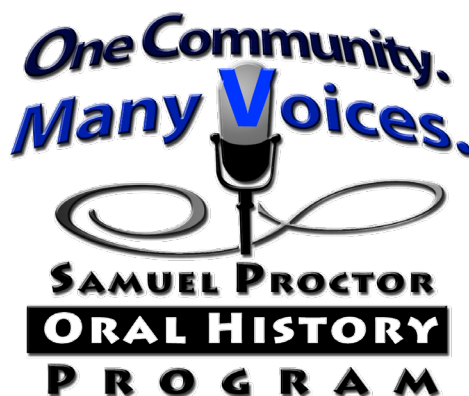


# Levi and Tracy McGhee

Poarch Creek Project  
CRK-043

**Interview by:**

**Dr. J. Anthony Paredes**  
**August 22, 1973**



University of Florida • Samuel Proctor Oral History Program • Paul Ortiz, Director  
P.O. Box 115215, 241 Pugh Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-5215  
(352) 392-7168 [www.clas.ufl.edu/history/oral](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/history/oral)

## **RECORDING LICENSE AGREEMENT**

**BY EXERCISING THE LICENSED RIGHTS (defined below), Licensee** accepts and agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions set out by the **Licensor, POARCH BAND OF CREEK INDIANS**, a federally recognized Indian Tribe having offices at 5811 Jack Springs Road, Atmore, Alabama 36502:

**WHEREAS**, Licensee desires to use certain sound recordings of spoken works, specifically recorded interviews of Licensor (hereinafter "Recordings").

**WHEREAS**, Licensor proposes to grant Licensee a non-exclusive, royalty-free right to use the Recordings in conformance with the terms set forth herein.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants herein contained, the Parties mutually agree as follows:

**1. Use of Recordings.** Licensor grants to Licensee the royalty-free right to use the Recordings in connection with non-commercial public events and educational programs (hereinafter, "Programs"). Such use includes, without limitation, the recordings and formats of the Recordings as provided to the Licensee. Licensee shall also have the right to the performance, transmission and use of the Recordings for use in Programs.

**2. Term.** The grant of this License is perpetual, unless Licensee desires to terminate the License. Licensee shall give Licensor ninety (90) days notice of their intention to terminate.

**3. Rights Not Included in this Agreement.** The rights granted to the Licensee do not permit the Licensee to: (1) claim authorship of the Recordings represented under this Agreement; (2) transfer, share or sub-lease this Agreement with any other party; (3) permit any other individual or third party the right to use the Recordings in place of the Licensee; (4) resell, trade, or exploit for profit the Recordings contained herein outright or as part of other music and/or audio-related collections, in part or in whole, to any other individual or party.

**4. Acknowledgement of Absence of Warranties by Licensor.** Licensor makes no representation or warranties as to any right, title, interest or ownership to the Recordings beyond what is stated in this Agreement. Licensee is fully aware of the fact that it may not be obtaining certain rights in the Recordings beyond those conveyed in this Agreement. Licensor is granting Licensee whatever rights or interest it may have in the Recordings and specifically makes no warranty as to having any specific rights thereto.

**5. Indemnification.** Licensee hereby indemnifies, defends, and holds harmless Licensor, and its subsidiaries, licensees, sublicensees, officers, agents, affiliates and assigns (the "PBCI Parties") against any and all legal claims, costs, liabilities, obligations, judgments or damages (including reasonable attorneys' fees), arising out of or for the purpose of avoiding any suit, claim, proceeding or demand or the settlement therefor, which may be brought against any of the PBCI Parties by reason of the breach of the obligations and representations made by Licensee under the Agreement as well as arising from Licensee negligence or any intentionally tortious or reckless acts, conduct or omissions committed by Licensee.

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Program Director: Dr. Paul Ortiz

241 Pugh Hall  
PO Box 115215  
Gainesville, FL 32611  
(352) 392-7168  
<https://oral.history.ufl.edu>

**CRK 043 Levi and Tracy McGhee**  
**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project**  
**Interviewed by J. Anthony Paredes on August 22, 1973**  
**1 hour, 18 minutes | 61 pages**

**Abstract:** Levi McGhee describes how his grandfather's homestead land was divided and sold over time. He speaks about who lived in the area and what life was like when he was a boy, including his education until the fourth grade and the Baptist church. He describes how people raised livestock and discusses hunting and fishing techniques. He goes into detail about the preachers from different churches that came to Poarch, and speaks about what his younger brother, Calvin McGhee, was like as a person. He describes the work people in the community used to do, including cutting cross-ties for the railroad and working in turpentine. Then he and his wife, Tracy, describe dances that were held in the community. They describe the new Apostolic Church they now belong to and the practices of different churches in the area. Finally, Levi discusses the process of making *sofke*, a corn soup.

**Keywords:** [Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Chief Calvin McGhee; Alabama--Hog Fork; Oral biography; Religion]

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

CRK-043

Interviewee: Levi and Tracy McGhee

Interviewer: Dr. J. Anthony Paredes

Date: August 22, 1973

P: When were you born? How old are you?

LM: Seventy-eight yesterday.

P: Seventy-eight yester—happy birthday. Were you born up here in Hog Fork? As I understand it, this place right down here that used to be, that was old man Joe McGhee, was that his home?

LM: That my granddaddy just about that grave over there. Behind that graveyard, he had a house round in there.

P: Was that a homestead up there?

LM: Yeah, homestead. He had a hundred and sixty acres here.

P: A hundred and sixty acres. How much of that do you have left now?

LM: Huh?

P: How much of that do you have left now?

LM: I don't have none of it but this little acre over here now.

P: What happened to his homestead through the years?

LM: He threw it out.

P: Did anybody of his boys get any? Did your daddy have any of it?

LM: Yeah, he had a piece of it. He had ten acres right out of that field there and give two or three more piece right across that creek. Get scattered about water, give them and then they sold it out.

P: Did Bill Rolin have a piece over there?

LM: That's right.

P: Was that his or did that belong to his wife?

LM: Belonged to his wife. She was my auntie.

P: Uh-huh.

LM: And Uncle Charlie, Charlie McGhee, he had a piece cross where that creek came out and cousin Annie lived over across that creek over there. And all the rest of us back on this side then.

P: Charlie McGhee, was that his name?

LM: Charlie, that was my uncle, yeah he had a piece too.

P: That was your daddy's brother?

LM: That's right.

P: Uh-huh. Well how'd ya'll make your living back in those days?

LM: We piddled on the farm and public work.

P: Public work.

LM: Mm-hmm.

P: Now, was the graveyard ever on your granddaddy's piece of land?

LM: Not till he died.

P: Well, who owns the graveyard?

LM: They own it, that's a sure thing.

P: You do? Or—

LM: No, that belongs to the community.

P: To the whole community.

LM: Now, by time my daddy owned all of it at one time, he bought it all in at one time and he give a mortgage on it to a fellow at Atmore and he got behind with it and all that and then he took it over there. And so he give us that acre back for a graveyard. He just deeded it to the community for.

P: To the community.

LM: For a graveyard.

P: Uh-huh. Now, when somebody is buried in that graveyard, they don't have to buy a plot or anything, they just bury wherever they want to be buried?

LM: That's right, that's right, that's right.

P: Well, besides your daddy and—your Aunt Liza, you said?

LM: Liza, that is right.

P: And Uncle Charlie. Who else lived right around this area when you were a boy?

LM: Well, my Uncle David, Uncle A.J. McGhee, he lived right down —Uncle A.J. had a place just under side those oaks over there. He lived there. Then Uncle David, he had a place over on down below the graveyard across there. He had a place down there.

P: And all of them were farmers?

LM: Yeah they piddled about the farm, but they didn't farm much.

P: Did they do much—was there any logging going on back in those days?

LM: Yeah, lots more than logging going on.

P: What were the main things that they raised on their little farms they had?

LM: There were cotton farms, they plant potatoes and rice and things like that.

P: Where would they take their cotton to sell it?

LM: They'd take it to Atmore.

P: To Atmore? How big was Atmore when you were just a little boy? What was it like?

LM: Well, it was nothing, you would see. I remember when it wasn't bust just, just only one store down there.

P: What store was that?

LM: Connor Mill Company.

P: That was the only one. And they bought cotton down there?

LM: Mhm, they bought cotton, had a gin down in there and they ginned it and sold it. There's one or two of the fellas –boarded in, you know, on the run.

P: And they had a general store, too? Or where did people go to buy clothes and things like that?

LM: Well, they could [inaudible] in that store. Conner Mill Company store carried clothes. Anything you have groceries and clothes and just anything you want to buy, they carried a full lot of everything like that.

P: How'd ya'll get to town in those days?

LM: We had wagons, mules, horses, things like that. Sometimes walk.

P: You'd walk all the way?

LM: [Laughter] That's right.

P: Did you have to carry a lunch with you?

LM: No, we'd make the time there pretty quick, didn't take too long.

P: When you were a boy growing up here in Hog Fork, did you go to school any place?

LM: We had a school at Bell Creek out here, what you call Bell Creek.

P: Ya'll didn't have a schoolhouse here at Hog Fork?

LM: No, not I did then when I was coming up, growing up.

P: So, you had to go all the way over there to Bell Creek?

LM: Over to Bell Creek.

P: How many teachers did they have over there?

LM: We had one.

P: Do you remember the teacher's name?

LM: The first teacher I went to was named Tippins.

P: Tippins?

LM: Tippins, yeah.

P: Tippins? Where'd she come from?

LM: He was a man.

P: Oh, it was a man. Did he live in the community around here?

LM: He lived at Brewton up there.

P: Did he come every day?

LM: Huh?

P: He come every day?

LM: He stayed down here, boarded down here.

P: Uh-huh. Now, I've heard that back quite a few years ago that the county didn't pay the teachers that the parents had to pay the teachers, is that right? Do you know anything about—

LM: I don't know anything about that, now. I don't know. We never did have to pay nothing when we went.

P: Your mama and daddy didn't have to pay him anything?

LM: No.



P: How far did you get in school?

LM: Only fourth grade.

P: Fourth grade. [Laughter] Did you learn much?

LM: Not too much. I learned to figure pretty good and things like that, but I never did learn how to write and read very much.

P: Did ya'll have a lot of schoolbooks over there or what'd they teach you out of?

LM: No, we didn't have too many.

P: Well, where'd ya'll go to church back then?

LM: Out there, the same place. They had church in the schoolhouse a long time out there.

P: From Hog Fork, you went over to Bell Creek?

LM: That's right.

P: What kind of church was that?

LM: It was Baptist.

P: Baptist? Did it become a Holiness church after a while?

LM: It didn't.

P: It didn't. Did you ever hear any of the only people, when you were a boy, do you ever hear any of them talking about how the Baptist church happened to be there in the first place?

LM: No, I never did hear nothing.

P: Did you ever know of any other kind of church around here before that?

LM: Nope, I don't what I've know to hear that.

P: That's the oldest denomination of Baptist Church?

LM: I don't remember. Baptist Church, yes.

P: When you were going to school, did you have to miss many days because of working on the farm and things or not?

LM: No, I didn't have to miss much days. I went ahead when I wanted to go and didn't want to go, well I didn't go.

P: What'd you all do for your dinner school?

LM: We'd carry lunch with us.

P: Well, getting back to the land around here, you say your daddy lost his piece for mortgage.

LM: Yeah.

P: Now, did some of your boys eventually buy some of it back?

LM: No, they sold it to a fella by the name of Parker. Ike Parker bought his deeds then.

P: Where'd he live?

LM: Huh?

P: Where did he live?

LM: Back in the Local, what you call, up in there then.

P: Uh-huh.

LM: He'd get the mortgage in and then he'd sold it out.

P: Well, How'd you come to get your piece of it here?

LM: I bought it from my cousin.

P: Who was that?

LM: A.C. McGhee.

P: A.C. Did he buy it back from Parker?

LM: No, from the Conner Mill Company.

P: Now, the land Calvin had, was that part of your daddy's original place?

LM: No, that's the place he bought from the Alger-Sullivan Company.

P: Uh-huh. Well, is there any of your daddy's children that are still living on it? Does Greeley live on part of what was your daddy's?

LM: No, he live on the piece I live on, the same block. Me and him both come here together.

P: Uh-huh. But what about all those people like Kenzie and all those others there, was that part of your daddy's place?

LM: That's right.

P: That was part of his place. Well, most of you lived sort of, back in those days, down close to the creek, is that right?

LM: Yep, several houses built back in there.

P: Well, who lived at that place that I've heard them talk about called McGhee Field, between here and Poarch Switch?

LM: Who?

P: There's a place back up in the woods that I've heard them call McGhee Field. I think it was Bill McGhee Field.

LM: That's where my uncle lived up there.

P: How long did he live there?

LM: He stayed about four or five years, I think.

P: Do you have any idea of how many years ago it was when he moved out of there?

LM: Oh, it's been a long time, I can't remember. It's been over forty, fifty year, I reckon.

P: I've heard there used to be a lot of cattle out here in the woods back in those days, is that right?

LM: Ooh, I reckon there did.

P: Who'd they belong to?

LM: There about seven big fellas in Pensacola.

P: And they just let them run through the woods here?

LM: Let them stay in the woods. He had fellows to tend to them, watch after them, see after them, you know, get them up and mark their calves in the summer, go around.

P: Any of the folks out here work for them, doing that?

LM: Yeah, my daddy did and my uncle, all of them worked down with them cattle.

P: Would they pen them up someplace?

LM: Oh yeah, they had big pens, they'd pen them, mark them up, you know, and brand them.

P: Then where would they go?

LM: They'd turn them back out in the wood.

P: Well, when the big fellas got ready to sell them, where would they talk them to? Would they take them to a train or something?

LM: No, they sold them out after they kept them so long, they sold them out. They sold all the ox and steers out at auctions to people near logging, you know?

P: Mm-hm.

LM: They got all of them big steers up and sold them for auction and thing.

P: I see.

LM: And see, they got so tight –dipping, I would see. Come in here and dipping, had to get them and dip them in fourteen days and then fellas just got together and sold them out.

P: They didn't sell any of them for meat?

LM: I don't know what they done **when they sell them**. Fella bought them and shipped them off, you know. He shipped them somewhere.

P: Did they ever have any trouble with people out here shooting them a cow once in a while to eat?

LM: No, it wasn't bad.

P: It wasn't?

LM: Sure wasn't.

P: How about hogs? Did they have hogs running in the woods there?

LM: Many of them.

P: Now, who owned the hogs?

LM: First one, then another. **There was** just a big bunch of them owned them.

P: Ever any goats out in the woods?

LM: They had a few. A few had goats.

P: Well, back when you were a boy-

LM: The fella owned the goats lived up there Padida up there, back up there were most the goat. 'Cause he had them up there, got figure there wasn't very many goats down in here, in this part down here.

P: Where would they sell their goats?

LM: I don't know, they kill them to eat them, I reckon they'll sell meat I don't think.  
[Laughter]

P: Well, other than the food people raised and the things they bought in the grocery stores, where'd people get most of their meat, the people that lived out here, the Indian folks, where did they get most of their meat back in those days?

LM: They'd get it from that store at Atmore, that's sold Atmore.

P: They do any huntin'?

LM: Yeah, they hunt right smart. Kill deer and turkey, most of them things like that. There was plenty of them there then.

P: What about fishing?

LM: Well, you know they didn't fish very much though.

P: They didn't?

LM: No. [Laughter]

P: Do you ever remember seeing people back in those days make any kind of fish traps to put in the streams to catch the fish?

LM: Yeah.

P: Tell me what those look like. How were those made?

LM: Well, just made it like a cage like, you know. Square it up and then it had a round hole in that end, and a long thing that run up in there like, you know. And fish

would come around and go up in that thing, then they couldn't come back out then.

P: I see, and it was made out of wood?

LM: It was made out of that screen wire, things like that.

P: Do you ever see one made out of little sticks or twigs?

LM: No, I haven't.

P: They were all made out of screen wire-

LM: I hadn't seen any made out of them. But they had them traps made out of that wire and had that thing fix on there, a long tube run up in there like, you know, the round hole is, you know, and fish would come around and go up in there and he went on through it and he got to that big part and he couldn't get out. He was trapped, sure enough.

P: Now, would that trap have to be tied on a rope to a tree on the shore?

LM: Yeah, they always tie it with something, you know.

P: Would they tie it on the shore or tie it to a stick in the water?

LM: Mm-hm, they'd stick down a stick somewhere today, near the water and tie it, you know.

P: I've heard some people say that years ago that people used to get fish by putting something in the water to stun them and make them to the top, is that right?

LM: I've heard that too, but I've never seen nobody try out, but I heard it.

P: Have you heard it all your life?

LM: Oh, yes.

P: Who'd you hear it from?

LM: Some of them old people. You'd tell you, take a green moss and put them in a sack and beat them up, put them in a place where you're gonna get fish, you get all the fish you want, they come to the top.

P: Mm-hm. Did they ever say you could use hickory nuts?

LM: Yeah, anything like that. It was glue, something like a strong, you know, put in there. It'd make them come up.

P: Could you do that in running water or would it have to be in a pool? I mean, could you do it a stream or would you have to find you a little pool?

LM: I imagine you had to find a sort of a still place like, you know.

P: You never saw that done?

LM: No sir, I never did see it done.

P: Uh-huh, but the old ones used to talk about it.

LM: Old ones say they used to could do it alright.

P: Can you remember the names of any of the old ones that used to talk about that?

LM: Old man Alec McGhee, Dick McGhee, all of them, they'd talk about it.

P: Who was Alec McGhee? How was he related to you?

LM: I don't hardly know. He was some kin someway, but I can't remember how and what it was now. He used to live at Local back up here, you know, at what they call Local, back up the Huxford town. He lived back up in there.

P: Were there any other ways that those old timers used to talk about getting fish and hunting and things that you can remember?

LM: No, I can't remember.

P: What about twisting rabbits and things, did they do that? [Laughter]



LM: Yeah, they done that alright, I've seen that done.

P: Have you ever done any of that yourself?

LM: Oh yeah, I done that myself.

P: What do you use to twist a rabbit? How do you make your stick?

LM: You make it, use a bamboo grout like these old bamboo grout got them stones on it. Get you one of them, got get up can you can get him.

P: Will it work on squirrels too?

LM: I imagine it would, I have never tried it on a squirrel.

P: You did it mainly for rabbits, you said.

LM: That's right.

P: How about bird traps? Were there any kind of bird traps those people used to use?

LM: I used to make a bird trap out of sticks and catch them.

P: Tell me how you made the traps. How'd you make your traps?

LM: You just get your sticks and make it about that long, you know, and about that wide. Build up just like a house like. Back when you're in trouble in there, he get you up to the top, put your board towards to the top and then put your another pick on the top, what's called a bender.

P: Uh-huh.

LM: Put it across there and just cut it, you know.

P: And it holds it all together?

LM: Hold it all together.

P: Well, how do you set it?

LM: Then you make you some trigger.

P: How do you make a trigger?

LM: Well, you just—you have one that stands up just like that and you make another that fit over that, cut a notch in it and fit over that and you have what they call a pedal. If you have a notch cut in it, it'll hook around there and stand up straight and you stick that other end in a little notch back here and you'd hold it up, you know. And then birds would go in there to eat—you put the bait in and they'd go in and eat, they'd knock that pedal down, you know. Now down comes the trap and you got him.

P: Have you ever heard of a kind of trap where you dig a hole?

LM: Yep.

P: Tell me how that worked.

LM: Well, they'd make it up, you know, and make it up and then they'd put a plank down here and it had a hole that sinks dug on a ditch and when the birds go on that trench, in there, but they'd never would look back at that hole out there to come out and you'd top around on top of the plank, all of them. They'd go round in it they never would look down at that hole at the bottom.

P: What kind of birds could you catch with one of those?

LM: Catch quail, things like that.

P: Now, the other kind with the trigger, what kind of birds would you usually-

LM: Quail and things, couldn't catch them, you know. Other wouldn't go in there much, no other kind of bird.

P: Was there any kind of trap you could use to catch turkeys?

LM: The other things, I've never seen that, but you could make one that they'd catch them. Build a big pen up, you know, build it, have your trench cut just like that for them boards, you know. Make enough for the turkey to go under that and he goes in it, but they ain't got to look up at that hole to come out. Looking up all the time, looking up.

P: You mean up at the top, he's not gonna see that?

LM: At the top of that pen, you know.

P: And he won't see the hole and come up. [Laughter]

LM: Never look down to come out down there.

P: What'd you use to bait your bird traps with?

LM: Peas, corn, something like that.

P: Do you remember any of the old-timers talking about hollowing out a cane and making little darts to shoot at the birds or anything? That you could blow through like a pea shooter?

LM: No, I don't believe I have.

P: Ever hear of them talk about people hunting with bows and arrows?

LM: Oh yeah, I've heard them telling who talk about that. I never did see them hunting out with them, but I've heard them talk about it.

P: Who was someone that used to talk about that?

LM: Oh, the all of them old ones used to talk about it. All the old McGhees and Rolins and things, they used to talk about hunting with their bow and arrows, you know.

P: That they did that themselves?

LM: Oh, yeah. They used to hunt with them, some of them did.

P: They say they hunt deer with them, or what?

LM: Well, I suppose anything like that, they'd get them with them things.

P: Uh-huh. So, ya'll used to do a lot of hunting and tracking and fishing and all kind of sports.

LM: That's right.

P: Anybody ever fish with any nets?

LM: Oh yeah, I've seen that done too.

P: How do you do that?

LM: Well, you got a big net made, you know, with sinkers on it. A long that's made up, some kind of a net that's made up, you know, got a bottom line that's bigger than the top one is and it's got the lead sinkers on it and they pull that right across the stream and sink the [inaudible] down to the bottom, you know. And you tie that top up to the bushes on top in a way and you get in, that's how the fish they. You drive them down to **that church**, you know, **as long as they get in there**.

P: Do you get in the water and drive them down there?

LM: Yeah, you get you up on the edge of the water, stand on the edge of the bank with your long stick and get at them, you know, and you go on down and get in that net.

P: Would people make their own nets?

LM: Yes, there's people could make them around here. Some of them could make them.

P: That live right around here.

LM: Yeah, but they're old, they get old and bored. Too old for making a net like anything like that. I have not a seen none of the youngsters try to make me a.

P: Did you ever try what to make one?

LM: No, I never did.

P: Was there ever any kind of trap people would make to get rabbits?

LM: Yeah, you make a box to catch them.

P: Have you ever heard of anybody catching one, making a like a loop of wire or something?

LM: No, I don't believe I ever heard that.

P: How about gophers, how did people used to get gophers?

LM: Just take a hook, got put on a line. Put your bullet with long bullet thing, a hook you put on there. I've caught a many of them.

P: What would you make the hook out of?

LM: A little steel rod or something, you know. I've made a many of them, caught them. [Laughter]

P: Do you ever pull up any snakes when you're down there trying to get a gopher?

LM: I never did pull out, but I have put them down in there and I leave him alone.

[Laughter]

P: Do you remember –speaking about those old ones a long time ago –do you remember any of them ever talking in Indian language?

LM: No sir never did.

P: Never did hear any of the others used to say anything?

LM: Never did hear a word or nothing. No, never did.

P: Did you ever ask them if they could? Or . . .

LM: No, I never did ask them, but I knew they couldn't though.

P: Uh-huh, you say that you know they could or they couldn't?

LM: They couldn't, they couldn't talk it.

P: Would any of those old ones ever talk about the original Lynn McGhee years ago?

LM: Oh yeah.

P: What would they tell you about him?

LM: Well, they would say –talk about he was a great hunter and all those things like that, you know.

P: Did he—

[Break in Recording]

P: Did they ever talk about Lynn McGhee ever getting land from the government?

LM: Oh yeah.

P: What'd they have to say?

LM: Huh?

P: What'd they say?

LM: Well, they said he just had a big will—the government had willed him a lots of land and turned it over to him, you know.

P: Did you ever go over to his land, that grant land?

LM: Yeah, back up there there's one old piece of grant land up there at Headapadida, what they call the McGhee track of land was up in there.

P: When you were a boy growing up over here, did ya'll visit over there much?

LM: Yeah, we went over there lots of times, we would visit over there lots of times over there.

P: Y'all ever go to church over there?

LM: Yeah, we went to church over there, too.

P: What church was that over there?

LM: We called it Free Will Baptist.

P: Was that different kind of church from this one at...

LM: Yeah, different from that.

P: How was it different from this one?

LM: I don't know, they just it Free Will Baptist and that other was just straight Baptist out there.

P: Were their services any different over there than...

LM: No, they preached the same thing. I couldn't tell the difference between the preachers.

P: Who were the preachers then?

LM: This fella Beck preached out there, to that one out there.

P: Bell Creek, you mean?

LM: Yeah, Bell Creek. And I can't think of the other fella. The other fella preached it up there so long. I know his name better than anything, but I can't think of it, but I know one used to preach up there was a fella by name of Slay preached there one while. But then the main preacher what preached there a long time, I can't say what his name, what it was now.

P: Did those preachers live around here?

LM: Yeah, they lived down by Padida back down in here, what's called Padida.

P: Not Headapadida, but Padida.

LM: Well, not Padida Station, back in there they called it.

P: Would they come ever Sunday?

LM: Every Sunday, right near it. That fellow Beck, he lived in Mobile—what that preached out to Bell Creek—what that he'd come every month. Preached out there once a month.

P: What'd they do for a preacher when he wasn't there?

LM: They didn't have no church.

P: They didn't have any church anywhere?

LM: Huh-uh, just only one a month they had church there.

P: Well, do you remember much about when the holiness preachers first started coming?

LM: Yes, I remember some about it.

P: Tell me what you know about that.

LM: Well, when they first come in here to preach here, a fellow by the name of Bill Bonadow, the first I've heard come to preach Holiness was Bill Bonadow. He lived in Mississippi, he'd come over and preach. Then after that, there was fella then that just got scattered all about it. Different ones coming, I couldn't think about all their names.

P: Where did Bill Bonadow go to preach first?

LM: Out there to Poarch.

P: Poarch?



LM: Yeah, he preached out there when he first come in here and preach out there.

P: Was there a church out there?

LM: No, they had what they call a brush arbor that he preached under it. They built him a brush arbor you know, put brush on top of it and kinda preached under there.

P: And that was at Poarch?

LM: Mm-hm.

P: Well, were there people living over there at that time?

LM: Yeah, there was plenty of people living over there. They had a big church out – they had people come to church from miles out there and around. They had a good church and everything.

P: And that was before the Holiness preacher came to Bell Creek?

LM: There wasn't no Holiness preacher come to Bell Creek, they never did have a Holiness preacher come out there for a long time, till after all that Baptist and everything died out and left. Then there was one come out there and preached on the arbor—they had a brush arbor. Fella by the name of Coon, Rayburn Coon, preached out there. He was a Holiness preacher.

P: Well, how old were you when that Bonadow came and preached at Poarch? About how old were you?

LM: I was about, I think about twenty or twenty-two years old.

P: And he set up a brush arbor out there at Poarch? Well, was that when a lot of people were working for Charlie Hall when he came there?

LM: That's right, working for Charlie Hall. Lots of them were working for Charlie Hall.

P: Were they living in the houses that he had out there?

LM: Yeah, he had them houses built out there and just scattered all about out living in them houses, there around.

P: About where was that brush arbor that Bonadow preached in?

LM: Do you know where Mace lives out there? Right back there from Mace's house, back down 'cross that field down in there, I couldn't tell you exactly what place now, but I can show you where it was, right back there from Mace's. And then all on over, there was another **on the side of** the railroad, near about to the railroad, they had one over there and there was a fella Asbury preached over there.

P: Where was he from?

LM: I don't know where he was from, I never did learn, but I think it seems like some said he was from up at Castlebury or somebody's up in there.

P: Now Coon, where was he from? That came to Bell Creek.

LM: I imagine about McCullough.

P: Now, did these preachers, did they stay for quite a while or did they just come and have a revival or what?

LM: Oh, just stayed around here near about a long time, they stayed around here. Bonadow lived over a while, right back over across that creek over there, he lived over there and preached here for a long time. Then he moved off, went off, then he come back and got him at church at Flomaton, he preached Flomaton along time of his death, when old fella died.

P: Were there ever any Holiness preachers over a Headapadida?

LM: Mighty scattered, never did come over there and work.

P: Do you happen to know how they first started coming in here? Did somebody invite them in or did they just come on their own or what?

LM: They just come on their own through, I reckon. Started preaching and kept on preaching and preaching and people got in with them, you know, and everything.

P: Were they well liked?

LM: Yeah, alright.

P: Well, then at some point, wasn't there a church built down here in Hog Fork over there near the graveyard?

LM: Right up here by the graveyard, there's a Holiness church.

P: About how long ago was that church there?

LM: Let's see, I can't think about how long it's been there.

P: Was that after the Bell Creek?

LM: Oh yeah, that was all over with. There was no preaching going on over but up there then nobody.

P: I think I heard some people say your daddy used to lead services sometimes, is that right?

LM: He did. You have what they call a prayer meeting, the others up there, he worked, kept me working church then all the whole time, that's right.

P: Did ya'll have regular preacher at that one? The church up here near the graveyard?

LM: Mm-hm.

P: Who was that preacher?

LM: Preacher Capers.

P: He's still living isn't he?

LM: Yep, still living. He preached up here for years, he did up at that little church up there.

P: Did you ever got to the Episcopal Church?

LM: I went a few times.

P: Which one did you go to?

LM: I did at Poarch, when they had one out there. They used to have one out there, you know.

P: I understand there used to be a lot of people that went to that one, is that right?

LM: Used to be a lots of people go over there. I went there just a few times.

P: You didn't like it?

LM: Huh-uh.

P: Why not?

LM: Huh?

P: Why didn't you like it?

LM: I just didn't like the doctrine they preached.

P: Why do you think all those people quit going to the Episcopal Church there quite a few years ago?

LM: I guess they just found out it wasn't right or something or other.

P: One thing I wondered about it how easy was it for people to change from Baptist to Holiness? Did they change pretty quick to that?

LM: Huh-uh, it took them a long time.

P: What did the people think of Holiness when it first came in here?

LM: Well, they were just scared of it, like looked like.

P: What were they scared of? [Laughter]

LM: I don't know, but they didn't know enough about it, you know. The fella got preaching Holiness, then they got to reading the bibles, then they see that the Holiness was right and then they just went into it.

P: Did the Baptist believe in shouting?

LM: They did along in them days, they did.

P: The Baptist Church you went to when you were a little boy, would they believe in shouting?

LM: They sure did shout.

P: Did they believe in getting the Holy Ghost?

LM: No, they didn't believe in that though.

P: Was that the part that people were scared of, when the Holiness-

LM: I think so, I think so.

P: Did the Baptist believe in laying on hands?

LM: No.

P: Did they believe in speaking in tongues?

LM: No.

P: They didn't believe in any of that. Just the shouting, they believed in that.

LM: Yeah, they'd shout, but they didn't believe in speaking in tongues or laying on hands, nothing like that.

P: Where would they do their baptizing?

LM: Back to them creeks out there, first one creek the another.

P: Baptists used to do that too, huh? Did you ever work out away from here anyplace yourself?

LM: Not very far off around in here.

P: You never went out of state working or anything?

LM: Nuh-uh.

P: What kind of work you done most of your life?

LM: Log, paper wood, such as that.

P: Did you ever work in the fields out in Baldwin County or anything?

LM: I worked down there one or two times—worked a little bit down there.

P: Why didn't you go back?

LM: I didn't like it. I went over in Mississippi one time and sawed a few logs over in Mississippi one time.

P: About how long ago was that?

LM: Oh, that's been forty, fifty year.

P: Oh.

LM: That was a long-

P: Who'd you go with to Mississippi?

LM: Otis Jackson.

P: Was he a member of this community? He live around here?

LM: He was kin to me.

P: He was?

LM: Third cousin to me.

P: Who were with mother and daddy?

LM: Lily Jackson was his mother's name and General Jackson, they called him, was his daddy.

P: Well, let me ask you another line of questioning here. You are Calvin McGhee's older brother?

LM: That's right.

P: Tell me what kind of boy he was growing up, when he was growing up. What kind of person was he?

LM: [Laughter] Well, he was pretty rough some time.

P: Was he?

LM: That's right. [Laughter] He was pretty rough sometimes.

P: How was he rough?

LM: Get drunk.

P: He did?

LM: [Laughter] And he was pretty rough. Rowdy, rowdy when he was growing up.

P: Do you get after him ever?

LM: Huh?

P: Did you ever get after him about it?

LM: [Laughter] I talked to him some –well, I was about as bad as he was near about, we'd get all together.

P: [Laughter] Did y'all go off together?

LM: Yeah, we'd get off together, we'd get drunk many time.

P: What was there to drink back in those days?

LM: You'd make whiskey then in them days, what they call moonshine, you know.

Well, you could go to town and buy it too and haul it out from Pensacola and all like that.

P: Haul it from Pensacola?

LM: Mm-hm.

P: Where would you order it from?

LM: You'd just up order and send it anyplace down there. They'd send it back to Atmore down here. Go by and pick her up.

P: They ever make any whiskey out of cane juice?

LM: I haven't made none myself, but I've seen it done.

P: What's it called?

LM: Huh?

P: What do they call it?

LM: What do they call it, they call it white lightning.

P: They ever call it knock them?

LM: Oh yeah, they were knock them over that cane skin, would keep that, you know, till it worked off. Then you'd distill it.

P: Uh-huh. Did you distill it the same way you do corn mash?

LM: Yeah, that's right, that's right.

P: What about –is there something called Raisin Jack?

LM: Well, I never did know that, but they put raisins in that thank. I don't much worry about what they would call it.



P: Well, I hear some talk about something called Raisin Jack, you don't remember ever hearing anybody talk about that?

LM: There wasn't nobody talk about it like that. Sit down here, quick.

P: Well tell me, how was it that Calvin changed and became the man that he was. I've heard so many good things about him, never met him. You say he was rough when he was young, what changed him?

LM: That Holiness Church.

P: When did that happen?

LM: Oh, that's been years ago now.

P: Was that before he became the chief?

LM: Mm-hm.

P: About how old was he?

LM: He was about forty years old, I reckon, when he got in the Holiness Church around.

P: Which one of the Holiness churches was he in?

LM: This yonder Pentecostal Holiness.

P: Was there just one at that time?

LM: Huh?

P: Was there just one Holiness church at that time?

LM: Oh, they was scattered all around here. All about.

P: Do you remember the time he got saved?

LM: No, I don't remember.

P: But after that, he didn't do any more rough stuff?

LM: Huh-uh. He settled down then pretty good.

P: Yeah, I've heard a lot of good things about him. Did you ever-

LM: He had lots of good friends, yes sir. He was well thought of.

P: How come do you think he got so interested in trying to help the people? What made him be that way, you think?

LM: I don't know, he just seen the way they was treated when it was done, you know, and everything. He just got in behind it and kept a shoving it, shoving it, 'til he got as far as he did.

P: You said, the way they were treated. What exact you mean by that now?

LM: Well, you know, there was this treaty, the land was taken away from them, done everything like that, you know. They was treated dirty, you know, and everything. But all this whole grant land you're talking about, you know, why he worked all that up, you know, and everything. They had to pay for it. They had to pay for the timber to cut off it one thing another. He just kept on workin' it 'til they got it around, you know.

P: And he got them to pay for it.

LM: Yeah.

P: What happened to the money?

LM: Huh?

P: What happened to the money?

LM: It went right on the land, I reckon. I never did know about how much money they got or nothing.

P: How did he get involved in the school doing?

LM: I don't know, he just picked it up hisself, I reckon. He had seen them about the school and he just taking it over.

P: Did you ever help him in his work?

LM: Not too much.

P: Too busy raising a family?

LM: Huh?

P: Too busy raising a family?

LM: [Laughter]

P: Now you said you were seventy-eight years old yesterday? You're still working the fields?

LM: Still working on the fields.

P: Have you been doing that all along?

LM: Oh yes, that's right.

P: Did you ever work off—work on shares anyplace?

LM: No sir, never did.

P: How long you been doing this field work here?

LM: All my life, just about it.

P: I mean, working for somebody else, you been doing that?

LM: Oh yes, the biggest part of the time.

P: Who you working for now?

LM: Bill Brown.

P: Do you work all year around for him or just in the summer?

LM: Right near, right near work year-round for him.

P: What kinda work you doing right now for him?

LM: Pulling weeds.

P: Anybody else work with you?

LM: Oh, a big bunch of us works out and goes, works with me, a whole bunch of us work, my boy there.

P: Your whole family almost, huh?

LM: Yeah, a bunch of us works out there.

P: How much are they paying these days for field work?

LM: They don't give a darn thing –six hours we get a dollar fifteen and house for working out there.

P: You work how many days a week?

LM: Eight hours.

P: How many days do you work?

LM: Why you work all that whole week or you can just work a day or two and quit if you want.

P: How'd you happen to get hooked up with him to get a job with him?

LM: Just good man working, I reckon.

P: How many years you been working for Bill brown?

LM: That is six years.

P: This is your sixth year? How'd you get to working for him in the first place? Did you know him before or what?

LM: No, I didn't know him before he come in.

P: Came looking for you?

LM: Come ask me about working for him and I started to work for him.

P: Who were you working for at the time?

LM: Oh, I couldn't tell you who I was working for then at the time.

P: Who was it?

TM: He worked for Amos Rasmis over there at the park.

LM: Yeah.

P: What was his name again?

TM: Amos Rasmis.

LM: Amos Rasmis, a fella I helped him a long time too on the farm.

P: Do you pick any cotton still or is that all done by machines now?

LM: It's done my machine now, the most of it. You don't get no cotton to pick now.

P: How many years ago has it been since people had to pick it by hand? How many years have those machines been doing it?

LM: Fifteen, twenty –oh about eight or ten year, I reckon. Something like that.

P: I guess a lot of people through here picked cotton before those machines came in, huh?

LM: That's right, yeah. They'd pick cotton all the time through here until those machines come in here.

P: Well besides working in the fields, logging, and paper wooding and farming on your own, through the years, what other kind of work has there been for the people that live out here in this community?

LM: That's about only kind of work that went on through here.

TM: There was tar wood.

P: What's tar wood.

TM: That's what they call it when it goes to the meat porch, you know. In Pensacola, got a new port place. It just, it stops, you know, you blow them out with dynamite. He worked with that a long time.

P: Tell me more about that, how that work goes, what all you did and who you worked for and all that.

LM: [Laughter] I worked for Terry Palmer when I was doing that. I didn't—they'd push them stumps with a Caterpillar, you know, and then they'd drill them and shoot them with dynamites. And they'd work it with axe, you know, and then they'd haul it and load it into car.

P: They load it in the . . .

LM: It was in box cars.

P: Box cars? Well, how would they get it to the box cars?

LM: Haul it on trucks.

P: Were they ever doing any of that when they still had the oxen working in the woods?

LM: Yeah, they done that with oxen too, a little.

P: So, they were doing tar wood back in the early days too?

LM: Yeah. They haul with mules and oxen a long time before we ever got any trucks and things to haul wood.

P: But they were doing tar wood.

LM: Tar wood.

P: Mm-hm, and the logging too.

LM: Yeah, didn't have to Caterpillars to get the stumps out, we had to drill them and shoot them out the ground then. Well, after they got them Caterpillars, well they can get them out, why they get that whole stump out, you know, then.

P: It'd come out in one piece?

LM: That's right, you'd screw them out and then you shoot them up.

P: I've heard there's not as many of those good stumps around now as there used to be.

LM: They're all gone, that's right.

P: Were the woods around here when you were a boy, were they like they are now or were the trees bigger or what?

LM: Yeah, when I was a small boy coming up, that whole place up there was covered with timber bigger than the tree yonder, bigger.

P: Pine trees, you mean.

LM: That's right, pine trees. Right out through yonder was the prettiest timber you ever put your eyes on and just as thick as it could be. Just bigger than them trees there.

P: What were the main companies that came in here cutting that timber?

LM: Southern State Company, call it. Southern State Company.

P: Southern State?

LM: Southern State Company first come in and build a camp back up there and they logged that whole thing off with mules and oxen and things. And from that then they went along, they got skidders and things, you know then, to pull them in, you

know, to cut out all those oxen and near about everything. Then they got skidder, what they call a skidder, you know.

P: Now what is a skidder?

LM: That's a big machine out there, you know. Sits on the railroad and they use it with line, got long lines on it, you know. A fella sits up on them—pull them drums, you know, to go get them lines back through the woods, hook on a log and bring it in and up.

P: So they were cutting off to the sides of the railroad and the skidder would 0the lines would like just pull it right up to the box.

LM: Pull them back, that's right.

P: Well, did you help build those railroads out in the woods?

LM: No, I never did build no railroad.

P: Were there people around here that worked on them?

LM: Oh yeah.

P: Did you cut the cross-ties?

LM: Yeah, cut a many a cross-tie for them.

P: When you cut cross-ties, did you have to haul them yourself or would you just leave them out in the wood?

LM: You had to haul them yourself to the railroad place where they were building a track, you know.

P: Would you square them of would you just cut them down and they'd square them?



LM: We'd have to square them while we was there. Peeling them with a broad axe, you know, what they called a broad axe, about that wide.

P: How'd they pay you? By the tie?

LM: Yeah, they'd pay you by the piece.

P: How much did they pay you a piece?

LM: About thirty and thirty-five cents apiece.

P: For a hewn railroad tie?

LM: Mm-hm.

P: Did you cut the trees down yourself for the ties?

LM: Yeah.

P: They didn't have any chainsaws back in those days.

LM: Oh, no. Had to do with it with a cross-cut saw then. [Laughter]

P: So, there was also that. Cutting railroad ties was another kind of work people did. What about dipping turpentine and working turpentine?

LM: Yeah, I dipped that too.

P: How many different kinds of jobs were there in working in turpentine?

LM: You mean in turpentine?

P: Yeah, what are the different kinds of jobs connected with working in turpentine?

LM: I've dipped it. I've pulled boxes, what they call pulling boxes. I've chipped them. I've done everything you can with turpentine you could, all except stilling it. I never did still none of it.

P: Okay now, pulling boxes, what is that?

LM: Well, you have something like a square thing like that, you know, you put it on a hind, and you had to get it to pull it, you know, up there what they call a pillar streak cross there, you know, and then that turpentine would run out of that streak, you know, and they'd have a thing fixed in, a cup hanging there to catch it in.

P: Now that's called pulling boxed?

LM: Pulling boxes, that's right.

P: How much would they pay you for that?

LM: They'd give you a dollar a thousand.

P: A dollar a thousand trees? Now, what's chipping it?

LM: Well, that's the same thing only you gotta just move those out it then, chip them. And if you wasn't mighty good, you'd hit your knee, you wouldn't ship many chip many before you'd be crippled out there.

P: But chipping and pulling boxes are the same thing, you say?

LM: Yeah, it's the same king of work about it. The pulling's up high, you know, and the chipping's down low.

P: Pulling is high and chipping is-

LM: Down low. You bring them on up from down there, you know, to get at what you call pulling boxes and then you had to get your pulling, pull them up there then.

P: Now, what exactly is dipping turpentine? What does that mean?

LM: That means dipping out of them cuts.

P: The cups stay on the tree and you dip it out?

LM: No, you have to take the cup off—

[Break in Recording]

P: How much did you say they paid for dipping it again?

LM: They give a dollar and half a day, that kind of work, dipping it.

P: And I don't think we got it all, would you say again what dipping means.

LM: [Laughter] It means you take that cup off, you know, and they have a what they call a paddle, a little bit of paddle. You just take that cup off, hold her up, take that paddle and run in that cup and wring it out and drop it over that bucket.

P: Okay, now, how much did-

LM: Get your bucket full and you catch it in a barrel and pour it in that big barrel there.

P: I see, would they have the barrels out in the woods?

LM: That's rights, they have them out in the woods.

P: How about chipping? How much do they pay for chipping?

LM: They give a dollar a thousand for chipping.

P: Same as for pulling boxes.

LM: Same as pulling.

P: How long ago has it been since there was a lot of turpentine work around here?

LM: Well, it's been forty year or longer since there's been any turpentine work here, I reckon.

P: What were the companies that were doing the turpentine work? What were the names of those companies?

LM: A fella Cooper, what I worked for the most.

P: And he had a still in . . .

LM: He had a still in Atmore, he did down there.

P: Well, let's see what you think of any other kind of jobs. Was there anything else people did?

LM: [Laughter] No, that's about all I know.

P: [Laughter] I'm going to give you a rest, I'm going to ask you wife, Mrs. **Tracy McGhee**, if she'd tell me a little bit of what she remembers about what women's life was like back in a few years ago.

TM: You asked a poor one now, I can't remember.

P: How about things like washing clothes and so forth. How'd they used to do that years ago?

TM: You used to have a tub and rug board, a battling block.

P: A battling block? What's that?

TM: A big block and you had a battling stick when it was real dirty, you'd put them on there and battle them with that stick. And we had a wash pot with boiled our white clothes. Put them in there and put some lye and boil them.

P: Did you ever remember any of the older women ever washing their clothes in the spring?

TM: I've washed them in a creek.

P: In a creek?

TM: Right up at Headapadida.

P: Why would someone wash it in the creek rather than in the washtub?

TM: Well, I don't know, I guess we just rather do it. We all just got together and stretched out quilts. We'd like, you know, we'd boil them then take them down and rinse them in the creek and I guess we just, well more of less, rinse them in

the creek, you know, we'd rub them and then put them in that creek and rinse them.

P: Was washing quilts something that was done not very often or was that a big occasion?

TM: Not once a year anyway, you know.

P: What time of the year would that usually be?

TM: Oh, just before winter time. Just before we had to use them or make room to put them up.

P: Did most people make their own quilts back in those days.

TM: Yeah, sure did.

P: Did they work each person by himself, or did they ever get together in groups and do it?

TM: Get together. We used to get together to make them and then some would make them, you know, individual.

P: Did many women, say when you were a real small girl, did many women out here have sewing machines?

TM: My mother did. She's had a sewing machine ever since I could remember. I've always—

P: Your mother was who?

TM: Lula Walker. Oh, I don't know if you've ever heard anything about Fred Walker, he used to be a—that was my dad.

P: He used to be a what, you were going to say?

TM: He used to be a big worker in the Episcopal Church. That was the first church that I belonged to was the Episcopal.

P: Which one? You were at St. Andrews?

TM: Mm-hm. That's where my daddy, he was a big church worker there.

P: Tell me a little bit more about him. I understand he used to be called Chief Walker sometime. How'd he get that title?

TM: I don't know, they just called him, Chief. I mean, he never did do anything as I know of, you know. He was no chief, but that was just a name they gave him.

P: Now, was that a name that people living in the community called him?

TM: Yes, Mm-hm.

P: And did they give him the name or did the Episcopal Church give him that name?

TM: I really don't know now about that. I just know they used to call him Chief Walker.

LM: That was just the name the people gave him.

P: How did he get that name, you think?

LM: I don't know, they just thought about it, I reckon, just called him Chief Walker.

P: Was he a leader in the community in any way?

TM: Kinda.

LM: Yeah, he was a pretty business knowing man like about things, you know, going on and things.

P: What kind of things was he a leader on?

TM: Well, mostly, you know just church work. Like I said, he was a big worker in the church and that's about all as I know of, I mean . . .

P: Was he a—compared other people—was he was well-off man?

TM: No, he wasn't a well off man. We was raised very poor.

P: He wasn't any better off than anybody else?

TM: No, ah. He was, I said, I guess the reason—well, he had influence over people as far as church work and things like that. But, them boys being in business, anything other than farming. He used to farm, but everybody did that, so he wasn't no higher than nobody else.

P: Was he a man that would ever be called on to settle arguments or anything?

TM: No, not as I know of.

P: I had heard somebody –can't remember –say that he was the king of man that if a fight started at a dance, he would try and calm things down a little bit. Tell me about that.

TM: Can you tell him all about that?

LM: He'd call that dude there, he'd fight you.

P: He would?

LM: Yeah, there wasn't no joke about that, he'd fight you.

P: Do you remember some of the fights he was in?

LM: I remember one or two.

P: Tell me about them.

LM: There was a fella they called a Slick Seal, they were having a big dance up out there, one night up there by Padida up there, you know? And they got up a roughhouse there like and they tied up him and that fella Seal did. And cut that fella Seal, they had to toll him up in a sheet and carry him home.

P: Fred Walker cut him.

LM: That's right.

P: Where was Slick Seal from?

LM: Up here at what they call, up here the Local up back up in here.

P: Was he an Indian fella?

LM: No, he was a white fella.

P: How come he was at the dance?

LM: Oh, he just wanted to act bully, I reckon. He come off down here, but he sure got his bully stomped, you know.

P: Uh-huh, and Fred Walker got after him, huh?

LM: That's right.

P: Whose house was that at?

LM: I can't remember whose house it was at, whether it was old man Dick McGhee's or here—seems like that's the place it was at. Old Man Dick McGhee's house, I think.

P: You said you remember a couple of them, that's one. What was the other one you remember?

LM: [Laughter] I don't know, I'll see. I can't think about the other one now, though.

P: Was it a dance too?

LM: No, it wasn't at no dance. I just can't remember where that place was though, but anyhow, he had a rough time that time. He was, they would have taken by him.

P: But he used a knife on people, huh?

LM: Yes sir, he'd cut you. There wasn't no joke about that, he'd throw that steel to you.



P: Would he have to be drunk before he cut somebody?

LM: No, he wouldn't have to be drunk.

TM: Never had a drink as far as I—

P: He wasn't a drinker, huh?

TM: Not as I can remember.

LM: He never did get drunk very much that I would know'd of. I don't suspect I ever did see him drunk, I don't believe it. Never did.

P: He just had a hot temper.

LM: That's right.

P: What was it that would really make him mad enough to cut somebody, usually? What was it that made him so mad that he cut that fellow?

LM: Well, I don't know. He just —that fella just wanted to act bigoted, I reckon. He he'd come down there and bullied over him and just take the place, you know. But he showed him he couldn't take it.

P: He was gonna just take over the place, huh?

LM: He was gonna take over the place, but he got asked out of it pretty quick.

P: Carried out of it.

LM: [Laughter] That's right, he was carried home in a sheet, rolled up in a sheet.

P: Do you remember whether they had different dances they used to do at those dances they had? Were they different kinds they did, or did they do the same thing all night long?

LM: Well, I don't know, it's just what they call the square dancing, you know, is all I've ever known them to be doing. What's called a square dance.

P: You ever heard of one called a Cotillion did they ever do that?

LM: No, I never did.

P: Ever hear of one called a breakdown?

LM: That's a breakdown square dances is all I ever hear them call it.

P: Uh-huh. Could you sort of describe what a breakdown square dance looked like?

LM: [Laughter] No, I can't hardly describe it, I don't think. It's been so long since I've been into one.

P: How many couples would be in one of those?

LM: Sometimes you'd dance about four couples, six and eight, like that.

P: Would the couples just dance together or would they ever make a big circle or anything like?

LM: They'd make a circle and go around the room and you had one fella the calling, what they call calling the sets, you know, and he'd call out what for them to do, you know, and they'd do it.

P: Who was some of the people that used to call at those dances? I know Fred Rolin used to do some; did you used to do some?

LM: [Laughter] Who, me? Yeah, I have called a few, you know, a lot of time.

P: I know it's been many years, but give me a sample of your calling, how you used to call.

LM: [Laughter] It's been so long, I can't say how I think it goes now.

P: Give it a try, see if you can remember. Just make up anything.

LM: Well, you get all your people out there, you know, you get your partner and I'd get mine, til we get about eight couple out there. And then they'd get all hands

up, you know, and that fella would holler out from there, all hands up and circle to the left. [Laughter] Right hands across and left back and two hand exchange.

P: One more time.

LM: You swing your partner and I'll swing mine.

P: I was interrupting you, do it all over again. [Laughter]

LM: And you holler out, first couple out and chase the squirrels. Ladies round the ladies and gents 'round the gents. Make your partner swing. [Laughter] That's about all I know.[Laughter]

P: I'm gonna be real quiet and I'm going to ask you if you'd do it one more all the way through it, I won't say anything. Hold this.

TM: He wants you to call that squirrely-

P: Same thing.

LM: All hands up and circle to the left. Hands round and back. Two ladies change. [Laughter] I can't go any . . . Swing your object lady over there, boy. That's about all . . . [Laughter]

P: That's good after all those years. Was there anybody in particular you learned from?

LM: Huh-uh, I just picked it up myself. I was just watching other person, listening at them, you know. I just caught on to how to call them.

P: What kind of music would you have for that?

LM: Sometimes they'd have a fiddle, guitar, and first one thing then another like that, you know. The fiddle made the best music for them to dance by.

P: Were there any real good fiddle players around here, then?

LM: Several good'n.

TM: Fred Rolin was one.

P: Fred Rolin was one? Who was some others?

LM: Her daddy could fiddle too, he fiddled lot too.

P: Do you remember back when they were having those dances, did they seem to have more of them in any one place or were they...?

LM: No, they were scattered about, all about.

P: Did they have just as many in Hog Fork as they did in Headapadida?

LM: Yeah, just about the same thing.

P: What about Bell Creek?

LM: Yeah, they'd have them out to Bell Creek too. They'd have on a Saturday night, you know I'd be out to Bell Creek maybe and the next Saturday night, there'd be one down here, next Saturday night there'd be one up about Headapadida. Just scattered about like that all over.

P: Was it usually the same people that had them at each of these places?

LM: No, different people would have them, you know, first one then they'd have a big house, you know, have a big house, you know, they'd give out a big dance, you know.

P: Would they feed everybody that came?

LM: Huh?

P: Would they feed everybody that came?

LM: No, you had to feed yourself, if you got anything to eat.

P: Did you ever go to dances up at Local?

LM: Yeah, went up there one or two times, you know.

P: But that was a little bit out of your area when you were here?

LM: No, it wasn't out of my area, I just went.

P: Did other people from here go up to Local?

LM: Not very many would go time I went. Just three or four boys –two or three boys would go up there some time.

P: Did the train run up there from here?

LM: No, there wasn't no railroad through here. One of the forks went up around up there, you know. Yeah, but all the frolicking was about over with that railroad went up in there

P: Pardon?

LM: All the frolicking was about done with then.

P: When the railroad went up?

LM: Went up through there

P: Well, was that true down here? Was there any frolicking after the railroads came in here?

LM: No, just scattered down, put away. It about all quickly diverted.

P: Well, why was that? How come the railroad did that, you thing?

LM: I don't know.

TM: The railroad come through, they just quit frolicking. [Laughter] Thinking about going to church, they quit frolicking, I reckon.

P: Do you think there was some connection between –did the frolics end about the time the Holiness Church came, or . . . ?

TM: I don't remember.

P: Well, how long ago was that that the railroad came in?

LM: Oh, that's been fifty, sixty years ago, I reckon, since that railroad's been in. That's when I was a fellow little small boy.

P: But before that, there weren't any railroads around at all. Was it the Frisco Line that came through here or which railroad was it?

LM: It was a log group at first and then the Frisco bought it out after they got on logging here and the Frisco bought it out and then they put a passenger train on it.

P: Was there a passenger train into Atmore back in those days?

LM: Yeah.

TM: Can you here that—

[Break in Recording]

P: Well, let me come up to modern times a little bit. I wonder between the two of you if you could tell me about your church. Your church is one of the newest churches out of the community here and some of the history behind your church and how it came to be.

TM: What do you mean how it came to be?

P: Well, first of all, the name of your church is Apostle...

TM: Apostolic.

P: Apostolic, uh-huh. Was there a particular person that came and started that church or what?

TM: Well, the one that we have in Atmore, that's the first one I've known of and Brother Pollock started that one. I mean, of course he's not the one that started the, you know, the whole thing, but he's the one that started that in Atmore.

P: Now, is it correct that he was the pastor one time up here at New Home? Uh-huh. How come he started this church, do you know?

TM: Well, not really, I don't know. They got rid of him over there as our pastor over there and he didn't feel like the Lord was through with him here in Atmore so he just started another church.

P: Is the belief of that church any different from the Pentecostal?

TM: No, it's all the same. They all believe the same.

P: No, what about Free Holiness? Is that belief the same as Pentecostal, like Brother Mace's church?

TM: No, they don't. They don't believe like the Pentecostal.

P: What's the main differences?

TM: Well, they don't baptize alike. Mace's church baptizes in name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and we baptize in Jesus name, Jesus Christ.

P: And that's true of both the Apostolic and the Pentecostal, too.

TM: Yes, we baptize alike, we believe alike. We believe in the power of the Holy Ghost and baptize in Jesus name and Mace's church, they teach Holy Ghost, but they don't teach it at you it's really necessary.

P: It's necessary for baptism or what?

TM: Baptism by the Holy Ghost. You know, the Bible speaks of that spirit. Without the spirit, you've non to have. So, we teach it is necessary for you to have the Holy Ghost.

P: Before you can be baptized?

TM: No, you supposed to be baptized first over that, you know, where Peter told him to repent.

P: Right.

TM: He baptized in the name of Jesus Christ that you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. So, really, you're not promised the Holy Ghost until you are baptized.

P: But Brother Mace's church doesn't believe in the Holy Ghost-

TM: Yeah, they believe in it, they believe in it, but they don't really –see, they teach that you're saved, sanctified, and then baptized with the Holy Ghost and we don't teach that you're even saved until you receive the Holy Ghost. You repent, but you're not saved until you get the Holy Ghost. That's the difference. See, they teach saved, sanctified and baptized by the Holy Ghost.

P: I see, but your church, you don't believe that you're saved until you have repented and then receive the Holy Ghost.

TM: That's right, we teach that you have to receive the Holy Ghost before you're saved. You repent, but then you have to have the Holy Ghost.

P: One thing I've wondered about it whether your church has ever given any thought, since most of the members live out in this part of the community, of trying to get yourself a church out here closer, or are you satisfied with going in to Atmore to the church there?

TM: Well, really, we planned it to build it Atmore because, you see, this church, like I say, we all believe the same thing and we wouldn't want to build this close to that church over there and we planned to just build in Atmore, in town.



P: So, all the people that are in that church used to belong to this church, is that correct?

TM: Well, they been there, but they really didn't belong to church. There's some that's in the church down there that wasn't in the church over there.

P: Let me ask you, what, of those who were there in that church before that went with Brother Pylon, why do you think that you went along with him instead of staying at this church?

TM: Because I believed in his teaching and I just liked him as a pastor. So, that's why I went.

P: Uh-huh. Do y'all have any kind of missionary program in your church?

TM: We don't.

P: I understand that one time, that the New Home church and Brother Mace's church, that they were one at one time, is that correct?

TM: Yes, they always used to go to church together until this come in baptism in Jesus thing, some believed it, some didn't.

P: When did that come in?

TM: Oh, I don't know.

P: About how many years ago was it?

TM: Levi could probably tell you more about that than I can. [Phone Rings]

LM: About what?

TM: When they first come in, baptize the oneness. When'd it first come through here?

LM: That's been about twenty-five or thirty years, you know. My brother Bill Bonnadow first brought the message in here. Might be been even longer than that.

TM: I really don't know.

P: So that first Holiness preacher was the oneness type?

LM: My brother Bill Bonnadow was that the fella I told you had the brush arbor, out there. He's the first one that brought the oneness message in here once.

P: And he came before they had the brush arbor in Bell Creek, you say?

LM: Yeah, and then a fella with name of Coon come, he believed like Brother Mace believes, he had a arbor built out there.

P: I see. Was that arbor built out at Bell Creek, was the Baptist Church building still there at that time?

LM: No, it was gone.

P: It was already gone. Were those people without any church for a while?

LM: Yeah, they was out. Two or three got into the Holiness business out there, stayed with it.

P: So, people in this area then, some of them have been in about three—through their lifetime—been Episcopalians and some of them have been one kind of Holiness and then another kind of Holiness.

TM: I'm one of them.

P: And you're one of them. [Laughter]

TM: Yeah, I started in Episcopal and then I used to go to Mace's church 'til I saw more light on God's word and then baptized in Jesus name.

P: Was it hard for you to make those changes?

TM: Sure was. It took me a long time, but I finally come to the decision. I didn't jump into it right off-handed.

P: Was it something that troubled your mind a lot while you were going through the process?

TM: Well, not really, but I really pondered over it.

P: Do you think—from talking to other people—do you think other people have gone through the same kind of experience?

TM: Well, I really don't know. I wouldn't say.

P: You've been in the—you say you only went to Episcopal two or three times, so you've been in Holiness, other than the Baptist, about all your life?

LM: I went to a Baptist Church a whole lot, then I went to a Holiness Church a whole lot.

TM: Watch out, Arthur.

P: How did you feel, when you were a young man in the Baptists Church, when Holiness first came in? How'd you feel about Holiness yourself, personally?

LM: Well, I just got to study over it and I see'd the Holiness would be the church to belong to.

P: Were you one of those that was scared of it at first?

LM: Huh-uh, I never was scared of it.

P: But some people were, you said. Let me go back to old days again. [Laughter]

LM: Some getting too old.

P: I know both of you can help me on this. This is a question I've asked a lot of people, but I'm just trying to get all the versions of it. Do you remember *sofke*?

LM: Huh?

P: Do you remember something called *sofke* that you eat?

LM: Yeah, you'd eat with them bow things, you know, like that. Yeah, I remember.

TM: Never one of those in my mind.

P: Now, one thing I've been trying to get straightened out is what time of the year they pick the corn to make the *sofke*.

LM: When they get dry and hard.

P: What would they do to it after they picked it? What would be the next step in that?

LM: Well, they just shove it in cane and have it ground up into chinks like, you know, and then they'd heat it up for *sofke*.

P: They'd have it ground up someplace?

LM: They had to beat it up, had to beat it, grind up with that pestle, what they call a pestle. Had to beat it, break it up, you know.

P: And that's different from hominy, right?

LM: Oh, yes.

P: Now, how did they make hominy?

LM: Well, that's been just a new thing got out. They grind, hitch it on up to the mill.

P: Uh-huh, hominy grits.

LM: Yeah, the grits, what they call grits. Well, they grind it up to a mill, you know, and make grits out of it.

P: Back in the old days, did people ever make white hominy themselves?

LM: No, they never did know what that was, I don't think.

P: They didn't soak it in ashes, lye or anything like that?

LM: Oh, they'd make what they call big corn, they'd soak it in lye.

P: Uh-huh, big corn.

LM: Mm-hm.

P: But big corn's not the same thing as *sofke*.

LM: Huh-uh, different.

P: The big corn is just corn that's shucked-

LM: It's just whole grains, you know. They'd boil it and soak it in that lye and things, had to get soft like, you know.

P: But *sofke*, you don't do that to?

LM: Huh-uh.

P: Now, this pestle that they beat with, about how long was that?

LM: Something about like that long?

P: About four feet long or so?

LM: Yeah, they had what they called a mortar, Uh-huh, a big block thing about that big around and they have it cut out up in here, you know. Then, you'd put that corn in there and take that thing, beat it up in there.

P: That block that they had hollowed out, how would they hollow that out? Would they burn it or cut it or-

LM: Yeah, they'd cut and burn like 'til they got it fixed, you know.

P: Well, they usually burned it and cut it.

LM: Mm-hm, burned and cut it till they got it thick you know.

P: What was the inside shape like? How was the inside of that block shaped after they hollowed it out? Was it square or round or how-

LM: Round like, you know, just round. It had a round bottom to it like, you know. You never could get it square like, you know, it'd just be round.

P: Were the sides squared out or-

LM: Yeah, mm-hm, the sides were pretty squared down like.

P: Would they keep those in the house?

LM: Yeah, they'd keep them in a dry place. They'd put them up, keep them up in a dry place.

P: When somebody got ready to beat up the-

LM: Use it, they'd take it out and use it, you know, put it back.

P: Was that something that only women did, or would men and women both pound the *sofke*?

LM: They both would do it sometimes, fix it, you know.

P: After you've got it pounded up, then how would they cook it?

LM: Well, they'd wash it, you know, and then they'd put it in a pot and boil it, you know, 'til it got done.

P: Would they put anything else in it?

LM: Huh-uh.

P: Just water?

LM: Just water.

P: No seasoning of any kind?

LM: Huh-uh.

P: How did it come out? Was it like a, how thick was it?

LM: Well, it wasn't too thick; they made them thick like, it wasn't very thick.

P: Would you drink it or eat it with a spoon?

LM: Eat it with a spoon.

P: Was that something that people ate a lot?

LM: I suspect they did in them olden days.

P: Now, when you were coming along, how often would people make *sofke*?

LM: I never did eat much of it 'cause I didn't like it.

P: You didn't like it huh? [Laughter].

TM: He don't like much.

P: How'd those old people like it back then?

LM: They ate it pretty good, looks like.

P: When was the last time you remember anybody ever making *sofke*?

LM: Oh, I can't tell you that now 'cause I don't know.

P: Were you a grown man yet or were you still little?

LM: I was a pretty small boy, but I remember seeing my grandma beat it all right and everything.

P: Your grandma was who, now?

LM: Polly, Old Lady Polly.

P: And that was a long time ago.

LM: That's right.

[End of Interview]

Transcribed By: Scott Kraff, November 13, 2012

Audit edited by: Isht Vatsa, December 14, 2012

Final edited by: Diana Dombrowski, December 19, 2012

Abstract by: Evangeline Giaconia, October 26, 2021