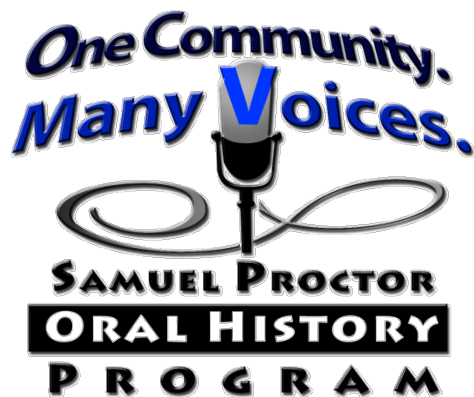


Narva Lee McGhee

Poarch Creek Project
CRK-071

Interview by:

INA
August 2, 1978



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CRK 071 Narva Lee McGhee
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project
Interviewed by INA on August 2, 1978
1 hour, 3 minutes | 30 pages

Abstract: The recording begins with Narva Lee McGhee discussing money with an unidentified person. He then describes why he moved from Bell Creek to Nokomis during the depression, and speaks about his work transporting laborers to Wisconsin. He discusses his relatives in Poarch and describes a game with a five-pointed star that he played as a child. He speaks about a letter he has that a community member was going to read to at a hearing in congress about the Creeks. He discusses an upcoming trip to Wisconsin to visit his son and work on a farm, and describes the man he works for and how potatoes are grown and processed. He speaks about tribes living on reservations, and finally returns to a discussion of hauling and boarding workers.

Keywords: [Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Oral biography; Agriculture]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
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University of Florida

CRK-071

Interviewee: Narva Lee McGhee

Interviewer: INA

Date: August 2, 1978

[Inaudible conversation 0:00-0:45]

INA: How long have you been living in Nokomis?

M: Pardon?

INA: How long have you been living in Nokomis?

M: Let's see thirty three...thirty-five years.

INA: Hm. Quite some time. That's a good long time.

M: Yeah. Yeah. We moved from up north of Poarch, northwest, a place called Bell Creek. That's was a bunch of Indians lived, there, you know. Since, that community's vanished, disappeared, you know; moved off. There's none living on what they call Bell Creek now. Used to, someone live on each side of the creek, all along. There's none. All them old places grewed up and rotted down on out here.

INA: They all moved down closer to the highway, or—?

M: Yeah.

Unidentified Female: That thirty dollars, did you ever send that money?

M: Huh?

Unidentified Female: You have to send that money to **Ellaway**. Thirty dollars? No you didn't. Well tell me **please**. She didn't get it?

M: No.

Unidentified Female: He didn't pay her?

M: He didn't never pay her the balance of it. You know, that month, for that month? He didn't never pay a balance that month, for that month.

Unidentified Female: He didn't?

M: No. He didn't never pay for the balance that month then.

Unidentified Female 2: No, he didn't never pay for the balance of the month, then, but he paid her double... And you done before didn't bring it, did you? What was that he brought you?

M: Huh?

Unidentified Female: That day.

M: What?

Unidentified Female: He brought you thirty dollars.

M: I spent all that he give me.

Unidentified Female: She ain't got no money you sent her. Who'd you send it by?

M: I gave her all **could sent**, Gladys. He didn't never pay for the balance of that month.

Unidentified Female 2: He did.

M: He just paid for part of the month.

Unidentified Female: No, he brought it back to him.

M: Forty dollars.

Unidentified Female: Thirty dollars.

M: He owed thirty more, and he didn't never pay it, see.

Unidentified Female: He come up here and brought it to you.

M: No, he didn't.

Unidentified Female: Yes, he did. Sure did. He said, didn't pay on it so now don't you I said, I reckon that's the reason he didn't pay because he was going **lose it**.

M: Yeah, that's what I say. He didn't pay for the balance of the month. I did—

Unidentified Female: Then you ain't sending the thirty dollars.

M: I give her the first forty dollars. Then it was thirty-one dollars you see well, well he didn't never pay that for he knew he was gonna move you see.

Unidentified Female: He sure paid you thirty dollars...I don't know, your daddy said you never did pay him but I've seen **[inaudible 04:15]**

INA: Why'd you move to Nokomis?

M: Pardon?

INA: Why'd you move out here?

M: Why did we move out-

Unidentified Female: He brought you that money and you know it. **Ellaways** been gone from here.

M: Well, the reason my daddy lived in Bell Creek at the time is during the depression. When the fellow he was farming for, his son in law, he didn't have no place to go. So that put my dad out. He had to come down here, he found a place down here you know you could rent. He rented this whole place a hundred twenty acres and I bought him a pair of mules, started him off.

INA: He didn't have nothing?

M: Nope. I bought him a pair of mules.

INA: And y'all just started farming around here?

M: Yeah and then I, later on bought after my dad died, mother died well I bought all the rest of the heirs out. Later on I sold it all except for twenty acres; well I've

been selling some off of this twenty. I don't have about only have but thirteen acres left out of that hundred and twenty, sold it.

INA: Are you still farming around here?

M: I got a little. I got some beans that's I rent it, standing rent. I don't farm it myself.

INA: But you haven't farmed around here for a long time?

M: Pardon?

INA: You haven't farmed for a long time though?

M: No I used to farm here, when I was public working. I retired, I said I didn't wanna. I just sold my **[6:21]**.

INA: Where did you retire from?

M: That was T R Miller Mill Company. I was a crane operator.

INA: Oh.

M: Operated the cranes for about fifteen years with Miller. Worked on other jobs there for about two or three years in high posture, wanna switch on you little. Operate the crane I reckon about fourteen years.

INA: How'd you get started going up to Wisconsin?

M: Well I just. While I went to carrying labor I went with some old friends up there. These fellows quit carrying labor and they kind of wanted me to carry labor for them and I started carrying labor for six, this is the seventh year if I go this. I bought a pickup truck of [19]72 brand new. I went that year and I've been going every year since. Six years, this is the seventh year if I go this year.

INA: Yeah, Getting ready to go, going tomorrow.

M: Yeah I'm getting ready.

INA: Is it very hard to find people to work around here?

M: Yeah it is pretty hard. Some of them promise to go that's done backed out on another job. There's a girl who's thinking on going with me, her sister come told me just a while ago, she couldn't go. Short again.

INA: So you're one short now, huh?

M: Yeah.

INA: Did it used to be this hard to get people?

M: Well, no it never been this hard, I don't think. See one of the things, the CETA program got a lot of people employed, young people employed. That's one reason in particular.

INA: You think that CETA's program is pretty good for the boys up there or?

M: Yeah I think it is, think it is.

INA: Taking away some of your labor though?

M: Yeah.

INA: How many people do you normally carry up there?

M: Well he wants me to carry fifteen, I ain't gonna have that many though. Some of them done backed out.

INA: Still got a lot of relatives over there in Poarch?

M: Pardon.

INA: Still got a lot of relatives in Poarch?

M: Me? Yeah, in fact all of them. The lady gonna... My grandfather, he used, that was his old home just east of that, what they called Hog Fork. I don't know what you heard of Hog Fork though.

INA: That's where I live.

M: Huh?

INA: I live in Hog Fork. That's where I'm staying this summer.

M: Who you staying there with?

INA: I'm staying by myself. Do you know **Willie Lloyd's**, her house?

M: Yeah.

INA: I'm renting that house.

M: Yeah, yeah. The cemetery there. You know what the cemetery there.

INA: Yeah.

M: That's where my grandfather's buried. Joe McGhee, his name was Joe.

INA: Joe?

M: His father I think was named Richard and his grandfather name Len, my daddy's named Len. He was named after his great grandpa, that's who the treaty was, signed the treaty I think with Jackson.

INA: I see.

M: A lot of treaties are signed, are signed under duress. A treaty under duress is not lawful.

INA: No, Doesn't seem like it would be.

M: It's not, forced to sign it you know.

INA: Did your grandfather or daddy ever tell you the old stories about what happened around Poarch or, not before they moved?

M: No I never really thought much about it...There's a game that he learned us how to play it. I don't know what you saw it but draw star. Star has got five points and

five crosses and it takes nine objects and work them in that stars and jump across lines with nine put nine of them, you ever saw that?

INA: No I don't think I've seen that.

M: That's an old **poem** handed down from generation to generation. My daddy learned me how.

INA: You just make a five pointed star.

M: You take five objects; you take rocks, grains and corn or beans anything you know and work them in **[inaudible 12:17]**. I got one here—

INA: Okay.

[Pause in Recording]

M: Let me get five. The point is to work these nine in there and jump across lines. See you can't go from this corner to that, that's two lines. You can jump over one but you can't start with it if you don't got one down. You watch me now. See I'm gonna go wherever. You can't start here and go that's two lines. But you can start here and go there. Start here and come there. Start here, start there come here. Start here go there. Start here go there, go there. Remember that.

INA: uh-huh.

M: Let me see you do it.

INA: You used to play this a lot as a kid?

M: Huh?

INA: You used to play this a lot as a kid?

M: Uh-huh. It's been handed down, I don't know how long, generations. My dad learnt me and his dad learnt him, I think.

D: Daddy, this is **Creekside** Indian paper about the Creek nation.

M: What?

D: Andrew Jackson and all them.

M: Yeah I think that's what Jack did.

D: You don't know about Andrew Jackson, woman that lived in Pensacola?

M: Now where did you get this?

D: Found it there in there.

M: Yeah that's what Jackie printed.

D: Huh?

M: That's what Jackie printed, she was going to read this letter she printed, she was going to read to the congress up there and she didn't. She knew at the time she didn't, she give a copy right to me.

INA: I think I'm in trouble there. Got myself in trouble.

M: See you can't start here and go to eight near line. You can't go from here to there cause that's two lines and you're jumping over two.

INA: Yeah. I think I filled up my corners too so it's harder than what it looks like it.

M: That's a **plural**, brother. It's just been handed down from generations. I ain't know how long.

INA: Yeah.

M: Now you watch me, now I'm going to go by the rules.

INA: Okay.

M: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.

INA: Uh huh. Let's see if I can do it one more time. One, two, three.

M: You started in, cause you can't start, you gained that line that come to this point.

INA: Oh that's true, I gotta go to that point.

M: You can't start come eight near line, gotta cross the line.

INA: Oh yeah.

M: Do that.

INA: Four, five, six, seven.

M: Now, you jump over there. That ain't going to be but eight.

INA: [Laughter] This better have left me one this time.

M: Only one can get.

INA: Alright, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. I keep seeing how you do it.

M: Huh?

INA: I keep seeing how you do it but I can't do it myself. Give it a try. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.

M: Let's see you work it again.

INA: You want to see me do it again? [Laughter]. Where do I start off at? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.

M: Let's see you work it again then.

INA: You want to see me do it again? [Laughter] Let me see where do a start off at.

M: You can call for three. I've seen them play on thing for half a night at a time, never work it. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight.

M: You caught the trick.

INA: [Laughter] Yeah?

M: I've seen them film since half a night at the time, didn't never work it.

INA: Half a night? Does take some figuring out yeah. Get it right. What's your trick, I was just watching you, seeing how you did it?

M: You can do it. [Laughter]

INA: Yeah, your trick is, I guess, is fill up the one that you just jumped from.

M: That's the only way you can work it.

INA: Un-huh.

M: I've seen them work and work on that thing for half a day. Used to, I used to operate crane and a lot of time it'd be raining, raining maybe half a day. We had a little old house, get in you know and all the crew get there in you know it the rains, play games and checkers. I've seen some of them fellah and that work on that thing for hours and hours, they could never work it. Here's a letter that Jackie wrote, she lived in Pensacola. She's gonna read that to the Congress up there. She did never and she give me one of the copies, we can't hardly replace it. Can't hardly.

INA: Jackie your daughter, no?

M: Huh?

INA: Who is—

M: Jackal, Jackie.

INA: Is that your—

M: Pensacola.

INA: Is that your daughter or?

M: No, No.

INA: No?

M: Just a, one of the members. She was going to Washington a lot. She printed this, got it out of history. She gonna to read this to Congress when they had their hearing you know. She didn't, she didn't. Somewhere, some for reason, the case didn't come up on the hearing that day. She gave me one of the copies.

INA: Un-huh.

M: I've hunted and hunted my daughter she found it; I've looked and looked for it. I was going to show it someone up yonder but I never could find it.

INA: David Moniac...So David Moniac is kin to Alexander McGillivray.

M: Pardon?

INA: David Moniac was son of Sam Moniac.

M: Yeah that's his one of his descendants. My grandmother, well she was a Moniac on the mother's side. She was a Colbert, her daddy was a Colbert, well his wife was Moniac. Moniacs and McGhees. See that where **they just** descended. Relatives descended from the Moniacs, McGhees, Colberts. Why you can show them that in Oklahoma when you go back.

INA: Yeah I'm doing' that. That's the first time I've seen it. My grandmother used to try to show me, make pictures out of string. Used to could do that but I haven't been able to in a long time.

M: You read this?

INA: I read part of it.

M: I am **Selwyn** H. White and I am sorry, you have crushed our nation. You, I can hardly see it. Make loud noises and shout that all men are created equal but you

deny us the right to live. Oh the tyranny. He the White rascals, rascals, that be you ain't a rascal.

INA: Rascal, race [laughter].

M: Oh yeah race, yeah. You have spilled our blood as a drunkard man spills his wine. You have crushed us but you cannot conquer us for our blood will be in the blood of your grandchildren in a hundred years from this date. The McIntoshes, the Weatherfords and the Baileys and the, I can't see here.

INA: The wards?

M: Well yeah Wards. The McQueens and the Hollingers and I can't see what that is.

INA: McDonalds, Lintons.

M: In 1832, ain't it? The creek nation, too hard to tell what the it mean, ceded to the United States all their land east of the Mississippi except for a few, what is that thing?

INA: Sections.

M: Yeah, sections. These they were allowed to keep up to five years unless they sold it soon. Most of the Creeks of Alabama what is it?

INA: Went west?

M: Went west. I can't see you can read it. I can't, I can't my readings got shocked.

INA: Gotta use glasses nowadays?

M: I had a pair one time but I just neglect wearing them.

INA: Some of them were allowed to stay and become citizens of the United States but they were to retain their tribal rights. I am a descendant of one of these. Your son going up to Wisconsin with you, the one you're going to pick up?

M: Yeah. But he got a job in Zion. He just got off a few days come to help me drive up. He's a security guard up there at a nuclear power plant.

INA: That same one that you was guarding?

M: The same one that I'm guarding in. Of course with two companies guarding now, Pinkerton they had it when Algard was under construction. When Algard had finished was another guard company taking over, you see?

INA: How long ago was this that you was a guard there?

M: [19]70 I believe, 1970 I believe. I think, see I can't think of that company that's guarding it now. What's the name of that company that guards these banks, these payrolls?

[Pause in Recording]

M: If you can pass the test, they'll hire you. There's one fellah going boy the same time, he couldn't pass it, my boy passed it.

INA: Oh yeah, How long did you live up at Zion?

M: Me?

INA: Un-huh.

M: I didn't live there, I just up there worked.

INA: Just up there working?

M: Yeah, Family's they were stay, it was here.

INA: You work up there very long or just?

M: No, about twelve months. I worked some with another guard company up there in Lake County College, that's a west of Zion. My job was to park cars, after I got all

them students park there. I didn't have nothing else to do. Once in a while someone would park illegally, you know and I'd have to give them a ticket.

INA: Yeah. [Laughter] For a ticket.

M: After I got everybody parked, see I didn't have nothing else to do. Walk around the old yard once a while, see there wasn't nobody tampering or nothing. Trying to steal nothing. Yeah that's easiest guard job, I ever had to. So I didn't stay with them long because it was about fifteen miles out of Zion and I didn't have my car. See, I was having to use the other boy's car.

[Pause in Recording]

INA: Am I keeping you from going to Pensacola?

M: No I ain't gonna go to, I won't leave here in about ten, eleven o' clock.

INA: Yeah.

M: Eleven o' clock. I used to lay down to, lay down and go to sleep. I just hope that plane's on time. In the winter time you could look for them to be late. In the winter time, you know they runways get iced up, you know they can't take off, can't land anymore, it's snowbound you know. I went down at a meeting in the wintertime to be delayed, plane be delayed.

INA: There in Pensacola or taking off in Wisconsin? Well probably taking off in Wisconsin is what—

M: Well he takes from O'Hare, that's where he's in Zion, O'Hare. That's one of the biggest airports in the country, O'Hare.

INA: Oh it gets cold up there too.

M: Yeah I was on guard duty one night, it's thirty two below zero.

INA: Thirty two [laughter].

M: The wind chill factor's fifty two below. You order to get the wind chill factor too, fifty two below.

INA: That's too cold.

M: Better believe it...so many chills, I dread my trip tomorrow.

INA: Not looking forward to it?

M: I went and bought another car today, I had one car, I had a [19]76 Chevy and a [19]72 pickup but I couldn't carry them all in one car and pickup, go to pickup reload the luggage and groceries. See I carry a lot of groceries from here; see such as flour and meal and lard. While you can't buy the same variety of flour up there, that's for sure.

INA: Can't buy it?

M: Not in Wisconsin, it wasn't there. If you find any it's about a five pound bag, you might find a five pound bag. You can't afford to buy five pounds of flour and feed a big camp crew. The smaller proportion you buy, the more it cost. Little five pound bag, cost about a dollar, over a dollar. Well you get a twenty five for about three dollars and a half. That take about five dollars paying a dollar for five pounds, I paid five dollars for twenty five pounds. You couldn't afford to feed him. Same thing with lard. I got about, I reckon, a hundred pounds of lard in that deep freezer in there now.

INA: Ready to go up there?

M: I'm gonna carry my son something He going to Zion. He can get it up there but it costs so much. Some way with the other goods, I got, I don't know how much, I reckon I expect I got fifty pounds of rice for him. Maybe more in there

INA: What will you have you to buy when you get there?

M: Well meats, eggs. I'm gonna pick up some meat in Zion. Willman and get from his daughter in law, she gonna give me a bunch of meat. You know salt meat. I'd like to buy bacon and eggs, and turkeys out of there or pork chops. Fresh meats, I could buy that up there see. In Paloma, or either Adams, one, Friendship. These towns, you know, we go into shop...These a big dairy farm, I mean a poultry farm, right close to where we're gonna be staying. Buy eggs on eggs at one, I reckon they still sell them, they did last year. Last year we was about two miles from this place but now we won't be more than half a mile from that place, had moved, change camps, move closer to the shed and be closer to this poultry farm.

INA: Do they have building up there for you to stay in?

M: For what?

INA: They have houses for you to stay in?

M: Oh yes, sure.

INA: Everything all fixed up then?

M: Yeah, yeah. Running water, indoor restrooms, hot showers. See the government got in behind me. You used to couldn't, used to you could do migrant labor anyway but the government say got behind then, you have to cut that stuff out man. They had to fix better facilities for workers, the migrant, migrant workers.

INA: I bet that makes it a lot easier going up there huh?

M: Yeah, right.

INA: This boy must have always treated you right though, for you to keep going back?

M: Pardon?

INA: This boy up there must have always treated you right for you to keep going back?

M: Oh yeah, good fellow to work for. Kinda wish I hadn't obligated myself to go now. He's expecting them, he done sent me money to travel, sent me money to go on. Good man. He come to mind you ever year to me. He come down here last year. Well, it was since he got through the basic group here. I believe it was in March or April of this year he come down. He's a big golfer and you know golf player. He was on Point Clear a lot of time, played golf. When he's down, he always comes see me.

INA: Yeah.

M: Sometime or –yeah, more like. His sonny and his wife they came to see us. I take them, carry them all around Poarch and come back to Atmore and we had dinner at the City Cafe. When he come we take them out in my car right there. He had a good car but he has a small car. I told him, I said, we'll just drive mine, mine's larger than your car. So he pumped the gas and everything. Bought our dinner and everything now. His son didn't come this year, the old man come. He's a millionaire, bulk from his marriage. His wife's President at the bank in Antigo.

INA: Anidorro?

M: Antigo, Wisconsin.

INA: Antigo.

M: He's got twelve hundred acres of land down in Coloma. Plants about four hundred and fifty, five hundred acres potatoes.

INA: Oh, that's a lot of potatoes.

M: Sometime he plants snap beans. He said he's going to plant a bunch of soybeans this year. Corn, celery, gotta dry sell seed corn. Plants a lot of corn...snap beans.

INA: Runs a big business up there then?

M: Yeah he's really rigged up for, for red potatoes. Honestly, got a harvester you know. They got a windrow, you don't see no I never seen none in this country. With a wind row he goes along and he digs two rows. He piled them out in a heap row. In this harvester, he comes along, he digs through it, he picks up these two. Gonna make one trip through the field a lot of time it done loaded a wagon before get all the way out. Long road here, potatoes good. Get that wagon-load seed hook a tractor to it, put it in shed, cut it loose. If they ain't got any extra tractor, they cut it loose. If they got an extra tractor, just let it stay hooked to the tractor. Maybe it'd be a tractor hook to this nifty. If they're running, get this nifty, he'd pull that knob that's loaded. He'd break that conveyor in half and shove this half around. Got another wagon up here standing, loaded, while we chain this on any soot that's not on see?

INA: Un-huh.

M: That way the potatoes ain't never off the conveyor, continue to rolling.

INA: Does it keep on running?

M: Well, when you put that empty out put this other load in. Couple up and ship this up north from here, see. We're on this don't end. Well when it gets empty, put another load and then you push it along. While you're chained this long end, that's continue to roll.

INA: Just keeps on doing it.

M: Keep on, don't stop. We run a half into it, not even switch over, don't stop.

INA: that's amazing. I've never seen harvest potatoes.

M: It used to up there several years ago There used to, these bees that had to work about three men to catch them and bag them and weight them and stack them back in the shed. Now them bees comes on a conveyor and they got a wagon, if the wagon back and just pile them right on that wagon. For to get that wagon loaded to put it out on the empty. Wanna get about five of us, about four or five of them wagon loaded to get a big open top van to come in there. Open top van come in there and they load them right out over the wagon right into that van. That way they ain't never touch by your hand. Man, don't even touch them with your hand.

INA: How do they grade the potatoes? They weigh them or?

M: Yeah, yeah. They go over a grader. Bees, you go to chain this. You ain't never seen a potato grader?

INA: No I've never seen a potato grader.

M: Well they've see that's got checked, deck change, when they're smaller the fall through go on another conveyor. The bigger thing ride on over and they go on a

place where the number ones go. They got an automatic bag of that. The thing revolves.

A: How ya doing?

M: That's my grandson here, **Alan**, he probably saw you.

INA: **Alan**?

A: Yeah I saw you yesterday.

INA: Uh huh.

M: And they, when they're running hundred they got an automatic weighing machine to weigh hundreds. Got one bag machine weighs tens and twenties, paper bags you see? These hundreds, gets on a revolver thing, when that thing gets a hundred pounds they automatically turn loose.

INA: Turn loose no. [Laughter]

M: And then they got an electric saw, you saw it. While Stack them on pallets and they got a forklift. Carry them right on in the van. They just last three years; got this forklift, stack them on pallets. In five and ten pounds bags, stack them on pallets. Get that forklift going, pick it up and put it right on in the van.

INA: Does it take long then?

M: No.

INA: The machine, it's kind of like an egg grader. I used to work on an egg farm and watch them grade eggs. They'd grade those on weight though, they'd tip the scale.

M: Uh huh...Will you have some more tea?

INA: I still got some here, thank you.

[Pause in recording]

INA: Florida State University

A: They was pretty good in football this year weren't they?

M: They were real good.

A: I saw them, they was in the Tangerine Bowl. They weren't no match for Texas Tech, they just.

INA: Run them on by.

A: That, what's that defensive tackle, what's his name? Anyway he was good.

INA: Ronson that's the nose guard

A: Yeah, he, he was good.

M: My grandfather was a general in the war, but she didn't say what war.

A: Mama, I appreciate the cleaning that.

M: I don't know what talking about. I ain't talking about it, though. Just **[inaudible 45:52]**. Her grandfather was a general in the war.

INA: I wonder which war that war was though.

M: Yeah I'd like to know, I would think the World Wars. You don't know where my copies papers had been through? Had copies of that.

[Pause in Recording]

INA: How far is that from **Oakmulgee**?

A: That's about, I memorized it, probably about forty-five, fifty miles north of Oakmulgee.

M: Course of north of Oakmulgee?

A: Yeah, about northeast of Oakmulgee.

M: Yeah, Calvin, I know you've heard of him, Calvin, that used to be Chief Calvin McGhee, he's dead now.

Unidentified Female: Are you a Creek Indian then?

A: Yep.

Unidentified Female: Wow, I thought you said you was Cherokee.

INA: What's mostly up there? But they got all kinds in Oklahoma.

A: They got reservations now.

INA: Not in Oklahoma.

M: The reason they moved the Indians, Oklahoma, they didn't think it was a barren land, they didn't think it's nothing. See once the **septics** going on ahead. And I understand a lot of them out there wealthy.

INA: Oh, some of them have got a little bit of money, none of them got very much.

M: Well, any of ya'll get any payment will come here monthly, checks.

INA: No.

M: Well, up in the Dakotas, they do.

INA: In the Dakotas, they do?

M: Yeah, places, you know, in the United States they get checks.

Unidentified Female: Well we don't get nothing and we the same kind he is.

M: I had lots of people ask so you get checks from the government that don't know. Tell me to try to get that started; try to get that work done.

Unidentified Female: Well, we don't get nothing. How much of that did you get? Did you get any of that what was paid off just lately, a hundred and twelve dollars?

INA: My dad did.

Unidentified Female: You didn't get it?

INA: No, I didn't sign up for it.

Unidentified Female: You better have signed to it.

INA: I should have had, right.

Unidentified Female: You should have had there, you should had there.

A: A hundred and twelve dollars can come in handy.

M: Was that on the same claim as docket twenty-one?

INA: Uh-huh.

M: It wasn't but a hundred and something dollars.

INA: No, it wasn't but a hundred and twelve.

M: Yeah, a hundred and twelve, that's what it was...Well, your oldest son is migrating from Alabama too, I reckon, 'cause that there wasn't nothing there, you know, they moved all the Indians, drove them west, you know.

INA: That used to be a bender, I think. The Creeks and Seminoles got out there and they was ready to head home.

M: Well, they used to be. I noticed a long time ago, there was a company, a milling company in Oklahoma City, I believe, by the name of Colbert Milling Company. I just wonder if that is some of my descendents. My grandmother, my mother was a Colbert. That's my mother, her daddy was a Colbert and the name of this company was a Colbert Milling Company in Oklahoma City. But it's wondering if in some other, I've descendents.

INA: Could have been.

M: Could have been.

Unidentified Female: Could have been. The Indians up in Wisconsin, what'd you call them?

M: **Menominees.**

Unidentified Female: Menominees. Well, there are several different kind up there.

M: There, let me see, what you call them, Winnebago, I believe north up there at **Antigo**. And this Menominees, they west –east of Antigo. They got three hundred thousand acres in their reservation. They got a big saw mill on it.

Unidentified Female: I tell you, they got the most timber of anybody I've seen.

M: Finest timber you ever saw.

Y: Just take it's gonna be a big old pine. They got a pine tree up there in the –what's that place?

M: Between them.

Unidentified Female: Said there's a road even through, it's so big. They have the prettiest river falls and everything else, yes sir. Really know water running in on them big rocks like a rainbow, it's so beautiful.

M: Wolf River, ain't that the name of that old river that goes through reservation, Wolf, Wolf River? Ain't that the name of that river that goes through the reservations, Wolf? Wolf River?

Unidentified Female: Yeah.

M: Some of them Indians I know there's one of them had a house right on the bank of that river. You could've fished out his back door. [Laughter]

Unidentified Female: That's the truth. I went there and back myself and we had a bunch of little children. They pretty good fall down, clean in that river, and drown. That's took a bank from the river, the people stood.

M: The reason they was there, this chief of that tribe, the government, he wouldn't go. He refused to go. So, for some reason, they didn't try to force him. There's a big marker out on the highway, reads and tells you all about this, you know, about the Menominees that the chief wouldn't budge, you know, they couldn't move him. So, they just give 'em that land, that three-hundred-thousand acres that's the reservation. They got a big saw mill on it, got a big store. The last eight or ten years, they built a big store there.

Unidentified Female: Indians sure been treated bad ain't they?

M: In what there, what with that mill and that store makes each one they participate in the profits, sharing the profits, see, what it makes.

Unidentified Female: I said, the treat the best Indians worse than they did the niggers but now they take it back, the niggers are taking care of it, swallowing it up. They used Indians what the damn different, the didn't like the niggers better than they did the Indians.

INA: Well, that's swell. What I'm gonna try to go now, put some sort of industry, I guess, on those land, so they keep employ the people.

Unidentified Female: So now, niggers are rubbing down their throat.

A: I bet nigger president before long.

[Laughter]

M: The more stand alone, there will be. Boy, the niggers, they out-populate the whites, the Indians. They go out and vote, assuming they do get to vote a nigger president. Some of these towns now got nigger mayors, you know. This town down here in Mobile, Pritchard, suburb of Mobile, they got a nigger mayor.

A: There's a nigger mayor of Los Angeles.

Unidentified Female: Yeah.

M: Some of the congressmen is niggers, you know.

INA: Yeah.

M: I believe the congressman from Massachusetts, I believe, was a nigger ain't. I believe he's from Massachusetts.

INA: Some place.

M: Somewhere else. Up there in **Holby**, going that's one thing for sure, you don't see no niggers there.

P: There's none up there?

M: None there. There are now, I understand now in Milwaukee, it's wrapped up with niggers, but on further up north, you don't see none, because none of them live. Once in a while, you might see one over in **Adams**. That's a town that we –that's a county seat of that county. In Antigo, I don't knows whether I ever saw one there and I ain't never saw one in Green Bay, you know where Green Bay, I know you've heard of it, read of it, Green Bay.

INA: Yeah, I heard about it.

M: Well, I ain't ever saw a nigger in Green Bay.

INA: Except playing football.

M: Yeah, except football.

A: Yeah, the Green Bay Packers. They ain't been no good in the last five years. That one year when they won the Super Bowl three times straight. They was good then, but now they ain't been no good since then.

INA: About how many more years you think you're gonna be going to Wisconsin?

Unidentified Female: [Laughter] Ain't no tell.

M: This is it, I think.

INA: Think this is your last?

M: I think this is.

Unidentified Female: Been trying to get him not to go this time, but nothing to do he's still gonna go.

M: I'm obligated. [Laughter]

M: Hate to let that man down, you know.

INA: Do you pay them boys? You give them boys some money or—

Y: No, ah ah, they pay them.

M: They have to pay them wages, about \$2.65 an hour. See, the man pays me for so much on the hours. See, I have to get them to work from the boarding house back and forth at dinner. Tell me at night; see, he pays me by the hour.

INA: By their hours or...by—

Unidentified Female: Yeah, by they hours.

M: Yeah, by what they makes.

Unidentified Female: It ain't much, I tell you was working hard.

M: It ain't much at all.

Unidentified Female: He just like to go far down.

INA: He also pays you for hauling them up there?

M: He don't pay me enough. I charge a little, you know, about ten dollars apiece and that's cheap to go get them twelve hundred miles.

INA: Yeah, that is cheap.

M: About ten dollars a piece is what I charge them. I have to charge a little 'cause everything's so high, you know, what he sends me ain't enough to cover or what.

[Pause in recording]

M: Then I charge them so much a week board. My wife, she does the cooking...See, this year, I think's about I'll getting I think it's about a fifty-cent on the hour wage up there. Gonna get \$2.65 an hour and then a two-bit bonus. See, you know, if you go without a stay till you get through, you get the bonus. Go there and work two, three works, well, you don't get that bonus. You go there and stay till you finish. The part is where you get that bonus added to your last check.

INA: What did you get, two bucks on the hour bonus?

M: Yeah.

INA: That brings that up pretty good there.

M: Yeah.

INA: That brings it up to almost three dollars an hour.

M: See, the reason they started that. See, well, a long time ago, we used to have a lot of Mexicans that go up there and they'd pay them off right up to date, see. And when they got ready to move, they didn't finished what they didn't none have any money to move on. So, the state passed, they had the money it takes to get

home, so they went to hold them back, you know, with the bonuses. So, when they got through, they'd have something to help transportation when they get away on. See didn't, as paying them up to day, well, they'd blow that money any sort of way, you know, as fast as they'd get it. So, when wound up, didn't none of them have it, see, to leave with. So, they adopted this rule, see.

INA: Makes pretty good sense.

M: Yeah.

[Pause in Recording]

INA: What's the most number of people you've hauled up there?

M: Oh, I ain't never carried over about twelve or fifteen.

INA: That's your average size crew then?

M: He wanted fifteen this year, but I wouldn't be able to carry as many this. Ain't gonna be able to get with that money. Of course, some of them backed out.

INA: How many have you been able to get?

M: Pardon?

INA: How many have you been able to get?

M: Well, I pretty well had a crew to start with, but two sisters backed out. I think maybe now, let's see, two, five, that's twelve, I imagine is all I've got now. Four women; a woman just come told me tonight her sister couldn't go. Her mother's sick or something or other. And This Walker Rolin up, you know him, I reckon, he was one of those out in front of Jackson's trailer today.

INA: Yeah.

M: I've been depending on him, he said he was going to –tonight, he told me we wasn't gonna go. That's six up there that I've got notice going from who I reckon

they're gonna now. My brother and myself, that's eight, and four women makes twelve.

INA: You got six going from Poarch?

M: Four. Big Sam, you know him, don't you?

INA: I don't think so.

M: He's right beside the road.

INA: Uh-huh, Sam Ward?

M: Sam, no, Sam Lionel. You know, he's got a long moustache.

A: Yeah, Big **Stout**.

INA: Oh okay.

M: And his sister was told him a little bit, why, I come by there and see him, he said something about his sister going. I don't know whether she's gonna go or not. And I've got a daughter-in-law in Zion's gonna go. She says she gonna go if she don't back out.

[59:16-1:03:18 Inaudible Conversation]

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