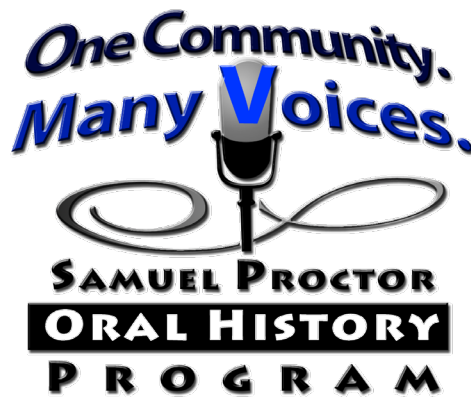


Vicki Sells

Poarch Creek Project
CRK-051

Interview by:

Dr. J. Anthony Paredes
August 31, 1974



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CRK 051 Vicki Sells
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project
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44 minutes | 28 pages

Abstract: Vicki Sells, who is eighteen years old, and her sister Dora Andrews discuss their education, first attending the community school and then going to high school in Atmore. Vicki discusses her decision to attend college, and her intention to become a P.E. teacher. She describes other youth in the community and their decisions to attend or not attend college. She speaks about her pride in being Indian and her runs for Princess of the Creek Indians, which she won this year. She gives an account of the history of the Creek from before colonization to the present day, and discusses Wounded Knee and her thoughts on the future of the local community. Finally, she returns to a discussion of educational prospects in the community and her decision to go to college.

Keywords: [Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Alabama--Poarch; Education; History]

ORAL HISTORY

P R O G R A M
University of Florida

CRK-051

Interviewee: Vicki Sells

Interviewer: Dr. J. Anthony Paredes

Date: August 31, 1974

P: This is August the 31, and I'm interviewing Ms. Vicki Sells and her sister, Dora—and Dora Andrews. Vicki, if you'd just start talking about what it was like for a young person to grow up in this community. Starting back when you can first remember what it was like. First of all, how old are you?

S: Eighteen.

P: You're eighteen, okay. So, about seventeen—sixteen, seventeen years ago, about as far back as you can remember.

S: Yeah.

P: What was it like for a youngster?

S: Well, I can remember, you know, first grade in school, when I started, they didn't have the cafeteria up there now and we would come home for lunch. There were two grades in a room with everybody—I mean, they joined in and they seemed to learn what was being taught. When they closed that school down, it bothered me, because they were saying everybody out here wanted to send their kids to Atmore. So, that got the school closed down, and when it did, they were hurt because they had to start going with blacks. It really bothered me when the school was closed, I said, because I made it in there and I didn't see why anybody else shouldn't.

A: We all did. Me, **Patty and them** . . . all of us went up **over there**.

P: Vendora, why don't you come sit over here so I can—

S: All our family went up there and finished the sixth grade up there, so I didn't see why nobody else couldn't go up there and learn as well as in Atmore. That's what puzzled me about all the families wanting to send their children to Atmore.

P: Did you ever hear them say any reasons why they wanted to send them there?

S: No.

P: Now, you went on to high school in Atmore.

S: Yes, sir. I graduated from the sixth grade up here and entered seventh grade in Atmore.

A: Me and her both. [Laughter] See we had homeroom at Atmore together.

S: Yeah. It was not so nice going down there because everybody picked—I mean, I don't know about everybody, but I know the experience I had and when I started junior high, all these boys that thought they were something would go around and call you half-breed like you didn't belong there.

A: That's one reason I quit. They picked at me all the time.

S: And they wasn't nice at all. I mean, it made you feel low when you shouldn't. But I told them, I said, if you was to look back on your heritage, you might find a little bit of Indian in you, too. And that's true.

P: How were the teachers?

S: The teachers were terrific. I mean, no teacher treated me like I was different from anybody else.

P: The boys that would call you half-breed, were they from any particular area?

Were they town boys or rural boys, or . . . ?

S: They were town boys.

P: Now, were the blacks—when you were in high school, were the blacks going to school at the same time?

S: Well, when I started—went in to senior high, they started going.

A: [Inaudible]

P: Did you ever go out with any boys from town?

S: I didn't then, but I do now.

P: But when you were in high school, you never had a date with any boys from town?

A: Yes, some boys from Uriah. [Laughter]

S: Not from Atmore.

A: **Randall**, from Uriah.

P: But you did date a boy from Uriah? Was he Indian too?

S: No. But he was nice.

P: Did many of the Indian girls date boys in town?

S: I don't know.

A: Some of them did.

S: I think Linda and them did.

P: Linda who? Well, were the boys from the community out here in high school at the same time you were?

S: Yeah, **Gord McGhee** was in high school when I was there.

P: If a dance came up or something like that, would you get one of the boys out here to take you?

S: I wouldn't never go.

P: You didn't go to any dances when you were in school?

S: Not till senior year. I went to the prom with the boy I'm going with now.

P: Where's he from?

S: Atmore.

P: Atmore. You never went off to that Indian school in South Dakota, did you?

S: No, sir.

P: How many girls from around here have gone off to that school?

A: Just one.

S: It was—**Susan Manac**—

A: **Ginnie McGorham and Glenda Fae.**

S: Susan and Glenda Fae Daughtry, and Virginia and Charlotte McGhee are the only ones I know that's ever been up there.

P: Virginia Rolin?

S: Mm-hm.

P: Have you ever talked with them about what it was like to go to school up there?

S: I talked with Virginia Bell, and she said she liked it and all. I was talking to her, you know, trying to get her to go on to school, but she said, no way. She wasn't going.

P: What made you decide to go on to college?

S: Because I just wanted to go. It was something I'd been thinking about all through school, you know, I'm going to go to college and become something, because none of these Indians around here, they're not doing anything.

P: Mm-hm. Did anybody give you any encouragement to go on to college?

S: No, sir, I just had it made up in my mind that I was going.

P: What have your parents' reaction been to your going to college?

A: They're proud of her.

S: They proud of me.

P: Are they? Now, has the Episcopal Church helped you at all in going to college?

S: Well, Mr. Powell—right before school starts, he'll deposit so much money in my checking account, you know, for me getting settled at school and my books and stuff. But, as far as that, I'm on a work-study program, and it works out my dorm fee, my meal ticket and all that.

P: You were talking before about how it felt to go from here to Atmore. Talk a little bit about going to college. What was that like, when you went off to college?

S: Well, when I went to college, I mean, everybody just loved me because I was an Indian. I was living history and they loved the Indians. Around there, I mean, it don't bother them. They just proud because they know an Indian. And, you know, Bay Minette not being so far off, I thought they were Indians down there. But it was me and my roommate. She's a Rolin girl from over there on—she lives in town, almost. She's my roommate, and she's an Indian, too.

P: What's her name?

S: **Barbara Rolin.**

P: And who were her mother and daddy?

S: Judd and . . . Irene, I think.

P: Is she getting any help in going to school at all?

S: She gets—the rehabilitation center helps her, because her daddy's disabled and she's on the work study here.

P: What motivated her to go to college, you think?

S: I don't know. She likes it, though.

P: Talk, if you can—what went on through your mind these years to make decide to go to college?

A: Be quiet.

S: I just put it back in my mind that I was going to be just as good as anybody else, and when I got all my schooling, it wasn't nothing anybody could take from me.

P: Mm-hm. Had you ever talked with anybody that had gone to college at all?

S: No, sir.

P: Before you left, what did you think college would be like?

S: Terrific. And it is. I mean—

P: You weren't scared at all about going off to college?

S: I was a little scared, because you know I didn't know how they would accept me and if I'd have friends and all, because I was an Indian. Because the way they did when I first started in Atmore to school.

P: But when you got there, you found—

S: It was different. It just made me want to go more, because everybody really liked the Indians. All kind of people would just come up and say, well, you know, the Indians were really ripped off. [Laughter] And all this, and they would just start chattering on about all this stuff about the Indians.

P: What percentage of the student body at Bay Minette Junior College is dormitories? Students?

S: I don't know. Because there a lot that commute from Mobile—

P: Are there many students living on campus?

S: A pretty good many. I think the dorm holds about—the girl's dorm holds about a hundred and twenty-six, I think. And the boy's dorm holds more, because they—

Unidentified woman: **Y'all got more** boys.

S: —have **about** three stories.

P: Have you taken a more active part in social life at college than you did in high school?

S: I like it down there.

P: I mean like dances and things. Do you take part in those?

S: Well, down there, they don't have that many because—you know, the faculty doesn't have the adequate funds for a whole lot of dances and stuff.

P: How well did Atmore High School prepare you for college?

S: It was fine, because I haven't had any trouble so far.

P: Well, tell me what you intend to do when you get through with your college education.

S: I want to be a P.E. teacher.

P: A P.E. teacher. How'd you pick that?

S: Because, you know, you see all these people that—old **age** who won't exercise and sit around all the time, and it makes me want to tell them to get out and do something. Because just walking, that's exercise, but a lot of them, these children

today, they don't get out and romp around like we did when we were small. They sit under the T.V. set just about all day, whenever they can. Because, you know, you're not healthy unless you're physically fit.

P: Have you given much thought to where you will look for a job?

S: No, sir.

P: Where would you like to get a job?

S: I don't know. I really don't.

P: That wouldn't matter to you whether it was close to home or far away, or . . . ?

S: It would about being real far away because I don't want to be that far from home. But, you know, something not so far off, I would like it.

P: Is your boyfriend go to Bay Minette Junior College, too?

S: No, he goes to Troy. Well, he went to Brewton last year, transferred to Troy this year.

P: And you're planning on going to Troy?

S: Yes, sir.

P: Well, has the Episcopal Church given you any assurance that they'll help you all the way through or not?

S: Well, Mr. Powell told me, whenever I need help—because he said there was something about Indian scholarships he had, and nobody around here had used any of them.

P: Were these church scholarships, or what kind?

S: I don't know. I think it was some people out in Monroe that donated the money for the Indian scholarships.

P: But the other day you said something about, you weren't sure they had the work study program at Troy, or what was that?

S: They have a work study program, but I'm not sure if I'm going to get on it up there. Because the hardest subjects fall when I get up there, it'll take more time to study.

P: You haven't found that much difference between junior college and high school? Or is it harder?

S: Well, it's not on the basis of being hard, it's just, you got to get at it and study. Because anything's hard if you want to make it hard. Even grammar school can be hard if you want it, but if you just study—I mean, you've got it made. Because that's all it takes. You don't have to study that much, you just have to listen in class and a lot of times, when I just sit and listen, I get more out of it than writing everything down.

P: Have you had many conversations with your friends and relatives your age out here in the community about what it's like to go to college?

S: No, sir.

P: Nobody ever asks you?

S: No, sir.

P: Have you done anything to try and encourage others to go? You were talking about—

S: I talked to George Lee and Virginia Bell, and I said, y'all out to go—and I say, this is a junior college, and I said, you wouldn't have to pay for anything, you could get on the work study and work your time out, and I said, it's fun being on work

study down there because you have spare time sometimes. It just helps you out.

Neither one of them are going.

P: What reasons do they give?

S: They just don't want to go. That's all I can get out of it.

P: Have there ever been any boys around here interested in going to college?

S: Well, I think Allen went.

P: Allen who?

S: McGhee. Bernestine's boy. He went a couple of years when he graduated. And **Callie's Caroline went**, and those are the only two I know that's went to college from around here. Because when Gordon graduated, he didn't go. Oh, and Maxine, she went to college.

P: In your own opinion, honestly, why didn't more of them go to college?

S: I don't know. It puzzles me. Because I don't see why they don't. To me, they're just making the Indians rank down lower than anybody else. Because, I mean, all the white people go to college, all the blacks go to college, and they don't have to worry about expenses. And you can't say that, well, I hadn't got the money to go, because the money's there. If you want it, you just go to ask for it.

P: What do you think there are many people around here that have a native intelligence, enough to get through college? In your own opinion?

S: Yeah. They could.

P: It's not because people aren't smart enough to go to college.

S: Smart enough not wanting to go, I don't see why they should. They graduated.

P: There's still quite a few people—I think, maybe boys more than girls—that don't graduate from high school. I wonder if—

S: That's right.

P: Why do so many drop out, do you think?

S: I don't know. They're just get in the wrong bunch and . . .

P: You said you dropped out because of—

A: I couldn't do it and work and they couldn't **get me like that**. I stayed sickly all my life.

S: Yeah, she's a hard learner. Up here, the teachers, you know, took patience to help her. But down there, it was just like knocking outside the lines.

P: You mentioned that the boys picked at you at school. Did the girls ever pick on you?

S: No, the girls just wouldn't **socialize** with me. They thought they were too good, the majority of them.

P: Would they go so far as to not even walk down the hall with you?

S: No. No, nothing like that. They just wouldn't talk to you in conversation and stuff like that.

P: Did you have any girl friends when you were in high school at Atmore?

A: No. [Baby Squealing]

S: But—you know, I got a lot of friends.

P: What was your favorite subject in high school?

S: P.E.

P: One thing I've heard—partly because, I guess, the religion—were there any girls from out here in school when you were who didn't like to dress out?

A: Lots of them.

P: Lots of them.

A: Some of them.

S: I don't know.

A: Most of them didn't.

S: Well, when I was in high school, it was me and Susan.

P: Susan Manack?

S: And she dressed out when I did, as far as I know. I know one time, I think, she failed P.E., but—

P: But Vendora, you've said when you were in school, there were lots of them that didn't want to dress out from here.

A: Lots of them.

P: What was there reason for not wanting to dress out from here?

A: I don't know, they just don't want to. [Inaudible]

P: [Laughter]

A: [Inaudible]

P: Were you ever—I know it's been mainly boys doing it, but when you were younger, Vicki, were you ever involved in going on these dancing trips and things like that with Calvin McGhee?

S: Huh-uh.

P: When did you get interested in making a costume of those things?

S: A couple years ago. I mean, I wanted to know about the Indians because I was an Indian and you notice that, when people ask, what's all this? And you can tell them something. And I'm proud to be an Indian. I really am.

P: What's the source of that pride? Why are you proud to be an Indian?

S: I really don't know.

P: Are there any young people now, today, who are ashamed of being Indian?

S: Not that I know of. There might be, but . . . it's nothing to be ashamed of.

P: Do you think most of them are as proud of—do you think most of them are as proud of being Indian as you are?

S: I doubt it.

P: You doubt it.

S: I mean, because, when I go somewhere, I just feel like I want everybody to know I'm an Indian. [Inaudible] And last year, one of the coaches at Faulkner—our mascots are the red eagles. And seeing it, red eagle's my ancestry. The year before I went down there, they had a red eagle contest and had these boys dressed up in Indian things.

P: Excuse me just a second.

[Break in Recording]

P: Start over about the **coaches**. [Laughter]

S: Well, I was talking to one of the coaches at Faulkner, you know, about why didn't they have a mascot red eagle to go on all the football—I mean, the basketball games—and be with the cheerleaders and all this stuff. So, they take it into consideration. I got some stuff and fixed up—nobody would volunteer for doing it,

because there wasn't that many that looked like Indians and all this stuff. So, we just picked one out and asked him, would he do it, so he said, yes. So, we fixed him an outfit and we painted him up for the basketball games and we fixed the little teepee down the corner of the gym, and everybody thought that was fantastic. So he says, when you come back next year, we'll do it again.

P: And that was your idea.

S: Yeah. And it worked out pretty good.

[Break in Recording]

P: Testing, one, two, three, four, five.

[Break in Recording]

S: Well, a couple years ago, I ran for princess. But I didn't get it. But I really wanted to be considered Princess of the Creek Indians. I thought it would help my image some, you know, being Princess. So I ran, but I didn't get it. This girl from Century got it, Debbie Newton or somebody. So, this year when I ran, I think—you know, if I hadn't have gotten it, I think it would have killed me, because I really wanted to get Princess this time. Because it meant something to me. Like anybody else, it probably just meant the title of being Princess, but it makes me feel good to say I was the Princess of the Creek Indians once.

P: How do you think the Princess could be used better than she is for the cause of the Creek Indians?

S: Well, as me being Creek Princess this year, they hadn't got any activities, you know, considering the princess. There's not that much stuff for to consider about the princess.

P: Would you yourself be willing to go off to other places representing the Creek Indians and make talks and things?

S: If I had the information to talk about, I would.

P: Well, if—just for the sake of . . . I don't know what. If somebody were to ask you now, you're the princess, would you tell us a little bit about your people? Just say what you would say.

S: I would say, well, a long time ago, Red Eagle, our ancestor, the white settlers came in on the Indians and the Indians—they were proud. I mean, you know they were astonished to find the Creek Indians living in houses, because the Creek Indians never lived in teepees. They were living in little permanent houses when the white settlers came, and they had cows and all this stuff raising them. Some even had slaves. The chief—I mean, the great landowner, he had the majority of the land and everything was—you know, it was like in rhythm. They did. The settlers couldn't understand this, and they couldn't realize that the Indians were humans, too. They thought like they were dogs or something. So everything was going fine, no fighting or nothing, until the settlers jump on the band of Creek Indians at Burnt Corn Creek, and that was the first battle in Indian history. After that, the battles just kept going on and on and on. And at Fort Mims, what really puzzles me—because when the Creek Indians won a battle, it was called a massacre. And yet, when the white settlers and their military people won it, it was a victory to them. But, when we won a battle, it was a massacre. And that's what I didn't like about it. I read in history, a book one time, about Red Eagle talking to Jackson, and Jackson wanting him to surrender. And, like, Red Eagle told

Jackson, he said, remember, General, you invaded our land, we did not invade yours.

P: Well, what about the recent history of your people? I thought that—I'm playing a part now, by questioner. I thought all the Creek Indians, all the Indians in the Southeast were shipped to Oklahoma.

S: No, the Indians left here were on a land grant from Andrew Jackson. He granted land to Red Eagle when all of them were banned in Oklahoma.

P: Well, how was it for your people, say, just a few years ago, back like in your grandparents and your parent's time.

S: It was rough, because a lot—you know, they didn't have, I guess . . . I don't really know, because they had to cook on wood stoves and they didn't have plumbing and all this. So, it must have been pretty bad.

P: Well, how do your people live today?

S: Well, they're just like anybody else now. These people around here. I mean, they have what they want, and they could have more if they wanted it and wanted to work for it, I guess.

P: But you don't think a lot of your people don't want to work for things?

S: Well, I'm not saying that they don't want to work for it, they just—to me, they don't try to do better. Like, I don't know. They get . . . they just don't try to do better.

P: Well, what are most of the young people like yourself doing nowadays?

S: They just get little jobs and work and they . . . they're still living with their parents, so they don't have nothing to show for their money except a good time. I hear

how everybody—that's all I can take of it, because I don't, none of them that I know of have cars .What they make of their money, they just blow it because they're still living at home and the majority of them I know don't give money to their parents to help share in the expenses.

P: They just blow their money.

S: Probably so.

P: Well, I don't know whether we got this on the tape earlier or not, but what, again, are your feelings about Wounded Knee and how did Wounded Knee affect your life?

S: Well, Wounded Knee, I mean—I was all for Wounded Knee and the Indians being recognized and took in consideration, but they just went at it in the wrong way.

P: And people at school ask you about, what would they do?

S: They would come up and say, when are you flying out to Wounded Knee? And all this stuff. I just tell them, when my jet comes or something. They were just joking, but some of them said, well, I'll go with you! And all these people says, well, I'll go, too! It was funny for them to saying something about Wounded Knee.

P: Could you envision yourself ever becoming a militant Indian like the ones you see on T.V. and read about in the newspapers?

S: Well, sometimes I'd like to. [Laughter]

P: What makes you feel that you'd like to, sometimes?

S: Because there's just something about the Indians, that people—any people. I mean, people in Atmore, a lot of them, they just won't associate with the Indians.

And they play—they put you down as a part, as being a savage, so why not live it sometimes?

P: Well, what do you think lies in the future for the Indian people of Atmore area?

S: Well . . . the future of the Indians from here, around Atmore, it can't be too great of a future because as soon as a lot of the young boy Indians from here, they go to school for a while and they drop out, and then even if they make it to graduating from high school, they won't go to college. Then they—you just can't get a job that's adequate with a high school education anymore.

P: Do you think some of the recent activities, like the princess contest and the Thanksgiving pow-wow in general, is that going to develop into anything more, you think?

S: I wish it would.

P: What would you like to see it become?

S: I wish, you know, they'd just hold a . . . maybe three-day deal up there, and just let everybody from all over come and advertise and just keep on advertising till the—you know, I don't know. It's just unreal to sit down and think that they're just having a little old thing up there. They should have them more often.

P: Well, what's the point, in this day and age, of putting on Indian costumes and all of that kind of thing? What point is there in that?

S: Well, a lot of people think it's mockery and all of that, but, if you're an Indian and you're proud, you want to do this. But, like I say, if you're ashamed of being an Indian, putting yourself in a costume sure don't help you at all.

P: One thing I wanted to ask you about is, I noticed one day on the shed out behind your house here is a sign that says, Indian power. Where'd you get that?

S: My little brother found it somewhere and he brought it home and tacked it up out there.

P: Have you ever gotten any comments from your friends and relatives about that?

S: No, sir.

P: How did you happen to meet the fellow in Uriah that you went to that high school dance with?

S: I don't know. It was down at Susan's house. They came down there or something, and we just . . . good friends.

P: And your present boyfriend you met in high school?

S: Yes, sir.

P: Is he Indian?

S: No, sir. He's not. [Laughter]

P: How do you feel about that subject, of . . . do you ever give any thought about whether it'd be nice to marry an Indian or not an Indian?

S: Well, I hadn't thought about it. But I don't really know. See, it's funny because a lot of people around here, they think I'm uppity-up because I go with a **Fayor**, you know. And it don't bother me, and I've never felt left out down there. They love me as much as they'd love anybody, and they do more for me than I could ever ask. I mean, they do.

P: Well, what's going to happen to the Indian people if, in future generations, everybody marries a non-Indian?

S: They'll die out eventually.

P: How do you feel about that?

S: Well, in some cases, it might be good, because they just . . . they just don't understand, really.

P: You think that it'd be just as well for the Indian population, as a group, to die out?

S: Not really, but it's working on that. Because living out here, I mean—just like all those that don't go to college, what do you have to look forward to if you marry an Indian boy from out here? . . . pinch pennies the rest of your life. They could go to college if they wanted to and make something of themselves, they just don't want to.

P: Are you suggesting the possibility that if both boys and girls, more of them went to college, there might be more Indians marrying Indians?

S: Right. That's what I'm saying. Because you just have to look at it as a whole and not just in little parts. But really, I mean, there wouldn't really be that much marrying between the Indians because so many of us around here are kin in somehow or another.

P: Have you had much opportunity to meet Indians from other tribes in other places?

S: No, sir. Not really.

P: Did you get to talk at all with people over at the pow-wow in Baton Rouge? From other tribes?

S: No, sir.

P: Would you like to?

S: Yeah. They seem so different than we did. To me.

[Break in Recording]

P: How were the Indians in Baton Rouge different to you?

S: They just seemed altogether different. They were quiet and they wasn't really friendly. The young ones, the ones I'm talking about. They just seem like . . . you know, hiding over in a corner, as you put it.

P: Your people don't hide in corners, huh? [laughter]

S: No, they don't.

[Break in Recording]

P: When you were in high school, and even today, what do you most of the young people do for entertainment at home here?

S: Here?

P: In the community here.

S: Well, it's either you sit and watch T.V. or that's it. Well, out here, they have—at the church, they have a little recreation thing. You know, play volleyball and stuff. But that's it.

P: Has there ever been any talk of starting just a recreation program of any kind out here?

S: I don't know.

P: Have you ever tried to start anything like that?

S: No, sir. Wouldn't do any good, really, because nobody wouldn't join. I mean, they wouldn't want to.

P: I've heard—changing the subject, but—I've heard and read in the newspaper and so forth that, in the town of Atmore itself, that there's increasing drug problems and those kind of things. Is there any drug problem with Indian youngsters in this area?

S: Well, I've heard of some of them, you know, having it, but . . . as far as saying they do, I couldn't, because I don't know. But anybody has got to be out of their mind to even fool with drugs.

P: Is there any drug problem at Faulkner?

S: Well, a couple of—you know, sometimes down there, you would hear of them smoking marijuana on campus, but other than that, that was it. But that was very seldom.

P: What about Troy? Have you heard anything from there, whether they have a drug problem?

S: No, sir, I haven't.

P: What about drinking? Do young people around here drink a lot?

S: [Laughter] Yeah. I guess they do. I mean, now, even the little ones are wanting to drink.

P: What do you mean by little ones?

S: About fourteen and fifteen, that's all. They just want to go out and have a good time, but that's not having a good time, at all.

A: [Inaudible] third, fourth grade.

P: Where was this?

S: At my school. Freemanville Elementary School, little boy named **Jerry Dale**. And a little boy named . . .

A: [inaudible]

S: Johnny Mack. They took beer out there on the spot at the local school.

P: During school time? [Laughter]

S: During the school day. And they was telling everybody that it was ginger ale.

P: [Laughter] Well, what do you think would be something that could be done that young people like yourself, with education, what do you think the best thing you could do for the community and your people here? What would it be?

S: I don't have any idea as of yet. I mean, seriously. I don't. Because you don't know what they want and they won't give you any idea what they want.

P: Do you like to come back here?

S: Sometimes I wonder. [Laughter]

P: Are you going to be sorry to leave next week and go back to school?

S: No.

P: How often will you come home during the year, from school?

S: I come home every weekend.

P: Every weekend. You never stay down there all through a weekend?

S: No, sir. I come home.

P: Are you in any social clubs of any kind at school, or do they have them there?

S: No, sir. I'm not in any. All I know they have is . . . this basic Bible club or something.

P: Are you in any organized athletics there?

S: No, sir.

P: Well, what are going to be your responsibilities this Thanksgiving as Princess? What—do you have any responsibilities for helping on the princess contest or anything?

S: No, sir. They hadn't told me anything about the princess contest next year. All I know is, just—you know, I just crown whoever gets princess, and that's it.

P: Now, I know there are several other princesses around in Georgia and Florida. How's that supposed to—are you over them, or what's the situation on that?

S: I haven't even heard. You know, I don't know. All I know is, I was just elected Princess of the Creek Indians East of the Mississippi, and that's it.

P: But there's no court or anything like that?

S: No, sir. It was just—they, the judges, picked me out of the rest.

P: What's the Junior Princess?

S: I really don't know. They just, I guess, pick her full name title or something . . . I hadn't saw her since she was elected Junior Princess.

P: During this year that you've been princess so far, how many things have you done, sort of officially, as princess?

S: Officially not any. Really. I just went on those pow-wows to Baton Rouge and all, and that was it.

P: Was Baton Rouge the only one you went to?

S: Yes, sir.

A: And down in Pensacola.

S: Oh, yeah. And that one at Cordova Mall in Pensacola. That one.

- A: [Inaudible] another one this Saturday
- P: Are you going to the one in Pensacola this weekend?
- S: They haven't even not asked me. Nobody's told me anything about it.
- P: They haven't . . . well, so, being Princess doesn't mean much, huh?
- S: Not like I thought it would be.
- P: Well, again, what kind of things do you think it should be?
- S: Well, I think the princess should be entitled to not have to find out from somebody else that she's supposed to do this or do that. You know. The Chief or the Chief's Wife or somebody should come and talk to her and stuff, and not let her just—try to find out what she's supposed to do from somebody else. That's really the major problem there.
- P: Have many girls spoken with you about running for princess this year?
- S: Not any.
- P: Are you going to encourage some to run?
- S: It doesn't do any good, once they make their mind up not to do something, they won't.
- P: When you were at school last year, did you tell anybody down there you were the Princess of the Creek Nation East of the Mississippi?
- S: Just about everybody knew it down there.
- P: [Laughter] How come everybody knew it?
- S: Because I was proud of being the princess.
- P: [Laughter] So you let them all know.
- S: Yes, sir.

P: Well, let me just turn it over to you now and ask you—I've asked you a lot of specific questions. Just say whatever is on your mind about being Indian and what the Indian community here in Atmore is like.

S: Well, to me, this community could be improved by parents encouraging their children to go to school and not to drop out—which not any of them do. If they did, they'd go ahead and continue school. But a couple of parents I know said, well, they could just got—they graduated and they just going to make up their mind and all. That's not the way to be. I mean, the parents should encourage it—and the child should want to do it. Because so many of them are just dropping out and when they graduate they just sit around and not do anything.

P: Well, what does it mean to be an Indian in 1973 in Alabama?

S: Being an Indian in Alabama in 1973, is terrific because now—I mean, people are realizing that there are Indians down here in Alabama, and every now and then, you'll see a write-up in the paper about the Indians doing this and something going on for the Indians. A lot of other people, you know, they act like they consider—I mean, they're being considerate about the Indians, but a lot of them, they don't really realize it.

P: Sounds almost to me like you've gotten kind of a boost to your Indian pride by being in college and having people ask you about being Indian. Is that right?

S: It's right. Because it makes me feel good for somebody wanting to hear about you being an Indian. Because around in Atmore ,they could care less. Anybody.

P: But just down in Bay Minette, there's that much difference in—?

S: That's true. And it's not that far, but yet and still, I—if it wouldn't have been for me being down there, I would never have believed it.

P: And is that strictly the college campus you're talking about, or is that town people in Bay Minette, too?

S: That's college campus and some town people.

P: Well, I hope you can encourage others to follow in your footsteps.

S: I wish so many of them would. But you just can't keep on begging.

P: How many did you say you've talked with now, trying to get them to go to school?

S: I know I've talked with Virginia and Georgia and that's all. But they're the only ones that's graduated this year, you know.

P: And there's no organized program within the Indian community itself to get people to go to college.

S: No, sir.

P: Mr. Powell, is he encouraging anybody else besides yourself, do you know?

S: He's talked to Georgia, and I think he's talked to Virginia, but I don't know. He talked to me about going, I said, well, I'm going. He said if I ever needed any help, you know, with financial situation, just to let him know.

P: You decided on your own to go. Nobody talked you into it or anything.

S: No, sir.

P: Would you have gone if you hadn't gotten the Episcopal Church help?

S: Sure.

P: Well, I want to ask you one more time, and maybe you can think of something this time. What is it about you—and I know you're not the only one, but you're

one of the very few that have gone to college in the community—what is it about you that has made you different from the others? Wanting to go to college?

S: I guess it's just—just being with my family, because my daddy, he can't read or write, and my mama, she doesn't have that much education. Makes me feel like I just want to keep on and on and get as much as I can.

[Break in Recording]

P: Sorry.

S: I think y'all's, and my bus, I had to ask to call in here, it's my bus.

P: Thank you, Vicki. I'm sorry I had that extra little mess-up there.

S: Well, that's okay.

P: And I will—I really think that we'll want to use that one. If you have another copy of it around—

S: Well, I can get a billfold copy.

P: You wouldn't have to—you have one? Or would you get one made?

S: No, Wayne's got one. I can get it from him.

P: Okay, well, that might be a little bit—

Unidentified child: Y'all going to go see my playhouse?

[End of Interview]

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