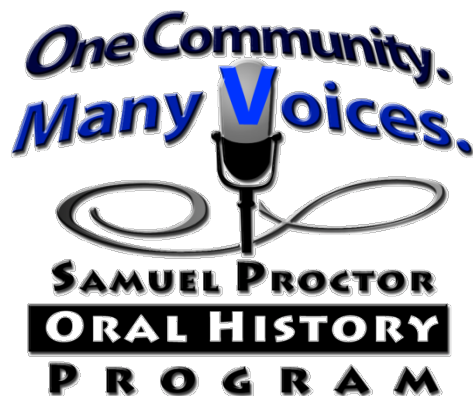


Adam Daughtry

Poarch Creek Project
CRK-060

Interview by:

Dr. J. Anthony Paredes
August 9, 1973



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CRK 060 Adam Daughtry
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project
Interviewed by J. Anthony Paredes on August 9, 1973
2 hours, 2 minutes | 67 pages

Abstract: Adam Daughtry discusses the poor quality of his education when he was a child, which made him determined that his children would have better access. He describes his work in farming, wood, and hauling hands (transporting laborers), and discusses how other families sharecropped on the lands of Charlie Hall and Bates Moore. He recalls the day he and his brother stopped the school bus driver and demanded he bus their children to school, and speaks about how he almost bought land from Charlie Hall. He discusses his part in helping Calvin McGhee with the land claims case, and their visit to speak to the governor about establishing an Indian consolidated school. He shares his ongoing pessimism about the ongoing land money situation and about how children in the community are still not going to school. Finally, he discusses the creation of the consolidated school.

Keywords: [Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Chief Calvin McGhee; Education; Activism]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY

P R O G R A M
University of Florida

CRK-060

Interviewee: Adam Daughtry

Interviewer: Dr. J. Anthony Paredes

Date: August 9, 1973

P: This is August the ninth in the home of Mr. Adam Daughtry.

[Break in recording]

P: You were just saying, as you were coming up through life, working and so forth, what you wanted out of life. Could you just start talking about that again? What life was like for you, years ago, and what you tried to do for your kids since then.

D: Well, as I said, I didn't get an education. People in this neighborhood wanted to beat me out of it. I didn't have parents to take up for me. I made a statement, if I ever got to be a man and had a family, I would give 'em an education and give what it takes, if it takes my life. That's what I meant.

P: How did people beat you out of your education? What do you mean by that?

D: They wouldn't let the Indian go to school here. They wouldn't let one go to Atmore, they wouldn't get one go to McCullough, Huxford, nowhere.

P: But you did go to some school in Hog Fork.

D: Well, just a few Indian people. Don't know white people they're just . . . maybe ten or twelve houses.

P: What kind of teacher did you have?

D: We just had teachers, that's all I know.

P: Was the teacher white or Indian?

D: White.

P: It was held in a, like a—

D: Dwelling house. No running water. No nothing. No lights or anything.

P: Did y'all have a blackboard or anything like that?

- D: I believe we did. I'm not sure, it's been so long. I believe we did have a blackboard.
- P: What did y'all do for books?
- D: I guess we bought 'em, but it's been so long, I clear forgot about it. County didn't furnish any of them, I know that.
- P: Yeah. You went to that Hog Fork school, and then from there you went to Poarch Switch school, you said?
- D: Yeah.
- P: That Poarch Switch school was held in the Episcopal Church?
- D: Episcopal Church.
- P: Now, was that any bigger than the Hog Fork school, were there more kids there?
- D: Oh, yeah.
- P: About how many children were in that school when you were going there?
- D: Oh, I'd say roughly fifty.
- P: Fifty? And how many teachers were there?
- D: One.
- P: Just one teacher for the fifty? What ages were all those kids?
- D: I'd say seven, eight to twelve, fourteen years old . . . Miss Daniels, **color** up here, she was a teacher there. And they had what was a teacher named Miss Connelly, **Lily Bell Connelly**. Miss Connelly—I just remember Miss Connelly was there before Miss Daniels, or Miss Daniels before Miss Connelly. I know when I quit, Miss Daniels was there. I was kind of riled up, see, it wasn't doing any good.

P: You were smart enough to see that school wasn't doing any good? What could you see? Even some school is better than none?

D: Well, way I had it figured, you're just going up for a good time and I was a poor boy. I mean, I had to make a living. I just got up and went to work.

P: What was going on at the school, what was she teaching?

D: Anything you wanted to. Talking about it was just running the school. I mean, it's all right if you got there at ten o'clock, it's all right if you got there at eleven or any time. I was one of those schools.

P: Did the teacher ever whip any of the kids or anything to make them—

D: Oh, I think she tried a time or two. It wasn't a school. It didn't matter. Go home if you wanted to.

P: What did you all do when it came to dinnertime? Did you all go home?

D: Well, some did, some didn't. Some brought their lunch. You had to walk . . . let's see, you know where twenty-one is down there?

P: Yeah.

D: Where the store is there, where you turn?

P: Yeah. **Raymard's** store?

D: Yeah. Well, we lived right out in that field there. We walked from way up there.

P: The field is right up there behind American Station, you mean?

D: You know where the American Station is there?

P: Yeah.

D: Between Raynard's store and the American Store, there's a house right out and that's where we was living. My brother Jack, I was living with him. We walked from there to there.

P: All the way to Poarch Switch.

D: Yeah.

P: That's close to, what? Three miles? Two or three miles? Something like that?

D: Every bit of three and a half. So, we used to have to walk from Poarch out here to Headapadida over here. To this little old school, I don't know if you—do you know where Eugene Sells lives right over—

P: Yeah, right now, I know where he lives.

D: Just about a hundred yards back down his house there, right on top of the hill where you go up that hill, used to be a little church there and a little school house there. They used to walk from Poarch, over out there.

P: And that was before your time that they did that?

D: No, I can remember doing all this time.

P: Why didn't they just go to school in Poarch instead of going over there?

D: They didn't have an Episcopal Church here.

P: Oh, I see. This was before the Episcopal Church came in there.

D: Before the Episcopal Church come in. We didn't have it in our time. All them people around Poarch there—and that was before the Hog Fork deal was, we went over there. So eventually, best I can remember now, it was so far for children to walk, it got a little school down there in that house I'm saying in Hog Fork and some went I don't know where. But they used to walk from Poarch over

there, where Eugene Sells lives. What little they got. But I can't remember a teacher taught over there. I can't. I can't remember teacher's taught over there. But I do remember these two out here.

P: Well, besides the teaching and the schools, did y'all have any ball games or any kind of sports and recreation?

D: Nah. You mean like football, basketball, anything like that?

P: Or anything like that.

D: Oh, we might have got out there, best I remember. Played some kind of games or something, I don't know.

P: Well, back in those days, how soon was a kid expected to start helping his family working around the place and barn and things like that?

D: Well, to tell you the fact about it, he had to stay out of school doing a lot of time to help them then.

P: Mm-hm.

D: People had farms. It was tough times and people lived on what you could get.

P: Were there many of them that had their own little farms or were most of them working for somebody else?

D: Every ninety-eight percent of them worked for somebody else. Everybody had their farm too.

P: Working on halves, or something like that?

D: Halves, it's what it was.

P: When you were a real small child, were there many people working in the woods at that time getting paper wood, or did that come on later?

D: That come on—yeah, they worked the woods all their lives. My brother . . . and after I grown up I went in wood business. I guess, like I said, that's been through this country ever since I can remember. My brother, he worked in it. My old one, matter of fact, my three oldest brothers, one of them's dead now, and my mother said my dad got killed in a log camp, and I guess that was time and time on. Guess that's the way you'd put it.

P: Now, when you remember back when you were a boy, were they using trucks already at that time, going out and getting the wood like they do now or how were they?

D: No. I can remember Eugene's wife was Roberta. Well, her dad was my uncle. We're first cousins. Over there what we call the Ewing's farm, well we put it on – well, they did, I was young, but they put it on with mules and wagons. I guess they told you same thing, didn't they?

P: Mm-hm. Now, was that for paper or was that?

D: That was paperwood.

P: That was paperwood.

D: They call paperwood, pulpwood. Now that's the first time I ever know of pulpwood was during that time. They put it on mules and wagons over there.

P: Now, you're talking about Will McGhee?

D: Yeah.

P: He started out with mules and wagons before he went into trucks?

D: Yeah.

P: Was he doing that back in what they call the Hoover Days already?

D: I guess that's what **I thought. This is what it's called.**

P: Then later on he started having the—

D: Trucks.

P: Trucks and things. Well, what about going out and working in the fields for other people? Not working on halves, but going out and say chopping cotton, or pulling weeds, or picking up potatoes, and that kind of work. How long's that been going on?

D: You mean working for—

P: Day labor. Where you go out and just work for somebody.

D: Oh, well, that's been ever since I can remember. I remember when I was a boy, first work I ever done, I worked for eight dollars a month. Plowed a mule. **Bates Moore** up here. You went out to pick cotton, I believe it's thirty-five cents a hundred there. Run about thirty-five cents a day.

P: Did you get room and board for that, too?

D: **No.** Oh, you might get dinner. I believe what's there. So much and dinner, you know.

P: Now, at that time, would a person usually work for some particular person or were they hauling hands? You know, getting a whole bunch of the people and taking them from place to place at that time?

D: Oh—

P: Like when you were plowing for somebody, did you work for him on a regular basis or did you just plow for him?

D: You worked when you could get it.

P: How long did you work for Bates Moore?

D: Oh, I don't know. I just a kid, I don't know.

P: What about hauling hands? When did all that start, when somebody would get a truck-load of people and take them all someplace else to work?

D: That's started in . . . let's see, [19]40. Started in World War II.

P: World War II?

D: Best I can remember. I know I started in World War II.

P: Were you going or hauling?

D: I was hauling?

P: Hauling.

D: I carried the labor all over the United States, just about.

P: How'd you get in that business?

D: Just contracting.

P: Well, I mean, how did you find out that there were opportunities to make money that way, and get your first contracts and all of that?

D: Well, let's see. I've been contracting for Peterson in Baldwin County for thirty-one years. For one man, I've been working with one fellow for thirty-one years.

P: You're still doing that some?

D: Yeah, worked for him this year. Now, I got a . . . that's going a—I don't remember how first time in [19]48—I actually don't remember how I got tied up into this deal. Me and another guy, a guy I worked for, Howard Neil—that's a good fellow for you—was a friend to Indian people.

P: Mm-hm.

D: Matter of fact, we carried **Curtis Frank** them all up. Norfolk, Virginia, digging potatoes on harvest. I don't know just how we got tied up in that deal. And from then on, well you know how words will get around, to different lands. And then I got to going to Wisconsin and Carolina carrying labor and everywhere. The first way I got to going to Carolina—I know, I don't really know why I got that employment office.

P: In what office?

D: Employment office.

P: Where was that employment office?

D: In Atmore and Brewton. People up there got to wanting labor, and so they got in contact with us guys down here what handled labor. I knew how I got started in that deal.

P: What year was that, that started here?

D: I believe that was [19]50 or [19]51. I'm not for sure.

P: Now your contract over here in Baldwin County was in [19]48?

D: No, I was contracting before [19]48.

P: Before [19]48. And you can't remember how you got in touch with him over there?

D: Oh, yeah, I can really remember that.

P: Tell me about that.

D: My brother, back in war time—see, I never went in the service. All these big wheels around here got mad at me because I never did have to go to service. They'd wonder how I stayed out of the service. Well, I always was needed in

farming, you see. So, my brother, he just had more than he could do—my oldest brother—in Baldwin County down here, and so he turned—he figured I was done got up big enough, age enough, that I could handle it. So, he turned one of the jobs over to me—he had a bunch of them—he turned one over **to sell them**, Mal McGhee up here. Mal, he was always was a big wheel in that kind of dealings too, you know. So, I just take them from then on. I've been with that same man ever since.

P: Now, you're talking your oldest brother—you're not talking about Jack, you're talking—

D: Jack's my oldest.

P: Jack's your oldest. And he'd been in it before you had?

D: Oh, yeah.

P: You don't happen to know how he got involved in it?

D: Well, really, I don't. The more and just—people needed labor. He could handle all the labor and that. No more than that, I reckon.

P: The first place you started hauling hands was over in Baldwin County. And then after there, where was the next place you went from Baldwin County?

D: Oh, I believe the next place I went was in Norfolk, Virginia. Outskirts of Norfolk, Virginia, little town called Pungo, Virginia.

P: Punda?

D: Just a little country town like Atmore, or something. And from there to tobacco country, and from there up in Wisconsin, different places.

P: Where's the tobacco country?

D: Carolina.

P: Carolina. When you were hauling hands, did you haul mainly the Indian people or do you have a mixture of all kinds?

D: Usually, I did. I would have—you would call it a mixture, sure, white and Indians and niggers, but I had the colored people to themselves. I had them on a truck, and I had my white and Indians on a truck. We'd camp and I had two different camps. They never stayed together like they do in days now.

P: Did you have to carry a cook along and cook for all those people? Who'd you usually get to cook for them?

D: Well, I'd get a colored woman to cook for the niggers and I'd get some Indian woman, my wife, myself to cook for them.

P: Now, what kind of camp would you have? Where would they sleep?

D: They'd have little like you see here, but they didn't have no running water.

P: Now, would the farmers provide those wherever you went?

D: Yeah, the farmers provide that, furnished . . .

P: What were the rates in those days? How much money were you making, were the people working for you making, and all of that?

D: Well, I'm going to be frank, it was all piece work, and it's hard to figure out. Lot of jobs, you would make money, and I lot of jobs you wouldn't make money. It was just because the way the season was. Just like a farming season here. If you hit, you hit and if you didn't, you didn't. Now, I went up in Hightstown, New Jersey, and I think I lost about—I don't know—three thousand dollar. That ride home,

wife sending money to bring my crew back home. Well that's just the way it was.

Now in—

P: You didn't even make the money home?

D: No. Otherwise, I left Norfolk, Virginia, went on to Hightstown, New Jersey. I come back home during the time and the green grass, little bit on the hills now. But I went on up there, and that when I lost money. I lost all the money I made in Norfolk up there. Now, you know, Carolina, it was kind of a sure thing. I believe the boys me and **Peter** carried up there—best I can remember now—they got ninety cents an hour, I believe. And the barn hand, I believe, sixty.

P: The barn hands?

D: Yes. You know what I mean? What I'm talking about?

P: No, I don't. You have to explain it to me.

D: Men out in the field, they cropped tobacco. Out in the field. Well, children could work at the barn. All they had to do was reach in a little tobacco wagon—we called it—get about four, five leaves of tobacco and hand it to somebody, loop it, and put it on a stick. Well, you take a six-year-old kid could do it. Seems to me like they got fifty cents an hour, fifty-four cents an hour. And we got—the foremen of the crew, they got fifteen cents off of every hour they worked. Well, that was kind of a sure thing. I mean you couldn't lose the money, but you didn't make no money.

P: Because in tobacco they were working by the hour?

D: That's right. In tobacco you work by the hour.

P: But potatoes they work by—

D: Piece work.

P: What other crops did you work in?

D: Well, that's about all I worked in, tobacco and potatoes. And tomatoes now. I went all in across the fields then they called Cape Charles—I mean Norfolk, Virginia, over there is what they call Cape Charles, Virginia. Wilson Canning Company. Of course, all that was piece work but it wasn't nothing.

P: That was tomatoes?

D: Yeah.

P: And New Jersey, when you lost all that money, was that on potatoes?

D: Yeah, potatoes.

P: You said a six-year-old kid could do some of those jobs. So, you would take whole families then?

D: Oh, yeah.

P: Would this ever take the children out of school?

D: No, that was right after, when school was all finished. When this tobacco comes off, school's completely out. I mean, it's just—there's guy here now trying to get me to go up there and bring him some labor You can't get no more labor to go around no more.

P: Well, is there more demand for labor now than can be supplied?

D: Everywhere.

P: Really? If you really wanted to go working at it, you could—if you really wanted to go around the country, gathering up anybody you could to work, you could probably still make a lot of money at it?

D: Oh my, you could make money. Excuse me just a second. Good God, **[inaudible 23:29]**.

[Break in recording]

P: What's that?

D: There's one leaving out Friday night.

P: This coming Friday night? Tomorrow night?

D: Yeah. Going up in Wisconsin, where I used to work.

P: What town was that in Wisconsin?

D: Old town they call Antigo.

P: Antigo? How big a crew is going to be taking off for there tomorrow, do you think?

D: I don't imagine it'd be many. Where I used to carry about seventy-five to a hundred, I would say, roughly, it'd be fifteen or twenty.

P: You used to carry seventy-five to a hundred?

D: Oh, yeah.

P: Is that what your bus is for now, is going over to Baldwin County?

D: Say what?

P: Your bus that you have now, is that what you use that for?

D: I didn't have buses during that time, I had trucks.

P: Your bus now, is that what you use it for you, is hauling? So then, besides your job at the prison at the present time, you do still haul some hands, make a living?

D: Yeah. Got to get a leave of absence over there, go around.

P: Do you think you'd ever consider going further away than Baldwin County again to do that?

D: No.

P: Mainly because it's just too hard to get people to take them?

D: You can't get anybody to work. You can't get no labor.

P: What about all these teenagers around here in the summertime?

D: They won't work.

P: They won't? But don't they need any money anymore?

D: I don't think they do. They must not, if they don't work. [Laughter] That's the differing people now than they was back when I was coming about. We had to work. Work wasn't no office to us, we had to get it. Now, I don't know, the government takes care of so many people. Parents don't make children work. Well, you know that, I ain't got to tell you that. People don't make children work anymore. They let them sleep till nine or ten o'clock. When I was a kid, first thing I had to do in the morning time, I had two milk cows and I had to milk 'em. If I didn't milk 'em, I knew what was coming.

P: Then, after you milked the cows, what was your next thing you had to do?

D: Go to work on the farm. We worked the farm, my brothers did, on halves with **Dodge**, you know.

P: Was this while you were in school?

D: Yeah. Well, what school I got, I never did go to school about there.

P: So you—go ahead.

D: Just as I said, I don't know, I was . . . kind of like with these things today, I see things going on that I don't like, but nothing I can do about it. But I've seen with what little schooling, what they was doing when I was going to school. I'd have been better off home having people. I was just built that way, and I guess I've been that way all my life. I've seen where I may have made a mistake, but I don't think I made a mistake. If I'd have had a real good school to went to, I think I'd have been all right. But I didn't have a good school to go to. Otherwise, I was called outdoor toilet, where I saw it, it looked to me anyhow. I just quit. I told my oldest brother, I said, I'll be a lots more help to them plowing a mule than I will up there.

P: How old were you when you finally decided to just quit school?

D: Oh, I must have been about eleven.

P: Eleven years old.

D: Uh-huh.

P: Well, you've done pretty well for yourself, it looks like. How do you think you've managed to make it?

D: Just hard work. As I said, I made a lot of money in my life, but I never did have the sense now to take care of it. Now, I give away a lot of money. Of course, I don't regret it. I don't regret a dime or nickel I ever give away. I felt like I was giving it for a cause.

P: What were you giving it to?

D: Just people. Signing notes for people and different things, banks and different things like that.

P: So you mean you've been—you've helped out some of your kinfolks that, notes coming due, and you just give them money?

D: Signing notes with them, different things . . . gave a lot of money. Not only kinfolks, a lot of more of 'em.

P: Really?

D: Yeah. I was the type of guy was always . . . I don't know, had too big a heart, I guess. A person come ask me for something, I was always the man never could turn them down. I guess that's what you call me; I've been that all my life. I was . . .

P: Was there ever a time when the Indian people had a hard time borrowing money at the bank or anything?

D: Yeah.

P: Why was that?

D: Didn't have any security.

P: They didn't have any security.

D: No job. And no bank will let you have money unless they sure the money back.

P: And none of them had any land or anything they could . . . ?

D: There were mighty few. Mighty few of them had the land.

P: Back in the days when a lot of people were working on halves, did they ever get themselves turned around some way, that they'd get in debt to the man they were working for, they could just almost never get out?

D: That's right.

P: How did that come about, they'd get in a situation like that? How'd that work, then—

D: I think it was mostly pencil work.

P: What?

D: Mostly pencil work.

P: Pencil work. And how does it operate?

D: Well, I remember when I was a boy, over at Poarch Switch—by the way—Charlie Hall, a fellow named Charlie Hall, I guess you heard of him?

P: I've heard people talk of him a lot.

D: He owned all that land over there. He had these—he had, I'd say, eighty percent of the people under his wing. If he told—if he said something, they believed it. Well, right on the corner down here in town, where 21 comes into Main Street there, he had a farm supply store there. And they all, everybody called it farmer's robber.

P: Farmer's what?

D: Robber.

P: Farmer's robin?

D: Farmer's robber, rather. And the old man that died over there, died I guess two weeks ago, he farmed there. Not only him, plenty more. Now, I've heard my mother say—I've heard some say, they would go in, and they were allowed three and a half a week to live on. That was the family. I believe that's right, three and a half a week. End of the year—well, they never got anything. Just another crop, another year to work, a place to live, that's the way I seen it.

P: So they'd buy on credit, that three and a half a week, is that right? He didn't give them three and a half dollars, then.

D: No, they traded it in his store.

P: Traded in the store. The one down here in Atmore? Is that the one on Ridgely Street?

D: It's not there now.

P: Where was it in Atmore?

D: Ooh, let's see. Right where 21—you know where the Alabama Power Company is there? You're going right straight. The first red light out there at Glenn's Service Station?

P: Uh-huh.

D: Well, it used to be sitting right there on the corner on this side.

P: Is that Ridgely Street and Main?

D: Yeah, Ridgely Street.

P: I've heard from other people that Charlie Hall used to, on Saturday, just gather everybody up in a truck and take them down there. Is that true? That worked for him.

D: I think so. I'm not positive of that, now. But I think that people didn't have a way to go, and he would haul them down to get groceries. If you didn't go in mules and wagons—usually, most of them would go in mules and wagons, best I can remember.

P: Was there anybody else besides Charlie Hall that people used to work for like that?

D: Oh, not right off hand. I imagine, I knew there had to be different families about, but . . .

P: Now, did Charlie Hall have people working for him down in Hog Fork, too, or was that just Poarch Switch area that they—

D: Well, he didn't own any land around Hog Fork. I believe, best I can remember, Calvin's daddy bought his—I mean, he worked for Curtis, a fellow Curtis. I never did know a lot about that.

P: Working on halves, or . . . ?

D: Well, I would be scared to say. I wouldn't know, now.

P: How about Headapadida? Was there ever like this—what you call it . . . Ewing's Farm. Was that one of those where you worked on halves, too, or—

D: No. Ewing's Farm never was worked on halves. It was always owned by one man.

P: Did a lot of people work for him, though?

D: Yeah, a lot of people worked for him. Well, the Ewing Bank, who I bought this place from here, he used to be foreman up there. A lot of the Indian people worked for him over there, his father Dave, and Al. And up here, called Headapadida, Will McGhee, with that was all granted land, he had farm in there, you know. A lot of people work for them now, Bates Moore and them up in here.

P: Now Bates Moore had a farm too?

D: Yeah.

P: Now this Miss Lucille Moore that taught at the school.

D: Husband.

P: That was her—

D: Husband.

P: It was her husband?

D: Right.

P: Now, I heard about a Dr. Moore, was that her husband's father?

D: Who?

P: I've heard of somebody who was a man who was a doctor whose name was Moore, years and years ago?

D: I understand that one. I've heard of him, I believe that was Bates Moore's dad.

P: His Dad.

D: I may be wrong. I'm not sure, but I may be wrong but...

P: Now, Charlie Hall, did he give everybody a house that worked for him, did they all have a house?

D: Yeah, they all had a house.

P: Back in those years, back then, did you know of many cases of Indian people going off and working on halves not right in this area, but saw off by a few miles from here?

D: No, I don't.

P: They all had—

D: There were a lot of people on up around Huxford, Indian people, now they worked on halves, but I didn't know a lot about that.

P: You never lived up in Huxford area?

D: No, I never...but I can tell you some guy you can find out as long as you want the information. It was a Hillary Carver.

P: Who's that?

D: Hillary Carver, he's an Indian guy.

P: Where does he live?

D: He just come back from down Florida. I think he lives on the trailer court going around **Tamish Step**?

P: On Highway 21?

D: Yeah, you know where the store is over there?

P: Is it the same trailer court where Joe Frank McGhee lives?

D: No, it's another one.

P: Another one.

D: I believe it's **Stedham's** Trailer Court here or something or other. So he lives, the best I can remember he lives alone.

P: Well, besides working on halves, doing day work on farms, working in the woods, going off working in Baldwin County, wherever else; through the years what other kinds of ways have Indian people had to make a living until this lately here?

D: As far as I know, that's all. As far as I know that was all, that there.

P: How about working on, for the county on the road, anything like that?

D: They never had any jobs on county, they never could get one, wouldn't ever give 'em a job.

P: The county wouldn't give 'em a job?

D: No. It hasn't been too many years Indian people went to work for the county and different things like that. Now WPA way back yonder, what they called the WPA, well they worked on that. That didn't want the Indians in county, I think that was a government deal come out wasn't it?

P: Yeah, federal government.

D: Federal government come out with that. Best I can remember—

P: Well, wasn't the county working colored people at that time?

D: No.

P: Just—

D: Strictly whites.

P: Strictly whites, I mean even doing common labor?

D: Strictly white people.

P: Even on the lowest, lowest paying job, it was still strictly white people. Well, back in those days, what, we've been talking about the Indians, what did the colored people do for a living? Do you have any idea what they were doing?

D: Best they could.

P: Best they could?

D: Like the Indian people.

P: Well, it sounds almost like the white people treated the Indians and the coloreds about the same.

D: That's exactly right. Like I tell a lot of these, sometimes I hate this nigger business as bad as I hate a dead man's corpse, but sometimes I'm glad to see it.

P: Why are you glad to see it?

D: The way they treated me.

P: Uh-huh. Sort of getting even?

D: I guess that's what way I figure it. I call it getting even, I don't know. I can remember my brother's twins, married, one of 'em married Curtis McGhee, one of 'em married Coleman. I can remember when they started school, right up here at Jackson's store. My brother owned that coin wash and things out there way in that trailer park and everything. Well, it come time to go to school start . . . we flagged the bus down and put them two girls on it, and a boy name was Van Martin. So, the bus driver, name was a—man, he was a Hall I can't forget his face. Can't think his first name. Told my brother, said he didn't have orders to pick the children up or something. I was hot-headed, I didn't care no how, and I been got up pretty good size anyhow. I got on the bus with 'em, I said I don't give a goddamn whether you got orders or not, you're gonna carry 'em. I mean that's just the way I spoke it. I meant it. So we went on up to schoolhouse afterward, and that's where the ball got rollin', right there. Because I think I gotta give Calvin McGhee credit, he's the first guy that got it started. And then it went to rolling from then on.

P: Now, he got started how?

D: By just sticking up for his rights, that's all, I guess that's what did it.

P: Your brother was telling me about that day that y'all stopped the bus and I can't figure out what made the bus driver back down. Were you just scaring him or . . . ?

D: Well, he meant—I don't know, he just, I guess he backed down.

P: Did y'all have any guns or anything?

D: No, no.

P: Just you and your brother, was anybody else there?

D: No, just me and my brother.

P: And that was to get 'em on into Atmore?

D: No, that was McCullough.

P: McCullough. For what grade?

D: Six, I believe, starting off school.

P: You remember exactly what school year that was, what year that was?

D: No, I don't, I don't remember. But if you see my brother and see that one of his daughters lives right below him, she can tell you what year it was, one of the twins.

P: Okay.

D: **Fairlane** Coleman, she can tell you what year it was.

P: That must have taken a lot of courage to do that back then.

D: Well, we felt about like the niggers feel today, I guess. I mean that's the way it appeared to me.

P: Did you feel the least bit scared yourself when you did it?

D: No, I didn't feel scared, I just felt like that I, we didn't tell a lie because it was an education like the rest of 'em. It didn't bother me a bit.

P: Do you think, I don't know if you ever thought about this or not but do you think the fact that even though you never met him that your daddy was a white man, had any effect on the way you thought about things, back then?

D: It had to be or wouldn't it be some of us, don't your reckon?

P: It had what?

D: It'd had to be that he had some kind of effect like that because it wanted to come back to blood lines.

P: Yeah.

D: That's the way I figured it. I've always said, I guess, I don't know, I can't, I've had a man's head on me ever since I was a five year old boy, I reckon, the way it appears to me. I've seen my white people do my parents and things so dirty and my people, and all of this and mister so-and-so, and that's been burning me up and knowing all the time that he was cutting their throat. But there wasn't nothing I could I do by it, and I said if I ever got to be a man that I was gonna do different. So far, I did. I mean I just, I don't know, old Charlie Hall is dead and gone and I don't like to about a fellow that's dead but I'm telling a face, you just people around. He'd get drunk, come out through the community shoot his gun, doing all he wanted to and making people do this and do that. Except my brother and Cal McGhee, never did make them do it now.

P: Uh-huh.

D: I've seen my brother beat him in the ground several times.

P: Physically beat him?

D: Yeah, I actually seen him doing it. Charlie Hall's brother too, Jim Hall.

P: Were they wealthy?

D: But he could do like—huh?

P: Were they wealthy men?

D: Oh, yeah, they—wheels, I guess what you'd call 'em. Owned all the land 'round out there and done this and done that. But after I got on up to be a man, I rented a place from him, a fifty-acre field. I didn't farm on halves with him, I rented it. Now, you know, I can tell you right where the field is now. Going through there by, going back to Calvin's, you where the Frisco Railroad comes through there, all that field on this side of the railroad there, where Bill Brown joins Bill Brown's field there. Well, I rented that farm from him back in World War II. So, I heard it was up for sale. I went to him, I asked him, I said, I hear this farm is up for sale. He said, yeah, it is. I said, well, if it is good, I'll make it, give me the first chance at it. He said, well, I will. So, after that year, right at Christmas time, John Crane, guy living right over there, he come over one morning and told me said, well Adam, I reckon you heard I bought this place. I said, no, don't know nothing about it. He said, yeah, I bought it. I said, well, that means that I gotta move, then, doesn't it? He said, no, said, that don't mean you gotta move, you stay here long as you want to except I gotta have the land, you can't farm the land. I said, well, I can't do that. I got cows, mules, hogs and things, I gotta farm. So I went hunting me a place and I found this place. So, the next following year, Charlie Hall comes to my place, comes to my house one day, and asked me did I still want the place. And I said, well, I thought John Crane bought the place. He said, well, he bought but he could never raise the money. So, I don't know, I guess I was stouthearted so my wife and mother says, why don't go buy it. Which I always made a mistake by not doing.

[Break in recording]

P: You said Dr. Holly was . . . ?

D: He was a big real estate man this and that. Him and Charlie Hall were just like that. Well, they office up, his office up there in town. So, I let my mother and him talk me into going down there and buying it. On Saturday morning, I went and asked Doc Holly, would he let me have the money. He said, yeah, I'll let you have the money to buy it. I had to put so much money; I don't remember just what it was. So, I got Charlie Hall up in there, fix up the papers and I just got thinking how dirty he done me, lying to me, and I just give up. I mean, I didn't give up, I just cussed him out; walked out. I was just that type of fellow, I just didn't like for nobody to double-cross me like that. But I always have been sorry I didn't buy it. I had the money and everything to buy it with, but I just didn't like the way he done me after. Yeah, promised me he was going to give me the first option at the place. And then another guy come tell me he done bought the place. Then come by the year later sell it to me.

P: And that was the property between the railroad and—

D: Bill Brown.

P: And the road that runs through Poarch Switch?

D: That's right on the right going this way.

P: All along where all those houses like where C.Y. and all of their houses are?

D: No, no it's not that. It's on this side of the railroad.

P: This side of the railroad?

D: You know where going, you know going back in turn goes to Poarch?

P: Yeah.

D: You know where the Frisco Railroad goes through there?

P: Right.

D: All that property on this side of that railroad.

P: Back to where?

D: Yeah.

P: How far back, excuse, how far back this way?

D: You know where Bill Brown's starts there? Well, you know right in the curve of that road going this way?

P: Yeah.

D: Where that nigger house sitting right there?

P: Right, right.

D: Well, that's about the line there, eighty acres, right in there. So, he wound up selling it to niggers. And I what I never could figure about old Hall, Charlie Hall. The Indian people farmed it up for years and never gave them a chance to try to buy it and he turned it around sold it to damn niggers. That's what got on my nerves.

P: Now this guy that told you he had bought but he really hadn't was he white or . . . ?

D: He was black. I think he made a down payment and had a bad farm year and lost it the next year.

P: Now that was during World War II, or when?

D: Yeah.

P: Did you farm any after that?

D: Oh, oh yeah, I farmed several years after that.

P: Where did you farm after that?

D: Back over here on **McQuade's** place.

P: On whose place?

D: **McQuade's**.

P: Where is that in relation to here?

D: Oh, it's about a mile back over here.

P: South?

D: Going towards Ewing's farm.

S: Toward Ewing's farm?

D: Yeah . . .and I bought—over there, where you see right now over here?

S: Yeah.

D: I bought a hundred acres all the lots from where Guthrie and them living, I owned all that land.

S: When did you buy that?

D: Oh . . . I'll be damned if I can remember—after World War II. And down there where **Kinzie** McGhee lives, I bought that forty acres back there, I bought forty acres in here then.

S: You don't have any of that now?

D: No, I just got disgusted, I don't know. I won't say I **don't [inaudible 51:47]** I made, I was frivolling the money, I thought I was making money, come to find out I was losing money. I had over a hundred acres over here.

P: What was the thing that gave you the start to really get enough money together to start buying up land?

D: I don't know, I just—as I said, I'm just hustling, made a living. I did pulpwood business, logging business.

P: Was there ever a time when you were hauling the hands farming and doing pulpwood all at the same, or you had those things going? Now, your brother Jack, he moved away from here a while, didn't he?

D: Oh, maybe a year and a half, something like that.

P: Did you ever go down into Florida like he did?

D: No. Never went down to Florida.

P: Huh, thought I asked you before, you were talking bout hauling hands. Did you ever haul any hands down to the tobacco around Quincy, Florida, where they had that shade tobacco thing?

D: No. I never fooled with tobacco except for Carolina.

P: And you never worked in the citrus work down there at all?

D: Never worked nothing down there.

P: When was the, when do you think was the main chance that came about when you start getting a lot of the women working in the Escambia Mills, and people working for the county, like yourself working for the state and all that. When did all those changes start to come about?

D: It was in the late [19]40s, the late [19]40s.

P: Getting back to another subject you were talking about. You said that your brother and Calvin McGhee were two that Charlie Hall could never push around. Why was Calvin McGhee that way, or how come he was different?

D: Well, it was just man had sense. I mean by that, he just didn't let man like Hall come out tell him to get in a hole and he'd go in it. Kind of like my brother.

P: But those are the only two that were like that?

D: Well, best I remember, the only two that lived around the farm.

P: The rest of them just sort of did what he said to do? Let's go on to another thing here. You probably have a lot of interesting insights on that and, that was this Land Claims Case. I know quite a bit about, but I'd like whatever you had to tell me about that. How you got involved and helping Calvin, giving him money and all those things.

D: Oh, all that. About helping Calvin, I'll tell you, the way I got it figured. See, a lot of people, a lot of own people think Calvin made a killing out of this deal you know, money, but . . .

P: For signing people up and all that?

D: Cal McGhee lost everything he had. When Cal McGhee started in this outfit, he was in pretty good shape

P: He was farming at the time?

D: Now, I don't think Calvin owed a lot of money when he got started in this outfit. I can near about say it with a clear conscience. But not actually knowing, I don't know.

P: But what kind of work was he farming, or was that the time he was working in Mobile or . . . ?

D: Well, he worked in Mobile and farmed too.

P: Uh-huh.

D: Calvin McGhee worked second shift down there and farmed in the day. I don't know what, but I pretty well know Cal McGhee like to lost everything he had. And all the money, I ever was involved in any of it, well as a matter of fact, I never was interested in it, plain fact, I never was. I fooled around with the thing. People wouldn't stick together; I guess I was too easy to give up. It wasn't for money I involved in. If they was on a trip, donate some money, ten, fifteen or twenty dollars whatever it was. I mean I didn't think one thing about it, one look at whether I'd get it back, didn't wonder when I was giving it if I was gonna get it back.

P: You say quite few people around here thought Calvin was just in it for the money himself?

D: Oh, I think a lot of them did. I think a lot of people did.

P: Did you ever try and explain to people at back at that time what it was all about?

D: Yes. I actually don't believe now with a clear conscience, I actually don't believe around so much in this area, but we've got so many blonde-headed Indians, red-headed Indians, and every other kind, you know. They were the ones that I think thinking, what I was talking about. Now that's the way I had it figured. Half of them wouldn't believe what the man said. Some of them would, some them wouldn't, course that's all over the world.

P: Did you ever go to Washington with him?

D: Never went, never went. No, I never went. He tried to get me to go several times with him. It was said, he tried to get me on the council with him several times. But during the time I was working twenty-four hour a day, I guess. I told him several times that my job never would, time it'd be to go somewhere, I wouldn't be capable of going, I just never did get into it.

P: What was that Houston was talking about the other night when you were frying fish, or something like that, what was that all about?

D: Oh, he was just talking back about how we used to camp out around out back there. Now, you take when this school built up here.

P: The ones that's there now?

D: Yeah. Calvin, myself, Brooks Rolin, and I believe a couple more guys, I can't remember. We went up to Montgomery and got all that started up there.

P: I've heard something about that but I'd like to hear what you have to say on going to Montgomery at that time.

D: Well, that's where we got the school started. Over around we went up to see Dr. Merritt, head of the Board of Education up there. I think some of these wheels around here done doctored him up the way I'd kind of call it. You know. We couldn't talk to him when we got up there. Well, we did talk to him a little, but we couldn't no sense out of him. So, I just spoke up, I believe I did or Calvin McGhee one now, I mean I'm just been so long. We said, well what about the governor, can he do something about it? So he made a statement, said, well it ain't no use see the governor, the governor can't do you no good on that so furthermore you

won't see him. You guy ain't got appointment with him. We said, no, we ain't got an appointment with him. Old Big Jim Folsom was governor then. So we left it 'bout like that with Dr. Merritt I guess. So we went on over to capitol. Now some way, somehow, we got to see the governor. The best I can remember, it was through a prisoner working there on the front, you know how the prisoners work around the capitol?

P: Huh-uh.

D: And right at noontime . . . and so the prisoner told the governor that a, said you got some Indian friends from out at Atmore, Alabama wanna see you, in any way shape or form. And hell, it wasn't a split second before the governor told us to come on in. He'd taken off his dinner hour; he'd taken off his dinner hour and talked with us. And that's what, he turned right around, of course it hadn't been brought in there before then. So, he turned right around to his phone and called Dr. Merritt, who was just left. And he told him, he told Dr. Merritt I don't know what he told him. He said, you can help 'em, and I can help, we all can help 'em. So, that's the way it got started.

P: What exactly did, best you can remember, did y'all say to the governor when you finally got to see him, what'd you say to him?

D: We just told him about the situation here with the school business and the way we'd been treated and we wanted an Indian consolidated school. We had the land up there to put it on, see the county owned it up, owned that land. It was just sitting there to waste.

P: Now that was to get the school building put up?

D: Yeah, get the school building up. But what got me with the school building, after it went on for several years, now here's what really got me. I believe they had three teachers there. And I believe I was trustee there for several years and I was interested in it. During that time, I was interested in seeing children get an education because I knew didn't get one, I was interested in those people getting one. But my own, some of my own people, children wouldn't go, wouldn't go to school over ten or twelve or fifteen days out of the month. So, I could see the county's . . . what they were griping about. They didn't mind paying teaching doing if the children come school but they couldn't pay three teachers to teach about twenty-five, thirty young'uns a day. I could see that problem, you can too. Children just didn't attend school. In this state, in this county right here, there's never been a law here to make children go to school.

P: Never been a law here to make them go to school? And so there's nothing they could do about it, they just never—

D: Nothing they could do about it. You know in most counties in Alabama, right in Baldwin County over here, the adjoining county here, a youngin, a child stay out of school over two or three days, they're gonna come by to see about him. But I never know nobody in Escambia County to come by and see why they were out. They children running around up here, twelve-, thirteen-year-old ain't going to school. Won't go.

P: Whose idea was it to go see the governor, or go see the Dr. Weeb or whatever his name Dr. **Merritt**?

D: **Merritt.**

P: Yeah.

D: I'll tell you, it's been a long, I don't know, it's just somehow or other just between us four went **[inaudible 1:04:51]** I guess.

P: Now was this, I heard about a time when the parents, some of the parents had a meeting with the superintendent of schools, when they were still in that old, that building that's the attached to the Episcopal Church now, they had a meeting with the superintendent—

D: Now, we never have school there. There never was school in that church. Oh yeah, hold on now I'm wrong that was around the corner, that was before it was moved around.

P: Before it was moved?

D: Yeah, you right.

P: And I heard there was a time when they had a big meeting with the superintendent of schools and they fired some of teachers and hired some new ones. Do you remember about that?

D: Yeah, I think so. I think Miss Moore was one that they fired. See Bates Moore was on the Board of Education—her husband—for years. And I think, they fired some of them there or done something.

P: Were you involved in that doings there?

D: Yeah, oh this like to been some bad fights before, all down the road, there's a long story. We liked to have a lot of trouble up in Brewton over there with Weaver and there about. One time, one of the guys is dead now, Brooks Rolin. We liked to have some bad trouble about that around here.

P: In Brewton, Now was this before you went to Montgomery to the governor?

D: Yes, think it was.

P: Now, that time you went to Montgomery, was Miss **Grace K. Mays** already teaching out there at the school?

D: No, the school wasn't built there then.

P: No, I mean was she teaching at the older building down there in the-

D: She never did teach there, the first teaching she ever done was in the consolidated school.

P: In the new school?

D: Right. She never taught in the old school. She taught in the school here.

P: Now, the time that you and Jack stopped the bus out there, was that before or after you went up there to Montgomery to see the governor?

D: Well, the school wasn't built there then.

P: Oh, I see, that that was before. What was the first thing y'all did to try and get the school situation straightened out? When they had the meeting with the over in Brewton, was that the first thing that ever happened on that?

D: You mean on the school building, or—?

P: No, on getting better teachers, that was the first thing? I was asking you about when they fired a bunch of teachers, or fired some teachers. Was that the first thing that happened to try and get the education better?

D: No. The first time they started to get education that's when they started putting the children, you know, when the school, let's see now . . . See, Mrs. Elsie Moore, Lucille Moore . . . somebody else. That's after this school was built, I

believe. See, they was all in a clique. Bates Moore was on the board, school board; he had all his people teaching school, good friends. And always going down there to make the money and go back home. They didn't try to learn the children anything and that's when the firing come on. That's when they got to getting more teachers. I just remember right before that school was built up there or not. But I believe it was, that was before this school was built, best I could remember.

P: And then stopping the bus, was that before or after they did the firing to get in some more teachers?

D: I'm just trying to think. That was before, I think –I know it was, twenty girls in the seventh grade and they had to go a high school, it was just grammar school then, it had to be. See, anybody to go to school in that dwelling house, we called it, was just for Indian people. And when the he got through grammar school, well that was his road in.

P: No chance for any more education—

D: No chance for no more. That's when it got to rolling sure enough.

P: Now, you had children in school at that time yourself?

D: No, I didn't have any children in school then. I was a young man then. My first boy born in 1941, it died, and the next boy born in...I guess it was wartime before I had any children in school.

P: Who was your first wife by the way?

D: Beg your pardon?

P: Who was your first wife by the way? Who was your first wife—

D: McGhee, Inez McGhee.

P: Inez. So then, it was after all this school business then Calvin McGhee started the land, Indian money thing?

D: Oh yeah, that was way after. It was way after that...I'll tell you, the Indian people have been treated dirty through this country, you bet bottom dollar on it, they were treated dirty.

P: You've talked about the education and the way they were treated when they were working on halves for people. What other ways, specific ways, were they treated dirty? I mean I know that's bad enough, but were there other things that were done to 'em too?

D: No, I think that whole education, you know.

P: Do you think there's nowadays is there any, any of that continuing even in a small way of treating Indian people a little less than somebody else? Any of that going on still, do you think?

D: Oh yeah, it always will be don't you think?

P: Well I don't know how what evidence do you have for it, how do you see it that way?

D: Well, I just feel that way, it may be just my feeling now, I may be wrong, but I could be wrong. It may be the feeling I was treated so dirty once. Possibility I could be wrong.

P: Do you know of any specific incidents that have occurred lately that indicate that the Indian people aren't be treated as well as they should be?

D: No, I really don't.

P: Well, what do you think is going to happen on this, continuing this land money situation and what the council is trying to, some of the things that Houston was talking about the other night, what's gonna happen in the future on this?

D: As I was saying to Houston the other night over there, I really don't know. I mean I just . . . I can't figure out one thing about it, so much money for **police fund**. It made out one time, and the lawyers got so much money, and the Indian people didn't get any. Now what I say, that's hearsay, they said the lawyers got so many thousands and thousands of dollars and knowing where he got it, I don't know. But I can't figure out the reason them getting so much, and the people getting any. So, it must have been crooked some way.

P: It's hard to tell sometimes exactly what's going on.

D: That's the way I got it figured. I believe they was getting so much percentage and the way I understood it to start with, but it looked to me like they wound up with all the percentage. Another deal, the deal that Houston and them had going up there the other Sunday, as I told you, I don't fool with no more, about this little old bit of money they think they're gonna get now if they get it, I don't know if they're gonna to get it or not. Don't know a thing about it. But what little bit of money will get, if they'd all put the money together and put in some benefits they might realize something out of it. What will that little old bit of money be to you?

P: Well that, when they took that vote, it seemed like there was a lot more people that said they didn't want to do that then said they did want to do that. And I wondered why is that you think most of the people would like one woman said want their twenty-five percent?

D: Just ignorance.

P: Ignorance?

D: That's all you can call it. That's what I was saying a while ago. If people, they think, oh wow, they think people are gonna beat 'em out of it. You see my point? That's exactly what it is. That's exactly the reason we quit fooling with 'em. You can't explain it to 'em. They hadn't really got the knowledge enough to see ahead of 'em and you couldn't beat it to one of 'em's head. But now as I said, Charlie Hall and some of them come through there and explained it to them, by gosh, it's all alright. And that's what's reason I just quit fooling with 'em. I mean I'd get mad and I just—I got out of that school business up there. You try to do something for the Indians, some of them come up with same things like you. Like the woman who did she said she wanted her twenty-five percent. That's the reason we get out of that. So, I just got out of it.

P: Now the school thing too?

D: Yeah, I got out of all of it.

P: You mean you got—

D: I mean the trustee business and things.

P: What were the trustees? Is that something that Alabama has for schools or what?

D: Well, the school will have three trustee each school, and they supposed to be kind of head of it, but it's all voted on and different things.

P: Were you a trustee at the time that all that school business was going on?

D: No, I was trustee when this here school was built here.

P: And how many years did you serve as a trustee?

D: Oh, about seven or eight years, I don't know exact count.

P: After this new school was built?

D: Yeah.

P: And why did you say, what caused you to get out of it exactly now?

D: It's people. It's like you try to explain something for better, and they don't want to go along with it.

P: What specifically were you trying to explain to them?

D: Well, several different things, you know, some way to make money for the school different ways. Go to TP forums and things.

P: Go to what?

D: Go to T, what you call it. God damn. What did they have at school, a little TP meeting or?

P: PTA.

Unidentified female: PTA

P: PTA.

D: P, yeah. PTA.

Unidentified female: I didn't know what you was talking about.

D: Have different things to raise money for the PTA meetings and different things. You'd get five or six, seven, eight, ten or fifteen all the way on up. So, I just—they was a hard bunch of people to get together. I'm going to be, I guess no more than you've around here you know that.

[Laughter]

D: I know you see that. You just can't, I just got out of it. I just don't fool with it.

P: Did they have trustees before this new school was built?

D: I doubt it. I mean.

P: When they had the school in the dwelling houses there were no—

D: I don't think they did. And I don't definitely I don't know.

P: Well, you feel like the meeting Sunday or so ago up there a couple of weeks ago, that shows the same kind of thing that you saw with the school situation?

D: That's right. How did that come out? I never did hear them say, how did it vote out?

P: Oh, it must have been about twenty to one, they divided it up to thirty dollars apiece. Maybe it wasn't quite that bad, maybe it was ten to one. I don't know, but it was a lot. A big bunch of people on one side, and not too many on the other.

D: And I'll bet you a dollar to a donut, if that had been some big wheel there like say Charlie Hall and them, it'd went the other damn way.

P: You think somebody from outside could have convinced them otherwise?

D: I think so, or the right kind of colored people.

P: Do you think Calvin McGhee could have convinced them to go the other way?

D: No, I don't think so, no.

P: He couldn't have?

D: He the one those own people. He couldn't have convinced them.

P: So you think maybe it's a situation of people afraid of their own people taking advantage of it, but not the other people taking advantage of it.

- D: That's the way I got it figured. Now, I say the older race now, not the younger race. I'm talking about the older race.
- P: Did you, have you seen, seen this from the time you said had a man's head on your shoulders since you were five years old, was it that way then?
- D: Same way . . . I mean, they just, I don't know, they just otherwise a white man, he was kind of a leader, but he told them something, that was it. You couldn't change them with a Gatling gun.
- P: Has there ever been much problem of, as the Indian people got a little more money in their hands, say traveling salesmen coming through the community and selling them a lot of stuff? What kind of things?
- D: Oh, different things. Selling them things they didn't need, charge three times what it worth circumstance. Of course, they didn't sell them too damn much, didn't have no money I don't think.
- P: Uh-huh. What were the main of things that a traveling salesman—
- D: I wouldn't know that, just different things . . . Yeah, insurance, they'd sell them phony insurance a lot of times and different things like that.
- P: Was that still going on at all, or is that all in the past?
- D: That's all in the past.
- P: Do you remember if there was ever a particular time when oil companies came through here buying up oil rights from the Indians, what little land they had?
- D: No, that's only been several years ago.
- P: Several years ago?

D: Yeah, I think everybody woke up pretty well to the fact here, you know, about different things.

P: Now, all these young people that have been educated, say in the past twenty, twenty five years, do you think they've had much influence on the thinking of the older people at all?

D: Yeah.

P: Is that it?

D: Pretty good. They all have. But, I'll put it this way; I say sixty percent of them over there ain't got any education, the young ones either.

P: Even the young ones don't have any? Now, why haven't they gotten an education, now that you the old people worked around and got to where they are today?

D: Now you play this sound somewhere else here, it's just damn **[inaudible 1:22:33] parents.**

P: It's what?

D: **[inaudible 1:22:36]**

P: Right.

D: They're not sending them to school, don't make 'em go to school. Now, you know a child good as I know 'em, now I was always this type of man, a young'un don't want to go to school, I'm sick, I feel bad, and ain't damn wrong until the bus runs and he's all right. Right?

P: Right.

P: Well, all this went on over there for years. Now, I was tough, though. See that boy up there, serious boy, that's my baby boy, I live over there. And I used to tell my children, I left home early to work. I left home anywhere from three to four o'clock every morning. And I said, if that school bus leaves you, you're gonna walk. So, one morning she left him and he walked from over there where the schoolhouse where the Episcopal Church used to be, the Holiness Church, there now, I lived right down there. He walked about a mile and a half. I sent my sister, went and got him, carried him home from school. But I was hard on my children; I made them go to school. I wasn't hard on them, I just, I made them go to school. But I didn't know it, there'd be boys right over there, yeah. Play all day, wouldn't be in school, plenty of 'em. There's that Rolin right, Jack Rolin over in there. I don't know if he got any child that finished school.

P: Which one is that?

D: Jack Rolin.

P: Living there now?

D: Yeah, around by Holiness Church there. You know—

P: I know who you're talking about, Jack Gibson.

D: Jack Gibson, I don't know if he's got a child that finished school. Not only him, plenty more. I'm just taking that for one for instance now. There are a lot of more that ain't finished school. And they're lots of them right up here. And it was their own fault. I won't say it's the children's fault; it's the parent's fault. Well now, well they got a chance to do.

P: Well, were those kids needed to work at home a few years ago?

D: No.

P: No work for 'em to do at home?

D: Some of 'em got to broom.

P: What do you think it's much changed say in the past two or three years, are things starting to change at all? Or not?

D: Now it, I'd say seventy five percent of it is, but some of it's not.

P: Uh-huh.

D: I just don't, I don't know, it's just, what I don't understand, now, if you're not able to send your children to school, the government helps you send them.

P: You mean financially?

D: Financially. And I just can't see a reason that you don't try to educate the children. Of course, unless there's a donkey out there somewhere.

P: Well, you feel like there's still quite a few that don't care?

D: I do. I sure do. There's a man right up there, Buster Rolin, I believe he's got thirteen children, and I think one girl finished school and the Episcopal people sent her way up north somewhere where she can.

P: Do you know of many that the Episcopal Church sent up like that? Many children that they helped that way?

D: They've helped two, three up in there, I don't know exactly how many.

P: How many children from this community out here have gone on and gotten some college anyway, do you know?

D: Not even not now that I know of. Now I see, I think Van Martin, the Episcopal people take him and sent him to school and I believe he went through some kind of college. I believe he did, I'm not sure. And he's a big wheel in the service now.

P: He's the one—

D: He didn't stay at all.

P: He was one of those y'all put on the bus that day?

D: Yeah . . . He didn't stay at all. That's the about the only one that I know of.

P: Well, let me ask you one thing, we're almost out of tape here. Looking ahead to the future, education, jobs, anything you can think of, where do you think the Indian community is headed as a whole? What's gonna happen in the future?

D: Well, I think there's something ahead of them, if they help themselves. But if they don't help their selves, I don't see no future for them. The biggest job if people just want you to sit down and give them something, but you gotta help yourself. And there ain't nobody going to walk up to you and give you something now. If you don't try to help yourself, ain't nobody going to help you.

P: Do you think there'll be a group of people living out there for some time to come? All living together like they do I mean an Indian family, all put together? What keeps them there?

D: I hate to say this, but it's ignorance.

P: Ignorance?

D: Yeah.

P: You think they'd be better if they all just left the Poarch area and Hog Fork and just moved off?

D: Yeah, I think been scattered out. I actually do. I don't know, it's just, well, they—I mean, I just don't understand it, and they should know better. If five sleep, sleep in one bedroom and all that. It's different thing out there, I don't know, I just.

P: I'm not talking about in one house but kind of like you yourself. You've got yourself a nice place here and you're not living right in the community anymore, but you are pretty close. Do you think that people should...

D: I think they should scatter, yeah. I sure do.

P: What should, what should the council be working for now specifically do you think; now they've gotten land claims money or Indian money rolling? Y'all got a school those years ago. What should the council be working for now, representing the people?

D: Well, what they really should be working for, the way I think, is to talk to people try to get these people on attending, going to school.

P: Get 'em what?

D: Get these people, send their children to school.

P: Uh-huh. Working on education?

D: Education. That's what I think they should do.

P: What about this powwow and all that kind of stuff, what do you think of that?

D: I don't think anything of it, because in my book they gotta do it.

P: There's not, huh?

D: I don't think a thing in the world to it myself.

P: You don't think it helps anything one way or the other?

D: I really don't. School.

P: Now didn't Calvin start some of that too, some of that wearing feathers and all that?

D: Sure. I'll tell you right now...I don't know how much Indian you got in you, but here's where –now, I drove a bus from Birmingham once. Carried up there on a big three or four day get together like this, you know, all that dancing, all that kind of stuff. And there's people there from all over the country, Indian people. Well, there's people in there that white, white as whitey, blond-headed, well them's no Indian. I'd sit around and listen to people talk you know. People there said, well them ain't no Indians. Well which they were right. And that's really what they were talking of. Now you take, oh years ago, people come by here hunting on Indian reservations. I said, there's no reservation up here. Which there's not, but they'd be looking to find the Indians. That's the reason I say all that junk **[inaudible 1:32:17]**. In my book, it ain't nothing. Just a get together.

P: You don't think it could ever turn in to a money making proposition?

D: I really don't. Now, that's where I got it figured, they maybe got it figured the other way. [Laughter] But it's been going on now for twenty-five years, and I ain't seen them make no money yet. Made it, if don't make some money fin twenty five years, well, I don't think its gonna be possible.

P: Well, do you think there ought to be anything at all to, say, keep young kids reminded of the fact they are Indians or anything like that, or should all be forgotten, the fact that they're Indian?

D: I don't believe that keeps in mind they're Indian, do it?

P: What?

D: I don't believe that keeps in mind they're Indians, is it?

P: What? the feathers?

D: All that.

P: What does keep reminding them?

D: Well he knows he's Indians, that's gonna keep his mind.

P: Do you think the young kids now are, they're pretty well aware of that?

D: Oh these young kids, they get on up, they get out of that. They're mixing on with too many different people now.

P: Uh-huh.

D: All they're a few now. You take Houston McGhee; you never change him with nothing and several more, but when this thing first started, well, you could get some grown girls in, nice looking girls, looked like Indians girls. All right, all this money was coming on. Years ago, if you told a man he had Indian in him, you had to fight. All right, when this money come on, if you told him he didn't have some in him, you'd have to fight him right on. Now, that's right, I ain't never seen as many Indians. [Laughter] When they first went to sign up for that money, it was in that old, that same house attached on to the Episcopal Church. It was over in that school house where you first went to sign up, and it was all in United States. And I'm telling you, I seen more blond-headed Indians, red-headed ones than I'd ever seen in my damn life. And so I just figured it out for myself then, and you could trace the ancestry back and they would have Indian in 'em. It's no joke, you told him he had Indian in before there, you would have had a fight.

[Break in recording]

P: Now, you were saying, all you ever cared about Indians was what?

D: To try to get an education. Now as far this powwow, and this money, I never was interested in it. I always said, if the government owed me something, they'd pay me. If I owed the government, I knew damn well I was gonna pay them. So that's the way I had it figured all down the road. I'll tell you actually what I believe. With a clear conscience, I believe the government just give these people a hundred-twenty-five dollars for them to shut their mouth.

P: Shut their mouth so that—

D: Now, you just stop all this, see. I believe the way a things set up when they paid this money, what little it is, never sue the government no more, isn't it? Is that right?

P: It could be interpreted that way I guess, yeah.

D: And I believe it's just mostly to give them that little bit to shut their mouth. That's that way I figure it for. I don't see where the government owed the Indian no money to a certain extent. I mean, I may be wrong now. They shouldn't have come in and taken the land. They might have taken the land, I don't know, but he paid him something for it. There was deed drawn up ever since there's been a world, ain't there? If deeds were drawn up on the land, it's supposed to be legal, and I think, I never did see nobody taking the land. They might have got it cheap now, was yet legal. And that's the way I never did figure different.

P: Now, when you were a little bitty kid, did you ever hear any of the older ones talking about the government owed 'em money for land?

D: I've get it all my life, about all I can ever remember.

P: So that—

D: I heard my mother say this started way back before my time, they were trying to get some money out of the government. There you go. Me and her used to have an argument a lot of times about so and so and this and that. I just tell here, I used to tell her, they didn't owe me nothing. I don't know, I just...I reckon they must have owed me a hundred-and-twelve dollars, that's what I got.

P: [Laughter]

D: I imagine I got twelve, fourteen hundred there. I don't know. I got, I think that thing went on for years. The government owed the Indian people some money.

P: The years before Calvin started?

D: Yeah.

P: Now, was that ever connected in any way with this grant land situation?

D: I guess so; down the road, yeah, I think it did. Now, you take this grant land up here. It cost me two-hundred-twelve dollars to find out that one grant land the way I found it.

P: Oh, yeah found that out then?

D: Yeah. The way the lawyer told me, and of course he's as crooked as a barrel of snakes, the lawyer told me this, I mean I paid for it, and he didn't tell me nothing. Ever since I've been a kid, they told me grant land up there, what you owned is where you stood. You know, grant land. It went on for an uncle of mine, Uncle Will, he stayed there and he homesteaded on a little land, and paid tax on it and everything. A man, Fred Walker, he had 80 acres of it in hand...all that. So somebody, I believe the way he said it was supposed to have been, it'll never be

deeded as long as the water runs. No tax, no **freeholding**. But I think after they stayed there so long, and it got to be tight for somewheres down road, up here at Brewton, they said tax never get no far in Brewton. That's hearsay, I don't know that. Well, it rocked on, I was gonna build my house on it on somebody land up there one time. So, I went to me lawyer, he showed where it was Will McGhee and them's land. It costs me two hundred and something dollars. So, that proved to me it wasn't grant land no more. If a man pays tax on a land for some many years, this and that, it belongs to him. But you never could preach it to these old people's head, oh it's our land. They heared that, they didn't go find out from the law whose land it was.

P: When did you go find that out? How long ago was that?

D: Oh, that must have been thirty years ago.

P: Thirty years ago? And you tried to tell people at that time that you had checked on it, and it wasn't? They didn't believe you?

D: They didn't believe me. Anytime that land is sold off, or sold right in front of the courthouse in Brewton, it's legal right?

P: I suppose so.

D: So, eighty acres of it was sold.

P: When did that happen in the courthouse?

D: Oh, it's been about twelve years ago, or about fifteen years ago.

P: Sold for taxes or what?

D: No, it was sold for, a whole eighty acres sold for twelve hundred dollars.

P: Well, why was it sold in front of the courthouse there?

D: Well the heirs, the old man died and the heirs sold it. Well, you know Levi McGhee?

P: Uh-huh.

D: His wife was one of the heirs. Lawrence Walker, that was a Walker. So, Lawrence Walker, he, and I was gonna buy that eighty acres, and I'm gonna to tell you how I got out of that deal. **Red Bixley** was a clerk up in Brewton. I was coming to see him, and I went by the Bank of Atmore and I asked the banker if he'd let me have the money to buy it. He told me how much; I'll let you have so much and go that high. Alright, that was on a Monday, down in Atmore there, they said it wasn't going to be sold that day, it gonna be the next Monday. And I called the clerk in Brewton to be sure of it. He said, well that's right Adam it's not gonna be sold today, it'll be next Monday. I'll be damned if they didn't sell it that day. An old, a lawyer, Ken Towns, and another guy bought it.

P: Do they still have it?

D: No, they sold it to another boy, another fella, and another fella bought it from him. They bought the whole eighty acres for twelve hundred dollars.

P: Well who were the two that originally bought it?

D: The lawyers?

P: Uh-huh.

D: The lawyer ain't, he's dead now. One of them was Curly and Tucker, I believe it was Tucker.

P: And then they sold it to somebody else?

- D: And they sold it to another guy, and another guy sold it to Moore, I think. Bates Moore's boy, Johnny Moore. Johnny Moore wound up paying a, oh, a big price. Of course, they wanted much of it in cultivation now, but it joined his place.
- P: Now was it an auction, was it sold at auction?
- D: Yeah, the highest bidder.
- P: Because none of the heirs wanted to take it over, was that the reason?
- D: None of the heirs didn't want take it over.
- P: Now was that, that was Fred Walker's piece?
- D: Yeah, it was, eighty acres. Well, you know where Eugene Sells lives?
- P: Yeah.
- D: That's on the Will McGhee part. If you know where you turn to go up there to Eugene Sells?
- P: Uh-huh.
- D: You know where that road goes on down that way?
- P: Down to the creek?
- D: Yeah, well that's on the right. And that little old field on across over there was on it. Yeah, I owned that eighty acres. The bank would only let me have five-thousand dollars to buy it.
- P: And it went for twelve?
- D: Twelve-hundred.
- P: Well do you think they just flat lied to you about when it was going to be sold?
- D: That's all I can figure of it.
- P: Have you ever had any way of figuring out why they would do that to you?

D: Must have been a made up deal.

P: Between the ones that bought it and . . .

D: Matter of fact, there wasn't anybody to bid on it. There were only two or three people there. And I talked with Lawrence Walker; he told me he was looking for a lot of people to come up there. And he was living in Pensacola during that time. He just went to Pensacola up here. That's all I call figure out what it was.

P: Let me ask you, how did you happen to get into your present job? How did you get into working in the prison near here?

D: Oh, that's easy. [Laughter]

P: How is it?

D: Just go in, go to work. [Laughter]

P: You just walked in and asked them for a job?

D: Ah, you gotta have your record; it's about the easiest thing that I know of.

P: Is it an easy job?

D: Yeah, I guess I am sitting around here with a shotgun.

P: Do you work out in the fields with them?

D: Yeah . . . We've been inside all day today.

P: Are you at Coleman or Atmore prison?

D: Atmore.

P: Atmore.

D: Having a shake down.

P: Trying to get that straightened out from last night?

D: They won't never be straightened out. That ain't no penitentiary over there, that's just for Boy Scouts. They ain't got the government wanting nobody to run it. We locked the white up to his self over today. That's what it was, the niggers on whites and they got 'em outnumbered about five to one. A white man don't stand a chance in there. That's what it was. All right, I said before Monday morning, some of the niggers have the Federal Government worried , they'll be down there putting them back together. It'll be the same, I guess. That ain't no penitentiary way, you can't work them. You just carry them out inside and bring 'em back. They work if they want to, if they don't, they won't. You ain't got no say so.

P: How long has that prison been there?

D: Ever since [19]28.

P: [19]28? Well I've heard, I guess it was people like Isaac McGhee talking—maybe it was somebody else—talking about how there used to be a lot of Indians living over in that area, and when the prison came in, they started moving away from there. Do you remember them talking about that?

D: We lived over there.

P: Your house was—

D: My brother, I lived with my brother. There wasn't about three, four houses over there. The prison, see the reason we moved, the state bought all that, when the penitentiary come in. It belonged to C.C. Huxley, a guy called C.C. Huxley, and the state bought it all.

P: Now the old—I think I've got it right—Dave McGhee place used to be down there behind the prison? Did he continue to live there after the prison was put in there?

D: Oh yeah, he lived there for years. But that wasn't on the prison land, that was **Allen Silverman**.

P: That was just across the road from the prison.

D: That's right.

P: Yeah. Do you ever have any trouble with them over there? Because I still hear lots of stories about the prisoners running, people are scared of that.

D: Yeah. Never had any trouble. Some prisoner, they try to get away, steal a car, do that now if they can. Anything else.

P: I know it's getting kind of late, let me ask you, we've got a little more tape here, completely different subject. Other than the fact that the Indian people were a little darker in color and were treated badly, was there anything else through the years that you felt, and the other Indian people felt sort of set them off apart in the way they acted or anything like that?

D: I think so.

P: What is that?

D: On account of they thought maybe it darker or something or other. Well, and I just believe that goes right on to a certain extent. Now I won't say all of them, but I'll so of them do. I believe, I've always felt that and I yet think it.

P: Was there ever a time when there were certain stores they couldn't go into, or anything like that?

D: Yeah, I've known of some cafés sometimes, back not around Atmore here, but I think on around Pensacola, about two or three us turned down.

P: You must be getting tired, I'm gonna let you stop.

[Break in recording]

P: I was just saying that it must be kind of exciting when you were working on getting the school improved.

D: Well, that's—yeah. I said when it first started the school business, I was interested. I mean, I didn't care what it cost or where it, how long a time it takes, or what it would take, I was ready to go. So it went on for several years then I got to find after we got to school, otherwise I didn't want nothing to do with it start with myself, my personal self. But the community wanted it, up to the sixth grade. Ain't go school in town. And so, well, that's what we did. But after, we got the school in and everything, there were enough children for three teachers. With a pretty nice school, you know. And but the folks wouldn't send their children to school. They wouldn't them regular or nothing. I remember a guy up here, I ain't calling no name, the fellah dead and gone now. We was having a PTA meeting up there one night, and he asked the teacher why come his boy wasn't doing so and so and this and that. She reached back and got his record and said, listen hadn't been to school for ten days this month. Well how could you learn anything [Laughter] And so, I don't know I just, the further it went it looked like worse it got. And I just, and so the county then got talking about moving the school if they, I mean they just couldn't pay the teachers. And some of them wanted it moved, and some of them didn't want it moved. During that time, I was out of it. I don't like to say this, but it's true, but I wasn't doing a lot of people's way, All your children are in high school. Which they were, but I didn't do it on account of that, I just never could get the people together. I'll say it again, you try to accomplish

something for them, and half a dozen will be that way, and twenty-five that way and you just couldn't do anything. I'll tell you actually what I believe is wrong with that schools that's up there. There's too many different denominations of churches.

P: And that was affecting the school?

D: That's what I think. Because of some of them want this, oh, I can't do that, that's against our church rule this and all this mess and all that. And I just I don't know. You just couldn't. Even if you went to do this here and that would be against their church rule. I don't know, I just, I got aggravated with this and throwed up my hands, I guess.

P: So finally that school just came to no school anymore?

D: No school.

P: And that just—

D: That thing was put on record as an Indian consolidated school. Like I told them, if they talking about the niggers going to school, if that thing been yet going, the way it wrote on record, they couldn't no nigger went there. Couldn't nothing went there but Indians because it was wrote up as Indian consolidated school. And that's who'd have went there.

P: Now, was it because of this busing that they closed the school down her a couple of years ago or what?

D: No, it wasn't that. Just people, well I, I think ninety percent of the just wanted to get rid of it up there. Just didn't want the children claimed the teachers up there wasn't learning them nothing, wanted to get them where better teachers were,

thing. Just 'cause it's a little country school out there, they felt like the teacher wasn't learning them nothing. But I think what it was, they just didn't send them.

That's the way I got it, what I think.

P: Well I know before I turn the tape back on you said when you first started, you felt good. How do you mean you felt good about it all?

D: Well I mean, I felt thought I'd call myself trying to help my people and help myself. Oh, as I said again I was interested in education for people.

P: Did you feel like you were sort of fighting for a cause?

D: Yeah. As a matter of fact, that's what it was. We liked to have two or three of them. Hard, we had some hard words, I mean fighting words right here in Brewton.

P: With who? The school board or?

D: School board. Several times, not one time, several times.

P: Well what would happen, y'all would go down there to school board meetings or what?

D: Yeah, at Brewton. And they'd always want to put you on the blacklist, you know. So, we heared that and heared it, we got afraid of it. We went, you know, clear to whatever it take us. And if we hadn't of, we'd have never got anywhere. Longer the lies, you go there and hear lies till you go out and he'll lie to you. And you know he'll be lying.

P: What would they lie about?

D: Different things we would try to get them. And after we got the school up there, we tried to get things for the school out of county. And one thing I can say for old

lady **Grace Mays** , she was one of the best principals that ever been there. And buddy, when she got ready for something, she got it. She'd ride the road day and night. And if she had time, they wasn't, she wasn't nothing but an old bachelor. If she was talking to a woman, she told her just what she felt. It could hit where it wanted to. Old Weaver and them others used to cuss her, but buddy she got what she wanted. I've heard her tell them, said, this Indian school gonna get equal to the what the other schools get, you know, in Brewton and different things for the schools. They never did, but now buddy she got it. She may had to bring it back in her car, but she got it. And I'll tell you another thing, when she sent a school, a child from grammar school, you didn't have to worry about him failing in high school either. She checked on him in high school just like she did through grammar school.

P: One of hers, huh?

D: That's what she called them, hers. He knowed it, I guarantee you that.

P: Well, I've heard that she too was one that helped get this Indian money thing started, or at least found out about the way it could be done.

D: Now I don't know about that now. I mean, I wouldn't think so, but she might have did now.

P: Who were, who were the other trustees at the time you were a trustee.

D: Oh, I don't know. Calvin was one, me, and Eugene Sells, I believe. They didn't...

P: Were y'all the ones that would go to the school board meetings, the three of you or?

D: Yeah, we'd go and some more would go.

P: Anybody that you could get to go with you?

D: Everybody that wanted to go.

P: Would y'all ever just speak right up and say what was on your mind at the school board meetings?

D: Oh yeah.

P: Do you remember anything specifically—

D: We'd go up to the board. Tell you what they used to do. The board meets let's say the fifteenth and the first sometimes of the month. We'd go up there and put it off. I mean, they'd have so many excuse for it to be put off. We done that several times and we knew, you know, that's there's something wrong. So eventually, we just had to get down to, we didn't wait for no meeting then, we'd just go in the office. And we'd get or make Weaver, we wouldn't make him, we'd ask him to, he'd call some them in. Eventually, we just told him we never could get the meeting. Every time the meeting was on, it'd be put off, somebody would be sick. If they didn't put the meeting off, one would be home sick or in the hospital or on vacation, something or other. It was always something out of **out of a pop**. It went on for six months or a year like that. But eventually, I reckon we won, I don't know.

P: And that was after this new school was built, or before?

D: That was along about the time it was building and after it was built too.

P: Do you remember any particular showdowns you had with those people over there?

D: I really, pretty bad words. I believe after we got the school in there, we couldn't get enough desks. I believe that's, it wasn't a big deal really.

P: Now, that's the first I heard of that. I thought once y'all got the school, everything was okay. You still had some more battles to be fought, huh?

D: Yeah, it was things for the school. Otherwise, after they built the school, the county, you know, they give so much stuff for each school. Well, this school never was getting any of it. All different things, you know, that you got for school. Couldn't get any play things, you know, like the county furnishes and all that. It was long story after it was built, getting different things that the children needed and all that.

P: Well, did the fighting y'all were doing, did it ever come back on you personally in any way? Did you ever have any trouble with the county on something else that you were trying to do?

D: No. Nope, we never had any. One of the boys, he's dead and gone, Brooks Rolin, he caught the old superintendant in the side of head up there one time . . . main office.

P: He did what?

D: He caught him in the side of the head there.

P: Really?

D: Probably killed him if it hadn't been for me and Calvin. He's the type of fellow that wanted to exchange words with you over fights and quick temper.

P: Superintendent ever threaten to bring charges against him or anything?

D: No.

P: But it took you and Calvin to stop him from doing it?

D: Yes . . . He was a—well, I'll say again, the Indian people been treated through here dirty now. They've been treated dirty. The boys are bothered a lot of times think about it. Nothing you can do about it I guess, it's done and done . . . Sure been treated dirty.

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