

2 October, 1982
Edward Davidson
Red Byrd - Clay County, Kentucky

Dr. Garrett: We're going to be talking about the rafting here on this river.

(nothing else recorded on side 1)

Dr. Garrett: and take that corn and horse.

Mr Davison: Take the horse and I was thrown off a horse. Grandpop was telling me - Pop was, you know - just don't know how to beat these He was comin' down there at midnight and he says, "Y'all will get to see him. You wait and see if I don't get to see him when he comes here daylight. As luck would have it, when you see him comin', y'know, he crawls out and he's got a good bead on him..... and it made the horse throw the man off, ate the corn, y'know, and the horse run off down the road. They just tore the corn off.... know how to do it. And Uncle Dan to the man, said, "If you want to do it, get a big rock and your head." That man kicks him, says, "He's dead"..... And when the horse come in, they see that Old dead.... Red Byrd... drug him back to the trees and left him them there, "Well, I'll never see him no more". Never had no more trouble with him.

Dr. Garrett: Where was that tree?

Mr. Davidson: Right at the hanging on a tree.

Dr. Garrett: Is that why it's called Red Byrd tree?
In other words, while one rode by, the other fellow killed Red Byrd when he came out - is that it?

Mr. Davidson: No - Uncle Dan was on the ^{FAR} first side of the river. See, he lays off at midnight until daylight, 'til it comes daylight. corn, you see, from the grist-mill. And when he saw him comin' out there, Uncle Dan snapped his flintlock gun, just as luck would have it, it fired the first time he snapped it.

Dr. Garrett: In other words, Red Byrd was going to hit the man on the horse.

Mr. Davidson: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Garrett: Well, that's interesting.

Mr. Davidson: He was going to kill him on the horse, take his horse and his lost about 10 or 12 men, horses and things. ?

Dr. Garrett: Was he from down South, Red Byrd - Cherokee?

Mr. Davidson: Well, I don't know where he was from - I don't know. Grandpa Davidson - Morgan is his name - and Uncle Dan and Uncle Charlie - they was all brothers. And they went down to Booneville.

Dr. Garrett Where did they meet Boone?

Mr. Davidson: On Red Byrd somewhere - somewhere along Red Byrd, he came in here for a time.

Dr. Garrett: Did they hunt with him?

Mr. Davidson: I guess they did - I don't know. I can't hardly tell you just exactly how. Pop told me about it. Y'see, Daniel Boone - Boonesborough - do you know where Boonesborough is? He's buried down there, isn't he?

Dr. Garrett: He's buried in Frankfort.

Mr. Davidson: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Garrett: What did you do for Christmas in those days?

Mr. Davidson: Oh, get out and rabbit hunt and made snowballs

Dr. Garrett: Did you all have Christmas trees at Christmastime, like we do now?

Mr. Davidson: Yeah, Christmas trees. People would come in, y'know, and have Christmas presents - two or three families maybe up that way and two or three down this way - they would all get in, all eat, have a good time.

Dr. Garrett: You didn't get as much for Christmas as you get now, did you, though? It was different.

Mr. Davidson: It was different, yeah.

Dr. Garrett: Did you use coal oil lamps or candles, or what?

Mr. Davidson: Coal oil lamps, yeah.

Dr. Garrett: Did you do any weaving in your days?

Mr. Davidson: Oh yeah, Mother had a spinning wheel and knitting needles.

Dr. Garrett: Did you all raise wool? And then she'd card it and spin it?

Mr. Davidson: No, we didn't raise wool - we raised cotton. We didn't have no sheep. But Old Man Jim Davis who lives in that over there now, he had, I guess, 25 or 30 sheep.

Dr. Garrett: How much cotton would you all raise?

Mr. Davidson: Well, something like an acre or two acres?

Dr. Garrett: And your mother would spin that and make cloth out of it?

Mr. Davidson: Make cloth out of it and make yarn socks and everything.

Dr. Garrett: I didn't know that. Did y'all raise it just like they do down South, then, right?

Mr. Davidson: I remember seein' them grow it. We used to grow it right here at the bottom of my line. We used to grow that and wheat.

Dr. Garrett: Any snakes in this country?

Mr. Davidson: Oh, yeah.

Dr. Garrett: What kind?

Mr. Davidson: Copperheads - plenty of them.

Dr. Garrett: Got any rattlers?

Mr. Davidson: Yeah, plenty of rattlers back in the mountains, yeah.

Dr. Garrett: But they don't bother you too much, do they?

Mr. Davidson: No, them rattlers don't come down much. Once in a while, they come down to the highway and you see them. I killed three or four copperheads up there at the old trail where it burned up, me and my grandson did, and five were in the house once. I killed one that was three foot long, saw it up in the yard there, a copperhead. He was as big around as my arm here. And we got to snake-huntin' while we was building that bridge out there. I said to my grandson, I says, "Leslie, let's go snake-hunting". "Snake-hunting!", he says. I said, "yeah". He says, "I don't have any way for snake-hunting". I says, "What we ought to do is get the guns", I says, "We would have us a good gun apiece", .22 Winchester, y'know, and a .20 gauge shotgun, and we went up there, and at first, he hit an old tire and an old chimney flue - they come down the flues, you know - there was an old chimney there, and I said, "Now, I'm going to step on this rock here". I give him the shotgun, y'know, I said, "I'm going to step on this rock now, and if you see some, I says, pour it on". There was two or three come out from under that rock. As fast as they would come out, he'd kill 'em. Before we quit killin' that evening, we had 17 killed, and we kept on killin' 'til we killed 35 up there and killed five more down here.

Dr. Garrett: Any fish in that river?

Mr. Davidson: Yeah. I caught - my grandson caught a big yellow cat, that weighed 17 pounds, and was three foot long.

Dr. Garrett: That was a good one.

Mr. Davidson: Yeah man!

Dr. Garrett: Did your mother weave?

Mr. Davidson: Yeah.

Dr. Garrett: Had your own loom and all?

Mr. Davidson: Yeah, she had a spinning wheel. Take a plank out of the floor like this, set the ol' spinning wheel down on the ground down there, through this plank floor, she'd spin it - she had a big corn cob - just roll her yarn up on it, and when she got done with that,

she'd put her knittin' needles in, sit down of a night and knit a pair of socks.....We buy 'em now.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever use grease lamps?

Mr. Davidson: Oh, yeah. Twist their legs together, leave it in the grease..... every once in a while, get you some more lard and put it on it so it won't burn up.....

Dr. Garrett: Pretty good light?

Mr. Davidson: Yeah.

Dr. Garrett: Pretty smoky, wasn't it?

Mr. Davidson: Yeah, smelt like ... burnin'. I've got a kerosene lamp in there, if you want to look at it.

Dr. Garrett: I know what a kerosene lamp is - just curious. I've got the chimney to it, you know. You mentioned Mr. Spurlock - is there an Old Man Spurlock over here that did a lot of rafting?

Mr. Davidson: Raftin'? Yeah, just about everybody has done a lot of raftin' around here, getting ... stream here. My daddy said there was cherry trees, ore, copper, all kinds of timber, back when I was a baby, y'know..... they'd be that big around, and they'd roll them out to the edge of the the river - there was a bench down where corn is they'd just get their ... full and roll them in the river and float away..... If we had them today, we'd be rich, wouldn't we? Yeah man, yeah boy!

Dr. Garrett: Oxen was good work, wasn't it?

Mr. Davidson: Oh, yeah! anything you ever see.

Dr. Garrett: Any ghost stories up here in this part of the country?

Mr. Davidson: No.

Dr. Garrett: Never had any up here?

Mr. Davidson: No, never had none. Did you ever see a stair shoe?

Dr. Garrett: I know what they look like. My father-in-law had them out West.

Mr. Davidson: Over the door there?

Dr. Garrett: Let's see, there's something I wanted to ask you specifically, and darn if I can remember what it was. What did you do for medicines in those days?

Mr. Davidson: Oh, you rode to the doctor on your horse... little something-or-other for him to come to you.

Dr. Garrett: Wait 'til he got here?

Mr. Davidson: Yeah.

Dr. Garrett: Did you do much treatment of yourself? Did you treat yourselves much?

Mr. Davidson: Oh, yeah.

Dr. Garrett: A lot of herbs and stuff?

Mr. Davidson: Yeah, he'd use and epsom salt and turpentine. Doc Jones was the doctor - I don't know whether you know him, he was the doctor and he'd ride a big horse and saddle pocket chest..... y'know. Mary was sick one morning and he come in here and said, "Aw, what's the matter with you?" He says that big and loud, y'know, "What's the matter with you. You ate them old sweet taters and you've constipated your bowels". He said, I get ^{sick} ~~it~~ of that". He went to his saddle pocket, got out a box of salts, a box of epsom salts, gave her two tablespoons of epsom salts and by 11 o'clock that day, she was better, her bowels moved.

Dr. Garrett: Did it give her much wounds or anything in those days, salt wounds?

Mr. Davidson: Yeah, once in a while you'd get a sore.

Dr. Garrett: Well, it sure is a - the trees have begun turning. Look at those woods over there.

Mr. Davidson: Yeah. There's an old saying that my daddy always said, "Mother Nature is taking up her green carpet now and puttin' down a yellor carpet".

Dr. Garrett: Yep. Where did you go to school, Mr. Davidson?

Mr. Davidson: Right over there.

Dr. Garrett: What school was that?

Mr. Davidson: Antepast School.

Dr. Garrett: Antepast?

Mr. Davidson: The schoolhouse used to be down here, the school used to be down here. Old Man Bob Wilson lived right over there, sold them that piece of ground. They wanted to get to school and halfway treat their kids. They wouldn't have to walk so fur, and built the schoolhouse over there, and the flood washed it away. It washed down in the field here and Charlie White with a bulldozer.....

Dr. Garrett: How many brothers did you have?

Mr. Davidson: Dan, Green, Henry, Earl, Harrison and Pittman and Sammy.

Dr. Garrett: Sisters?

Mr. Davidson: Two sisters - there was seven boys of us - I done named myself - that was eight boys, and I just had two sisters, and they're both dead. Everybody's dead but me, Harrison and Pittman.

Dr. Garrett: Where does Pittman live?

Mr. Davidson: He's in a home up at Fall Creek.

Dr. Garrett: Do you do any fox-hunting with that dog?

Mr. Davidson: No (can't understand rest of sentence)

Dr. Garrett: Well, I'll tell you - I gotta head toward home.
So I guess I'd better close off.