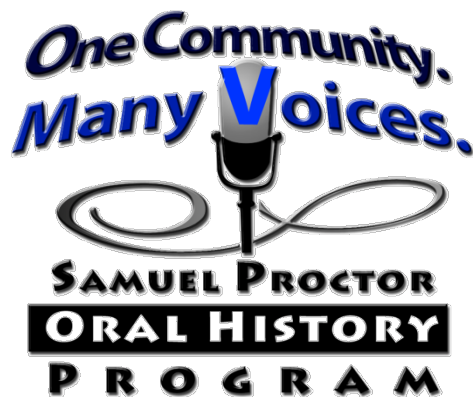


Greely McGhee

Poarch Creek Project
CRK-070

Interview by:

**Larry Haikey
August 15, 1978**



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CRK 070 Greely McGhee
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project
Interviewed by Larry Haikey on August 15, 1978
2 hours, 12 minutes | 81 pages

Abstract: Greely McGhee describes his early life with his brother Calvin McGhee. He details how he and Calvin made and sold moonshine, describes fights Calvin got in, and recalls weekend dances in the community. He tells the story of how his grandfather killed a man and speaks about how Calvin was wrongfully jailed for a robbery. He discusses why Calvin quit drinking and got involved in the land case and school fight. He speaks about the war between the Creek Indians and the United States, and the tells the story of his cousin who killed a woman. He describes what life was like growing up, including family frequently visiting, the livestock they raised, and how they preserved meat. He shares stories of hunting deer with Calvin, and finally speaks more on the process of making moonshine.

Keywords: [Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Chief Calvin McGhee; Florida--Nokomis; Oral biography; Family histories]

ORAL HISTORY

P R O G R A M
University of Florida

CRK-070

Interviewee: Greely McGhee

Interviewer: Larry Haikey

Date: August 15, 1978

M: Ahead with the cows; we had want to kill cow, kill hogs, chickens, goats, we had all that stuff there and he—we left it up to him to do the . . . what he wanted to kill. If he wanted to kill a cow, he done all the skinning and cutting the meat up and everything and then we had to go around. We had to run to all the neighbor's houses around in the community, yelling, canning them some meat, me and Mace would. Many time, we had run to our sisters' houses and our cousins' houses around here, close neighbors. We had to always go carry them some meat. We never did sell none, we always were just neighborly. We lived that close that we just give the meat and, messes of meat away. Why, when they killed, they would return it back, they would bring us some fresh meat, you know . . . but everything like that was on till . . .

H: You were saying that Calvin was the best one at cutting the meat up.

M: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

H: Tell me about that some.

M: Well, he was. Now, Calvin was a good meat cutter. That's when everybody put on him what when we would go deer hunting, we'd killed a deer, he always had to cut the meat up. He said, now, when you cut meat, see, the way you cut meat and if you cut it with the grain, you can't cook it done. You can cook on that thing, cook on that steel, it's just like chewing on a piece of leather. You got to cut meat 'cross the grain. Then you only got just the grain as thick as your slice of meat to cut. Then you can cook it. But, if you cut it with the grain, you just got a big strip of lean meat there, just like a piece of leather. But now, Calvin always taught me

that, but I never did ever cut up none. He'd always do all the cutting, but say, always cut your meat across the grain.

H: What were saying before about how he would cut it up evenly or something like that before the group was hunting?

M: Oh, yeah. When we would go hunting and kill a deer, all the meat—everybody would jump in and help him cut it up, but they left it up to him to divide it out. He would divide the meat out, he'd count all of the standards within the group, in the home there, and as many standards as there was, he'd make that many piles. And he'd a put a piece of the ham in every one of them's pile. Took one around, if it was enough to come back around; if it wasn't, he'd cut the ham pieces—the steak into and just give each one. Everyone, he tried to give everyone as much as he did the other. That's why everybody liked him; he was liked, I reckon, by everybody around in the community here. And it wasn't only community. He had friends far and near.

H: Did he learn how to cut meat when he was pretty young, or is that something he just did later in his life?

M: Well, it was before he ever married.

H: Oh, really?

M: Yeah. See, we owned all this land out here ourselves, and when old places back up here, right up there were Dewey lives now. And I remember there's two big old pine trees out there and he the big pole there. We had a chain way up on it and he let that pole up with a rope, way up yonder, tie that cow onto it down here and just pull that rope down here and tie it to this other tree back here and then

pick the cow up high enough to where he could stand down, stand there and skin the cow. Well, he done that way before he was ever married.

H: Just talk a little bit about what was he like in other ways before he married. What kind of a young man was he before he got married?

M: Well, we used to make whiskey. We used to me . . . me and him would make— had a whiskey still. We'd set the thing up after supper, we'd set that still up in the kitchen there, me and him, and we'd run us some moonshine whiskey there. Put the beer, we had the beer buried there out in the backyard.

H: Were y'all living at home with your mother and daddy through all that time?

M: Yeah, yeah. No, Calvin was married at the time we was making the whiskey.

H: You were making the whiskey when he was married?

M: But I was at home. Calvin was living right around here. But that's what I told you. Me and Calvin was just like that. And he would come up to the house and we made us a whiskey still, and we would make us what whiskey we drank. See, you couldn't get no beer, but they didn't have no whiskey stores like they got now. You had to run the risk of putting up the beer and making your own whiskey. So, that's what we done, we'd make our own whiskey. We'd it in—fire up that stove in the kitchen there and start it a running. I'd go to toting water, pour it in there and let it run 'till they'd keep it cooled down. He was mixing and I was toting water. We'd make about a gallon or a couple of gallons. Sometime, we'd make three gallons to a barrel of beer, and that's the way we made our own whiskey.

H: Was y'all selling?

M: Not at that time. But now, Calvin did. He used to make it and sell it. Then he'd go to Florida down there and buy moonshine whiskey and come back and sell it. Used to have an old T-Model car, we'd load that thing down here and go out to... Alger-Sullivan Lumber Company. Camp's out above McCullough. On payday night, he'd load that thing down; we'd go out up there and sell out all that whiskey, about fifty cents a pint. And gambling, too. I'd get so I'd get sleepy and don't want to come back home and he say, why, we'll just wait and we'll go directly. And it'd be a raining and old come to this little creek out here, to Bell Creek, there wasn't no bridge there. You just had to drive through there. We'd get in there and that thing would drowned out in that creek. There'd be five or six of us in there and then we'd just get out there and push out in water waist deep. There, we pushed that thing out, let her dry off a little bit, crank up and come on to the house.

H: Who were some of the other five or six that were part of your group at that time?

M: You mean in the hunting, or . . . ?

H: Well, in all of Calvin's doings.

M: There never was too many more.

H: Who were some of them? Were some of them people that stuck by him the rest of his life?

M: Well, I don't know whether they was or not, they was . . .

H: What I'm trying to find out is, the ones that he ran around with in those days, were some of them some of the same ones that later on in life were helping him in the fighting the land case and all of that?

M: No, that was before. That was before, there wasn't too many of them. A lot of them had left here. There wasn't too many of them around here.

H: Who were some of those that left here?

M: Elbert Rolin was one of them.

B: Yeah, I understand that part. Who was like when you pushed the car out of the, when y'all got it out . . .

M: That was me and—

B: Name them and we'll go from there.

M: Mace and John was with us, and sometime Elbert was with us at the time when we'd get in . . .

B: Elbert Rolin?

M: Yeah. I pushed the car out and that little old creek got . . .

B: That the gang really around that time.

M: Oh yeah, at that time. But now, Mace and John and me, we stuck with Calvin all ever, all the time together when we he'd make whiskey and take it over there and sell it to that camp over there. Well, we went with him all the time then. He had a still right back down here and the sheriff, he'd —Calvin had that thing timed. He'd wait 'til where the sheriff would have to be to Brewton on the first Monday in every month when they was having court. He know'd where the sheriff would have to be, he'd put the beer up to where it would come off while the sheriff would be gone. They worked at him to try to catch him, they'd drive off this road up here, all back down in them woods, you know, just old wagon roads, you know. Back then, old T-model car was about all you had. With the lights off,

Jesse and Calvin would be under. I never did go down around the still too much while they was making down in there, but Jesse and Calvin, they'd make it down there and they'd come out toting the whiskey and they'd hear that car coming. They'd just step aside. They'd done run the whiskey, got all moved everything. And they would come in, they'd lay out on that hill and go down there, they probably watch to see if he's coming in there and then when they got out, they'd done run the whiskey and everything was gone; moved. They never did catch him. Old Man T.K. Fountain, this place down here used to belong to Old Man Fountain. He was the High Sheriff at that time and he sure worked to try to catch Calvin and Jesse making whiskey. But they was too sharp for him.

H: Who was Jesse? Jesse who?

M: Jesse Rolin.

H: Jesse Rolin.

M: They couldn't catch him.

B: Now, where did they make whiskey down there, down on the Wet Willow Creek?

M: Yeah, right back of the house out there on the hill. [Laughter]

B: Well, I'm surprised you got away with it.

M: Yeah, just a little ways from the house down here. Then, they had a still back over here. I've toted fifty pound of sugar, I've set fifty pound of sugar on my shoulder and climbed with one hand up high as the top of this house, up a big leaning pine tree from right in the middle of the swamp in there that fell on right to the edge of the swamp there. And it was high, had big old long limbs on it. Had to

climb up that limb, get up on that tree and walk down that tree, right to the still, with fifty pound of sugar laying on my shoulder.

B: Well, Wet Willow was the main stream for making whiskey on it.

M: Reedy Branch, this little branch right over here.

B: Yeah, well it runs into.

M: Runs into Wet Willow back down here, yeah.

B: Wet Willow, right, yeah.

M: But it had a good spring head up in it with good water and we had found a place in there, the way the water bank was uphill, was high. We set that trough in there and we didn't have to tote water then to cool it down. We had that trough set there and the pipes from the condenser run into the trough and that cold water was running down the trough all the time. [Laughter] We had that one fixed up there.

H: Was he the only one working with moonshine down there or were there some other people who were doing the same time he was?

M: There was a lot of them around here selling whiskey now, but they didn't nobody make it like he did. Calvin done a lot of his own making whiskey.

H: Make good whiskey?

M: Mighty right. Yeah, we'd make it and we would drink it. My dad, when I was a kid growing up, there was a gallon jug set on the table every morning and the glasses put out there and we'd come by and pulled us a big shot of whiskey out and we'd drink that every morning. Then that jug was put away till the next morning. He'd go get the jug and bring it back in there after breakfast. Fool

around there before we went out to work or whatever we had to do. Them glasses and that jug were set up there and we poured us out a big shot of whiskey. Everybody got them a big shot of whiskey, then he was on his own, he went to do what he had to do that day. We'd go to the field, we had something to do the field, we'd go to fieldwork.

H: That's when you were growing up?

M: Oh, yeah. We was raised up with it. We never did do without whiskey. We kept whiskey in our home all the time.

H: Did your dad make it too or did you just buy it somewhere?

M: No. He dranked it, but he never did make none. Calvin was the only maker in the family here.

H: Where'd he learn to make whiskey?

M: I have no idea. Since you mentioned that, now where did he learn to make it? There was a Gibson, Hansel Gibson used to live right back around here. He used to work with him at that time, when they was down here. He had a big ole' red mule. Never will forget, had a big ole' red mule and a one-horse wagon. They'd put them barrels and things, stills, and things on the wagon. He'd haul them around these woods wherever they'd wanted to put up a still, if they broke them up one place trying to tap a still, they'd go build another one, make another one, go put up another place. He had a big ole red mule and a one-horse wagon, since you mentioned it, where he learn that, he was one worked with him too, Hansel Gibson. He ain't but too long died. He died just before I come back from Illinois.

H: Really. So, you really don't know where Calvin learned how to make whiskey?

M: I reckon he just started out and learned to make it.

H: Did he ever get in trouble for it?

M: Not for making whiskey, never was caught.

H: Did he ever get in trouble drinking it?

M: Oh, yeah. There's one time he hit Rob Rolin, you know Rob Rolin? I never will forget that. One Sunday night—it was Saturday night, I just remembered—Rob had—could you bring me a drink of water while I'm talking?

B: Yeah.

M: Thank you.

H: Rob had been around here, I thought he used to live around here at times; he had been around here and was having church at some old bush arbor right in back of the road here, and Calvin—

M: Was Rob was having church?

H: Huh?

M: Rob was having church here?

H: No, he was going up to church at an old bush arbor. And Calvin was married anyway.

B: That was right in the old McGhee field, wasn't it? Brush arbor?

M: Yeah, do you remember where the old bush arbor used to be, that road here?

B: Yeah, but I don't, the old McGhee field . . .

M: This side of that old field up there. And Calvin had it in for one fella, he had a fight with way back then and he thought that was—he heard that T-model car

coming, he thought that was him, so he hit Rob with a club or something or other and knocked him clean out that car. The car went on to run into a tree and after, he was sorry after he'd done hit Rob, but he thought that other guy.

H: Well, what caused that?

M: Huh?

H: What caused that hitting between him and Rob?

M: Well, see we had a –we used to have –then Calvin was making whiskey and has selling it at that time and he was having an ice cream supper and a big dance.

H: Calvin was having an ice cream supper?

M: Yeah, right round here on this hill.

B: Selling whiskey at the same time?

M: Yeah. So, this guy, he kept a big bunch of women there and this guy kept a cursing him and our brother-in-law.

B: Well, now who was that?

M: Jim Blackman and Ben Daniels. Ben Daniels from up in Monroe County. They come down and they were gonna take over the place and Calvin went in there two times. Every time he'd go to them and say, Ben, see now we've got some women folks here. No more of that backyard talking and cussing. Okay, Calvin, okay. By the time he get back out on the back, he'd hear them again the same thing. Somebody come tell him, Calvin, you're gonna have to go and talk to Ben Daniels again. Well, they went to him again. He promised him and the next time he went, well, he hit and didn't tell him. Calvin just hit him and knocked him out of a window and out on he went. And when he finally tore loose from Calvin, he had

chewed his nose off and one of his ears off and all in his face and when he finally got a loose from him.

H: Biting?

M: Yeah, he done eat him up. And Levi, I never will forget, Levi, he jumped out the window, and he thought all the time he was kicking Ben Daniels, and he had broke four, five of Calvin's ribs. [Laughter] Yeah, he had been down and all the time he was kicking Calvin and that's one reason give loose to let Ben Daniels get loose from him. When he got a loose, he come up from there, and the house was on a hill and one end of the porch was up pretty high, and went off low on the other end. And Brooks Rolin's brother, Dooney, was standing on the porch, he had done got him a picket. And when Ben Daniels come run across the porch to jump off and take this little old picket only about this high. He could have jumped over and just knocked him out the way, but Dooney had done picked him out a big old, I never will forget it, a big old wide picket about this wide and he picked that man up and set him off that porch clean into that picket fence out there when he come across that porch with that board. He picked him up across the butt and knocked him clean out that porch out there with that picket. And he left there running and went up the road and then he come back up this way and he told folks then said, he had been in World War II, but said, I'm gonna tell you – Clyde Peacocks used to tell me about that, that Ben Daniels used to tell him. Said, he thought that World War II was bad, but said, well, when you get in that war over there with them Indians, said, now you got trouble on your hands. Then

he had finally gotten loose from them, but oh he had a time. And then, worked on and it got where him and Jesse were fighting one another.

H: Calvin and Jesse.

M: Yeah. He chewed Jesse's nose up and one of his ears cut and every bit of this rim of his ear off around here on him.

H: What come to cause him and Jesse to start that stuff?

M: Just drinking and, I reckon, and just get in an argument then.

H: Was they making whiskey together?

M: One wouldn't give to the other one and so naturally get in an argument. And they'd just get up an argument and go to fighting. So, Jesse, I never will forget, if you ever see a T-Model plug wrench. Did you?

H: Yeah.

M: Had a old wrench about this lone and it had a drop down on it where the wrench was, down about this far from the handle, it dropped down where it would fit in that hole and take the plugs out.

H: Yeah.

M: Jesse got a hold of one of them things and threw it at Calvin and hit him in the side, I think, and broke some ribs again and from that, Calvin got on him then and that's when he –the medicine man was with them. They was off to get a load of whiskey at that time. They wasn't making no whiskey at that time, but they was buying and selling. Calvin would go get a load of whiskey and bring it back.

B: Yeah, I remember **[inaudible 20:13]**.

M: Yeah, I know who.

H: That was before he was the medicine man.

B: No, not uh. Well, he was the medicine man then, he's always been a medicine man.

H: But, I mean before he started wearing feathers and all that.

B: Oh, before he started wearing. Well, he started making medicine-

M: And peddling as far back as I can remember. He was what they called a medicine man, him and my uncle were. And his Uncle was a shrine man.

H: Your Uncle **Fraser**?

M: Yeah. Them two, them was two medicine man. They made it and sold it.

[Laughter]

B: I remember. [Laughter] I remember Norman telling me about him and Uncle Jesse and somebody having **[inaudible 20:58]**.

H: Going back to Rob Rolin, he thought that Rob Rolin was the man at the ice cream social and that's why he...

M: Right. That's why he hit Rob.

B: But that would have trouble with Rob.

M: That's why he hit Rob. And from that, then him and Fred Rolin got into it and Calvin, he was little, but now, you had to kill him. You didn't scare him, he just wasn't scared. He chewed on Fred Rolin like chewed his nose off and all in the face and from that, the same one, our brother-in-law...

B: Kinda like a bull dog.

H: Which brother-in-law was that?

M: Huh?

H: Which brother-in-law was that?

M: Jim Blackman, that's my sister Anna's husband, lived up there. From that, then they got into it. They got in a big argument and from that-

B: They was moon. Well, they liked to drink too-

M: Oh, yeah.

B: They was selling moonshine too

M: Yeah, them was set fooling with moonshine too, but John, my brother John, he'd run around; mostly fool with Jim Blackman when he was selling whiskey. But I'd get so drunk -I didn't drink at that time -I'd get so drunk, Calvin would set up fifteen gallon keg up in the straight chair, stick a holes in it and turn it out in a tub, and I'd just sit there with a dipper, in a chair, filling up pint bottles and half of pints and quarts by the cases with it. I'd get so drunk just sitting up there inhaling that stuff, you know. Bottling it up for Calvin, getting ready to go to make a sale, selling out over there to that camp.

H: You were selling to the lumber camp that was up there?

M: Yeah.

H: I have heard people talk about...somebody got the nickname Nub from Calvin biting him on the nose, is that true?

M: Might have been, I disremember.

H: There is a Nub Rolin, isn't there?

M: Yeah.

H: But that has nothing to do with Calvin.

M: Not uh, no, he's young, he don't know nothing about that. But I have a brother-in-law, him and Calvin, they got in a big argument and Calvin chewed him up 'til they thought one time that he wasn't gonna make it. They kept him in the hospital long time up there at Monroe. He chewed him all back of the neck here like a dog would. [Laughter] And his ear too. Towards the last, Calvin used to ride an old bicycle. That was way before Calvin married. Way on back before Calvin ever married. Calvin used to live here a ride a bicycle up to sister and they house. Well...

B: What house? Where'd he live?

M: Up in Monroe County, way back down below Uriah.

B: From here in Monroe County?

M: Yeah, he'd drive a bicycle up there and he went off-

B: That's twenty-five miles, ain't it?

M: Yeah.

B: About twenty-five miles.

M: I imagine, the way back down he had to go. Jim and one of them boys of his had brought up a bale of cotton to Uriah for the gin and Calvin was going up there after they had done had all that fight. Well, Calvin was on his way going up to the gin, and they got up with him up there to the gin out at Uriah. So he put the bicycle on the wagon, you know, and got on there and was going on with them and they got in another big argument and had an old mule whip, Jim was driving a mule, you know.

B: Did he have any moonshine with him on the buggy there?

M: Yeah, yeah. And he wrapped Calvin with that whip stock and broke Calvin's arm. That's all he done, didn't have not fight, that's all he done. He just hit Calvin across the arm and broke his arm with that big old oak or hickory whip stock about that big around. He whooped Calvin across the arm and broke it and that's all he said. He said, he used to always call Calvin, "Mac." He said, well, Mac, I'm even with you now. And they was good friends from then on. He said, we're even now. He said, you liked to cause me to lose my face and neck where he had chewed on it, and said, I broke your ole' arm just like that and I broke your ole' man. And after then, they went on, Calvin went on up there, went to the doctor and had that arm fixed up, stayed up there, got ready to come back.

B: Is that in Uriah?

M: Way down below Uriah.

H: Was Calvin the only one that would bite like that when he was fighting or do other people fight like that?

M: Why, nobody around here never did have too many fights, only him, Calvin. He would get in a fight 'cause, I reckon, they looked like they wanted to pick on him 'cause Calvin was small. He wasn't never was no big man. Calvin was about the smallest one.

B: Smaller than you?

M: I don't know, John...

B: He weighed about a hundred and sixty.

M: Back before after he got up in age, Calvin gained some weight.

B: About a hundred and fifty-five.

M: About a hundred and thirty-five was mostly his limit. About my age. I say, I said at about a hundred and thirty-five 'till I was around twenty-five years old, 'til I married.

B: Now, that' it, about a hundred and thirty-five, hundred and forty-five. Lightweight.

M: Yep. Then they just like wanted to pick on him so, they didn't scare him then. They had to kill him before he'd do anything with them or really, he was just like a dog. If he ever got to them with them teeth, you would hear them hollering out. Get him off, get him off. [Laughter] He was, he was just like a dog.

H: Well, how would he fight? Would he just bite or would he also take them on with his fist?

M: Take them with his fist 'till he could get to them with the teeth. [Laughter] When he got to them with the teeth, he had it.

H: Worked his way inside now.

M: Right, I'm telling you, that's right. He got a hold of one of Fred Rolin's thumbs too, in his mouth, and boy, he like to chewed that thumb off.

H: You mentioned Brook Rolin. Were he and Brook good friends?

M: Brooks was another mean. You didn't scare Brooks Rolin; Brooks Rolin would kill you in a minute.

H: Really?

M: In a minute. Now, he didn't scare any.

B: Well, he was one of the bigger fellows.

M: Oh, Brooks was big. I never will forget, we went out to Mississippi picking cotton one time and, I reckon, we would both wind up in penitentiary. He begged me out

there, said, let's go back to Alabama. I said, well, the truck's going back this weekend, I think. He said, let's go now. I said, look Rolin, I can't go now, I'm gonna wait and go back on the truck. He said, if you'll go with me, we'll get one of these niggers that carry us out to Greenwood and catch the train out there and said, we'll just kill him and take the car and drive her back to Alabama. I said, no, man, don't think of something or other like that. No, not me, no not kill nobody. But he would have, I guess if I had just said yeah, he would have done it in a minute. He was another one you didn't scare, he was so unscared.

H: And what do you think make him that way?

M: Why, some of them, it was borned in them. See, the young race of people now is not like the old people was, you didn't scare them. They had a killing and a cutting every week, just about it. Years ago, when they'd have a dance, they'd knock out the light there and if you got out, you were a good one. Without getting cut, that's right.

B: How about the women? What did the girls say about that?

M: Oh, why they'd get on the outside if they could, the girls would.

B: But most of them was men that got all that.

M: That's right. I never will forget, they told one time on John Steadham. Him and Fred Rolin got into a fight, to a dance right around here somewhere. I just remember now whose house it was too, but it wasn't too far. It was right around in the neighborhood and he got –Fred got too hot for him, you know, and said he take him out and run out and got in the lot, run in the stable where there's an mold kicking mule in there. And that mule, he went up behind that mule and that

mule got to kicking and kicking in there and John was hollering in there too. Said, hey, said, somebody come out here. Said, everybody's in trouble. That mule was kicking, you know, and John was in there hoping the mule didn't kick him. They ain't bad now, they used to be. Man, they used to be some mean people down there.

B: Back then, I'll tell you what, wasn't no juke to go to unless all of us get together and somebody have a party-

M: Yeah, see, there was a dance going on somewhere or another, but square dancing was going on somewhere every Saturday. Friday night and Saturday night, we had it.

B: At somebody's house?

M: Yeah, at somebody's house.

B: Well, why'd you do it at a house?

M: Huh?

B: Was you going back to the cornfield or...?

M: Oh, yeah. Well, it was. They just move everything back out of the house. They had the whole house to dance in.

B: Oh, they'd take the stuff out...

M: Yeah, I've been there many time, seen them take down beds and give the whole house to dance, every dance, square dance.

H: Did some of the white people that lived in this neighborhood have dances too? Like that?

M: [Laughter] There wasn't too many that lived in here. You couldn't get them to – they finally used to come to dances here.

H: They'd come to dances.

M: But now, then they got too rough, they just quit coming. They would quit coming to a dance. They never would come to dance here hardly

B: Well, what caused it to get rough? I mean, was it...

M: Well, it was just...

B: Was it the girls and the boys or the...?

M: No, they were just mean. Just mean. They'd get in an argument, if one, it didn't go his way, they'd have a fight. Probably may wind up a killing. I know Grandpa; he went to have a dance at his house. He gone, he wasn't there, went to him a third time and told him, let's see, I forget his name. Will Colbert, I believe, was his name Will Colbert. Mama said that's when she was a young girl. Said Grandpa went to him twice and told him just like Calvin done. That's the reason ma always said, you just like your grandfather. She, I've heard her many time tell Calvin that. And so, he went to him and the third time and the third time, he hit him and knocked him off the porch, you know, out in the yard. And when he jumped out on him, he just sat there and stabbed him and stabbed him till all he wanted to and then taken his knife and tilt his head back and sawed till he cut his head complete off and laid up on him here. And the law didn't come after him now, but he sent for them.

H: Now, who done that?

M: Grandpa.

H: Your grandfather?

M: Yeah. He didn't come after him. Old Man Fountain down here was the law at that time.

H: Was that your grandpa McGhee or Rolin?

M: Yeah, McGhee. He didn't come after him till he had a Winchester rifle and sent for the man finally to come after him. And I've heard old man Fountain say in my presence, when he was living, this little old story down here was his, he built it there. He sat there and told us he didn't know right where he was at, but remember where there's a big lighted log laying on the left end side of that woods wood. Yeah, he said, now, I'll be sitting up on that log. Don't bring nobody with you, you come by yourself. And Old Man Fountain said he didn't know whether to go or not. He ventured off, he went. Got there, Grandpa give him the gun. He said, I'm ready to go.

B: Well, did you find him?

M: No, my great grand-dad. That's the—

[Break in recording]

M: There didn't nobody know where he went or whatever come of him. He never did come back here.

H: He just disappeared.

M: Disappeared.

H: Now, what was his name?

M: I can't remember.

H: That was your great-grandfather.

M: Yeah. But I believe mama said that was some of his people, moved back to north Alabama, up in the, up in North Carolina. With some McGhees up in North Carolina and she said she always will believe that's where he went. There was some of these big-shots up there to Brewton, they liked it and they got him out from there without a trial. See, they probably would have sent him off or probably killed him, or give him life in the penitentiary and they slipped him out from there and they didn't nobody know when he left or where he went or what. But there was a lot of McGhees back up in north Alabama and up in North Carolina and she said she believed –there's some come and registered in down here from up there McGhee we didn't know existed, and she said she believed-

H: That's some of his children.

M: That was some of his children. That's right.

B: Now, they McGhees up in North Carolina **[inaudible 35:00]**.

H: What other kind of stuff did Calvin McGhee do in his younger days besides making moonshine whiskey and getting in fights and such?

M: Nothing, but just farm. Went to farming and after I grow up to be a man, well, Calvin settled down then.

H: When did he settle down?

M: After I grew up to be a man. See, Calvin married just not too long before I married. Calvin married back in [19]40 something and I married in [19]39.

H: He did all that and never got in trouble with the law?

M: I mean Calvin married back in the [19]30s and I married in [19]39. Huh?

H: You say he did all that and never got in trouble with the law?

M: Never did. I don't reckon he was ever arrested, only one time, Alf Brown arrested Calvin, but now I disremember how that come about. But I do know that Calvin was married at that time.

B: Didn't he spend some time in jail or something?

M: Oh, yes. We'll get to that directly.

B: Oh, okay.

H: Be patient, **Buford**, be patient. [Laughter]

M: So, I don't know how that come about, but I do remember he had one killing on his mind. He was gonna kill Alfred Brown for hitting with a pistol up at this old place out one Sunday evening.

B: Which old place? **[inaudible 36:42]**

M: Yeah, the old house up here.

H: Was Alfred Brown part of these Browns that live around here now?

M: I don't know whether they'd any related or not. Could be all related some way or another. But he used to be chief of police and High Sheriff too here, Alfred Brown did. And he didn't have no right of Calvin. Calvin says well, Brown told you, well Calvin you're under arrest. He said, for what. He said, well, I'll tell you later. And Calvin said, well, let me get my hat. He walked and started to get up to get his hat and he did, Alf Brown hit him with a pistol, cut a big gash in his head. And that's one, Calvin said, is on the killing list. He said if I ever catch him right, I'm gonna kill him. And I said, I don't know, I don't never think about killing. He said, well, he didn't have no right of hitting me. But now, when they got him then,

Calvin moved up Monroe County then. He farmed, oh now for several years up there in Monroe County.

B: That's out at Uriah.

M: Yeah. And that's when Curtis was—Joyce was in the bed with Curtis, Curtis was being born.

B: Well, right along then they just—

M: A t that time. And Taft around here was staying with Calvin, and they didn't know this old store was robbed that Sunday night 'til that Monday morning, 'til Taft went to get the mule. Taft come back to the house, Calvin say, they know Taft stayed with him all day Saturday and Sunday, he didn't leave. 'Cause Taft, Calvin raised Taft, he did. He stayed with Calvin for years and . . .

B: He moved from Camden County when I think about it.

M: Yeah, well he moved back down here, then Taft come back down in here.

B: I thought it was . . .

M: And stayed on with Calvin right around in here on this hill, too.

B: Yeah.

M: And Taft come back —they always called the little old store, commissary. Calvin said, you know the commissary got robbed, broked it, and burnt up last night. Robbed and burned. And Calvin said, sure enough. And so, well, him and Taft, they went back up through the field, back up to it. They didn't plow, stopped plowing, then they went back up there.

B: Well, did you hear Carlton then?

M: Yeah, yeah. Working with old man Ellis, I believe. That's who Calvin was farming for.

H: Sharecropper.

M: Sharecropping with Ellis. And Calvin said when they got up there; nobody didn't know nothing about it. Said, he didn't, Taft didn't and then the law come down and that was Jesse, Taft, and Calvin, Curtis Galloway, and a nigger. Then was they grabbed them the first thing.

B: What did... **[Inaudible 39:52]**?

M: I don't know. They just got him 'cause he lived up there.

B: Jesse living?

M: Yeah, Jesse was living up there at that time too. So, they grabbed them and they kept them in jail nine months and three days, I believe.

H: Curtis Galloway, who was Curtis Galloway?

M: That was just a guy lived up there, they used to run around with too.

H: Kept them in nine months and three days.

M: Nine months and three days.

H: All of them?

M: No, they don't sent—they kept Jesse and Taft in there that long, but I think Jesse and Calvin, but Taft then, he had done signed a statement that he knew all about it, he was into it and Calvin said he know he wasn't. And they give Taft from ten to fifteen years. He's gonna clean this field up over here.

H: Really?

M: They sent Taft off. They sent Curtis Galloway and the nigger off and they the one's done it for a year and a day.

H: Well, why'd they keep Calvin and Jesse?

M: They though they was into it too. They would bring this statement over to Jesse. See, they kept Calvin in jail at Monroe a long time; they had Jesse over at Brewton. They would keep them apart; they didn't let them get together. They would bring a signed statement over to Calvin over there. Jesse Rolin said he signed this statement here, said, McGhee you just as well come on and sign it too. He said you was with him. Calvin said, well if Jesse knows anything about it, if signed a statement, he knows I don't. I don't know nothing about it. Why they carried that statement back to Jesse, one signed Calvin had signed a statement there. He was, Jesse was guilty, he was with them. Getting them to sign that statement, then they'd hook them for times like they don't Taft. That's the way they hooked Taft. Said, you just as well to tell us 'cause these other guys had done made a statement here and signed a lie and he got from ten to fifteen years in the wind-up. And he ought to go clean all them fields-

H: How long a time did he serve?

M: I disremember now, I don't know it, whether he pulled all that time or...

H: Well, didn't they have a trial or anything?

M: Oh yeah, sure.

H: They did have a trial.

M: Yeah, they had a trial.

B: They had a trial.

M: They had a trial, but now . . .

B: Taft and Jesse all at the same time or . . . ?

M: No, they had them, they had Jesse and Calvin's trial at the same time and that was the worst messed-up thing I've ever seen in my life. The defendant's witnesses and state witnesses all was sitting right out in the Courtroom, hearing what everything was told. They didn't go in a room, they sat up. And so the judge said, well, what are you pleading on? What do you have these boys for? Well, the defendants knowed what the state did, the state knowed what they did 'cause they were off at night, they didn't even go in the witness room at all. They sat right out in the courtroom.

H: Was Alf Brown the one that arrested them?

M: Huh?

H: You mentioned Alf Brown—

M: No, that was up in Monroe County. And they kept them separated. They sent Jesse then clean to Evergreen and moved Calvin to Monroe over to Brewton County. Over to Brewton a long time there then,

B: Across county lines?

M: Yeah, and then this boy's daddy, Scotty Burns what's the high sheriff up there now, his dad, he would let turn Calvin and Jesse loose. They went all downtown, went any way they wanted to 'round there. He never did keep them shut up in the day time. They went out, stayed out all the time. They brought food from there out where they cooked it up at the jail; they toted the food in and kept the one what was in jail in there. They stayed out and the old fire marshal, he said, you

mean to tell me you're gonna let these guys stay out loose like this. And Scotty Burns' daddy, Glen Burns, he said, marshal, he said, if either one of these men leave, I'll let you arrest me and I'll take his place. Turn him a loose and I'll take his place. He said, these boys ain't done nothing, that's the reason they ain't gonna leave. Said, I can tell a man when he's guilty. Said, these boys don't know nothing about it. So as it worked out, they didn't.

B: Well, that was Scotty Burns' daddy.

M: It was Glen Burns.

B: Glen Burns.

M: Scotty's daddy.

H: How did they finally get free?

M: When they had the trial, they turned them loose.

H: Oh, I see. They held them for trial for nine months?

M: Nine months and three days.

H: Before they got to the trial.

B: Before they got an appearance.

M: They wouldn't give even—we'd get the bond signed over here, take them to Brewton up there, Glen Burns would okay them, carry them over there and they'd turn them down every time.

H: The bail bonds you're talking about.

M: Yeah, a bail bond. We'd get them signed over here in this county, take them up to Monroe and turn them down. So, Glen Burns, Jay—I never will forget, mama and Joycie and Mag, they rode first one another, go and carry them to the

people. They'd know them, they signed the bonds, they'd know they was worth no more than the bonds. And Glen Burns, he'd go and if he get the bonds said, when you get these bonds this time, you bring them to me, I'm going over there to Monroe. We gonna find out why they won't accept these bonds. He just went in there and told them, said, these men is double what these little bonds here.

B: Oh, now I'm the one voting for Scotty.

M: Huh?

B: Now, I'm gonna vote, tell my boy I'm gonna vote for Scotty.

M: Vote, yeah, that's right. So, if he takes after his daddy, why so far he has, as far as I know. He's been a good sheriff just as far as I know.

H: Well, did Burns finally get them up there to-

M: Oh yeah, they finally signed the bond and turned them out just a few days before they had the trial. And then, they, when they went back to trial, they turned them a loose. And then Taft was stuck with from ten to fifteen years for lying on his self. When Calvin said he know Taft didn't leave the house. He stayed right there with him because they had moonshine whiskey there then and they would go out down there and get a gallon and bring it to the house and sit there and drink.

They'd drink a gallon, gallon and a half a day.

B: So, they was living up in Monroe County—

M: At the time.

H: Did he still have some of that fighting spirit when he first started on the school case? Working on the school case?

M: The fighting?

H: The fighting spirit. Did Calvin still have some of the fighting when he—

M: That stayed with him, I guess, 'til he got saved.

H: Well, like when he would go to the school superintendent and talk with him and so forth,

M: Yeah, if you didn't believe Calvin McGhee would fight you, now you just...

H: Do you think he ever came close to getting into it with anybody over the school case?

M: I guess, for a little bit, he would have killed. [Laughter]

H: Who he would killed, you reckon?

M: See, the one could have helped the Indians with this school up here was one of the superintendents on the board to Brewton.

H: Weaver, in Brewton?

M: No, Bates Moore. Calvin said he'd made, had they had it up there to Brewton one day and Calvin said, I reckon, said, for a little bit he'd have went on and right there in the courthouse. He shook his finger in his face and said, Bates, said, you just a liar from the beginning. Said, you could have helped use to start with, but you didn't do it. And his own brother, Bates Moore's brother, Bill Moore, he sold his place and left and went to Mobile 'cause he seen what Bill was getting into and what he was doing. 'Cause said he loved the Indians and had a lot of Indians there.

H: Bill Moore did?

M: Yeah, Bill did. He went to Mobile. He told Calvin all about it to Mobile. He said, that's why I sold my place, to get out from up there 'cause, said, Bill could have helped you—

H: Bates did.

M: Indian boys. Bates could have helped you Indian boys up there when he didn't do it. And said, that's the reason—he may be still living, I don't know.

B: Was it Bates Moore used to live right over here?

M: Yeah, right up here where that road goes into the school, right above that road that we turn to do to the graveyard.

B: Was Lucille Moore his daughter?

M: His wife.

H: His wife.

B: His wife.

M: His wife. Yeah, that's right. And he had been on-

B: **[inaudible 48:28]**

M: That's all right. See, he kept them down to—we didn't even have a school to go to. What schooling we got was to a dwelling house and to a church house.

B: If it wasn't for Calvin, they wouldn't furnish us schools.

M: To a dwelling house right around here on that hill where I first went to school in a little old house right out in front of this old place up here, right where Dewey's house is built now. Used to a be a little house we went one day. Went one time out there to Bell Creek—I only went to the fifth grade.

H: Did you ever go over to the church house at Headpadida schools at all?

M: No. No, see, we had a church house, or the same, out there where that there Episcopal Church is. Well, see, some of them went to school up there and there was Episcopal Church built right where this church is out here to Poarch here now. Why, we went to school to that line, same kind of church. There's one built over here. I reckon they was still in there, I disremember. The Woods Settlement back over here –they built one over there and built one, they had to be built alike at the same time.

H: Where was the Woods Settlement, exactly? I've heard a lot of people talk about it. Was that on the other side of Hog Fork over there?

M: Well, yeah, right there was Freemanville. You know where the road comes out to **Doug's, goes straight across yonder to that stream road [49:49]**, have you ever been out through there?

H: Mhmm.

M: Well, you can go right straight across that road and turn over there and go back left and you'll go back by where they built the church, that's what they call the Woods Settlement back in there. A lot of Woods is back in—in fact, there's McGhees around here. Or used to be, I don't know whether—I reckon, they may still live in there. It's been so long since I've been back around in there.

H: What do you think it was that—it may not have happened all at once, but what do you think it was that made Calvin change and devote his life to working for the Indians, getting away from . . .

M: Well . . .

H: Moonshine and those things.

M: He got to going to church and then, Joycie, his wife, she never did like for Calvin to drink. If Calvin was drinking, he was mean; he'd do anything. And then, after he got to going to church, then he got saved and come to be in this church around here and-

H: New Hope Church?

M: Yeah, around here. From that, he just give up, he quit drinking.

H: Do you remember about what year it was that he got saved?

M: No, I surely don't. That was while I was up in Illinois, 'cause I know mama used to say, he get to drinking, used to fight over on this hill over here. When she lived in that little old house where Johnny used to stay up there, he'd come over there and then he'd come in and get some water, or she'd have something another cooked all the time then and she would ask him, son, don't you want something to eat? Said, I've got some so and so fixed here. He'd get down off the tractor and go over there and eat some, or get some water or something another and then he'd go to crying 'cause I had moved off up in Illinois and said, it just ain't no more like it used to be. He always called me Curt, said, after Curt left; I don't even care about going hunting. Said, I don't care even about going hunting no more like I did. After I left 'cause see, we were so close. Now, me and Calvin-

H: When did you go to Illinois?

M: I went up there in the last part of [19]62, I think.

H: Well, he had already been involved in the school business and all that before-

M: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

H: So, he didn't get saved until after he had already gone through this.

M: While I was up in Illinois.

H: He had already started the land claim and everything.

B: Oh, yeah. Well, I like to say that we had borrowed your car –we had done run out of the car when . . .

M: Oh, yeah. I had bought a new [19]62 Ford. I don't know how many times that thing went to Washington. He'd always come out of the house, said, well, Curt, come on, come on, come to borrow your car again. I said, there it is out there. If I had any money, I'd pull out ten, five, or twenty dollars and give him if I had it. A lot of times, I had it and sometime I wouldn't, so. Now, that's the way me and him were.

H: You know, you were just, you were . . . tonight, you were saying or sometime. Heard so many people talk about what a good speaker he was.

M: Oh, he was.

H: Do you remember when he was young, real young, was he a good speaker back then?

M: He never did have too much to speak about until he got into this business. You know, not out in public like that. He was a good talker, now, but he never did get into nothing like that, get involved in nothing like that until he come about with this . . .

B: At the platform . . .

M: Land case.

B: Might have wanted to voice his opinion, give his opinion.

M: Oh, yeah.

B: **[inaudible 53:41]**

H: Well, he was quite a bit—how much older than he was you?

M: See, I'll be sixty-two in October and he died—how long has he been dead?

B: He was sixty-seven years old when he died.

H: Oh, he was considerably older than . . .

M: Sixty-seven, yes. See, I'm the youngest one. Lucie Mae out here, Edgar's wife, she's our baby sister. I'm just a little older than she is, about two years older than she is.

H: So, you think it—

M: Oh, yeah.

H: Well, you say he changed his ways when he got saved, but he didn't get saved until after he had already taken on the real task of changing the schools and the land claim?

M: Yeah.

H: Well, what got him into that? What got him started on that route before he even got saved?

M: His wife, I guess, kept talking to him all the time. She was strictly bitterly against his drinking; she didn't normally drink. I know. Me and him had went and got two gallons of moonshine whiskey and had carried it out down there, and her and Mama had found it and he had lot of Epsom salts here he'd put out in across for cows, you know and I never will forget, Joycie, his wife, had got a whole pound of it. A pound of that box of Epsom salts and poured it in that gallon of whiskey and it was night. He goes back there to get it—I had gone back to the house. He goes

back to get a drink of that whiskey and he said that was the awful-est taste he'd ever tasted of whiskey. He said, there's something. He thought right then what had happened. Well, he didn't come on, he say, he didn't say nothing and went back the next morning, picked the jug up and looked and that whiskey was strong enough it had eaten that Epsom salts up in there 'till it was just like a lint cotton working in that jug, you know, when he picked it up and shook and moved it a little bit. It was just like lint cotton in that jug, you know. And he, he knowed what had happened, so he come right asked Joyce. She didn't lie to him, she told him what. Said, me and you mama put that Epsom salts in it. But that didn't stop him; we had another jug out there. He dranked it on 'till he just got decided to quit. Well, that's the way I was. I drank it 'till I—I said, I think that I ain't getting a day younger. Every day, I'm getting old. And I said, I think I've had enough of this. Then a lot of them had already done quit, got into the church. I didn't have nobody go with me 'cause when I went, she went, and if I didn't go, she didn't go, so that's the way it was. We went out to dance and have a good time and drink and come back to house. We didn't go out to pick no, I didn't never pick no fights with anyone. Course, I would've fighted if pushed on me now, but I never did pick no fight with nobody. And so, that's just the way we . . .

H: Well, Calvin had quit drinking about and quit making moonshine about when? Do you remember?

M: No, I don't.

H: Was he still doing it after he started on the school case or no?

M: No, he was done quit making whiskey. Or sell it, he didn't sell none or make no whiskey. We bought all the moonshine we got then.

H: What do you remember about the things that he used to talk about that led him to getting into the school case in the first place?

M: Well, I'll tell you. We have always heard the government owned the Indians for they land. Now, we was taught that from as far as I can remember. And that was before I was ever born. There was a guy come through here and fixed up papers, signed papers, that we were going to get –that the Indians was gonna get so much money. And it went, when Calvin found that on record; they had it on record. It went as far as it could go that they hadn't never opened up the way the Indians could sue the government for, like putting in cases, until [19]48, 1948. This lawyer, lawyer Horn here in Atmore, he found it out in the paper. So, he come to Calvin. That was the beginning. He said, Calvin, said, I was reading it in the paper here. Said, I have always heard too the government owed the Indian for the land. Said, it had opened up the way y'all can sue the government for your land. And from that, it got started.

H: Well, that got started in the land case, but what got started in the school business, the fight with the school board there?

M: Well, you mean they didn't want the Indians to go to the white schools?

H: Right, he went to the school board and all that.

M: Oh, yeah. Yeah, Jack Daughtry and, I disremember now which one was it, Brooks Rolin was with him or not. They met the school bus up there, they would go by and other and holler and cut up and make fun 'cause they'd drive by and

they couldn't go up there, the Indian girls or boys couldn't go to school in Atmore. So, they'd make the bus out there that morning and Jack Daughtry's wife loaded up that shotgun with buckshot too. Said, this is one morning I'm gonna die and them young'uns are gonna ride that bus. So, when the bus come, they seen that gun, they stopped and picked them up. And from that day, kept going on to school.

H: But Calvin brought a suit against the school board too, didn't he? Or did he?

M: No, not that I remember. I don't recall. He might've –no, I don't think so. He could have, I guess, but they agreed.

H: But he was in on it. He was the one going over there to do school board.

M: Oh yeah, yeah.

H: Well, what got him involved in doing that? Calvin McGhee going to the school board.

M: Because they wouldn't pick them kids up there to go to school.

H: Why did he decide, when they hadn't been picking them up for years, why did he decide at that time . . .

M: See, Curtis and Frank, Calvin's two older boys, they went to Atwater school, but they had to go meet the bus way down here, drive down here to catch the bus. And the bus wouldn't come up there to pick them up 'til after this got started. They had to go and then put Calvin off, they say, Calvin, said, if you'll stop this where it's at now, we'll come pick your kids up and that's it. Calvin said, no, if my kids have to stay out here and not go to school and you don't pick the other ones up, they won't none of them go. If my kids go, the other ones is going. And Bill

Moore was one of them. That's the reason that Calvin said he taken all he could do to stay often right there in the courthouse. And he knew it too and this other one, Weaver, he was the superintendent up there. He would have went on him before he'd a batted his eyes, but . . .

H: The old Weaver.

M: Yeah, the old Weaver.

H: Not the Weaver that's up there now.

M: That's the old Weaver.

H: Old Weaver.

M: Yeah, man. He'd a done just like the way the Indians been treated, Calvin said he'd make him so mad, he would just almost cry when they'd read this up yonder at the archives. If you don't believe it, he said, it's on record up there just how the Indian was treated. The niggers ain't treated bad at all; the Indians was the ones was treated when they was drove from here to Oklahoma, off from they own home, native home land here. Drove from to here Oklahoma, they give them their choice. It was on record up there that they were to feed them steaks all time or whatever they wanted. They could go or stay to give them their druthers. They could stay or they could go. Well, a lot of them went and a lot of them stayed. That's the reason there's a lot of them, the Creeks was out there in Oklahoma and a lot of them back here. What wanted to went and what wanted to stayed. They give them the druthers. Now, that was all that on up to the archives. And he had fooled around in that thing enough, he knowed what he went in there to hunt for, but you didn't carry no books out. All of them books, them guards was in

there, you didn't carry a book out. You just signed to where you wanted to start back and you turn that book back in and you could get it the next day. There wasn't a book went out of there.

H: When did he make his first trip to Washington? Do you remember?

M: It was in, that was in [19]48 when they agreed to let the Indian sue for the land, but now knowing how long it was after that, but they got busy on it right away. And Lawyer Horn was the first one. Then, when they find out they had to get some more lawyers included. When, later on, Calvin was such a speaker and knowed about everything that some of the head men there in Washington, he said, why, I don't see why you would have even needed a lawyer to represent your case. Now, he was just that kind of man.

H: Somebody once told me that when they were saying there weren't any Creek Indians in Alabama, that he just got a whole bunch of the older Indians, took a carload up there.

M: Yeah.

H: Did you tell me that?

B: Yeah, they carried up there, that's when I went up there with him.

H: Two carloads.

M: One time when they was having a trial that day . . .

B: Concerning Creek Indians, two carloads.

M: Have you ever been there to Washington in the Creek Indians in the Indian Interior Department there in Washington?

H: No, I haven't been there.

M: That thing is big enough, it cover the whole block.

B: What I was speaking, **[inaudible 1:04:58]**

[Other people talking in background]

M: That cafeteria in that place is twice as big as this house. Have you ever been there?

B: Think I might have been by it.

M: Yeah, I've been all in it.

B: Up there with Calvin.

M: He knowed we had people down here that was supposed, they had to suppose recognize, you know, and with the BIA and the federal government been unrecognizing for years.

H: You know, just like we were talking earlier, all I ever heard from anybody about Calvin, he was a man who had a real talent for politics.

M: He did, he was.

H: And I wondered, did he ever show any signs in his early life of being shrewd in how to do things in politics?

B: Not early life, I don't believe he did.

M: No.

B: But he had a—

[Break in recording]

H: As figuring out for others.

B: He had roots . . .

M: And they was one of them old head out here to Mama that matched up. Calvin was just like him. Etta said, he could sit—he didn't have no education now, this other guy didn't.

H: One of the older ones.

M: The older ones. He didn't have no education, but you could read a newspaper out there and all the headlines and he could tell y'all what you read him.

H: Yeah, one of the things I was wondering about—

M: Just remember.

H: Being as close to Calvin as you were, later on in life, did he ever kinda sit around and reminisce and talk about the older days when he was running moonshine and doing those kind of things? Did he ever talk about things like that?

M: Only when we would get off together. Me and him are off with a bunch off hunting, we would all sit down drinking and sometimes things like that would come up.

B: Bullcrap, the only time, any other times, he was talking most of the times, it was Indians.

M: Yep.

H: When y'all were all together, he would talk about some years gone by, what he used to do.

M: Oh, yeah. Yeah, there would be things like that be brought up, you know.

H: Did he enjoy talking about it?

M: Oh, yeah, I reckon he did.

B: Oh, daddy used to be a clown too; he used to be a clown. He was good in his clown days and he was funny, dad was funny.

M: Yeah, he kept a bunch entertained all the time. Man, he kept a bunch laughing there, and everybody—

B: It was crazy, we were bullshitting all the time, you know.

H: When he first started wearing feathers and things, do you think he was just partly clowning around when he did that, or was he really serious?

B: No, it was serious.

H: He was serious?

M: Yeah, he was serious 'cause, see, we was never raised up to be raised up like the Indians was. That's the reason they didn't claimed there was no Indians down here. There wasn't no Indians in Alabama.

B: They knew Creek Indians didn't dress like he dressed and he knew that, but he had saw movies, he saw television about recognizing publicly till it dawned on him. Said, he would get, I mean, if you the feathers on him, they he'd recognize.

M: Yeah, he enjoyed that.

B: And then he really got recognized, he was simply that when he put the feathers on, you recognized him. I mean, he was, he wasn't clowning, he was serious.

M: And what I'm telling you, he was a man that was well-known here abouts.

B: You know, the Indians, you know, the way the public is and the media, giving the Indians heat. He had to get that strength to get some attention to our area.

Daddy knew the Creek Indians didn't dress like he did.

H: But he knew that people expected Indians to look like that.

M: That's right, yeah.

B: He wanted to give something. We've got some Indians here.

H: What were you gonna say, Greely?

M: I said a lot—you see a lot of picture on Television. Now, Calvin, I don't know if there's any way we killing the Indians, oh god. Calvin said, I'm gonna tell you right now, they ought to put a real picture on there. It wasn't only them killing the Indians. I guarantee you, they said when they had this massacre over here, now, when them Indians went in, they killed everything. They didn't leave nothing; they killed women, children, and all.

B: So, really, that's the reason—

M: The blood was running in the ditches they say just like water.

B: You know, motion pictures don't really—that's the Fort Mims is the biggest massacre in the United States. A Massacre.

M: Yeah, you hear about it.

B: They don't want to talk about it. Well, they out to come in and film a program on that.

M: That's right, yeah. It's over there, have you ever been there? You went over there, didn't you?

H: Yeah, I've been to Fort Mims.

M: You ain't, have you ever been over there?

B: Well, the Creek Indians had a war with the United States for seven years. It was a war; it wasn't a darn little battle.

M: Hehe, mighty right.

B: Yeah, it went on.

M: They said that, I don't know how far this is away from Brewton, but they camped that night up there on Burnt Corn, that creek just as you get going into Brewton there, that's Burnt Corn. They camped back this way someways or another and they traveled from there over till they come in the boatyard over there that day. And they out here the old folks say, they had some nigger slaves there and said that they told these white fellows, soldiers, they had saw them Indians out there. They went out and looked and they couldn't find them, and so they come back and whooped them with horse whips, the niggers, for lying to them. And they said at twelve o'clock that day, they didn't think there was nobody around, the gate was open, that's when they come in. Caught them with the gate open and said, honey, they killed people there. I ain't never heard how many was killed.

B: That history, have you seen that history of the Fort Mims Mass Murder.

H: I don't know one at this moment.

M: A massacre like that, have y'all ever heard whether had any Indian territories anywhere there?

H: Not like that.

M: Man, they had one there.

B: Larry, have you ever, do you know what was . . .

?: I'd heard about, I heard something about it.

M: They come so close, but now see, they wanted to do the Indians like that up in North Carolina. They didn't want them to go to school with the white. So, them guys up there, they come clean down here; they contacted Calvin down here,

would he be willing to go help them. Calvin got the money together, everyone says yeah, they'd be willing to go.

H: How'd they know about him?

M: Huh?

B: Daddy, went up on—

M: They went up there and then a lot of them Indians up there come down here. They met Calvin to café here at Atmore, to discuss that matter. Could he get his bunch to go, Calvin said, whenever I called the bunch together, if you need help up there, we'll come help you.

H: Was that the Lumbee Indians?

M: I don't know which ones.

B: Yeah, Lumbee, that's right.

M: Then, some of them there, they got their first one thing then another. Sheriff's boy, the judge's boy or something another and they got him and they kept him there and they shot out lights there and they killed some up there too. And they brought that thing to a close pretty quick. They knowed they mad up there.

B: One of them had to stay in the wing.

M: Did you know they contacted Scotty Burns at that time? How did the Indians feel after that bunch come down there? Was they planning to go up there —they's some of them even called from up yonder...where was that?

B: You mean all that BIA stuff.

M: Wounded Knee, the battle?

B: Right.

- M: Yeah, they contacted the law down here; how did the Indians feel about what was going on up there.
- B: Yeah, the phone burned up.
- M: Would they go up there? He said, I'll tell you one thing, said, if they call me-
- H: It was recently when they had that Wounded Knee.
- M: Yeah, that's right, that's right. They contacted the law down here.
- B: The sheriff got a telephone call.
- M: Yeah, he said I'd imagine if they called on them, they would go. That's what Burns told them, said, I imagine if they called on them, they would go.
- B: I mean the one I got was from the Agency.
- M: Yeah, I think Burns had told some of them, yeah, they contacted him.
- H: You talking about when Calvin went up there to North Carolina, they called Burns here or before he-
- M: Yeah, they checked with Burns then.
- B: Well, daddy was dead then.
- M: Huh?
- B: Daddy was dead when the Wounded Incident . . .
- M: Oh yeah, with Wounded Knee, but up yonder, he say.
- H: But before that, he said that they contacted Burns at that time.
- M: Yes sir, they contacted him then.
- H: The law in North Carolina contacted Burns.
- M: Yes sir, how did they feel down there? Wonder if these Indians down here would go up there if they was called on and Burns told them, yeah cause Burns was

part Indian himself. Yeah, said they probably would if they're called on and needed. That's the answer he give them and then these folks down here, they contacted him down here too. Yeah, see, there's a place there –you, the Indians, you don't scare them. If it just takes to killing, they'll go out for that too. 'Cause I've read a lot about it. They said a man wasn't nothing but just a man.

H: There's one thing I've heard so many people just mention in passing, mainly I guess, connection with Calvin's funeral. That's about Brooks Rolin, he was in jail. Tell me the story of Brooks Rolin, what really happened out here to Brooks Rolin.

M: No, I wasn't here while he was in jail then. All I know, so Brooks Rolin, he would fight you. That's all I know about Brooks. But now, as far as I wasn't here at that time that he was, when he was in jail. I know they woulda probably electrocuted him in Bay Minette down there if it hadn't been for Calvin.

H: Oh really?

M: Yeah, they wanted to burn him so bad.

H: Had he killed somebody?

M: He shot that woman nine times. After he separated, him and his old lady, well he got in with another woman and –do you remember south of Bay Minette? The old part of the old building used to be there. I ain't been down that way in a long time, I don't know whether they ever tore it rest of it down, but they tore the old building down. Only just some of the places of the wall was still up there. Used to have a big old, colored I forget now what it was, the name of it, but that was the place. She was already to this tavern and he drove up there what you call them's wife was working at that time; she told me all about it. Fester Bird's wife over yonder

boat yard, she said her and another girl was working there. This woman come in there first before Brooks come in there and said, then directly Brooks come in there, he sat there and they talked awhile and he ordered him a beer and ordered her a beer. They sat there and drank and got in an argument and said, Brooks, he just went back out to the car and come in there and shot her nine times, and she fell on the floor, and he turned her over there and he got blood or something was on his hand. He asked one of the girls for a pan to wash his hands and said, she said yeah. She went and got him something or another to wash his hands and said, call the law to come get him. Said, give me another beer and they didn't know whether to give him a beer or not and the girl, woman was running the place at the time, she said, give him anything he wants. Yeah, said, give him anything he wants. I don't want me just a beer, so just bring me a beer.

B: Well, Brooks used to be an original councilor; he was on that original council.

M: Oh, yeah.

H: Had Brooks done any preaching when he was there?

M: Yeah, used to be a good preacher. I believe our preacher was living right at that time.

H: Preacher what?

M: Yeah.

H: You believe your preacher what?

M: I said, if he was a preacher and I believe he was a preacher what done his best to try to live right at that time.

H: At the time that happened, you mean?

M: No, that was before then, before then.

H: When you said Calvin kept him from getting electrocuted, how did he do that?

M: By knowing other people.

H: By knowing people.

M: Yeah, they wanted –see, Brooks played off as crazy. They sent him to Tuscaloosa up there. I know, see when Calvin was dead, they had him in penitentiary up here and he come, I talked with him right up at the house. And Calvin, the day Calvin was buried, he told them other young boys there, Brooks had done fell off then, Brooks used to be a good, stout, heavy fellow, but when he come down through, he was-

B: He was about two hundred and twenty pounds, wasn't he?

M: Yeah, and he told them young boys, said boys, said-

H: Was it Dooney's brother?

M: Huh?

H: Was it Dooney's brother?

B: Dooney's brother, yeah.

H: I met Dooney. Dooney's a pretty big man too.

M: Brooks was a big man too, but he had got down, poor, and he told them young boys, said, boys, I'm gonna tell you right now, said you'd better appreciate being out here. You better not do nothing to get sent up yonder. He said, that's awful place. He killed one of them convicts over here near about. Would have killed

him, I reckon, if it hadn't been someone or another beg, hollering and begging him not to kill him.

B: While he get in there?

M: Yeah. This one on the gate over here and this guard over here right now, they know him. They didn't know his name, they said, McGhee said, does you have any kinfolks over here in prison? I said, Yeah. I said, I had a cousin up there, Brooks Rolin. That's the one, that's the one. He said, he died up there. He sure did.

H: Atmore Prison?

M: Yeah, he died up there too. He's buried around here though. He's buried around here. And this old guard and that colored fellow what's on the gate over there stays on the gate out there with that guard out there opening the gate, he knowed him too. He said, yeah, he would have killed that other convict over there on account of some fish bait. Wigglers, they'd go off and dig wigglers to sell, you know, and I don't know whether this other guy had took some-

B: He was about fifty-five at the time, I believe.

M: I imagine. And he had a pitchfork, done had him down, had that pitchfork, he was gonna give him that pitchfork through him. And that guard was hollering at him, begging him not to do it, not to do it.

H: I didn't realize, Brooks Rolin was a cousin of yours?

M: Mhmm.

H: Who was his mother and daddy?

M: Henry Rolin, my mama's brother. I don't know Brooks's mama. She died.
Brooks's baby sister is just a little bit older than I am, and she died in childbirth.
And she is just a little bit older than I am.

H: Is his sister still living?

M: Yeah.

H: What's her name?

M: Ernie May. She has one of her legs off. I don't know whether they were taking
this other leg off or not. They did say they might have to take the other leg off.
She's a diabetic and they had to take her legs off.

B: Does Dooney's brother still live in Jacksonville?

M: Yeah.

H: He is a pretty big, impressive man.

B: **That is me and him run around there, have contact with Dooney right down
here [49:18]**

M: Really?

H: Yeah I believe he is down there.

M: Yeah, he didn't scare me. He didn't get to me.

H: What caused that one?

M: I imagined my brother in law weighed three hundred pounds. [Laugh] No big man
scared him. That thing was like a guinea war. He would be all over him.

H: Why'd you take on Dooney?

M: He probably get to drinking and get to hogging.

B: Once Calvin got into the Indian world and he really just devoted himself to that. He kept tried to do all the farming too at the same time.

M: Well he had to give off his farm. By the time he got out there to get farming, doing something. Get on the tractor; he would come here for an hour, two hours at a time.

H: How did he make a living doing all this?

M: A lot of folks been helping him. You know **Misses Menkin** down in Pensacola? She used to help Calvin a whole lot. And other folks would help him and after when he had done a lot of research work for different ones, he put a price on it. He could charge you as well, council could charge you. He had papers fixed up that he could charge too. If you wanted him to trace back your ancestors in Washington. Well could be sure to do it and that he said, "I'll do it for so much." Well if you thought that you could get it cheaper, you could go with somebody else. So he got to make a little money out of it along like that. But other, he didn't make nothing. He didn't get nothing for the wood defending being as he wouldn't have done that.

[Several people speaking]

M: That's what I hate so bad. We all called him before he got what little bit he had worked so hard for.

B: With everything going on, **we'd been pretty strong [inaudible 1:24:37]**. Had he gotten good grades, he would have had my job. [Laugh]

M: Brooks Rolin's brother, Elbert, used to he stayed away from here around thirty-something years, got married or something and finally- he went in service awhile, lost one of his eyes while he was in service.

H: This is a different Elbert than the one that was married to Macey?

M: Yeah, yeah, this is Brooks's brother.

B: Brooks' younger brother.

H: No relation to Elbert.

M: Ah uh, they may be a little bit.

B: Cousins.

H: But not close related.

B: Right.

M: And he come back here from Arizona and him and Calvin used to run around a whole lot together. A fellow, Greg Hales, used to live back over here. Him and Calvin used to ride around a whole lot together, go to dances together. He was about the only white fella ever lived around here that never did have no trouble.

H: Who was that?

M: Greg Hales, he used to live back down here. He was about the only one that lived time through here. Him and Calvin was like that too.

B: The dairy.

M: Huh?

B: Runned a dairy.

M: No, used to live right across the creek over here.

B: Oh, right.

M: Yeah, that's where that there old boy married that girl of Rob's. That boy, what's his name? You know who I'm talking, married that girl of Rob's, that Faith. Well, his mama right across from where I lived over there, across that creek, that old **Lee Ann's** house over there. You know where Leonard used to live over there?

B: Yeah, yeah.

M: Well, that old big house back this side of there's all tore down now. You can't be telling' there's a house been out there. Well, that's where she was born there. Calvin and Greg Hales used to run around a whole lot together. They'd separate coming down for this branch way up yonder. Greg went down on the other side of the branch and Calvin would come down on this side coming home and they'd get off from one another and said Greg Hale would holler at him, hey Calvin. I hope you live forever and never die, he said. Calvin tell'd him, let's see, one word... I can't remember now how; I don't really remember. But anyhow, that was his hope they'd ever would live forever and never die. That was the point, you know. I hope you live forever and never die and the other one would say something, something or another. I can't think about how it was, but that was the password, that's when they would separate. One would go down one side of the branch, one on the other side.

H: That's when they were young fellows?

M: Yeah. Greg was married at that time, Calvin wasn't married.

H: You were starting to say something about Elbert coming back from Arizona a while ago.

M: I said, he stayed out there, but now, Elbert, he only went to the third grade, but now he was just about like Calvin. He could talk and he could write. He could write a prettier handwrite as you want to look at and only went to the third grade. And now to talking, he was a good talker too.

B: But he left, didn't he?

M: He left here back, I disremember now what year he left here, but he stayed out there, he stayed away from here around thirty-five year, I imagine. Well, might have been longer.

B: And finally come back.

M: Yeah, he left here with them **Casklows** and went out there and stayed out there till all them **Casklows** died out there.

H: Who were the Casklows?

M: That was just some folks lived right back down here between here and town and he got in with them, there were five sisters.

B: Were they Indian?

M: Uh-h. And had one brother; five sisters and one brother and the mama and daddy. And he got in with them and they was going out to Arizona, so he just went off out there with them. Got him a job out there and he just stayed out, never did come back here. He'd write every once in a while. Used to write mostly to a fellow here in Atmore, **Charlie Hogg**.

H: Same Charlie Hogg that you know over here?

M: At Poarch out there?

H: Yeah.

M: That's the one. He used to write to him pretty often, but he never did write to his brothers and sisters.

B: He was the most her contact.

M: Now and then, he'd write to them.

B: Charlie Hogg was the most he'd contact.

H: When all those people were working over there at Poarch with Charlie Hogg and you all had your place here, did y'all deal with the Indian folks down at Poarch much up here?

M: From down here?

H: Yeah.

M: Oh, yeah.

H: Did you go down to Charlie Hall's place and-

M: Oh, yeah. He used to sell mule, had a big mule stable at Atmore, he'd sell mules. That's when there wasn't no tractors, everybody farmed with mules. He'd go up to Tennessee and buy carloads of mules, have them shipped down on the train, unload it to Atmore there; he had a big barf there.

H: But Hog Fork out there was pretty much your lead...

M: Territory yeah, around here.

H: Your daddy used to boys and...

M: See, there was just like there was three bunches; bunch here, a bunch up at Poarch -no, let's see, I take that back. There was a bunch here, bunch out to Poarch, and bunch up there at Headapadida, then there was a bunch out to Bell Creek, and a bunch up there to Huxford. But they all visit one another. People

don't visit one another like they used to. I know my sister and me used to drive a mule wagon off from way up in Monroe County, come on down. Every weekend near about, they'd come down here or we would go up there.

H: By wagon?

M: By wagon, that's the only way we had. We didn't have no car. By wagon. I remember when we bought the first old T-Model car. We was picking cotton right back out in the field, right back out here and Charlie Halls come along in an old T-Model car and all of them has gathered, the older one said, we ought to go buy that old car from Hall. Calvin said, why y'all want it? Ma and Pa was along too. Calvin went on, made the trade for the old car, come driving her back. Went on and bought the car.

H: Do you remember your granddaddy?

M: He died before –I never did see him, on neither side.

H: When you were growing up did...

M: Mama's daddy was a full-blooded white man.

H: What was his name?

M: I can't think of his name right now. He lived back down here in Florida. John seen him, my brother John said he saw him, but I never did see him. He was an Irishman, full-blood Irish.

H: When you were growing up, did your Uncle Isaac, Aunt Josie, and those were still living, would they come and visit a lot with your folks and so on?

M: Oh, yeah.

H: They lived over in Poarch or did they?

M: Yeah, lived right around this here yonder, them did. All my uncles and aunts.

H: They all lived right around here when you were growing up.

M: Yeah. See, out there to Poarch, we just backward and forwards all the time. Out there to Poarch, but now up to Padida, they never did go up there too much on this occasion as far as I can remember. But now, like them, Isaac and Josephine...

B: That's out of the territory

M: Yeah, get too far off. They used to live right around here and they used to live up back over here. They used to live right round there in a church house around near that cemetery. I can remember that when I was, I was small. I can remember when Aunt Josephine used to live around there and they was to Grandma and –I can remember both of my grandmas now, but I never did see my grandfathers on either side. I can remember me and Mace caught a cat, tied shucks to its tail and set it afire and caused our barn to burn up. [Laughter] But we never did tell it. Never did tell it. And Grandma and Josie was to the house at that time. Ma and Pa –there used to be an old railroad come down through here, had old steam engine and they would cut wood and put on, they'd take up the wood right over there. They had the log cut all that time back in yonder, back in that –I don't know how far they go back in that log trains, you know, and pull them out, take them with oxes. And they would put on wood and all of them was all four there cutting wood to put on over there and me and Mace was small, we went to the house with Aunt Josie and Grandma. So, me and Mace decide to – Mace did – come up with tied some shucks to the cat's tail and right up in the

barn he went with that fire and set the barn afire and the horses in the barn too.

And when we hollers out the barn was on fire, Grandma and Aunt Josie run back there and turned the horses out, that's what saved them. They weren't too big then, they run out the barn and turned the horses out, saved the horses.

H: And they never did find out that you and Mace did it?

B: Y'all never did tell them.

M: No.

B: Wasn't no doubt.

M: I reckon they'd a wore us out good. [Laughter] Yeah, we used to have to go out in them woods bout time. I reckon we had a hundred and fifty or two hundred head of old goats out there. We'd go out in them woods and drive them things up there, play with them old goats around there till me and Mace would be stinking like the goats, you know, we'd get on the old big one and ride them things there. And this little old house used to be down here – Levi's. Calvin and Joe Rolin, they pulled all that stuff Levi chopped, hew it out with a broad ax, all the posts and some things and rafters and things, they drag all that stuff with goats and way out down in them woods up come around that head of that branch and come around. That house was built out of them.

H: That one that's down there now?

M: That old house right down there. They had all the posts and rafters and stills and things, they drag all that stuff up there with goats. They had big old goats and a little two-cart wagon, they'd jack that thing up on –it's like dragging logs, you

know. And them goats, they'd holler for them goats, they just like oxen, and they'd...

B: Had them trained, huh?

M: They didn't run neither. They was just like oxen, walk alongside them with that whip there and everything would listen at 'em just like driving oxen.

B: Well, who had the goats?

M: Huh?

H: Whose goats were they?

M: Joe had goats and we had goats. I disremember now, but they did pick out the biggest ones and they worked with something or another like that and with that wagon. That's what I said. You know, I told you well back when you was asking me, I said I had a good time back then. We didn't have no money, we didn't have no beer to drink; we made our whiskey. But we had plenty to eat, we never was down low, we didn't have nothing hardly. We always had stuff. We raised everything we'd eat on the farm, but we had to buy, like coffee, sugar, flour. I guess we could have raised wheat and they could have cleaned it and ground it out to that mill just like they cleaned the rice, but we didn't fool with no wheat. We raised our own ride. Uncle Arlie, Rob, you know Rob, his daddy. Now see, we worked together. This little old pond right back of that church used to be a big, pretty good sized pond that would hold water. That used to be the rice pond. Uncle Arlie then farmed that field and we farmed all this back this away. He planted rice over there at rice-cutting time, me and Mace and John, we was the smallest ones at that time, we'd go, help cut that stuff and shock it up, left it up to

dry and then help McCullough up to that mill up there and have it cleaned. And then when Uncle Arlie he done divide, we got half of it and him half of it. He gave us-

[Pause in Recording]

M: Money at that time, but now far as anything to eat we had, oh we had a big smokehouse there. I've see sometime eight and ten big barrels of meat, sixty-five gallon barrels in there, full of meat. That was pure meat, now, that wasn't the bones. Then they had, Mama and them would have barrels they'd put all the meat. Cut the bones out off of the meat; put the boned ones in barrels there and all the pure meat was in barrels.

B: There was soot pile and the meat there.

M: That's right.

H: Salted meat?

M: That's right. And sauces, we made our own sauces.

H: The meat in barrels, was it salted or...?

B: They would salt that thing down till we'd let it stay in there for about nine days to take the salt good. Then, my daddy, me and him and Mace, we'd take that meat out of there then and he'd put about two gallons of syrup in a wash pot full of water and we'd get that think boiling, water with that syrup in it would make it kind of squeaky. We'd dip that meat up and down in there and wash that salt off it, you know. Then, we'd hang it up in the smokehouse till it taking out all of it hung it up in there, we just had it just lined up in there on sticks, you know, across the planks up there. Tie it, punch holes in the meat and tie. Thing is, years ago, they

didn't put strings in it; they had a big ole thing that growed in the woods called bear grass. You ever seen any of it?

H: Mhmm.

M: That's what they done, that thing was strong. They take them things and Lee'd take a little strip of that thing and make a hole in that meat and tie it on that, hang up on that stick, run it up on that stick. You'd pull up that stick and just hang it, put it up there. We done that, you know, to...

B: I told ya, you want a little bit of meat?

H: I've had my share.

B: All you have to do it bite till it's gone.

M: Then, they put that fence wire up over the meat before the planks up there, George done that. Then, we'd make sausage and string that sausage up and down on there and smoke the sausage, then smoke the meat. We had smoked a barrel of smoked sausage then he wants sausage. That's where you get your red gravy, from that hickory smoke off a meat. That meat would cure so pretty, you know, when you get that. You seen the picture in refrigerator them books where you cut a slice off a big ham, that's just the way it would look when you take the bone out a ham and double it back, it would stay together, and hang it up there and let it dry. Man, you could cut that thing off there and it wouldn't be too salty. Then, after you dip up and down in that hot water, you know, washed all that salt off. And then we'd go to the crib, shuck a bunch of corn and get them clean shucks. We'd put a layer of shucks and a layer of meat, a layer of shucks and a layer of meat. And when them shucks would get damp from that salty meat in

there, they would stay salty and the meat would stay just as salted when it almost about to get hard. And that's the way we cured our meat. Then, they had pickled meat, we'd pickle meat. Now, I never did know how they pickled, I never did find out how that was done.

H: Was it put up in jars?

M: No, pickled it, put it in barrels. And that was the best tasting meat. You don't get nothing like that now.

H: No.

M: They'd pickle hog feet, they'd pickle them things down in jars, wait for them. We'd kill sometimes fifteen and twenty head of hogs. We have. I believe that's what I said, we never did have to buy for nothing on this one.

H: When you went hunting and shot a deer or something, did you just eat that right up or did you put up some kind of tool.

M: Well, now there wasn't no deer today. Now, years ago, there used to be a lot of deer here. Papa says he went out one morning and killed two big buck right up down here between here and that branch right on down in there. Running, coming up to him there, had caught them fighting, had their horned hooked together, but he killed both of them. They couldn't get apart, he run around a tree there and he killed both of them right at it. But, now back in my days, we never did hunt no deer around here. Then, it commence to getting thick with settlers arounds here, a lot of farms, they just drove the deer away. I've been deer hunting since I've been was grown.

H: Can you say that again?

M: I said what deer hunting I had done is been since I was grown.

H: What about the squirrel hunting?

M: Oh yeah, we used to squirrel hunt a lot; there was a lots of squirrels.

H: About the time you came along, the deer were pretty much gone from right around here.

M: From right around here, yeah. Turkey too. Papa said there used to be a lot of turkey here, and pigeons, and wild pigeons. He said there was tree, used to be way back down yonder, there would be so many pigeons that they'd just break the limbs right off the trees. People used to kill pigeons and eat them. I reckon it was, back then, whatever they got to eat, it wasn't like they probably have a garbage place, sit down and eat their garbage and stuff. They eat bugs and stuff, I reckon, it why those were here.

H: They were wood pigeons and not city pigeons.

M: Yeah, that's right. And he said there were so many of them things; it would just break the trees there, the limbs off the trees.

H: I wish you wouldn't work so fast. I hate to see you do all that cooking and I have to clean up too.

M: Yeah, we used to; I used to have a good time when I was growing. Of course, now, all our people right around in here, they never did have what we had. We were what I said, a step above them. But yet, when we killed, everybody had some. That's when I have a, plant a garden; I don't never sell nothing out of that garden. If anybody wants it, come get it as long as it last. That's the way I am.

H: You feel your family was just a step above most of the other people around?

M: Yes, we always had plenty, everything we wanted.

H: Because you had more land or what?

M: Yeah, we had our own. See, if we owned from way yonder where I lived, used to own that below where I lived there, out in that field from the graveyard, there.

Well, they got of that and then, Willis McGhee's daddy got into some trouble, I don't know what about now. Got into some trouble and my daddy signed his bond and he jumped the bong and went to Mississippi and that's one reason we had to sell this forty acres of land joining, well from my house back to this way.

H: To cover the bond.

M: To cover, that's right.

H: Was that when Willis, when he went off to Mississippi, is that when he first got started in paper wooding there?

M: Oh, no, that was back before I was ever come along.

H: Oh yeah, before.

M: That's what they told us, that's how come we had to sell that. Then, we'll see if what I tell you. We had plenty to eat such as it was, but we never did have very much money. And when my sister, Mary, had to be operated on for appendicitis, we still didn't have no money. We'd give a note on the place and back then, gave your farm, then you didn't get nothing for what you made, only what you harvest to eat, keep for yourself. The cotton, that's about all they would plant, you know, to try to make a go. Well, we had to give these cotton growers a note on the place and we never did make it to pay it. That's when Calvin went to work for the shipyard, he got to making pretty good money and the Carter brothers told

mama. Said, Ida, if y'all ever want it, it was only seven hundred, I believe, right close to eight hundred or eleven hundred dollars, I disremembered, for that place. And we never did get the money 'cause back then you never did get nothing from what you made. And we only was making aways with two, three bales of cotton, probably, and that would take care of what we had to live on, what we couldn't raise, and so we never did make the money until Calvin went to work for the shipyard. And so, Calvin, he went to Carter to try to get the place, he said no. If your mama said you can have it, if you can redeem the place and I promised to let her have it back if she ever got the money, she could get the place back. And mama told him, no, if Calvin wants the place, let him have it for what you've taken it for. So, Calvin got the place for just what he'd taken the place for.

H: When he did go to work at the shipyard?

M: No, I didn't.

H: You were a still a little boy then?

M: Huh?

H: Were you a younger boy when you did that?

M: No, I was grown, married. That was back in the-

H: During the war?

M: During the wartime, got that foot mashed off down here.

H: Did he?

M: Pipe fell on it, fell across right where he was standing, this pipe broke loose and fell across and the angle it fell in, it caught him here, but it just come down

enough to cut his foot near about off. And was still getting' drunk, he walked on crutches. He lived in this place and everybody's house was built here and the kitchen was built here and they had to walk from the house to the kitchen. And that thing got drunk with that walk on them old crutches with that cut off foot, he about fell if he got too far along. [Laughter] Oh man, that thing, we used to make the whiskey we couldn't make if we went and bought it. I had sixteen gallons sitting under the house around there. Them boys, Wilbert over here, and one of Woodrow Rolin's boys found about seven or eight cases of it and I had sixteen gallons sitting under the house around there. And Curtis and Frank, Calvin'd just eat it. He wouldn't quit till we got too drunk, too far along, he'd get drunk, sure as just like **Junior Lehman** right here. If he was, he wouldn't have been drinking like y'all he'd ever been drunk. He couldn't, Junior Lehman can't drink no beer.

B: Just go there to get drunk.

M: That's right.

B: That's it.

M: He can't drink no beer. When I was drinking that stuff, it was just like pouring it in the creek. [Laughter] It didn't got no sugar, it would take a lot of beer.

B: Daddy went ahead and got, he got full and he was a clown then and then he passed out, gone ahead and got drunk.

H: If he was gonna drink, he drank all the way till he was passed out?

M: Did you ever meet James Rolin? That was Jesse's boy. My nephew. He lived in Texas.

H: I never did meet him.

M: Calvin knew that whiskey was under the house, I sold four gallon of it and rest, me and him drank it up. Calvin, James knew I had that whiskey around there. He said, what, we always called him **Cheester**. What you got around there, **Cheester**, keeps going around there about and I sent him out to the field.

[Laughter] He come, sit there, I'd get him a gallon of it, sit out there and drink all he wanted, then he'd pour them out and try to bring it with him. [Pause] Curtis's drinking isn't no secret. He didn't care what he done after he got to drinking, Calvin didn't, and they got after me, said, just don't give it to him. I told him a lie last time, I told him, I ain't got no more, I sold the last of it. And then, Curtis and Frank, they would go off and get drunk and they didn't care what they done and I said, I told Elberta, I said, Elbert, I told Calvin a lie and I said, I ain't gonna do it. If he wants that whiskey, I'll just move to another place and I said, it's sitting out there alongside that fence. It's sitting out beside that fence, help yourself. We'd go hunting, I'd always pour out about a fifth. I had a big hunting jacket and I'd just stick it back in here. And the judge, well that's his wife, the judge up here to Brewton now, **Bill Curkin**. He said, what is –I was in between him and Calvin, I was standing on this Conner Mill Company. Them Conner Mill company used to give five free pumps over there, but anytime we wanted to go, it only cost about a dollar to go over there to hunt on their land. There were plenty of deer in there. And they was millionaires, there was five girls and two boys was living. And that Howard Patterson, he died a young man. I don't know what was wrong with him, he died right over there at **hill home** [1:52:35]. But they had neighbors didn't care out there they do the barbecue and you might have stayed with that dollar you

paid that day to hunt, you could stay and get your dinner. And anything you wanted to eat, anything you wanted to drink was in there on the table. If you wanted whiskey, it was in there. If you wanted beer, it was in there. And them girls, they all knew Calvin. Calvin was late one Saturday morning; all of them was just about gone out. We was late getting over that morning and boy they went o hollering, them girls, they knew Calvin. They went o hollering at Calvin, Hey **Cheester**, you better come in here and get your drink of this before you go out there. It was cold, too. We went in there and they poured us out a glass, oh it was about that high, full of whiskey. We went on and jumped on that truck, went on out there, but this judge up here, he asked me, said, Greely, what Calvin keep coming over to where you live. He figured something or another. He said, I got some whiskey here, he said, well give me a drink of that stuff, the judge said. He said, well, give me a drink of that stuff. It was cold, too.

H: Was this moonshine whiskey?

M: No, this was, we bought this in town.

H: Uh huh.

M: And he said, well give me a drink of that stuff. And he had shot and missed too. And Calvin had got too far along, you know, and he had shot at a big buck come, he said he saw it coming way down in the wood and kept on it till he got up as close as he wanted it and when he shot, some of them buck shot was way up on them tree there. And Calvin and the judge got out of there at eleven o'clock before everybody knocked off. You see, the old rules were, if you shot a buck and missed him, they had a judge there to tell how much of your shirt tail cut off.

And I laughed at that task there 'cause he's the, had an old big **Bubba bow app** [1:54:33] here to Atmore, run a store here at Atmore, had him for the judge. And Taft, he's always studying something or another and I said, hey, I said, you fellows have got the wrong man there for a judge. That man sells clothes and he'll cut that guy's shirt off for him. I said, he sells clothes.

H: Margie, we'll get out of here in a minute.

M: Girl, if you've got to work tomorrow, you gotta get some rest.

B: You gotta work, we ain't gotta work, gal.

M: Yeah, we ain't got to do nothing. You don't have to go to work till nine o'clock do you?

?: No, not till nine o'clock.

M: Nine o'clock.

?: Then I got to drive to...

M: Yeah, if you've got to work tomorrow, you ought to get some sleep.

[Inaudible Conversation]

B: I've enjoyed the conversation.

H: You know, I do, I enjoy this, getting off and bringing something or another. Now, that's the way we do when we drink now. We never did get off and get in to no fights or nothing. We'd just get off and have us conversation like this, talking and going on. We never did think about fighting.

B: But I was like him, but him in there, they were just like that.

M: Yeah. When I went hunting, I laughed at that boy of Hose's, what's his name, the biggest one? Crenshaw always would say that if you hear the gun shoot, Calvin

would always say, if that's that brother of mine, you can bet on a hit. I'd get a hit, if that's down there. Said, if that my brother of mine, go down and help him get him up there. Said, he got a deer down there. I'd get a deer near about every time I went hunting. I killed him three buck a year when I was here. The last one I killed-

B: You was hot that about whole year of time.

M: Man, I killed them thing, I killed the biggest I killed, ten point. I killed an eight point, was way bigger than the ten point was. Boy that was a big deer. Hit that thing with one buck shot in the back. One buck shot and he like to fell then. And a lot of them boys said, you mean to tell me that big deer like to fell. Adam did, with that one buck shot. It only takes just one shot if it's put the right place. You could hit that heart of hit that back and you've got him, he'll go down. He like to fell then, but that thing scruffled and got away from there as far as that old house down there, I reckon. And we done give him up, we was working the dog up the way the last time I seen him. The dog wanted to go back the other way, trailed the deer the way he went, but I said no, he went this away. But that thing had cut, after he got out of my sight, he cut right down and come back across the road. We walked out that road there and never could find where he had went across that road. There was no blood, they couldn't find no blood. And **Lee Spencer** said, boy, said, if he hit that deer like to knock him down, he ain't gone too far. He said, let's alls get out and go out through these woods back down to the old water hole. And we hadn't walked but just a little ways there before Hawk and Mace was pretty close together. They hollered, here he is here. Walked over

there and that thing's head was propped up there with them old big horns. That thing's horns was that wide. Had his old head propped up there where he was laying, you know. I said that thing looked like a moose, he had a big set of horns. And them boys said, there it is, yeah it sure is a big buck. And they'd been busting firecrackers down below me and that thing had slipped out and was standing there looking at me when I turned around and seen them. When I turned around and seen them, I just brought that turn around. I shot wide.

H: Was it on the **Carney** hunting?

M: Huh?

H: Was this the one at the Carney Mill Company?

M: No, that was another place that's, oh, it went back over here. Oh, one of your men, **Bob Sack's** guy. [Laughter]

B: Get back to the hunting, what you a hunting around here.

M: Yeah, Bob Sacks got it. I don't know how he come about it. They claim he made a deal some way or another for that paper mill company what used to belong to **Cantoment** family, Saint Regis. But he come in contact with, he got a big trailer back down there and large shack in them woods there.

B: You can't go hunting no more around there.

M: He don't live no place, fenced up. Got a big, high fence, about eight...

B: **Great big, grounds, they gonna rip up there. [1:59:43]**

M: Yes.

B: Come back, they don't do it no more.

H: Well, we have had some good times I would say.

B: That's right, I was on the hunt.

H: That was down south from **Cantoma**?

B: No, this was...

M: Right back over here.

B: Toward Poarch.

M: Yeah, but the guy it belonged to that paper mill company down in Cantoma.

H: Oh, I see.

B: When it was wide open, Bob Sikes has got it closed.

M: And now, Bob Sikes has got it. Said he traded them another place in Florida for that place over there. But I hear some guys says they have chased him out, he didn't own no land in Florida, he owned little spots about in town, lots. They said he didn't own no big land out no way as they knowed of, they hadn't found it. So, I don't know. He pulled something about that company.

H: It was a money swap, not a land swap.

B: Well, they cut the deer hunters out from hunting, that was a big. I guess been hunting over there for...

M: A long time. See, Calvin used to live over there to that old Padgett house.

B: Yeah, right up above it.

M: Above there. And we used to go down in there catch wild hogs. Used to be a lot of wild hogs in there. Man, we'd kick to kill big old wild hogs down in there.

H: This is in Baldwin County.

M: Yeah.

B: Yeah, Baldwin County.

M: We carried over in there sometimes, they'd be up in here around Thanksgiving, hunting season would be in then and be living in those cabins.

H: We drove through there one time, yeah. I think the same day we went to William Weatherford's grave.

M: It only cost just five dollars for your hunting permit. I mean, for your license. And it'll cost you, if you hunt in a club, the club over there, it'll cost about three dollars to hunt into that there. In other places here, back up here, there a lot of deer back up here the other side of the school because they cook over there.

B: Daddy knew that Monroe County to over there. Monroe County over there.

M: No, they moved from Monroe County back to around here. And then they moved from around here over to the old Padgett place, then they moved back around here and then we let this old place go and then Calvin...

B: Wait, wait, wait a minute. Monroe County over here and then they went to old Padgett place, that's fifteen miles over yonder.

M: I imagine, yeah.

B: Then he moved.

M: We moved old Calvin, moved Calvin over there in half wagon.

B: Taft was staying with him.

M: Calvin had a-

B: Taft stayed with him then.

M: [Laughter] Had that old mule of Calvin's.

B: Taft staying with him, Taft stayed with him.

M: You know half up there at Headapadida, they call Half? Lived just below the little store there beside that road.

B: You know, Sells.

H: Oh, Milton.

M: Milton, yeah, we call him Half. Yeah, Calvin raised that thing up.

B: And then after it got grown, it was gone and moved the whole family along, the baby. He's been raising people ever since he and Mama was married.

M: That's right, he sure has.

B: The babies come in on us.

M: He raised Pappy, Pappy with him all the way up in Monroe County, they'd come on down and stayed with him awhile around there till he married.

B: Till me met, married **Ellen**.

M: [Laughter] Married him.

H: I had often wondered how Half met Ellen from down here, because I knew he was from up there in Monroe County, knew your daddy.

M: See, Ellen and them used to live up there too, but I don't think Taft really talked to her till we got down here, till he come on down here.

B: Gone out of his way. Got up there and him and daddy after he got up to being a politician, they was one hundred percent business. Never did go with daddy. And daddy raised him, I mean helped him.

M: Go out there for Calvin and Hank used to make whiskey too. I never will forget I laughed at that Taft, telling about time we was having a dance up there to Calvin's house at that time. You see, there's somebody used to be having a

dance near about every Friday night and Saturday night. You could go somewhere for dancing. But up there, down here now, we had fiddle and guitar music, a piano or organ. But up there, they didn't have nothing like that hardly and this one place you got had a little old talking machine with records with one of them winding types. Wind that thing up, put a record.

B: Yeah.

M: [Laughter] By the right, man. I'm telling you then back then, yeah. Old Jay Bell.

B: Oh, record hops. They had record hops back then.

M: Yeah, and...

B: That's, they let them do it.

M: Yes, sir. He would walk ten miles toting that little old suitcase. [Laughter] Talking machine about this big, you know, had a handle on it, you know. You could screw the handle off of it, put it inside of it. He just go on a long hike, you know, and just had that handle. Little old finger part, it may be about that wide. Then I remember we had a big old one up there we had with a big old horn on it this big around. You ever saw one of them?

H: Mhmm.

M: Well, we had one of them things. I remember whatever –that thing. Yeah and that night, Calvin and somebody, they was having a dance at Calvin's house and Taft and somebody big, boy they really worked and tried to catch with that moonshine whiskey, the law did.

B: Well, daddy and Taft made, it was pretty strong whiskey that was.

M: Oh yeah, yeah. And going from Calvin's house down to **Enoch Stabler's** house was just a little old three trail road and on each side of that road there was them old big salt rise as tall as that ceiling there. And Taft knew it. He and Stabler on a big old overcoat he said was on his way coming up to Calvin with every one of them pockets stuffed full of whiskey. [Laughter] They kept passing him and some guy was out, they caught him down the lane from Calvin's house. Was just like a lane down, a lane with them briars on both sides really. And he, Taft said they got down that road there and was sit down and was talking, drinking whiskey too. And said that other guy, he had a flashlight and somehow he blinked that light and Enoch was coming up there and he saw that light and he thought that was the law and said he didn't turn to run back down the road, he tore right out through them briars and tore his clothes off. Taft said they went down to see how he had come out and he had made it back to the house. [Laughter] He was still scared and got in there and said he was tore up with them briars little bit. Man there was stalked of briars that big around and them things had thorns on them that long and they had tore that man up. And said he got down there and said. after later on, he found out it was Taft and this other guy and Taft said, did you know? He said, if I'd known Taft said that was y'all up there, said I'd of killed both of ya. [Laughter] Yeah, he said I'd like to kill you. Yeah said, no, you wrong, it wasn't them. But, Taft said it was. They was sitting down there drinking because they didn't know Enoch was that close to them and that other guy, he had a flashlight and he blinked that light he think that was the law. Boy, he tore out through them briars. I'm telling you, he was a sight.

B: Wasn't that dad and Taft make the whiskey?

M: Down, it was a long ways from the house where they had to make it. It was down on beaver Dam, that creek come across before you got down there near to where they lived. No, no, no, down below them Beaver Dam was, and it come around this way, they had to go a pretty good piece from the house and make the –but, boy, they watched them. But they had them worked, now that Calvin was sharp enough, he had that thing fixed. In the summertime now, you couldn't get out there, they didn't make no whiskey hardly though the winter 'cause if they did, they'd make to the house. They couldn't get beer, it'd stay too cold, couldn't get beer to sat right. But Calvin put that thing up here far enough along, he'd age that thing, work it to where every time he'd know where the law was gonna be, they'd have to beat him, run over to the court. Then they'd go in and make the whiskey. They'd run everything out and they come back, they would be done moved that thing. They would just spy where they had been.

B: Well, he was –daddy was making moonshine himself too, a little drink.

M: Yeah, I seen him and Jesse Rolin come up that old railroad walking from back down yonder, black dark with no light or nothing. Didn't have no jugs or nothing to put it in, put it in syrup cans, gallon syrup cans. Put a lid on it. Put that, get them bales together tight the way they would stay in that thing, wouldn't come out. Put that thing on a pole with fifteen gallons on a big pole. One would get the one end of it and the other pick it up. Come up to that old right-of-way with it, light off. That's the way the law would, they would have to go down a road, they'd

come up through this old railroad, right-of-way here, toting that thing on a big pole about twelve-fifteen gallons on, on that pole in them gallon buckets.

B: They'd make that for sale, wouldn't they?

M: Yeah, bring them up here. Now, I didn't get into bartering that. Calvin'd would barter that, I was too young. Calvin would barter that. Now, that's what he would didn't make it himself, he went off and bought it. I sit up there on the little old house, used to be out by that old corn crib house, you remember that old house? Out there where Dewey lives now, that old house out there.

B: Yeah, yeah, uh huh.

M: I'd just sit out there in that thing, wasn't nobody living there then. Just sat out there getting so drunk, just sitting there with a pickled. Fifteen gallon keg sitting up there.

H: Just from smelling it, huh?

M: Yeah.

B: They took a hold of it.

M: Bottling it up. Calvin would stick a holes in there and start in that tub and I'd start bottling it up. Just sitting there well, I'd get twelve pints or twelves half a pints or twelves four-quarts in cases.

H: Good stuff, too.

M: Mighty right, they could make good whiskey around here then. They had the stuff to make it out of. You take now, you scared to drink moonshine now.

B: We should have had a brewer, a kind of brewer who was the knowledge.

[End of Interview]

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