

GRANVILLE DAVIDSON
Oneida, Kentucky
2 January 1981

Dr. Garrett: Now, you said you were born at the mouth of the Frost Branch on Indian Creek. That you went to school with Arthur Garrett and ...

Mr. Davidson: Eugene.

Dr. Garrett: Eugene, rather. And, my granddaddy was Lafayette Garrett or Fayette Garrett who ran that store. Now, can you tell me anything about your family. I'd like to tape. Tell me about what Indian Creek was like and what it was like during those days.

Mr. Davidson: They wasn't any roads, only just an old bad wagon road and they hauled their goods from Heidelsberg over there they hauled their goods there and that old man, your granddaddy kept a team on the road ever day, just about ever day hauling goods. He sold goods and he had a large store there, a good store. He was a fine old man.

Dr. Garrett: I never did see him.

Mr. Davidson: I saw him...

Dr. Garrett: What was he like? Was he a big man?

Mr. Davidson: His was a big chocky man, sort of, he wasn't too high and he kind of chunky, an awful good old man, awful good talking man. Had a good position, a good, would give you a good look and treat you nice. He was a fine old man. I just about, I studied and studied about the old lady, I believe her name was Martha.

Dr. Garrett: Susan. Now wait a minute, it would have been Susan. Her mother was Martha Flannery. She probably visited up there a lot then.

Mr. Davidson: She was a nice old lady. They lived there. They didn't live there on Indian Creek too long, not too very long.

Dr. Garrett: Where did they live on Indian Creek?

Mr. Davidson: Right at Harve Bryce place, right across from the mouth of the Frost Branch, just up a little.

Dr. Garrett: On the other side of the creek from the store.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, in a big, fine white house there. ^{COLSON} Colson and Duff lives there now, in the house.

Dr. Garrett: ^{COLSON} Colts and Duffs. How old were you when you left there?

Mr. Davidson: I was, lets see, 13.

Dr. Garrett: Where did you go to school there? And, you said Gene was your teacher.

Mr. Davidson: Grassy Branch. At Indian Creek there was a school house. They called it the Grassy Branch school house. And I went to school to Eugene thar.

Dr. Garrett: How far did ou go to school, how many grades did he teach or did you do all your schooling under him.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, I went to school to Gene all my life. I went to school to Tillman ~~Grange~~. You know Tillman ~~Grange~~?
GREEN GREEN,

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, I knew Tillman real well.

Mr. Davidson: I went to school to Tillman and went to school with Eugene and went to school to Taylor Gabbard.

Dr. Garrett: I knew Taylor Gabbard.

Mr. Davidson: Went to school with Steve Gabbard. I just went in and out. I's ^{aw} a child, a boy that and when we had something to do to live, I just had to help her do it, to live and I didn't get to go to school very much. The other two children went to school, we sent em all we could. Each one of them got a pretty good education but I never got no education at all. To amount to nothing. I finally made a veterinarian in this County. I been a veterinarian 76 year in this county.

Dr. Garrett: What did you do, just start working on animals?

Mr. Davidson: Just took raw handed at hit, where a cow would have a calf and couldn't have it, I would take it. And I kept that up from a young man up till I got now.

Dr. Garrett: Tell me about what drugs you used. How did you treat distemper in a dog?

Mr. Davidson: Well, I always give em some kind of blood treatment and smoked feathers under their nose.

Dr. Garrett: Smoked feathers under their nose.

Mr. Davidson: yeh.

Dr. Garrett: Smoked feathers, now what was the reason for that?

Mr. Davidson: Now that was something my mammy always say to do.

Dr. Garrett: Smoked feathers under a dogs nose, how did you do that?

Mr. Davidson: Get a big wad of feathers and hold the dog and get them fired and warm and hold that feather right under its nose.

Dr. Garrett: Did i t help?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, it was tight and trying to cough and right tight, you know, hit would break that up and the nose would begin to run and hit would kind a open it up. That smoke, I guess the smoke of anything would have done it.

Dr. Garrett: What else, what other kind of animal disease did you handle or treat.

Mr. Davidson: Well, I would take pigs from a sow, take pups from a dog, such as that. I learned it in a way and I now got up with these veterinarians when they is some of them mighty good. I never did have no license. I never had high enough education to get license.

Dr. Garrett: What did you with hollow tail on a cow?

Mr. Davidson: Split it.

Dr. Garrett: Split it.

Mr. Davidson: Tell me how you did it.

Mr. Davidson: I'd lay the tail on a piece of plank and theres a soft place at the hollow, theres a soft place. I'd split that as deep as I could and if I could cut it plumb through, I would, and fill it full of soot out of a chimley and salt. That soot would keep it from bleeding and salt was good and I had em down that they couldn's get up and I's split their tail and then in an hour they'd be up eatin.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, that's right. Now, a lot of veterinarians say there isn't any such thing.

Mr. Davidson: Well, two veterinarians said there wasn't such a thing and I said, now let me tell you, I said, there are, and there was one veterinarian agreed with me. I said this tail, this nerve from the brain to the end of the tail has to act and I said when hit fails to act in this tail, that will stop that nerve fails to act and I said, they will come a place there. He said, its a worm and I said no, I said that nerve just dries up or dies. He said, well now that is right. But he said there hain't no worm in there. He wouldn't agree that there was a worm.

Dr. Garrett: Did you find worms in there?

Mr. Davidson: No sir, I just split, I'd, sometimes I'd cut them that long.

Dr. Garrett: Four inches, huh.

Mr. Davidson: I'd turn it up that away, wouldn't bleed, just be yellow water there and at no time that cow would be wailin.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever use roots and herbs and bark and stuff for medicine? What did you use it for?

Mr. Davidson: I'd use red sassafras and yellar root.

Dr. Garrett: What did you use those for?

Mr. Davidson: Used yellar root for a cough and a bad hurtin in the chest.

Dr. Garrett: On people.

Mr. Davidson: On people. I'd boil the yellar root down, put a lot of yellar root in a vessel and boil it and then strain it and put it in honey or sugar. It generally would be homemade sugar.

Dr. Garrett: That was maple sugar.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: Did you make your own maple sugar.

Mr. Davidson: Yes, we made our own sugar.

Dr. Garrett: Lots of it?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, me and old granny Frost, the old lady that lived just across from me, she was the best hand at that that I ever saw in life.

Dr. Garrett: Did she make a lot of it?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, take it to Booneville and sell it, she would. She would make molasses too out of it.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, syrup.

Mr. Davidson: Boil it. It would have the prettiest, whitest foam, the best you ever eat with bread or biscuit.

Dr. Garrett: Tell me some more about these bark and root medicines. I am always interested in medicines. I am always interested in that.

Mr. Davidson: Now red root, now they's two red roots. They's a bush, a great big bush that grows in the mountain, hit grows up a great big bush and its red root. And, then they's a red root cocoon. Now, the cocoon is kindly, its high flugage, hits kind a poison. Hit ain't poison but its a high flugage and we'd get that and dry it. I'd get that in the Spring of the year and Summer and hit comes up awful early and blossoms, has a white blossom on it, great big round leaf thing, and I'd get that and dry it and powder it up and give it if a cow was puny, or a horse. I'd melt it up and grind it up and give it to em and it seemed to help em.

Mr. Davidson: And that red root would to make tea out of it. My mammy would make tea out of that red root stuff. She said it broke all things out of your blood and give your blood a good transfusion, a good passage and everything. Black snake root, you don't know what that is.

Dr. Garrett: Yes I do.

Mr. Davidson: And snake root.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, know them both.

Mr. Davidson: Theys another snake root, hit grows, hits scarce stuff. It grows in a patch, has root, it is real good medicine for anybody. Hit'll move your bowels, it'll work through it, keep you in good health every way. And theres a star root in the mountains. Hit grows on a point, poor point. Had to root more like a grub worm than anything you ever saw but it was a great big leafed thing, my mammy learnt that. She called it star root. Hit was good medicine.

Dr. Garrett: What did you use it for?

Mr. Davidson: Use it for a cough, a cold, just a lot of stuff.

Dr. Garrett: Tell me about cane. Was cane big when you come in here along the river?

Mr. Davidson: Cane?

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, the river cane, you know. Grows along the river, creeks.

Mr. Davidson: Hit grows around the creeks. You hardly ever see'd a patch of it, but whenever you seed it and found it, hit grewed high.

Dr. Garrett: Did the animals like to eat it?

Mr. Davidson: Well, yes, in the winter time and spring, they would feed on it terrible. Around that creek bank and around the river and things, they would peak on it terrible.

Dr. Garrett: It's about gone now, isn't it? Now when you come in here, was there any deer or game in here at all?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, there was deer. Old man Tom Frost lived there right by me. He had two dogs and they'd run deers. He'd kill them. Ever time the dogs would get after a deer, he'd go to Buffalo and back in that country and them deer would go to the hole of water and he'd go to that hole of water and kill em. I don't know how many deer he killed in that hole of water.

Dr. Garrett: There were a lot of hogs wild over there too.

Mr. Davidson: He coon hunted all the time. Squirrel hunted with an old rifle gun, old Hogg rifle. I seed him come in with 12 and 15 and 18 squirrels at a time. Then, they was plenty of squirrels back then.

Dr. Garrett: Were there big snakes in those days?

Mr. Davidson: Lord, yes, plenty of em.

Dr. Garrett: What kind?

Mr. Davidson: Rattlers, copperheads, big ones. Well, me and my mammy ginsenged all the time. We'd kill em and have 18, 16, 15 rattlers. Killed one, a big black one here on Red Bird, what they called the Darby. And that was the meanest snake I ever saw. She got a big pole, big chestnut pole, and that snake watched her, just follered her. He was laying in a quile (coil), it just moved its head just around and around and follered her. Hit wanted to fight, its was laying there singing, you could hear it singin. We killed it, hit had 17 rattles and a button, a big black one. We didn't go 200 yard till we killed a big yellar un. But the yellar one was a cam, a cam, tried to dodge, tried to hide, tried to get away from us, but we got it, we got two that day, a sengin.

Dr. Garrett: Now tell me about the senging, was there a lot of senging in those days?

Mr. Davidson: Well, now there was just about as much as that now as they was then.

Dr. Garrett: Pretty scarce.

Mr. Davidson: Hit was scarce, very scarce and didn't bring nothin. We'd sell it, me and my mammy, would sell it for three, two and four dollars a pound.

Dr. Garrett: Of course that was a lot of money in those days, wasn't it?

Mr. Davidson: Well, you could take that two, three and four dollars a pound, we'd dig a lot of it. We lived on it. We bought food with hit. We bought everything that we eat with it, even our clothing. In the Fall of the year we'd always seng before it died down, we'd seng every day. And, at the time it died down, we'd have three, four or five pounds of seng. We'd have a great big hunk. It'd buy our shoes and clothing, but in the Spring of the year we'd eat very, very tough. You know, everything was hard to come at. Me and my brother have went about three days without a bite to eat.

Dr. Garrett: What did you use for light in those days, in the cabin?

Mr. Davidson: Well, wood fire and black pine knots.

Dr. Garrett: Black pine knots, how did you use them?

Mr. Davidson: We'd go in the hills and get them big knots, you know, them big ones.

Dr. Garrett: Two feet long.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, just as black as they could be. We'd split them up and we had some kind of a lid or something that we would lay them on and stick it in the edge of the chimney and let it burn. One piece that long would last a long time.

Dr. Garrett: About 12 or 14 inches long. How do you mean you would stick it in the chimney? In between the rocks in the chimney, and just set it on fire.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, it shined in the house.

Dr. Garrett: Didn't it smoke. Wasn't the smoke pretty bad.

Mr. Davidson: The smoke went into the chimney.

Dr. Garrett: Now what did you need that for, for weaving or...

Mr. Davidson: Well, that was the way they raised.

Dr. Garrett: Did you read by it and so forth?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, set there by it. Two little old youngins just had to get wood and ...

Dr. Garrett: What did you have, a one room cabin.

Mr. Davidson: One log cabin, cooked and slept, everything.

Dr. Garrett: How did you keep warm in that late in the night, just keep throwing fire wood on all night long.

Mr. Davidson: No sir, we kept, we always had two or three featherbeds and sleep under them and on them.

Dr. Garrett: Sleep under them and on them.

Mr. Davidson: Like a big straw bed, you know what I mean. Had a big straw bed under em and then a featherbed and then a featherbed over you.

Dr. Garrett: And then start the fire again in the morning, just stoke up the firewood before you go to bed and then fix it up again in the morning.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, that is what we'd do.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever make hominy?

Mr. Davidson: Lord, that, we lived on it just about. We'd raise the corn, we'd pick us out a big pile of good big years of corn, at that time, years ago, it was a sight, big grains, we found a big grain that big and we'd say that was the best hominy corn that ever was. We skinned it with ashes. Got them ashes, boiled them ashes till it come to be a lye and set it down, strain it and put that corn right in that lye and put it on the fire and let it boil and hit come to be just that skin, got to be almost thick, that skin did, we took it and washed

it and washed it three or four different times and it come to be just as white and grains that big and hit was really good hominy.

Dr. Garrett: How did you cook it them?

Mr. Davidson: We'd fry it in hog's lard, cook it and eat it raw, just ever way you wanted to eat it.

Dr. Garrett: Did you use parched corn?

Mr. Davidson: Yessir.

Dr. Garrett: How did you parch it?

Mr. Davidson: Just parch it in a skillet on the fire. Shell the corn in a big skillet, put you some grease and salt in it, and just keep a stirrin it, not let it burn nary a bit and hit would, just get to be, oh, you could almost mash it up with your fingers, it was good then.

Dr. Garrett: Just eat it just like peanuts, huh.

Mr. Davidson: Popcorn, we'd always, me and my brother would always raise some extra popcorn every year of our life. We never would fail but we wouldn't raise a big patch of popcorn. You know what popcorn is.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, I sure do.

Mr. Davidson: We'd pop it in a big old cooker of a thing. Oh, it was a big thing. We would pop enough when we'd pop to do us about all day.

Dr. Garrett: Where did you get salt in those days?

Mr. Davidson: Well sir, we went to the store, like your great granddad's. He kept salt, sugar. He kept lard. He kept everything that we needed and he was a good old man. He was good to us.

Dr. Garrett: Tell me what you can about his family. I don't know much about him.

Mr. Davidson: His family: a real good family. They didn't stay on Indian Creek two or three year, I believe. They was a good family. Gene was a young man. He taught school and he loved to go to dances. They had frolics and Gene would rather go to a frolic, and Lord.

Dr. Garrett: Gene got in a little trouble over there in Buffalo, didn't he?

Mr. Davidson: He went somewheres over there to a frolic and them Gabbards and things tried to bulldoze him then and he burnt them up. He wouldn't be fooled with him.

Dr. Garrett: Harve Rice served time for killing one of them over there. You ever know who killed Doc Gabbard?

Mr. Davidson; No, they accused Ancil Vires. I don't know who killed Doc Gabbard but someboy laywayed Doc Gabbard and killed him. And Harve Rice lived there where your daddy, granddaddy, lived and he killed Greenberry Merrill. He killed Merrill right in that church house, that school house.

Dr. Garrett: When my grandpa was there?

Mr. Davidson: Harve, that was later, after your granddaddy...

Dr. Garrett: Harve took it over didn't he?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, he shot Merrill. Merrill come there in the night and was tryin to take over, drunk, tried to bulldoze and Harve shot him across the county and killed him. They had a terrible time after that. Fellas was moody, them Merrills was. They threatened to kill Harve and everything but then Harve come clear of killin him.

Dr. Garrett: There was a lot of killing up in that Buffalo country wasn't there? A lot of bad men in those days.

Mr. Davidson: That was an ungodly place. I went there when I was a kid and but by some means or other our school house had got burned or something happened to it and they put us to Martha B. _____ on Buffalo to school, going across that hill. They had a box supper there. Addie Brown, Adie Hacker she was, and Hattie Neace was the two teachers. They had a box supper and them Gabbards and Daniels and there was a man by the name of Gilbert Harris, he was in the bunch. They let the box supper go a little while and then they raised cane about it, went to shootin up through the loft and I was just a little old boy. You know how a little old boy will do, I just watched em all. That Hattie Neace was a school teacher. She was from Booneville and she went out that and she had on a big flarery tailed dress and that dress flinging in and out as she went out that window.

Dr. Garrett: I would have too.

Mr. Davidson: I tell you, they ran off, them Daniels. The Gabbards and Harris was again the Daniels. They was trying to run the Daniels off but the Daniels run the others off.

Dr. Garrett: This Clay County country was pretty bad in those days too, wasn't it?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, it was, it was bad. When I come to Clay County it was rough country. Rough, rough.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, it is still rough up there.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, they killed some men the other day up here. Them Sizemores.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, but the Bakers and all those people...

Mr. Davidson: Oh, God, that Baker and Howard war, that was just about unmerciful.

Dr. Garrett: It was a war. There was a lot of people killed in that wasn't there?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, killed old, young, children and all. That boy that got killed down there today, _____ Childs, , they think it was a woman killed him but nobody knows nothing about it. They never, they never took her in fer it.

Dr. Garrett: Old Bull skin used to be kind of mean didn't it?

Mr. Davidson: Yes it did. Used to be terrible.

Dr. Garrett: You know, I have always been fascinated by the names down here, Bull Skin, Hog Skin, Red Bird. What other interesting names are there down in this neighborhood?

Mr. Davidson: Bull Skin, Red Bird, Jack's Creek, Big Creek, Flat Creek, Double Creek, Sugar Creek and Crane Creek, Hector's Creek, Sexton, you know where Sexton is? Dole, it's this side of Booneville.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, Dole Creek, I just came by there. Any ~~unhanted~~ ^{Hades} houses up in this part of the contry? Did you believe in ghosts when you were little?

Mr. Davidson: No, I's too mean. I was right mean, you know.

Dr. Garrett: You were mean, I couldn't imagine that.

Mr. Davidson: I wasn't mean, never wold bother nobodies stuff, never stole nothin, and I lived that way and never stole nothing, never killed nobody, never bothered nobody in no way, but I wouldn't take nothin. That old man that lived in above me always saying, "Now, brother, don't take nothin that don't belong to you, don't never steal, said, that's the worst thing in the world." And he said, "Don't bother nobody and said you'd get along." Old man Combs, Matt Combs. He was a good old man. He was a daddy to me.

Dr. Garrett: A lot of moonshine done up there, wasn't there?

Mr. Davidson: Oh, God, that's all they done. They used, that's all they done in this country forever and I guess they are doin it yet, fer as I know. Some, it has to be done, it's men seed.

Dr. Garrett: I guess just about everybody did their own moonshine didn't they, made their own liquor.

Mr. Davidson: And senging now, me and my mammy would find these stills in the mountains. We'd always find them and never bother them, just go on and ...

Dr. Garrett: Were a lot of people on Indian Creek in those days?

Mr. Davidson: Not too many. You know where the _____ from out of the head of Indian Creek, up Frost Branch and go down to the lower Coal, old lower Coal place, way down, almost to the mouth of Indian Creek, you know where the _____ lives there now. _____ me and my mammy and maybe two or three more women made, we'd go a senging in that country. We'd generally find a lot, get in places where it hadn't been bothered and dug. We'd find a lot.

Dr. Garrett: Was that still virgin timber in there in those days, in most of that country?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh. Hit wasn't cleared up too much.

Dr. Garrett: Were fish in the creeks in those days?

Mr. Davidson: Big ones. I caught many a big one, many a mess, oh, little bass about something like that, and red eyes and gropin.

Dr. Garrett: Gropin?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, go in a hole of water and get after them and they'd be rocks and we'd go in after em and catch them with our hands.

Dr. Garrett: Reach in under the rocks. Used to do that to cat fish. They still do I guess. You afraid you might reach in and get something real big sometimes.

Mr. Davidson: Just reach in and get a snake, pull a snake out of there or a water dog. You know what a water dog is. We'd get em.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, I wouldn't care about doing that, I don't think too much.

Mr. Davidson: There'd always be two or three of us boys, three or four neighbor boys and me.

Dr. Garrett: Did you train oxen?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: How soon did you start breaking them?

Mr. Davidson: Well, very, very early. Always from a child up, I wanted might to do, wanted to be something, something to help the country, but I had a dull, bad chance at it. My daddy lived good in his life but never cared a second, the second family, me

and my brother, he never cared for us at no time.

Dr. Garrett: That was kind of tough wasn't it.

Mr. Davidson: Never bought us nothin in his life. His son, one of his sons, took us one time and bought us some shoes and some jeans to make us a pair of pants apiece. And, thats the only thing that I ever ...

Dr. Garrett: What ever happened to your dad?

Mr. Davidson: He died with something like TB. Died at 84 years old. He was 84 years old when he died.

Dr. Garrett: Had he been in the Civil War?

Mr. Davidson: No, his son got killed in the Army and drawed a permanent pension off his son.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever know old man Boston Baker?

Mr. Davidson: I heared of im. Heared my mammy talk about im one thousand times. He's the man that told (unintelligible) His boy killed Pruitt, killed Frank Pruitt or his girl, his daughter-in-law it was and they hung him, hung him right here at Manchester and the boy went, before they went to hang him said he had something to tell and old Boston stepped up and patted him on the breast and said, "Die with Billy..."

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, he was the boy Boston's son was hung and he wanted to tell something and his daddy wouldn't let him do it.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, he went to say, Bill, was the boy's name, and he went to say, he had something to tell before they hung him, said, "I never killed a man." The old man stepped up and said, "Now die with it in you son." He knocked a man down and the woman killed him. The woman killed him with an iron shovel.

Dr. Garrett: Boston let his own boy hang, watched his own boy hang.

Mr. Davidson: Watched his own boy hanged.

Dr. Garrett: Where was that done, here?

Mr. Davidson: Right in Manchester.

Dr. Garrett: Manchester. Man, you have to kind of mean to do that, wouldn't you?

Mr. Davidson: That was old man Boston now.

Dr. Garrett: He must have been meaner than old homemade sin from all I've heard of him.

Mr. Davidson: They killed a man and put him on a big white steer and took him into the head of the Pruitt branch down here right at the line and took him right in the ~~spirit~~ ^{right} head of that Pruitt Branch

and hid him. And the blood never would come off'n that white steer.

Dr. Garrett: I'll be darn. Do you remember the salt wells they used to have up here when they used to make salt.

Mr. Davidson: Yessir, I been to it a many of a time.

Dr. Garrett: An they boiled, what did they do, use creek water, use well water and boil it dry?

Mr. Davidson: Big, big kettle, had big pan, they called em pans but they was big old kettles. They boiled it down, made salt out of it. Hits right over yonder. You can't use the water thats in there now.

Dr. Garrett: In the Spring, I want to come up and I want you to go over there and show me where that it. I can get some pictures of that area. Now they shipped it out of here in big quantities, didn't they?

Mr. Davidson: A school over there, right at it.

Dr. Garrett: Right at it.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh. They's two or three mines down there and no body can't have water over there for it being salt.

Dr. Garrett: What did they use to boil it down, wood?

Mr. Davidson: And coal. They mined it you know.

Dr. Garrett: They must have made an awful lot of salt cause I remember when I was a little boy they were still doing it.

Mr. Davidson: It was that old man _____ Combs had a big salt well and he run it.

Dr. Garrett: He was Governor Combs daddy wasn't he? Bert Combs dad.

Mr. Davidson: Combs, granddaddy.

Dr. Garrett: Were there any doctors in this part of the country when you were little?

Mr. Davidson: Awful few.

Dr. Garrett: What did they do for gunshot wounds and stuff?

Mr. Davidson: Well, at Booneville, Dr. Glass. Did you ever hear tell of him?

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, I sure did.

Mr. Davidson: And Dr. Anderson.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, I heard of him, I knew Dr. Anderson.

Mr. Davidson: Well, they was the two doctors at Booneville and at Manchester they was a doctor, Dr. Hatton and Dr. Mahafey was back

Dr. Garrett: Virgin country wasn't it?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, he was an eye doctor and they was scarce. You just about had to doctor yourself.

Dr. Garrett: You didn't have any roads in here at all, everything was a trail.

Mr. Davidson: Old bad roads with a wagon and two mules or four mules to it, pullin a load of corn.

Dr. Garrett: Why did these people feud so much up here?

Mr. Davidson: I don't know. I could not tell you. They seemed to be good people all of em, you could be a talkin to one side of em and they was nice, good to you, talk to the other side and the same way, but they feuded. They was feuds in them some ways or another. Wanted to kill each other. The Bakers and the Howards wanted to kill each other. Then the Burns's up Bull Skin, they got mean wantin to do things. I guess hit was the devil got into em.

Dr. Garrett: Was it from the Civil War you think.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: They got them there, they were on both sides I guess, different sides in the Civil War. There was a lot of it.

Mr. Davidson: A lot of Unions and a lot of Rebels. As I was to go up to Oakleys up yonder, you know that _____, that Rebel point, that thar they met, the Rebels and the Union met and the Unions got two of the Rebels and the Rebels got nary one of the Unions.

Dr. Garrett: Did you have good horses and mules back there in those days?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, they did, they had good horses. Thats what...

Dr. Garrett: Tell me, in your early days of farming up here, tell me how, did you make a big yield early and then fall off?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, made, the land was extra good. Hit wasn't worn and it was fresh. All these bottoms, river bottoms and things, overflows, heavy, and you didn't have to tend too much to make a big lot of stuff. It was good, extra good. You could can corn, oats, feed, rye, beans, soy beans, anything like that, wouldn't take much of it to do you. You didn't have to ...

Dr. Garrett: You raised most everything you ate in those days, didn't you?

Mr. Davidson: Everything we eat about we raised. We just about had to.

Dr. Garrett: Did you raise flax?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, I've seed my mammy break flax a many of a time. You break flax before you put it in the loom.

Dr. Garrett: Did they soak it in water to rot it off or what?

Mr. Davidson: I disremember.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever make baskets?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh. Willow baskets and ...

Dr. Garrett: Tell me how you made a willow basket.

Mr. Davidson: Cane baskets.

Dr. Garrett: Cane baskets. Tell me how you made each one.

Mr. Davidson: Well, you'd get a big, big lot of willers, switches, just, you know you go to the creek and find these willers, yellar willers, you get all them limbs.

Dr. Garrett: Long, slender limbs.

Mr. Davidson: Them nice limbs. You'd get a lot that was crooked but you could work them in crooked ones right in thar. They'd begin makin that down here, making this part, the bottom, and they'd just keep a makin, goin around and around and around and the first thing you know they'd go around and they'd come up to be a great big half a bushel or a bushel basket. I seed my mammy and my grandma make em.

Dr. Garrett: Out of willow. Now, how did you make them out of cane?

Mr. Davidson: They'd get them canes.

Dr. Garrett: The leaves or the canes?

Mr. Davidson: They'd trim all them leaves off'n them and the cane and heat em. The had to heat them canes but them cane baskets was a heap costlier now than the willer.

Dr. Garrett: I never saw one.

Mr. Davidson: Well, they was good.

Dr. Garrett: They use small cane or big cane.

Mr. Davidson: Small, have to have something like your finger, little finger and big finger.

Dr. Garrett: Did you raise gourds?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: What did you raise them for?

Mr. Davidson: Water gourds. I've drunk many a drink of water out of em.

Dr. Garrett: Did you store anything in them, the gourds, in the old bushel gourds?

Mr. Davidson: No, I've not seed em, raise em, big old half bushel gourds, the called them half bushel gourds. Always heard said it took a fool to raise a gourd.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, I have a lot of luck raising gourds myself so I must be a fool. My grandmother had them and she had salt and sugar gourds.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, my grandmother had em. Had sugar gourds, had em hangin up in the kitchen. Had salt in one, sugar in one and I believe she kept flour and stuff in em.

Dr. Garrett: Didn't have any other way to store them. How big a cabin did you live in?

Mr. Davidson: Oh, about, hit was a very large cabin. Hit was bigger than 18, 18 by something.

Dr. Garrett: The way they built the flues in those days, it was hell to keep warm, wasn't it?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh. We ...

Dr. Garrett: Did you have a dirt floor or a wooden floor?

Mr. Davidson: Wooden floor. The wood was very handy, big old beeches, sugar trees and hickorys. They was very handy. We'd saw em and roll a big back log, you know what I mean. Roll it in the back of the chimney, build a fire and it would stay thar for a day or so, have the awfulest fire you ever....

Dr. Garrett: How did you celebrate Christmas in those days, did you have a tree?

Mr. Davidson: We had, no sir, I never seed a Christmas tree when I was a boy till I got grown, might near grown.

Dr. Garrett: Did you celebrate Christmas?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: How did you do it?

Mr. Davidson: I'd always have plenty of fruit, we'd hold the fruit up now, we'd gather fruit in the Fall of the year and we'd dig a hole in the ground and fill that hole full of straw, dry straw, cbrab grass. Gather, pick apples off, we'd pick em. Climb right up in the tree and pick em and put that basket and some apples in that hole and then put straw over the top of em and they'd last till Christmas. We'd raise em, have the finest apples you ever saw. Very red, Black Bens, striped Bens, we'd have the best time a eatin apples. But my mammy would never let us raise, go in to em until Christmas. But we always had plenty of fruit.

Dr. Garrett: Did you get a lot of toys in those days?

Mr. Davidson: No. I didn't get you right.

Dr. Garrett: Toys, did you give a lot of toys and get a lot of toys in those days?

Mr. Davidson: No sir, no sir.

Dr. Garrett: Wasn't part of it, was it?

Mr. Davidson: Ever now and then you'd see a box of firecrackers, or a Roman candles, just very seldom you seed that.

Dr. Garrett: Did you go to church on Christmas?

Mr. Davidson: No sir.

Dr. Garrett: What church did you go to when you would go in ...

Mr. Davidson: Ever now and then they'd have church at the school house. Some preacher would come in and have church. They didn't serve the Lord then, that day in time like they should. That old lady that lived with my granny Frost over there, she was always all the time, she'd talk to us about servin the Lord and things and we looked to her.

Dr. Garrett: Was there a burial place down there on Frost Branch, is there a burial place down there?

Mr. Davidson: Yes.

Dr. Garrett: Is that where the family is now?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh. Now, where I was raised, from the time I was born until I got big enough to recollect anything, is up the Frost Branch to the second fork, the first fork you come up to the old man _____ Wilder place and the next fork, the first fork is the old Wilder place and the second fork is where I was raised. Where I was raised went towards Buffalo.

Dr. Garrett: Do you have level ground up there?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, my mammy owned a big farm and thar and

Dr. Garrett: Tell me, what kind of mills did they have in those days? To grind corn and stuff.

Mr. Davidson: They went, we went to a big mill.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever know where Ed and _____ Allen's mill was down at the Narrows?

Mr. Davidson: Adam Davidson?

Dr. Garrett: Adeniron Allen.

Mr. Davidson: Dan Allen? A water mill? Yes sir.

Dr. Garrett: A big one?

Mr. Davidson: A big un. Hughnog Bishop, you ever hear of him? He had a water mill at the mouth of New Found. Now me and my mammy would come from mouth of New Found over thar and carry a half bushel apiece, she would carry a half bushel on her hip and I'd carry a half bushel on my back to Hughnogs. Old Hughnog would always say, "Now Lizanne." That was my mammy's name. "Lizanne, I'll grind, I got your meal already ground. Now if you and your boy want to go on up there and eat your dinner, hit was a long ways, called his old womans name, go up thar and eat your dinner and come back and get your meal and then go home. He was a good old, he was good to us.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever use hickory bark for medicine?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: Slippery elm and stuff like that?

Mr. Davidson: Hickory bark and white ash bark.

Dr. Garrett: What did you use white ash bark for? I didn't know that.

Mr. Davidson: It was a good cough medicine. And red oak bark was a good healing. You get a cut and you could get it healed.

Dr. Garrett: Make a tea or something of it or a poultice?

Mr. Davidson: You could get it and boil it, red oak, and hit just as red as it could be and you could bathe your leg, a cut, a shot or a wound in that and it would heal that fast as you ever seed.

Dr. Garrett: No, I never did know that. Did you raise turkeys and geese?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: Chickens?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, chickens, geese, ducks.

Dr. Garrett: Did you do a lot of hunting when you were a young man?

Mr. Davidson: No sir, I never did hunt too much. I went around with that old man Frost a whole lot, just here and yonder.

Dr. Garrett: Killed a lot of wild turkeys, huh.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, he'd kill wild turkeys. Ever Spring, he never failed but he wouldn't kill two or three big gobblers. He'd always give me part of one.

Dr. Garrett: At Christmas did you have a special celebration and food, other than just food or did you...

Mr. Davidson: Sometimes we did and sometimes we didn't.

Dr. Garrett: Did you raise hogs, a lot of hogs?

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, we'd always try to keep us a breedin sow and litter base and have chickens and when we wanted a chicken, we'd kill it and eat it. But they come a time in our life that we'd have it hard. And that was from about February, well...

Dr. Garrett: Let me walk out here one second. I want to check on something. There are several more things I wanted to ask you. Did you just use spring water back in your young days? It was always clean, wasn't it?

Mr. Davidson: Had a big spring right across the Branch and hit was sulphur. And cut out in a big slate rock. It never failed, never raised, never went down. I seed it the last time I was there, I looked at it, it was right across from the Joe Wilder place on Frost Branch and we learned to use that water, hit was sulphur.

Dr. Garrett: Who lives up on the Frost Branch now, anybody?

Mr. Davidson: I don't know. I aint't been there in twenty year.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever mine any?

Mr. Davidson: No, no I never did. Coal mine, now. I raised two boys and neither one of them, one of them lives in Arkansas and Oakley lives...

Dr. Garrett: Well, I am going to go up to Oakleys now and take some stuff up to him. I am going to come back down in the Spring and maybe you'll get in the car and go down to Indian Creek.

Mr. Davidson: I'd be glad to.

Dr. Garrett: Show me around because I am interested in that country. You see, I left Booneville when I was about 18 years old but I have been back a lot. I got a sister who lives down there again now but my boys don't know much about this country and that is the reason I am trying to find out all I can.

Mr. Davidson: Well, I'd be glad, anything I can do to help you.

Dr. Garrett: Well, I have been interested in how people lived because it is hard for people to realize how people did live in the mountains here when they come in. They could have gone on to the Blue Grass and made it a hell of a lot easier, couldn't they? Why did they stay in the mountains, do you know?

Mr. Davidson: No, I reckon it was home to em.

Dr. Garrett: Just wanted to hunt and fish and lay out in the hills more than work, huh?

Mr. Davidson: Go down log, raft, go down the river, get them big poplar trees and pull em out with yoke cattle, raft em, put pop holes on em, pin em down and take em to Bell Point. I went a many of a time to Bell Point.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, you told me last time about rafting. You did a lot of it, didn't you?

Mr. Davidson: Yes sir, I did.

Dr. Garrett: Now one thing you started to tell me and some reason or other I changed the subject, you were telling me about some of these places where they boarded raft men and fed them.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, old man Lee Brownboarded. He would always fix when it went to rainin and the river got to raisin, Red Bird, he lived in the Forks over yonder, what they call the Forks, fork in the river, Goose Creek and Mudberry. When the river would go to raisin he'd go to work. He'd kill a hog, kill a beef, kill just to have for all those people from the head of Red Bird, from them Flat Creek country, Sugar Creek, Double Creek, Big Creek, Jack's Creek, all that big country come down with the rafts and they'd land along the river thar and tie. Old man Brown would have two and three hundred ever time.

Dr. Garrett: That would have been a hell of a way feeding them wouldn't it?

Mr. Davidson: He'd have three or four girls there and his old woman and two or three men cooked all the time. He had plenty to eat. That old man would go around amongst them and I've seed him many of a night, he was a nice old man.

Dr. Garrett: How did he sleep that many?

Mr. Davidson: Well, what could get in the bed slept in the bed and what couldn't get in the bed, layed on the floor. The floor would be a layin. He had three or four big rooms and the floor would be layin just as thick as it could be, the beds full and the barns full. Everything would be full. They'd begin in the early mornin, gettin up and eatin and goin on with their raft, takin it on.

Dr. Garrett: Some of it was pretty cool weather wasn't it?

Mr. Davidson: Oh, yeh, man, I've seen em come in there with their ears frost bit, their hands frost bit.

Dr. Garrett: Well, they had a tough time making that raft up, didn't they? That was cold weather.

Mr. Davidson: Yeh, they had a tough time. Now this branch right across over yonder, they called it the Grey Hound, hit had fine timbers on it. Had white oaks, a sight on this earth. I helped cut and saw that timber. We worked about two year cuttin and sawin.

Dr. Garrett: How big a cross cut saw did you have?

Mr. Davidson: Six and eight foot. Sometimes we had a eight footer when, the company always kept a eight foot for a big tree. Hit took two men.

Dr. Garrett: How long did it take you to cut down a six foot tree?

Mr. Davidson: Hit would take a short time for four men to get a hold a that big saw and cut it down. They'd saw a block out you know, and then chip it out and get on the other side of it, it would be a very short time until the big. Sometimes they'd split a big white oak wide open.

Dr. Garrett: That's pretty heavy stuff.

Mr. Davidson: They bought it, these loggin people, Feltman was the loggin man. He'd buy it. He was a hard, hard, give em a bad way.

Dr. Garrett: When was Oneida started?

Mr. Davidson: When was it?

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, in your lifetime?

Mr. Davidson: Now that just about, Oneida was, I can remember when there was just a few houses in Oneida. I can remember when old man Coldiron sold goods down there, right just at the mouth of Mulberry. They was just two or three houses up on the campus and one or two over yon way and his mother was old Miss Hogg. She married a man down thar at Booneville by the name of Steve Hogg.

Dr. Garrett: Steve Hogg. My mother and dad knew Steve Hogg. Was that school here then?

Mr. Davidson: Her son was a sellin goods. I was just a kid. And come there, me and my brother-in-law, and that old lady, old Miss Hogg come around and we had a gallon and a half bucket and she picked the bucket up and said, "I thought you had berries." Shabby old woman. She said, "I thought you had berries." We didn't, we had lard in the bucket. Hog lard in the bucket. Mr. Coldiron, her boy, said, "Mother, you keep out of peoples things." I remember that. I was just a kid.

Dr. Garrett: When did they finally found the school here?

Mr. Davidson: About 18 and ...

Dr. Garrett: Was the school here when you came here?

Mr. Davidson: Just a bash small lot of it. They was a school but just two or three houses. These ladies and men would come from ... Mr. Burns brought em in here and, Anderson Burns.

Dr. Garrett: Was it accepted pretty much in the early days?

Mr. Davidson: Yes.

Dr. Garrett: They didn't give Burns too much trouble here did they?

Well, I tell you what I got to do. It's getting late in the day and I have taken up enough of your time. I am going out to Oakleys for a little. Now, in the Spring I am going to come down and you and I will get in the car and we will run down on Indian Creek.

Mr. Davidson: We'll go.

Dr. Garrett: I would like for you to go up and show me the Frost Branch and that country there. I would like to see that. I would like to see that. If there is anything I can do for you in the meantime, let me know and but, I do want to go up to see Oakley. So, Merry Christmas to you and a Happy New year.

Mr. Davidson: Same to you.

Dr. Garrett: How old are you now, 91? When is your birthday?

Mr. Davidson: Be 91 on my birthday, first day of September.

Dr. Garrett: Well, I'm 62 today. I was a twin.

Mr. Davidson: And that was your sister that was with you?

Dr. Garrett: Yeh. Well, listen, I am going to go then and you just have a good time. I like you dog. You got a nice dog there. Thank you for everything.