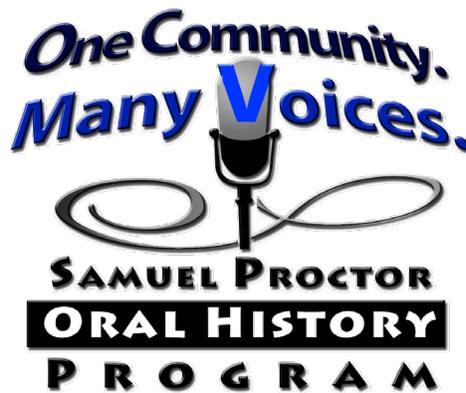


Doug Martin

Poarch Creek Project
CRK-048

Interview by:

Dr. J. Anthony Paredes
August 24, 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

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 048 Doug Martin
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project
Interviewed by J. Anthony Paredes on August 24, 1973
1 hour | 36 pages

Abstract: Doug Martin describes how he and other men from the Headapadida area came to work for Goodyear in Zion, Illinois. Those who migrate maintain a strong community and support each other when they pass through. He talks about his positive opinions of reservation conditions in Wisconsin and discusses his education through high school, before he began working on boats. He speaks about how the people in Zion stay connected to the community back home, and the differences between living in the country and city. He discusses his visits home, the money he sends back to his family, and how he mostly socializes within the community of migrants in Zion.

Keywords: [Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Alabama--Headapadida; Communities; Oral biography]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY

P R O G R A M
University of Florida

CRK-048

Interviewee: Douglas Martin

Interviewer: Dr. J. Anthony Paredes

Date: August 24, 1973

P: This is August 24, and I'm talking with Douglas Martin who lives in Zion, Illinois and is currently on vacation at his mother's place here in Headapadida. How old were you when you first moved away from this area?

M: That was seven years ago—that would be, what would that be back in [19]60 . . . twenty-eight years old. Twenty-eight years old when I left from here going up there.

P: And you're thirty-five now?

M: Yeah. Thirty-four, be thirty-fifth my birthday.

P: How did you happen to pick Zion, Illinois, or is that the first place you went up to?

M: Well, I had some cousins that migrated from here and go up there and working. Started working in a factory up there. Goodyear. Well, there's several people from here, you know, works up by. Junior McGhee, and Cecil McGhee, all brothers and stuff like that.

P: Who's their mother and daddy?

M: **Natalie** McGhee.

P: How did all them get started going up to the—

M: Well, first of all Junior he came from—was living in Antigo, Wisconsin. He married a girl from up there, because we used to all go to migrating work and go leave from here and go up Antigo and work in potatoes and stuff like that around. And so Junior, he married up there, so from there he got a job down here at the Goodyear Plant, so he started working there. Everybody else from around here got to knowing where he was working at so they just migrated. Matter of fact, I'd

say twelve years ago, about seven or eight of us guys that worked together, you know going on, and **we in and went**, Zion right now.

P: When you say worked together—going off and working in the fields?

M: Yeah, in Wisconsin. Now every one of us is working in Zion, and working at the same plant, too.

P: You work for Goodyear yourself now?

M: Yeah.

P: Uh-huh. Did y'all help each other get those jobs, or just because—

M: Yeah, a lot of ways, yeah. Because if they needed somebody at the plant, we'd contact somebody that we knew, or something like that. Or either when they go put in an application, well, we'd recommend them, give them something like that.

P: Any of you ever phoned down here from Illinois to say, hey there's a job open, why don't you come on up?

M: Yeah. Lot of times.

P: Who were some people that you got to go up there that way?

M: Let's see, Norman **Raimer** and a couple of his—well, Howard Presley's up there, and he had two brothers he called, and they went to work up there, but they both quit and come back down.

P: You think there's ever much chance you'll come back down here permanently?

M: Yeah, whenever I—I'm gonna stay there till I get enough years in to retire. Because we have to have at least ten or fifteen years in, then we can draw some retirement when we quit.

P: What would you do if you came back here? Do you have any idea?

M: Well, I hope to have me a place to build. I mean, you know, bought and built. I'd like to have some farm land or something another.

P: Are you thinking about trying to build out around here? Or further out or what?

M: Well, probably here or either—yeah, more likely around here.

P: All of y'all that are from this community originally that are up there, do y'all ever get together for social occasions?

M: I tell you what, just about every weekend. Because we all work together, and we always got something going like, up there we get in and play ball together, unless when football games come on, something like that, we all generally get to one house and watch it. [Laughter] We really get together quite a bit up there.

P: Do y'all ever go up drinking together or anything like that?

M: Used to, long time ago, but now most everybody is just about settled. We guys are more settled now than used to be. I guess everybody had to settle down and watch that penny now too close.

P: Are there any real young guys up there at the present time, say in their late teens or early twenties?

M: No. Well, Norman's boys, they up there, but they only about fifteen, sixteen years old. But they going to school and all.

P: Were you married—

M: Let's see, Huey's up there, Huey McGhee. Well, he just reached, I guess he's just about twenty-one now, he's just reached.

P: Were most of y'all married when you first when up there and started working at Goodyear. or not?

- M: No, I wasn't married when I went up there, because I had been divorced.
- P: You were divorced, and then you went up there?
- M: Yeah.
- P: Do y'all ever get together with—are there any more of your people still living in Antigo, Wisconsin?
- M: Yeah, there's a McGhee boy up there, and there's a Jack Charles Jackson, his wife. He married a girl from Antigo, and that McGhee boy married a girl from Antigo.
- P: What kind of work do they do over there?
- M: Charles, last time I talked to him he's driving a truck. And then, that McGhee boy he's working some little old factory. And there's a Gibson boy up there, Floyd Gibson, that's, um . . . you'd probably . . . Claudie?
- P: Claudie?
- M: I believe she's a sister, or a nephew, aunt or something. I don't know, but he's related to her, and he's up there. I guess this whole community is related some way or another.
- P: Were you up there at the time that Houston and Benny and David and Evelyn and all those were at Harvard?
- M: Yeah, I'd used to go over there and visit them.
- P: How far away is that from Zion?
- M: That's thirty-five, forty miles, about all.
- P: I noticed the other night at your granddaddy's wake Greely was teasing you about not coming over to visit or something. At that time, would there ever be an

occasion when all of them from Harvard and all from Zion would get together and watch a football game or something?

M: Yeah, we used to go over there a lot of times. Especially me and John McGhee used to go over quite a bit—

P: John?

M: Yeah, John. Because he knew him.

P: Do many of you up there go to church?

M: Yeah. Cecil's wife, well, since she's been up there she got saved and everything.

P: Do most of the people that from here up there go to the same church?

M: No, they go to Holiness Church. I'm Episcopal myself.

P: Let me ask you, I may have asked you this informally once before—have y'all up there ever had much contact with the large numbers of Indians that are living in Chicago that has Indian clubs and all that kind of thing?

M: Never have, really. More than likely, only reason I don't contact them myself like that, because it's generally in a riot, stuff when you hear everything that happens, well it's generally one of them riots or something like that. I don't know, just like that deal they had up in what was it North Dakota?

P: Yeah, South Dakota.

M: Well see, that was a big—well that was their own tribe and stuff like that. And I didn't even know much about it myself, or wouldn't have knew much about it.

P: Are you familiar with the Chicago Indian Center?

M: Well, there's a few round. A couple of them work the plant where I did once before. But I don't know, those Indians kinda stay more to themselves. They

kinda different from—they not as friendly as people around here. [Laughter] I was out one night to this club and got in a conversation with one Indian and he was from Alaska, up in there. And really, he and I just didn't have the same thing going on.

P: [Laughter] What were your differences?

M: Well, one thing, he couldn't hardly speak American. The way they live up there and everything. It's completely different and everything. I don't know, we just didn't see eye to eye. He believed in one thing, I believe in a different way.

P: Had anybody up there from, say a church or a university or anything ever contacted any of you because you were Indians, wanting to do research on you or anything like that?

M: No, never have. Because I don't—they don't that know we up there, a lot of them people. I imagine they would have, if they knew that we was there.

P: When somebody new comes up there from the community, would it ever be the case that y'all would pitch in and provide him with transportation money, or get him started on a house, or anything like that?

M: Oh, yeah. We've always—yeah, help them. We don't let them go hungry, that's for sure, and have a place to stay or something like that. Matter of fact, those Cumming boys came through there not too long ago, and stayed a couple of nights and went on to Wisconsin. I mean, just about every year there's some of them comes through, you know and stop. A lot them boys just still like to go from one place to the other, they don't wanna really settle down, they just—

P: Were you talking about—it was just couple of weeks ago, I guess, when **Narvalie** took a crew up there?

M: Yeah, Narvalie was saying there was some more boys that was off by themselves, and they stopped by through.

P: So these people that are still working in the fields, they sorta have a resting place at the homes of the you guys that live up there in Zion, Illinois?

M: Yeah. They stop by, yeah. They generally stop to see us. Sometimes they'll even come down from up there from Antigo where they're working at. Come down over the weekends. I have left and went up there for the weekend just to see some people there.

P: Not to work, but just to—

M: No, just to go up there and visit them, because I know we know they're up there.

P: Do y'all ever—since that's a good hunting and fishing territory, do y'all go hunting and fishing around there?

M: I go fishing a lot. Back this past winter, I did more fishing than I'd ever did before. I done a lot of ice fishing.

P: You did, huh?

M: Yeah.

P: How did you pick—I've been ice fishing myself, but it's a lot different from any other—

M: Take a—all is you find you a lake and make sure the ice is good and frozen solid.

P: I know how to ice fish, but how did you get into it, through people up there, or?

M: No, I started back when I was up in Wisconsin with a boy that lived up there, he took me ice fishing one time. We went out on a big lake up there. And this past time here, I went out with, me and this boy to work—we work together, we went out. They built a little shack out on the ice, and you just go right out there and dig you a—take an auger, cut about a twelve inch hole, and rig your poles up and just put them in. Fish just like—actually, I believe if you can catch them through that ice better than you can in a lake. Because a fish, he can come to that place and he can breathe, get oxygen better. So they'll just start—get them to that hole.

P: Do y'all ever have parties in your ice fishing shacks?

M: No, that's—

P: Two or three guys getting together, and just doing more shooting the bull and that sorta thing than fishing?

M: Fishing, just talking. A couple of us, about two or three's about all you can get in to one of them shacks. Because they don't build it very big, I'd say about four by six, or something like that or something. Just big—

P: Well, I haven't actually seen, but I used to hear a lot of people in Minnesota talking about sometimes people would put those things with TV sets and everything else and really just stay out there practically all winter.

M: Well some—you could do it. If you catch it at the right time of the year, and the ice froze good. But if that ice is froze good, well it don't take much to hold up the shack. Just set it out there, and put your heat in there and everything—

P: What lakes do you go on?

M: Well, there's a chain of lakes up in that area where I'm at. Gray's Lake, Gages Lake, Fox Lake. We got one called Deep Lake. That Deep Lake's got a lot of **crappie and blue gill** and stuff in it. Cecil McGhee, he went out there just before I left coming down here. Him and his boy caught about fifty something, probably blue gills.

P: Do you ever go up way into Wisconsin up in the Northwoods country and go fishing or vacation or anything like that?

M: Me and a friend of mine that worked together, we went up this past season—back in June or July, one—and went up there while white bass was running in this one lake up there. It didn't take us no time, we had about sixty of them.

P: I've heard some of the older people that used to go up there talk about their occasional run-ins with Winnebago and Menominee and Chippewa Indians up there. Do you ever run into any of them while you're traveling through Wisconsin?

M: You can if you go out on a reservations.

P: Have you yourself ever been out on a reservation?

M: Yeah, I've been through there.

P: Now, what'd you think of it?

M: I tell you one thing, on that reservation they got it made. It's pretty nice.

P: Really?

M: Yeah. Look like it is.

P: From your perspective, you think they're any better off than people are here?

M: In one way, I believe they are, because they don't have to work as much. These people around here have to work for a living. Them people out there can move to that reservation and stay on it and not do anything hardly. That makes a difference. These people around here's gotta get out and work.

P: What about their housing? How did it compare to housing around here?

M: Most of those people on the reservation's got nice group of houses.

P: They do?

M: Yeah.

P: Well, I've heard a lot of folks around here that just—what they know of reservations and what they read and see on TV—talk about terrible reservations are. Have you ever had any discussions with your own people here about reservation Indians?

M: I never have discussed it with them.

P: Yeah. Well, you're one of the few—matter of fact you're about the first person I think I've ever heard from this community talking any kind of positive way at all about the reservation conditions, and I guess it's because you've seen them personally?

M: I tell you, I think reservations would be all right for people, you know, that's not able to work or anything like that. And that way, **you knows that will be** taking care of you, and stuff like that. But if a person is able to work, it's best for them to work, I don't care who it is.

P: Yeah.

M: But in reservations, they're not all that tied down like that, because they can go off of it and back on it, too.

P: But most of those Indians in Chicago come from reservations, originally.

M: Yeah, a lot of them. Matter of fact, right there at Zion there was this camp, I believe Camp Logan. You probably read that in the paper, about them Indians coming up out of Camp Logan and taking it over, and they held that. They stayed down there for . . . uh, shit, I know two months.

P: That was on national TV—

M: Two or three months, yeah. The people in Zion got so involved in, they would take clothes and food and everything, [inaudible].

P: How'd you feel about it?

M: They wanted to stay there. Well, I—they was fighting for their rights, what they thought was right. So, I didn't mind them sticking it out as long as they could.

P: The people at work generally know that you're Indian?

M: Well, everybody that I work with always, every one of us that's Indian, they call us Indian. [Laughter]

P: Do they? [Laughter] Did you get any comments from any of them when all that was going on?

M: Yeah, just about everybody that come by me said, hell I wished I was the Indian. [Laughter] Especially when we got that, what was that check for, \$112? They found out that, they said, damn I wished I had Indian in me. [Laughter]

P: Now, I was talking about when they took that Camp Logan over, did you get any people asking you what you thought about it, or teasing you about it or anything?

M: No. Not so much about that deal, but when they was up in North Dakota, I believe it was—

P: Wounded Knee, you mean?

M: Yeah, Wounded Knee. They was asking us when were we gonna go up there.

[Laughter]

P: And what would you say to that?

M: We'd always tell them, well we getting together, we gonna leave anytime.

P: [Laughter] So you play along with that kind of teasing?

M: Oh yeah. Go right along with it. I think people has changed a lot in the last, I'd say in the last twenty-five years that I can remember good, they've changed a lot about towards the Indians, stuff like that. They used to be pretty rough on the Indians around here. Because a person where they didn't have any Indian in them at all was, man, they wouldn't even hardly socialize with you. But since then, back in twenty-five years, changed a heck of a lot. Now everywhere you go, you're proud to be an Indian, out here.

P: Now back when you were growing up here in this community, was that still the conditions when you were growing up?

M: Yeah, a lot of times, a lot of it.

P: What about in school and that?

M: Yeah. Well, when I went, we got to go to the Atmore school. Well, things was done changing completely. But back then . . .

P: Did you go to school out here your first six grades?

M: Went to school right over here first. Had this little school here. Only the first time. And then from there, went over here and graduated from the sixth grade, and from there I went to McCullough. Yeah, they had a school up there—

P: When you went to McCullough, what was the reaction of the McCullough people to y'all going up there?

M: When I went to McCullough, well everything had done changed completely. There was no difference, hardly. But you could still sense it a little bit, but my brother, [inaudible] now, if you get to ever interview him, he could tell you because he really knows. When he went to school, it was hard.

P: He went to McCullough, too?

M: Yeah, he went to McCullough some.

P: I've heard that the people in McCullough were really worse—

M: He went to McCullough a little, but most of his, he went from then to Atmore.

P: I had heard that the people in McCullough were really harder on the Indians than people in Atmore. Would you say that's true?

M: Well, I can only speak for myself. I lived with my aunt and uncle up at McCullough. **Lou Bob Stitem** and his wife, **Oda**. And all those people around McCullough, I don't know they—I knew them all, and I mean, I get along good with them.

P: So you were living up there, you weren't going up there every day on the bus?

M: No. See I was going from over there in the neighborhood up, because the school where **Reuben** lived, see? I guess all of them boys, guys I went to school with, they thought the world of me, I think.

P: Well, how many years were you at McCullough?

M: I went to McCullough for three.

P: Then you transferred to Atmore?

M: Yeah, see it only went to the ninth. I graduated from McCullough, and then I went to Atmore.

P: Did you finish high school?

M: No.

P: How come you didn't finish?

M: Well, I tell you, it's just like a . . . it happened to me what happened to a lot of these boys. Back then, your money was, it was pretty tight. And I got out of school that year, I'd done got big enough that I went off and I started, got me a job working on my boat. And you'd get making a little bit bigger of money, and you figure, well that's all, you gonna make it then, that's all you need. So that's one of the reasons why come I never did finish high school. If I hadn't never got to migrating off like that, I probably would have stayed. And any kid that's coming up now, I'd say to stay put until they finish school.

P: Did you get a job through your uncle over here on the boats, or how did you get?

M: No, my brother **Ophin** he's working been them boats for—

P: Ophin. That's your brother, Ophin?

M: Yeah. He's been working the boats since, shit I imagine he's got about twenty-eight years' experience on these boats and stuff. And the first one I went to work on when I was working with, let's see . . . I started working with just me and a captain on it. And then my brother, I got what you call experience. a little

experience, about a month or two. And then one day we was going up the river and my brother he pulled up, they were come up behind us on another boat. And so, I had a little experience, so they took me off that boat and put me on a boat with him so I could work with him. And he and I worked together for three or four years on the same boats and everything.

P: But how old were you when you quit school and started working on the boat?

M: Sixteen.

P: Is there a law in this county that if you have to go to school till you're sixteen or not?

M: Yeah, you supposed to go now, I think it is. But back then, it didn't make any difference. If a kid dropped out, they figured, well that's just makes room for another one, let him go. They didn't push it too much. Now, they push it pretty good.

P: There would have never been a truant officer looking for you or anything like that, you think?

M: Not back then there wasn't. Especially on the Indian boys, they didn't care whether you went or not. A truant officer or anything like that, because I don't know, just didn't take much interest. They had to put a big fight, argument, and they finally got this school over here, because this one nothing but more or less a house, clubhouse, something like that.

P: That's the same one that's attached to the church?

M: This one here, yeah. That's about all the size it was, it wasn't very big. But then there's, you'd take that place over there was taken here the community from

Poarch and Hog Fork and them places they call that. And this community around here and all that, that's the place over here, it used to be full of them.

P: Now, you had some from Huxford too didn't you? Or did it?

M: Yeah, kids coming, I believe. Yeah, kids coming from Huxford, because see that is why I say they were Indians and instead of them going to a school that was closer back, they all had to come here.

P: Were you at school at the time that some of the parents kept their kids out of school as a kind of protest against the kind of teaching they were getting or was that before your time?

M: I can remember, I heard a little of that. Because they didn't want to go because the Indians was going there. But—

P: I'm talking about the Indian people themselves keeping their kids out of school one time sort of a strike at school to get better teachers or something.

M: No, never had. They was always glad to get them there. I mean, that's my part, what I've heard of. I mean, just speaking for myself, I never heard of any of—

P: Well, were you at school at the time—or maybe it's hard to remember you were so young—the time that Calvin McGhee and all those really got hot on trying to get a better school and all that, get the kids bussed to town. Do you remember anything about that?

M: I can remember just a little bit about hearing it, but I didn't—

P: But as a kid it didn't make much of an impression on you at the time?

M: Back then it didn't. Because . . . I have to talk with some of the old ones that really knew that of—

P: Yeah, well I was just asking as, since you were a kid at that time what kind of impression it made on you then.

M: See, they were trying to go to Atmore, and see, I was going to McCullough.

P: I see.

M: Well, I fell right in with the group at McCullough, it didn't bother too much. They was just about where at McCullough—I know just about every family in McCullough, just about around there.

P: Do you live there with your aunt for the whole three years you were in school there?

M: Hmm, let's see. I lived with them some, and then my mother and stepfather, they moved up on my aunt and them's place and was farming with them, and I stayed with my mother then.

P: Do you know of any other, during your time, any other families that had their kids living up there at McCullough so they could go to school?

M: No, I didn't. I think I was—my family was about the onliest ones that I knew that really went. Yeah, there was one boy, **Littleton McGhee**, you've probably heard of someone mention him. Call him Frank, little Frank McGhee. He went to McCullough school and I don't know what he—Frank, he fell right into pattern with them to, and every one of them liked him, too. I guess because we played basketball in McCullough, and we played nice, and boy they really did strive on that, they liked to have a good—Frank, he was a good basketball player.

P: Did you ever play any sports at Atmore?

M: Yeah, I went out for football in Atmore. Played some, until I—

P: Was Houston McGhee in your class, or was he a little ahead of you?

M: Oh, me, Houston, and Benny was all in the same grade.

P: You were?

M: Mm-hm.

P: You played football at the same time they did?

M: They played a little ahead of me, and then I played a little the next year with them. Me and Houston and Benny was on the same team all together one time, until Houston got his leg hurt, and I quit and went off on that boat, and Benny's the onliest one; he stayed out, and they played him the whole time. This would have been one—if they'd have had a high school out here for Indians, they would have had some kind of a football team. Because all these boys out here was country boys, and they were big boys.

P: Was there ever any talk with trying to get a high school out here for the Indians?

M: Yeah, there was talk, always talk of wanting it. But nobody could never come up with the money and then never had to work with to get it anyway, no way whatsoever. I was hard.

P: Going back to Zion a minute. How big a town is Zion?

M: Well, right off hand, I'd say Zion is about fifteen, eighteen, twenty thousand. But what's make it—and I couldn't really pin it down, because I'm right between seven miles on each side is on the south side of Waukegan. Got about seventy to eighty thousand. And north side has gotten about seven or eighty, I imagine; it's called Kenosha, Wisconsin. See I'm right up next to the Wisconsin line, and

see for the Zion part, fifteen, sixteen thousand, or eighteen, somewhere along there. But it's spread out now, it's almost expanded all the way.

P: Your Goodyear plant where you work, is it in Zion?

M: No, it's in what they call North Chicago.

P: So you have to commute quite a ways to work every morning?

M: Well, I think it's about twelve miles.

P: Now, let me go back to something else you said, see if I got it right. You said the original person in this community that got a job at Goodyear, get it down here and transfer up there, or did he get it up there?

M: No, he got it up there. I think that was Junior McGhee. I believe Junior's got the most time in that plant.

P: And he just sort of walked in there one day and asked for a job or? Had he been one of those that was—

M: Well, he just filled his application in and went right on up there.

P: And he was the one that was married to the girl in Antigo, Wisconsin?

M: Yeah, he married that girl from Antigo, Wisconsin.

P: Your wife was saying something the other day about how impressed she was about how fast words travels from down here up there is that really true?

M: Yeah, because see if something happens down here, well any one of those guys up there, they contact them. Well, they'll generally let the rest of us know.

P: So that way, by working all together there, each individual doesn't get called individually?

[Break in Recording]

- P: What were you just saying about if somebody calls—just whatever you were saying just a minute ago?
- M: Well, generally if anybody calls from up there down here, generally they find out if there's anything happen, if there's anybody sick or something like that, and they generally let everyone else know if they are. Especially the men, because everyone of us men that's been up there, and just about we all work on the same shift, and we see one another every day. Matter of fact—
- P: How many of you are married to girls from here in the community? I know you're not. How many girls?
- M: Let's see **Norman Raimer**, well he'd marry Elouise McGhee, Junior's sister. Houston married from down here. And Cecil McGhee, his wife is from down here.
- P: Is she Indian?
- M: No. She's not Indian, no. Jack Amos my brother-in-law, he married my sister from around here. The rest of them, let's see Junior, **Early**, and Howard Pressley, they married girls from Antigo, Wisconsin.
- P: Do all those fellows get down here about as often as you do?
- M: Yeah, we've always all been to that plant long enough, now we got three years vacation a year now.
- P: Three weeks?
- M: I mean, three weeks a year, we get three weeks a year. Yeah.
- P: Do all of them take their vacation coming down here? Every time, like yourself?
- M: Most of them, they try to take at least two weeks, because then they'll save a week and go up north with the wife or something like that. Or sometimes they

take all three weeks down here, and on the weekends—see that's only two hundred miles, they can go up there for the weekend, something like that.

P: When you first went up there, and when others had first gone up there, did they encounter any particular problems in getting used to city living that you can think of?

M: Well, the guys worked with me and I know up there didn't, because we've all traveled around enough that we that we knew.

P: So there's no—

M: It's still hard living in the city when you lived in the country all your life. It just ain't the same thing.

P: What are the specific things that you find hard about it?

M: Well, you're tied down a lot, because you can't—living in a city like that, you don't have a garden laying up there. They don't have the land for you, you don't have a garden, you can't have no dogs outside, you can't have anything. Unless you own property, and if you own the property, you can't have any dogs, chickens . . . well, a dog can't run loose in the city, and chickens you can't even have them in city limits. In a city, it's just not like the country really.

P: What about getting around different places? You find any particular problems there?

M: You mean going from—

P: Driving and things.

M: No, me and my brother was just talking while ago, and I told him that Illinois' drivers' license are more stricter than this part of the country. Because you got

too much interstate and more stop signs and stuff like that. And the traffic is much, much heavier.

P: For your own self personally, if you could, I'd like for you to just sort of list off what you see to be the advantages of living up there, and then what you see as being the disadvantages. First of all, what advantages are for you personally in living up there?

M: Well, they got a lot of jobs up there. If you're job just closed down, well you can find another one the next day, because they factories on top of factories up there. Just about all them factories is run by people from the South. They millions of people up there from the South working in those factories.

P: Besides the ease in getting another job, what other advantage is there in living up there?

M: Not any, really.

P: What are the disadvantages of living up there?

M: The biggest disadvantage is too far to come home, something like that you know. You can't come home, well every weekend like you would want to. You have your vacation—I'd say, one of the advantages, I believe up there is too, because when you work, and say you get vacation three weeks, like I was telling a boy the other day, how many people around here gets three weeks' vacation a year and get to go somewhere? I said, if they get three weeks, they sure not going to take three weeks and go north.

P: That's right. [Laughter]

M: I say, I get three weeks' vacation, I'm coming south, I got some place to go. I ain't going to take no three weeks and go north.

P: When you come south on your vacation, do you usually do you like you did this time and not spend all your time right here in the community, but maybe go down to the coast for a few days?

M: Yeah, try to get down there, but more or less this time, we had those kids with us, and they had never saw anything really. Course that's the one reason why we went down there. But if it was just me and my wife, well I'd probably stay up here in the community the whole time, and I could run down there like if I wanted to get up, went early in the morning time, spent the day and came back and lay around rest up for a couple of days and maybe go back again.

P: How has the community accepted your wife and your children?

M: Everybody seemed like they accept them all right.

P: Getting back to the original question I asked you—besides the being able to get those three weeks and coming down south here, have you thought of any more advantages there is to living up there, in your own opinion?

M: Well, one thing about, well the company I work for, we got a—hospital plans is better, the insurance is better. The company I work for pays all the insurance and everything. I even got a medical card if I need medicine or my family needs medicine, I can get a prescription filled for one dollar. Anywhere. And they pay for it. And that's hard to beat, you can't find that nowhere.

P: You don't think you could find as good a fringe benefits and that kind of thing at any kind of job you can get right around here, say in Mobile or Pensacola?

- M: I haven't really checked in on it, but I was talking to Kent yesterday—Kent McGhee?
- P: Uh-huh.
- M: He works for the telephone company, and they got good benefits.
- P: If there was an opening suddenly for you in a job, say as good as Kent's down here, do you think you'd give up your job up there and come down here?
- M: As old as I am right now—thirty-four years old—and the years they got in that plant, I couldn't make the change. Because I'm working for retirement, too, you know.
- P: How soon do you think you'll retire? Will you retire as soon as you can, or will you put in more years?
- M: I think I would come back home in another ten years anyway. Easy.
- P: You won't work up there till you're sixty-five?
- M: No, unh-uh. If it was left up to my wife, we'd come back now. [Laughter]
- P: She's originally from where?
- M: Mississippi.
- P: Does she have people still living over in Mississippi?
- M: Oh yeah. Yeah, she still—
- P: Do y'all usually swing by there on vacation?
- M: Oh, we thinking about going back through there for a stop. But her mother is up right next to us.
- P: Oh, in—

M: Yeah, her mother lives up in Waukegan. No, not Waukegan, North Chicago, right down below, about seven or eight miles from us.

P: Well, I've been asking about things that y'all do sort of amongst yourself, but how about—do many of you send money back down here and help support any families down here at all like your parents or anything?

M: If I get hold to any spare money, I send it for mother. She always, she just—

P: Do you know of any of the fellas that regularly are sending a part of their checks down here to help out their folks or anything like that?

M: No, not right off hand, right now. If they do, they kinda keep it more or less to themselves or in the family, I think to them.

P: So y'all aren't really, except for occasional extra money, well you said if you get any spare money you send it to your mother. About how many times a year would that happen, would you get some extra money that you can send for?

M: About two or three times, about three times.

P: Just—

M: Oh, if she gets in a jam and needs any money, well she'll let me know and I'll send it to her. I don't care how many times—

P: Just a rough estimate, during the past year, about how much do you think you've sent for mother in dollars?

M: Oh, well my daughter, see I have to take care of her down here anyway. I imagine—I try to send her at least six hundred dollars a year, my daughter.

That's average of fifty a month. And my mother, before she got on, I think, Social

Security she's getting now. Before she got that going, we always sent her money then to help her out.

P: Do y'all up there, do you get many folks coming from down here up there to visit you? Like does your mother ever come up, or any of the other fellas' parents or anything?

M: When I got married, my mother came up. And John McGhee, he got sick back here, well I guess it's been about five months now. There was about seven, eight of them came up. Eugene Sales, Howard McGhee, my brother Ophin and his wife, and John's three sisters, they was a lot of them came up then.

P: They just come up for a visit?

M: No, they just came more or less to see him, what was wrong with him.

P: How long did they stay?

M: I think it's a week, I believe it was a full week they stayed on.

P: So all in all, y'all stay in pretty good touch with people down here?

M: Oh, yeah.

P: How many phone calls do you think make a month back down here? That either you make or your mother makes, how many times are you in touch by phone with your people down here?

M: I generally try to once a month or twice the month. Hey, I might call her twice in the same day, if something you get talking about. I always tell her to call me anytime she want to, but she said, well I'm not going to call you unless there's something important that you have to know or something like that.

P: Do y'all ever exchange letters, or can your mother read well enough to exchange letters?

M: Momma, she don't read, she always has to get someone to read her, but it's much easier to pick up the phone and call her, stuff like that now.

P: Has she had a phone all the time you've been up there?

M: My mother?

P: Your mother.

M: Yeah.

P: If you could, and I know it's hard being—if you could sorta reconstruct the scene last December, the day that the Indian money arrived, and how you found about it and all that.

M: Well, when I found out about it, there'd been talk going on all the time if they was going to get it. I figured they was going to get it, but when, I didn't know because it's been going on for twenty-something years. All of a sudden one morning, one of them guys was talking and said, well I got my money today. I said, what money? He said, well that Indian money. I got it. And they said, I believe my mother called up and told us. See, mine came to my mother's house, mine and my daughter's. My daughter's, hers was made out to me for her, and so then I just cashed it and sent her the money to her, because . . .

P: Do you happen to know just generally how most of the guys up there used their Indian money, when they got it? What they did with it?

M: No, I don't really know. I don't really know how most of them used it.

P: Now, you sent your daughter's just directly back to her?

M: I sent hers directly back to—

P: What'd you use yours for?

M: Let's see, I bought me a fishing rod, a reel on the rod, one thing. And I think I put the rest of it in a bank. [Laughter] I don't know really how you would spend the Indian—I put in the bank then. Some of mine might not be spent yet. [Laughter]

P: Did by chance y'all have any kind of celebration or anything after the money came, to celebrate? Or was there much to do made out it?

M: No, it wasn't. I think everybody was glad to get that \$112, but the majority of us, said that's no money compared to now. But still, you know, just the idea of getting them. Just something that you never—I never did really deep down believe that it was gonna ever pay off, because the government been holding onto it so much, and then they can find ways to keep on holding onto it, you know how they operate. Because if they want to pay off, why don't they just go ahead and get it over with? Like that, instead of just dragging along and dragging along. I don't know.

P: Generally speaking, when you're up there in Zion, I assume that you have friends up there that don't come from here as well, is that true?

M: I tell you what, I know more people up there than I do around here now. Because a lot of these kids grewed up since I left here—a lot of kids around here that I don't know. But I try to learn them, and get back to knowing whose kids is whose, stuff like that. Now, but up there, the plant I work in is only, we only have about six or seven hundred employees. And I never even one of those in there.

P: Do you socialize with them much?

M: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I know all their families and everything.

P: About how much of your socializing is with people you know from up there compared to socializing with people from here that are up there?

M: Well, there's a big difference. I mean, the people that's from here, you're more closer. The people up there, there's a lot of people up there that I know that I'm real close with, but you're still not as close to them as you are from the people you were born and raised with and brought up.

P: Are you saying that most of your real close socializing and friendship and all is with people that are from here? Like when y'all get together and watch a ball game—

M: Yeah.

P: —is that strictly people from here—

M: Yeah, more or less—

P: —or it is some of the other guys that are up there?

M: No, a lot of people up there, because them guys up there that I work with are from the South, too. They're not from this area, but they from the South, too.

P: So some of them might get together with your bunch from down here, too?

M: Oh, yeah. Sometimes it's high as twelve, fifteen guys together.

P: Let's take a specific thing—if you were in a tight, and you needed to borrow a hundred dollars, say a hundred dollars, would you ever go to anybody that you just knew from up there, or would you usually or always go to somebody that you knew from here?

M: Well, if it's somebody I knew from here, and they got the money right away and stuff like that, well I'd go and get it from them. But if they didn't—generally somebody's got it, you know, around. But guys up there, if you know them, I've been working with them, and they close. I could walk in that plant out there and guys that I know, I could get five or ten from each one, it wouldn't take no time to pick up a hundred dollars. You might walk up to one of them and they might have a hundred dollars on them, or two hundred dollars in their pocket. Because a lot of times, you can't get a check cashed, or you can't get it to the bank, and . . .

P: Yeah. And you would hit up somebody that you just met up there as easily as you would somebody that came from down here?

M: Oh, yeah. See, that plant that I work in is just like one big family, really. We got a union, and it's nothing but a big family, really. Everybody knows everybody. It ain't nothing to—

P: Is it a closed shop?

M: Huh?

P: Is it a closed shop, that you got to be in the union to work there?

M: If you work in the plant, you gotta be in, you gotta join the union. It cost seven, I believe seven and a half a month.

P: Did you have any particular feelings about that when you first started working for them?

M: What, the union?

P: The union, uh-huh.

M: No, because I liked the union. That's a good thing, it protects the people, too.

P: Yeah. Well, I know in the South, generally, unions are not well thought of in a lot of places, and I just wondered if you have any—

M: But if you ever talk to any company that's union, they wouldn't have nothing there for you.

P: Feel like they get better work out of their people, or what?

M: They don't get better work out of them, but you get paid for what you do. You got a certain job to do, that's the way we work, we have a certain job to do. Well, we do our job, and if we get caught up or something like that, well that man can't come over and bother me and say, well you got to go over here and do this job and go over there and do that job, and just keep moving you around. And that's one thing the union protects you from. It's just . . .

P: Getting back to something you said, you said that it's just not the same, the other people and the ones that you grew up with. Can you point to any specific difference in the way you act with people you grew up with here compared to the others? I asked you about borrowing money and—

M: Well, one thing about it, because all those guys up there is related just about. You more closer, I guess, to your kin people than you are—

P: You feel closer to them?

M: Yeah, yeah. Well, if I go to one of those guys' houses or something like that, I feel like I'm just at home really, you know. I don't care how close a stranger is to you, but you just don't go in his house and I don't know, just feel complete in it.

P: You feel like you in your own house almost?

M: Yeah, you feel like in your own house if you go to one of these boys' houses or something like that.

P: Has it ever been a case of somebody from here that really wasn't in the circle that sorta just stayed off and didn't participate with the other people and visit back and forth?

M: No. If we don't see them at home on the weekend, we see them every day at work and some. And matter of fact, some of us worked back together on the same job.

P: And you're on the same shift?

M: Yeah, same shift. On the same shift and have the same job. He'll be doing a job just exactly my job—

P: Yeah, I see. Uh-huh. Now, did you say that all of the men you know who came originally from this community, this Indian community, work at Goodyear that live in Zion?

M: Every one that ever came from this community has worked in Goodyear.

P: Yeah.

M: Just about every one.

P: Let me ask you one last general—

M: That ol' boy told me up there the other day, say we got more Indians then when we have employees. [Laughter]

P: [Laughter] Was that one of the supervisors or something?

M: Yeah, it was a supervisor. Say we got more Indians than we have employees. [Laughter] He and I get kidding him like that, and where to saying we ain't got

enough work. And I said, well—and you know we have a lot of bosses running around there. I said, all I can say is reason you ain't got no production out here, you got too many chiefs and not enough Indians. [Laughter] Because you know, we got a lot of supervisors and stuff like that. Well, them supervisors ain't doing nothing, see. I tell, I said you got too many chiefs and not enough Indians around. We'll have to send out some smoke signals and recruit some. [Laughter]

P: Well, there's a fair amount of joking about the Indians.

M: Oh, yeah. Others in the past, now, it's more than . . .

P: Has there ever been anybody that you know of that works up there that's been offended by any of the joking about being Indian?

M: No. Everybody that I run into now, I don't care where I go just about, sit down and talk with them, they all wished they were Indians now. I mean, you've probably run across the same case now that, if you've talked to them. You got to seriously talking with them and just about, I don't know how they get it, but just about everybody you talk to is got a little touch of Indian somewhere in them. They can tell you, and they done find it out, figured out where it's coming from and everything.

P: Have you ever met any people up there that you hadn't known before who were Creek Indians that got in on the claim?

M: Up there? No

P: Uh-huh. Let me ask you—

M: I imagine there's some, but they didn't know about it, and they didn't get in on it. They lost out.

P: Incidentally, how many years ago was it that that first man that you mentioned got the job at Goodyear? Do you know how many years ago that was?

M: He's got about ten years in now, so that's been about ten years ago.

P: And I don't remember whether I asked you this or not, but you had already been up in that part of the country earlier working in the field.

M: In Antigo, Wisconsin, yeah. But when I was working on the rowboats, I used to run the Mississippi River, and we went all the way to St. Paul, Minnesota.

P: Oh.

M: St. Paul, and that was on the Mississippi, and then I went up to Ohio to East Liverpool, places like that. See I had run all over, been up them rivers and things.

P: What were you hauling in the rivers?

M: Gasoline and oil. That was one company I worked with. We didn't carry nothing but oil and gasoline and stuff. And the last company I worked for, we strictly didn't push anything but grain. But go up empty and come down loaded with soybeans, corn, stuff like that.

P: Do you still have a license, an operator's license to run a boat?

M: No, I never did have an operator's license, I was just more or less decking on it, working on the boat. You didn't—

P: You don't require any special license for just being a deck hand?

M: No.

P: How much did that pay, by the way?

M: Back when I was doing it, I'd get about five something a month.

P: Five hundred something a month? And how many years ago was this?

M: That's been about eight years ago.

P: How did your brother Ophin, how did he get into that work in the first place?

M: I really don't know offhand, it's been so long ago, but a couple of these guys worked around here on the little boat down in Pensacola. And he got in with a guy who was a captain down there. Man by the name of Spooner. And he took a liking to Ophin and they just kept on as it going, boats.

P: Ophin help others get jobs besides you?

M: Oh, Ophin got a lot of these boys jobs on boats down there.

P: Who were some of them?

M: **Shirley Bonn**, you know Shirley. I think Shirley got on and Randy and . . .

P: Randy?

M: **Eddie's** boy, Randy Martin. And Buddy Gibson, he's in Pensacola now. He's helped a lot of them, and he's helped a lot of guys get jobs that's not even from around here. But you know run into them, stuff like that, talking.

P: Let me ask you real quickly—

M: I imagine if he needed somebody to work right now. He's always after me, wanting me to come back and go to work with him.

P: What do you think lies in the future for the Indian people in this community?

M: I don't know. I was talking to Kent yesterday, and Kent was telling me something about they's gonna—if they could any way, they kinda talking about buying this section of land here for the school and stuff like that. And put a swimming pool out there and make it a park area. I tell you, that would be one big help for a lot of these kids that have some place to go swimming. Already got a nice ball down

there, and if they could fix up and keep it fixed up. They gonna have get together and get them some little tractor or something to keep the thing mowed and stuff like that.

P: Do you see any possibility of any significant further changes in people's attitudes about how they look at life in general?

M: You mean, the Indians? How they look at—

P: Indians, yeah.

M: I couldn't really say, because I'm not around here all the time. I really wouldn't know myself, because I'm not around here enough. But I think my mother, she's doing good now.

P: Is she making more quilts than she's ever made before you think?

M: Yeah, I think she is.

P: Uh-huh. Yeah, what I was getting at was the kinda joking y'all do about being Indian up there, I wonder if that ever would happen down here.

M: Oh, these boys down there, they don't think about it. They wanna be Indians.

[End of Interview]

Transcribed by: Mike Goodwin, August 9, 2012

Audit edited by: Allen Kent, December 20, 2012

Final edited by: Allen Kent, December 20, 2012

Abstract by: Evangeline Giaconia, November 9, 2021