Frank Bell Joe

Southeastern Indian Oral History Project

MISS CHOC-012

Interview by:

Lonus D. Hucks
April 16, XXXX

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Abstract: Frank Joe describes his family members and his childhood as a sharecropper. He discusses his current employment as a supervisor in a boy's dormitory. He discusses his education and his plans to adopt his two foster children. He recalls a few memories of his schooling, speaks about instances of prejudice his family has faced, and discusses Choctaw marriage and funeral practices. He speaks about house on the reservation he is paying off, employment opportunities in the community, and troubles with alcoholism. Finally, he describes community baseball games.

Keywords: [Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; Mississippi--Philadelphia; Community Life & Family Life; Biography]

MISS CHOC 012
Interviewee: Frank Bell Joe
Interviewer: Lonus D. Hucks
Date of Interview: April 16

H: This is Wednesday morning, April 16, at 9:00 in the morning, and I'm talking with Frank Joe. Frank, is this your whole name?

J: I have a middle name which is Bell, but I usually put it as initial, as a "B" in my middle name.

H: How did you come about your name? Do you know?

J: Well, my grandmother gave me the name Frank. I have two grandfathers that died several years back, and I have their last name—the one that I have as a Bell was from **Aiden Bell**, who was my grandfather. I got that Bell from the last name, the Bell on there. Then I had a grandfather named Jasper Joe, which I got it from. So, it turned out that it was to be that way ever since then.

H: Are you known by any other names?

J: Well, I have a nickname which is Wishbone. Actually, my uncle is the one who calls me this, but they don't hardly use it anymore since I've been called Frank. That's the only name I've been using.

H: Do you have a Choctaw name?

J: No.

H: So, they don't—and your nickname was used back when you were younger?

J: Something like that, yes.

H: And let's talk about your family now, is your mother and father living?

J: Yeah, I have a father who is a disabled, and my mother is still living and—

[Phone rings]

[Break in recording]

H: Frank, before we was interrupted, let's get back to what we were talking about. We were talking about your parents. What was your mother's maiden name before she married?

J: She was a Bell before she got married to my father, and she was the daughter to **Aiden Bell**.

H: What's her name?

J: Emory Joe.

H: Emory. And what age is your mama now?

J: She's in mid-fifties, I believe it is.

H: And your dad, what age is he now?

J: He's in sixties right now.

H: Is he late sixties?

J: He’s going into sixty-one right now, I believe.

H: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

J: I have two brothers and one sister. My brother, Albert Joe, he's the oldest. He has a family of his own. And another brother of mine, Enas, has his own family, and I have a sister, Bessie. She's about to have her own family right now.

H: What ages are your brothers?

J: Albert Joe is about twenty-seven now, and Enas, he's twenty-five years old, and my sister, she's twenty-one, I believe it was. She'll be twenty-one the twenty-ninth of May.

H: And are they all out of school?

J: They all out of school.

H: What about your grandparents? Do you have any grandparents living?

J: No. The last one that died was about six years back, somewhat.

H: Who was that, now?

J: That was my grandmother, who was Sally. Sally Joe.

H: And how old was she when she passed?

J: She was about ninety-five. I'd say between ninety to a hundred, somewhere in between, but I'd say closer to ninety-five.

H: Did you talk with her much?

J: No, she was ill for a long time, so all we did was visit her, and we tried to help her as much as we can. But she was going down, so there was no way we could cheer her up like we wanted to, and she died in a hospital.

H: What about your other grandparents?

J: There was **Aiden Bell**. He died several years back. But I've known him for a while, ‘cause he lived with us. My mother told me that his wife died when they were about six years old or somewhere, so it's been a long time.

H: How old was he when he passed away?

J: He was in sixty, sixty-five somewhere.

H: Did your grandparents that you knew, did they speak very much English?

J: **Aiden Bell** speaked pretty good English, but my other grandparents, I guess they mostly grew up speaking the Choctaw language, and they hardly know mostly English like they're supposed to.

H: Well, where were y'all raised?

J: I was raised in Kemper County area about twenty years or something like that. I stayed up there and my grandfather, my father's been up there for about—I don't know, it's been quite a while.

H: Were you all raised on a farm?

J: Yes, we were a sharecropper.

H: Is this the only kind of work your dad ever did?

J: Well, before he started farming, he worked with some crew cutting pulpwood somewhere, but he decided to follow his father's footstep, being a sharecropper. I guess we mostly grown up with being a sharecropper.

H: And you told me about your brothers. What are they doing now?

J: Well, Enas, he's a teacher's aide right now, and my brother Albert, he's working over at the warehouse and he's a laborer or something like that. My sister, she's a housewife now.

H: How much education did the children have of the family?

J: Well, my brother, Albert, went up to the fifth grade when he got married, and my brother Enas finished high school, went on to be one of those… some type of beautician or something like that. My sister went on to the eighth grade. She dropped out, and she's been going out to them adult education night class over at the Bogue Chitto. But I believe she's expecting a baby pretty soon, so I imagine she'll wait until afterwards before she continues her education again.

H: Yourself, did you finish school?

J: I, myself, finished high school, and for the first semester I took a college courses, but that was the only education that I've kept for myself, which is not enough, I don't think.

H: Well, what kind of work do you do now?

J: I'm working over at the dormitory as a boy's supervisor. In other words, it's working with the boys mostly, from each community, and so far, I like it. I've been over there ever since—last February was the one year that I've been up there, so I think—of course, I don't know if I'll be up there for a long time, but I'm going to try to be there as much as I could.

H: Well, after you finished school what did you do? What kind of employment did you—?

J: I worked over at the hospital for about a year before I applied for a teacher over in Bogue Chitto, as a Head Start teacher. And I got that job, and about a year later I had to let it go because I was interested in police work. And I've worked with them for about a year or something like that before they transferred me to the dormitory down there to work with the boys.

H: So, you came from police work straight to the dormitory.

J: Yes, sir.

H: Well, what is your plans as far as the future's concerned, as far as employment's concerned?

J: Well, I'm hoping I can go back to being as a policeman for the reservation down here, or back over Bogue Chitto community. But right now, I'm going to go ahead and keep on working until—if there's a position open for another policeman, I'd

like to apply for it again. So far, I'm gonna go ahead and stick with the dormitory then.

H: What about your mother and father's education? Did they have any?

J: My father went without an education for a long time, and my mother, she finished first grade, I believe it was, and that was the only education she's got.

H: Was those in bureau schools?

J: Yes, that was when they had some type of a first grade. That was the first time they had a school down there, too. I believe that's what she told me, and the first grade was the only education she's got.

H: Where did you start your education?

J: I started mine over at the Bogue Chitto School in 1959. I started out being a first grader, no, a beginner, then a first grader on up to sixth grade. Then after sixth grade—Bogue Chitto has only from beginner on to first to sixth grade, I believe it was, and after I finished up there, I came on to Choctaw Central High School where I started my junior high. And I went on until I finished high school up there.

H: What do you remember most about your elementary school over at Bogue Chitto?

J: Well, I guess being one of those smart aleck type, I used to get into trouble with my teacher. But after remembering for this long, I guess it's something I did wrong. When I got to eighth grade, it looks like things got harder on me, because I didn't work with the teachers like I was supposed to and do my work. That's what’s dropping me down. And afterwards I started being a nice guy for about until I finished high school or something like that, you know.

H: Well, when you were in your school years did you live at home, or did you live away from home?

J: Well, from first grade on up to sixth grade I stayed mostly at home. Then, I believe it was seventh or the eighth grade that I stayed in a dormitory over at Bogue Chitto school. After eighth grade, I came on down to Choctaw Central when they first built the dormitory down there. I guess I was the first person from Bogue Chitto to be up there when it was open. So, I stayed up there for—I guess I could have called it my home, because I stayed up there during the summer. I didn't get to go home like I wanted to, ‘cause I didn't want to. What I did was that I stayed up there until I graduated. So, I didn't hardly go home until I wanted to. The only time I went home was the time when I felt like it, or if I needed to help my mother pay the bill, is when I went home.

H: Are y'all a pretty close-knit family?

J: I guess we are, coming from a strict family. I guess we mostly been close, and it's been that way ever since then. But sometimes we have our problems of communicating with each other, though. I guess that's the way the family are raised. But I consider we've been a close family for a long time. I go out to see them once in a while, but not too often.

H: Were you ever told by your grandparents or anything of any stories of anything of any nature or things that happened a long time ago?

J: Well, I really can't say. But I've been told … is something that we were told to watch out for ourselves, like not get in trouble, but that was the only thing that I've

been told other than what the Indians do for themselves, except maybe when they were pretty young.

H: What about your parents? Did they offer you any suggestions?

J: Only thing they gave me was when they told me to stay out of trouble as much as I can, and don't go around drinking, you know. But that was the only thing that they offered me as a suggestion, and they told me to take care of my family when I get married. I guess that was the only suggestions I had.

H: Who did you marry?

J: I married a girl from Redwater community. That was Ike Billie's granddaughter, and her name was Minnie Pearl Wilson. I went with her for about five years before we got married, and I guess we knew mostly what we expect from each other, so we had things mostly going our way. And we have been married about four years now. But we haven't got any children of our own.

H: You do have some foster children?

J: We have two foster children right now. The other one went to Neshoba Central Elementary School over in Philadelphia. Her name is Janice, she's a seven-year-old, and she's in the second grade. I have another one. Her name is Mary Helen. She's a four-year-old now, and I'm planning to send her to a Head Start program, but so far nothing has been worked out like I want it to. So, I imagine she has to wait for a while.

H: What's their full names?

J: Mary Helen and Janice, their last name is Hog, and they are the granddaughter of Herbert Hog. Their mother is Madeline Hog, and she's in the Greenwood area

now, so I don't know if they're going to get them back. For myself, I think I'm going to go ahead and try to adopt them as soon as possible, and I hope that it can work out for me like that.

H: Have you already applied?

J: We applied for one, but they turned us down because if the mother don't want anybody to adopt them, she has to put some sort of word in there if she wants us to go ahead and adopt them. But so far nothing's been worked out.

H: And you and your wife are living where now?

J: We live in Bogue Chitto right now, and I'm hoping, if we can get a house out here somewhere, we can move up here to where we'd be a lot closer to our jobs. We're hoping that we can send the children to an Indian school up here at Choctaw Central.

H: What type of work is your wife doing at this time?

J: She's a nurse's aide right now. She works with the nurses over in an Indian hospital down there.

H: Has she had any training as a nurse?

J: Right now, she's taking training on that, I believe it's a career—something about the career program that's been going on for a while now over at the Indian reservation. She's on a training deal, and right now she's taking a training as a nurse's aide.

H: And y'all are living, you say, in the Bogue Chitto community. What type of home were you living in?

J: We're living in one of those low rent houses right now. It's a brick house, has a three bedroom, but so far the house looks small. [Laughter]

H: In comparison with the way you were raised and what you were raised in, how does this house compare?

J: Well, if we have an air conditioner in there during the summer it would help, but we running the fans, which helps us a lot. But if we don't have anything during the summer, it gets hot in there. Then during the wintertime, it gets cold in there. We don't have any heater, but I guess I'd like to go back living the same way I did before they built the brick houses. [Laughter] I think I got used to it. Even though it's cold, you try to keep warm, you know.

H: What about a fireplace? Did y'all have a fireplace when you were growing up?

J: That's what I'd grown up with, toting firewood and building a fire. Which, now, we have to turn the meter on in order for heaters to be laid out from that place and try to keep the house warm.

H: So, the new house has no fireplace?

J: No. I'm hoping maybe we can work it out someway during the future and build a fireplace in there, so as we can burn firewood down there. I guess that's the most special thing that I been missing for a long time.

H: Well, what's the most expensive thing about living like you live now?

J: Well, the rent, the whole utilities and everything is the most expensive thing that we've been running into since we've been living in that brick house. When we were living in the old houses, we had a fireplace. We didn't have no running water. All we had was a well which we got our water from. So, I imagine the

house rent, utilities, and **nightmares** is the most expensive thing I'm running into right now, which we didn't have several years back.

H: What about your mother and father? They living in a old house now or a new house?

J: No, they're living in a brick house, too, which is next door from where I live. And it's about fifteen yards from where I live. So, they're my next-door neighbors now.

H: You see them almost every day?

J: Almost every day. Well, I have a little girl that goes up there and stays up there mostly all day while we work. After I come to work, she goes up there and stays with them until about four, five o'clock that afternoon, when she comes back home.

H: When you were going to school, when did you first become aware that you were an Indian?

J: Well, I guess I was in about second grade somewhere before I found out that we were a lot different from White people and Black people. After looking back to where our ancestor was, that's when I first started noticing that we weren't compared with the Blacks and the Whites are now.

H: So, you think you was in about the second grade when you—?

J: I was in the second grade.

H: Well, do you remember anything in particular that had happened back then that made you aware that you was an Indian?

J: Yes, right then I didn't hardly know how to speak English like I wanted to, and I guess we was mostly grown up with the Choctaw language. That was the time

that I started noticing that our language were different and that we were being looked at as another person coming into the world, I guess. That's the time that I noticed our speech were different than the Whites.

H: Were you ever told anything by your grandparents or your mother and father about your language?

J: No. But I guess looking at the other Tribes from different reservations, I noticed they have a different language even though they're Indian. So, I guess it's something that we were taught to grow up with, and I guess there was, mostly, the only thing that I have been grown up with.

H: What do you remember most about your elementary school at Bogue Chitto?

J: Well, I remember that I had a teacher by the name of Mrs. McKay, and she used to run a test for—we used to have a test of some sort on tasting food and everything. So, each time she brings in a cracker, she made us taste it, and she wanted us to tell what kind of taste it is. One time she wanted somebody to participate in tasting that food. So, I guess I was the only person that enjoyed eating. I volunteered to go in there, and that was the time I started eating crackers, because I didn't know anything about crackers until she brought it in. So that's the only thing I can remember.

H: What about when you left Bogue Chitto and came over to Choctaw Central? What did you remember most about Choctaw Central?

J: There are several things that I can remember now. But it's something that I still remember, that one time I was in the seventh grade, and the teacher was Ms. Sharp. She wanted to pull out my gray hair which I had. That was the only gray

hair I had, and she wanted to pull that. I didn't want her to, and she kind of got ticklish on that. So, that's the thing that I remember on, and I was in … I think it was in seventh grade. Then, in the eighth grade I was in—Mrs. **Kaminsky** was my teacher. I had one boy sit in front of me would shoot me with the rubber band. I kind of got mad at him, so I had to find me a rubber band, I chewed up all the papers I had, and rolled it into one, and I was going to shoot at him. He ducked on me, so the spitball I had went on through and hit my teacher, and the teacher came down there and slapped this boy's face in front of me even though it wasn't his fault. But I guess that's the only thing I remember from my eighth grade. Then in ninth grade, we took a trip down to New Orleans one time, and down there I went up to this fellow, asked him where I can find a trash can and he was a Frenchman, and he didn't know anything about the English. I asked him where the trash can was, he talked in French, and I didn't understand. So, I just got out, you know, and I just speak to him what I can. [Laughter] But that's the only thing I can remember now.

H: Well, what about in the high school, in senior high?

J: Well, we took a trip down to—actually, during the senior trip, we went to Atlanta, Georgia. Then we went on to Washington, D.C., then on up to New York City. And coming back from New York, we went to Natural Bridge, Virginia. From that we came on down to Chattanooga, Tennessee, where we went up that Blue Top Mountain Tennessee and a place where they call Lovers Leap.

H: Let's see, you worked with me when you were, what, a junior or senior?

J: I was in ninth grade when I started working with you, Mr. Hucks. That was when they had the NYC program that's been going on ever since then, I believe.

H: How long did you work with me?

J: I'd say about three years or something like that.

H: What do you remember the most about working with me?

J: I had a time going out to spend the night in a motel, working with girls' softball, men's softball. The only thing I remember, I'll never forget this, when we got chewed out by Jim Billie.

H: Was that your first time to ever stay away in a motel for you?

J: No. I was in Ohio when I stayed a night in a motel. It’s not something that I've been stranger to, it wasn't the only time I was in a motel. I kind of liked it there, paying my way [inaudible 36:12]

H: Is there anything else you remember about these days?

J: Well, I remember one time me and my brother Enas was working with you over in the recreation program, and we got chewed out by Jim Billie. [Laughter] But I guess we called the ball games and calling strikes. Being an umpire was the only thing I liked, though. 'Cause they'd turn the lights on. But I guess that was the good old days.

H: Well, now do you do anything, participate in anything, that you did back in those days?

J: Well, I think I've been putting down some on the softball now that I'm the manager of the baseball team that I'm starting, and right now we're entered in the independent league over here. So, I guess I’ve coached—**I’d say this, I miss**

mostly all my sports. But I've been wanting to participate. Baseball is the only thing that I've been participating in all season.

H: What's the name of your team that you're manager of?

J: My team is the Braves. We don't have any first name. All we had was this Braves that we thought of, and I guess we'll go ahead and stick to that.

H: In most cases and like the team that you're working with, is most everybody on your team related?

J: Yes. [Laughter] We're mostly cousins, I believe, and we mostly kinfolk down there. But some of these boys that we got from down here are not related to us, but they wanted to play with somebody who can be there on time, and that they can play pretty good. So, I guess we mostly had some boys coming down from different communities.

H: Has this been most of the practice throughout the years, to get everybody together that's related?

J: No. I guess, though, it's something that we—it's certainly been a boost to everybody, I guess. We have chances to get together with other community like we're supposed to, so I guess you can go ahead and call it buddies getting together and relatives mostly.

H: Well, let me ask you—you said you remembered when you became conscious that you were an Indian—when have you been the most proudest that you were an Indian?

J: Well, I guess the time I was read about the history of us being down here. One time I saw something that got me to where I got thinking back, and I found out

that we were the first Americans to be living down here, but that was the only time that I was proud of myself of being called the first American.

[Break in recording]

H: This is the side two, and I'm still talking with Frank Joe. It's still Wednesday, April the 16th, and we are talking in generalities about various things. Frank, we were talking about when you were proud that you were an Indian. Is there any other thing that has come about that you can think of that made you feel real proud that you were an Indian?

J: I can say, Mr. Hucks… Other than what I've been reading. So, I guess that was the only thing that I've mostly been proud of, you know.

H: Well, let's talk a little bit about some downfalls of some of the Choctaw people, and see if you can give a little input here about that. You know the old saying is that the Choctaw people were the truest people on the earth, and they were known as not to tell stories or not to tell lies and this type of thing. In working with them like I have, I find this is mostly true, except when maybe a person gets to drinking a little bit and this type of thing. Would you say that drinking is one of the biggest problems?

J: Mr. Hucks, I believe that … relating to what you just said. I guess it'll be that way for a long time. Now that even the school students, some of these boys and girls been even around here. I don't think it's something we're gonna control, something that we're not going to get rid of, I believe. 'Cause right now, it's a family matter now, to where the family has a problem with that. And I remember one time that my parents told me that she's not going to fool with them drinking

anymore, but now she's an alcoholic. So even if we have this alcoholic program that we had going on down here, I don't think it's doing any good like they want it to. They may think that they have it in control, but the way it looks right now, I think it'll be better if it stays that way. I guess even if we have many people being killed along the highways, even if …. But on the other hand, I don't think we'll be able to control that alcoholic until maybe in the 1990s somewhere.

H: You got any suggestions on what we ought to do?

J: Only suggestions that I can say for people down here is to stay away from—if you don't drink, it's better that you stay away from it. I come from a pretty good family on my side, and I'm hoping that I can have it the way they brought me up, so I won't have any problems.

H: When did you ever become aware of prejudice?

J: Well, I'd say around when—that was in 1963, I believe it was. I guess the British people over in the England area sent some boys down here with the long hairs, and I guess we tried to imitate them by wearing the long hairs. This was the time when I first noticed that people, that White people were being prejudiced against the Indian people, and also Black people down here. One time I wore long hair, and I went to this drug store, and I got kicked out because I was told that I had filthy hair and that I was an Indian, they didn't want me in there. So after that, I came on to another place called Mary's Coffee Shop. I went to the front door down there. I was met by the manager down there that told me that I was to go out in the back and eat with the Black people down there, and that's the only time

that I started noticing that we were being prejudiced of. I guess that's the only thing that I can remember. That was in 1963, I believe it was.

H: Has things changed much now since then?

J: Well, I'd say mostly things are changing now that I can get in there over at that. But not all places down in Philadelphia won't let you in there. I guess I could say that we can get in mostly where the people's going in now, such as restaurants, cafes, and other places. It's not the same as it was several years back.

H: Was this true only in Philadelphia or—?

J: Well, I could say that we are still being—I imagine it's been that way for some other Indian people, too. So, I guess Philadelphia isn't the only place that has prejudiced peoples.

H: Well, when you go to a larger city like Jackson, do you notice any difference?

J: No, all I know is that we are being looked at. [Laughter] Other than that we don't have any problem of being kicked out. Even if we go into a restaurant, we are not being neglect or anything as being the Indian people, so I kind of like that, other than what we had over at Philadelphia.

H: Are the people more friendly to you at the other places?

J: I guess they are, and looking back over in Philadelphia, they're being nice to you because of you spending your money down there, and after you spend it, spending the money down there, they don't care where you go. [Laughter]

H: Well, when you were younger, did your parents ever say you can't go in such-and-such a place, or you can't go to a certain place?

J: Well, they told us that we can go into different places, but all the same they then told us not to do was steal anything or do something that can put us in trouble. But other than that, we didn't have any problem of going into a store and buy something we wanted.

H: Do you do most of your shopping in Philadelphia now?

J: No. Only time I needed things that I needed at home, I buy one in Philadelphia. Other than that, I have to go over to New England, Mississippi, in order to get most of all the clothes, some furniture.

H: Do you find this true with most of the Choctaw people? They buy out of Philadelphia or in Philadelphia?

J: Well, I guess it's both. But, I guess, mostly when I'm in Meridian, I see many Indian people down there. So, I guess they mostly buying things from up there in Meridian, and other than what they've been getting down in Philadelphia.

H: What about your haircut situation?

J: Well, that place I got kicked out, too, Mr. Hucks, so I imagine it is that way now. I don't hardly get any haircut down here no more. As I said I got up to Meridian to get a haircut. We can go into that place where they have a barber shop. We don't get kicked out or anything.

H: So, you do most of your shopping and so forth in Meridian rather than Philadelphia.

J: Uh-huh.

H: But there's some necessities that you have to buy in Philadelphia, don't you?

J: Yes, something only when we need it.

H: You say your wife is from the Redwater community in Carthage. Is the city of Carthage similar to the city of Philadelphia?

J: In some way I guess it is, but I guess it's mostly been … I don't think it's the same thing as I thought it was. They want my money or—[Laughter]

H: Well, did you and your wife, do y'all ever talk about this buying situation?

J: Yes, we talked about it one time, and whenever we want something, we can't hardly find it down here, so we have to go up there sometimes and get it from there. And I guess we get mostly things for a reasonable price up there, other than what we've been getting in Philadelphia.

H: Do you feel like sometimes you're overcharged in Philadelphia?

J: Yeah, I guess so, ‘cause one time my wife bought something. And she knew—she was a good mathematician, I guess, in her background. So, she was looking at this person and she was adding this. She had a blouse or something that she bought one time, and this saleslady added up the prices on that and she overcharged her at least two dollars and something. She was looking at her doing that, and in her mind she figured out the numbers and all that. And it turned out that she was to pay eight dollars and something, and she was supposed to wind up eleven dollars and something. She caught her doing that, and the only thing she did was that she complained to the manager. The manager wouldn't do anything, so she threw that thing on the floor. She walked out. I remember that one time. I believe that was in the Parks department store. So, I imagine it's been that way for us in the other stores, like if you buy things on credit. I guess it's typical, mostly, I guess. Other than people that you can trust now.

H: Frank, let's talk a little bit here about the BIA. Ever since you can remember I'm sure that there has been a BIA here in Philadelphia. Has your dad ever said anything about when BIA first came in here?

J: No, he didn't know anything about it. ‘Cause I understood that he had never been to school, never been told anything about the BIA business. So, I imagine he found out when they first started that school down there. So, I don't know if he ever fooled with the BIA business other than what he's been doing—

H: You never did hear him talk about BIA or say anything about BIA?

J: No.

H: How it was helping the Choctaw people?

J: No, I never heard him say anything about it.

H: What do you think about BIA?

J: I think whoever had it—the promises that were made like running the BIA school without costing us anything, I believe that was the progress that somebody made on that deal with the federal government and all that. So, I guess mostly we can get what we wanted without any cost while we are in school, other than what the public school’s been paying for pencils and everything.

H: Well, how do your people feel about the BIA?

J: Well, I guess they—the other day my parents told me that it was better that the BIA be the one to taking care of the schools instead of the Tribe trying to take over the school that they’ve been doing for a long time. They told us that it'll be better that the BIA's to be the one to run that school. That way things would be

run better. They told us that in several years from now, things gonna change and that what we had it good down here, it won't be the same several years.

H: Well, when people think of BIA they think mainly of the schools?

J: Well, it's some type of building that takes care of all the things that the Indian people be needing, and I guess they don't say much of them.

H: They don't talk much about it?

J: Uh-huh.

H: What about the medical services, the hospital, do people talk about that much?

J: Yes, even though they sometimes complain about the doctors being on training, you know, but other than that—they don't like the hospital being moved to the other side of Philadelphia. So, I don't know what they be doing there, got to go down to the county hospital you know.

H: All your life have you heard of the Indian doctors?

J: Well, I don't think I ever did other than what we have as what they call a witch doctor. [Laughter]

H: Are there many Indian people still using an Indian doctor?

J: Yes, we have some here and there, but it's something that they be doing it for quite a while, though.

H: Does community have one or two that they consider Indian doctors in those communities?

J: Not all communities I don't believe. Only Bogue Chitto, and Pearl River has a few. Other than that, mostly all the doctors I know are dead because of old age.

But several years from now, it'll get to where we won't have any witch doctors or anything other than we'll have a doctor in the hospital.

H: Do you ever remember any home remedies for anything?

J: Yes, we have what you call—it comes on some type of tree now that they can use like if you burn yourself, they can use that to heal that. But I don't think the people over in the hospital are using that. It's never been getting to where they can practice with that. But the Indian people been doing that for a long time.

H: You don't know what that is, do you?

J: No.

H: You don't know of any other thing that they've come up with for any kind of hurts, or disease, or anything that they've come up with something?

J: They have something for, I think it was high blood pressure or—yeah, I believe it was high blood pressure. I've couldn't figure out what the name was, even though they take it out a special tree.

H: Do they make that stuff?

J: Yes.

H: It's made.

J: Uh-huh.

R: Do you hear this today, or did you hear it back when you were younger?

J: Well, on this medicine—?

H: Yeah

J: I still hear about it now, now and then. I notice that some of these people are making it. Other than what they have in a pharmacy.

H: So, they still have a good number of home remedies that they use?

J: Yeah.

H: And a lot of them seem to help?

J: Yes, it does.

H: Did you ever hear your parents talk about it?

J: Yes, my father had some type of—there was something wrong with his urine. And one of the witch doctors—he died several years back now, but he came down there one time and made up these remedies for him, and few days later he was back to normal without going to the hospital. So, whatever they're making now is still working.

H: But you never did know what that was?

J: No.

H: What about religion? Was your family real religious? Are they religious now?

J: Yes, I guess I was about eleven years old when my family started going to church, and so I guess that was the time we started making a religious family then.

H: What church do y'all attend?

J: We used to attend what they used to call Sandyhill Baptist Church. Now they changed the name to Scarborough. But there was the time when we moved up to Bogue Chitto community, and now they changed it to Scarborough, so I don't hardly go to church no more like I wanted to.

H: You said you moved to the Bogue Chitto. Where were you living before you moved up there?

J: We lived in Preston area, in Kemper County.

H: Kemper County. Whose place did you live on?

J: We lived on the Austin Hick's place down there with a big farmhouse.

H: Has he still got his place up?

J: Yes, he had a brick house next to where we lived, and I guess he's been living there for a long time.

H: You was talking about you sharecropped, what did y'all do, plant the cotton and pick it?

J: Yes, we picked it with our own hands. So, we'd plant some corn, harvest it. We raised some hogs, we had two cows. I guess the time we were living there, we thought we had it made. [Laughter] Other that what we've been cheated of**.** I guess living in a brick house and living on the reservation is something I'm very proud of now. Right then when we were living on the landlord, we used to get up early in the morning, being called up in the house to go after some cows, and this was about four or five in the morning. That's the thing that I didn't like. But now whenever you want to do something you—other than getting ready to go to work, you don't have to, you can take your time going out.

H: So that in the period of the last few years things have really changed?

J: Yes.

H: Do you think the Choctaw people have accepted more of the White man's ways?

J: I guess they did, now. Other than what the old people think still. Other than what we've been doing, I guess we can go ahead and accept what White people are doing now.

H: Well, does the younger generation? Is that what they want?

J: I really can't say. I don't really know what the younger generation would be, so I really can't say.

H: Since they're building so many new houses and so many people are moving in and all, what do the older people think about this? Do they think that that's good?

J: Well, I noticed one time that one of my grandfathers told me that things are going to change, and that something's going to come our way. But they told me that they won't be there to enjoy it like they wanted to, and ever since then that was the only thing I can remember about them saying anything about the younger generation.

H: Did you ever hear of any legends told by your grandparents or anything?

J: Yes, something that's been going on way back when White people wasn't here. But they had legends going on that some these people come in killing people, the Indian people mostly. They told me—this also was told to me by my grandfather: "Things gonna change." He told us that several years from now that the White people, I don't know how he got that word, but he told me that they were going to the moon, I believe it was. He told me that one day, several years from now, something's going to go wrong, and that five people's going up to that moon to live up there. Things is gonna change, and what we didn't expect will show up. That got me thinking, and I guess it's something that I'm going to have to think about for a long time.

H: That's happened now. You know, we have been to the moon. And is there anything else that you could think of?

J: Yes, he said something about having a war somewhere. It's going to start from somewhere, and if we don't do anything about it, they're going to go ahead and take over the whole country down there. And if possible, they're going to move into where we're living now. They said, they’re going to throw that rocket around, through us. They're going to take care of the bigger places before they're gonna go into a little places down here. That's the only thing that I can remember that my grandfather talked to me about, but I got [inaudible 1:12:12]

H: Let's talk a little bit about the community you're from. Bogue Chitto community is known for its traditional Choctaw dances. Do they ever have any big Choctaw dances in Bogue Chitto?

J: No, other than what they be practicing for Choctaw fair, which we usually have in July, they mostly get together, have big dinners, and then have a dance. But other than that, some people, like in one place at Santo Domingo, we used to have a dance every single night. [Laughter]

H: Well, what about this Nanih Waiya State Park that they have over there? Have you ever heard anything about that?

J: Yes, and in what way?

H: In that, your parents talk anything about Nanih Waiya State Park, or anything that happened to make it significant to the people as far as history's concerned?

J: Well, they used to tell me that there used to be an Indian people, Indian village down there, behind that mound down there, which is not there anymore. Now they have that place all messed up now. But they used to tell me that they used

to have a village down there, and they used to have Indian people living down there, too.

H: You never did hear them talk—what about the cave? Did you ever hear them talk about the cave?

J: Not my family, but I'm going to get back to my grandfather again. He told me that one day several years from now, something's going to come out of that creek down there. He didn't tell me what it's going to be, but he said it was going to show up one of these days. That it might be that some type of peoples going to come out of there, and they're going to kill the Indian people. But he told me that he won't be here to warn us or anything. But he told us that we're going to have to expect this you know, said some things that I don't remember.

H: Have you ever been in that cave?

J: A little bit inside, but I can go in there on the outside, look in there. There won't be much to be looked at because it's dark in there. Has some water, that's cool. I don't think it had any air in their cave, probably.

H: Did your grandfather ever tell you about going in the cave or anything?

J: No, other than what he told me several years back, that somebody tried to use a bulldozer or something to move that mound down there, and they were determined. He said that they tried to move that cave and make it into a bigger hole. They started doing that until it got where the clouds struck on it. The sky got dark, and they nearly had some tornadoes down there. So that's the time they quit working on that, and I guess it'll be there for a while.

H: Do they still have a Choctaw marriage ceremony?

J: Yes, my two brothers and my sister has been in there, but even though it's a tradition way back when, they didn't have any marriage license or anything such as that. They used to have that, and that would be the final marriage, and it's like buying a marriage license then. Now, even though we go through that traditional Choctaw wedding, it doesn't consider you legally married until you buy your marriage license, and you don't have to go through a J.P. before in order to get married.

H: Have you been to a Choctaw wedding lately?

J: Last time I attended was my sister's. She was married a year ago on a Choctaw wedding.

H: This is side three, I'm still talking with Frank Joe. Frank, something I forgot to ask you in the very beginning, how old are you now?

J: I am twenty-three years old.

H: And when's your birthday?

J: It's September 28, 1959.

H: 1959. Okay, we were just talking on this other tape about the marriage ceremony, and you told me your sister was married in the traditional Choctaw ceremony. What of real importance goes on at those ceremonies?

J: Well, I guess … way back, some years back, in order for you to marry another girl, you have to be a good hunter, be a good sportsman, good sportsmanship. If you go out to kill anything, that way you be eligible to be married to this girl. If she were somebody's daughter, you have to make that her father see that—you being a good hunter. So that way, if the father agrees with you and stated that

you are a good hunter, they can go through that ceremonial Choctaw marriage, and after that you be considered married.

H: Today when they go through the Choctaw ceremony does the boy have to go ask the parents?

J: No, it don't happen that way like the marriage they have now. I think it was this way. If this boy was going go out somewhere and look after this—I mean, seize this girl—her parents turn around and ask the boy's parents for at least three hundred pound of hogs, and they gonna ask them for about four, five sacks of flour. [Laughter] In order for them to have that ceremonial Choctaw marriage, they gonna have to buy their pig or hog, plus some flowers. They kill the hog, cut the meat into pieces, and I guess they cooked it, let the girl's relatives, parents, and friends eat the hog, instead of the boy's father and relatives eat the hog, they turn around and let the girl do it. And if it's enough left over, they can turn around and have the girl and the boy eat at the same table. And I guess they guess it's been mostly that way. As far as I can ….

H: You didn't have a Choctaw ceremony?

J: No, we went to a J.P.

H What about the sport of stickball, since you've grown up, have you been aware of stickball, or playing it?

J: I think that I was pretty small when they had the Choctaw fair over here, but they ain't part of the Choctaws **after this Mr. Cramer**. **He didn't play none.** They had it for all the communities. I can remember one that they start playing the stickball. Only time I participated was when I was working in the recreation program, when

I was in the ninth or tenth grade somewhere was when I participated. And somebody picked me up from behind and hit me hard on the ground. [Laughter]

H: Well, do they play it, stickball, is it played at all, other than during the fair?

J: I guess if some sort of big occasion from some state, like in Alabama, Tennessee or somewhere, they can get the people together and go out there, but other than that I don't think they ever fool with it, unless when they fooling with it now they may be another Choctaw. [Laughter]

H: Then the people who makes the sticks mostly was from Bogue Chitto?

J: Bogue Chitto area, yeah.

H: Who was the stick makers?

J: One person I can remember, he died about four, five years back, and his name was John Bell.

H: How old was John?

J: I would say he was in sixties, somewhere.

H: Does anyone else over there make sticks now?

J: I really don't know. There may be some, but I don't think I got around to where I notice any.

H: What about the arts and crafts of the Choctaw people? Are there many people doing that now?

J: Well, there's some famous, I remember, that makes beadworks, medallion, belts, and everything, but other than that, I don't believe we have so many people like I hear is making.

H: Are there very many basket makers?

J: There's only one or two basket makers I know that make baskets. Other than what others I know**.**

H: Are they older?

J: Yes, if we lost them, I believe they'll be the only last two Choctaw women that were making that.

H: Are the young school students, are they interested in that kind of stuff?

J: If they offered some, they might, but I don't believe they'd be interested. Other than if they interested in first time, then they disinterested after that.

H: Why do you think they have lost interest in it?

J: I guess the younger generation is the one that's been making things change.

H: Is the money deal entered into the picture? Not getting enough for what they make?

J: I don't know, some of these things I know that they're not interested anymore. Long as they take an interest in [inaudible 1:26:52] [Laughter]

H: Well, can you see it becoming a lost art? By that, nobody making any baskets anymore?

J: I believe it will, in a few years from now.

H: Well, from the cultural standpoint, what is the one thing that the Choctaw people has held onto the longest, or you think will be held onto the longest?

J: Well, this is the Choctaw dress that the Indian wore. That some of these Indian women you be seeing around wear a Choctaw dress, they be wearing that until they die.

H: What about the Choctaw language? Is it being held onto?

J: Well, I think it'll stick with us for a while. Some are worse like I am right now. Don't hardly know anything. Don't hardly say much.

H: Do these children that you have, these foster children, are you teaching them both?

J: Oh yeah, teaching them both Choctaw and English. But I guess if we start talking in English language, they gonna go ahead and they gonna take English as a second language.

H: When you in high school, did you see that as a problem as far as learning was concerned?

J: Yes. Actually, I can remember when one time I was teaching a Head Start program, and I wanted the boys and girls to speak English as much as they can. But it turned out that they went against me, and they told me not to do it. So that's a problem 'cause if they go into the higher grades they won't lose that**.**

H: Well, are most children, do they just speak English in school? Then when they go home they go back to Choctaw?

J: Some of these Choctaw people that notice their background in communicating with the English, they doing pretty good, and some of these others that I've seen that goes home and speak English, it's a lot different. Their parents, another parents speak in English, another parents speak in Choctaw. It's a lot different. I have a little girl that if somebody can speak to her in Choctaw and English, she can get it right then. But in order for us to do it, we have to use our Choctaw English combined into Choctaw sometimes.

H: Well, there's a lot of words in English there's not in Choctaw—you don't have a Choctaw word for.

J: No, we don't.

H: Is the Choctaw language a highly descriptive language? By that I mean, can you really describe something? In detail?

J: Well, if we're gonna do this, we're going to have to do it backwards or something like that. But some of these things I don't think we have any definition of, such as that.

H: I notice that they've gotten into a bilingual program here on the reservation to try to teach the Choctaw language. Is there very much difference in the language from community to community?

J: Yes, Conehatta, and it's mostly different from Bogue Chitto, and Central Pearl River here, than you find in Redwater. I don't think there is any difference in between that other than Bogue Chitto and Conehatta.

H: Do you notice any difference in your wife's talking before y'all got married?

J: Yes, I remember some, but she's been saying I been confused.

H: She says you got confused.

J: Uh-huh.

H: And you said she's got confused.

J: Mmhm.

H: [Laughter] Well, does her family speak Choctaw?

J: Yes, uh-huh. I don't believe they have anybody in there that's speaking English.

H: They all Choctaw?

J: Yes. They have one White woman in there living with them, that's married to this boy. She's the only one that speaks English right. [Laughter]

H: Your mother and father are full bloods, aren't they?

J: Yes.

H: That makes all the children full bloods. Is there any non-Indians in your family background?

J: Not that I know of, I don't believe there is.

H: I didn't know if, back years ago, if there was someone that was in your, you know, some of your family. Do you have any, or did your mother and father have any old records of Indian dead? Parents or grandparents or—?

J: I don't believe they do. I mean, if they did, it might of disappeared somewhere, or …. But one person I remember had a lot of these papers. That somebody wrote it down whenever they said something, and he used to have it. I don't know what he did, or, might burn it up, ‘cause he died way back, and I was pretty small. He had some papers that if he had, he could’ve sold it for about—he might have got rich on it, though. It's something that somebody wrote it for him, and he either did burn it up or somebody still has it.

H: Well, are the Choctaw people big collectors? Do they collect a lot of things?

J: Well, I don't think—they might, if they think it's very valuable. Other than, I don't think they—I’d say they not big collectors.

H: They don't hold onto things for a long period of time?

J: No.

H: Are there very many—over in the Bogue Chitto community, are there very many Choctaw people over there that's got old timey things, like antiques and things of this type?

J: I don’t think so. If they do, then I don't notice it any of them, but if I think that they might have.

H: I notice one thing that a lot of people make is the old hand brooms.

J: Yeah.

H: Do they still make the hand brooms?

J: One family I know that—they might be several families now. They go out to their pasture, and they gather all these straws here and make it into broom, use it as a broom. One person I know that still has one antique, and he's got for a long time, that's this drunk. That’s Bob Henry.

H: Bob Henry’s passed on now.

J: Yes. I don’t know if he still has it or not, but if he does, he **used to**…

H: He used to bring it up to the fair every year. Talking about the fair, is this one of the big highlights of the year for the Choctaw people? Do they all look forward to the fair?

J: I guess they do now. If they have the vehicle to travel back and forth, and they have some things that they want to show to some people, like my grandmother.

H: The fair was set up really, to begin with, as a agricultural exhibit, for people to show agricultural products, and I understand now there's not many farmers left.

J: No, there are not.

H: So, people is not living off the land any longer.

J: No.

H: Not like they used to. Are most of the Choctaw people having they own gardens?

J: Yes, like I am right now, I'm trying to start one. And I hope the weather agrees with you.

H: Do your momma and dad still have their garden?

J: Yes, they gonna start one. I'm hoping that I can get them to work with me. We had a pretty good garden last year, **so they're planting over on pasture, plant same thing last year.**

H: This house that you talking about that you have, did they give you so much land with it?

J: Well, I believe it was one acre that they loan to. But you can lease for more.

H: Oh, you're leasing the land? What is the limitation on the lease?

J: Well, it depends on how big the land you want and what you gonna to use for, these things the things they gonna go on. They gonna have to have a good reason for you to lease before they can loan it to you.

H: Now, what happens to this house that you're living? You paying for it, right?

J: Right.

H: And you got a lease on it for how long?

J: One year.

H: A year? And then you have to renew it for another year? You renew it from year to year.

J: Yeah.

H: All right. What happens when you get the house paid for? It's your house?

J: It's your house, but I don't think it'll do us any good. [Laughter] Like, in wooden houses, we can have it moved to some place, move it around if we want to, but brick houses, I don't know, it's got me confused on that, too. If I want to move, I'm going to have to lift it up or break every brick on that will break down that wall. [Laughter]

H: It's built on a slab, isn't it?

J: Right.

H: Concrete slab. Well, there has been a shortage of houses for some time. And by building all these houses like they have is giving the people an opportunity to get into they own house. And some of them don't think about what's going to happen in the future, they just think about living today. Are there very many people that plan for the future?

J: I can't really say. That's gonna depend on what they want to do. I just can't say right now.

H: Well, when you were growing up, did your families kind of plan for the future?

J: Not that I know of.

H: They didn't tell you you should do this or should do that.

J: No.

H: Well, do you plan for the future for your—say, two foster children that you have, do you plan for their future?

J: Yes, if I was to adopt them, I'm gonna ahead and send them off to college, providing that they get through with their high school. I'm hoping I will do that, but in the first place I need to adopt them first.

H: When you get with some adult people, do they talk much about the future and this type of thing?

J: Not that I know of, and I don't think you find many that's interested in that other than what they be thinking about in the next weekend. [Laughter]

H: [Laughter] Live today and let tomorrow take care of itself.

J: Yeah. [Laughter]

H: Frank, I want to talk a little bit now about death with the Choctaw people. How do the people feel about death?

J: Well, it's not any different from what White people have been doing, except if it's the older people. Like in Bogue Chitto, they still have that—they'll have what they call a cry. It's a place where the nearer relatives used to gather around and cries it over. If they go out and eat, you know.

H: Is there any kind of ceremony they have other than just the regular ceremony that we know of today?

J: Not that I know of. If they do, I don't think I noticed them.

H: Are most of the funerals held in the local churches?

J: Yes, uh-huh.

H: Are these churches, they usually manned by missionaries?

J: Yeah, something like that.

H: Did these churches have Choctaw preachers?

J: Yeah. We have several Choctaw preachers now that we didn't have several years back.

H: Are they educated in the White man's society?

J: Yes, I would say so.

H: And they are taught the Bible through the course of college type of training, and then they'd come back, and do they preach in Choctaw?

J: Yes, they can, course if they want to, they can put it into English. You know, with Choctaw.

H: Well, when they have a funeral, do they have it in Choctaw or English?

J: Yes, Choctaw.

H: Most of it’s in Choctaw.

J: Right, uh-huh.

H: Is there any certain amount of time that they leave the body out before they bury?

J: Well, it depends on what the family decides on that, I believe. If they only hold it for three days or four days, they can, provided that they take care of it. But I don't believe it goes beyond two days.

H: Yeah.

J: I think that's enough to families.

H: So, there really is not much difference then?

J: No, I don’t think so.

H: What about the place that they usually bury the people, do they have cemeteries?

J: Yes, like me, we have all our own cemetery, it's an acre. It's a hundred for the few people down there.

H: Where is it located?

J: It's located on Kemper County area, and it's hidden from the road down there so nobody can hardly see it down there.

H: Is that Tribal land?

J: No, but there's a fella that used to live on that land that gave it to us as a burial ground.

H: The old custom—one of the old customs was they used to bury within the yard of the house.

J: Uh-huh.

H: Do they do that anymore?

J: I don't think so. I remember one time that one of them was buried under the house. So, they don't have that anymore, I think. The other cemetery I remember is in Neshoba. That's a place where they sign a paper, an agreement of some sort. That they used to have for a cemetery. They still down there. That's the place where they have old people that's been buried down there for a long time. It's been spared, you know.

H: So, not much difference in the way that they handle their funerals, and they have now as to what the White people did? About the same?

J: About the same.

H: Is there anything else that you can think of as far as that we may have left out?

J: Let's see. If there is, I don't think I have it on my mind right now, other than what I've been going through now.

[Break in recording]

H: Let's talk about the improvements that's been made over the last few years. What is some of the biggest improvements that have been made as far as the reservation's concerned?

J: I think I'm going to turn here to an education. In that we have a high school, that's something that we've been wanting a long time. And after giving that high school, I wish there were people would understand that it's a place where I can get an education, other than what we've been given from our elementary school or from the grammar school. So, I believe that's the biggest improvement we ever had. I'm gonna turn to Bogue Chitto community. Well, we have a brick house that was built down there for the people. And I'm glad to say that I'm happy to have one for myself. Now, we have a community center that was built down there, it's nearly finished. Also, the other communities is building another community center for themselves, but I guess that's the biggest improvement that I believe we ever had coming at you with seventy-five season.

H: What did your parents see in this? Do they see all this, and do they have any comment?

J: Well, if they do, I think they like to have Choctaw people working for Choctaw people. I think that's what they would say if they had anything to say about it.

H: Well, what's the greatest need right now?

J: Well, I can't say for upon that, 'cause there's several things that’s being needed right now. So, I can't say, for myself.

H: Well, we talked about your new school, and we got a new hospital coming before long. I was just wondering if there was any other thing in particular that was

needed at this time, that you could think of? What about industry? A place for people to work? Some kind of factory or something?

J: If we gonna need that, we gonna have to go out somewhere and try to get some people interested in that in order for us to start one over here, I'm hoping they will do that, and it's been a place where they wanted to build that factory. It's ready for it, but I don't think—whoever was trying to get that place, I don't think they doing their job, at this place.

H: Well, are there people interested in that type of work?

J: It depends on if the people wanted to work. That's something that we would have to sample. And if we're gonna get them, I wish we'd do that. **[inaudible 1:54:11]** We have a mainstream in the workers going on, but I don't think they're doing the job that they're supposed to. 'Cause I know that sometimes during payday they don't show up, day after nights they don't show up. But Monday morning they all show up. So, it'll be better if we sample it over before we can decide to build a factory or something.

H: Well, what about the employment situation here, are there very many people out of jobs?

J: Yes, we need the employment for all the people that's around here, but like I said, it's something we won't have to think of before we get there. If we don't, it's gonna mess this up a little. By that I mean if the person was an alcoholic, or something, or he loves to drink, and if, of course, it's payday, he can go out and drink there and don't come in in the morning. It will cut the production down.

H: Are you thinking, then, employment is something that's really needed?

J: Yeah.

H: And since most of the people have gotten away from farming then most people now are doing other kind of jobs.

[Break in recording]

H: Frank, let's talk about the people over at Bogue Chitto community. What kind of work do most of those people over there do?

J: Well, some of those people that I've seen are working over at the U. S. Mortar, they're in the factory, Weyerhaeuser, and some of these people are working at a mainstream or clerk workers, mostly. And some of these people are working for Tribe.

H: Does the Tribe employ a lot of people?

J: Not very much, I don't believe, 'cause I've seen some go in there and back out a few minutes later.

H: Well, are there many people that's holding down jobs doing beadwork?

J: Not that I know of. There might be some, but I don't think they doing that anymore in Bogue Chitto right now.

H: Well, what do people do as a hobby? Besides work?

J: Some of these fix cars, but most of—I like to play golf, and I guess the people that I've seen, like the Robertsons family, lives on the other side of county line down there, they used to work on beads. They usually do beadwork as their hobby. It's just mostly sleeping, that's all. [Laughter]

H: What does your mother and father do as a hobby?

J: Well, my mother makes the quilt. My father, he's like his father was, he loves to work, but he's on the disabled now, so what he usually do is take care of my hogs.

H: Yeah. Does your mother sell quilts?

J: Yes, she does. If somebody goes up to her and wants one made for them, she can make it for them. But other than that, she makes her own quilts, you know, to use it herself.

H: Is everything handmade? She hand makes it?

J: Yes, except the cloth, plus carpeting stuff that she bought it from a store. Other than that, plus the needle, thread, that she buys, but, on the other hand, she does it with her own hands, you know.

H: Do they have their own car? Your mother and father?

J: No, they don't have any. My brother, Enas, lives with them, so he’s the one who has two cars right now. He's the one usually takes them to the store.

H: Do they usually go into town, buy groceries in town?

J: Yes, like my mother's been trading points, she will over in Kemper County area. She used to go to De Kalb, it simpler to get our groceries from there, and I believe she's been doing that for about twenty years, something like that. What time is it?

[Break in recording]

H: I’m still talking with Frank Joe. Frank, let's talk a little bit about your wife's family, about her brothers and sisters. How many brothers and sisters did she have?

J: She only has one sister, and she doesn't have any father, she has her mother. She and her sister are the only two that I know of.

H: Who is her sister?

J: Marybell Wilson.

H: Marybell. How old is she?

J: She's only about nineteen or eighteen, somewhere.

H: And your wife's name is Minnie?

J: Mmhm.

H: Minnie Pearl?

J: Uh-huh.

H: And how old is she?

J: She's twenty-one.

H: And you don't know when she's born, do you?

J: She was born February 25, 1953, I believe it was.

H: What does her mother do?

J: She babysits for his brother.

H: Does she have her own home over there?

J: No, she lives with her grandmother right now.

H: Who is her grandmother?

J: Lucien Billy.

H: How old is she?

J: She’s in fifties, somewhere, forties.

H: Does her grandmother work?

J: No, she stays home now,

H: She got pretty good health?

J: Well, she goes to the hospital a lot for medicine, other than that, she's in pretty good health, I believe.

H: And has your wife always been in the Redwater community?

J: Yes, we used to go down there, but lately I've been pretty busy, myself, and I guess she's pretty busy herself, because she's working over at the hospital over there.

H: How far did she go in school?

J: She went to, I believe it was eleventh grade. She dropped out, and she went on to night school and got her G.E.D.

H: So, she finished her high school, then, through G.E.D. program.

J: Then she went on to junior college, got her certificate for teacher training. Teacher education training, I believe it was.

H: So, is all of her relatives still over around Redwater? Has your family, mother and father, been over there?

J: My father hasn't been anywhere in Redwater, but my mother has.

H: Your mother has been over there?

J: Yes.

H: Would she go over there with your brother? Or with you?

J: No, she goes down there visiting sometimes.

H: Oh. Is her family in the new house over in Redwater?

J: Yes.

H: Is it just like your house?

J: No, it's a lot different from where I live because—I believe Tucker and Bogue Chitto are about the same building, and Redwater **Pearl River** are the same building.

H: How is it different from what yours is?

J: Well, ours in the living room, they have—we have a small part of something like a cage in there, except it's a lot different from what Dave and **Lillian** have.

H: When we talked earlier, you was talking about the cost of living was going up so high in keeping your house and your house rent and this type of thing. Has salaries gone up?

J: Of my [inaudible 2:06:14]?

H: Yeah, as far as you are concerned, every time you change jobs, do you always go up?

J: Yeah, something like that.

H: Well, that's good. So that helps a lot.

J: That helps a lot.

H: Helps a lot to keep going up. Have you thought anything about this energy crisis they keep talking about?

J: Yes, I been trying to cut down on some, but you know, I tell you, I'm gonna have to get a job over at Bogue Chitto somewhere.

H: You mean another job besides the one you got?

J: Well, not really, I mean—

H: You mean just change out—

J: Yeah, something like that. I don't think I be able to do that. I have a car that's has a pretty good mileage on there, and sometimes it looks like I'm saving gas. So—well shucks, I'm going to go ahead and stick to my job over here. And I'm gonna try to move to get closer. One that won't involve my driving back and forth.

H: Yeah. Is that the hardest part about your job now?

J: Right.

H: And the expense of traveling back and forth?

J: That's right.

H: How many miles do you have to drive to come to work?

J: Well, I'd say about fifty, both ways, somewhere. So, I'd say about a hundred, somewhere. Boy, that hurts. Yeah, 'cause back and forth coming from Bogue Chitto to Columbus, that's about twenty-five miles somewhere. And going back I do twenty-five, coming back I do twenty-five, going back—so I'd say about a hundred miles somewhere a day.

H: Yeah. And you was telling me you work a split shift now.

J: Right.

H: What time do you go to work in the morning?

J: Oh, I get up early around five, somewhere. Like, if I gotta work at six, I get up at five. If I work on seven, I have to get up at six.

H: How long you work in the morning?

J: Well, it depends on what schedule I was given. Like, I could work from seven to eight, or six to eight sometimes.

H: Yeah. You work from seven to eight, then you come back home at what time?

J: From three to ten.

H: Three to ten?

J: Uh-huh.

H: And do you work here on Saturday and Sunday?

J: Well, I'm off Saturday and Sunday, but only time I can come back is when I'm called in. Other than that, I'm off on weekends.

H: How many boys are you responsible for in the dormitory?

J: Oh, I started out with fifty-two, now I'm up to forty-one.

H: All of them?

J: Mmhm.

H: How come it dropped off?

J: Well, I guess some of these people don't like to live in a dormitory like they thought they would in the first place. The dormitory isn't the place where you just go out there and have, you know, play pool, or wrestle or anything. It's just a place where you get an education. It's a place where you get a room and board, and that we have a team. And all sorts of—not much recreation, we provide some recreation in there sometime, but sometimes it's not easy like they thought it would be here.

H: Is it about the same as it was when you stayed in the dorms?

J: Well, I guess we didn't have any student rights when we were down there. But I think they have that now. So, that's the only thing that's changed the whole scenery down at the dormitory. And we used to have everything that we needs, like cleaning stuff and everything down there, but now we don't have anything.

H: Well, do you wonder why they don't have the supplies you need?

J: I don’t know. I don't know why.

H: May be short of supplies or something?

J: I guess so. We used to have everything down there when I was living down there going to school.

H: But basically, the dorm is about the same as it was when you was down there.

J: Uh-huh.

H: Did you ever think when you was in that dorm that you'd be working in it?

J: I wanted to. If I'd get a chance, which I did, and I'm in there now.

H: I guess you like this job better than any job you ever had?

J: That's right.

H: You was telling me you'd like to get into police work, do you like that?

J: [Laughter] Well, I kind of like it, and I guess if I'm going to choose something, I'd like to go back to the police work. The dormitories are second place.

H: Do you need any more training? For police work?

J: Yes, I think I do, I need to go back to the academy, ‘cause I think you gonna have to go through that in order to be a qualified policeman, police officer. I'd like to do that one day.

H: Are there any special requirements for a policeman?

J: Well, you have to be one-fourth blood in order to go in there. You have to be five six, I believe it was, and you have to be a high school graduate.

H: Well, what kind of requirements did you have to get for the job you got?

J: Well, they tell me that all I need was my driver's license. [Laughter] And they don't have any requirements on that. 'Cause by then they were in need of a man, person to go in there to the boys and supervise. I wasn't going to go in there, but I mentioned it to somebody in the police work down there about dropping in there and I guess they call Mr. Gibson, and Mr. Gibson call somebody down there, and they told me if I want to be in there that they could transfer me down there. So, I just went ahead and said “okay,” and next week they send me down there. I really didn't know if they had my qualification for that.

H: This is your second year, then?

J: Yeah, right.

H: Second year, then. What's your plans for this summer?

J: Well, I expect we'll be working on dump trucks, trying to take a vacation and in July sometime.

H: Yeah. Do they try to have some workshops for y'all?

J: Yes. They did last time, mostly during the school hour. Like, after eight we can do a workshop down there, come back before the students comes in.

H: Do the boys give you much trouble in a day?

J: No, huh-uh.

H: There isn't any problems with any of them?

J: I believe I'm the one that's giving them trouble. [Laughter]

H: [Laughter] You give them extra detail?

J: Right.

H: How many girls do they have in that dorm?

J: I believe about seventy-nine, somewhere.

H: Seventy-nine? And how many girl counselors are in there helping? How many aids are helping with the girls?

J: Oh, they have about four.

H: About four? You the only one working with the boys?

J: Right.

H: So, this summer, you was telling me you gonna manage a baseball team?

J: Yeah.

H: Have y'all already had any games?

J: Yes, we won three games and lost two games. [Laughter]

H: Already?

J: Yeah. ‘Cause the first two game we had lost, and third, fourth, fifth game we won. So, I think we gonna start out with a pretty good team.

H: Yeah. When do you play again? Have you already started to schedule?

J: Well, we're waiting for Morty to hand out the schedule for a practice game. But he told me that he was gonna give it to me tomorrow.

H: Where do y’all play your games?

J: Well, it depends on whether we want to go, like Decatur, Westfield. It's just like mostly Choctaw people and like.

H: Yeah. Do you have a ballfield over at Bogue Chitto?

J: Yeah, we have one ready to go.

H: When y'all play over there, do a lot of people in the community come out?

J: [Laughter] I don't think nobody shows up 'cause they kind of hate us down there.

H: [Laughter] Is that right? 'Cause y'all win all the time?

J: Right. I guess also because we wear a pretty good uniform. [Laughter] We wore maroon and white with Braves on the front written in script. One time we showed out the Bogue Chitto team down there, and they hated us for the rest of the year. Wouldn't hardly want any of us to use their ballfield 'cause they told us they would have some sort of medicine.

H: Yeah.

J: That's what we have going on down here now. That's because we would have to sign [inaudible 2:19:25] **for every single game, and I'm strongly against** [inaudible 2:19:29] I don't believe we do.

H: Have you noticed much jealousy among your people?

J: Yes.

H: In what way?

J: Well, in marriage—we have that. Plus, if we bury them, then they get jealous. [Laughter]

H: Yeah. You mean by having material things, a new car and this type of thing, they jealous of you?

J: Yeah.

H: Well, what about if you are winning in sports?

J: Right, the same trouble with that now.

H: Yeah. Has it always been this way?

J: It's gonna be that way until everybody dies out. [Laughter]

H: Do you have much trouble with people disagreeing with each other?

J: Yes. But it feels pretty good that they do**.**

H: Yeah. Particularly in sports and all, do you have people getting mad at each other? And wanting to fight?

J: Yeah. But I don't think we have that on our team. I noticed, some of my boys been drinking out, and I chewed them out. I imagine they'll straighten out somewhere.

H: Well, is this a cultural thing?

J: Yeah, something like that. Like in stickball you can get hit and you can fight. [Laughter] I imagine by now all the communities are against Conehatta for winning the stickball game. It's something that's going to stick with Indian people, for some of the people, for a long time.

H: It's just like prejudices. It's gonna be around for some time. Do you think that since a lot of people are jealous of each other for having things, these material things, that tends to keep people from buying things?

J: Well, that's going to depend on if they jealous against who, 'cause in order for them to stop buying things, they gonna have to kill them or do something like that. [Laughter]

H: But I'm talking about buying a new car, buying new furniture, stuff like this. They think, "well, if I furnish my house with all new furniture then my family or my wife's family won't like this" or—?

J: Yeah, it's that way. Like one time a cousin of mine bought a house. No, he rented a house, except he bought brand-new furniture. My aunt went in there and cut

the whole thing up. I don't know why she did that, she was jealous of that, I guess. He had the brand-new things, and she had none.

H: With your people are there much divorces and separations?

J: Yes, I think they do. I believe what's causing it is alcohol. They get drunk, they fight each other. Sometimes they say they be leaving each other, first thing they go back together. It's not something new you worry about, 'cause pretty soon they going to come together again. [Laughter] But sometimes gets into pretty serious business. One time I see them in court, then I know what law and order. You know that trailer we had down there?

H: Yeah.

J: I sit in there, and you know the woman came in there, husband came in with her. This woman wanted divorce, and the wife start telling the story that the husband wouldn't give him some money. That husband turned around and told the judge that he gave her twenty dollars or fifty dollars by every payday. Three days later, they were in—I know [inaudible 2:25:20] together. [Laughter] It's that way. It's gonna be that way for a long time.

H: Well, when they do that, do they get a legal divorce? Do they go out and get the papers and get a actual divorce?

J: Well, if they want to ….

H: Well, it usually costs, doesn't it?

J: Yeah.

H: I didn't know if they did it since it costs money, or they just separated and didn't live together. Before they get remarried, they got to have a divorce.

J: But I notice one time, too. Somebody got divorced, but they stick together. [Laughter]

H: Well, when they do that, does the woman always get the children?

J: Well, yeah, but I notice my uncle had a divorce filed that went through, and he start taking care of child. Instead of the woman, so, it goes both ways, I guess.

H: So it doesn't always mean that she gets the children. I guess it depends on what the nature of the divorce was about. I notice one thing, Frank, like you have two foster children, there's a lot of foster children around. Why are there so many foster children?

J: Well, like I said, it's because of that alcoholic business that's been going around. Instead of buying food for them, they wind up buying liquor. I believe that's why starting out with parents not agreeing with each other. Like one time I notice a husband went out drinking, and the wife wanted him to stop, but he wouldn't. In order for her being satisfied, she had to go out drinking with him. They got into a fight somewhere and come home without any money. They wouldn't buy any food, the children go around being hungry like these two left them. I imagine that's what causing it.

H: Well, is there anybody that you know that is going hungry on the reservation because of not enough food?

J: Well, I just can't go out and pick on one parents, but I think I will go ahead and say mostly all the people there is, mostly. We have some down here on the reservation I believe, they might be doing a lot better now. I believe it might be in that situation.

H: Yeah. Well what about the food stamp program, don't they have that available?

J: Yeah.

H: Are there many people getting food stamps?

J: They might, but I really can't say for sure, but they might.

H: Your mother and father's not on food stamps?

J: No.

H: And he gets enough on his disability?

J: Yeah.

H: Does he get social security?

J: Not to date that I know of.

H: What is he, in welfare?

J: Yeah.

H: Does your momma get something, too?

J: Yes, from welfare.

H: She gets something from welfare.

J: What they got from the garden, they approved in their **enthusiasm** and that's what they living on. And maybe I'm doing the same thing. I rather go out and buy some things that they want that I have.

H: Well, when you were going to school and working, did you help them with money?

J: Right. I **helped out** to the kids and paid their bill for them and get some groceries. **Then after dinner they serve every night, I come home around dark.**

H: Did your brothers help you?

J: Well, Enas might be doing that now, but I don't think he is doing that right this.

H: What about Albert, does he help you?

J: Well, he takes care of his own family now, so I imagine he does that.

H: They live out there in the community?

J: Yeah.

H: Have they got a new house?

J: Right.

H: Frank, I think this takes care of our discussion here in this interview. I can't think of anything that we haven't talked about, can you?

J: No, I think we pretty well covered mostly everything.

H: Well, I appreciate talking to you. And if from time-to-time if something to come up, we can always get together and talk some more. So, this ends this tape.

[End of interview]

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