, so-called white has come a long way. Yeah, they sure have.

P: Why do you think, just in your own opinion, there's still, some people say, among the Indians out there that haven't come that long way, they're still not much better off than the one-room.

D: Yeah, there's some, there's some.

P: Why haven't they come a long way?

D: I just don't understand it, I don't know.

P: You ever think about that much?

D: I sure do, yeah.

P: What are some of the answers you've come up with, thinking through?

D: Yeah, yeah . . . [inaudible]. Since the government's got involved with this here, building these rentable homes, cheap, low-rental homes, now, that's come a long way out there for the last two years. [inaudible] And that's brought them a long, long way. The chief got involved in that that, he brought them a long way today.

P: I know I said this the last [inaudible], but you just mentioned something that I should have asked about a long time ago, and that's how, did he get to be the chief and how did all of that business start?

D: Well they just, everybody got started in this and I was in South Florida, and he went down there with me and they wrote him a letter calling him to come. They got together somehow or another with these lawyers, was about to get them some councilmen and appoint them as a chief, see.

P: The lawyers did?

D: Well, and the councilmen, they know how to get it up one ,see. He was a smart man, and I think he was about to be a **priest**, maybe something like that. But he come a long ways, [inaudible]. But he was a pretty swift man, this guy. He had his picture made with a couple of presidents, right near every governor that's been in since he's got up to be chief, see, and a lot of folks ain't been that far. Yeah, yeah. He come a long ways, too, sure did. They just appointed him as council, see—I mean, chief, the best I can understand it. They appointed him, see, as a chief, see. To go back and vote for Walker, see if this Indian deal, see. He finally won.

P: Did you work with him much on the school or the land?

D: Yeah, I was with him a lots on that, you know. But I was just behind him, kind of backing him in a way I didn't have to get involved too to go out in front of him, stood behind him all the time.

P: But you were the man who really forced the school buses to take the children on to—

D: Yeah, I was the very fella who done it, yeah.

P: And after that, there wasn't any more?

D: That ended it, that stopped it right there.

P: Was there a court case going on at that time, or—?

D: Had to have a court case to get that school house.

P: To get the schoolhouse in the first place—

D: **And we had across the bar,** it would have helped me. They done denigrated us you know. Bad. It's like I tell them all the time, talking about the colored folks. I said, we been in the worse shape than every colored person ever been in this country. Of course, they come up, most of them, on way back as slaves, but they just went over us the whole time because they had better schools and everything. Yes, sir.

P: So, it took a court case just to get up to six grades out there, right?

D: At that school.

P: Was there a court case to make the county bus the children on in for seventh through twelfth?

D: Yeah. Yeah, they soon to got that thing straight, see. They had, on my bus, Indian Consolidated School, see. And after they got it in court, they tore that Indian sign off of there then, but they still wasn't doing like they supposed to, see. Since my brother in law driving that bus out there, and went to picking them colored children on this side and then they stopped bringing the buses up in there, picking them. They had a triple bus coming in, picking up just two or three children. That's where I'd say Wallace is always running his big mouth about this and that. We done been through some of that [inaudible]. The days he fought these colored people so hard. He didn't only start in Alabama, but he started them on all over the United States. There was you couldn't find a mayor or Deputy Sheriff or High Sheriff nowhere, nowhere's in the United States that I knows of till he went to bucking them. They put it right down his throat, right down his throat. Right down his throat.

P: Were there ever any other ways, besides schools, that you think the Indians were discriminated against?

D: Yeah, yeah, there are a lot of ways. A lot of them went back to when they wouldn't let **Marna** eat at the table with him and all like that.

Unidentified woman: Or let us to go to Church **with them**.

D: Yeah they **were scared** way back there, because I remember some that. Well, I do.

P: You mean wouldn't let you eat like in restaurants, or what—?

D: Yeah, you take this Reed Drugstore. I remember right up there, this old fella out there, he's eighty-seven years old, Isaac. They wouldn't even let him go to the drugstore and sit down in there.

P: That's changed now, though.

D: Yeah, it's all over now. It's all over with, they don't think that. They might, but they don't blow it.

P: In your own estimation, how important, in the long run, in the history and in the betterment of Indian people out there, how important do you think that that day was when you stood out there with your twins and made them get on the bus?

D: I think it was really important. It looked like that was the only way it were to stop it, see. I think I done the right move when I done it.

P: The bus driver didn't fight you or he didn't try to stop you?

D: No, and he was a mean fellow too. He was a mean old goat.

P: I can't understand how you got away with it so easily, really.

D: Well, he just knowed I meant business, see. See, he supposed a law, they had it a law since then, see, that speak up each other. But he passed all them children around all day and come on down below me and turned around and I picked up some white children, come back by. Done passed all them children back over there from the church house back, what we call most of it was on that old grant land back there they lived on. They come on over to see what I was gonna do it about it, see. I just got my one youngins and stood right in the middle of the road.

He stopped, he opened the door, and I told them, I said, y'all get in. In about a few minutes, **Bates Moore** come down there and told me about it. I said, it's a good thing it's happened.

P: Can you remember back to that time and think about your own state of mind, what made you decide that you were gonna do that that day?

D: I just meant I wasn't gonna be run over no longer.

P: Was this the first day of school, or when was it?

Unidentified woman: School had just started.

D: Just started, yeah.

P: School had just started. And you just made up your mind you were gonna do this?

D: Yeah. I meant business, I didn't mean no foolishness.

P: And once you had done that, you felt like you had the support of the rest of the community behind you—?

D: Yeah, that I did then, you see. Yeah, 'cause I know the chief and [inaudible] and send them to school without—

P: Without the Headapadida?

D: . . . but he wouldn't go along with it, see.

P: They were willing to take the chief's children but they weren't gonna take any others.

D: Yeah, I think they told Neil they'd take his children up there at Huxford, but they wouldn't take the others. So, they just battled around up at that little place back there in the woods. They kept the children back there, too.

P: When you did that, you do know that the court had said that they were supposed to pick up the children?

D: Well, not this time, I don't know, I wouldn't say. But I think I'm right that they had—

P: At that time, did you think that was the case? When you did that, were you aware of the fact they were supposed to do that?

D: Yeah, yeah.

P: So you were gonna make them enforce the law, huh?

D: Yeah. I done it, yeah, sure done it. I wanted it of me. See, they'd still pick up some of the and I would believe **they thought** that colored school would keep them from sending the children up there, to send them up there to Atmore at the colored school. Huxford School, too, at that time, see?

P: That must have been kind of, as you say, must have been a real turning point for people out there after that day.

D: Yeah. Yes, sir.

P: Did many people after that come up to you and say nice things or bad things or anything to you—

D: Only thing they wanted to talk about was how it was stopped, you know, and I just meant business. I never did tell, you know? 'Course, the chief and a lot of them might have been **talking angry** about it, you know. I just, see, I just stood it as long as I could. Wasn't no need to live if you couldn't get your freedom, wouldn't have it. I didn't mean to move, I just had them children there.

P: You just thought it would be easier to move away?

D: Yeah.

P: Well, I never thought about it that way, but you say that the kind of discrimination that you people experienced was worse than what the colored people did, they had better schools and things—

D: Yeah. At that time, they sure did, better schools than we had. They did have a schoolhouse and a teacher paid by the county. But later on, I talked to some of these old colored people here, back there. See, I've been around them a whole lot; been with them, worked with them, drinked water with them, everything else. And they told me that they ain't been long got the books in yet. They was just lending out some of these old ones to them, then they didn't get the books the white people got. I don't know how true that is. I just come up here last year and I talked with some of them old people about that. They said, they didn't get the books that they get now. Yeah, they had an old school and had the county school

teacher and all. They had the bussing and were hauling them around before they ever did haul these Indian children.

P: When you were first starting in school, if an Indian child was gonna get an education, his parents had to pay for it, right?

D: The first time I went, that's what we paid a dollar for a month.

P: Where'd they find the teachers, where did the teachers come from?

D: Roberta Stewart, Old Man Jim Stewart from down here in [inaudible], and she taught school there. And this Roberta Sells that live out there, that's where she got her name then.

P: In the earlier days of the school, where was the school held? Was there a building?

D: Down on the old grant land there.

P: Oh, it was on the grant land?

D: Had a church house there, see. Made a school, see. Maybe a year or two, I don't know how many years it was, had that private schools like what they're trying to do now. We went to school under that, maybe a year or two years before the county, they went to furnishing a schoolteacher for these children. Yeah, the first day I went to school, at least, that's where I went.

P: Just a point of information, the school that's out there now, what year was that built, do you know when the school was out there?

D: It's got to be in the . . . it's along the last part of the [19]20s or early in the [19]30s. I disremember, I just couldn't go write it down.

P: That that school was built. The first county was just a wooden building?

D: Yeah, that's right.

P: And tThis was in the, early in the [19]40s that you put your kids on the bus, or was that in the [19]50s or when was that?

D: It must have been in the [19]40s.

P: In the [19]40s.

D: Yeah.

P: And since that time, Indian children have been able to get a high school education?

D: Oh yeah, they get it. It's just left up them now to get it—

P: But before that there was no way to—

D: No, no, no. I think the Episcopal out there, church, that they sent some of them off, a few of them through high school. But, at that time, they just wasn't getting it, not through this area.

P: And it's because they were Indians.

P: That's exactly the reason why.

P: Yet there were some people who were Indian descendant, they weren't admitting they were Indian, they were getting their education anyway. It's really kind of a confusing thing to look back and see that there were Indians and whites who were married and some were considered Indians and some weren't.

D: Yeah. That's the truth just like I'm telling you. I won't tell a lie by the Lord.

P: Let me just ask you finally now, is there anything else that you've experienced that you think that should be known as part of the history of the Indians of the Atmore area that I haven't asked you about?

D: No, I don't. I don't think that there be nothing else now, I just know that we've come a long ways, and I'm plenty happy over it. Some of them haven't, but some of them just won't. I don't know.

P: What's in the future? You've come a long way thus far, but what do you think is in the future for the Indians?

D: I think it's a good future for them now. The biggest trouble I see, they won't pull together. They won't stick. Jim come over here and tear one right off and reckon John's got another and he's going another way with it. You can't get nowhere, that's the biggest trouble. Yeah.

P: It looks like, these days, there's a lot of interest in Indian organizing and the council and all those kind of things, taking part in meetings and the government. Do you think that's a good thing that people are doing that kind of thing?

D: Well, it's like I told Billy the other day, I said, now, if y'all are doing something good, I can kinda look through it. But I said now, they are doing all right now, and I said, I hope nobody mislead them and get them out of pocket again, now. I told him that the other day, he's into this councilor business with Buford and them. Well, see, he don't never know about this, he was raised down in Florida see. His daddy a white man, wife's sister boy. He's down in there and they got Indians going all the time down to that school where you're going. And Indian centers and all, see. And he got good education. Now, see, Buford, this Episcopal sent him some of the time to school. That year, his sister, but they and Dan's girl, they sent her off, too, for schooling.

P: But you say some of the younger people just don't know anything about all the things you been talking about this morning.

D: No, they don't. I'm talking about—in fact, when I was coming up, me and my brother used to walk about four miles and scrape through two barrels of turpentine and I think about six cents a barrel, come back home even, walk back to Poarch, see. Sure was rough back through there. We didn't have no lamps or nothing like that, you know. The Indians had to use fat lighter splinters for lights and all.

P: Didn't even have kerosene lighters then?

D: Just now and then. You could see some of them, some few would have lamps. Take a Coca-Cola bottle or something like that, through a rag and fill it up and make a light of a lamp out of that.

P: You talking about in the house now?

D: Yeah.

P: Did people had wood stoves or people cook in the fireplace or what?

D: Fireplace and wood stove. Most of them, way back, they cooked on the fireplace, that's some good eating too, boy.

P: But that's really kind of amazing that people didn't even have kerosene lamps in their house.

D: Yeah, there are a lot of them didn't have it.

Unidentified woman: Back then your mother cooked on a fireplace, she didn't have no stove back then, did she?

D: Huh?

Unidentified woman: Your mother didn't have no stove back then, did she?

D: No, that's what I'm telling you .

Unidentified woman: Cooked on the fireplace.

P: I'm just curious, now, did the fireplaces have a thing to hang your pots on or did you have some kind of grill or what?

D: No, Made them big chimneys then, stick thick chimneys. And they just make the big [inaudible], you see. Pick up big rocks, small rocks, stuff like that. Bakers had

the legs on them, about something like that. And they had a lid, see, go over the top of it and they take that ash and put it on top of that lid and bake it.

P: Yeah, I've seen that, yeah.

Unidentified woman: [inaudible]

P: I guess, really, as a child, you weren't paying attention, but were there any white people that didn't have stoves or kerosene lighters?

D: Yeah, yeah. See, a lot of harder living now a whole lot worse than lot of these Indians. See, I be around with a lot of them. Yeah, you better believe that.

P: Well, I guess I'll just turn this off.

[End of Interview]

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