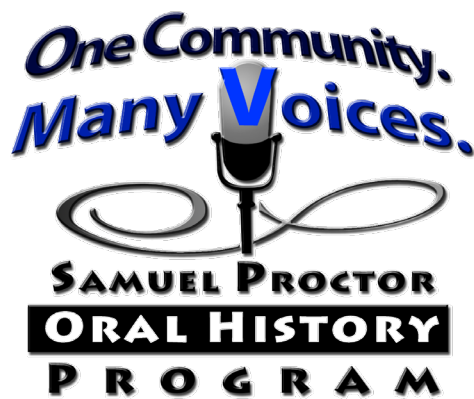


Mace McGhee

Poarch Creek Project
CRK-012

Interview by:

Dr. J. Anthony Paredes
July 18, 1972



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CRK 012 Mace McGhee
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project
Interviewed by J. Anthony Paredes on July 18, 1972
36 minutes | 27 pages

Abstract: Reverend Mace McGhee reflects on the history of the Holiness Church in Poarch, Alabama. He remembers how the Church came to own the land it stands on, given by a timber company first to an Episcopalian Church and then to the Holiness Church. He goes on to describe the Holiness religion and his family history. Previously Episcopalian, he left the Church and moved out of his parents' home with his family, and later began to preach. He shares the emergence of several Holiness churches in the area, including the network to which his church belongs—the Free Holiness Church. He speaks on the theological differences of several different churches, and then discusses his disapproval of a fellow church member who engages in traditional Indian religious practices. The interview concludes with discussion of a land purchase.

Keywords: [Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Alabama--Poarch; Holiness churches; Preaching]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
PROGRAM
University of Florida

CRK-012

Interviewee: Mace McGhee

Interviewer: Dr. J. Anthony Paredes

Date: July 18, 1972

P: Testing one, two, three, four, five, six, seven.

[Break in Recording]

P: This is July 18, 1972, and I'm interviewing Reverend Mace McGhee, who is the Pastor of the Friendly Holiness Church in Poarch, Alabama. And we're doing this interview on his front porch—[laughter]

M: Right on the front porch.

P: Of Mr. McGhee's house. Well, the first question that I began asking Reverend McGhee was, how did the Holiness Church come about in this community?

M: Well, way back then, the time when there was no Holiness round here, **Brother Raymond Coon** came in and he was a Free Holiness. And he didn't have no places to preach, no high just like the other organizations did. So we built a arbor over here at Bell Creek—they call it Bell Creek—it's about right at a three quarter of a mile from here. So that's where we come in contact with Holiness, and from then on, well, then we made us some of our arbors. We made a arbor right at the back of my field over here. So, the next arbor we made was right down here, about a mile and a quarter down the road.

P: Let me ask you, if you can recall, about what year was it that Reverend Coon came in here?

M: I imagine it was way back in the [19]20s.

P: To get some time perspective on this, could you just say your date of birth, what year and—

M: What year? The twelfth year. And then my birthday is July 27, 1912—that's when I were born.

P: Okay. I'm sorry I interrupted you. We were talking about the arbor you built right down here. As you talk about that, maybe you could describe what an arbor looked like, because most folks like myself never saw an arbor.

M: Well, a arbor is nothing but just a place for the fixed—and posters put up, and sorta like a framework put over it, and then covered with the brushes. And that's what you call a arbor. And that's all that Holiness really—when it first come to this country, that's what it really come under—Holiness, old brush arbor.

P: And when were the first buildings built, then, after that?

M: Well, the next buildings was built, I imagine about in the [19]30s. We built a church then, fallen down at our New Home Cemetery. And my daddy, he hewed the timber out of the woods, did all the framing. There were no sawmills like there is now around that you could—you couldn't get things like that, you know. And he'd just hewed them out of the woods. He could use a good broad axe, you know, and Brother **Levy**—the oldest boy—he could, too. They just let us all got out there and squared them up, and fixed the church.

P: When was the next church after that built, and where was that?

M: Next church was built just two hundred yards from here. Right up where Sister **Rackard's** house is, right up there now. That's when we built the church that we in today. That's the real foundation of the church. And after it, people sort of got a little bit able, and better financed way up—well, they left this one and got this piece of land up here at the corner. And that's where we built the church and that's where it's continued to been ever since.

P: Now, I understand that at one time there was an Episcopal church. Could you talk about how that came about and what happened to that?

M: Well, it came about at—let me recall—**Miss Maze** and Preacher Edwards. They first done brought their Episcopalian church and hand-built the church, built the house. But the **Atmore Relay Company** gave the land. Atmore Relay Company gave the land. And if the church went down, it never had no more service, then the land went back to the relay company. So, after the church went down, **Alton** Jackson bought the building. See, he went ahead and bought the building that his daddy-in-law was a bishop of the church, and so he had to change at the church house. So, he goes ahead and buy the church. So, he tears it down and move it. Well, then, it go back to the relay company.

P: What kind of company is a relay company?

M: Atmore Relay Company. It's a big timber company, it used to be **Carney Mill Company**, but it went into Atmore Relay Company. And that's what it mostly goes in right now, Atmore Relay Company.

P: Okay. Going on from there, then—the piece of land went back to the relay company. Then how did your church get it?

M: Then our church went and seen Mr. Patterson then, and we told him what we wanted the piece of land for. And so he said, well, said it was **gived** for the church, and said, we'd just soon to give it to y'all, and let y'all go ahead and build your church on it. And said, if it ever goes down, well, then, it goes back to the company. But this gone year, we goes ahead and fix it where we could have it individually, ourselves.

P: The church as a whole?

M: Yeah, the church as a whole. It belongs to the Friendly Holiness Church now.

P: And the Atmore Relay Company can't take it back anymore?

M: No. They out of it now. Excepting the oil—oil-leased—now we ain't got nothing to do with the oil lease, but just the land.

P: What's the lease? I don't understand that.

M: Well, you see, all through here they got what they call the oil-leased royalty. And if you strike oil anywhere close by, well, then you got a share into it.

P: So, the Atmore Relay Company has retained the oil lease on it.

M: That's right. The oil lease, for it is—

P: What happened that the Episcopal Church went down over there?

M: Well, I think most of the members just found out it really wasn't on the foundation that they really seen it. And they had made no change in their lives—you could drink and just do anything you want to, and go right on back to church. But in our church, now, we don't like that.

P: I have to confess my ignorance. I don't know much about the Holiness religion. Maybe you could just tell me something about the Holiness religion.

M: We believe in being saved—now, saved means a new life in Christ Jesus. Being borned again, that's what it really means. When we repent of our sins, well, then, we come to find out that Christ will forgive us of our sins, and make a new creature out of us. So, we don't walk in the same rooks that we used to walk in. We don't wanna fool with the world—and the things otherworld—like we used to.

P: Can a person change the way he used to be, and still not be saved?

M: Yes, sir. He certainly can.

P: How does that work? [laughter] That if you change your living ways, how is it that you're not saved?

M: Well, if you change your living way, then, and go back on the wrong way, we know that you're not saved. See, the Bible teaches that you can backslide. And a lot of people don't believe. Now the Bible has stopped them, now, they don't believe you can backslide. They believe that you once saved, always saved. But I can't believe that, because the Bible don't bear it out—because Peter, he

backslid. He denied the Lord, and he even swore and cursed that he didn't know Jesus Christ. And certainly he backslid.

P: So, Holiness, you have to keep working at it all the time. . .

M: That's right. Continue working, continue to going forwards.

P: My first question, I really didn't make clear. What I was really asking, would it be possible for a person who had been living sinful ways to not act that way anymore, but still not be saved, to have started out—

M: That's right. Yes, sir. I've got a boy today, my oldest boy, only boy I got, he just as good a boy as a—well, he's a man now. But he's just as good a man, in the country found anywhere. I never heard him cuss a oath, I've never heard him use a **blackyard** word, I've never seen him smoke a cigarette, I've never seen him take a beer in his hands—no way, shape, or form. And he really obeys me when he comes home. But yet and still, he will be lost if he don't repent of his sins.

P: And so it takes not only living a sinless life, but repenting your—

M: That's right. Repenting of our sins. Because, you know, we are born with a sin from back under Adam. Adam and Eve. And that's the reason a man grow—you all go on now, children—that's the reason we don't have to teach a child, when he comes to responsibility of a age. You don't have to teach him all these kinda other things. He knows all these things. And that is the sin—that's an inbred sin—that we have inherited down from the time of Adam.

P: Well, do you feel that it was the lack of these beliefs, and the Episcopal Church that made people like yourself, who used to be Episcopal, go away from it?

M: Sure was. Absolutely so. Because—now, I'll tell you—when I went to it, my heart was to try to find something other that was good for me, 'cause I was raising a family. I had two children, my wife and two girls. And I wanted to do something other, and I wanted to be a good man, and I wanted to be a church-going person. But after I got into this Episcopal Church, then the preacher, he would give cigar smokings. Well, I didn't do that to start off with. My mama and my dad taught me better than that from their growing up, you know—not to fool with no such a things as cigarettes, 'cause they would hurt you in the long run. So, I never did fool with them. But after I got into this church, well, then, they just kept on, kept on wanting. And I just decided then that the best thing for me to do is to get out of it. My mother's dad and her mother, they belonged to it. And we was living in a house—me and him bought this little house right up here, what burnt down, just on this side of the church. We bought that house, that piece of land together. We bought ten acres there together. So after, I went to raising my family. Then, I realized that two living in one house couldn't raise a family. So, I told my wife, I said now ain't but one thing for us to do—get out and find us a place that we can buy, or either get out and rent it for them. That's the only thing that I know to do. 'Cause we raising a family, and we can't let our parents tell our children what to do, because I know what grandparents do. Yes, sir. So, a fella—he lives in Pensacola, **Fred Rolin**, he's one of my cousins. He bought this place here, and I had just a little bitty house built here. Had it built right out there, close to the road.

So, he wanted to go to Pensacola and he asked me one time—he said, how about it, let me sell you my place over there. Said, I know you don't wanna get very far from your folks. And said, that would be a good place for you and your wife to buy. I said, all right, I'll certainly do it. So, he wanted two hundred and fifty dollars for what he had paid on the place—on the little old house he had built. So, I went and made arrangements then, and took the contract in my name. It was twenty acres went with the place. So I bought it.

P: When did you become a preacher yourself?

M: Well, I became—God called me a Preacher, I imagine about twelve year ago. Something like that.

P: How did you know that you had been called?

M: Because that he continued to deal with my heart and life. And, I could think about so many different things of the Bible and it would be true. I could turn over there to it, and it would be true, just like it. He had really brought it to my mind. So, one Sunday at eleven o'clock, well, I just obeyed him. I got up, and he just give me some things to say. And from then on, well, he just continued to give me things to say. And I said, well, Lord if you want me to continue to say for you, I said, think but one thing that I know to do, and that's just to go ahead and preach what you give me to preach. So, that's why I know that God told me to preach—because no, man—I didn't have the education to lean back on, because I don't have but the sixth grade—I just got to the sixth grade. Because back then, in them days,

they didn't like a Indian. We got a lot of people right around here that don't like Indian people at all.

P: Still today?

M: That's right, still today.

P: How did they show this, not liking Indian people?

M: Because, you know, way on back they wouldn't let our children go to school.

P: I knew about that. But still today it goes on, that there's some that don't like Indians?

M: Oh, yeah. You can tell in different ways—in going to different places—that they got a different working in amongst different people, you know.

P: Are these people who are supposed to be Christians?

M: Well, they supposedly belong to the Baptist Church. [laughter]

P: Who was the preacher at the time you were called to preach?

M: Well, Brother **Large Capers**. He was our pastor when I got saved. And then he stayed the pastor for I don't know how many years. Then Brother **T.M. Tatum**, now, he was pastor in the church when I really found out that God really wanted me to preach his word.

P: Was this church the only church they were pastors of, or did they have other churches they were also, at the same time, pastoring?

M: Well, they had different churches. See, we first was in the Pentecostal Holiness Church. And then they would change the preachers, you know, in different churches, in different places. But Brother Capers and Brother Tatum, they continued to stay with us. Then it came a split in the church. A fella name **T.M. Dunkins** come out of Mobile. He's in Montgomery—out from Montgomery—up in there, now. So, he came in here with the **Fire Baptized** Holiness Church.

P: With the what?

M: Fire Baptized Holiness Church. Well, that's what this used to be after he got them all split up. Well, it went that way for a pretty good while. Well, I got my license—missionary license—with the Fire Baptized Holiness Church at that present time. And after it went on for a while, he pulls out of it. The same man, now, that done all this splitting up and got it going here, he pulls out. And go into what they call **Emmanuelist Holiness Church**. Well, then he wanted us to come out of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church, and go into that one with him. So, we wouldn't do it. I said, if we moves out of this church any more—I said, we'll go free and we'll be free, until the Lord comes to call us home. And that's why that we are Free Holiness today.

P: Now, the Pentecostal and the Emmanuelist Holiness, all of those were churches here in the Poarch area?

M: Yeah, there was churches around in the Poarch area.

P: Is the New Home Pentecostal Church—is that the descendant of the original church up there?

M: No. Well, the New Home Cemetery, now, that's the where the original church was. But it was a Pentecostal Holiness Church—New Home.

P: And in the Emmanuel Holiness Church, where was that one, then?

M: It originated from Frisco City. Now, they just going over the overhead path after you leave Frisco City. To your left, there is Emmanuel Holiness Church, right there, still going on.

P: Was there ever one right here in the Poarch Switch area?

M: No.

P: So, if I've got this correct then, that this—I've forgotten his name now, the—

M: T.M. Dunkins.

P: T.M. Dunkins, he got you to leave the Pentecostal Holiness Church to the Fire—

M: Yeah. Fire Baptized—

P: But you didn't change buildings, you were still in the same building—

M: We were still in the same building.

P: And then he tried to get you to go Emmanuel Holiness—

M: That's right.

P: And then you went Free Holiness, on your own free will.

M: That's right.

P: And that's what the Friendly Holiness Church is now, it's Free Holiness.

M: Free Holiness. And the name that we carry is Friendly Holiness Church. But it's a Free.

P: Now, is the Free Holiness Church, does it have any statewide or national organizations? Or is each church independent?

M: Well, through this syndicate, now, there are a good many Free Holiness Church now. Brother **Fratwill**—Will Fratwill—that's the old fella, and then he got a son preaches, too. And he's Free. And then we got some more down in Florida is Free. Now, we got, originally, a fifth Sunday meeting that goes all around. And we got another Free Holiness Church at Bay Minette. Then, we got another Free Holiness Church out from Flomaton—what they call Lambert Church. And this one at Bay Minette is called Pine Grove Church, Friendly.

P: Now, on fifth Sundays you go to different churches, is that right?

M: Yeah. Now the fifth Sunday meeting, all of them will be at my church up here.

P: I see. This next—

M: That's right.

P: Is that this next Sunday?

M: Not this Sunday, but the Sunday next.

P: The Sunday next, oh.

M: That's right.

P: Back to when you had the call to preach—is there ever, how did—it seemed to me that it might be possible that God would be talking to them, or playing with their heart, as you say. And just be really, a call for the person to be more Christian and not necessarily preach. How does one tell the difference?

M: Well, just you out there—and you're not called to preach—well, you ain't got that there calling up on your heart. But if you are called to preach, then you still got a calling. It's continue to ring in your heart and life. That you ought to do more—that you ought to do more for the people. And that's the only thing that I can realize, that God really calls a man to preach when he just continues to show him and to tell him what to do.

P: Preaching is not the way you make your living, however. Is it? What do you do for a living?

M: [laughter] I work for **Whitfield Picker Company**.

P: And that's a full-time job?

M: Yeah, a full-time job.

P: And you also have a small farm operation?

M: Yeah. Two acres here to the house.

P: Does the church provide any support for you in a financial way at all?

M: Well, sometime—now, back here, before the Lord really dealt with Sister Ruth—you know her, don't you?

P: I saw her in church.

M: Well, she says the Lord called her to work for him. Well, I told her, if the Lord called her to work for Him, well then we would do everything that we possibly could. And I said, now, if you want to continue to work with us, and in the church, and you want say-so's in the church, well, we'll just let you have say-so's in the church, and whatever is made up. Now, she is a widow woman. Her husband left her for another woman down here in Mobile. He stayed with her and they had one child, and he got in with another woman and run off, and left her. So, she ain't got no other way, only what the church and the Christian people really, really helps her.

P: And so she works with you? She helps you—

M: She works with me in the church. And all the donations, and the offerings, and the tithes that different people pays in when we take up offering—like on a Sunday morning on, of appointed time—well, we gives that to her, to help her.

P: Back to the history of these different—I can't see here, see whether we're running out of tape. We're still going [laughter]. Back to the history of these different buildings; now, when you moved up here—just down here, below your house, here, where you said **Mr. Rackard** lives—were there some that stayed at the New Home Church and didn't come with you to this church?

M: Yeah. There's some stayed.

P: So, that whenever—again, I've forgotten his name. The man that—

M: T.M. Dunkins.

P: Dunkins. So, that some stayed with him down there, and some came up here. Is that the idea?

M: No. They didn't—see he come in to try to get the church. This church. But he did never fooled the main Mother Church, as you would say.

P: I see, I see. So he was never down at New Home?

M: No, he never did [inaudible].

P: Now, how was it then that there was this original split in the New Home Church that produced your church, before it moved up here to this area?

M: Well, they had called for a new preacher. And **conflicts** sent them the same preacher back. See, and back in that time, well, they would have a Preacher Calling, they call it. And when they voted a preacher—and whichever preacher got the most votes—well, then he's the one that supposed to take the church over for another year, you see. So, they had voted for another preacher—I can't think of his name right now—but when they had conflicts they sent the same preacher back. So, that put a division amongst the church.

P: At New Home?

M: That's right.

P: And that division was when your Friendly Holiness Church started?

M: That's right.

P: About what year was that?

M: Oh, I imagine that was in the [19]40s.

P: In the [19]40s. Then, following this line of questioning, could you tell me anything about how the **Church of God of Prophecy** started, and when that started?

M: Well, the Church of God of Prophecy. . . it started about two year ago. The same girl that brought the Church of God of Prophecy into this community—she got saved in our church. Her mother got saved in our church. She goes and married a man down here towards Perdido, and while she was down there, this Church of God Prophecy fella, he run a revival. Nothing for her to do then, but to bring him up to her dad's house. So, he got sort of good friends, I reckon, with her dad. So, they had a meeting around there to his house. And after they had a meeting around to his house then, this preacher, he says that people that really wanted the church up here, that he would help them build a church. And that's why the Church of God of Propesy is here. Now, this man right over here of that, Noah McGhee, that really rented this place to him—now, he belonged to our church. Until he backslid. And after he backslid, then he went back and he let them have this little building that he's got over here.

P: How do you feel about the Church of God of Prophecy? Is it a proper religion, you think, or—

M: Well, in one sense, I believe part of it is. But I certainly don't believe that it is the only one right. Now, that's what their doctrine is. Their doctrine is, that if you don't belong to the Church of God of Prophecy, you're not right. But you don't find that in the Word of God. 'Cause Jesus said—in the Word of God—on this rock he didn't call no kind of a name, he didn't call no kind of an organization. What he said, on this rock I'll build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

P: So, this means that you don't think that the Holiness Church is the only right church—

M: No, sir. I believe a man can live holy whether he goes to my church or not—if he really wants to live holy.

P: Is it easier to live holy in some churches than others?

M: Yeah. It certainly is. [laughter] Yes, sir, it certainly is. It's easy to live Holiness in that one, in this church down here.

P: Is it?

M: And it is to my mind. Cause they carries on a lot of **worldly** outfits that I don't carry on in the church.

P: Like what, for example?

M: These ball games and things like that, on a Sunday. I don't let them play ball up there, when I see them on that acre of ground that's gived to the House of God.

Because I realize that ain't nothing else but sport. Because it's His named, the sport, that goes in that category. I used to play it when I was a sinner.

P: But, you say that sports are sinful in themselves?

M: Yes, sir.

P: Does that come from the Word of God, or—

M: Yes, sir. He said, love not the things of the world, neither the things that evil in the world. If the love of the world is in you, then the love of God is not in you.

[Break in Recording]

P: This may sound like a funny kind of question, but before you were called to preach, do you feel like before that time, you were still quite a public speaker, or not?

M: Well, I could speak pretty good. Sure could.

P: I wanted to ask you quite frankly, and in connection with, something that you said in Sunday school the day I was there. If you could, tell me your feelings about your late brother Calvin's activities in working for Indian land, and all these other kinds of things. And just, tell me whatever you think about that.

M: Well, now, I'll tell you. I've told him, and I'll tell you just like I told him. In times, it would have been fine for Brother Calvin. Brother Calvin had great knowledge, and understanding, with only the third grade education—that's all he got. But he had it. He had something other that lawyers didn't even realize that he really had.

But I told him, I said, Brother Calvin, it's fine to work for these things—and I enjoy seeing you do these things—but I said, when it comes the Lord's day, I said, you need to put everything aside. I said, don't go on and carry on all these things—lay these things aside and go to the church. And serve the Lord on that day. And then the Lord will bless you in getting out, in doing, and carrying on the other work that you have been appointed to carry out. But I said, if you take Sunday, just like any other day—I said, then you, you were absolutely going wrong. You cannot be a good Christian and don't honor God's holy day.

P: What about the wearing of Indian feathers, and dancing, and all that? What do you think of that?

M: Well, I'll tell you. I don't approve of it.

P: Why don't you approve of it?

M: Well, because the Bible said—as I said a while ago—come out from among the world, and be a separated people. Now, I could've been with him. He asked me—he begged me—to go with him a lot of times, and preach with these Indian feathers and things on. Now my forefather, and all them that grew up, they didn't come up with that part. It just come along when the time that come when we could sue the government for taking the land from our forefathers. That's only time that we really selected a Chief. That's where all that come along.

P: Well, what was the life of your forefathers really like, though, apart from the feather—the fact that there weren't any feathers and all that—but what else was the life of your forefathers like?

M: Well now, and our forefathers, they were good-going, church-working people. And they knowed there was an end, but they didn't know nothing else but just go on and serve the Lord to the best of their knowledge.

P: And that for this for this community is the old Indian way.

M: That's right.

P: Is to serve the Lord. [laughter]

M: Yes, sir. I try my best, since God has saved me about twenty-seven years ago. I've tried my best to live according to his Word.

P: You grew up in the Holiness Church, or were you in another one before that?

M: That's right. Grew up among the Holiness people some. But, as I said, I went into this here Episcopal Church, me and my wife both. You take a young man—well, if God ain't done nothing for him—well, then he don't know nothing about what places to move into.

P: But as a young boy, before you were married, did you go to church?

M: Yeah. I went to church.

P: Which church did you go to?

M: I went to this Episcopal Church.

P: Oh. So that was here when you were a young boy—

M: Yeah, when I was a young boy, before I even married. That's where I got up with my wife is— [laughter]

P: The Episcopal Church? [laughter]

M: That's right.

P: Well, that's one thing the Episcopal Church did for you. [laughter] Well, I wanted to ask you one more question, then I'll put this away. What do you think, in your heart, is in the future for the friendly Creek Indian people of Poarch and Headapadida and Hog Fork?

M: Well, I don't see too much in the future, because the boy—or, the man, that we got now, that's Brother Calvin's boy—seem like he just ain't got the get-up. And he turns further to the world—and he do the Christian side of the people in what's living right. And that's really not—I'm not looking for a great future out of it.

P: Have you yourself ever thought of taking a more active role in leading the people, and trying to get land money, and those kinds of things since your brother's death, or not?

M: Well, you can't—you don't have no authority here. You see, they got a council. And, like me, well, I don't have no authority, no say-so's, whatever. The council is the one that has got the say-so's.

P: Well, I guess I'd better stop for now. [laughter]

[Break in Recording]

P: Start over. Okay. [laughter]

M: The United Pentecostal Holiness Church—now, this man came out of Mississippi, and put the split that's the reason they got down here.

P: That one that says New Home now?

M: Yeah, one they call New Home. But it's a United Pentecostal Holiness Church.

P: And who was that that came out of Mississippi and started that?

M: Let me think of his name—**Bonnie Doe**.

P: Bonnie Doe?

M: Bonnie Doe. He's the one that made this split of the other old church, and went into this United Pentecostal Holiness Church.

P: Well, what happened to the people in the other old church?

M: Well, then they came back with us.

P: They came back with you. I see.

M: That's right.

P: But the United Pentecostal still carries the name New Home.

M: That's right. They still carry the name of New Home. Just like the—originally old church was at the graveyard. See, that's how the graveyard—New Home Cemetery, well, it carries the name—

P: How did that name, New Home Cemetery, get started? Do you know?

M: Well, my dad did. There's a fella give that spot of ground for a cemetery, and they just name it New Home.

P: Your dad did, you said?

M: Yeah. I have a dad.

P: He just named it—you don't know why he decided to name it New Home?

M: No. I don't know that. But, see he owned a lot of that ground, right out in front of our graveyard. His home burnt down one time—and we owned all that land, come right back down to the graveyard. And that's the reason. . . and then his brother live just right down the next age of the branch. **A.G.** McGhee—that's Brother **Shirley's** dad.

P: I see.

M: So, both of them was right in the in between the graveyards.

P: And the graveyard land was originally given by—

M: Given by Curtis. **J.D. Curtis.**

P: Who was a big land owner? Or what was—

M: A big land owner. We bought our—most of our—land from J.D. Curtis.

P: Did you ever work on halves or sharecrop for him?

M: Yeah, we certainly did. We **sharecropped** a long, long time with him.

P: You yourself did, or just your father?

M: My dad.

P: Your Dad? Oh, I forgot. One more church—what about the Baptist Mission up here? Tell me about that. [laughter]

M: Well, the Baptist Mission came on account of **Riley** McGhee. He's dead and gone, but his wife lives right across the road from our church. Now, they used to be Holiness. That's why Holiness is so strong, and right in here, is because they was Holiness. They was 'cause that man—**Raben Coon**—building that arbor at Bell Creek. Riley McGhee was one of the head leaders of it. And, he just growed cold, and his wife growed cold, and, first thing you know, well, they wanna ease away. And so they got into the Baptist.

P: And they brought the Baptists out here.

M: That's right. They's the one that brought the Baptists.

P: I don't seem to ever see much activity around the Baptist Church. Do they not have many members?

M: No. They don't that many members—

P: How long—

M: I doubt whether they got five or six.

P: How long has that Baptist Church been there?

M: Oh, it's been there, I imagine, five or six year or longer.

P: What was there before that building was there? Was that another church before the Baptist Mission was there?

M: Well, yeah. That's what they first put there. The worshipping—this one on this side—that round building, like—

P: Yeah, yeah.

M: Well, that's what they put there first. And then, after they put that there, well, then they built the church.

P: But was there a house there before the church moved in there? Or was that just farmland, or what?

M: Farmland.

P: Farmland.

M: Yeah. I used to farm that. [laughter]

P: That corner there? [laughter]

M: Yes, sir. Many a time I plowed a mule, right in that corner. [laughter]

P: But now it's a church. [laughter]

M: That's right. Now it's a church.

P: Did the church just buy that from somebody? Or, do you know—

M: Yeah. Bought that from a colored fella, **C.W. Hall**. We used to all farm—my daddy-in-law and my uncle and all, just, all of my uncles here about. But, I had four uncles that used to farm for C.W. Hall. Like they on Poarch, every one of them.

P: Working on halves?

M: Yeah, working on halves. And, when he got ready to sell the land, he supposed to sold it to them. But he didn't do it. He pure lied to my people. And he got a bunch of colored people, and went to Monroeville—Monroeville is the place that the government had a long loan outfit up there—and he went up there, and got these colored people into this long loan business, and come back, and they bought that place.

P: And is that why there's so many colored people living on the road between here and Headapadida?

M: That's right. Yes, sir.

P: But he had promised to sell that to Indians?

M: He promised to sell all of that land to the Indian people, 'cause that's the only people that farmed for him, was the Indian people.

P: Were there ever colored people around here before then?

M: Nothing on back crossed the creek over here.

P: Do you have any idea why he did that?

M: I don't know. I certainly don't.

P: But many Indian people had farmed for him for many—

M: Farmed for him, I mean for years. Ever since that I knew anything about farming.

P: And then he turned around did that?

M: Turned it round and done that very thing. Yes.

P: Hard to understand.

M: Yes, sir.

[End of interview]

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