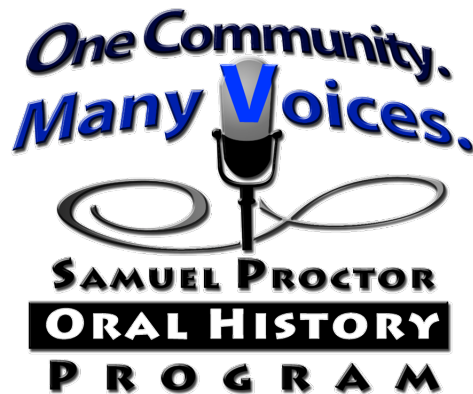


# Dean Jim Wilson

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project  
MISS CHOC-003**

**Interview by:**

**John K. Mahon  
December 4, 1973**



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**MISS CHOC 003 Dean Jim Wilson**  
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**Interviewed by John K. Mahon on December 3, 1973**  
**45 minutes | 25 pages**

**Abstract:** Dean Wilson speaks about the origins of his last name and his family history. He then details his work in family education, where he visits homes to teach parents how to provide an education for their children with common household items, and he goes on to explain the new Red Water school. Then, he talks about his own education and tending his family's farm growing up. He says Choctaw is his first language, and comments that the younger generation knows more English than he did at their age. He discusses getting drafted into the Korean War. He ends by discussing the actions of his own son and the children he works with.

**Keywords:** [Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; Mississippi--Choctaw; Child welfare; Education]

**SAMUEL PROCTOR**  
**ORAL HISTORY**  
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**University of Florida**

MISS CHOC 003

Interviewee: Dean Jim Wilson

Interviewer: John K. Mahon

Date of Interview: December 4, 1973

M: I am John K. Mahon, and we're conducting an interview on December 4 at Choctaw Central School in the principal's office at about 10:30 in the morning.

Mr. Wilson, would you just please say your name?

W: Dean Wilson.

M: No problem spelling that, is there? "Dean" and "Wilson" is ordinarily spelled?

W: Yes, I have a middle name—

M: What is that? Just for interest.

W: Jim. Dean Jim Wilson.

M: Dean Jim Wilson.

W: But I don't use the "Jim" because it sorta make it too long. I guess I should, but—

M: It's up to you. I've got a middle initial. I've always used it, I just like it, but I don't have a reason to. Have you got an Indian name? Or is your entire handle—

W: No, it's just Dean.

M: And Wilson.

W: Wilson, yeah.

M: How far back does the name "Wilson" go? I mean, do you know?

W: No, I don't. Actually, I don't ever ask my old man—I say, that's my daddy—but somewhere he picked it up, I imagine. Of course, I believe that, if I ever recall, he said that Willemson or Williamson or something in there, but they changed to Wilson whenever—people that couldn't pronounce the name right, they usually just picks it up and they say, "That's what you are," probably in the old days, I guess. Then, that part about Williamson, I don't know how that got there, but

that's all they say Wilson now, but it used to be Williamson, I think. My grandma, when she was living, she'd say something about it, but I just remember just a little bit about that.

M: Is your father living?

W: No, he died about three or four years, I believe.

M: Is your mother living?

W: No, she's dead, too, when I was a little child. I don't recall what she looked like, see.

M: I guess you told me that yesterday.

W: Yes, I did.

M: Or somebody I was talking to did. Have you got any old living relatives?

W: Not old, but—not really old. We got my wife's grandma. She's around eighty years old now, but I don't know how—if she remembers all these old ways or not, but—

M: Does she know her birthday? Does she know when she was born?

W: She says she knows someone that used to live back in the hills, I call it, because this is the government hills, in the community—Redwater community, the old Redwater I'm talking about—that used to live in this government hill around there. When I first settled, something in that line, I don't remember, but that's where she was born. And so, she remembers by some other family that they was working with, a sharecropper or something. And so that's what she used to say.

M: Which one of these communities are you from?

W: Redwater.

M: And how long a drive is it up here for you?

W: It's about twenty-four, twenty-five miles.

M: One way?

W: One way.

M: Do you come up here every day?

W: No, I don't. I just came here because they choose me from this community, Redwater.

M: Are you employed by the Tribe?

W: Yes, I am.

M: What's your ....

W: Family education.

M: I see. And what do you do in that?

W: Well, actually the trainee—we try to train the parents at home, you know. We home visit them. In other words, we are home visitors. We visit their homes, the ones with children, small children.

M: What are you training them to do?

W: Well, actually, we're trying to teach—in other words, we teach the parents of these children when they was young at home, when we visit—

[Break in recording]

M: And now, go ahead. You were saying, you go in and train them to ...

W: Well, actually, we go and teach them. We don't train them, we teach the mother to care for the children. I mean, not care—well, we teach them to care for them, too. But what I mean is that we go to these homes and try to show the mother

how to bring up her children. You know, many times, parents don't think much of children, especially the Choctaw. Of course, the children, as they grow, they need to learn something, but then they have to—you know, there's a lot of things around home that they don't realize is educational. Like a picture on a wall—just like that picture there. The children when they see this, they only think about it as a picture, but there is an education behind that picture. As you can see, there are several different items there, or material there, that could be taught as a book. As for instance, that picture there, it's got a fork, a basket of fruit, a vegetable, a wheelbarrow there loaded with something. In the background there, that looks like a church, a city, or maybe all this grass that grows around there? All these are educational, but many parents don't realize that these things are important to children. You know, the picture shows what kind of a day that is. Must be a cloudy day, because you see some clouds hanging up. Might've been in the noon of the day by watching the shadows, or maybe it's in the evening, depending on how the picture shows.

M: Well, would you mean in the first place, would you encourage them to get out some pictures, for instance? Have you got anything around, or—

W: No. You see, the problem is that they can't afford these things. I'm talking about poverty, people that are really down where there's so many children that they can't afford the commercial toys or pictures, or all this. But what we try to teach them is that they can use their own materials or what they got, there's an egg carton, or maybe a cardboard that they could draw on, or maybe paint.

M: To give the kid something—

W: Something to play with, make some toys with these things, you see. Just around home, there's a lot of things that could be done to teach these youngsters. But many people do not realize these things, you see.

M: Well, are you a field worker? You actually go into the homes and do this sort of thing?

W: Yes, we go into homes, and we try to teach them to maybe they get the idea, and eventually they'll start doing the things that we doing for them, you see. And then as they go along, we gradually move out and maybe the mothers and parents could teach their own children right at home. I mean, it's not going to be every day because they have other things to do, see. Whenever they have time, we teach them to do the work whenever they have time to do these things. So, it's best to let them have their own way. Besides, us going into their home, invading their times, they probably have something to do, see. They set their own time. If they want us there at a certain time, we be there at a certain time. Because that's the only time she has, usually, around nine-thirty or maybe in the afternoon. So, it's their own times that they really want it. If they want this program in their home, well, we're there to help. That's the main problem that we have, as poverty goes.

M: Well now, if you went into a home like that, and say the woman said, "I can see you around nine-thirty," you'd try to be there?

W: Yeah, we'd try to be there.

M: And, in general, how long would you stay?

W: Well, it depends on—

M: The reason I'm curious is because this is something completely out of my experience, you know, and—

W: Well, it depends on the children. You know, sometimes we can go in there, and the children will play with toys—we bring some toys to them in their homes. And they'll play with it, they'll usually—you know how children is, they just want to run all over the place. So, we try to keep 'em there to really teach 'em what this is. If this is a car, if we have a toy car, we show him that it has a wheel, and what makes wheel do—if it's rolling, we'll say, "This is rolling." Here's a light, here's a head, or here's a—it's a lot of things in the toys itself. People may not realize this, but it is. Inside of this toy, there are things that you see in automobiles. So they have lights, or maybe they have steering wheels, or maybe, you know, a two-seated car or one-seated car. All that is the way you try to teach them, it's in there, the same as an automobile on the outside, if they have one.

M: Well now, you go—like in this case you're talking about, with a toy car—you've got a manufactured toy, don't you?

W: Yes, uh-huh. Commercial toys.

M: And do you give them to the kids?

W: Well, we do. We try to give each of them, it's not too expensive.

M: Yeah, they're little toys.

W: But, in the meantime, we try to make him one out of wood or whatever they have in the house, you see.

M: And show him how you make it? Let him see how you do it?



W: Yeah. We try to make anything, just like this toy, a doll. We bought him a commercial toy and we—you know, one that the children can play with. And we show the mother to teach the child how to make this toy. Make it out of some cloth and some, you know, waste paper, or something like that. Old magazines for stuffing up in the cloth, you know, and make it into a doll, cut it into a doll and then sew it together. Stuff it with newspaper, and there's your doll. You can put his eyes on with a button, or you can sew his eyes, nose, mouth, whatever. You know, as a teacher, we try to teach them what to make.

M: How about the father? Does he ever get into this act? Or are you altogether working with the mother? Does the father ever have anything to do with this type of education?

W: Well, he should, but usually father's working or—you see, sometimes it'd be in the evening. We'll get there, but the father will be there, but we usually have no father there. But eventually when the father comes, they should presume that the mother's supposed to teach him or probably pick up the baby and hold him the way he should, see. Maybe hold him while the mother's doing. While he's doing this, he should be talking to him and all that. We suggest these things, you see. We don't tell him to do things. We just suggest it, or maybe we show them these things. We don't try to go in there and try to say, "You ought to do this, you ought to do that." We don't do this. What we try to do is to show her, or maybe if she's **lacking there**, maybe the housekeeper will probably we could tell them that something could be done. "Why don't you change it? This dresser on the other

side, maybe. Put the paint off, maybe it'll look better, maybe." Some things like this.

M: Have you ever had to deal with a family where one parent was gone, dead, or left home or anything?

W: Oh, yes. Yes.

M: You ever have a father who was trying to bring up the children without a mother?

W: No, we don't. I mean, in my community, I don't. I only work with the mothers, or probably the caretaker. Not with fathers, because, well, naturally, they're working, and I usually work with the caretakers. But, in the meantime, I visit the families, probably at night, maybe whenever was to their convenience, you see, and talk to them about these things.

M: You work altogether in Redwater?

W: Yes, uh-huh. Well, two of us work in Redwater.

M: Well, how much population you got down there?

W: Well, actually, around about ... I would say about three hundred. And most of them is youngsters. I'd say about a hundred and fifty children. Half of them is children.

M: And is this type of education necessary for a good portion of them?

W: Well, in this part, I think it is. 'Cause as an Indian, as a Choctaw, we don't really have the knowledge whenever these youngsters go to this school. On the first day of their school, they don't know what's going on. For another reason, that's why we need to learn **them these** things before they get to Head Start or kindergarten or first grade. And so, we start it from zero to four years old, where

the four years old is in Head Start. But they only learning the different colors and all this other things, that the toys—that we explain to them. While the kindergarten, they're starting in the books, reading and writing his own names and stuff like this. So, what really—for the Choctaw people, I think there's a good deal that need to be at home, see. 'Cause they really don't know what's going on at school. But whenever—if they've seen this, or recognize when they hit the school, they'll automatically know what this is. As of now, whenever these kids go to school, they don't know. There's just new environment there where there's just things that they've never seen, or maybe one or two. But what we try to do is try to show them all the things before they hit the school.

M: Have you got a school down at Redwater?

W: Yes, we have.

M: Is it a one-room school, with all the grades in one room?

W: No, we have new school built about five or six years ago. It has about eight rooms. School building, cafeteria built in—

M: Oh, good-sized. How many teachers? You know?

W: Well, we have, I'd say about five. Five paid teachers and their aides.

M: Are any of the teachers Indian?

W: Yes, we have one. She teaches fifth and sixth, I believe. Somewhere in there.

M: Why aren't they all Indians?

W: Actually, they don't have the education, I'd say. I mean, actually, you have to have a degree, otherwise they couldn't teach. That's the policy of the BIA.

M: The interns—or aides, I guess, they're training?

W: They are training, yes. But as far as teachers are concerned, the principal, just one is the real Indian there which teaches.

M: The principal a White person?

W: Yes, he's a White person. He's been there before and then came back again. I don't really know what's in the back of that, though.

M: Mr. Wilson, if you're not sensitive about your age, how old a man are you?

W: Well, I'm forty-four. I will be forty-five next year about April twenty-first.

M: Were you born down there in Redwater?

W: Yes. I don't really know where I was born. I probably was born here in the hospital.

M: Oh.

W: I don't have the birth certificate, you know. I should get one, but I haven't. But I think I was born here in the hospital here, Neshoba County here.

M: But you lived—

W: I lived there.

M: —All your life down in there.

W: Yes.

M: Well, now, did you go to school around here? Have you had some schooling?

W: Well, I came here one year when this old building was still here—you know, when I first started the junior high. I was sent over here by my parents, my father was still living then.

M: Were you sent over to the dormitories?

W: No, they didn't have no dormitories.

M: So, you went back and forth every day?

W: No, they sent us here to some of our kinfolks. We stayed here with the family over here. That's where the feeling that they should have a bigger school, probably, with dormitories like this, came into being in the Choctaw mind that they should have all this. And I think that's when they started building these things.

M: But you went through the lower grades down there at Redwater?

W: Yes. Up to about sixth grade, and I came here—actually, the sixth grade, I say. They used to just pass you through whenever you get so much age, you see.

M: I know.

W: I didn't learn nothing. I'll tell the truth, I didn't learn nothing. Still don't. But, of course, the family wasn't pushing me to get this education. If they really wanted me to be somebody, then they probably would have pushed. But I didn't have the mother, I guess. Of course, the father always working or doing something. He don't usually push me. You could go to any school, probably. If I didn't go to school, I had to be doing something at home, you see. So, the best place to do nothing is to go to school. That was my feeling then. So, whenever they said to go to school, I'd go to school. But in them days, whenever they had something to be done, they pulled me off school and said, "Okay, have to help around house, by cutting wood, or splitting stump wood, or picking cotton, or pulling corn," and all this that goes with the farm, see. Whenever I didn't feel like working, I'd go to school. So that could be my resting place. In other words, if I stayed at home, I could be doing something, you see.

M: Was your father a sharecropper?

W: Yes, he was. He was. No, let's see. He probably was when he first started, but when the government moved them from Government Hill, as I said before, about eleven miles west of where we live here now. They set aside this land that they should come out and start their own farm. And I think the BIA had something to do with that. So they moved down from Redwater—Old Redwater—to New Redwater.

M: And then they were on Tribal land.

W: Yes, uh-huh.

M: Prior to that, all you was sharecropping somebody's land, I suppose. Is that right?

W: Yes, yes.

M: Growing what?

W: Well, usually cotton or corn or something to, you know, get by with for a living. As of today—most of these guys nowadays, you know, but—I think that's what brought them down to the New Redwater when they set aside for these lands that Indians could move in, whoever wants it.

M: You have experience in growing cotton and corn? I mean, you know how to chop cotton and so forth?

W: Yes, sir. Very much so.

M: You haven't done it, though, I guess, in a while, have you?

W: No, I haven't, but I know how it's done. Yes, I worked the crop myself. I have to. My daddy left. But it's not a big crop, just enough to get by on.

M: What would you have used for horsepower in those days, a mule? Or did you have a tractor?

W: Yes, we had a mule. Mules is what they used.

M: Are there any mules left around?

W: No. Most all of them somehow got rid of their mules. I don't know what **books them up or breaks them into that** but I think the jobs that I mean, you, sort of coming out in them days and then some of them went to work and leave the farmland. Probably pushing these youngsters to keep them from working on the farm. They'll lose this farm of theirs then, because the old man by himself cannot farm, you know, without the help of the other children. And the BIA wants all the children in the school. When they started, then the farms starts phasing out, I believe.

M: What kind of acreage would your father, for instance, have worked? Do you have any idea?

W: Well, we had about, I would say, fifteen acres.

M: Fifteen. You worked—

W: Cotton and corn, had some gardening and some of the beans and stuff.

M: Could they make a living out of that?

W: Yes, if they really work at it, I guess they could. Yeah. They did. I mean, they lived this long, because I don't see any of them starved to death.

M: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

W: Well, I have four brothers and two sisters, as I remember. So that's a good many people.

M: Are they all living?

W: No. Let's see. I got one sister and two brothers still living.

M: Are they older or younger than you?

W: Well, I got one younger than me, and then I got two of them older.

M: Well now, was Choctaw your native tongue? Is that the first language you spoke?

W: Yes. That's what I've been using all my life.

M: And when did you first get exposed to English so you used it?

W: What was that? I didn't understand.

M: When did you first start to use English? Or when did you had to learn it or—

W: When I went to school. When I first went to school.

M: And how old would you have been then?

W: I would have been around six years old. Somewhere along in there.

M: Did you know any English when you—

W: No, I didn't.

M: Was the school conducted in Choctaw?

W: No.

M: Conducted in English?

W: Mmhm.

M: Well, how did you make out at that?

W: That's what I'm talking about. As of today, when the young Choctaws get here to school, they don't even know the first language—the White language.

M: Is that still true?

W: Yes, it is. In some parts, it is.



M: So, Choctaw is still widely spoken, isn't it?

W: Yes, sir. And so that's the reason we are working in family education is trying to reach these people to them to say "yes" or "no"—any word. So that was my problem. I didn't know any English speaking when I first got to school, I didn't even know what was "yes" or "no," but now, the older children knows what I'm talking about. Maybe when I say something, they take over from there.

M: Did you ever get to the place where you had to take a course in English, in the English language? Did they offer any such thing?

W: No, they didn't.

M: What we'd call grammar and that kind of stuff?

W: No, they didn't have that. What I learned is that as I go along, I picked it up. As I go, at times.

M: Now, can you read Choctaw?

W: No, I couldn't. I could not. That's the problem with me. See, I know **men that probably** went to school probably that couldn't, but people that didn't went, still they could read Choctaw. And so, some people can write and talk it. Some of us couldn't even—we could talk Choctaw, but we couldn't even read or write, you see.

M: You read English pretty handily?

W: Yes. Pretty fairly.

M: Picked that up in school, huh?

W: Yes. I don't really pick up the nouns and verbs and all this, but I barely just—as I said before, I was in school to get out of work. Stay away from work. And then,

no one was pushing me, or the teacher actually wouldn't pay that much attention to the Indian children in them days. Because if I didn't learn nothing, still, I was— I don't know whether it was parent or teacher, you see. That is, until recently, and they just started pushing the teachers to really teach these youngsters. I suppose when I came to Pearl River, I still didn't know half of what they're teaching here, when I first came over here. And so, actually, probably I didn't want to learn it. In them days, I guess they'll learn it the hard way if they didn't go to school, you know, probably was the idea there. I don't know, but actually, I wasn't taught all that hard to be in school.

M: Did you get a little arithmetic along?

W: Yes, I was pretty good in arithmetic. I think pretty fairly.

M: Would you say you thought in Choctaw? I mean, that's way you think of things?

W: Well, yes. I thought in Choctaw first and then I thought in English.

M: Do you still think first, in Choctaw?

W: Yes, I do.

M: You think that's the way you frame ideas?

W: Yes, yes. That's because that's the way I was taught at home. I mean, we are on two sides. We have to be— we cannot be English or we cannot be a Choctaw. English cannot meddle with it. In other words, I have to, when you talk to me, I have to think in Choctaw and then English. And so, that's the way my feeling is. As of now, these youngsters today, whenever you talk to them in English, they'll know exactly what you're talking about. But for me, in them days, I had to think about what they say.

M: Do you think they also know in Choctaw instantly what you're talking about? Or do a lot of these kids have to translate from English into Choctaw?

W: Well ... I believe they translate it. Because, actually, whenever you talk at home, you know what you're talking, and whenever you talk in English, you know what you're talking about. It's sort of translated. But whenever the English gets so much into you, then you automatically know what they're talking about.

M: Would there be any of these kids that we're just seeing passing that don't know Choctaw, do you think? Are there any of the young ones that don't know any Choctaw?

W: Yes, they know some English, but some of these—

M: Are there any that don't know Choctaw?

W: That's right.

M: There are some.

W: Yes, mmhm.

M: They're growing up without knowing it.

W: Yes, because of the—what do they call it? The lingo, languages—another way to say it. The marriage have something to do with it, you see. If a Choctaw married a Navajo, they'd have to speak English, one English only. And so, it'll be English, because a Choctaw cannot speak Navajo and a Navajo cannot speak Choctaw. So, they use one language, and it'll be English. It's the only thing that—so that's the reason for kids that come up now, some of them speak only English.

M: Have you got quite a few people married to other types of Indians?

W: Yes.

M: Where do they meet them?

W: Well, let's say, they go to school somewhere—

M: Boarding school?

W: Boarding school, or somewhere out of state, probably. And they meet, you know, a different Tribe or different, you know, people. Indians.

M: What about marrying to Whites? Have you got any—?

W: Yes, we have several. And these people are speaking in English. The people that's not Choctaw. The Choctaw has the wife speaking in English and the kids, their kids have to speak English to come up. Even though they're all really Choctaw children, they speak English, and the children speak Choctaw. Still, they get along. Those are children. They can get along. They get by with most anything. As for you and me, we probably couldn't get along because I may know what I'm talking about, but still, you may not understand what I'm trying to say. You see the difference.

M: Well now, if, let us say, a Choctaw woman marries a White man. Have there been some?

W: Yes, there have.

M: Can they as a family live on the reservation?

W: Yes. They have.

M: And vice versa? If a Choctaw man marries a White woman, can they live on the reservation, there's no restriction to this?

W: Well, sort of. I don't know how it is now. But there was a little different. There, if a girl marries a White man, she has to be with the White—you know, with the White—

M: She can't bring him back on to the reservation?

W: Well, she can, but you know—

M: He isn't welcome?

W: No, he is welcome, but there are some things in the governing body that are sort of .... The White man won't have the rights to any Tribal affairs. But the Indian girl can. If a Choctaw marries a White woman, well then, he can be involved with the Tribal affairs.

M: He can.

W: Yeah.

M: But she can't.

W: No, not the man, anyway. The White man won't be involved with Tribal affairs.

M: No, but if a Choctaw is married to a White woman, she can't be involved either, can she?

W: Well, she's one of the Tribe.

M: She is?

W: Yes.

M: So, it works two different ways.

W: That's right.

M: That's interesting.

W: That's the way the understanding was, but I don't know how it is now. It's been so long since I've been reading up on the Tribal affairs.

M: Do you live on the reservation?

W: Yes.

M: But you can't own that land, can you?

W: No.

M: You've got some kind of lease on it?

W: Yes, I have.

M: How long a lease?

W: Well, I have a year-to-year basis with all.

M: And who owns the house? You've got—

W: I own my own home.

M: You own it on that land, but you can't own the land.

W: That's right. I've been there, say it's thirty years, close. But still, it couldn't be my own place. I mean, I don't have the right to do anything on it unless I lease the land.

M: How much land do you lease?

W: Well, I lease—let's see. Well, house, lease and all, and then the place where I plant corn, stuff like that, around six, seven acres, in open land.

M: Did you build your own house, or how did it get on there?

W: No, the Tribe started selling these old houses that was sitting on there, and I just bought one. The one I was living in.

M: The house was right on the property where you are.

W: Uh-huh.

M: Could a son or daughter of yours inherit that house?

W: Yes, that's what it's set there for. Because, for the old saying, if I remember correctly, the house was there for the family. For whoever wants it, it's there. My daddy was living there when he died, and the family that's living on it now should still be his home. And on so down then the line. Unless the whole family moved out and then somebody else have to move in, and then they have that house, and it's their house, you see. There's nothing I can do about that because my family moved out. But in other words, we don't own it unless we buy it. They started selling now because of the new houses that's come in. They've started building them, you see. So that's the housing authority that they have is doing this.

M: Has the Tribe got a housing authority? They call it a Tribal housing authority?

W: Yes, but for those that's not being owned. If I owned it, then I can do whatever I want to do with the home. Because I done paid for it and if it's pulled down, the Tribe had nothing to do with it. The only thing the Tribe would have something to do with is if they wanted the lease to the land, and how you take care of the land and all this. And so—

M: Going back to your family counseling, how'd you get started in that?

W: What was that?

M: What you do. Your family counseling, or as you call it, family education.

W: Oh! Well, actually, I just signed up for an opening. I didn't know what I was getting into until I got to workshop and then started learning these things. But I

had a dealing with youngsters before, before I ever started this early childhood. I was working with the youth center, delinquents, when they first opened up here at the Pearl River here, about half a mile down the road there. That's the camp housing there. I mean, not camp housing, but trailer houses. And we moved in there, and they sort of picked me. I was doing, you know, counselor for these youngsters. And so that's where I started coming back and realized that children, and the needs—I didn't realize that this really helping the Indian children when I first started. Because when I first got married, my old man said, "You bring that woman into this house, you're going to work, feed it, clothe it." They tell me, they said, "You have to go out and get it, and then you bring the food in, you feed it." He says that "I brought you into this world and half the time you'll probably do what I want you to do." But as for now, he says he's just getting too old, couldn't do nothing. Couldn't even farm. But if you start yourself, whatever you want to be, you can have it. And so, that's when I started to think about myself, I have to go out and get it. So, before I was married, I was in service, you see. I spent five years in the service.

M: Oh, you did?

W: Yes.

M: During what, Korea?

W: Korea, yes. [19]52 to [19]58.

M: How'd that happen?

W: Before that, you know, I was working with another man farming.

M: Did you get drafted?



W: Yes, I got drafted. And I spent two years in there, and I liked it so much I spent another three years in it. And finally, I just come out and say that I was making my own living. Tried it, you know. See the other side of the world for a while. And before this, I was working with a non-Indian. He was a farmer, raising corn, **feed**, or this stuff, you know. Not very much, but I was working with him on and off for spending money when I was a youngster. And so, when I got drafted, I spent five years in the service. After I got out, I got married, and then that's when I was told that I was my own. And so, I started thinking about myself then, and so for the rest of ten, twelve years about, work. I mean, you know, I had nothing, no dealing with no Choctaw people, you know. I was thinking about was my family, half-starving. They say they're half-starving, but really, it's not half-starving. It's not starving. If really a man will get down and think about himself, you see, with his family, try to bring up a [inaudible 42:16] into the family. It can be done, you know. But I wasn't looking for no price, you see. I could work for three dollars a day and still live through it. But as of today, if you make forty, fifty dollars a week, then that's good. And I used to feel that way about other peoples. They had these jobs, while I was making four dollars a day, while they was making about eight dollars a day. People would usually get jealous of each other, you know, because of making that much money, but I feel that if he's man enough to get it—I didn't get that much education. He'd probably got more education than I have to get that much money. So, I feel that if I was going to make it, I'm going to have to make it with what I got, you know. With the education I have.

M: Now I guess what you're telling me in part is that something's different with the kids, what you're describing.

W: Right.

M: What is it that's different?

W: Well, actually, it's started at home, most of these things. Some families don't really get down and talk with these youngsters, and they go their way whatever they want to do. They can almost overrun you, just like my son. He's seventeen years old now. When he went to school here in Redwater, he never talked back to the mother, you know. But when he come over here among those other children, a different kind—they come from seven different schools, you see, and they get to where they don't really understand what they saying, they say some words that you may probably not realize what they say. Whenever the kids gets up there, if you do some cussing or something, if he hear you, he may not do it at home, but when he come over here, he'll do that. And the kids pick it up from there, back and forth, you see. These language that makes them rough, or maybe they tell tales or something. And whenever all these youngsters get together, that could do things. They could even— “You're chicken if you don't do this,” you see. And if he don't want to be called chicken, he's gonna do it. And I think that's where the attitude come from my boy.

M: So, what kind of problems result?

W: Well, he started—

M: Not with your boy, necessarily, but any. You worked with delinquents. What problems have they got?

W: Well, delinquent children—that's where it started, at home, probably.

M: What's wrong with them? What are they doing? What are their crimes or sins?

W: Well, their crimes are they'll really—leave home. In other words, most dealings we have with this delinquent children is that they'll leave home and not come back.

M: Who supports them, then?

W: I didn't—

M: Who supports them when they leave home? How do they eat?

W: Well, they got kin, brothers. They stick together.

M: Go on and move in with them?

[End of interview]

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