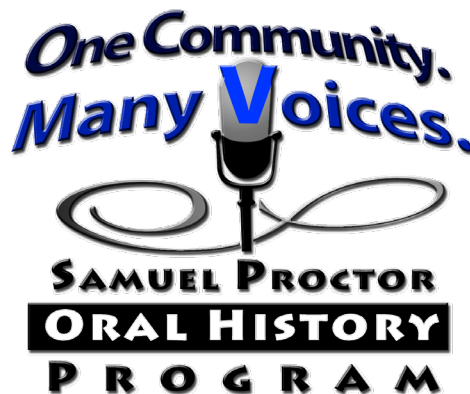


Willie Lee Martin

Poarch Creek Project
CRK-037

Interview by:

Dr. J. Anthony Paredes
January 27, 1973



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CRK 037 Mrs. Willie Lee Martin
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project
Interviewed by J. Anthony Paredes on January 7, 1973
1 hour, 25 minutes | 49 pages

Abstract: Mrs. Martin discusses the history of a program she teaches for, which teaches adults to read and write. She discusses how the program is funded, and the lack of educational access the older community members had growing up. She describes how she began a women's sewing circle as a way to support community members and projects. She shares several memories of her youth, including what church was like and several stories she was told. She then discusses racial discrimination against Indians, in the past and present. She recalls her education as a child, and reflects on her past quality of life. Finally, she discusses what it was like when community members finally received their money from the land claims case.

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

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY

P R O G R A M
University of Florida

CRK-037

Interviewee: Willie Lee Martin

Interviewer: Dr. J. Anthony Paredes

Date: January 27, 1973

P: Testing, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Today is January 27, 1973. I'm in the home Mrs. Willie Lee Martin, that's Mrs. A.D. Martin. If you'd begin by just, so we can get some idea of what time period we'll be talking about, saying when you were born, Mrs. Martin.

M: Well, I was born in 1920, fifth of September.

P: Okay. Couple of the first things I wanted to find out more about is, recently, I understand there's been a kind of organized sewing circle here in the community. If you could tell me about how that came about and what it does please.

M: Well, in the beginning, I was asked to go into the town to the women's circle, the Methodist and Baptist churches, the women they would get together I believe every two or three months and they asked me if I would be the guest speaker to tell them something about how I got started with my adult price. But now how I got started with this, it's kind of a long story.

P: Go ahead, okay.

M: So, I'll just tell you this. Really, well how I think it got started was through Ms. Bradshaw. She was working here for the Episcopal church and she found out somehow I think it got started in Birmingham that they taught people that didn't have any education at all that couldn't read or write and she come in here and work with Episcopal church here, she found there was a lot of them here that couldn't read and write at all. And one is Elsie's mother and her father—well,

Elsie herself; Elsie Hollands what that makes the quilts now. And she began to teach the ones that couldn't read or write. Then there was a lady from—I believe she was from Birmingham, Blankenship, and she come down and Ms. Bradshaw got her to come here and look things over and she gave her some instruction class, I believe it was something that . . . to know who was eligible for the teachers, you know, to get teachers to handle that. And through this, she had a chart that, well, we met. I believe there were five lessons given and you would have this chart that she would show them how and it had to be that they give the sounds of letters and then you would read. You'd learn those sounds and then you'd teach them about the pictures.

P: So, she was teaching the teachers.

M: Yeah. She was, you know, it was this kind of instruction that she would show, you know. She'd say, this is a bird and then the B and the sound of B is bir and the bird, you give the bird's picture. It helped them to learn the word bird. And so then we have to get in front of her and see if we could do that same thing that she did. So, yeah, I never dreamed of ever being one to be chosen for it. There was a lot of the teachers in town and five or six from out in here, you know. So, but I was one chose for the teaching out here. So, we had to have five pupils, or students, to start. But then we started off with more than five. I think maybe there might have been fifteen all together. And me and Leola Manac, another lady that was chosen for this. And in doing this, we really helped, but of course, now the people that started then, a lot of them are dead, you know, like Margie and Ed

and that would be Aunt Alice's sister and her husband. Well, there's several.
About as many that's already dead that I have in the class.

P: What year was that when that first began?

M: That was in [19]63, I believe.

P: So, it's been about, it's been just ten years.

M: It's been, it was [19]63 if I can...

P: How many people do you think actually learn to read out of that program?

M: Well, tell you the truth, there was really people that didn't know not A, B, or –they really just didn't know anything. And through that, there wasn't a one that started that wasn't able to read and write his name. And not only that, but to read. I'll tell you something that happened here. This lady started in the first beginning. Of course, she was a young –not too young, she's in her sixties, close to seventy now, but when she started, she couldn't read or write at all. And, you know, she told me the other night, she said, I want to tell you how much that I know that I have learned. She said, I wrote a letter the other day and I asked one of my daughters to read it that was in high school, tenth, eleventh grade and said, you know, that child was so surprised all she could say was, mama you can read. And she said that was how much that her daughter saw that she had learned and she said she was really surprised and the daughter was so got off with it that's all she could say. [Laughter]

P: How many of these people that couldn't read had actually spent some time in school when they were little do you think?

M: Now, there was—I would say a third of them.

P: Had actually been in school or they just didn't—

M: That had been in school.

P: But they just didn't learn anything.

M: No and too, it was back, as I go back to the old times, it was back, you know, when that they didn't have teachers as they have today. I mean, when they went to school, they were really taught, just taught to read and write, and of course they had learned that. It had been such time, you know, that they just really hadn't cultivated or hadn't felt that they had any use for what little that they did have. And of course, they were sooner to pick theirs up than people that really couldn't read and write at all.

P: But there were about two-thirds of them, you say, who had never been in a school at all.

M: Never had been, well, as I said I guess, they had opportunities of going, but then the times, you know, back then, the school just, you could go I guess if you wanted to and if you didn't, well you just didn't go.

P: Now, you're still teaching the adult school now?

M: Yeah, I still do it.

P: How many students do you have now?

M: Well, I have, I would say, on roll about seven. But then they all don't come every night. We average maybe three or four.

P: How often do you meet?

M: On Tuesdays and Thursday night.

P: And where do you meet?

M: At the school.

[Break in Recording]

P: You say you meet at the school?

M: Uh-huh. We don't have to test, we only can teach about hour and a half or two hours is all that we teach.

P: Now, are all of those people from the Indian community here?

M: Yeah, well they're from Poarch, you know, but I don't have anything but **eatings** is all that I have.

P: Now, who is sponsoring this? Are you just doing it free or is there some kind of financial support for it?

M: When we first started, the women of **Sayre** paid and at that time-

P: Of the Episcopal church?

M: Well, I don't know whether it came through that or how, but there's a lady in town, Ms. Keene, she was kind of the overseer here and the ones that when I first started, there was some of the students that didn't have glasses and that made it kind of hard for them to read or because of they eyes and Ms. Keene helped me through the alliance club to get glasses for the ones that needed them. Later on though, let me see, was it [19]68? [19]67 or [19]68, I believe, the government thing started and see now we were paid through the Board of Education, through Mr. Weaving in Brewton. And then, we get more now. When we started off, it was fifty dollars, but the women of Sayre paid that. And then when the government then they paid by the hour. Get so much an hour for teaching.

P: How much did they pay an hour for teaching?

M: I believe it's two...I don't -two or four. I'm not so interested in how good, I mean, I just love gettin' into it and it's still I think though that's what it is. I really [inaudible].

P: Do you have any connection with the Little River community action at all in this?

M: No, no.

P: That's completely separate people?

M: It's nothing into this, they don't have. After the government takin' it, well it's something similar to that. And I had went to workshops that is something like this Head Start workshop, but now I really don't know how much they are connected with it or-

P: But the program now, you say, is paid by the Board of Education. Was it federal funds that pays for it?

M: Yeah, it's federal funds that pays it now.

P: Are you the only one teaching now?

M: I'm the only teacher since Leola Manac, you know about that. Well, I asked for another teacher, but then they thought since I didn't have no more than what I did I would go ahead with it by myself.

P: Just out of curiosity, what was the reaction, especially when you first began, at the idea of old people going to school?

M: Well, some of them, as I told you about the sounds, I helped of learning the sounds of letters. But it was so funny. I would start with the sounds and they would get to laughing. They say, we never heard this before. And it was—it was really, I don't know how to say it, it was. And finally, I had got to the place that I had to drop a lot of the teaching of the sounds because it would just more to them fun than it was learning. But I dropped a lot of it. Of course, I would always ask the ones like Ms. Keene. She came out, she thought she could help me. She said, well all I can tell you to just give it up if you feel that you can do without it. So, I gave up the teaching of the sounds, but then, to me, what helped a lot and helped them to realize what they were doing and why they were doing this, we'd give parties with sayin' the ones we tried once a month. Then, each one would bring a bowl salad, fried chicken. We'd give out tickets and we'd make up what we like to have and we let them do that on their own. And then when the night

that we have the party, we let each one stand and tell how he enjoyed the school and what it meant to him. And you know, that peaked their interest up, we found that was more for picking up there interest in learning than anything that we had tried.

P: How did you go about getting your first students? Just people you knew of or how was it done?

M: Yes, it was, well as I said, Ms. Bradshaw had a lot of the old ones, you know, teaching them already. And she helped us, Ms. Bradshaw helped us to get out first class started. And of course, we still have some of those that did [inaudible]. Now, we haven't been able to get new many new ones. There was one white man that started year before last and he just couldn't read. He could write and he knew his ABC's, you know, he knew them as he saw them, and he could write, but he just couldn't read. He just was never able, he said, to read. And you know, I don't know whether he didn't feel that he's fitting him, not being used to us or something like that, so he finally just give up. He just felt he just couldn't, but we tried and I did what I could to help him, but he finally just decided he just couldn't do it and he hasn't been back anymore. But now the ones that have started, their interest have been enough, I would say more for them or their—I mean, they'd soon find the value of it, the telling why you have been just so good to come.

P: Back in 1963 when this first started, I know it's a hard question to answer, but if you could just give me a rough estimate, about how many people in the Indian community really couldn't read and write at that time?

M: Well, now for me, I were born and raised here from 1920 and, you know, I only could go to the sixth grade. At that time, we were in the one-room school buildings and you could only go to the sixth grade. I never went any further than the sixth grade. I don't know how I would ever got the job that I got. In fact, I tell you I've learned a lot. I have taught and I have learned. I really learned as much as I've been able to teach 'cause I couldn't teach except what I knew and all of us together, I learned a lot. But they were really not any of the older people, I would say. When they started in my class at the age of—all of them was over forty-five and there were none of them. I mean all of the community, there are still now people that if they would come that would really enjoy and really be helped, even the old. All of our olden time people just didn't have education. You could just mainly say everyone from forty or forty-five back just didn't have any education.

P: In 1963, say that, anybody over forty-five years of age in 1963 had no education really. How about, were there many people under forty-five who hadn't had much education?

M: Well, that's what I mean, under forty-five is the one now. After, let me see, I first graduate inside in here was . . . I could trace back, but right now . . .

P: You mean high school graduates?

M: Yeah. They started I reckon, I guess after the school was built I believe.

P: After 1950 then at some time.

M: I believe that was about our first—there might have been some before then, but if it were, it was just a few.

P: Let's go back to the sewing circle, that's where we started. But, in order to tell me about the sewing circle, you had to tell me about the adult school.

M: Yeah, as I said, as I get to talking, I get all mixed up.

P: But they had—the ladies in town had asked you to come and just talk about what you were doing with the adult school?

M: Yeah and they really didn't know how it was going on. You see there was a lot of the teachers that, as I said, was under this instruction that she give, or this demonstration or whatever you would say that she gave on this, but at that time, they were trying to get as many classes even in town and all around that they could get and of course you had to get your own students to go, you know, to get a class. But, going back to the sewing circles, that was how that got started. They wanted to help. Now, there were Maxine McGhee, they helped her. Of course, there was a lot of it through the Episcopal Church that helped her with her education that she's a schoolteacher now.

P: Where does she live now?

M: She lives in Monroeville. She's married; she married in the last year, I believe, in college. But she's teaching school now in Monroeville. But they helped her through her high school and college and then Caroline McGhee, Kelly's girl of Arthur Jackson, they started helping her. And they came to my house to ask me

some questions about it, some of the ladies from town, and well I said, well can't you help the boys. I said, you know, I think girls need education, but I am one against women working. I don't know why, but I just feel that especially with a family, now of course, it's all right. I don't have anything against it, but I don't have anything for it either. But I just asked the questions, why was it they couldn't help the boys get an education, because the boys was always the breadwinner in my days. Growing up, we always felt that the man, you know, of course, you know, we'd asked anybody, the girls are the smartest it seems it rights now, but so that was really how the sewing circle got started was through this coming up. And then they talked about, the women, they didn't know why the women circles wouldn't help boys, but they was always they wanted to help the girls. They didn't know how and it was just a question that when I ask them they said you know, I just hadn't give any thought to it, but they just don't do it. But they said, well they would like to look into it and after we talked a while. So, when they left, just somehow or another, the thought come to me, what could our community do? Now, here they were helping out here, they had chose this girl to help and they wanted to help and all one thought just all through that afternoon I kept thinking, what could we do and why was it that we couldn't do something in our community for our own with working among ourselves. So, I called, it was Ms. Grimes from Fair Hope and a Ms. Christianson from Fair Hope, Ms. Grimes is in Atmore. And I called Ms. Grimes and I talked to her and I ask her, what did she think about it and what did she think of that Ms. Christian would say about it or feel about us starting something, a women's circle of our own. Oh, it just really, she thought it

was just the nicest thing that we could do. She really like the idea of getting started and she right away wanted to help us and she said she'd get in touch with Ms. Christianson and see what she thought about it. So, from that, different ones started helping us and we met together and we got organized you know of our presidents and secretaries and things and that so. So, our first thought was to have a chicken supper, you know how that goes here. Chicken suppers always the handiest thing 'cause you're gonna sell foods, you know, always. So, we had a couple of chicken suppers to gather some money to get started with and then we had rummage sale and from that, we just picked up then. Now, our first buy out of how women's circle was a hospital bed that Luna May's using now and we thought that that was just really something and, of course, we've used a lot of our money in keeping up the school building.

P: How many and who were the people who originally started the sewing circle. Yourself and who else was some of the first ones to get it organized?

M: Well, it was myself and my daughter. Then, it was Roberta and her daughter-in-law and my daughter-in-law and well it was just, we wanted, when we had our first meeting, our plans were that we would choose one out of each community to put in as a secretary and the treasurer and the President. We'd choose one out of each community.

P: Now, community, you mean . . .

M: Like Poarch and down where Calvin lives and up here. And we would all just come together as the three communities and make it up. But they never had no

interest in coming up here, I guess it being that far from them. And then they had a lot of church activities in both churches, you know, at Poarch and Hog Fork, and they never did seem to have too much interest in coming to help us, so it just left this community. So, then we had to go and put in new members, you know, and of course we got them around here. It's about twelve, I guess it would be all together when they all meet. And we have worked good together, we really don't meet as often as we should because of sickness and different ones with their jobs and PTA meetings and everything going on at night, we haven't been able to meet as often as we . . .

P: But the idea was not just to sew things, but to somehow do something for the community.

M: We just wanted to band together to help in the times that we feel is needed to be . . .

P: Now, you do actually do some sewing when you get together sometimes.

M: Yes, now as I said, we have a, now before Thanksgiving, see we just met to this house and the ones that could meet and sew, they did. Of course, like Catherine and different ones around, they were working, you know, and Head Start and they couldn't come.

P: Catherine who?

M: Sells, that's Roberta' daughter-in-law. And Julianne, but now Marie, her sister, she could help us. And the ones that could come and quilt, they just pitched in

and quilted the ones that we sewed for the, well and then what they could do together, they did, like helping Catherine with the posters, you know. Julianne was doing what she could do and we all just worked that way together.

P: Well, at the Thanksgiving *pow-wow*, there were quilts and were those potholders made by the sewing circle too or were they-

M: No, now those potholders, a lady had given them. She wanted to help and she did these at her home and she would bring them and she brought them and give them to Martha up here to the store that she just wanted to help us.

P: Now, you mention the hospital bed and you helped out in school. Are there any other specific things that the circle has given to the community or gotten for the community? Well, what kinds of things have you done up at the school?

M: Well, we bought the curtains for the windows and we paid for this pole light that's out in the front, you know, to protect the school building. The Head Start wouldn't so we're paying for that.

P: One other important question. When was it that the sewing circle started? How long ago has that been?

M: It was in the summer. I would like to give you the date of our first meeting, but I just really don't know, but it was before the first Thanksgiving that they had up here.

P: But it's not been very long ago then?

M: No, no, it hasn't been very long at all.

P: Do you remember from your own youth, was there ever any other sewing circle thing like this in the Indian community that you know of?

M: This was the first.

P: This was the very first one.

M: That I ever knew anything about. As I said though, we used to, in this community, we have been, and I guess maybe this was a lot of our backing_ with what we're doing now. We were always, if somebody got in need, we always, just the community, would meet and if it was for getting together for a shower to give them something that we needed. Out here the other day, all the women got together and with Aura, Aura has her father, and of course she needed a lot of sheets with him.

P: **Aura** [inaudible]?

M: Uh-huh. And she had to wash a lot, see she just washed so and she really keeps him clean. Now, I tell you, you know if you do that it's a washing. So, we just got together and we taken some refreshments up to her house and she didn't know anything about it and we took her sheets and towels and things and we just had a party with her and we've always done things like that.

P: Here in Headapadida, you're telling me about?

M: Yeah. And of course that comes under our sewing circle, you know, because it's the women that's in the sewing circle that do these things.

P: You mention PTAs, there's still a PTA associated with the school out there?

M: No, that's how that we had to take over the light. When the PTA was there, then they paid for the light then.

P: When the PTA was there, did the people from Poarch and Hog Fork take part in that too?

M: Yes, they were, well, I'll tell you how we got that done. We usually we found that if the president—say most of the office members, you know—was elected from those communities, then they, you know, would have an interest. And we tried always to keep that going and it was a help. And of course now, in the time the school was going on, they were, they did have a big interest to help me.

P: But you couldn't do that with the sewing circle?

M: No, we just wasn't able to do it. I think, though, that one of the things was that they had so much more of them in their churches. See, there was different, now of course, they even Poarch has a different nomination of church than the folks in Hog Fork and they just was, I guess in that circle we'd say together that each community-

P: In your sewing circle, do you have people from—I think I know the answer—but are they members of the Episcopal Church and the Poarch community church both in the sewing circle?

M: Now, I think there might be I would say three of four, or hardly that from the Episcopal Church that does take part. I guess I would say because Elsie and Hattie May and Bernestine, they all in the Episcopal Church and they do help.

Help so it would mean these two churches. Well, in fact, the Episcopal Church and our church, they work a lot together. It's really our community. I think we've got to the place, we kinda don't hold nominations as much as some churches do today. We kind of use ours more as a family and community 'cause we visit each other in our churches and so and so.

P: Let's listen to some.

[Break in Recording]

P: Okay, now Ms. Martin, we can talk about old times. Just start anyplace where we were talking before or anything, just start talking.

M: I was thinking of the churches. I remember that my mother used to say that there was this preacher, they called him Joyner, I believe his name was Joyner, that used to come through ever so often, he'd come through with a buggy, horse and buggy. And he would stay maybe a week and have meetings with them and he would teach them, but, you know, I find that they were taught then a lot of things that we just don't find in scripture. Well, find we find it in scripture, but what I'm saying is like, if you killed a man, you didn't get forgiveness because if you took something that you couldn't give, then God wouldn't forgive you, but you don't find that in the scripture, it says God forgives for everything, sinning against the Holy Ghost. And that was one thing that they were taught there and I find that a lot of things in their teaching, but of course, now they loved and cared for each other and what they knew, it kept them from really even wanting to have murder in their heart because they fault that that was one thing and to me, I don't think

even after all that it did any harm to them, it helped them. And even though, I have to say that it was a hands of God, it was just God with them that helped them to do the things that they done back in those days with what little that they had to do with.

P: Now, you said that you remembered that Fred Walker was a leader of sorts. Could you talk about that again?

M: Yeah, he used to, he used to. He would gather all the young girls together, all the young people, and we'd have prayer meeting on Wednesday night. Oh, we loved singing. We'd just sing and even now I can remember how different that was and what it really meant to us comparing to what how church and things of that sort is nowadays, you know, singings and all. It just, and he would be the leader and of course, I ain't just seeing it off and how he just carried on with us and his leading in the old time songs and he knew of his memory and from him, we just sing along and we just memorized them, we didn't have a book.

P: How else was it different then than it is now when you go to church?

M: Well, we met together as I said, we met together and we just sing and we talked and we had, of course, my mother always taught us to be reverent. Even when someone was praying that you just wasn't to talk or say anything, you know, it was just a quietly sitting. And, to me, the children, you didn't have to just keep after them today. You know, children now today in church, they really don't have what we had then somehow because it's just you have to really always just caution them that what's going on. And that I know we really appreciate that old

man. We love that man, we appreciated what he was doing for us and we believed in him. We just, our confidence in him meant something to us I think more than what you find in people nowadays.

P: Now, why was it that he took this upon himself to do that, you think?

M: Well, as I said, to me, I just feel that God could use him and he did because his family life wasn't all that perfect and, of course, he really had problems in his home. In fact, his wife left him years after and he stayed a widow for a long time. But, you know, even while he was a widow, he really done more after he was a widow than he was in his family. Not saying that it was that wrong of him being married, it wasn't, but he just found more time and up until he died, he was a man that was trying to carry the word of God.

P: Did he ever try to be a leader in, you know, everyday practical kinds of things, helping people at all?

M: Well, at that time, he had some children to take care of after his wife left him. He worked, he really worked more in a farm and garden, but we always could go to his house. Otherwords, he was somebody that we could really just depend on. You know, he could look up. This is a fact that I know that has happened. We would say, Uncle Fred is it gonna rain? We wanted to have a party some –he'd look up and there wouldn't be a cloud around that you could see and he'd say, well, about Thursday it'll be raining. And sure enough, when Thursday came, that rain came. I know that has happened so many times with that man.

P: He just had a gift for that or did he ever tell you how he did it or what?

M: He, at night, he would tell us that there was a railroad that come close to his house and down this railroad, there was a trussle and he used to tell us that he would go down to that trussle, eleven and twelve 'clock at night and he said, I would walk out and he studied the stars. I think that he, because he knew a lot about the stars, and I think that he learned it of him, his own, you know, through God's help and through his determination. I just feel it was just the determination he had that he learned these things, I guess, a lot of it through the stars.

P: Did he ever have any stories, sort of like fairy tales, about the stars that he would tell people?

M: No, he didn't.

P: When he would talk to the young people or something like that?

M: He would tell of olden time now, I remember he used to tell us about Hanks, he was the person that really big in Hanks. And he always told us, you know, maybe tales, you know, the children like about different things happening like that.

P: About the Hanks. Do you remember any of his stories at all?

M: Well, he used to tell us one about this house. He said there was a house that, I don't remember whether it was around in this community or whether it was some place that had went, but there was a house he said that you could go in this house to go to sleep and it was a house kinda, people did live there and it was for that reason they couldn't. He said that about twelve o'clock at night, you'd just go just like tubs of rocks pouring out on the top and he said you could come out

and come around and it would be just this quiet and the moon would be shining pretty, but there's somedays you wouldn't be at that, you could hear that noise. Things of that sort he used to tell us and he used to tell us a lot of times too about people was warned of their death back in his days. He used to say that if a person told you that he was gonna die, they could always even tell you the time of the day that they was gonna die.

P: People knew beforehand talk about this.

M: And you know, my mother told us, she said when her mother died, she said she called them to her bed one night, one evening, and she talked to them, all the girls and boys, she said the children. She talked to them and told them, she said Tamyra, when the sun goes done, when the sun begins to set, said the angels is coming after mama. And she said now, I want you all to be good children, I want you to care for your father, but she said, now God is gonna send the angels for me tomorrow evening. And she said, sure enough the next evening, when the sun began the set, said her mama started dying. And said she would tell them, don't ya'll see the angel. Said, they're here for me. And she said a little while he mama died. And, you know, to me that had made me without a doubt knew that God cared for people then as much as he does today. They used to tell us now tales of that sort was what that they lived on and they handed down and to me that was love. They loved and was close to each other.

P: Do you think people were more that way then than they are now?

M: I really do. You know, now, you just got to show somebody something –they just got to know it. But now back then, she said that her –my daddy’s sister, they were so close to each other, my mama and my daddy’s sister. And the night that she got so sick, my mama told my daddy, she said, you know, said, something’s happened to Emma that was her name. Said, something has happened to Emma. And he asked, well why. Said, well she sit here beside my bed so long, said, she’s been sitting here on my bed. And said, something I know is happening to her. And sure enough, when they got up the next morning, they found out they had to take her to Mobile that night to the hospital and she never lived to come back home.

P: And when was that? That was when you were a girl or . . .

M: No, that was, you know, back when they were first married, you know. But, they used to tell us things of that sort a lot. Boy, they just a lot of-

P: Back in those days, how’d they get to Mobile?

M: They would have to go, I believe it was a train, but they’d have to go to Florentine. I believe it was to Florentine then to catch the train. I’m not sure, but I think and from there I think they would have to go, I guess, in buggy or something.

P: You know, speaking of those olden times, one thing I’ve asked a lot of people is if they could remember when they were young ever hearing any of the older people using any Indian language at any time? Heard words or two.

M: My mother, at one time, she said to us that her mama had told them –well, it would be my mother’s grandmother that did speak a few words in Creek.

P: Your mother’s grandmother’s name was what?

M: Louisa, I believe.

P: And her last name?

M: Let’s see, my mother was Mary Hathcock and I believe her mother was either Polly Moniac or Louisa Moniac, I don’t remember which. That’s a little back than I hardly can remember, but I think that that’s where it was.

P: But by the time you came along, there weren’t any people left that knew even a word or two of it.

M: She would say *bob-o-wa ta-teela* was you a bad boy. I believe that’s what she said.

P: Say that again. [Laughter]

M: *Bob-o-wa ta-teela*. I think that’s what my mother used to say that her grandmother said. And *chunimy*, I can’t remember, but somehow I know that that meant for money.

P: *Chunimy*?

M: *Chunimy*. I thank that was –I can’t put that other together. I usually could, but you know, I can’t. I know everybody was talking about that some time ago, that we

were gonna get together and see if we could, you know, think of some of those things back.

P: But those were, when you were growing up, those were just kind of rarities or oddities, they weren't everyday conversation.

M: No, just at times when we'd get together and we'd start questioning her that it would help her to think of it and she would sometimes she would say, well, maybe sometimes I think of it, I'll tell you more. But then, we'd always you know maybe never had the time to.

P: But you did when you were growing up. You all knew that you were Creek Indian ancestry.

M: Yeah.

P: Do you remember your parents ever talking about –you have a phone call, I guess.

[Break in Recording]

M: My mother used to, from the distance that I would live from Roberta now, you can know about the distances I am from Roberta here. In the afternoons, if she wanted to, she could call us this distance and we would hear her and come home.

P: Did she call you by name or did you just have a special signal that she-

M: Well, she would call us by name.

P: And you could hear your name over that—

M: We could hear our name. And even all around from the distance, people could holler and call their cows. Back then, the cows would leave home and they'd go in the woods to graze all day and then they would call those cows in the evening and, you know, those cows would hear that and they would come home. I can remember that as well as if it was just now.

P: Of course, back in those days, I guess there weren't so many cars zipping up and down the highway, making other kinds of noise.

M: Well, you know, you can hardly talk with the telephone and hear anybody on the telephone now. And back then, it was a quietness and all and I was telling you about this old minute, at that time, the night was so still, the moon would shine and you could just hear people. It was just so different from what it is now.

P: It's a different world now. I was gonna ask you before if you could compare Fred Walker and Calvin McGhee. Were the two men alike in any way or different in important ways?

M: Well, no, in some of their ways you would say that they were a lot alike. Of course, Calvin carried one thing and he carried another. I think that I could say that Uncle Fred was more on the bible. Of course, Calvin, you know, he worked for his people and if they got in trouble in lawsuits or things of that sort, Calvin, and I guess there too, their education made a difference. Calvin really had a lot more education even though he had just a little bit, it was a lot more than Uncle Fred had. Uncle Fred was more of a memory. Now, as I said about his teaching

of the bible, then the preachers come through, to me, I feel that Uncle Fred had that determination that whenever he would taught these things, he remembered them. And now, you know, you gotta read, Tamyra, you gotta read from the book. But, I think that he remembered what the preachers would say whenever they would come through what he knew at the time.

P: Not being able to read, he had to commit it to memory, I guess. One thing that I had heard people talk about that happened before you were born, but I wonder if you remember your parents talking about, was oh back in the early 1900s, some men coming through here trying to sign up people for Indian money back then. Do you remember your parents talking about that?

M: Yes, I do.

P: What did they have to say about that?

M: Well, you know, I think that they found the documents, you know, up there that they had signed up. Yet, well you see my daddy and mama lived to sign on this time and of course that helped them-

[Break in Recording]

P: Now, you were just about to say that when your mother and daddy signed up, that helped them to remember a lot. Well, go ahead back if you can recall that back.

M: Even, I was saying that even their parents had heard of it, you know, before them. Now, I don't know how that they knew about it, but their parents had known that there was this Indian money was owed to the Indians.

P: Now, you say there was a preacher of Perry?

M: I believe it was a Perry, I'm not sure, but I think that's who signed him up.

P: Well, signed your parents up?

M: And how he knew about it, how he got his information, I don't know whether they was ever able to know.

P: But then your parents talked about it before even preacher Perry, their parents then had been talking about the Indian money.

M: I don't know how they knew it, how it came about for them, but as I said, they had said all their life they had heard of Indian money being owed to the Indians.

P: And that's, I guess that's been one thing that's kept people very much aware of the fact that there were Indians, talking about that Indian money?

M: Mr. Paredes, there's something that I have thought of so many times and I mean maybe I have a right to think of it different. Knowing my fore-parents back, how really did the Indians get here? I'd just love to know that I could really have some clue to believe how they got here.

[Break in Recording]

P: Would you tell what Uncle John had to say about how the Indians got here?

M: Well, his parents I guess they told him that or maybe their parents told them. I never read it in the Bible, but always said it to me it was in the Bible that they had drifted down this river. He didn't know what river, but they had drifted down this river and had found themselves here and they started from there and that they really had come from the red land. He never knew, that was all that he ever knowed, I guess, what to say any about it was that they came from the red land and that's how they had got here. And I guess maybe he meant maybe fishing or hunting or something of that sort that they drifted off and I guess a group of them, no doubt.

P: Of course, there are lots of different groups of Indians all over the country and the exact story of how each group got where they are could well be that that's the story of coming down the river. Well, let me go back and sort of change the subject, but get back to something they you said. When you first started talking before we turned on the machine, you said that you were trying to describe how things used to be and you were talking about your people and the way it was and you said something about them, about how they were set aside or something?

M: Well, as I said, my fore-parents were, at that time I used to hear my mama say that they used to associate all together here and then she said that they had got to the place that they, I guess a division come between them somehow and it just made that one part be over here and the other ones over there. To me, the Indians were just put down as if they were nothing. I mean, they just wasn't considered more to me than when some of the things that happened with slaves and they were really counted as people, I mean as somebody. Because I

remember even in my day that my mother's sister used to work for a family of white folks up here and they paid her with milk from grains in the garden, but every day she worked for them. But she was never allowed to sit with them to eat to the table. She was never allowed to associate around and she was just counted more as just a servant.

P: Do you have any ideas about why that division came between the Indians and the whites?

M: I don't know what happened. I never learned really what happened. I did hear my parents say that it was at one time that they associated, but I know in our day and I said that's one thing that come between the schools. Now, away from here, the Indians could always go to school with the white people even as far as [inaudible] down here. But from McCullough through this part from here up to McCullough, it seemed it was just I don't know, they always just lived to be. A lot of people said it was because of the drinking. Since I've been grown to really realize and know myself, white people drink just as much as Indians. And of course the Indians, if they done anything that was really, well, we'd say stealing a killing or something of that sort, you would just clash them old Indians. But I find it there's just as many white people doing it as there are Indians, but it's never the white people. Maybe they'll call him by name, but if just one Indians do something, then you'll find that if you hear them just to be around very much. You'll find if one Indian does wrong, it's, those old Indians. And that's been more from ages I guess.

P: Is there much of that feeling still left around, you think?

M: Yes, they are. More with the older. Now, you take the young generation of people, they're inter-marrying so in Indians till it's breaking down that gap a lot, but I find there were a lot of the older white people, really it's those old Indians.

P: They still feel that way.

M: Now, I know here, last summer, I saw there's a bunch of the boys. The white girls left home and they left with –they got with some of the Indian boys. Well, the girls left home and got with the boys, but it was what those old Indian boys was doing to their girls. They didn't think of it was their girls that left and got with the Indian boys. It was just that they needed somebody wed. And I found that that still can, is in a lot of it with the, well guess you'd say it in the hearts of the people, but I find it's more of the elder people than it is the younger.

P: Were those girls from right around here or from-

M: From town.

P: From town? And did you actually hear people make statements about those old Indians?

M: Yes, on my telephone, they call. My boy was with these Rolin boys that was with the girls and they come out. The girls had left home and they thought these boys had the girls and you know they have the law to pick these boys up, put them in jail. This woman call me and she said, well your boy wasn't doing anything Ms. Martin. Then she began to say, quote what somebody else said about the

old Indian boys taking the girls. And I said, well did you ever think that it's your own white girls that's meeting these old Indian boys. I made the statement to her, I said, maybe that's what parents ought to think of that would help a whole lot if they would just really stop to think it's the old white girls that's meeting these old Indian boys.

P: Was there any trouble about that at all?

M: They wasn't never able to do anything 'cause I think the girls was rough enough, they just never get them calm enough to do anything about it. That's happened, I think, twice just in the past year that they've wanted to do something about it, but they've never been able to do. I think a lot of that too has been proven where that the Indians are not altogether –they don't have to wear what the white people want them to wear. I think that's helping a whole lot.

P: Now, how do you mean that? I'm not sure-

M: Well, the whites think they can do something to the Indian boys for doing this to the girls, they'd pick them up, but the think the girls is gonna have to, after a while, stay in the place that they are. Otherwords, the old Indian boys won't carry what they're doing, they're gonna prove to themselves that they're –you know, whatever you do, it's gonna tell on you sometime.

P: Yeah, yeah. You were speaking of the police, do you think that in the past, there was ever any discrimination by the police against Indians or the Sherriff's department or anything? Or has that been one area that there hasn't been any discrimination?

M: No, I don't think that not that I can recall really. As I said, that is one help I feel that has helped the Indians a lot more than the money has. That with Calvin, after he was appointed Chief, that he did through what he learned in lawsuits, and with this Indian money he learned a lot, that they couldn't do everything that they wanted to. Now, I know whenever they get into trouble, Calvin was always able to help them and then after they began to vote, then naturally you know how politics goes and that had a lot to do with giving Calvin –otherwords, noticing him more for the politic as it was for the, really the right.

P: Were there a lot of Indians that just didn't vote before he came along?

M: Yes, it was a lot. That day, as I said, we were just set aside and when I say for nothing it meant for a lot of things.

P: Voting was one of those.

M: Voting was one of the things.

P: Do you recall, say back before when you were a girl, were there some Indians that did go and vote?

M: Well, now to me, my first knowing of the Indian Voting Act could even go back farther than this. You know, if you paid your poll tax and I think that that helped a lot was money stirring up that if you paid your poll tax, you could vote. 'Cause there were a lot of them as far back as I can call that paid, and it was a good bit, to catch them up, you know. And they paid their poll tax, which made them eligible to vote.

P: But were there actually people that went out in the countryside trying to get people to pay their poll tax?

M: Yes, there were. It's sad to say, there's a lot of them paid their poll tax to get their vote.

P: And that was the only reason they came.

M: Of course, you know that. And as I said, to me, that's how I feel. Now, maybe it wasn't, but I feel that that was a lot that brought the gap that Indians could vote.

P: You think there were some people that would say pay an Indian's poll tax, but not let that Indian vote, he'd vote the way he wanted it to be?

M: Well, I think that they really, you know, they felt that who paid it, they did get their vote.

P: I see, I see. I understand what you're talking about now, but that was-

M: But then again, I think that it really helped. I mean, it give them really privileges is other people had.

P: That was the first step, sort of.

M: Well, not to me as I remember it. I know at the time, my brother, you know, used to candidate for people. They grew step by step into doing a little more till they really now have got to the place that they have privileges as everybody else does, you know.

P: One thing I wanted to ask you about was, had you started to school before they consolidated all the Indian schools to the one here?

M: Mine was finished at that time. I had children, you see, that go up here.

P: But I understood that before this new school was built, back in the thirties sometime, that some of them like the, some of the other schools-

M: Yes, I went a year to the church.

P: To the church school. That they had started bringing them in from Hog Fork and Poarch and different places to this school. Do you remember when they did that?

M: Yeah, I went a year then, but of course, I have been out—well, I started school six years old. When I was twelve, I finished. The sixth grade as far as I could go and I guess I was fifteen or sixteen at that time anyway. Or maybe older. Anyway, I went one year when it was integrated. Church hours thought that would help me to pick up, but I hadn't been, you see, for so long.

P: Now, when you went to school, were all of the children from Headapadida or were there . . .

M: No, just the Headapadida children.

P: Just Headapadida. But then you went one year to the church school right after they started bringing them all in. Was that any different? Of course, you had been out of school, as you said, for a while.

M: Well, I wasn't able to really catch. You see, it was so different from the time that I had went up until the time that they would started, you know, different methods of teaching and all that it was just completely different from what I had went.

P: What was school like when you went? How many teachers did you have and all that?

M: I remember the school that I went to. Mr. Paredes. I can remember as if it were yesterday. We had a teacher for the name of Bertie May Weaver, she was from Castleberry and it wasn't a very big school, but it was from, you know, first to the sixth and there was a long a bench and that's where we had our class. You were called from your desk to sit on this long bench to the blackboard and there we read or we had our arithmetic on the blackboard. But we used to have programs a lot. Every holiday, I guess, we had a program and there was where we got a lot of our learning was through the programs. But this was just a smart teacher and you know, I know that through her help and how she cared for us that our education come really at that time of what we learned. I can say not only myself, but the ones that went at the time I did. And you know what we says, she would get girls and we loved that well and she taught, she was the only other person that ever showed me anything of embroidering. She taught us to embroider because she would take the girls and she would be embroidering herself and she would teach us to embroider. And then she would always teach us in the wearing of clothes and things of that sort.

P: Did she live here in the community or did she live off in Castleberry?

M: No, she lived in town, she roomed in town, but her home was in Castleberry.

P: And she came out every day?

M: Right, she would come every day on time to teach. But it was just that each class, you know, each group would have their lessons and that was the way they were.

P: And she was the one teacher for all the classes.

M: Just for all the classes.

P: Well, one more thing. I remember you, one time before, when I just came by for a visit, you were comparing what's happened through the years with the Indian with what's happened with the colored people and I think you also mentioned the Choctaws in Mississippi. Would you talk about that, those comparisons that you see there?

M: Well, as I've said, I know back in the time, it was hard times I would say. The days of whatever they called them then, I can't remember. But anyway, almost everybody, they wasn't facilities for electricity and telephones and all. We lived back then there wasn't nobody that really was –otherwords, it was all about in the same category, but for us it was hard. To me, the ones in our community right around in here, it was hard for us when we were growing up. The home that I feel that I have with my children is just rich comparing to the living that we had 'cause we ate in one room, we slept in one. And it was that we really couldn't do any better. I know that at that time, I mean it was that you farmed with the mule and if

you went in debt that year, the man in town didn't mind. He took what was his regardless of whether you had anything left or not. That's how it went and if you didn't make it then you just didn't have it and it was at heart with our living. But now with Choctaws over there, they have just been set far out back. Even with their electricity and things, the white man have kept them down or the families that I know about that has left the reservation that they still don't have the privileges of their electricity. It's back to me when I go over and visit with them, it's back to what we used to be and I can feel that even now that we just didn't have these things. I remember the lamp lights and what a hard time in fact most of it find. And with them now they have, I don't know whether it's been that they haven't wanted to whether it's been just to me I wanna think that the white man just hasn't given them a chance yet to really live as they could if it wouldn't be that they just wanted them down to work for them.

P: Also, what about the colored people? How do you see them in relation to this?

M: Well, the distance that I did with them over there out with Mr. Weaver over there at the time he got started with the missionary work and these families had left the reservation. As long as they keep them on the reservation, they'll send them to school and they all send them whenever they get halfway through high school, they send them, I believe it's in Oklahoma, of different places that they can send them to college. But it's this Indian through the government that does it, but the ones that would leave the reservation that they wouldn't have any dealings with is happening, then they would come to the white man, the white man would get them there with them. And I were told by Mr. Weaver, and of course I know he

told the truth, that these white men would work these Indians and they would only give them the cigarettes after they had used them and that's how they would maybe do half a day's work to get them.

P: And that's just in recently now?

M: That's just in the past year. I guess he's been over there about twelve years and that just was all going on.

P: You've been over there yourself.

M: I've been in there and I've seen that.

P: But when you see the Choctaw today, you think about your own tribe.

M: I just have to, I said, you know. When I first visit with them and we have our first Bible school, it was in the house that I had to just know that I could feel what they're living because it was just so much like the one I was raised in. Had no beds and the wood stove and everything smoked up and just, it was just back in my day.

P: And you wonder, you know, why were the people here able to change all that and they haven't over there?

M: Well, as I said, I don't know except to me, that's why me and Roberta oftentimes—well, a lot of the others too—we think that even though we were glad for the money, we are more proud for that because I think that that's a lot that really give us a chance of living. And that's why that I feel that even with the colored people, I know they're doing things that they shouldn't do and I know that

they have taken advantages more than they ought to. I have to think that with us, as I said, we would fight to get to the sixth grade because we knew that was as far as we could go. That was the end of our education and it causes not to have anymore. Well, we didn't care because we knew that there wasn't any use and that's how I've compared to colored people. They think, well even if they get so far, what's the point of trying to go any further? And I know that they take more privilege, but I have to feel for them as I have, knowing what we had gone through. And I think that's how it was with our living. We knew that we couldn't get anywhere, so what was the use of working? Until now, we've got the privilege that we feel that we can be what other people can. It makes a big difference.

P: Do you feel like, I think I understand, you said you feel like the Indian land money thing was important in this change?

M: I think it was. I think it was more important there than really the money I was. I mean, I know that the money was something the people look forward to and you find there was a lot a lot of Indians when it come for the money that wasn't Indians before because they had the chance of being something different and we didn't. And, to me, I think it just gave us privilege of being what we would like to be and we want to be rather than feeling, well what's the use, we can't go any further.

P: But, how did that land money issue create that kind of atmosphere you think?

M: Well, as I said, I think after Calvin was appointed chief and we just got behind him and as I said a lot in politics and a lot in and after he went in these lawsuits

and learned. Now, this is me saying 'cause I feel that I can see it and I believe it and I know I've talked it with several people and in fact of the bandits, it's not unusual for me to talk. I guess you can tell from the way I talk, I've repeated it more than one time.

P: Well, I'm interested in your view on that.

M: But, to me, I think that it just give him an opportunity to be in place that he wouldn't have never been if it hadn't been that he was appointed chief, that he would have never been like meeting with the president and speaking some of things. And I'll have to say that I'm so glad that Calvin was a person he really could speak and if you ever talked to him, you knew that, that he could speak and he learned a lot through the lawsuits, as I said, and meeting with people and hearing them talk. He picked up their words and also the meeting that helped him a lot to get where he was and to help his people. And one thing I feel like was a lot of help, he wanted to. You know, that makes a big difference is whether we want to and I believe that I can say that he wanted to and it helped a lot. And, as I said, there were the politics that they knew that he had an influence over his people that if he told them, now let's all vote this way, they did because they confided in him and they liked him and they that he liked them. He knew that he was for them and it give him a chance to prove himself as well as because they know they would get help from him.

[Break in Recording]

P: One more thing that I can think of, maybe you'll think of something, I wanted to ask you to do for me. If you could, now that the money has finally come, if you could –well, we already talked about this before I turned on the machine– talk about what it was like when the money got here last month.

M: Well, about these telephone calls and this mail route. That morning, Olivette, somebody, had got there's down in **Ocamas**, I believe it was. And they had called to let Joycie know that they had got that I guess the mail was earlier down that way than it was through this area out in here. So, they called to let Joycie know they had got their check. And then Olivette called me as soon as they called out there for her, she called me and said, mama watch the mail, the Indian money's on the way this morning. [Laughter] So naturally, my son was in bed and I said, get up and watch the mail, the Indian money's on the way. So, he got up in here when the mail come by, she blowed. The mail lady blowed in and sure enough, it was just a stack of checks. There were so many checks that morning in the mail. Then, naturally, I called in up to Elsie's house because the mail come here before it got to her house and I called her and told her about it and she called back, she said, you know, there's about thirty-five been put out here in this mailbox. So, the telephone was ringing all around then, telling them about the checks coming in. But, it was really something to have. The Christmas time, there were so many that you would meet in town that were just spending it. It was really something to think of and that was a –when you'd meet somebody in the store, that was the first thing to say, are you spending your Indian money?

[Laughter] And naturally the banks and the stores too, you know, had nothing got that they knew that had got Indian money.

P: Do you think most people spent their Indian money wisely when they finally got it?

M: The ones in this community, I feel they did because most every one of us, in our conversations with each other, most every one of us just took ours right on and put it in savings in the banks and I know that was wise to do because it makes you really –in checking accounts, you may just write a check, but in savings you really take your time and with this community, I believe the biggest majority of our people, even for their children's checks I know. But now in the other communities, I really don't know. Here, as I said, about the conversations with them and you'd meet them in the stores, most everyone that would say, well, they were glad that they had got them because they could buy them in presents and where they wasn't able to buy presents, they could get present. Well that, to me, I felt that that was good, but at Christmas time, with me, for buying Christmas presents, I used layaway a lot because if you put it up and you pay a little bit along until you get it out and with Christmas, I usually start early with buying my Christmas present. And of course, I had the most of mine bought before the money got here. And so I told them, I said well I couldn't say that I bought presents with mine because I had been bought, that was how I had to do was buy them. He said, I found them and things of that sort. So, it took me a good while and I really had most of mine bought before it got here. And I think a lot of them in this community had done that too because usually what one does

around here, the others. That's why I think we live as a family as much as a community in here.

P: And you say that some places, there were like thirty-five checks in one mailbox. Now, why would they bring so many to one place?

M: Well, now, like Elsie and her son and well, all of these that lived on this road through here get their mail at that one box.

P: Oh, I see. So, it was a lot of different families with the same mailbox.

M: And that's how it is here. There's with my family and then there's the children get theirs to my box, the one's that's away from home.

P: Well, you know I've heard so many people talk. Now, I've been working for about a year here off and on. Heard so many people talk about the Indian money and some of them sounded discouraged like it would never come and other said, I believe someday maybe we'll get it. Now that the money has finally come, what effect do you think that's had on people generally in their interest in let's say continuing with things like the Thanksgiving homecoming *pow-wow* and those sorts of things?

M: Well, to me, I hardly know how to answer that right now because we had a wonderful time, as you said it, at Thanksgiving before and there was a lot of interest and of course, that was at first notice, I guess, that they had got that the Indian money would be coming, you know, soon. But, now I have tried and I hope that when you're visiting, if you feel that it's a good suggestion, I'd like you to

think it over and if you feel that it's good to do, maybe you can share the interest as you meet and start talking with different one. I would like, they say that we will get another one in the spring, and of course, now this has been my thought and I have tried to share it with different ones. I feel that if we got another one in the Spring, we should set a Thanksgiving aside as an Indian Thanksgiving and celebrate that day and naturally, I think we would have better weather. And I think that we would say that this would be more of an Indian Thanksgiving. And I've talked, I've asked the Council if they'll bring it up in their meeting and if they'll maybe appoint a day, we couldn't very well do it not on the date that these was got because it's so close to Christmas. But I feel that if they would do that, that that would be something that would really mean more or be more, as a day set aside as an Indian Thanksgiving Day, really than Thanksgiving. Now, that's naturally as I said, my feelings, but I've thought of it so many times.

P: Never thought about that, but that sounds like an interesting idea.

M: And it should stir the interest even more if they do that.

P: Do you think that there might be some people that now that they've gotten their Indian money, they just want to forget about being Indian?

M: Well, as I said, I don't think that we'll ever forget of being an Indian. 'Cause I told them before I got mine, you know, I know I'm an Indian and of course there have been a lot of people like I told you in the beginning here that had gotten to the place that they could get out of it and they did. And naturally they never thought

of it anymore until the money come back, then they picked it up. Now, with them, if it would be anybody, I believe it would be those kind of people.

P: Do you think that in any way actually getting the money is going to give people a new sense of hope or anything?

M: I believe it will unless in years, as the years come that as I said, maybe they may get away from the thought if they don't be any more paid or maybe get away from the thought. I'm hoping that it won't be put back. I'm hoping that it will give them a start to stay where they are and keep climbing other than setting them back and what hour we're in. Of course, I don't agree with the education that people are getting our days. I don't believe they'll be able to do that. I hope that it would never be.

P: Now, like your children, they didn't experience the things you did, but how do they feel about Indian things and being Indian, your children?

M: They think it's the wonderfulest thing there ever was. In these [inaudible] they want to go on, they just want to be an Indian. They just, they don't take it. I mean, they, the Indians now used to be thought of as something really –now, they look at them and you know there's so many little boys that really want to be Indian. They want to be Indians. To me, the association of children, as I said about the young generation, they don't think of it. That's forgotten because they're inter-marrying so much, it's just nothing. And I said the older people no doubt hold to their feelings that they –what you are taught is what you don't forget and as I

think that's how the older people have held on to it is from the teaching of their parents.

P: And what the little Indian children are being taught now is a lot different from it.

M: And I tell you this immigrating has made them feel a bit wrong. You know, now not going to be immigrating, marrying with Indians, it's just gonna be marrying with who you meet or who you want and marry to.

P: How do you feel about that from the standpoint of a –now, you've always said, you put it that this is not so much a community but a family– what effect on that is there gonna be by the younger people marrying outside of the Indian group and into the white and so forth. Is that gonna change that in any way, you think?

M: Well, now up until now, Mr. Paredes the white girls have joined in to the family of Indians other than taking our boys out. Now, how long that'll last, I don't know, but now I know with the boys, my boys have married. I have two that's married and then my daughter. Now, of course, Olivette do it, they're both Indians, but they have married into white families. But, it was brought them to me into our family other than going out of the town. Now, I don't know how long this will happen, you know, with this community.

P: Now, what about if an Indian girl marries a white boy, what happens in that situation?

M: Well, usually that's the same way. Usually, I guess that I could say not for boasting or not for feeling that we have something that other people don't have,

but to me, somehow Indians have been, they once said that you're with them, it's hard to ever want to leave them. And that's how it's happened in the past years. So, it hadn't really been hard for either side, the girls or the boys.

P: So, you think that Indian girls are just as apt to bring their white husbands into the family as the Indian boys bring their white wives into the family. So, I guess in a way, are you saying that you think there'll always be Indians or not?

M: I believe, I believe that that's one thing that, well, till now. I mean, they marry Indian boys, but now in some cases, maybe it is different. Maybe they are looked down, maybe they don't like it, but I feel now with my two boys, I don't feel that they're family. Now, I've had their in-laws to say to me that they love my children better than they do the other in-laws. I don't whether they said it to me, but they I can also look back and see that they treat them better. So, it does give me a feelings to feel, well I guess they are something about a Indian that maybe it's – and I don't say that they all alike either and I don't say that they don't believe family problems, because I think that goes in every family. But I know that most every one of course now, my older boy he married into an Indian family, but then his mother-in-law said to me, Shirley is so different from my other son-in-laws, I just love him to death. [Laughter] So, I don't know whether the boys of white families wear clothes and all but-

P: Her other son-in-laws are not Indian?

M: No, they're not Indians [Laughter] But, she said that to me so many times. She said, you know, she's even thought you know, maybe it's 'cause Shirley's an

Indian, but she says, you know, I just love him to death. There's just something about him that I just don't have for the others. When I write down to wrote him, the boy married into the white family and she's always saying, well he's so different, I love their children better than I do my other grandchildren and they show they're Indian. So, I don't know, I don't know how to take that, I just don't know how that's gonna last anything. It does make a mother feel proud to know somebody cares for her children though.

P: I want to end this by teasing you a little bit. I remember when I ran into you at Thanksgiving, you had on an Indian dress and I said something about it and you said that Olivette made you wear it and you told her, I don't have to wear this to prove I'm an Indian. [Laughter] Now, why did you say that to her?

M: Well, I feel that we've always been Indian here. Everybody that know me can know I'm an Indian 'cause I've always been one. I don't know, I just never have tried to change it, you know, as I said some people had a chance to step out, go in to the white group and just deny they're Indians. I've known that to be and I been here all my life, I've been treated as one. I was down when they were down. When they got up, I got up. [Laughter] I guess that was what I really meant and I think too, I look like an Indian. I just think I look like an Indian. I don't have to put too much on to look like one because I'm just one.

P: Okay, anything else you want to add?

M: No, I don't think. I guess I've said about all I could. Sure, I could just talk and talk and—

[End of Interview]

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