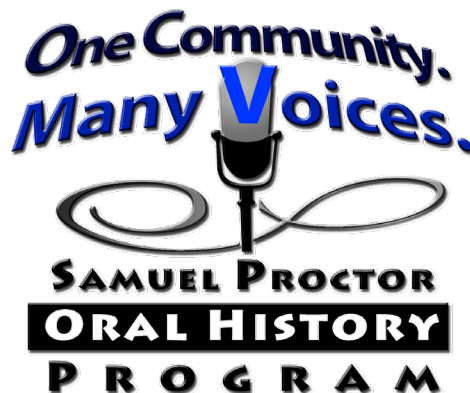


# **Gertrude Rolin, Albert Rolin, and Isaac McGhee**

**Poarch Creek Project  
CRK-010**

**Interview by:**

**Dr. J. Anthony Paredes  
April 29, 1972**



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**CRK 010 Gertrude Rolin, Albert Rolin, and Isaac McGhee**  
**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project**  
**Interviewed by J. Anthony Paredes on April 29, 1972**  
**40 minutes | 37 pages**

**Abstract:** Gertrude Rollins, Isaac McGhee, and Albert Rolin speak about the late Fred Walker, a leader in the Episcopal Church. Gertrude, Fred Walker's daughter, recalls how Fred would get very drunk at times. They recall how Fred left the Baptist Church to become a leader of the Episcopalian Church. They then discuss the history and taxation of the piece of grant land Fred lived on that was sold after his death. They discuss who is still living on the grant land, and who lived there in the past. They recall how folks lived and cooked in the early 1900s. They discuss the meeting where Calvin McGhee was appointed as chief, and his fight for a good school. They conclude by speaking about their work as sharecroppers the limited opportunities for Indians in the past.

**Keywords:** [Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Fred Walker; Alabama--Poarch; Religion; Land tenure]

**ORAL HISTORY**

**P R O G R A M**  
**University of Florida**

CRK-010

Interviewee: Gertrude Rolin, Albert Rolin, Isaac McGhee

Interviewer: Dr. J. Anthony Paredes

Date: April 29, 1972

P: Rolin. This is April 29, 1972 at three in the afternoon. The home of Mrs. Gertrude Rolin in Poarch, Alabama. Mrs. Rolin, I understand that your father, Fred Walker, was a leader of his people long ago, and I wonder if you could just tell about that.

GR: Yeah. Mostly what he done, though, was in church work, you know. He was a great leader to lead the people in church working.

AR: He'd frolic, too. Tell it like it is.

GR: And . . . yeah, well, yes, he used to frolic on Sunday evening. Oh, my. Well, now, see he can tell you more about it really than I can. I don't remember too much about my daddy—about what he'd done. But we'd go to church on Sunday and then Sunday afternoon, he'd take to young folks, and just dance from then till night. [laughter] Yeah, he was . . . well, he was a pretty rowdy man in some ways, he sure was. Papa wouldn't take nothing off nobody.

P: What do you mean exactly about rowdy?

GR: Well, he was bad to drink. He'd drink. He'd get angry and fight. He'd fight you if you made him a little bit—right, right, he sure would. He was pretty bad about drinking and, well, sometimes he'd come in, run us all off from home. [laughter] Take a brick back, I knowed him one morning take a brick back, chunk it at us and call running to have us haul off from the house. We had to leave, he was pretty drunk. I mean crazy, just crazy drunk. One night I had to go get him, he's over to my first cousin, at Girlie's. I went over there and he had money rolled up

trying to make her smoke it for a cigarette. [Laughter] I's took him and carried him home. Got him as far as the edge of the porch and lied him there, gave him a pillow. Stayed there the rest of the night.

P: How did he get to be a leader of the people?

GR: Well, now, I reckon he was just called to be the older head. Seemed like he was older than any of the rest that I knew anything about, and I reckon he'd know more about the Indian people, to my knowing, than any of the rest did and they just all—just took him to kind of be the overseer over all the people.

P: When you say he knew about the Indian people, what kind of things do you think he knew about?

GR: Well, I don't know no more than just . . . the way I reckon the older ones was raised up. He about the oldest then, won't you think, Uncle Isaac? The oldest one there was in here at that time.

P: About what time was that?

GR: I don't know, but he died in [19]41.

P: In [19]41.

GR: Mm-hmm. Now, I don't know what month, either, he died, but he died in [19]41.

P: Did people ever call him chief?

GR: No. Now, I didn't ever hear them he always went as Uncle Fred. That's with everybody, they called him Uncle Fred.

[Interruption]

P: Your name, sir, is what again?

AR: Albert Rolin.

P: This is Albert Rolin speaking now.

AR: Well, did you know old Dr. Macy?

P: No, I haven't met him. I didn't know him.

AR: He come over here to this apple field, and he lived over there. Doctored over there, him and Edwards. Preacher Edwards. Preacher Edwards called him chief all the time, man. The doctor would call him chief.

P: Now, Mrs. Rolin said he was a leader in the church. Which church was that?

AR: Episcopal Church.

GR: Episcopal Church.

P: In the Episcopal Church.

AR: And we built three houses. We built one right here, this house, this place here. One at Perdido, one over yonder at the Woods settlement.

GR: At the first all start, Papa was a Free Will Baptist. That was our first religion. Why, Preacher Edwards come here while Dr. Macy and Mrs. Macy come here, first. They was here for quite a while. Now, Dr. Macy had my tonsils took out. And they

was here for quite a while, and then Preacher Edwards come, why, he got right in after Papa to go into the Episcopal Church. And he did.

[Laughter]

P: And Preacher Edwards called him the chief, you say?

GR: Nah.

AR: Dr. Macy too, did.

P: But you never heard him called a chief?

GR: No, I never did hear him called him chief. It was always Uncle Fred, is all.

P: Was he the kind of man that—or did it often happen that other people would come to him with problems of any kind for help on?

GR: No, not as I know anything about. No more than—here, they're close kin, you know, like Girlie. They always seemed like they looked to Papa to pray over things. And he'd back in the—he was kind of young, well, we was all back in there and they just seemed like they just wanted him to kind of be the leaderman of everything they wanted done. They liked Papa.

P: Excuse me. This is Isaac McGhee talking now.

IM: Important. Like a kid now, when he was growing up, coming up a young man, there weren't no settlement in here, hardly. He was living a distance apart. But he was instead a kind of head leader everywhere he went.

P: Now, was he related to you, Uncle Isaac?

IM: Yeah.

P: How was he related to you?

IM: Well, his mother was my father's sister. Old Aunt Tracey Walker, she was a midnight woman, kept babies, you know. Me and him are first cousins according to that one.

P: How did the family name Walker come in?

IM: A man, the Walker, fellow by the name of Walker, white man.

GR: J.C., J.C.

P: A white man by the name of Walker.

IM: That's right, that's when they commenced to coming in here.

P: Where was J.C. Walker from? Do you know?

IM: J.C., that's one of his sons, wasn't it?

GR: No, that was there. That was his daddy, and he had a son named J.C., too. J.C. Walker was my grandpa.

IM: Yeah, that's right.

P: Where did he come from?



GR: No, I don't know, now. I don't know where he come from, I never did remembers ever seeing him.

IM: I don't think. I'd never see him.

GR: But I don't know. That's the way that Walker business come in.

P: But was he a white man who married who now?

IM : Theresa.

AR: Theresa, my sister.

P: Theresa? Theresa?

AR: McGhee.

P: Theresa McGhee. Uh-huh. Did Fred Walker ever do anything to try and get money for the Indian land or like Calvin McGhee did?

GR: Well, there, now then they said a man come through in 1925.

AR: We had one come 'round here around writing them up, you know. One come 'round.

GR: But he never did work here. Not like Calvin. No, huh-uh.

AR: None of them worked quite like Calvin.

GR: No, sir. Didn't nobody.

AR: [inaudible 06:40-48]. Listen to what I'm telling you. There come to a man sharp enough to get a lot of money out of them.

P: He'd be gone. [laughter]

AR: No, I sold the last shotgun I had. Didn't have no money in them days because money was hard to get ahold of. I had a single barrel breech-loader, and I sold that it comin' around a fella—well, he was a lawyer, one of them was, Indian lawyer, made out us from Oklahoma. And my dad paid him five dollars.

P: Do you remember that lawyer's name?

AR: No I sure don't.

P: But he was from Oklahoma? Uh-huh. Did Fred Walker ever give speeches anyplace or in church or any . . . ?

GR: Yeah, he's used to go to what we'd call a—what would it be? Church association. He used to go them and give speeches, be gone for three or four days at a time. Yeah, well, he's what we'd call—they had him for a deacon in the church. He always would open the church and close the church, that's the way he did.

P: Did he get paid any money for working for the church?

GR: No. Not that I know anything about it.

P: Where were these church association meetings held? And what were they all about?

GR: Well, now I can't tell you. They used to go off. Now, whenever Preach Edwards-- he went off one time whenever after Preach Edwards. I don't know where they went to.

AR: Birmingham, I think.

IM: But that's where they melted all that iron, what they got. Fred told me he had pipe enough over there, we were melting that thing and steam's running out of control. Up over their head when it came like . . . who was that who carried him off? Preacher Edwards. Way up there somewhere they melted that thing.

P: Where they melted the iron?

IM: Yeah. Paid him two hundred then and it was running over their head. He'd about ready . . . [laughter]

GR: I was trying to think where he went to association one time. I just can't remember. But he did, he lead the church. He'd get up, he'd open up the song service, led the song service, he opened the church, to start with.

IM: I know an old song if I could think what he'd sing everybody, but I can't think of it now.

GR: I used to know one of them, too.

P: Now, did he ever give sermons in church too or . . . ?

GR: Well, he'd be just like—yeah, he talked just like preacher or something, that's all right. Yes sir, he was good. Papa was real good, he was a real good church leader.

IM: He didn't have no education, just like all the rest of us.

GR: No, he didn't have no education, but he could sure get up and give good speeches.

P: Can you remember some of the kinds of things he used to say in speeches and sermons?

GR: No. No, I can't remember.

P: Did he ever go, say, into Atmore or down to Mobile or any place and make speeches about the Indian people or anything like that?

GR: No. No, I never did know of him going nowhere like that.

P: Now, he lived on the grant land over there at Headapadida? Tell me about the grant land and where that came from and what happened to it and all of that.

GR: Well, now, I can't tell you where it come from, but I can tell you really what happened to what we lived on. They sold it. It was sold for taxes two or three times, and we redeemed it, and then eventually after Papa died, well, they sold it. We all got ninety dollars apiece out of it.

P: Now, we all, that means who?

GR: Me and my other brothers and sisters and my mama.

P: Who sold it?

GR: My oldest brother, Lonnie. He's the one sold it. He tried to sell it to keep us from getting any out. See, him and his wife, they raised their family there after Papa— well, Papa stayed with them after him and Mama, they separated way on back, I don't know when. But him and his wife, after he married, they stayed there with Papa up until he died, and then, I reckon he thought he could sell it and we wouldn't have no part in it, but anyway, another one of my brothers, he kind of got around and seen what he was trying to do. Well, after the lawyer got into it, you see, and seen he'd had more brothers and sisters, well, he couldn't send it to him without all of us agreeing. So, we did sell it, and got ninety dollars apiece out of it.

P: Just ninety dollars apiece?

GR: Ninety dollars.

P: And how many acres was that?

GR: Forty. It was forty.

AR: It was eighty.

P: Eighty acres?

AR: It was eighty acres.

GR: Now, I don't know. I thought our one was a forty. I don't know. It could have been.

P: Who was the lawyer? Do you remember the lawyer's name that was on that?

GR: No. I believe Lawyer Horne, but he's dead and gone. I believe Lawyer Horne, now but I won't be sure. That's been too long back. My remembrance is no good back there.

P: Now, I've heard that that land was granted to the Indians many years ago by the United States Government and there wasn't supposed to be any taxes paid on it. Well, how did they start paying taxes on it?

GR: I just don't know.

IM: I told you before how that happened. Old man Fred McCauley married old man Lynn McGhee's daughter. Her name was Mary McGhee, sister to old man Lynn McGhee and Lynn McGhee was my great-granddaddy. Well, when he was such a brave soldier, when they whooped the Yankees, the United States and the president gave him that section of land up there. A whole section of that belonged to us, but they just kept on ripping right there. After some of their heirs to it, kept a-writing to Washington to get a deed to it, so old man Fred McCauley, they sent him an abstract deed of it, and they just kept on there and kept on there and they just kept on there until it went back to be taxable.

P: This was Fred McCoy, you say?

IM: McCauley.

P: He was an Indian? Fred McCauley was Indian?

AR: No, he married an Indian.

P: Married Indian, I see.

IM: That's right. All right? Me and Brother Lee, that's my brother, and Henry Rolin went down here to Bay Minette, Old Lawyer Stone, the best lawyer there was in this country. Gave him a dollar apiece to unravel that thing for us, that there grant land, that's what we're talking about now. Got those big law books, said, wait now, Lee. Says, he's kind of callous, you know, that about talking and speaking. Wait, I ain't going to tell you what I'm about to say, but I'm going to tell you what the United States President said about it and know about . . . made a will, I bet they that long and about that thick. It read in there this way. Granted to Old Man Lynn McGhee and his heirs, long as grass grows and water runs. Never was to be taxable long as water run and grass grow. Well, you know that's a long time.

P: That is a long time. [laughter]

IM: That's just the way it read in that book.

P: But somehow, people started paying taxes on it.

IM: That's right. That's right.

GR: Yeah, and old man Jim Crystal. He bought our land one time for taxes.

IM: And he bought Richard Walker's one time.

GR: Yeah.

P: But your daddy paid taxes on it for a while?

IM: Hold on, let me tell you. Richard Walker, he went up to Brewton to pay taxes and I asked him what was he paying on Old Man Crystal, bought Richard Walker's place. What was his name?

GR: Jim Crystal.

IM: Jim Crystal. Went to Brewton with him, and the lawyer told him, that if you can get your money back, you'd better get it back till you couldn't do nothing with that land if you had it. So, we'd tried to get it back.

GR: That's right. He done ours the same way.

IM: He just kept on writing, you see, writing and writing them and writing them...

GR: And my daddy had to pay taxes. He did, he basically had to pay taxes.

P: So, some people who weren't Indians tried to pay taxes on the land to get it?

GR: That's right.

IM: That's right.

P: And the lawyer told them they couldn't do that? But then, later on, some Indians like your daddy started paying taxes and then the taxes couldn't be kept up, and it was sold off?

GR: No, we just sold our claim. See, my oldest brother, he claimed that it all belonged to him, and he thought maybe he would sell it after him and his wife separated, and he could just sell it and get all there was in it. But whenever they got to



looking into the deeds and all, he found where there were some more children there—was heirs, too. We all had to sign the paper before he could sell it.

IM: Just like Lee asked him that day down there. I asked him, I said, Mr. Stone, can this land be sold? He said, yeah. He said, you can sell it to one another, but you can't sell it to outsiders to save your life. But if you're all kin and McGhee, going by Lynn McGhee, you can buy his part any time you want, but said, you can't sell it to a outsider.

P: Well, how is it that the land was eventually sold to outsiders then?

IM: That's what we're talking about, they just overran it and they got it.

P: Oh, they overran and got it that way. So in a sense, the sale of that land really wasn't according to the U.S. law at all. Now, could anybody who was an heir to Lynn McGhee go and build himself a house on that grant land?

GR: That's what they always tell me they can. So they don't join fences.

IM: I can go up there and find an empty house on that land and live there about as my day and they couldn't make me pay rent to save their lives.

P: But most of the land is sold to white people now? Uh-huh.

GR: Yeah, that's the way it is.

P: Now, did your daddy, Fred Walker, ever sort of have to fight to hold onto the land?

GR: Well, that time with Jim Crystal, yes he did, and Bates Moore bought it in one time for its taxes. Yeah, he sure did. He had to go and have it redeemed back. He had to pay it, then what they had to put out in it.

P: Somebody was telling me a story that one time when somebody tried to pay the taxes and get the land, they tried to post it, and your Daddy didn't like that. What happened on that time?

GR: Well, now, I don't know anything about that.

P: Do you know anything about that, Uncle Isaac?

IM: That's what he done, all right. All right, in them days, there had to be a . . . that's why I said, the reason that none of the Indian folks ain't got [inaudible 17:04]—not till the lawyer, Old Lawyer Stone said, as long as there's a boy McGhee born into the family, never would lose his land. But he said they just kept all the money coming in there. Kept writing to Washington. I reckon me and you'd have done the same thing, coming in and let them maybe have a day for this one and that one. Well, I got to it for taxes. I'm paying taxes on something like that. It never was taxable, as long as grass grows and the water runs, and you know that's a long time.

P: And when that happened, your daddy would go down to the courthouse or what?

GR: Now, I don't know. I reckon that's where he'd have to go, to the courthouse.

IM: That's where he had to go, the courthouse.

GR: Now . . . that done slipped my mind, now, while I was just fixing to tell you.  
Something other about it.

[Break in Recording]

GR: He told me whenever the land was sold, you see, my brother, there's a man down in Baldwin County. We went down there to a judge or a lawyer or something other in Baldwin County. They come down, I was down there working. And we went down there and signed the papers. And they said then, that that was just money we got. You see, this was not to be sold.

IM: That's right.

GR: That was just money, if it was looked into it, that they just give us. It was just money give to us. It wasn't to be sold.

P: So, you think really today the land still belongs to the heirs of Lynn McGhee?

GR: I sure do. I believe according to what the back in, and what I've always heard.

P: But it would take a fight to get on it now, wouldn't it?

GR: Yeah, it sure would.

IM: That's what I was just fixing to tell you a while ago. We didn't have no money to enter a lawsuit to begin with, if we did, I'd a put the last one of them in jail. But we didn't have that money to make a . . . I just told that. Just go ahead and . . .

GR: You know, just a few people went in there on that land and got the benefit of the trees, the timber and all up in there. Well, we were really just whooped out of everything.

IM: Everything. Everything.

P: Are there any Indian folks that are still living on a part of the original grant land?

GR: Yeah.

P: Who are some of them that are on the—?

GR: Well, that's . . .

IM: Eugene Sells is one of them.

P: Eugene Sells?

GR: Yeah, Eugene Sells. He's about the onliest one of us, though, right now on the grant. No, Sam Lynam, don't he . . . yeah, he lives in Uncle Clay's house.

IM: But he's a white man, ain't he?

GR: Yeah.

IM: You know what I'm saying? But he married an Indian woman.

GR: And Eleanor. Shirley Vaughn.

IM: That's right.

P: Eleanor who?

GR: Eleanor, my sister's daughter. And Shirley Vaughn, Willie Lee, Martin's son.

They're still on it. And I believe, Ranton and Willis, don't they live over there on it? Well, then, Susie Gibson. She's up there now, she's on it. Now, that many is still in there on it.

P: They're still on the grant land, but part of the grant land passed from your hands.

GR: That's right. Well, naturally, the few that's in there on it now, they claim it belongs to them.

P: Oh, they hold the title to it as individuals?

GR: Uh-huh.

IM: They hold the title to what they own.

P: Was there ever an occasion when one of the heirs to Lynn McGhee would be on the land and not let other people come on it or anything like that?

IM: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

P: Tell me about that.

IM: Well, that's all they done. They just couldn't get on it when they was living—all the older heads—back in them days, you wass asking to get on it. You know, the law on it, and now the law by the United States government, President of the United States. Weren't nobody but him and his heirs. Well, just see one come in there, they just lay the law down and tell them they couldn't do nothing.

P: No, what I was asking . . .

IM: Commence the man in the family, they thought had much right to it as me and you did . . .

P: What I was asking was there ever an occasion when one Indian would try and keep another Indian person off the land?

GR: Couldn't do it.

P: Couldn't do that.

IM: But I could sell you my part if you were one of his heirs. I could sell you my part there and move off. But that's onliest way as you'd get it. By according to the law, the United States law. We went and paid Old Man Lawyer Stone down here a dollar apiece to find out the law on that thing, and that's what he told us.

P: And what year was that? Do you remember?

IM: No, I sure don't.

P: But that was a long time ago? Uh-huh. Tell me about, just to talk about the older days. When you were a girl, Mrs. Rolin, how many families were there living on the grant land at that time? Do you know?

GR: No, I really don't. But there was a good many back then. 'Cause we was one, and there was . . .

IM: Old Man Will McGhee.

GR: Will McGhee. Yeah, old man Bill McCauley, and Old Man Wesley Wise, and Mrs. Byrant and Uncle Richard, and Doris, and Luther, **Meryl**.

IM: Them was Old Man Will McGhee's children.

GR: Them was they boys. That was his boys.

P: Those were all Will McGhee's boys.

GR: And we all lived on there, and Mike Rolin and Fred Rolin. Back when I was a girl .

..

IM: Old Man Bill McGhee was Papa's brother. They had a title to it. Well, they just went on ahead up and then built up after they married and built them a home. Some of them walking today, they ain't paying a penny of tax.

GR: Uncle Eliot Rollin.

IM: That's right.

GR: All of them, back when I was a girl.

P: Now, did all of those people that are still on the land, are they paying taxes? Did you tell—they don't all pay taxes?

IM: No.

P: But some pieces of it, people started paying taxes on it? Uh-huh. What kind of house did you have when you were a girl on the land there? Tell me about that.

GR: Well, it was just a kind of what I'd call a shed to stay under. We could sit in the house around the fire and count the chickens up under the house. And we could

look out down through the cracks and see a person coming a half and mile and tell who they was.

IM: That's right.

GR: Now, that was the kind of . . . and whenever it rained, the kitchen would just be the same as if you was outside. Now, that's the kind of place I was raised up in.

P: How many rooms was it?

GR: Two—there was three rooms. Just a fire room, and a bedroom, and a kitchen. All that was together, just three rooms.

P: What was the house made out of?

GR: Logs.

P: Logs. And the roof?

GR: It was made out of boards. Split boards.

P: Now, when you say a fire room, what do you mean by that?

GR: Well, we'd call that a chimney on one end of the bedroom. It's two bedrooms and a kitchen.

P: Was it a stone chimney or what kind of chimney?

GR: No, it was stick and dirt.

P: Stick and dirt.



GR: Made out of mud.

P: You said you could look through and see the chicken. It must have had a wood floor. It had a wood floor?

GR: Wood floor, one with big cracks in it.

[Laughter]

P: Can you remember, when you were a girl, whether there were any people who lived in houses with dirt floors?

GR: Yeah. Yeah, his brother.

P: Who was that?

GR: Lawrence McGhee and Mamie McGhee. I can remember when they lived in what we'd call a . . . it didn't have but one room. It was called a mule stable back them days. Well, it was. Actually it was, wasn't it? And it just had one room. That was what they had their family in it. And where they cooked was just down on pure dirt. I can remember that far back.

P: They just cooked on a fire on the ground?

GR: No, they had a little old stove.

P: They had a little stove?

GR: Wood stove.

P: From your childhood, were any people still cooking in a fireplace as they were . . . ?

GR: Yeah. Old Man Sam Lynam's mama up there, the only way she had to cook. On a fireplace and had one of these old covered-over skillets that you put your bread in there and put the fire up on top. That was the way she cooked.

P: Just so that we can get some idea of the time that we're talking about, when you were born?

GR: Back in 1913.

P: 1913?

GR: Uh-huh.

P: So, this would only make it only about—oh, less than sixty years ago that you can remember people doing that? Uh-huh. And back in your childhood, I guess there were a lot of people that cooked in fireplaces, Isaac?

IM: That's all they done.

P: That was the only kind of cooking when you were a boy. [Laughter] Do you think that there were any other people besides Fred Walker who acted as leaders for the people before Calvin McGhee came along?

GR: No, sir. Not as I know anything about.

P: Who were the people that organized the first kind of school that they had, when they were used to hire people to come in to teach, do you know anything about that?

GR: Now, I don't know nothing about that.

IM: I don't expect Calvin had been a chief, but he got that there money to finance, you know it, that had to be settled in 1946. I believe that was the year they had sent all that money in.

GR: [19]45.

IM: Was it [19]45? All right. Calvin put out a meeting, and he found that in the paper way back in there in [19]45.

GR: Charles?

IM: But they didn't come up there and see something about it, well, they wasn't going to get a thing. We ain't got none yet, may never get none, but anyhow, Calvin had a meeting up there to that school there, that church house. What's the name of that church?

GR: Episcopal.

IM: Episcopal Church. Now, I bet you, there was five hundred people there that night, all over the place. Calvin got up and made a speech what he found in the paper, and some of them read it. He had the proof to find out if there was any Indians in the state of Alabama, they's entitled to that money.

P: Mm-hm.

IM: All right. And he got up and talked a long time, and some of them said, well, why don't we just appoint Calvin the chief? They had to have a chief in order to start the business. All right, said y'all want to appoint me for chief, I'll serve as the chief. So, everything, they held up the hand. I bet you there was over five hundred people there that night. That's how they come to call Calvin chief. Well, he run that thing until he died with a heart attack, didn't he?

P: Uh-huh.

IM: Just as straight up and down a man as there was. He knowed it all. Sometimes, you'd give him a check. Someone would go up and tell him, says, I've got a check book round there, or a book down there, if y'all don't find where I spent any of that money, says, I'm ready to quit the job. You heard him say it. I heard him say it. And then some of them say it, well, he just getting him a new car, something like that.

GR: One thing I praise Calvin for, even though they have lost the school, he got a school. For them young 'uns, back whenever I was going to school, I went in an old dwelling-house and the church house that we had church in, what little bit of schooling I got. But the young 'uns in this day and time got a good bus to ride, they got a good school. They don't have to worry about a thing in the world. They get their food and all. But then, they don't appreciate it. That's one thing I can praise Calvin for. He fought for that school, and he got a good school.

P: What year was that school built?

GR: Now, I don't know. I don't remember back what year it was built in.

IM: I can't tell neither.

GR: I can't either.

P: Was it quite a few years ago, or in the [19]50s or when?

GR: No. Ah, well, yeah, I would say I believe back in the [19]50s, whenever it was built. I just couldn't say right offhand when, but I know he really done some fighting for that school. He sure did.

P: Tell me about the school you went to a little bit more and what it was like going to that school.

GR: Well, we just went on the little old hill over there from down where Eugene Sells, you know where he lives, don't you.

P: Mm-hm.

GR: Sitting right up on the hill, just a little bit back this away from where he's living now. And it was just a one little building. All of us children went to school, what schooling we got, and that's where we worship, had church worship, and we went to school there five days a week and went to church and Sunday School on Sunday there. Just one little building, the whole school.

P: And how many teachers were there?

AR: One. One teacher.

P: Was that teacher paid by the county? Do you know?

GR: Yes, she sure was. Mm-hm. Yes, she was paid by the county.

P: Now did your father, Fred Walker, go to any school, any place, you think?

GR: No, not as far as I know anything about it.

P: Do you know, Isaac, whether he went to school any place?

IM: Sure don't.

GR: I don't think he ever went to school.

P: Could he read and write?

GR: No, sir.

P: He couldn't. Could he write his name?

GR: I imagine he could write his name, but that's about all.

P: So, you think that his being a leader was mainly from his work in the church. Was that it?

GR: Yeah. Yeah, I believe that was it.

P: And he was just the kind of man that people looked up to, or what?

GR: Yes, he was. He was. He was what I'd call a good person to advise people for things, you know. That's what they wanted, advice from him. And people depended on him to really lead the church.

P: Well, what kind of things did they seek advice on from him?

GR: Well, if they wanted like to do anything toward, maybe work in the church, or to have anything done in the church, they wanted his consent about it before it was ever done.

P: And he did this all free. He didn't get any money.

GR: He never got no money, no, sir.

[Break in Recording]

P: Mr. Rolin, you said something about there were three church houses built. The one here that's now where the Holiness Church is, and the one over at Headapadida, and one at Wood Settlement. Where is Wood Settlement?

AR: Right on down towards Atmore.

P: Was that a place where a lot of Indians lived?

AR: Yeah, there's a good bunch of them over there.

GR: No, there ain't no Indians that live over in the Wood Settlement.

AR: Well, Woods is Indian.

IM: There ain't no Indians in that Woods . . .

AR: It was built on his land. He granted the land. George Woods granted the land to Dr. Macy to build a house on.

P: And so, there were three churches built at that time? Is the one at Wood's Settlement still there?

AR: No sir, they tore it down. And they tore down this one up here, where this one in Poarch. Tore it down and moved it over.

P: Now, when you say, we built, was that everybody just got together and built them, or what?

AR: I helped them build them, all three.

P: The community members would get together and do . . .

GR: They just got together and built the church.

AR: Yes, sir. Now, Mr. Patterson give them . . .

[Break in Recording]

P: . . . wether many of the Indian folks around here were ever did any sharecropping? Know anything about that?

GR: Sharecropping. You mean like on halves or anything like that? Farm on halves?

P: Uh-huh.

GR: He did all the farming he done, he done on . . .

P: Tell me about what sharecropping was like.

AR: I farmed around near the railroad for **Charlie Hall**, and that's where we was working on halves.



P: Working on halves, was does that mean?

AR: We pay for half of the materials, or everything, and he'd split the difference with us, what's left.

P: Did he own the land, or did . . . ?

AR: We had to pay for the fertilizer and seeds, and then what's left, he'd divide it.

P: Were there a lot of Indian people that worked on halves like that?

AR: Me and him, we worked together.

IM: A whole bunch of them.

AR: Ed McGhee.

P: Did it ever happen that somebody you were working halves for, after many years, he'd then give you title to the land you were working? Did that ever happen?

AR: No. His brother got a piece of land he worked over yonder as a settlement. And he had to pay taxes on it, and when he died, why, his boys are still working it. Rent it out.

GR: That was Calvin's plan, though, wasn't it? They cleared up that as new ground, and they'd worked it so many years, and his boys up there, they still rents it, right on till now. Yes, he rents it every year.

AR: Yes, he rents his place every year.

P: And who did the land originally belong to now?

GR: The Alger people, the Alger Southern people, a company.

P: A company?

GR: Uh-huh. Alger Southern.

P: But when they cleared that land, they just rented it, you're saying?

GR: Now, I don't know whether they cleared it and rented it, you know, and paid rent on it, or whether they just cleared the land and in so many years, they just come owner to it. Well, all right, let him tell you.

Unidentified male: Now, here, that place where David, Brother David lived at, there come a white man with his family. And he built up there and stayed there for years and years. All right, and he left it, and another man come there, white man come in there with his family and stayed there years and years. And after he left, Brother David went over there to stay and raised his family over there. I wished you'da been along. He had a dirt chimney just like we were speaking about and a porch just about as high as that and **I bet the top was older than . . .** And the man what pays the insurance said, I'm going back to Atmore. I'm going to get some of them people to come out here some night and when David McGhee has got a big fire, that fire going to come over them porch right up to the corner of the house. [Laughter] Never did check that fire. They always show them people what kind of chimney he's got and he don't get no insurance on. They all write you in town and got good housing and get more insurance than McGhee. He did, I fenced them in, and the fire'd be up, coming up on top of them porches.

P: That was David McGhee?

Unidentified male: David McGhee, my brother.

P: Your brother. But you're not sure whether they rented it, or after so many years, they got the land by just . . .

GR: No, I don't. They might have come by it just like he said there. I don't know. I do know she still rents the land to them till now.

P: A while ago, after I turned the tape recorder off, I asked you whether, you were talking about how hard life was in the past, and I was asking you whether you thought it was worse for the Indians than white people or not, and your answer was what?

GR: Yeah. Yeah, I think it was. I believe it was worser for the Indians than it was for the whites. Now to me, we was treated you worse. We was always just pushed back, to my notion. When I was a girl growing up, we never had the privilege. You know, the sixth grade was as high as you could go in school back when I was growing up. They didn't have the opportunity of going to school and getting an education like the children now. Sixth grade, and that was it. We'd go, to get out of the sixth grade up here on that little old one-room building and you had to quit. You couldn't go nowhere else. No further. And I feel like we was just always pushed back.

P: What kind of work was available in those days to do?

GR: Nothing but picking cotton, hoeing cotton, and things like that.

IM: Pulling corn.

GR: Pulling corn, that's right. Raising rice. Now, my daddy raised rice. He sure did.

We had rice. We raised our own rice.

P: Was his land where he raised the rice, was on the grant land too?

GR: It was on the grant land where we was raised at.

P: What about stock? Did many people around here keep stock of any kind?

GR: No. Now, we'd . . . hogs. We always had our own meat every year too. Back when I was a girl growing up, people raised their own meat. They didn't have to buy meat like people do now. But we never did have no cows. We had plenty of goats and raised a big bunch of goats and hogs, chickens, but we never did raise no cows.

P: So, you didn't have butter and milk and things like that?

GR: Yeah. We was always lucky enough that we'd milk other peoples' cows and have milk and butter, mm-hm.

P: One other thing I've asked a couple of other people about, I'm still not real straight on, is how long have there been Indian people living right along here in Poarch Switch, right along this road here? Do you know?

GR: Now, I been living here, right in this spot, for right at twenty-five years. Right here. And that's been way on back, whenever I was a girl back in [19]31 when I married, there was still, there was, these Indians were through here. They didn't

have the highway, but they was living in here. They was renting, though, they didn't own their own homes. They was—

P: Renting.

GR: But for Charlie Hall. That was back where they was here.

P: Charlie Hall owned all this land through here?

GR: He didn't own this, this was Corney Mill Company, but right around there, from the church on back yonder, he did.

Unidentified woman: Howdy, howdy.

GR: Good evening. How are you?

[Break in Recording]

P: Was Charlie Hall an Atmore man or what?

GR: Yeah, he was an Atmore man.

P: What kind of business did he have?

GR: Well, he was just a big farmer, big farmer.

IM: And sell mules.

GR: Yeah, and sell mules.

P: And a lot of people in through here were working halves with him?

GR: That's right. That's the way they farmed, with Hall.

P: And then, in time, they come to buy the land themselves?

GR: They bought these little old places in here from the Corney Mill Company.

AR: We could have bought this same land, all back from the Charlie Hall, but he sold it to niggers.

GR: Yeah, he sold it to colored folks. Colored folks owns all of that now.

P: Oh, I see.

AR: They lived up yonder there and borrowed that money from the FHA or the **Disaster Loan** or one of them.

P: Okay, well, I think that's enough for today.

[Break in Recording]

GR: Well, I'm glad I can help you. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to.

AR: Yeah, that was ten years ago, Charlie Hall... [Inaudible]

P: On halves?

AR: On halves.

IM: [inaudible 38:49-52]

P: [laughter]

P: Well, I've learned a lot, but, you know, it's hard to learn all these things 'cause you're trying to get names straight in your mind and all this is brand new to me and all these people you've known about all your life.

P: My name is Tony Paredes. I'm from Florida State University in Tallahassee.

Unidentified woman: I'm McGhee.

P: Oh, you're another McGhee!

GR: Yeah, that's Brother Macy's wife. Mace McGhee's wife. And Calvin's daughter.

P: Oh, I met your husband the first time I was up here with Buford Rolin last December.

GR: Her husband's Calvin's brother.

P: And he's the minister of the church down here.

GR: Minister of the church. You ought to come out and listen to him preach some time.

P: Well, this summer, I certainly intend to do so.

IM: When'd I see him . . . ?

GR: That'll be the second Saturday night.

IM: May?

GR: Uh-huh. We have a singing the second Saturday night in May.

P: Second Saturday night in May? Let's see, what date will that be?

GR: Oh, next Saturday night will be the first. And then, it'll be the next following Saturday night. It'll be two weeks from tonight.

P: Two weeks from tonight. I might be up here at that time, and I'll try and take that in. It's just a . . .

[End of interview]

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