

FOUR GENERATIONS OF POARCH CREEK HISTORY

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
School of Education (Culture, Curriculum, and Change)

Chapel Hill
2011

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ABSTRACT

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Four Generations of Poarch Creek History
(Under the direction of George Noblit)

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians is a segment of the original Creek Nation that avoided removal and remained in Alabama. This dissertation is a qualitative study designed to record oral histories of Poarch Creek people. Together the tribe and I collected and recorded oral histories from four generations of four Poarch Creek families. In addition, I did participant observations, analyzed documents, had informal conversations, and recorded field notes. All of this data helps us to understand more about family, community, education, religion, relationships, living situations, and many more aspects of Poarch Creeks from 1920 to 2011. Other stories were shared about the history of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians before, during, and after federal recognition. All of these stories teach us about how Poarch Creek identity has changed and been maintained over time.

This dissertation is dedicated to all members of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians that have come before me, that are living today, and that will be the future. These stories have been collected and recorded to be passed down for all future generations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this dissertation has been more than the yearlong process of research and writing, and more than the five-year process of attending graduate school. It has been and will continue to be my lifelong project. Everything I have done until this day has prepared me for where I am now and where I will go in the future. There are so many people in my life that have helped me along the way: my family, friends, community, and mentors.

I would like to thank my family: mom, dad, sister, grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles, for all of their love and support throughout all of my life. I know I would have never gotten through graduate school or writing this dissertation without all of their help. Throughout this process, they have been my rocks, sounding boards, editors, teachers, friends, and so much more. I thank each of them so much for their constant love and support. Thank you and I love you so much!

I could have never written this dissertation without the help of the four generations of four families that are in this dissertation. I thank them so much for spending countless hours talking with me and sharing important parts of their lives with me. I am so blessed to have gotten to know each of them better and will cherish my time with them for the rest of my life. Thank you so much for opening up your homes and hearts to me! I have learned so much from each of you. This

story is as much their story as it is mine. Together we have written a story for the future of our tribe.

While I have had so many mentors in my life, there are three that really helped me these past five years to get to where I am now: Dr. Natalie Adams, Dr. Sandra Hoeflich, and Dr. George Noblit. These three men and women have changed my life forever. As my McNair Scholar's mentor, Dr. Adams introduced me to the world of research and graduate school. She began this long journey and has been an amazing mentor throughout undergraduate and graduate school. Dr. Sandra Hoeflich is an amazing mentor that I met on my first visit to UNC. She believed in me long before I believed in myself. Her dedication and genuine care has been such an important part of my graduate school experience. Last but not least, I have a deep appreciation for my advisor and mentor, George Noblit. I thank him for always being there to encourage, support, challenge, and teach me. Most importantly, I thank him for guiding me and standing beside me during graduate school and as I wrote this dissertation. The lessons that I have learned from him are invaluable. I have a deep appreciation for each of these mentors and could never thank them enough for all they have always done for me. I am so thankful to each of them for being my teachers, mentors, and friends.

I would also like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee: Malinda Maynor Lowery, Jocelyn Glazier, Luis Urrieta, and Deborah Eaker-Rich. They have each helped me in so many different ways throughout graduate school and in this dissertation process. Their continuous support, intellectual conversations, and challenging questions have helped me find my voice as a Native American scholar. I

thank each of them for their time and dedication to me, always going above and beyond to help me grow as a student and scholar.

In addition to these professors, I am so thankful to have a supportive community of American Indian faculty, staff, and colleagues. These men and women created a very welcoming Indian community that became my home away from home. They walked alongside me throughout this process, teaching me so many different things personally and academically. They have each helped me in so many ways and for that I thank them so much.

Coming to graduate school, I had many amazing friends that continued to be my support systems. Throughout graduate school, I made many more friends, colleagues, and alumni that became part of my life. I am so lucky to have each of these people to support and guide me throughout this journey. All of your cards, phone calls, emails, meetings, texts, Skype conversations, and outings have supported, encouraged, and challenged me along the way. I have a truly amazing group of friends! I thank each of you so much for all that you have done for me.

I could have never gotten through graduate school or life without each of these people. I thank each person in my life for making me the person that I am today. I am truly grateful for everything you have given me. Thank you!

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INTRODUCTION

My Dad was waiting for me when I got off the plane. We both had huge smiles on our faces and gave each other a big hug. I was so excited to see him and to be home from school on Spring Break a whole week! We got my bags, headed to the car, and began catching up on our day. The conversation never stopped. We arrived home an hour later to our small town in south Alabama. During our conversation we talked about the usual: what's been going on at home and what's been going on with me at school. With excitement, I told my Dad about a class project that I would be doing that week while I was at home. As always, he listened and then added his opinion, "well that sounds good but I really think you should be looking more at the idea of what is a "21st century Indian". At first I didn't want to hear his new idea because I had planned this whole other project, but I thought it was a good idea for a future project. I asked him what he meant by a "21st century Indian"? We discussed how opportunities for the current generation of children have changed so much because of revenue from casinos. We talked about what it was like for us being Indian growing up, focusing on our experiences in school and the programs and the opportunities we had in the tribe. Then we discussed how different it is for kids today. This is what he meant. A "21st century Indian" is about what it means to be Indian today. Though I saw lots of potential for a

future project involving this topic, I decided to put this conversation and these ideas on the backburner for another time.

I don't know whom I was fooling. Putting this on the backburner meant it remained in the forefront of my mind. That week and over the next few months, I thought about designing a project that would focus on this idea of the "21st century Indian". As I laid in bed, sat in class, and drove down the road- so many questions and thoughts consumed my mind. What does it mean to be a "21st century Indian"? How would I find out more about that? Is it possible? Who would I talk with to understand this "21st century Indian"? This is a good idea to counter the images of the static Indian¹ that we are always being compared to. Can I really accurately portray this "21st century Indian" without creating another model that people compare Indians to? With all of these questions came many more questions and also many great conversations with my Dad, other tribal members, my advisor, and friends- both people from home and school- about this project. As I talked with people in my tribe they thought this would be a great idea because it was helping to find out more about Poarch Creek young people and what kinds of things they need. When I talked with people at school they also thought it was a great idea but our conversations focused more Indian and identity more broadly. We talked about identity in an academic context and in relation to other groups and other Native Americans. The difference between the two conversations was the focus of the project. People at home wanted to know more about ways to help our young people, and people at

¹ In the media, the images of Indians are set in a specific time period many years ago and in a specific context- that of the west. Most images are of Plains Indians where they are wearing leather and living in teepees. When I say static image of Indian, I am talking about how society still judges whether Indians today are real or not based on what they have learned through the media from this image of Indian.

school also wanting to do this but they helped me think about how to add this information to the larger body of academic knowledge.

A few months later, I attempted for the first time to put my dissertation design on paper. I couldn't help but return to my Dad's idea, to look at the "21st century Indian". I combined his idea with conversations with my Dad and others, literature that I had read, and my experiences. This study was going to look at the identity and experiences of Poarch Creek children 7 to 18 years old. After designing this study, I took it to my committee for approval to begin fieldwork, because that is the natural process of doing a research study in graduate school, and I know I was going to need their permission to start. They were very supportive, offered some feedback, and then agreed that before I actually started collecting data that I should take this to the tribe for their feedback and permission. I was so excited about my committee's feedback and this research idea that I couldn't wait to go home to talk with others and hear their ideas.

In October, I took my ideas to the tribe's education advisory committee- that I am part of, and also to members of the tribal council. Everyone was so supportive, providing many suggestions and ideas. In my conversation with one of the tribal council members, she told me she had been thinking about my dissertation and thought of something else that I may consider doing instead of what I had designed. I was very open to any suggestions and never thought that this conversation would change my whole project. She said, "in order to understand the present, you have to understand the past, understand where we came from so that you can understand where we are now and how far we've come." She hit the nail on the head. We agreed that in order to understand the current

generation that we must look at other generations and that it would be more beneficial for the tribe, to do a project that focused on Poarch Creeks over multiple generations.

My initial reaction was excitement, which was followed by questions of how I would do this in a way that didn't make it a huge project. I asked if she could design this study, how she would design it. She responded quickly, "well family is a huge part of our tribe, so I would look at generations of a family." Wow! This was such a great idea and one that I hadn't thought about. At this moment, I knew that this would be a great dissertation and definitely one that would be beneficial for our tribe and its history. We were both very excited about this new idea and worked for the next hour to use these ideas, my original ideas, and past conversations to design my dissertation. This tribal council member really helped me think about this research in a different way, in a way that took me away from the academy and into the community and history of our tribe. I was overjoyed! Her idea put the tribe at the center of this research, which was exactly what I had hoped for.

When I returned to school, I couldn't wait to tell my advisor, friends, and committee about how my visit had gone at home. Everyone was so excited and helpful. So for the next few weeks, I took all of the ideas from my tribe, this council member, the education committee, my Dad, my family, my advisor, and my friends. I did all of the things required by the university to start a research study: completed a literature review to understand more about Indian identity; designed a methodology; designed consent forms and interview questions; received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval; talked with my committee about starting fieldwork for this project; and anything else required.

I knew it was extremely important to document the history of our tribe told by tribal members and this was the perfect opportunity. All of my life, I have listened to people in my community talk about their experiences growing up and how far the tribe has come, but I often wonder where all of these rich stories, experiences, and information are being preserved. I have found that as people are leaving this world, some of their stories are being passed down and others are leaving with them. I want to help preserve as many stories as possible, told by the community so that in hundreds of years Poarch Creek people will know where we came from and what life was like in many different generations. Other people have written our history for a long time, and I feel it is very important for people in the community to write their own history, to tell the stories they want, the way they want with the memories they have.

As I began designing this research project, I learned so much more about so many things including the type of work that has already been done on and with tribes. I reviewed various methods for collecting and telling or representing stories. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Goodall, 2000; Jackson, 2001; Lamphere, 2007; Noblit, Flores, Murillo, 2004) The Poarch Band of Creek Indians' history while unique, is part of a larger history of tribes in the southeast, tribes that avoided removal, and Native Americans in the United States.

I had studied qualitative research methods and conducted research, but had not thought through the research methods necessary for this study. As I searched for a method to collect and record the individual stories/histories, I discovered oral history as a method that I could use. After reading some of the literature, I found very helpful

information on oral history, memory, and storytelling that help me understand how to use this method.

Oral History, Memory, and Storytelling

There are many definitions and lots of literature on oral history. “Oral history, in its most standard definition, relies on memories of firsthand experiences” (Trimble, Sommer, & Quinlan, 2008, p. 15). Before the 1970s, oral history was seen as “more than a tool and less than a discipline” (Dunaway & Baum, 1996, p. 52). Dunaway and Baum (1996) note that “oral history is not only a tool or method for recovering history; it also is a theory of history which maintains that the common folk and the disposed have a history; and that this history must be written” (p. 209). Some scholars argue that “oral history is the process of making history in dialogue” (Pollock, 2005, p. 2). Zusman (2010) adds, that it is also “the product this process creates” (p. 17).

Pollock (2005) argues, “history cannot be held privately. No one person “owns” a story. Any one story is embedded in layers of remembering and storying” (p. 5). Oral histories aim to create, “a primary historical source- a snapshot of history that comes directly from the participant” (Zusman, 2010, p. 18).

Using oral history as a data collection method, has both positives and negatives. One of the better arguments for using oral history is that it allows you to hear what the people are talking about but also the emotions, intonations, gestures, and many other pieces of the story that are left out on paper. Also, unlike documents, oral histories allow you to ask as many questions as you need to find out as much information as you can about what you are studying. Dunaway and Baum (1996) suggest that oral history gives researchers some control over the “primary resources, the respondent, and strive to

minimize the number of errors in the memoir which is produced” (p. 100). One of the negatives in doing this is that researchers all have a reason for collecting histories, therefore no one person can be completely objective when collecting, recording, or sharing histories. The history recorded, shared, and passed down can be altered depending on the researcher’s questions, comments, and opinions.

Within communities, “many stories are told over and over, or discussed with members of the community,” making them a more “formalized narrative” (Portelli, 1991, p. 52). Because communities tell their stories they come to share a larger narrative. In smaller communities there is less variety in this shared narrative because people are associated with one another (Noblit & Dempsey, 1996).

Fixico (2003) discusses the important role of oral tradition and “story” in American Indian communities. He discusses, how “a story unites us with a common understanding of kinship, giving us a common experience, and creates a group ethos” (p. 29). Fixico (2003) shares that,

narrative and oral tradition produce a kind of social history, telling you also about the culture of the people. Stories are clues of what they are like, what they like, and what they think are important in their lives. It is also a kind of community history of oral tradition, and these stories actually bond the community members together. The stories, as they are told, weave a fabric of continuity, holding the community together. They give a sense of place, time, people, feeling, and identity (p. 29).

Oral histories are typically told through stories about one’s life, memories, and experiences. “Oral history is not an attempt to define an objective ‘Truth.’ Instead, oral

history exposes the truth as expressed by each narrator. With oral history, truth is relative” (Zusman, 2010, p. 18). Instead, the “focus of oral history is the narrators’ memories” (Zusman, 2010, p. 19). “Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did” (Portelli, 1991, p. 50). This being because “memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings” (Portelli, 1991, p. 52).

Time is an important part of memories. Instead of using specific dates, people use phrases such as “when I was young,” “before I got married,” and “after I had children” to reference different times in their lives (Tonkin, 1992, p. 169). When people tell stories they usually talk about the past and distinguish it from the present. However, Tonkin makes us think about the fact that

every ‘now’ is the consequences of many ‘thens’, of vastly different durations, in an amalgam unique to each person experiencing it. What goes on now is interpreted from previous knowledge, from memory. The present we live in is built from past events. (Tonkin, 1992, p. 9)

It is very important when reading or listening to any story to remember that all stories are told or written at a specific time in a specific context and can only be understood within those conditions (Tonkin, 1992).

I became convinced oral history was a viable way to ‘historize’ identity for my people. I decided to use this as the method with the task as collecting memories. With this method in mind, I then explored my tribe’s history, the literature on Indian identity, and how these may or may not be connected. I turned to research done by other Native scholars on Indian identity in order to understand issues of identity with other Native

Americans. While both myself and members of my tribe live and discuss many of these topics everyday, I include other scholars' stories so that we can expand our knowledge about things we know and don't know as well as to inform other readers about the larger body of work that our story fits into.

Native American Identity

I have studied Native American identity in several graduate classes, taught an undergraduate course on identity, and read all I can about Native Americans. Identity is real to me. I live and work within it every day. Four scholars, Grande, Lowery, Garrouette, and Sturm can help us think about Indian identity. These scholars talk about Indian identity differently in different time periods, with different tribes, and in different locations. I turn to these stories to help understand change and continuity over generations in my tribe.

Each of these scholars used the terms Native American, Indian, Indigenous, or American Indian to talk about Native Americans as a whole. Though their preference in wording changed, they were all talking about the same group of people. Grande and Garrouette focus on Indian identity more broadly, whereas Lowery focuses on Lumbee identity both locally and nationally, and then Sturm focuses more narrowly on aspects of identity in the Cherokee Nation. These authors articulate how wider issues in society, and in Indian Country² can connect across levels.

Grande (2004) writes to an academic audience and tries to create a “self-determined space for American Indian intellectualism” (p. 118). In doing this, she

² Indian Country is a term that many people use to refer to a metaphorical space that all Native Americans are part of.

discusses more broadly, issues of Indian identity, sovereignty, tribal affiliations and legal definitions, and modern Indianness. Similarly, Garrouette (2003) examines legal definitions of Indianness “as well as biological, cultural, and personal definitions,” (p. 11) in a contemporary context. Lowery (2010) discusses four layers of Native American identity: a People, race, tribe, and nation. She specifically looks at the Lumbee tribe and their identity within these four layers over time.

More narrowly, Sturm (2002) focuses on race, culture, and identity in the Cherokee Nation in the eighteenth century. Sturm (2002) argues that “blood, kinship, language, and culture: these fundamental aspects of eighteenth-century Cherokee identity not only bound Cherokees to one another but also defined them as distinct individuals” (p. 36). Sturm (2002) focuses on how Cherokee identity is socially, racially, and politically constructed within the Cherokee nation and nationally, and how these ideas are “internalized, reproduced, manipulated, and resisted” (p. 2). Each of these scholars discussed the tensions in Indian identity created by insiders and outsiders as well as tribal identity, claiming Indian, identity markers, membership, and legal definitions.

There are many layers of Indian identity. When talking about Indian identity more broadly and Indians as a collective group, issues of “authenticity” often arise. Each of the four scholars talked about different identity markers that both insiders and outsiders use to determine who is Indian. Garrouette (2003) explains, “it is one thing to claim identity as an Indian person, and it is quite another for that claim to be received by others as legitimate” (p. 6). Grande (2004) shares that because of the recent increase in people claiming an American Indian identity, things such as “ethnic switching” and “ethnic fraud” are facing Indian communities (p. 110).

Often many people group Native Americans into one category, however these scholars show the importance of discussing Indian identity within specific tribal groups. Each tribe has their own criteria for determining who is a member which in turn says who is Indian and who is not. This creates tensions within Indian communities. As with many other tribes, Lowery shares, “kinship and place are the foundational layer of Indian identity in Robeson County” (Lowery, 2010, p. xiii). Sturm (2002) shares that Cherokees use “phenotype, social behavior, language, religion, and residence- to define the racial and social boundaries of their community and to socially classify other Cherokees into categories of identity other than just Cherokee or Indian” (p. 136). She discusses how today, “blood, race, culture, language, religion, national politics: any or all of these aspects of personal subjectivity can both unite and divide Cherokee citizens along different lines” (p. 210). Complexity defines identity.

Membership is another point of tension between those that are and are not considered members of different tribes. Both the Lumbee and Cherokee Nation require that a person trace back lineal descent of an enrolled member, but do not require a minimum blood quantum to be a member of their tribe, which makes for a different conversation and community from that of mine that require a certain blood quantum³. Membership rules are negotiated in conversations around “being authentic.” As Sturm (2002) points out, this lays into question “to what degree can multiracial individuals claim Native-American identity and still be considered socially ‘authentic’” (p. 3). It also leads her to question, “how much “racial blending” can occur before Native Americans

³ Blood quantum or blood is a term that people have used to scientifically talk about how much “Indian” a person has. A person’s blood quantum is configured by adding how much “blood” your biological mother and biological father have and dividing that by two.

cease to be identified as a distinct people, and what danger is posed to Native-American sovereignty and even continuity if the federal government continues to identify Native Americans on a racial instead of a cultural or more explicitly political basis” (p. 3).

Sturm (2002) argues that today, Cherokees see being Cherokee as more of a political identity and being Indian as a racial identity. She discusses how “many tribal members consider themselves to be nationally, politically, and socially Cherokee but not racially Indian” (p. 109). However, she acknowledges that “there is a racial subtext to both categories, since the national definition of Cherokee identity has a racial component” (p. 109).

This brings into conversation a legal identity which all of the scholars discuss. What makes Indian a legal status in the United States is the relationship that tribes have to state and federal governments. Garrouette (2003) explains,

both federal and state governments formally classify certain groups as “recognized” or “acknowledged” Indian tribes and invest them with specific rights and responsibilities not shared by other groups... By acknowledging a group of claimants as an Indian tribe, the federal government extends “government-to-government” relations to it, legally constituting that group as a sovereign power and as a “domestic dependent nation. (p. 25)

Grande (2004) adds that this legal status makes tribal identity different than other identities. She points out that sovereignty, treaty rights, dual citizenship, federal recognition, economic dependency, and reservations all “position American Indians in a unique and paradoxical relationship to the United States” (pp. 98-99).

Garrouette (2003) examines the different ways tribes use to determine membership. She shares that many people do not know that the tribes, not the government,

have the exclusive right to create their own legal definitions of identity and to do so in any way they choose. The most common tribal requirement for determining citizenship concerns “blood quantum,” or degree of Indian ancestry... About two-thirds of all federally recognized tribes of the coterminous United States specify a minimum blood quantum in their legal citizenship criteria, with one-quarter blood degree being the most frequent minimum requirement. The remained one-third of Indian tribes specify no minimum blood quantum. They often simply require that an enrollee be a lineal (direct) descendant of another tribal member. (p. 15)

Garrouette discusses other ways that tribes determine membership besides using blood quantum. Some tribes require maternal or paternal descent, others require members to meet certain yearly duties, and some require community participation and being voted on by the council (Garrouette, 2003). All of these are different ways that tribes determine their membership.

Garrouette (2003) explains that a legal definition of Indian identity is important because of the rights that Indian people have under the government. For example, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, and Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 are all laws that protect Indian

people. There are also “certain privileges” such as “ ‘Indian preference’ in federal employment” (p. 19) that acts as a right of Indian people.

What Can We Learn from These Scholars?

The conversation of Indian identity began long before these scholars started writing it down. Therefore, it is important to remember that this is an ongoing and ever-changing conversation that we are entering into it at this moment in time. Indian identity is complex and always changing. Lowery (2010) suggests, “Indian identity, then-indeed, all identity- is a historical process, not a fixed constant from which we measure change” (p. xii). Garrouette (2003) says, “even though one’s actual blood quantum obviously cannot change, the definition of identity that depends upon it can and does” (p. 53). Something that people often forget is that “identity is a practice that shifts over time to meet different needs, and it is constructed in layers so that a People can maintain some fundamental direction as it changes” (Lowery, 2010, p. 257).

These scholars ask teach us about the significance of legal definitions of being Indians. While I usually don’t give much thought to this consideration in day-to-day life as an Indian, this scholars challenge me to think about both the positives and negatives of legal definitions. Do we as Indian people use these legal definitions as the basis of our definitions on who we consider to be Indian? This seems to be giving colonial determinants more power than it should. Do we as Indian people really know the power that we have as nations? How do we exercise that power and what more could we do to have more power over our nations? With the government being a colonial entity, I wonder how much colonial influence is overtly and covertly combined with Indian people’s thoughts and carried out each day.

As scholars, Grande (2004) reminds us, “American Indian intellectuals must be careful, in their own assertions of what constitutes American Indian-ness, to avoid reenacting the divisive logic of colonialist domination- one that not only pits Indian against non-Indian, but also Indian against Indian and tribe against tribe” (p. 106). There are many dangers in doing research. When doing identity research, scholars must be careful not to make “checklists” or “images” of fixed identities, because as we know these identities are always adapting and changing. As scholars, we must be cautious to not assert an understanding, but rather should focus on recording stories as memories of experiences and not as absolute truths. Nevertheless, I cannot overstate the importance of documenting these stories for future generations. This requires careful consideration of how they are represented and shared.

After learning so much from each of these scholars, I reflect to see which scholars’ thoughts on identity can be used as a guide to understand Poarch Creek identity in the stories shared. I chose Lowery’s (2010) four layers of Native American identity: a People, race, tribe, and nation, as a framework to look at Poarch Creek identity throughout this dissertation. Because Lowery believes that identity is always changing, she has no concrete definition of each of these layers. However, she discusses what each of these layers mean to Native Americans by using historical data to show how the Robeson County Indian community develop as a People, race, and tribe (p. xvii).

Lowery (2010) uses the term “People” to talk about how Indians see themselves, and how they refer to members of their own group. “A People” is “a kinship identity defined by a shared place and history” (Lowery, 2010, p. 179). “Using People

acknowledges that Indians have a history and sense of self that goes back to before the colonial relationship that labeled us Indians, Native Americans, or Indigenous” (p. xxv).

Lowery (2010) discusses how race is a socially constructed category, separating Indians as a racial group different from Whites and African Americans. Among many things, she talks about how Indians used this distinction in race as a strategy for ways for Indians to distinguish themselves and preserve their identity as separate people (p. 35). Lowery makes a point to explain the differences between being “a socially acknowledged race” and a “legally recognized tribe” (p. 21). Lowery shares that Indian tribes are much more than a race. They are “acknowledged entities that had political structures and historical claims” (p. 21). Being a tribe “emerged from the process of recognition by governments” (p. 59). Lowery then discusses how discusses Indians all over the United States have adopted the word “nation” to portray their political identity. In the United States, Indians are citizens of their nations and the American nation (xviii).

Throughout chapters 4, 5, 6, and 8, I use Lowery’s four layers to guide me in the understanding of Poarch Creek identity. I provide additions or modifications based on Poarch Creeks’ experiences. Throughout these stories, you will hear how Poarch Creek people describe themselves as a family and community; a race; and a tribe and sovereign nation.

Conclusion

I provide this literature and what others say about Indians and their tribes to provide a context for the Poarch Creek story. Our tribe lives alongside others and under the control of the federal government, though as our own nation. Therefore, we live in all of this literature whether it is the world that we create for ourselves or the world that

others create for us. Through my research, I hope to show how our way of being Indian speaks with these stories and in unique ways that add to these stories.

The purpose of this dissertation is to collect and record oral histories from four generations⁴ of four Poarch Creek families to understand more about what it means and has meant to be Poarch Creek today and in the past, or the change and continuity of Poarch Creek identity over time. The remaining chapters in the dissertation aim to do just this. This story is continued in Chapter 2 with the design of the project, collection of the stories, and telling of the stories. The following chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 will walk you through the history of the Poarch Creeks, told by Poarch Creeks. Chapter 3 will provide you with a context of the tribe including a brief history and description of location from past to present. Chapter 4, 5, 6, and 7 are generation stories told by each generation about their lives as Poarch Creek people. Chapter 8 is a Conclusions chapter that discusses what is told in each of the generation chapters and examines Indian identity more broadly. Chapter 9 ends with the future generations, what they have inherited as well as stories of what all generations wish for the future generations of Poarch Creeks and the tribe as a whole. Each of these chapters helps understand the overall change and continuity of Poarch Creek identity from one generation to another.

⁴ I define generation as the time frame between a parent and a child, which in these families is anywhere from 19 to 34 years.

ENGAGING MYSELF, ENGAGING MY TRIBE

When I thought about how to design this research, I knew that the more generations I could talk with, the more stories we could record and the longer period of time we could try to understand. I began brainstorming with my family about different families that we knew to see how many generation that each of the families had. We discovered that many of the elders had passed away, leaving most families with three living generations. When thinking about families with four generations, we realized that they were often part of the same family, having the same Great-Grandmother or Great-Grandfather. Therefore, this would not give us enough different perspectives. Therefore, I decided to only allow one family branching off from one great-grandparent, unless others wanted to participate and then we would combine their stories still only making them represent one family. In order to give all families an opportunity to participate, I put a write-up in our our tribe's newsletter to ask for volunteers and within two months two families had contacted me. The next few months consisted of informal discussions with my advisor, friends, family, and tribal members about the dissertation to get their opinions and thoughts.

It was Spring Break 2010. A full year had passed since my first conversation with my Dad about doing a project on what it means to be a “21st century Indian”. I was going home again for the week. While I was there I really focused on this project by talking

with tribal members, family, and of course my Dad to get their thoughts. Everyone was excited and immediately began helping me think of families with four generations that could be part of this story. Because our tribe is so small – a little over 3,000 people – and most people live in or around Poarch⁵ and have for most of their life, everyone knows everyone so multiple people identified the same families. From these discussions, I made lists of families with four generations that people had identified, but waited to see if anyone else would contact me before I started asking families to volunteer. Sure enough, in April I received a phone call from another family to volunteer, giving me a total of three families.

In May 2010, after school had gotten out for the semester I was so excited to be driving home to see the family I had not seen in a few months, the longest time I'd spent away from them-- ever. A friend from school in North Carolina was driving with me to visit my hometown for the first time. This is one of my best friends, so I was super excited. I was also extremely nervous for her to come. Nervous because, while she is a very accepting person and open to different cultures, she was still a White person with little background or interactions with Indians other than myself. She was entering into my world and I didn't know what that would look like. While our intentions were to start my dissertation work, we spent the week exploring Poarch and the surrounding area, visiting with family and friends, eating lots of good food, and attending tribal elections and my family reunion. At this family reunion, I talked with another family that

⁵ See Appendix 1 for a map of Poarch in relation to the United States and Southeast. See Appendix 2 for a map of the Poarch community.

volunteered to share their stories with me, making a total of 4 families that have volunteered to talk with me.

Throughout the week as my friend would ask questions, I was able to think about what she didn't know about and what she was trying to understand. I also thought about my explanations to her questions. All of these things helped me think about ways to explain my town and tribe to an outside audience for my dissertation. As she pointed out things that were specifically Poarch Creek-- symbols on flags and street signs, the casino, and billboards-- I began thinking about what I had learned in the academy about how to make the familiar unfamiliar to understand a setting that is home.

While my friend was in town we talked about many things, but the conversations that stood out the most were those about me being Indian and about Poarch as a tribe and a community. I have to admit, some of her questions were very hard emotionally because I had to question and respond to questions about things I know, don't know, or have been raised all of my life doing. It seemed more of a formal process of having to judge whether that was right or wrong instead of just explaining something to her as a friend. However, what I didn't realize at the time was that her questions and our conversations really helped prepare me to get in the mindset of asking questions, and "doing research" at home. From then on, I began paying attention to everything in Poarch, the local town, and surrounding communities to try and see things that I often take for granted. I began to pay attention to the divisions between town and the surrounding communities, the Poarch signs that are posted everywhere, the Poarch symbols that are on all of the street signs, billboards, and many other things that I see all of the time but never really pay attention to.

After my friend left, I thought that I had settled in at home and knew that I wanted to start setting up interviews. My plans were to interview or have conversations with each person three times throughout the summer and fall. I split the interview guides⁶ into three separate topics 1) Who are you? 2) What about the tribe? 3) Indian identity. Throughout these three interviews I planned to talk with each person to learn more about them and their family; their stories of tribal events, history, tradition, culture, changes, and continuity over time; and their thoughts on how they see themselves, Indians, and Poarch Creeks today. My intention in choosing these specific questions/topics was to help the tribe record this moment in history as well as to elicit stories that happened before this time. I wanted to learn more about what it means and has meant to be Poarch Creek and how that has changed and been maintained over time. I wanted these to be conversations around these topics told as their stories and experiences and not them only answering interview questions that I had made up.

Though I had a plan, my anxiety slowly began building and unexpectedly I froze up when I started thinking about “doing research”. I felt something that I never thought I would... I was having a hard time with the idea of “doing research” on my family. This went on for about three weeks. Fortunately, I was able to take a break and talk with family and friends about all of my anxiety. I was frustrated and tried to convince myself that everything was going to be okay and I needed to just get started. After a few weeks and many conversations, I had gained enough courage to begin scheduling and doing interviews.

⁶ See Appendix 3 for interview guides.

After reflecting on my first interview, I realized the academy had taught me well. I had been trained to be a “good researcher.” So good that all of the things I learned about research that I didn't think were culturally appropriate or appropriate for my community, I found myself doing. In that moment I realized this was one of the reasons why I was so nervous and had a hard time getting started doing research at home. I wanted to change the way research was done by doing it the way our community does and just have conversations with people. I was very disappointed in myself and couldn't believe I had really sat down to interview an elder and did just that. I asked the questions on the interview guide, only varying a little, and remained in control of the conversation at all times. However, I did not give this woman who I respect dearly, space to tell the stories she wanted to tell and guide the conversation where she wanted it to go. I was so disappointed in myself for doing this and hated that I was now being the “researcher and scholar” that I had longed to avoid. I had done research ON a person and not WITH my tribe. After much reflection, I knew something had to change in my conversations because this was not my plan and was not how I wanted these conversations to go.

The next week, as I sat in my Grandmother's living room, I talked with her about what happened in this first interview and my hesitations with doing the next interview. My Grandmother listened as always, talked with me about some of my worries, and gave me the confidence to continue. She essentially validated me to continue this research and gave me the push I needed to keep going. She made the next step and probably the hardest for me. Because the next person I was going to talk with was one of her friends, she called and set up the interview for me. During the phone conversation, the elder invited my Grandmother and I to come over one afternoon, so she agreed to go with me.

That same week, my Grandmother and I went to this elder's home, where we were greeted and invited in by an amazing woman and her daughter. As we sat in her living room, my Grandmother led the conversation by catching up on what's been going on and then began asking questions and talking about experiences they had growing up. I remember thinking and feeling all of my nervousness and worries disappear, and at that moment I realized this is the feeling of community that I wanted in all of my conversations. Though I had an interview guide and we referred to it every once in a while, the five hour long conversation was carried by one story after another and the questions that each of us four women had for each other, making this conversation more of a group of women talking and reminiscing on the past and recording it for the future. The four of us had created an atmosphere of knowledge and memory sharing.

During the conversation and as I drove to my house, I couldn't help but smile because I was so excited from learning all of this new information and hearing stories from the past that I had never heard before. While that was part of my smile, the other part was that I was so excited about how the conversation went and honored to be one of the people that these stories were shared with. I not only heard the stories and information but I saw the relationships and emotions between these three women that represented the Poarch Creek community many years ago and are still alive today. This environment was familiar and what I wanted for my future conversations. It is hard to explain, but these three women, particularly my Grandmother, showed me how to do things in a "Poarch Creek" way. This conversation went almost opposite of my first interview and more like the conversations I was used to. I am not a stranger to this community, so why was I putting distance between me and the first interviewee and not

embracing the relationship that I had with this woman? I know it had to do with me “doing research” but what I don’t know is why I reverted back to doing things in the academy’s way, forgetting the way I have been raised sitting in living rooms and on front porches with friends and family of all ages, talking about issues, and listening to stories. I am forever indebted to these women for reminding me that this is how it is supposed to be.

I was overjoyed that this conversation was followed with similar conversations throughout the summer whether it was one person or multiple people talking with me about topics, the past, and the future. These conversations were so natural and the way I have always had conversations with people in my community. From my 2nd interview on, my “research process” became much like everyday life in our community. I must admit that not all interviews/conversations were as “conversational” because ultimately everyone knew that I was doing a dissertation and wanted to help provide me with any information that I needed. However, I never went back to the way that I did the first interview by only asking questions and never allowing time for other stories. All interviews were different-- some being mainly conversations around topics and others being conversations around the interview questions.

Since the beginning of this project, my goal has been to do collaborative research where I work WITH my tribe to do my dissertation for them. After taking “a class” from Poarch Creeks of all generations in how to do research in a Poarch Creek way, this project had been transformed from doing Academia's research with the Poarch Creek to doing Poarch Creek research and sharing it with Academia. This has now become a

project appropriated for, by, and with the tribe for the academy... not the other way around.

From June 2010 to March 2011, I spent lots of time talking with people, living and participating at home in my community. I spent five months from May 2010 to September 2010, and then returned for two or more weeks at a time every month from October 2010 to March 2011. Together we recorded oral history conversations. Every day I learned much that I didn't know. While I originally planned to talk with each person three times, schedules and time did not always allow for that. I talked with each person as many times as possible, whether that be one interview for multiple hours or multiple interviews over a range of time. In total, I spent 60 or more hours talking with 18 members⁷ of these four families.

There are a few things that you should know about these 18 men and women⁸. When I started this project, I didn't realize that I had narrowly defined family as being biologically related, which were not my intentions because I know families are different. However, when I talked with each of the families that volunteered, they determined the people I should talk with in their family and they happened to all be biologically related. Secondly, as I was recruiting families, the criteria I had was for them to be part of a Poarch Creek family of four living generations. I am defining a Poarch Creek family as a family that has at least one Poarch Creek person that is on the tribal roll; however, all families had all generations on the tribal roll except for generation four. The reason that some people in generation 4 weren't on the tribal roll is because we require a minimum

⁷ See Appendix 4 for duration of interviews.

⁸ See Appendix 5 for demographics of families.

of ¼ blood quantum to be an enrolled member of our tribe, and some of these children in generation four had less than ¼ blood quantum. I talked with the people in each family that volunteered. All meetings were set up for wherever the person chose, whether that be their home, in a restaurant, at work, or in summer programs.

In one family I was only able to talk with two generations because of the inability to coordinate schedules. However, I felt it was only appropriate to include the first two generation's stories and hope to include the others as I continue this work. Given this is a tribal story, I could not exclude voices for technical reasons. In another family, I talked more than one person in each generation: two people in the first two generations and 3 siblings in the last generation. In the last generation there were rarely people that had more than one child over the age of seven.

The demographics of the people I interviewed included four males and fourteen females, all identifying as Poarch Creek, ranging in age from 7 to 90 years old. There was a mixture of reasons why I talked with mostly Indian women. Of these fourteen women, three of their spouses had passed away and three of their spouses were not Indian, making them the only Poarch Creek person of their generation living in their family. Five of these women didn't have spouses, two of their spouses didn't talk with me for various reasons, and I spoke with one couple together. Two of the men I talked with were the only Poarch Creek parent in their immediate family, and the other was a child that of course wasn't married.

They are all amazing men and women that have taught me more than I could ever describe. The time I have spent with these people is invaluable and the stories that I have heard are fascinating. I feel like such a lucky person to now have these memories to pass

down to future generations to come. After talking with each of these men and women, for many reasons we decided not to use their real names and instead they gave themselves a fake name to protect their identity. However, we decided to use the real names of people that have passed away that were included in their stories as well as leaders in the tribe, all which should be recognized as a piece of this history.

Descriptions

Family has always been part of this dissertation; therefore, I felt it would be best to ask people's families to help me describe them. The families were able to describe them a lot better than I could, so I felt it was only right to ask them to help with this process.

Generation One. The people encompassing generation one are Mae, Maybell, Bernie, Doris, and Geronimo. Mae, which many refer to as "Big Granny," was born in 1920 and is 90 years old today. Her great-granddaughter describes her as "strong willed, an amazing woman of god, and determined. When she wants to do something she doesn't let anything get in the way of her accomplishing what she wants to accomplish." Mae is an amazing woman filled with so much history and life.

Maybell was born in 1926 and is 84 years old today. Maybell is a family woman that talks about her Kids, Grandkids, and Great-Grandkids all of the time. She is a very caring, knowledgeable, and independent woman. Her granddaughter described her as "a very straight forward lady, a very proud women who loves the lord. She is my hero." While Maybell loves to be with and around people she often keeps to herself in crowds, and reserves most of her talking to small groups of her friends or family.

Bernie was born in 1929 and is 81 years old today. Her granddaughter describes her “Granny” as

one of the most giving people that I know. If families in the community were in crisis, she would be one of the first people to respond with whatever support she could give. Granny has always been very understanding and passive (she has become a little more aggressive in her older years). She holds a very huge piece of my heart because she helped take care of me and my sister when we were growing up.

Bernie is such a friendly person that truly cares about others.

Geronimo was also born in 1929, making him 81 years old today. “Papa” is a very loving and generous person that is known by everyone in the community. In his granddaughter’s words,

before Papa got sick, he would always go around and check on people to just talk or give them vegetables out of his garden. He is a very hardworking, dedicated, strong-willed man that has truly had a hard life and has worked for everything him and his has ever had. He appreciates everything in life, doesn’t taken anything for granted, and never gives up. He is also a very fun-loving and playful person that loves to dance, walk, and spend time with his family. He is a supportive and encouraging man of wisdom that many kids and adults talk with and look up to.

Doris was born in 1936 and in March celebrated her 75th birthday with a huge community party. All of her grandkids and great-grandkids call her “Mamaw.” A friend described her personality as “gregarious and friendly, immediately adopting strangers as family. She is always surrounded by family and her place often serves as the gathering

spot for many people to come together.” Her granddaughter says, “she always wants to know what’s going on with everybody and while she can not physically get around like she used to, she checks on her family and people in the community all of the time with the phone that sits beside her rocking chair.” Her house is filled with pictures which she shows proudly to anyone that graces the door. A friend says, “she has silvery hair that spirals on her head into a bun and has an affinity for sweets. Her voice is strong like her personality and her strength carries through the family.”

Generation Two. Their children, which make up generation two are Rachel, Laura, Mary, Arlie, and Jimmy. Rachel was born in 1943 and is 67 years old today. Rachel’s granddaughter says, “Granny, one word that would describe everything about her would be a giver. Granny does for everyone and does not ask or expect anything in return. She is an amazing person to be around, always happy, smiling, and full of the good things in life.” Every day, Rachel takes care of her Mother and grandchildren and loves to work in the garden. Rachel is “a woman of God.” She is very involved in her church and praises God in all aspects of her life.

Laura was also born in 1943 and is 67 years old today. Laura’s is a very kind-hearted person that truly loves children. Laura’s friend shared,

She has worked with children all of her life both at Head Start and in church. She loves history and has so many pictures, family trees, newspaper clippings, and any artifacts that she can collect about the tribe’s history. I learn so much from her every time we talk. She is a very talented person whether that is with patchwork, drawing, beadwork, or cooking. She loves church and loves taking trips with the

church. Laura is a very laid back and easygoing woman that is kind, loving, and always welcoming.

Mary was born in 1950 and is 61 years old today. Mary loves to be around people, but is a very quiet person that often times keeps to herself. Mary's daughter described her as

a very hard working individual. She was a single mother of two daughters and married for the first time when I was 12. My mother was not very affectionate but I always knew that I could call on her if ever I faced a difficult situation. She taught me to be strong and independent. She loves to watch TV and read books and she does not like to drive.

Mary loves to spend time with her friends and family.

Arlie was born in 1957 and is 53 years old today. Arlie is a very caring, supportive, and loving person that values family and the people in her life. Her niece describes her as

a very caring person that takes care of so many different people as if they were her family. She is a family person and most every night after work her house is filled with faces of people visiting, eating, or just sitting around talking. She loves going on vacations and trips with large groups of people. She loves kids and loves to cook. Arlie is very talkative and loves to be in the middle of the conversation but is a very shy person around people she doesn't know.

Arlie is a woman that loves with all of her heart. She is always doing for others.

Jimmy was born in 1959 and is 51 years old today. He has been very involved in the tribe throughout all of his life. Jimmy's daughter describes him as,

a very hardworking and dedicated man that loves the tribe, tribal politics, his family, and his business. He is a very wise man that has so much knowledge, knowledge that extends beyond books. My Dad truly cares about so many people and is always willing to help each of them. He never meets a stranger and would do anything for his family. He is a very fun, loving, trustworthy, ambitious, and dependable person.

Generation Three. The Grandchildren, who make up generation three, are Rose, James, and Ana. Rose is a pretty reserved woman that upholds high morals and loves God. Rose is a very friendly person. In Rose you can see both her Mother and Grandmother's love for the Lord, value of family, care for the community, which is also passed down to her daughter. Rose is a family person that truly values every dinner, get-together, conversations, hug, and event that involves her family.

James was born in 1975 and is 35 years old today. Many see him as a very reserved person that keeps to himself and his family. His cousin describes him as a family man that takes care of his family, wife, and children. On the one hand he keeps to himself and can be described as very protective, reserved, and cautious. On the other hand he is fun to be around and has a dry sense of humor. He is a very giving person that cares and is considerate of others. He is an amazing cook! James is a person of few words, but many intelligent thoughts.

Ana was born in 1980 and is 30 years old. Ana take up so much time with her family and the children of our tribe. Her sister describes her as a very intelligent and talented person, especially with beadwork and basketry. She is one of the hardest working people I know and strives to do the very best job

possible. We are very good friends who communicate well with each other. Our interests and tastes are very much alike.

Ana is a very dedicated person. She is always looking and planning for the future.

Generation Four. Last are the Great-Grandchildren in generation four: Bailey, Chase, Nat, Cinderella, and Nicole. Bailey is 12 years old and was born in 1998. Bailey's friend said she, "loves to talk and is a leader, always wanting to be in control. She is very responsible and mature for her age. She loves her family and God. She looks up to her older cousins and brother."

Chase is 11 years old and was born in 1999. Chase is a lot like his Dad, very reserved, quiet, soft spoken, and shy most of the time, especially in front of people.

Chase's cousin said,

he is brilliant and has so many deep thoughts, amazing me every time we have a conversation. He is a gifted student with many artistic capabilities, and loves to draw. He has a passion and willingness to learn things that he is interested in.

Nat is 10 years old and was born in 2002. Nat is a family person, always wanted to spend time with others and caring about others. Nat's cousin describes her as,

a character and when I say that I mean she is an entertainer whether that is telling jokes and stories or singing. She is talkative, loves attention, and loves giving others attention. She loves 80s music, the Black Eyed Peas, and fashion. She is a very sweet and loveable person. She is very independent and firm in her beliefs, knowing how to stand up to others.

Cinderella, a name which she chose herself and describes her looks and demeanor quite appropriately, is 7 years old and was born in 2003. Her cousins describe her as "a

beautiful and sweet girl. She is entertaining, energetic, and imaginative. She is shy at times and very talkative at others. She is so caring and full of life.”

Nicole is also 7 years old and was born in 2003. Nicole’s aunt describes her as “very talented and one of the most beautiful babies I have ever laid eyes on. She loves to help in the kitchen.” Nicole is very smart, outgoing, and friendly person. She loves to draw, ride horses, and dance at powwows.

Observations

From May to September as I was doing interviews and observations, I was living in the community as usual, but also “doing research” and often “reflecting” on many emotional stories I was told. Because there are so many activities and events going on in the summer, I was able to attend softball and baseball games for all ages, tribal elections, the tribe's annual celebration, family functions, summer programs, cultural classes, and many other informal and formal events in our tribe and community.

Throughout the year there were many other events I attended such as cultural classes for children and adults, church services, family gatherings, community events, schools, school sporting events, birthday parties, and our tribe’s annual powwow; which are things that I would normally be part of when I am living there. I estimate that I have spent well over 150 hours in informal conversations, observations, and participant observations⁹ not including the time I spent on more with formal conversations/interviews.

Because I am part of the community, I do not find it appropriate to sit down and formally observe and take notes about what people are doing, so I decided that I would

⁹ See Appendix 6 for observation guide.

mainly do participant observations. In doing participant observations, I was part of the community and community events, and recorded any important things that I saw in each event as they occurred, describing each event that I attended, and writing down any information from informal conversations I had so that I could get a more representative picture of things happening. After the event, I went home, wrote up notes, and reflected on my thoughts, writing down any questions that I had. Throughout the chapters, I use these observations and informal conversations to add to the stories, filling in holes and offering different perspectives that give us a more representative picture of what's happening within our tribe today.

Analysis

When determining how I would tell this story, I went through many processes. I knew that I wanted the community to tell their story and did not want to be the overarching voice or speak for them. Though I realize these are stories constructed between community members and me, these stories are their memories, which I will share in their words.

After talking with my mentors, we decided to tell the stories in the structure of families. However we quickly realized that didn't work. Telling the stories in four different generations turned out to be a more workable structure. This would not only provide a history of each generation but would also provide a variety of perspectives. The people I spoke with in generation one were born from 1920 to 1936, generation two were born from 1943 to 1959, generation three were born from the mid 1960s to the mid 1980s, and generation four were born from 1998 to 2003, although it is clear that the inheritance of the three generations will affect the generation for many more years.

I began by transcribing, coding, and creating a timeline of stories for each generation. After compiling chronologically the generation stories, we tried a few different ways to analyze and tell the stories. At that point, I took the stories and structure of what I had back to the community to get their opinion.

Returning to the Community

In talking with my committee, we decided that I would return all of what I have written to the people in my dissertation and talk with them to get their opinions and concerns. In qualitative research this is referred to as member checking, but Poarch Creeks see this as respect. It is a sign of respect to share with people what I have done with their words and to give them a say in changing, adding to, deleting, or doing whatever they want with their words. Though this is something I knew from the beginning I would do, I never thought I'd be so nervous doing it. Among many things, I was really worried what they would say about how I used their words to represent the tribe and history. I mean if you think about it: I am writing a group's history and even though it's told with other's stories, in the end I have the control in choosing which stories to tell, putting everything together, and writing the story up.

I shared the history, generation stories, and future chapters with everyone in different ways. I met with four of the five people in the first generation around my Grandmother's kitchen table at lunchtime over pizza and sodas. I shared with them the structure of my dissertation, some of the stories from their generation, and questions I had or points I needed more information or clarification on. I had such a good time talking with everyone and unexpectedly it was a great opportunity for the people in this generation to spend time together and talk about past times. My Grandmother said, "we

don't get together much so it was really good to get to spend time with them and talk with them." One of the women's daughters told me that night; "brother really enjoyed talking with y'all today."

In talking with generation two, I learned that three of the people loved to read. Therefore, I chose to print out a copy of what I had written for the chapters: tribal history, generation two, and the future and delivered them to each one of them. Similarly I did the same thing with generation three. Because all of these men and women work, have a computer, and are very busy, the best way to get their feedback was to email each person a copy of the chapters on tribal history, the future, and generation three. I got email responses, had informal conversations, and had more formal conversations to get people's thoughts and feedback. Per some people's requests, I corrected their stories so that they would be more grammatically correct, but made sure to keep it as close to the original as possible. I chose not to take these stories back to generation four for their feedback, but plan to do so at a later time.

Structure of Story

With the feedback I received, I decided to include this section in the chapter. Throughout this dissertation, I will narrate, but their words will tell the story of our tribe's history. Many told me that reading these stories may be difficult to people not used to the language and dialect within them. In the quotations, sentences may be partial, may not be grammatically correct, and may have different words, but these are the voices of my people and are the ones that should be passed on. If you listen to their voices you can learn about the place, people, and time period these stories are about.

The structure of the chapters is different than many other texts. Because this is a story told by people, there will be lots of quotations as it takes a lot of people to tell a tribe's history, generation stories, and future wishes. I interpret each of these generations as having one main story that is told, and in doing so, passed down to the next generation. While there are many of the same themes throughout the generations, I structure each generation chapter so that it will tell the story of what is being passed down to the next generation. Generations two, three, four, and the future inherit all of the things passed down from the previous generations and then use those things in their lives and history. I will use a basket as a metaphor to explain this process. It is a fitting metaphor for our tribe, and one others see as representative.

I came to this metaphor this spring when I was sitting in a presentation about a museum that the tribe is in the process of designing and building. The museum design firm used the metaphor of a basket to describe our tribe and it's history. They shared, the history of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians is very much like a basket. It started out as one Creek Nation and was ripped apart by things such as wars, the government, and removal. However, y'all remained as a cohesive community that was a forgotten part of the Creek Nation. The tribe has many leaders that's names have been talked about, however there are also many names of community members that were vital parts of the community that are not mentioned. A basket is made up of small strands of material and woven together it makes a strong and solid basket. Each strand represents a person in the community that has worked hard to help

build the tribe that you have today, a very strong, united and unbreakable nation.

I will use the basket as a metaphor specifically to help us understand Poarch Creek identity. Just as making a basket is a process, identity is a lifelong process, ongoing and always changing. I will use the basket as a metaphor for what each generation has added and passed down to the next generation. One of the reasons for choosing this metaphor is that in a basket there are many strands that are of equal importance and play a role in making up the overall basket. Another is that the interwovenness of the basket is what creates the strength and holds it together. In our community, there are many people that play a role in the history and together they have accomplished so much.

In a basket, many different strands are woven across and alongside one another overtime. Shape is given with meaning, utility, and aesthetics in mind. Though a basket is a finished product, identity is not. Everyone in this story is still living, lives are always changing, and stories are being created. While the materials, the process, and design of baskets may be the same, no one basket is the same. The maker, conditions under which it is made, purpose, and end product are different.

Throughout these stories, each of the generations together weaves on the Poarch Creek basket new material with the influence of the generations that came before them. The frame of the basket was built many generations before any of these generations were born. However, this is the basket that generation one inherits and begins weaving their strands of material into. Through the history of our tribe you will see that there are many lost Creek traditions and arts that our tribe is diligently working to revive. I use the

metaphor of basketmaking similarly. With it I take my role in creating this story of Poarch Creek identity. Together we are creating the basket that the future will inherit.

I will end each generation chapter with an interpretation based on Lowery's four layers of Native American identity: a People, place, tribe, and nation. I will also discuss any additions or modifications to these layers based on Poarch Creek experiences. These interpretations and conclusions will be written for children who inherit this identity and culture in the current generation. A conclusion chapter will follow all of the generation chapters, providing an overview of the change and continuity of Poarch Creek identity and how this story contributes to the larger story of Indian identity. I will end the dissertation with a discussion of what the future generation is inheriting from the previous generations as well as the wishes of the four generations for a fifth generation.

THE HISTORY OF THE POARCH BAND OF CREEK INDIANS

There is a history to the Poarch Band of Creek Indians that is inscribed in both text and story. I weave these together in this chapter to start the basket. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians is a segment of the original Creek Nation that avoided removal in the Trail of Tears. We have previously been referred to as the Creek Nation East of the Mississippi and are now The Poarch Band of Creek Indians. In 1984, we were federally recognized making us the only federally recognized tribe in the state of Alabama to date. Our reservation is located in the small community of Poarch in south Alabama and there are currently over 3,000 enrolled tribal members.

Community

Today when we talk about Poarch, we are talking about the tribe and one collective Poarch community. However, everyone over the age of 40 describes Poarch as three Indian communities: Poarch Switch, Hog Fork, and Hedapeada (Head of Perdido). Geographically these communities are located with “Headapeada on County Road 1; Poarch Switch, 2/3 miles northeast of Headapeada; and Hog Fork, one mile east of Poarch Switch” (Authority, 2009, p. 2). The woods or what people call the “thicket” surrounding each community, kept them separate and limited daily communication. Laura said, “this community (Hedapeada), Poarch, and Hog Fork was the heart of the

Creek people.” Maybell added, “Hedapeada was the headquarters.” Jimmy shared, “everything happened in Hedapeada. If it happened, it happened in Hedapeada or it didn’t happen. They had council meetings, had public meetings, and had the powwow, all up there. Everything was centered around the school house.”

If you were to drive through Poarch today, you would never know these three communities were once separate, because they are adjacent to one another and connected by roads. Also, if you didn’t know to look for a tribe and reservation you may not notice that one is there. Poarch is a small community with tribal facilities, housing complexes, houses, churches, sports fields, roads, a gymnasium, a casino, and fields of crops such as corn, cotton, and peanuts. There are two exits off of Interstate 65 that will take you to Poarch... one exit where the tribal headquarters and facilities are located and another exit where the casino is. Over the interstate at both exits is an overpass, which often serves as an unofficial marker of where Poarch starts and ends.

Many people described our tribe today in similar words to Ana’s, it’s the only federally recognized tribe in Alabama. So, we’re still fairly young ‘cause we’ve only been recognized since ’84. How old does that make us? 26. And that we are the remnants of the original Creek Nation that avoided removal and pretty much lost all of our cultural ways, but are fighting every day to regain it and have within the last about four years really focused hard on reviving lost arts and language and life ways in general.

A twelve-year-old girl describes Poarch as located “about forty-five minutes from Mobile, about an hour from Pensacola, about thirty minutes from Bay Minette, and about thirty minutes from Brewton.” Bailey goes on to say, “that’s just a location, but I’d

explain it as family, ‘cause we’re pretty much all related down here.” Rose expands on Poarch as a family:

even though we’re all tribal members, I can say we branch off from just about the same families. I remember looking at a family tree the other day and it was on Granny’s side, her Daddy’s family. And somebody said, they don’t have a family tree, they only have vines because they’re all intertwined.

Jimmy goes even further to talk about the tribe as the structure that families are part of.

It’s like the tribe is your Mother and Father and they take care of you and it’s still just one big family.... The tribe is a family and the tribe takes care of the other families, so you feel connected to a bunch of people.

James describes how the fact that being such a close group of people living in the same area, everyone is “very inter-connected, lots of relationships, either family, friend, enemy, whatever.” Though this often has benefits making everyone a really close family, there are also “all the dynamics that go with that.” James said the changes he has seen over the years with this is that

used to, you were dependent on each other just to survive and helped each other out a lot. Now, I think, it’s really neck and neck, and I think because there is so much to be had. Now, I think that the connections are really tainted with jealousy or feelings of exclusion or preference, usually big extremes. And everything in this little society is really magnified from what it would be on the outside...

because everything is so personal... It’s small... it’s like the fish in the barrel kind of thing, very concentrated... for some people, it’s hard to have been away and know what it’s like out in the real world.

As James shares, communities are made of many different people, and Poarch is no exception. Most people describe the Poarch using the words love, home, tribe, community, and family. Each generation's history is part of the larger tribal history. Jimmy shared, in generation two,

we fought for federal recognition and while it may have happened in the lives of the next generation, it is a privilege they grew up with whereas for our generation it was something we fought for... For the current generation, the creek is something they can say is theirs because we bought it when they were growing up so that's what they know. Casinos are this time. There are lots of kids programs and better facilities which all comes from gaming money.

Tribal History

Though we all know the history of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians began before the 1900s, the starting point for this story is based on the memories of these men and women as children and adults. Therefore, while I acknowledge that this is only a piece of our tribe's history, I will use it as the place of origin for this story. As stories were told of our tribe's history, many people talked about federal recognition. While we acknowledge this is not all of our tribe's history, the fight for federal recognition and then being a federally recognized tribe is the history of the tribe while these people were living. As the four Native American scholars: Garrouette, Lowery, Sturm, and Grande each attested, legal status plays a large role in Indian history, and my tribe is no exception.

Federal Recognition Process

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians was granted federal recognition in 1984 when the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) declared them an Indian tribe. However, the fight for federal recognition began long before then. The first chief that people remember is Fred Walker. Everyone told me, “he called himself a chief. I don’t know if anybody recognized him as being a chief.” Parades (1979) shares, “in 1951, Calvin McGhee was elected permanent chairman of the “council” of the Eastern Creek organization” (pp. 136-137). Everyone acknowledges Calvin McGhee as the chief and tribal leader that fought for tribal rights on a local and national level until he died in 1970.

Everyone also acknowledges a teacher, Miss Grace Kay Mays who found out about federal recognition in “a newspaper article about the 1946 legislation which established the U.S. Indian Claims Commission and the right of American Indians to sue the Government for payment for lands taken from their ancestors” (Authority, 2009).

Doris said

now that old woman started diggin... buddy she fought for the Indians. And she is the one that started this... she found it in that paper. She’s the one that started this getting on the roll and federal recognized and all that. That one woman done that... she was a teacher up there, and she was like a principal and a teacher too, she was over this school up here, and she found it and she worked with Calvin, and that’s when we started, started digging into it. And she knowed there were Indians and everything and she started with the tribe, working, and she’s the one that started it... we would have meetings and everything.

Mae added, “Roselle and Thompson were lawyers that helped Calvin and the tribe with federal recognition stuff. They all saw that Indian kids didn’t get benefits that they needed and that others got.”

This idea of federal recognition was a dream. Mary shared, “way back then when federal recognition was first starting... it wasn’t a big deal.” As a child Mary doesn’t remember much. She shared, “it didn’t really mean a whole lot to me like it does now.” While federal recognition meant many different things to different people, everyone echoed that they knew “you had to get federally recognized though where you could get some money to get something built.” Arlie added,

I remember when we were growing up, that’s all they thought about was getting federal recognition where we could get all the benefits like the other tribes did. Our community was real religious, they prayed about it to try to get federal recognition where we could get benefits for people, like a health clinic and stuff like that. That was a big thing, to get federal recognition.

As a teenager, Rose remembers a conversation about federal recognition between her and her aunt. She shared,

she said if we get federal recognition then that means that money goes into the tribe as a whole and we wouldn’t individually get the money. That they have more benefits. I was little, I was in my teens by that time we had this conversation but I remember what federal recognition was supposed to mean.

The process of becoming a federally recognized tribe took lots of time and money. However, during this time period the community didn’t have much money. Mae shared, “I know one thing, (Calvin) wouldn’t even have a making of coffee. He had to

near about go up to Mothers and get a making of coffee. That was back when it was poor and hard times.”

Everyone told stories of how the community worked together to raise money to make sure that Calvin could go to Washington to represent the tribe and fight for federal recognition. The story everyone in the first and second generation told was,

we used to have cookouts and make up money for Calvin to go to Washington.

The community would be involved in that. We did that a lot. We sold it to anybody that came by to buy it, but the community mostly bought it.

Arlie added, “we used to cook a lot of plates and sell a lot of plates, make money... Indians and churches and stuff like that.”

This money that the community raised sent Calvin on many trips to Washington, DC. Arlie shared, “Calvin went many a times to Washington. That man did a lot of stuff to get us federal recognition and get us on the roll and all that stuff.” Mae added, Calvin would go “on an old paperwood truck to go to Washington.” Calvin was the leader and the face of our tribe, but often times many other people went with him. Mae remembers “Mother went a time or two with him up there.” When Calvin came back from Washington, Mae shared,

there would be lots of people always... they’d always come down to Brother Calvin’s house wanting to see when he’d go back to Washington if they was on roll, if their name was on roll. He had boxes and boxes of books where he would sign up people... a lot of people would come down to his house and talk with him... I know there’s a good many of ‘em that used to come down to Brother

Calvin's. I mean, he was busy. There was somebody there all the time. Brother Calvin's house was just busy as it could be, trying to help someone.

Mary shared, the tribe, "it was nothing like it is now. It was just mostly Calvin and Anna. I think Granddaddy helped some too. They were going around to get people to sign up so they could go to Washington with the names." Doris remembers when she, "first signed up I guess... 1955, I reckon. When they were signing up people to get federal recognized. In the old school house, they started in the Pickerall house that's where they signed em up." The younger part of generation two, the people in their 50s today, remember as Jimmy does,

we've always been on the roll, 'cause Calvin McGhee, when he went to Washington, and the papers coming around, we all had to fill out stuff. We got put on the roll 'cause... that's why we got such low roll numbers. We were one of the first ones... we were put on the roll when it first was a roll. We were in the 500's, so at that time there was probably 1,000, 1,500 people signed up at the most.

Calvin devoted his life trying to get others to recognize that we were an Indian tribe and that there were still Indians left in Alabama. Mae shared, "Calvin died in 1970." Maybell added, Calvin's son

Houston was the Chief after Calvin died... Houston did it for a while and then he just resigned. He said I don't know what I'm doing. All day, all he would do was sign papers, sign papers. And they said it got above his head and he couldn't handle it... so he just volunteered to quit.

Though Calvin wasn't alive to see his hard work, things began to progress for the tribe. "In 1971 the council incorporated as the Creek Nation East of the Mississippi" (Parades, 1979). In the 1970s, an anthropologist named Anthony "Tony" Parades came to Poarch to do research. He recorded interviews and observations from many people that are not alive today, preserving history that had not been officially recorded anywhere. All of his research was used in our petition for federal recognition. Many people in the community have much respect for Tony. As Maybell shares, "that man, he's the one that helped the Indians. Tony Parades."

One of the community's main events was started in 1971, the annual Thanksgiving Day powwow. Maybell shared that the powwow got started with "Houston McGhee and them I reckon. They built a little old log place, log cabin down there." Doris added, "the first powwow was mainly people around here. It started little and has grown to be big. All the kids used to dance, the ones with the dance team." Jimmy shared one of his favorite memories, "I think I was about twelve when we first started having the powwow and everybody left home to get a better job, get school or whatever, and everybody would come home for the powwow and you'd see all your family." Arlie added, "we always did stuff for the church, selling plates and cooking food and all to sell at the powwow. All the churches always cooked the food for the powwow," and still do today.

This history of the tribe's federal recognition process was one that everyone in the community alive during the fight distinctly remembers. The community banded together in this fight for federal recognition, making food to raise money to send their leader to represent the tribe in Washington, DC. As the fight for federal recognition was

underway, the community also learned about other benefits that they could get from the government such as land claims checks or “Indian money.”

Indian Money

The older generation remembers being children and hearing the saying, “when I get my Indian money, I’ll pay you. I heard that for years.” Little did people know this would ever actually happen. Mary shared, in the early 1970s, “some people got one check and some got two checks. Some people carried their money to give to Leon to help with the tribe. A lot of people that got checks aren’t on the roll.” Everybody that was alive during this time period, no matter his or her age, remembers getting this “Indian money.” Mary shared,

we got some papers back and then we got some kind of check... they were very small amounts, it wasn’t really anything. Then I remember one time we got one and they asked if we would give it back... I think that’s when the Health Department was getting started... to help toward that. We didn’t keep that one, we turned it back in... Most everybody (turned it in).

The Indian money they are referring to is a payment that Indians received in the 1970s. Authority (2009) explains,

In 1962 the Indian Claims Commission awarded the Creek Nation (including both the Oklahoma and Eastern groups) \$3,913,000 in payment for nearly 9,000,000 acres ceded to the U.S. in 1814... In December 1972, the Claims Judgment was finally dispersed to the several thousand people... Approximately 5,000 persons “proved up” through the Creek Nation East of the Mississippi alone... each Creek Indian received \$112.13. (pp. 26-27)

In 2009, Billy Smith donated his original, uncashed check to the tribe's museum. He received the check on December 20, 1972. Smith says,

the value of the check was minute, but because of segregation, it was a dream come true that the government recognized us as Indians... We have been Indians since the beginning of time, but the value to him personally was the actual acknowledgement of our community's Creek identity by the government that repeatedly failed to honor its treaties with our nation. (Dees, 2009, p. 4)

The Poarch Creeks had land taken from them by outsiders and were paid a small amount of money for this wrongdoing. However, when it came time for federal recognition, it didn't matter how much the government paid them for the land that had been taken away, they had to own land.

Land

"In 1973 efforts were begun to transfer title to the school grounds from the county to the Indian community" (Parades, 1979, p. 138). Doris remembers when her and Willie Lee went to Brewton to talk to the county about buying the land where the schoolhouse is... The county bought this little schoolhouse up here. Around there is where all of this federal recognition stuff started... that's the only 18 acres that the Indians had for us to get recognized, federally recognized.

The tribal headquarters are located in the community of Hedapeada, now Poarch. Doris explained,

Well we started in Poarch and asked Bill Brown to sell us some land to build everything on but he wouldn't. They were gonna build something out there.

They couldn't get no land so then we asked Martin Weber and he's the one that sold us the land that the tribal center is on now. That's the reason why the tribe is located in Hedapeada because that's the only place we could buy land.

Our reservation land is checkerboard, so most people don't actually know what is the reservation, what is trust land, what individuals own, and what is land the tribe owns.

After talking with Ellen O'Barr, I learned

the legality behind land that the tribe owns. Reservation land is the land that the tribe owned when we first got federally recognized. Trust land is land that the tribe bought after federal recognition. Today, the tribe owns 400.756 acres of trust land and reservation land. The tribe deeds the reservation land and the trust land over to the BIA. Then the BIA gives it back to the tribe to take care of. The land is then In Trust of The Poarch Band of Creek Indians. The tribe has all rights over the land, they just don't own it. The tribe has sovereignty and jurisdiction over trust land and reservation land. It is federal land so the state has no control over it. It is similar to a military base. On reservation land you find HUD Housing subdivisions, tribal facilities, powwow grounds, the recreation facilities, tribal police, etc. On trust land, we have gaming, which used to be the bingo palace and now is the casino. Another type of land is feed land. Today, the tribe has 7,787.55 acres of feed land. This is not trust land or reservation land, but is additional land that the tribe owns that is either paid for or they are still paying for. In order for this land to be trust land, the tribe would have to go through a process with the BIA to do this, but the BIA has not let tribes put land in trust for

a few years. Feed land the tribe pays taxes on. As of April 2010, the tribe has a total of 8,188.31 acres total of feed, trust, and reservation land.

Jimmy was the only person that discussed this land in detail. He explains,

the reason our tribe doesn't have much reservation land is because we didn't have any money. After getting federally recognized your first land is reservation land. The key is it has to be paid off for any land to be reservation land or land in trust. That's why our reservation is so checkerboard because different people owned land in different places within the community. We are a tribe that was later recognized and didn't have as much land because of that.

Owning land was one of the tribe's priorities. Owning land was important to this group because they had control over it to do what they want. During the fight for federal recognition, people in the Indian community were living in poverty. However, as the Chief went to Washington and met with government officials he found out about government assistance that the tribe could get even before federal recognition.

Assistance

Though our tribe was state recognized before being federal recognized not many people remember much about this or what that meant for the tribe. Jimmy shared, "our tribe started the state recognition process for Alabama." Maybell shared,

we were state recognized first. We got a lot of services through the state... I believe when Houston was there, they would get a little bit of help, uh state wise, when they started that CETA program... And different people would work... I was working over there whenever we was trying to prove our recognition. We

were filling out pedigree charts and stuff of that nature. I tell you that, they are blessed to get federally recognized.

Before the tribe was federally recognized they began to get grants from the state.

Rachel remembers the first grant that the tribe got. She shared,

(My husband) was on the council, Houston was the Chief and Linda Gail was secretary working for the tribe. They went to Washington to try to get funds, working towards getting federally recognized and getting funds. Some way or another, they found out if they could write the proposal, they could get a grant. And it had to be a community project and (my husband) said he came up with the idea of cemeteries. They needed the cemeteries kept up. So they wrote a proposal for a community project. There were three or four cemeteries and they got the grant and got the money and worked the people. I think Glenda was about the first one that was hired and she was the secretary and the checks would come (to our house)... But that's the three that got the grant and they hired Glenda to keep up with it and then they hired three or four men and those men worked on it as a community project to keep up the cemeteries. I guess the grant was like a one year total. But anyway, that's when it all started.

The tribe began to get assistance from the government through things such as grants. Laura remembers starting a summer program. She worked with the children and took them on trips.

We'd have a summer program and we took them to Cherokee. It was an experience for me because I had never been to another reservation except one time with Mr. Weaver... we went to Mississippi and we saw Choctaw. But you

know, it's not much difference. The language may be different or they may do things just a little bit different but to me a lot of the characteristics of Indian people are the same.

James remembers going to the summer program as a teenager.

I was in the summer youth programs in the earlier years... from what I remember they were four or five weeks, maybe... it was around ninth grade, I want to think, the first time, 'cause I did that for a couple of years. But it was really fun. It was way back when things were first getting started.

As Maybell shared federal recognition is "when a lot of money got involved."

Through federal government assistance, money for health care, housing, summer programs, benefits, and many other things were provided as a result of federal recognition. This was a huge thing for the Indian community. James shared,

federal recognition, I relate that to the services that we started being able to receive, and mainly the Health Department... and then some of the health services, the dental. And even back then, I had my wisdom teeth taken out. They used to pay for that years ago. I remember used to be Episcopal Church... had that where Shadowland or whatever is. And they used to do some stuff around the Episcopal Church, these little health fairs where they'd prick your finger. 'Cause I remember, that I was just traumatized by having to do all that. But they would do just the little kind of Band-Aid station. And I remember that from way on back.

Like James, many people remember the tribe first getting assistance for Indians in the community. Rose remembers being a child and going to the dentist and doctor.

We went to the dentist in a bus... I don't know where they were coming from, but they would drive the bus up there, you know where Saint Anna's, where the daycare's at now... we'd have to go on there and see the dentist... I don't remember going to the doctor. We didn't have a doctor... The first health complex was at where the daycare's at now... I remember first going to the clinic to see a nurse practitioner. The tribal health clinic was opened in April of '87.

James shared, "many people equate federal recognition to getting something."

Federal recognition allowed our tribe to gain federal assistance with health, education, housing, and many other programs. Our tribe has come a long way from generation one to generation four. Many people talked about how we have fared as a federally recognized tribe in the last 27 years. James shared,

Being so young, we probably haven't even gotten over some of the developmental phases. We are just that young. When you look at other tribes that have been around since, 1800's or even some that go back to, the original Indian Health Service Act, I want to think that was in the 1700's. And just by comparison. I mean, we've always been Indian, but it's a whole different ballgame when it's federal. So I guess, in some ways, I'm still getting used to it. We have a lot to be a new tribe. The stuff that we got here was almost immediate, after we were recognized. Some of the services we got... bam, bam, bam, it's been non-stop ever since.

In the fight for federal recognition, the Indian community really came together. Though no one had alot individually, together they were able to work to raise money, buy land, and get federal recognition. Today, our tribe is working towards being a self-

sufficient nation. Over time our tribe has managed to have offer many services in things such as health, education, housing, social services through federal assistance programs and enterprises that the tribe has created. Today, our tribe owns many businesses: Perdido River Farms, Muskogee Metal Works, three casinos, two hotels, a dog track, Magnolia Wildlife and Reserve, and many other things. We have our own business offices, tribal court, police department, fire department, and many other things that nations have. Our people have worked very hard to create this nation that we have so that we can have the opportunities that we have today. Just as the tribe has changed over time, so has what it has meant to be Indian.

Being Indian

What it means to be Indian as well as how Indians were treated has changed over the generations. Everyone in generation one talked about when they were growing up, “we weren’t called a tribe... just Indians. When we tried to get federally recognized, we were the Creek Nation East of the Mississippi then we had to change to the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Now we are tribal members. (laughing). United as a tribe.”

Doris shared, “we used to be treated worse than colored people, someone would come and we’d peep out the window, we wouldn’t look out the door.” As Jimmy explained,

before federal recognition, you were Indian because you said you were Indian.

There was nothing to gain. There was no reason to be or not to be Indian... There were two pushes when lots of people became Indian. Federal recognition got lots of local people and then gaming and the money and benefits from gaming got lots of others.

I talked with Jimmy about whether or not the “Indian money” that they got in the 70s got people to say they were Indian also. He said, “you’re gonna give up your comfort zone for 100 dollars, to say you are Indian? I don’t think so... It was a big thing to say you were an Indian. People just didn’t claim they were Indian.”

For people in generation one and two, being Indian was just who you were. Mary shared,

We were so removed from that stuff. When people used to say something to me about being Indian, I would say, the only thing I know about Indian is I’ve got the color and I’ve got the name, that’s all. And really and truly, that was it. That’s all I knew... Well, you know, history tells you that when the Whites started taking over everything and then they sent us to White schools and more or less took away all our culture from us, so that’s all we knew. All we knew was that we were different; we were Indians. We had the coloring; we had the name, that’s all we knew.

Jimmy talked about how they “learned” what being Indian was supposed to be from other images of Indians that they saw on TV.

We didn’t know what an Indian was other than what it said on TV, and TV sure ain’t what an Indian is. When we first started dancing we wore feathers... Billy Smith got that off the TV. Then you become a performer and entertainer and give them what they want to see... Federal recognition taught you what it meant to be Indian.

To Ana, being Indian, “it’s a lifestyle... It’s more than a race. It’s your lifestyle.” Nicole adds, “we were born like that.” Ana shares,

What makes us Poarch Creek is location. Basically, we're born into it. The sad thing is nobody around here kept any of their ways, there's nothing to differentiate us from (other groups). In the last few years, it's getting there, but before then, if you asked me when I was in high school what it's like being Poarch Creek? I'd say, we have a health clinic... I go to the doctor and the dentist at Poarch. That's it.

While many are sad that the tribe lost some of their cultural ways, they realize that survival was a main concern. Rose shared,

It still goes back to our heritage, because I think of Paw Paw and them and I remember him telling the story they used to have to hide, they couldn't let nobody know they were Indians. But still in all, they tried to keep the tribe alive. They were tribal members and it maybe was a lost culture to everybody else but they kept alive what they could.

Suzanne added,

I think about culture and how everybody's bring back culture. But my Dad always says somehow the people here still made it Poarch Creek. There's something about the culture here. It might not be Oklahoma culture or "Creek" culture or whatever, but it's something. So I think the question about culture is, what is Poarch Creek culture? What makes us different than other people?

Rose added,

The way they had to live, they had to do it for them to maintain who they were. Not necessarily their traditions because the traditional things they had to fit into

the White man's world. But they still maintained their integrity as a tribal member.

Being Poarch Creek. While survival was the main story shared in the first generation, after talking with many people, there are Poarch Creek ways of being in the everyday that were considered "Poarch Creek," such as cooking, arts, funerals, and family. Ana shared,

The one thing that was kind of sticking in the back of my mind is cooking chicken in the wash pot. There's nobody that does that anymore, except (a Mother and daughter) I've heard that does it every now and then... And that you can see in the old pictures, so it came from somewhere... we also make chinaberry necklaces. That's one thing that we can say is strictly Poarch Creek. There's no other tribe that uses chinaberries. Now, there's some that use juniper berries, they look a lot alike, but as far as I know, we're the only ones that use those.

Mary takes pride in the fact that her family is learning the culture, preserving it, and passing it down, but sees herself as

Too old to get into any of that... We don't speak the language and everything. Through (the cultural educator) and everything, he's trying to bring it back to us. And like the younger children today, he has helped so much, 'cause he tries to instill that in them. When he talks to them he talks to them in the Creek language. I know my little grandchildren and everything, they can speak some. And then (my daughters and granddaughters) they're interested in it. They're trying to learn. They go to those basket weaving classes and the language classes. Yeah, my girls, they've really been trying to really get into it.

Laura feels like language, arts, history, and culture are important to learn and participates in classes now to learn these things. However, Laura feels like, the history that “the children today need to learn what it was when Mother was a child, how they grew up, what they had to go through... and not what happened hundreds of years ago.”

The tribe has a long history, predating each of the men and women that I talked with. This chapter provides a brief overview of the history of the tribe as they lived and remember it. They discuss many things such as community; what life was like before and after federal recognition; and what it means and has meant to be Indian. These four generations share histories that will now be preserved and passed on to the future generations.

Conclusion

Though many things have changed throughout the history of our tribe, Maybell shares one thing that has remained constant over the years: Indians are one family both in the past and today. “I tell you, these Indians is like one... I know that’s a lot of confusions, a lot of hate maybe amongst ‘em, but you know, when it comes down to the nitty gritty, they all pretty well hang together.”

This history is one of the process of “becoming a tribe.” All of these men and women lived in the time period where they were fighting for inclusion, opportunities, and federal recognition. Over time, all of these things were made possible and have helped to form the Poarch Band of Creek Indians as a tribe today. The hard work of our elders is evident in the stories that these men and women tell, and people take pride in being Indian. Over time, as things changed and many problems were solved, other problems and issues evolve. Therefore, while our tribe is larger and more economically stable now

than it's ever been, we are at a new and different point in our history and there are new and different problems facing our tribe today that will affect the future. While no one knows what the future will hold, the decisions we make today impact that history.

Poarch Creek identity is woven on these strands of history. The basket is made of both the past and the present.

GENERATION 1: FAMILY

Mae, Maybell, Bernie, Geronimo, and Doris, all great-grandparents ages 90 to 75 years old today, share with us stories beginning in the 1920s about family. I talked to these men and women in living rooms, around kitchen tables, and on front porches. I talked with two of these women with their children, one woman by herself, and then one conversation was with the married couple. After I had conversations with everyone individually, five of the six men and women came together around a dinner table to share additional stories, fill in gaps in stories, and help me determine how to tell this story.

All of these people and stories are special in so many ways. Their stories are personal, filled with people, emotions, and memories, told in a specific context, about a particular time. Thus presenting them in this format loses much that was in the events and conversations themselves. You literally needed to be there to appreciate it. I chose to tell these stories by themes in part because of this. Using themes, others can see what was talked about. However, when separating stories into themes, I lose many aspects of the stories such as the context they were told in. While pulling these stories apart by themes does them little justice, I hope that this sheds light on as much of their stories as I could possibly recapture on paper.

These men and women lived in small communities that were like large families. While most of the members of the family were biologically related, participation in the

Community is one of the main things that united them. Other elements that defined this family were living situations, poverty, subsistent skills, culture, church, school, and outsiders. Through stories, this generation teaches us about their family and what family means, and then passes that idea of family onto the next generation.

Indian Community

I lived in the community, we was all Indians... I was just brought up in the community as Indian. Never did discuss why I was Indian. I was just brought up with Indians. Our people brought us up as Indians. Just families with Indians. I reckon, you just went as an Indian. We was born as Indian, I guess you just went as an Indian. -Doris

Being Indian for these men and women is a way of life, how they were raised, and who they are. The community Doris spoke about was actually one of the three smaller communities: Hedapeada, Poarch Switch, and Hog Fork, which make up the Poarch we know today. Each person described their communities as “not many house” and “not many roads,” but lots of “woods” or “thicket” that separated the communities. This set up lent itself to a caring for one another. Maybell explained, “we had hard times and we had good times. People loved each other back then and they cared for each other... we had a good time, but it was hard, but people loved each other.”

You could find that love in many of the things people did for each other every day. Doris shared,

when somebody was sick, now everybody went and seen about ‘em...

And I had a Granny, if she went, if you were sick and she went and there

wasn't nothing but a jar of stuff or something. They would carry a little something for them to eat. Sure did, back in them days.

Mae added, "they had little farms and they'd go and help 'em if they got behind with their farms, you know, pitch in and help 'em."

Family has always been a huge part of this community. As I talked with these men and women, I learned about the generations that came before them. "Them old people, they believe in big families, had big families. It was hard on 'em and they hardly had anything to eat but they all had big families then and they was loved. They loved each other." Some of these men and women were raised in large families of 13 siblings while others were raised with just one sibling. Their parents married other Indians within their small communities of Hog Fork, Poarch Switch, and Hedapeada because "they didn't mix with other communities." While each of them grew up in a different household, they were raised similarly within a few miles from each other and knew each other.

Everyone saw their community as their family. As we talked more about what family means, they each shared their definitions of family. Everyone talked about their immediate families and other people they saw as family. Maybell expressed, "family are close-knit people... your family is just your children... you can lean on them as being a part of you." While everyone talked about their biological families, they also shared stories of family that were not related biologically to them.

All of the women I talked with also talked about their church family being an important part of lives. Some talked about other family they had, such as children that their Mother's raised that became part of their family. Mae shared, "(my sister's) mother

died when she was about four or five years old and Mama raised her. Me and (my Sister) are just like sisters, you know, raised up together.” Maybell shared that her “Mama’s sister died during childbirth,” so her sister was nursed by Geronimo’s Mother. After a year Maybell’s Mother raised her as part of her family. “We were raised just like sisters. My mother never treated me no better than her or her no better than me. That’s the only sister I got. She calls me sister and all my youngun’s called her sister.” Geronimo’s Mother was a single Mom and he has never seen his Father. He grew up “staying with whoever me and Momma could stay with. Momma didn’t have a home ‘til I built her one. I stayed with my aunt mostly and she always took care of me.” Through these stories you can see how everyone in the community helped take care of one another.

Everyone shared memories of their families. Mae shared with me her family bible where she keeps track of her Mother and Father’s families. “That’s all from my Daddy, my mama. Their birth date and when they died. See everyone of ‘em space... there’s my space.” She keeps these records and said that everything her Brother “told me about I’d write it down.” The walls and tables of her house are covered in pictures from the past and today. “We didn’t take too many pictures back then. That’s the reason I like lots of pictures today.”

Other family stories were shared about Christmas, Thanksgiving, and birthdays. Everyone talked about spending Christmas and Thanksgiving with their families. Maybell shared, “we used to go to Hog Branch and Hog Creek. We would go get a Christmas tree. A long time ago we decorated with holly. There used to be alot of holly trees.” Bernie told stories of birthdays she remembers celebrating.

When my Daddy was living, we always looked forward to having this birthday dinner... sometimes we had it out on the powwow grounds but most of the time it was at my house up there at that old house... all of 'em tried to come. We just invited everybody that would come.

During the fall, Doris's family had a 100th birthday celebration for her Mother that passed away. The whole family came together at the graveyard to have a celebration ceremony where they released balloons, sang songs, and spoke about her Mother. They ended with a potluck dinner at the tribe's SAIL¹⁰ center where they all gathered and fellowshiped with each other.

In these communities, everyone was very close-knit and family was community. Everyday living was a significant part of the community. We learn from these stories more about their everyday living: the community they lived in, how they were raised, where and how they lived, and the resources that were and were not available.

Living Situation

Childhood. They all used very similar words to explain the poverty they lived in. Bernie said, "back then, I can tell you, we had some hard times back then." Geronimo added, "I tell you right now we were so poor the roaches wouldn't even stay with us."

Maybell explained,

we was raised poor. There ain't nobody been raised no poorer than these Indians... Of course nobody had anything. Now I have learned that we wasn't the only people that didn't have anything. White people didn't

¹⁰ The SAIL center is a building that the tribe built for the senior citizens of the tribe to have their own place for their events.

have anything neither. That was during the Depression. Nobody had anything to eat.

Mae and Doris remember having “coupons to get sugar and flour” or “rations”. “The stuff was rationed. You had to have a coupon to get it... They used to come up there where that church house is now at Saint Anna’s,” and “they used to go get things from a warehouse in town... that’s where they got lots of food.”

Their parents found work wherever they could and worked in a variety of different places. Maybell shared, “I was living when there wasn’t no social security. There wasn’t nothing. Now, that was Depression to me, is when no social security.” Bernie’s Dad had many different jobs. He was a caretaker of the Episcopal Church, and

he used to drive the school bus, see, so much. And he was also the, I don’t know what you call it, sort of like a deputy under the county law up here at Burns. He was the right hand man. Most people called him Deputy Dan... my Daddy was a walking doctor. They used to always call my Daddy the doctor ‘cause he kept check on all of ‘em around here and he was the only one that got paragard and that brown medicine. And it got to where you couldn’t get it at the drugstore and all. But Daddy, he was in cahoots with one of the druggists so he could get it. And every time, they’d hunt Daddy up to get that paragard. Daddy could go down there and tell him what he wanted, he would fix him up a bottle full of it and he’d bring it back to whoever he needed it... I knew where it come from but nobody else can. Nobody could walk in there and get it.

Maybell remembers her Dad and Uncle working. She shared, they “used to go off in the woods and if they could make a little bit of money, they made it, cutting cross ties and there’d be a truck come pick ‘em up on Friday and they’d make a little bit of money.” Maybell shared, “course, Daddy used to get two dollars and fifty cent a week to live off of, farming... two dollars and fifty cents, now. And that’s what we lived off of.” Most of the women didn’t talk about their Mother’s doing work other than in the fields or around the house. However, Maybell remembers,

My Mother, I guess she was one of the proud ones. She didn’t get back no farther than she was knocked back. She went to work at a sewing room in Atmore. She would catch the Frisco train. There used to be a little passenger train... and they’d flag that train down; she’d catch it in the morning and go to work, and then she would catch it in the afternoon when it came back from Pensacola, and come home.

Each shared their memories of the houses they lived in as a child, which for many were old log houses. “Nobody had large houses and it was common for people to stay with each other.” Doris elaborated on her house, “didn’t have but two rooms, a kitchen and a bedroom.” They all slept in the bedroom and,

the first person that went to bed at night got the bed and then everyone else piled in... they turned the old smokehouse into a house for (a woman) and her family and then built (a man) a room on the corner of the front porch.

Mae described the house she grew up in.

the kitchen was built off from the house and you had a walk from the kitchen to the bedrooms. It's like a hall... You know, in case of a fire, it's so easy because a lot of cooking on the stove and all. But if the kitchen caught fire, you wouldn't lose the whole house. You know, that's the reason I think they built the kitchens separate from the rest of the house.

Doris and Mae both described the house they grew up in, "there's the old saying you could see the chickens under the house and count your stars in the top." Mae explained, "we could see the chickens under the house, and see they raised their foods and had the chicken and eggs and all what they could." When it snowed, "the house was covered with shingles but they was wooden shingles and that snow would somehow get in through them cracks and you could see it falling in the house."

Though Maybell's family didn't have much, she remembers, her Mom always took pride in being "a clean woman... She would wash on Wednesdays; she'd iron on Thursdays, Fridays she would scrub. And my mama always kept a clean house. We always had a clean bed to sleep in." Doris added, "we used to clean on Fridays. My aunt would sweep her yard every day. We are clean people. So clean, you could eat off the floors."

While some people talked about always having something to eat, others shared that they didn't have much at all, which seemed to depend on the size of the family. Many of the families had some kind of garden or farm where they raised pretty much whatever they ate. Maybell shared,

Daddy always farmed and we always had plenty of food to eat. We never had to go hungry. We had our syrup and he killed hogs and we had meat,

lard, cornbread. There wasn't no canning back then. That hadn't come along yet. No freezers or nothing. So they would pick their peas and they'd beat 'em out. They would always cook. They'd have their food dried like peas or beans or whatever.

Bernie would "plant the corn, we'd just have to go out and pull that corn. And some of 'em, they would save it and take it to the mill down here and make meal. Grind it up and make meal." Maybell added, "then I'd hate to see some time come, when we was youngun's, if it rained, you know what you had to do, go set out sweet potatoes... in the fall we picked up pecans."

As children, all of them had to work. Without electricity and running water they had to do a lot of prep work so that they could keep warm, take baths, and cook meals. Bernie talked about the jobs she had to do around the house when she came in from school.

We'd have to go out into the woods and we had to find these lighted thumps we called 'em. We had a little axe and see all these corn sacks. That's what we had. We chopped up wood as much as we could and put it in that sack across our shoulder and come home with it. That was to cook with and to warm by.

In order to have water, most of them got water from a spring, "we never knew what a pump was." Maybell said everybody washed clothes at the creek. "They'd get down there, all of 'em washing together." Bernie remembers, "we'd take the old... we used to call it the chopping block. But we would put the clothes down on that and had a thing that you'd hit 'em and the old scrub board."

Geronimo shared that with him being the oldest child and his Mom being a single Mom, “when I got big enough... when I was ten years old, I was plowing a mule for \$2.00 or \$3.00 a day, trying to make groceries for mama.” Maybell shared a similar story.

There wasn’t nothing for us to do but farm... we picked cotton... We used to help Daddy. My Daddy was sickly and I chopped cotton all day long for seventy-five cents. And then I’d give it to him to help him. See we didn’t have no life then.

Bernie and others talked about going after school to work to make money. “I’d wash dishes, I’d press pants and everything to try to earn a dress or a pair of shoes. We’d have to work so many evenings, so many hours before we could ever afford to get that dress.”

Most people stayed within the community. The only way to get from one place to another was by walking, riding a mule or horse, or catching a train. Maybell shared, “there wasn’t no cars back then. The traveling we did was by a mule and wagon... We went to school in five days and when that five days was over, we had no way of traveling.” The lack of transportation kept people in their communities. Bernie shared, “we didn’t have no transportation and you didn’t get to socialize with nobody too much. It had to be a special occasion... nobody had no way of going, and you just about had to stick to your own.”

Life as children and young adults were very similar. As resources and opportunities became available, lifestyles began changing and the community as a whole began changing. The people in this generation have seen many changes throughout their lifetimes, which make them very appreciative of how they are living today.

Adulthood. With marriage of Poarch Creeks to one another, this bond of family and community grew even stronger. Everyone I talked with married a Poarch Creek man or woman. The reasoning was quite simple, “the, population wasn’t like it is now. There’s a lot of people now. And see, Indian people didn’t mix hardly with other people. So, pretty well stayed to ourselves. We lived in a world of our own.”

While there was no place to get married in Poarch, these men and women went to surrounding towns and states to get married. At different ages, three of the women talked about running off and marrying their husbands. Mae was the first to get married in 1937 just two months before turning 18 years old. She ran away to get married because her Mother didn’t like her husband.

I didn’t have a big wedding. I got married in a preacher’s house right there in Atmore and we had one witness... Well, same (preacher) that married (my brother) was the one that married me and (my husband).

After we went and got married, he brought me back and went home and I stayed with my mama for a couple of days... When Momma found out I was married I had already gone to bed and she made me get up and leave.

In 1947, Bernie also got married a few months before she turned 18 years old, and has a similar story.

I call myself being smart. Me and (my husband) ran away... they had an old paperwood truck... They had done all the work during that week, went and got a marriage license, we got up with the preacher and everything, and I didn’t know all about that too much. But they had it all ready for him. So we all got on this truck to go to the show that night and instead of

going to the show, we went to Bay Minette and we got married, me and (my husband) down there in some big old house... I don't know if it was a judge or justice of the peace or what. But anyway, we came on back and... (My brother's wife) had to go in and tell Mama and Daddy what happened and... we took off. And we stayed two places in one night... that's how scared we were. We got up before day, went cross the creek here, up on the little hill... and stayed the rest of the time there.

Bernie's parents did not approve of her marriage. She remembers her Dad saying, "I knew it was gonna happen but I wasn't expecting it this soon... Well, it was about two months he wouldn't speak to none of us... it was mama too, but yeah, he finally got over it."

Maybell got married in 1942 at 15 years old. Bernie got married to her 1st husband in 1947 and then married to her husband now in 1957. Geronimo and Doris got married in 1943 in Mississippi. Doris shared, "that's where most of the people went to get married... that's the only place where you could go and buy the license and get married at the same time." Doris and Geronimo have been married for 59 years and are still married today. Maybell and Mae both shared memories and tears about their husbands who they were married to all of their lives until they passed away.

For a long time, men from these communities worked paperwooding, logging, and in shipyards. As more opportunities became available, they went away to get better jobs.

Geronimo

paperwooded over yonder in them woods. I'd cut a whole row of wood a day... and load the boxcar full in one day... We had a saw that had wheels

on it, cut that tree down... They had a thing on that truck to load it on with. But see, in my younger days, we used to have to put it on there by hand, but they rigged that truck up and they'd pick the big box up from up there. And then they'd haul it to Poarch out there and put it on the track.

See, it would take about four to five loads to load a boxcar out.

After paperwooding, Geronimo went to work on a tugboat when he was in his twenties.

Doris said,

he didn't have no education, but he could do things because he learned the river and everything and they would send him with other people because he would know. He would sit and talk with (a man)... he took a recorder and he would put (stuff about the river) on a tape recorder for him.

Geronimo would play it and then he would know what to do.

Geronimo loved working on the tugboat and always shares stories from his days on the river. "I learned more with that tape recorder, on the river, than I learned from anything."

Geronimo worked there and eventually became captain of the tugboat. Geronimo explained that he "got all these boys a job but they wouldn't even make a trip. They quit. Time was rough around here. It was hard to make a dollar." When he came home he "used to go over (to the school) and cook for 'em. And then I used to go out here at the church and cook. All I know how to cook is chicken. That's what we cooked, in a washpot."

Both Bernie and Maybell shared stories of their husbands going off to work.

Maybell's husband,

left to go into the Navy in '43. (My daughter) was nine months old when he left to go to World War II, and he didn't come back 'til... he was ready to get out. Back then he wouldn't fly so he come home one time on leave and he rode the train all the way from California. And he stayed on three or four days, like over a weekend, and it's time for him to go back and so he caught the passenger train at Poarch and left and he didn't come back no more until the war was over... Well, way after the war 'cause they had to stay and sweep mines. He was a minesweeper.

Later, Bernie's husband, "went off to Texas to work construction,"

Most of the women either never officially worked or worked in the later part of their lives, but worked in the house and garden or farm. Doris said that her husband told her, "your place is home. You ain't gonna work, so, I ain't never worked. I worked one summer with the youth up here at the school, just fixed sandwiches. That's all the work I ever done." Mae had a similar story in that she worked "just in the field... pulling cotton, picking cucumbers, picking up pecans with (lots of other women)." Bernie "worked picking up potatoes and chicken eggs. I don't recognize that as work... and I picked up pecans and but it wasn't no regular."

When Bernie did go to look for a job, her boss commented about "other Indians starting and quitting their jobs and asked if I was kin to those people. I said yes, but don't you judge me by nobody else. If I didn't want to work I wouldn't have applied for this job." Bernie worked "with Vanity Fair. I worked there for about fourteen years." Then, both Maybell and Bernie started work in the 1970s at "Little River Community Action." Maybell shared,

we worked four hours a day. Oh we had a good program. We worked under a board and people that needed groceries, transportation, going to the doctor, and different things. That little program helped a lot of people. Back then, see the tribe, they was just starting out... we was all in the old school up there. We had one end, Little River did, and Head Start was up there too. And then we worked down at the Parish House.

Both Bernie and Maybell went to work with the tribe after leaving this program.

Bernie continued doing similar work,

deliver the meals, bring a lot of 'em to the doctor... then after we got where we had to go get our CDL's everything got big... I was getting close to retirement, 60, and said shoot I ain't gonna worry myself to death with that thing... so I just give it up. Just quit working, applied for my early social security.

Maybell was working with the tribe, "doing the pedigree charts trying to get people... That's when we were working to get federally recognized." She explained that pedigree charts are, "a long sheet. It may have mama's name here and her parents. Like a family tree." After doing that, "I worked over at the hotel for 15 years. I was a housekeeper supervisor."

While everyone talked about being involved in different part of the tribe, Bernie was the only one that talked about voluntarily serving on the tribal council.

I served on there about fifteen years and didn't get a dime. That's when they elected Houston, after Calvin passed away... I stayed on it. Of course it wasn't as bad as I told. But after we begin to get in all this here,

federally recognized and all that back then, I said, hey, I don't have a complete high school education. No college, no nothing at all. I just felt like... I stepped down not many years after that. I just felt like I wasn't doing justice to the people.

As adults, their living situations were fairly similar to their childhood. Maybell explained, "they're wasn't many houses and they would be a bunch of 'em live together." Bernie and her 1st husband got married and "lived with his brother." When they were "separated, I was living with Mama and Daddy in that old log house where we all just about ended up." Maybell said that her husband "left and went to World War II... and while he was gone we moved." (Maybell and her one-year-old daughter) lived with my Mamma and Daddy and Sister. We all stayed together. We lived together."

Doris described the house that Geronimo and her lived in after they got married. The house had

wooden windows in the back. When my husband would go off on the boat and come back and he'd work a little bit on the house. When I was pregnant with (my fourth child), the rain come and we had to stand the mattress upside the wall it leaked so... We took the mattress off and stood it where it wasn't leakin. And then the next day, I was pregnant; I went up the ladder... me and my husband and covered the house with tarpaper.

Oooh we was brought up hard, we was brought up hard.

Mae's shared "my husband said he sometimes was sleeping on ice... When the rain blowed in through cracks in the house and froze."

Mae's memory is very sharp. She remembered lots about her house and the living conditions. "We didn't have electricity... I think it was in 1950 something when we got electricity... We didn't have no bathroom... We would cook in a big washpot." Bernie added that her husband "would farm all day and then all come in... and it would be dusk dark and we'd go down and take us a bath in the creek... other than that you had to wash in a pan." Many others said they would "warm some water in the sun and wash in the wash tub." Doris added, "sometimes everyone would wash in the same water." Mae added, "we had an outhouse and bathed in a washtub. We used bleach water to wash in sometimes." Doris said to wash your clothes, "you used to boil clothes in them little black pots." Mae said, "there was a wash tub where we scrubbed the clothes, bleach tub, and rinse water."

As adults, for food, most everyone raised his or her food in a garden or on a farm. Bernie said her and her 1st husband,

had to milk the cows... we used to couldn't go in town and buy nothing like that. We had to do it all, raise it. I can remember when your Grandpa Will, when I was living with (my first husband), he had what you call a smokehouse. That's where he kept all his stuff. When they'd kill hogs... have certain days to kill a hog and everybody would come together and help and kill the hogs... Then he'd hang some up in the smokehouse and he'd put fire under it and that smoke, it would cure that meat.

Doris's family had hogs and cows. "We would feed 'em, me and the young'uns. We had chickens. I got a big water bucket full of eggs every day. Them young'uns, they didn't like to fool with hogs and chickens, they thought they were nasty."

Because there was little or no transportation, rolling stores came to the communities selling different things. “They’d come by the house and that’s where they got the name- rolling store. They came once a week... selling all kinds of things.” Geronimo described it as, “a big old thing like one of these school buses, only it was different.” Doris added, “you’d listen out for the rolling store. They’d start blowing before they’d get to your house and that’s the way you’d know it was coming.” Geronimo added, “it had all kinds of candy and stuff... we were the onliest ones that had laying chickens... and we’d save all the eggs up... and trade the eggs for groceries.”

Mae shared the process her family went through to preserve food by canning. They would pick and fill up the cans and then you had to take ‘em into town, to the big canner and the cans... It was a steam-pressured cooker that you had a name on your can and you could put ‘em in there. You know. And they’d have something that would lift ‘em up, you know, and put ‘em down there and take ‘em but your name was on yours so you’d have proof of whose it was. That was the way they canned.

Their families were large, but not as large as the families they were part of. Mae had seven children. Bernie had four kids, three by the 1st marriage and one by the 2nd marriage. Doris and Geronimo had five kids together and one of them died days after being born. Geronimo found out a few years ago that he had a grown child who was conceived when he and Doris were separated. He didn’t talk much about this child except about him having to do a DNA test to have the child added to the roll and then not hearing from the child since he has been added to the roll. Maybell had five kids and had her 1st kid at 15 or 16 so she said, “I grew up with you young’uns.”

No one but Doris shared with me where her kids were born. They were born in town at the Vault hospital. Doris shared, today, “all kinds of doctors come to Atmore now but they didn’t use to. And the doctors used to treat you for everything.” Doris shared that when her children were small, a Mother and her two kids, “had to go up there too, to the TB place in Montgomery.” And she kept one of their children. “Everybody had to help her with (her son) ‘cause he was a baby when she got it and had to go off and leave him.”

While diseases and health were not talked about in many of these stories, diabetes was something that everyone talked about. Diabetes is very high in Indian communities today. All of these men and women had diabetes and had at least one child with diabetes.

Mae’s son

found out about diabetes when he was really sick and my daughter read a medical book and diagnosed him and took him to a doctor. They immediately put him on shots... and now he has two legs that have been amputated because of diabetes.

Maybell lost a child to diabetes. She shared,

diabetes will kill you... I reckon he had the worst type of diabetes there was, because he ate right and (my son) would never put his feet on the floor unless he had a sock on. But he had his feet wasn’t that bad ‘cause once in a while he’d get a bad sore, but he’d go straight to the doctor.

From these stories, you can see that diabetes is a disease that has taken a toll on many Indian families in our community.

Throughout our conversations we talked about death and loss of family members, which brought sorrow to all of our hearts and tears to our eyes. Even among the family and community that each of them talk about, Maybell shared the loneliness that she lives in.

(My husband's) gone, (my son's) gone, (my grandchild's) gone and... you're just in the world existing. You just live from day to day 'cause they ain't no more happy days. I hate to see Christmas, Thanksgiving come. The easiest way I can get through it, that's what I do... when (my husband) lived, it was stationary. You was always home and he would always be there. But now, I'm by myself and so I just... coast through life. I just live from day to day. Especially after (my son) died... And after (my husband) left, why then I had learned to depend on (my son) and then he died and so I was left... left again.

As people grew up in the communities and then raised their families there, the community became bigger and stronger. One of the main things linking this community together was everyone's participation with each other in the community as both adults and children.

Participation

Everyone talked about different things people in their community did together as children and adults: woodsawings, swimming and fishing, celebrating holidays, box suppers, and dancing. These were all ways people participated in the community and memories they all shared with each other. Woodsawings were something that most everyone remembered. Mae shared,

back then we'd have wood stoves. We didn't have electricity. We had a wood stove with fireplace wood... we'd have a woodsawing and they'd go out in the woods and cut the wood. Whoever was having it, we'd go over to their house and we'd eat and we'd fix cakes and things. We'd have a good time out there.

Bernie added that she remembers them also having a "wood-sawing contest... they'd see which one could saw the log in two the quickest. They called it a log-sawing contest."

Maybell added, "we mostly had them on Friday nights so we would have a place to go, something to do."

Going to the creek with friends and family was a memory shared by all of the communities. Mae shared,

we stayed together a lot and we'd go up to that creek, but not like they do now, putting on a bathing suit. I've never put on a bathing suit. I've never had a bathing suit. No, no, no. No, I've never had no pants on. I ain't never worn pants. No, no, no.

This was because of her religious beliefs. Bernie added,

usually on the 4th of July, they used to all try to come together and have a picnic... you could go swimming and everything. We'd all get together and go down there and all cook and have dinner.

Doris added, "Uncle Mal used to get everybody together and go to the Mill Pond."

Everyone shared with me their memories from "shoebox meals" or "box suppers" that they participated in as teenagers and young adults that was held at school. Bernie explained,

we used to have the dances and they used to have what they call box suppers... You make the box, you decorate it, and that's how they raised money. They would fix that box. You put enough in it whatever you put for two and then you take it to the dance that night, or maybe they just had the box supper. They'd auction it off and say like I was your boyfriend... all right, this other one over there likes you... okay, he'll start off the bid just like at an auction and if he wanted your box, he'd get higher than the other and he kept on going. Then whenever he finished up, you were supposed to sit down and eat with him.

Most of the people I talked with loved to dance. From the laughter and stories told, I could see that dancing was one of their favorite teenage and young adult memories. Mae shared,

way back then too, we used to like to dance. Of course, we wouldn't go off like they do now with dancing. We'd just go around to one another's houses. We'd go there and we'd just dance and have a good time and then we'd go and eat. Like now, they're always going somewhere else. We didn't have cars to go around in.

Most of them talked about a dancing place they would go to that was located in their community, Hedapeada. "The Rusty Bucket was a place we would all go and dance. They would have a jukebox. It was a long building. Mostly Indians and some Whites would come." Others would go into town, "across the (Florida state) line... at the Wagon Wheel... We went to the legion hall too. Just a bunch of young girls. And a lot of times we'd get us a taxi to come home."

Everyone in the community participated in family and community events, as well as cultural activities. What all of these gatherings or events had in common was that these were places where the community came together and participated with each other. Together people built a strong and loving Indian community.

Culture

Being Indian was part of their everyday. It's who they are and what they do. So when talking with these men and women about "culture" it was hard to name specific "cultural" things. Some people argue that everything Poarch Creeks did was Poarch Creek culture, simply because they did it. Others argue that Poarch Creek culture is things that were passed down from one generation to the next. Maybell said, "I don't know what made it separated. The Indian culture is different from any other. They're just different. I don't know what it is but they are different." After talking more with people in this generation, some of the "cultural" things that they specified were old time remedies, a medicine man, and funerals.

"Old Time Remedies". Everybody remembered "old time remedies" that their parents and tribal elders knew and that some of them learned and carried into their adult lives. While everyone knew of a person they called "the medicine man", Bernie explained that there usually wasn't one person that knew how to cure everything but, "I guess if certain people knew of them different things. I know I believe in some of them old remedies. They do the trick." Her and others talked about different medicines like salves and cough syrups or remedies they knew that would raise someone's pallet, take off warts, or clear thrash. Doris shared that her husband knows and still does an old remedy, but "he won't tell you who taught him or how to do it." Bernie added, "I don't

know of people that use them now. But Lord, that's what we used to believe in years ago. Of course we didn't have much more."

Funerals. Funerals were something that everyone remembered. Mae, Maybell, and Bernie shared that growing up they remember them laying the body

Out on what they call a cooling board. Back then people was so poor they take the backdoor down, and fix it and they would call that the cooling board and they'd get a little bit of salt and put it in a saucer and put it right here on em'. (pointing to the center of her stomach) And keep 'em out there overnight. Just leave 'em at the house and stay up all night with em'.

Maybell added,

They wouldn't embalm them then so we put a causer of salt on their chest.

We would put two chairs side by side and lay the door across the chairs

long ways and then lay the body on the door until they were buried.

To bury them, "they'd make their own boxes." Mae is the oldest person and remembers for funerals, "we'd have a mule pulling the wagon and then they wouldn't be the trucks and things and hearse... No, no, no... had that corpse on top on that wagon and go down to the cemetery." This changed as transportation changed. Maybell added, "I guess that was handed down from their generation. They don't hardly do that now."

All of these communities were made up of many Indian families. Through their living situations, participation with each other and in the communities, and culture we learn a little about what it was like for these great-grandparents living in these Indian communities. These communities were geographically separate from other communities

in the surrounding areas. However, as time passed, outside institutions came into the communities.

Outside Institutions in the Community

The communities had established their own way of living and while not elaborate or having extra, they survived. They received many resources through churches and school, both outside institutions that came into these communities. The communities embraced these institutions and the people in them, and made them part of their daily lives.

Church

All of the women talked about church being a large part of their lives as children and now as adults. In talking with everyone, I learned that most churches came into these three communities in the early 1900s. Throughout these conversations, they all echoed, “we went to church if we had to walk.” Maybell shared,

Back when I was a child being raised up there wasn't hardly no churches 'til they built that Episcopal Church out at Poarch. Then we went there. They'd make brush arbors and go to church under them, or meet in somebody's house. There wasn't no churches.

Doris explained that a brush arbor was where “they would put a pole and just go and cut bushes and put over and that's where they would have church.” They had church on Sunday and sometimes would have weekly services for things such as revivals. In Poarch Switch, Maybell shared, “if a preacher came through and wanted to run revivals, they'd run revivals.” Maybell talked about how church changed and was held regularly in a building “when the Episcopal Church was established at Poarch, then it was there

and they had Sunday school teachers and preachers and, that was something different than what we were used to.”

The churches played a huge role in everyone’s lives in celebrating religious holidays as well as having fellowships and get-togethers in the community. Bernie remembers, “they used to have what you call 5th Sunday meetings where some of us would go to church, on a certain Sunday you’d get together and have lunch.” Maybell shared on Easter, her Mom always made her a dress.

I don’t even know if you can buy that kind of material. She would always put a ruffle around the neck and one around the tail, make a big sash, and we’d have patent leather shoes. Either I’d have a blue one or (my Sister) would have a pink one, whichever one we wanted. But she always fixed us up on them days.

Churches played a huge part in Christmas. Because Bernie’s Dad was the caretaker of the Episcopal Church, she knew a lot about the stuff that went on behind the scenes. “He always got the Christmas tree and he would stay up all night that night before Christmas Day, making sure everything was right with apples and oranges and the Christmas tree.” Everyone remembered the church giving the adults and children Christmas presents. “On Christmas, everybody knew they was gonna get an apple and orange if they didn’t get nothing else, and candy... We might have a shoebox and a little tiny doll placed in that shoebox at Christmastime.” Most of the time this was the only Christmas they’d get.

Churches had events where people from different communities would participate in. Most of them talked about having “some good Christmas plays.” The different

communities each had their own play and they “would sort of compete” with each other. “They would sing and we’d do our Christmas program at Poarch and then we’d come up here and put it on and it was vice versa. The churches worked together. Somewhere down the line, the churches got... split up. “

Though churches were outside institutions, these three Indian communities incorporated them into their lives and they became a huge part of the communities. However, they were not the only outside institutions that entered into the communities. Another institution, the school, came into the community, at times combining with the churches and then becoming separate institutions. School also became part of these communities.

School

As I talked with these men and women about their educational history, I learned a little about their parent’s educational experiences. Maybell shared, “Daddy could write a little bit. My Momma went to school at Bell Creek Church, but I don’t know for how long. Momma could read because she worked at the sewing room. She could read patterns.” Bernie said, “Daddy could read.” Doris added, “Momma read a little but she signed her name just with an x.”

Schools during the 1920-40s in small communities were held in churches and houses. Mae started school in 1927 and shares somewhat of a different story than the others.

Well, my first schooling was at Bell Creek Church... It’s about five miles I guess... we walked right through the woods. I guess I was then about 7 years old. They had a 7-month school instead of a 9-month school. We

walked, go through the woods, through Huxford go up to Bell Creek... had a place in the woods you all met up and walk on to school... 'Cause you think about it, that's a long way! First, second and third grade children walking through them woods. That was my first schooling. We went up there about one year I reckon. And then we went to school up there to that house... I've never been in a schoolhouse or went to school in a schoolhouse. It was always a church or either just a dwelling house... They sent a teacher from Brewton... I went to school in that house, just a little old dwelling house... I remember going... when I was in the sixth grade, we had to walk. It's just a little what you call a trail... I guess there was around 40 or 50 something like that (children in the class), wasn't but one teacher. One teacher for all the grades. We had to carry our lunch, we sure did. We didn't even have an indoor bathroom. It was all outside. It was a church but we went to school in it... I've never been into a schoolhouse. I've never ridden a bus.

Mae shares this experience of schooling in the late 1920s. After describing her schooling experiences, she talked about her schooling ending at 6th grade. "We all went down to Bell Creek then to take the test for the seventh grade and we passed. We all passed. Then we didn't have a school to go to because we was Indians." Because they were Indian they were not allowed access to education past the 6th grade. She discussed how education was the one thing that brought people in the community together, to fight for access to education for Indian children. Mae says that during this time, "that's when my Brother Calvin,

he said, I'm gonna see what's going on. He said, there's something going on.

And he said, I'm not only working for my family, I'm working for my people. He said they've been mistreated."

Like Mae, everyone started school in the 1st grade, because "back then there wasn't no kindergarten." From 1934 to 1936, Maybell, Bernie, and Geronimo started school in two different communities but had very similar situations. Maybell started school at "Saint John's at Poarch," and the others started school in Hedapeada at a school they "couldn't remember the name of". Both were one-room houses, where the teacher, "taught from the first to the sixth grade in that building and it wasn't a whole lot of children. She just had first grade in a section, second, third, fourth, fifth and that's the way it was." They attended these schools until they consolidated into one school at the Episcopal Church. Overall, Maybell said, "they didn't provide education... the county had that little... sixth grade and when you finished that, that was it." The only way to get an education was to leave the community. Maybell said, "unless you was able to go live with somebody like Leon did. See, they lived in Florida and they went to Walnut Hill. They had no problem."

Because of the lack of opportunity to attend school, Mae couldn't get an education past the 6th grade. Geronimo wasn't allowed to attend school past the 6th grade either, but didn't go to school much throughout his life because as the oldest brother he had to work to earn money to help his Mom support their family. He shared, "I went to the Episcopal Church, that's where I'd get my clothes. I was helping them and they would give me some clothes." He talked about how he went to school but they would work him instead of teach him so that he could earn things like food and clothes for his

family, which at the time was much more important. He said, “you couldn’t learn nothing hungry,” and Doris responded, “the rest of us was learning.” Maybell went through the 8th grade and is the only one to go back to school and finish her education. At age 51 she took GED classes from a tribal member during the summer and got her GED. Her granddaughter helped her study. She said,

I would dream about it. It’s something I always wanted and I put forth an effort that summer... It’s something I always wanted to do. But I wish... you know if things were like they are now, I’d have loved to went to school. I would have loved it. I’d have loved to be a meteorologist. I’d have loved that. I love watching the weather.

In 1943, by the time Doris started school, the school had moved to another building, the Pickerall House. Doris described it as, a three-room schoolhouse with,

An outdoor bathroom. There was six grades and each room had two grades 1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th, and 5th and 6th. There wasn’t that many (students). And we had to walk. There was a lunchroom built right off of St. Anna’s church. It was a long building out there by the church close to the ditch. They’d have a bridge and we’d come across it and eat lunch at that little house.

While no one really agrees on when the three separate communities started coming together to be one Poarch community, many say these outside institutions helped bring them together. Both church and school provided places where the community could be together and do things together as well as provided opportunities that these communities did not have before. Bernie remembers, “the three communities started

coming together before they built the school.” Maybell added, “the Episcopal Church brought us together more than anything.” They shared, “Saint John’s in the Wilderness and the Episcopal Church did a lot together but the people in Hog Fork were isolated.” Mae thinks, “it was long about the time when Brother Calvin got into it and got it started and they built that school up there.” Though these communities went from being three separate communities to one Poarch community throughout their lifetime, people in this generation have always kept these divisions. They explained to me that the divisions were more than just about being divided by land, they were about people’s beliefs. Bernie shares, “I don’t know if it’ll ever be just one... ‘cause there’s still a lot of difference in their beliefs and their religion and what they are doing as what ours up here did.”

Overtime, these outside institutions were incorporated into the community. While communities were still very much separate mainly because of lack of transportation, they began to be in contact more with one another. Even though resources during this time were very limited, as Indian people were allowed to attend non-Indian schools and had ways of transportation they came into more contact with non-Indian people and non-Indian places. Their experiences with these people and in these places even further marked who was inside and outside of the Indian community.

Non-Indian People and Places

Though Indians lived separate from other racial groups in different communities, institutions of church and school came into the Indian communities. Also as transportation and opportunities were made available for Indians, slowly Indians entered into non-Indian places such as schools, towns, and stores. However, while the access to

these places may have changed, most places were still segregated which meant continued mistreatment of Indians.

School

With separate schools, people felt Indians were getting a poor education and fought for a better education. Until 1950, Indians were confined to schools in their communities and were not allowed to attend schools in town, which for most people meant the inability to obtain an education past the 6th grade (The Poarch Band of Creeks, 1980). One way for students to get a higher education was to attend a boarding school out of state. The Episcopal Church paid for many children to attend boarding schools, upon the student's desire. Bernie is an example of one of the Indian students that the Episcopal Church paid to attend boarding school.

After going to Saint Anna's through the ninth grade, Bernie started St. Mary's girl's school in Sewanee, Tennessee. The church helped Bernie and other Indian men and women go to boarding schools. Bernie shared,

they wouldn't let us go to either one of the schools you see. And so I was so interested in school... The pastor of the church up there Mr. Merkel, he came in one day and asked me he said, would you like to go away to a girls school, you wanting to go to school. So I told him, I said, yeah, I said, I would, but my parents, they won't let me get out of here.

Her parents agreed to let her go.

Bernie shared many stories from boarding school. She vividly remembers the 1st day that she arrived at boarding school.

I was the onliest Indian. The next day after I went to school a lot of the girls would come up to me and say, we want to apologize. I didn't know what they were apologizing... cause they thought I was coming and I was gonna have braids, my hair was gonna be braided and I'd be wearing a feather, and that's what they was looking for. And that night we got there about... I don't know what time. They usually have study hall and study hall was over at 9:00. And I was up on the 2nd floor. And so they said that night them stairs was just full of people wanting to see the Indian, them girls wanted to see the Indian. But they just got to the door, up to the stairs and everything. They wouldn't wake me up or nothing, but all they could see was my black hair sticking out from under of the covers that night. But they was expecting me to wear feathers and have my hair braided. But I was the onliest Indian there. But there was all kind there, you know, all from around.

Throughout the year, Bernie met lots of people, learned lots, and made many memories that she shared with me.

It was a Christian school. St. Mary's was run by the nuns... Episcopal Church, no boys, just girls. Then we had St. Andrew's school. I don't know if you ever heard them talk about that... The school had to choose to associate with a boy's school and we would have dances and that's who we could date. If you get caught doing different things, you'd get campus... you couldn't go anywhere, they'd take away your privileges. And I remember I got campus one weekend. I couldn't go off on the trips

because I had to write an essay and down here they didn't teach you too much about essays. So this other girl... I didn't copy her essay she helped me get on track and then the teacher caught it and she said you're suppose to do it on your own... but I needed a little help.

Bernie noticed that she did get “more privileges than the others because I was the onliest Indian there, and I would get to go into town with the Sisters a lot of times to pick up the groceries and different things.” She shared,

I didn't have ordinary clothes. I didn't have very many of them but the Sisters knew that and they wouldn't give me demerits for borrowing clothes. I could borrow from some of the girls on different occasions and they knew I was poor and didn't have, and they wouldn't give... they were supposed to give demerits for worn clothes.

Bernie “stayed a year and then I went back for the next session,” and her brother was seriously injured so she had to go home to help with him and her Dad wouldn't let her return to school.

Only a small percentage of all of the Indian students went away to boarding school. The community continued to fight for a good quality education for Indian children, inclusion into other schools so that Indians could get an education past the 6th grade, and bussing to local schools. Mae shared,

Calvin first took over, after how we's been treated, after they wouldn't let us go to school. They told Brother Calvin then, said, yeah, your children's light complected, and said we'll come up there and pick them up and

that's when Brother Calvin said, no. He said, I ain't only working for my family. He said, I'm working for my people.

Maybell shared a story that she remembers, "people in the community went to Montgomery and sat on the steps of the capital. They wanted us Indians to get a school. That's how Poarch got it's own elementary school. For the first time we had a school."

Geronimo shared, "my brother, he would walk to school way from the airport and the school bus would pass by him and wouldn't pick him up." You always hear stories told about the bus not stopping to pick up Indian children. However, because these men and women were young when all of this was going on, they had a hard time remembering exactly what happened. What they remembered was, "the bus would pass by his daughters every day going to school. So one day Jack Daughtry stopped the bus with a gun and made them let his daughters ride the bus to school." Another person added, "I think there was more people than just Jack but I can't remember who all it was."

In the late 1940s, the Pickerall House Doris attended in the Hedapeada community was closed, so she attended 6th grade at a school in the nearby town of McCullough with White students. Doris explained, "they didn't have school no more down here. That's when they was tryin to get us in with the White folks." For 7th grade, she went to the White high school in town until she got pregnant with her oldest child. She remembers that "you couldn't feel free" at school. This generation expressed, we were "glad when desegregation happened because those people in town thought themselves better than we were and it was great to know they had to sit next to us and Black people in the same room in school."

Growing up, school outside of the Indian community was one of the places that these women remember being treated differently because of their race. In some of their adulthood and other's childhood, town was another place where they saw difference. Both town and school are outside of the Indian community and had specific ways of marking Indians as outsiders.

Town

Because of the lack of transportation, they stayed within the community or very close by. However, there were times that they remembered "going into town". Maybell said, "the only time we went to Atmore was when we would pick cotton all week and save our money and we'd go to the movies and stay all day on Saturday." Geronimo added, "I used to walk from here to Atmore to see the show. That movie down there. If I could scrape me up a dime."

Though going into town was a treat to go to movies and things, many had to deal with others negativity towards Indians. Bernie talked about how her husband was mistreated a lot. I know when I used to date (my husband) a lot of times he would go downtown to where the movies and he was... always say he was tall, dark and handsome. But anyway, they wanted to classify him as colored. I seen a lot of that, and we couldn't go a lot of places and do a lot of things.

Doris remembers her aunt telling her a story of a store in town refusing to serve her. "Reid's Drug store was really open. They had a table and chairs fixed up and they sold ice cream. Indians wasn't hardly allowed to go in there."

While there are many stories of Indians being mistreated by non-Indians, there are also stories of Indians not being mistreated. Doris shared,

I ain't never been mistreated no way about no Indian... I guess cause I was young... things had been taken care of a lot before I was that age... they a lot of people they turned down but you know I ain't never been turned down out of no where.

As we sat around the kitchen table talking about how they were treated as Indian people, one of the stories that they all shared was about a place in town named “Anchor Café” that an Indian woman named Leola ran. “On Saturdays Indians would go down there and sit around and talk and everything and drink and a lot of people would just sit there and eat and drink.”

While Indian people and non-Indian people did not mix too often, the times that they did made a lasting impact on these men and women’s lives. In school and town, people’s experiences were sometimes good, but often bad. These men and women’s stories show that their experiences with non-Indian people and in non-Indian places are part of their story and the Indian story. It adds other pieces to the story of what it means to be Indian in this time period.

Being Indian

While being Indian was defined by what people in the communities did and how they lived, it was also defined by how others viewed and treated Indians in school, in town, and in other places. Unfortunately, in these non-Indian places, many people shared that being Indian meant being mistreated by others. Maybell said,

I don't need to learn the Indian culture. I done been through it. I learned and I felt what it was to be an Indian. We was looked at, laughed at. To be an Indian... You hated to be an Indian. It wasn't like it is now... And um Indians had a rough go of it. They did. You better not tell nobody you're Indian or they could look at you and tell who you were... I thought we was the only Indian people in the world. I said, nobody else ain't treated like we are, but then as I grew older, I didn't know the Choctaws was right over there in Mississippi. Never dreamed.

Doris added, "we knew they didn't like us. They would bully us and they'd do anything to the Indians." Maybell shared,

you didn't feel like you was as good as anybody else. That's the way it made you feel. They treated you and instead of you raising up against the way they wanted to do it, you just let 'em make you feel that way... well I ain't no good. But I guess we was as good as anybody... But now I guess we feel like we're as good as anybody, and you are. I don't care what color you are. God don't look at color. That's one thing; you are as good as anybody. We sure ain't trash, that's for sure... But now we have as much right as anybody. Back then we had as much right but you just didn't... You felt like you felt beneath everybody.

As they grew older, Indians were treated better, which changed who claimed to be Indian and associated with Indian people. Everyone talked about how they are the Indians that have always been Indians and today now that Indians are treated better and get benefits that people want to claim they are Indian. "We're the ones that's been here.

We had to go through the hardship of being Indians and seemed like White people wanted to come in and take over again.”

Conclusion

Every generation grows up in the community that the previous generations created for them. This generation of great-grandparents tells us a story of the community of family that they live in. They add to the Poarch Creek basket this family that is passed on to the next generation. The strands woven into the basket are stories of community, location, large families, living situations, poverty, subsistence skills, hard work, participation, culture, church, school, outsiders, and being Indian.

To understand and reflect on Poarch Creek identity in this generation, I use Lowery’s (2010) four layers of identity: a People, race, tribe, and nation. These great-grandparents show us that this group of Indians is a People and a race. While they don’t refer to themselves as “a People”, they use words such as community and family to talk about the collective Indian group that they are part of.

As “a People”, this generation grew up in three different Indian communities: Hedapeada, Poarch Switch, and Hog Fork. Because of the land separating the three communities from each other and other places as well as the lack of transportation, they pretty much stayed in the community they lived in. Growing up in the Depression, as an Indian, and with very few resources, the communities had to help each other to survive.

This generation teaches us that being Indian is a way of life, how they were raised, and who they are. It is being part of a close-knit family that lives among each other and participate in one another’s daily lives. They live in their community alongside one another, doing things such as helping take care of each other’s children and working

in gardens together. They also participate with each other in community and cultural events such as woodsawings, celebrations, box suppers, and funerals. As people grew up in the communities, raised their families there, and married one another, this bond of family and community grew stronger, maintaining their identity as “a People”.

This generation teaches us that being Indian was their racial identity. With their community being physically separated, they had little interactions with other races. The interactions they did have were when outsiders came into their community or when they went into non-Indian communities. The two outside institutions being church and school, became a part of this Indian community as this generation was growing up. The community embraced these outsiders and outside institutions and made them part of their lives. However, it was a little different when Indian people left their communities and went into non-Indian places. These men and women discussed town and school as being places where they were mistreated because they were Indian. Growing up in south Alabama, there was lots of racial discrimination and mistreatment based on race and from these stories we know that Indians were treated no different than other minority people.

At this time, this group of Indians was not a “tribe” or a “nation,” because they were not recognized by the state or federal government as such. Instead this generation grew up in three small Indian communities. While each of the three communities had schools and churches, the group together had Indian leaders that represented all Indian communities and fought for all of their rights.

Generation one teaches us that being Indian is about their experiences in their communities and outside of their communities. Inside of the community, being Indian is about family. Outside of the community being Indian was about race. These men and

women's experiences in both places help name who and what is within and outside of the Indian family. We learn many things from this generation, with the main thing being how this group of Indians created their own community of family. This family is passed down to the next generation.

GENERATION 2: INDIAN IN RELATION TO OTHERS

Rachel, Laura, Mary, Arlie, and Jimmy, are all grandparents born from 1943 to 1959, making them 67 to 51 years old today. I talked to all but one of these men and women in groups with either their Mothers or each other. I talked with them in their homes around kitchen tables and in living rooms, very informal and personal spaces. In talking with these men and women in groups, I was able to learn about a variety of experiences whether that had to do with differences in gender, age, or generations.

Generation two takes up the basket passed down to them and begins to weave on it. They inherit a basket made of many things that center on the community of family that they are born into. This generation grew up in communities where being Indian meant at least two things. One is that being Indian is part of everyday life; it means being part of a larger family and participating in that family. The second is being Indian is having a legal, cultural, and racial identity in relation to other people.

Being Indian is who they are in their everyday lives; it is a community, family, church, living situations, participation, school, and many other things. While the previous generation didn't have much contact with outsiders, because of integration and the fight for federal recognition this generation did. Geographically they were located in the Poarch community, which was outside of town; and in school they were an in-between race, often separate, sometimes considered White, and other times recognized as

Indian. Nationally, the tribe was fighting for federal recognition, so the community created an image of Indian for outsiders to see through things such as the dance team.

This generation faced many changes in their lives and in the tribe. Major things such as electricity, running water, and transportation changed living in the community. Laws changed allowing everyone in this generation access to a junior high and high school education, and towards the end of the generation everyone was integrated into the same school systems. Through the fight for federal recognition, these Indian people created an image of Indian that was locally and nationally recognized. Generation two creates and passes on a legal, cultural, and racial Indian in relation to the rest of the world.

Indian Community

The previous generation passes down the Indian community that these kids grow up in where being Indian is who they are and what they did, and where family is community and community is family. Jimmy and Arlie shared, “we’ve known all our life we were Indian, ‘cause our grannies told us. Our grannies were dark. We’ve known that all our life. We have never denied that.” While individual families did often live by themselves, people helped take care of one another and looked after each other. Jimmy shared, “I still don’t know... we’ve always done for each other and I don’t know why. I don’t know. Just the way you were taught. That’s the way you were raised.”

Everyone shared the sentiment that Poarch was “home” and “a very friendly place.” Growing up Rachel shared, neighbors knew each other because up until just recently, everybody knew everybody ‘cause it was family that just lived in a different house. You were

related to everybody. Now, you probably still are related but I don't know everybody. A lot of the ones that have moved across the street over there... we can go back and search the history and all of it is related to us but you don't know that as well as you used to.

They spoke with pride about the community they grew up in: Hog Fork, Poarch Switch/Poarch, or Hedapeada. Mary said, "Poarch... well, you know, we've always said there were three parts. [laughing] Poarch and Hedapeada and Hog Fork. Rachel added, everything

was separated then because there was a lot of land between here. And over there, that was not really settled, and there were no automobiles to travel in, and that was a long way. And same way from here to Hog Fork. There was nothing but a little dirt road running through there, so it was separated. We're from Poarch now and everybody's just from Poarch. Back then, no it was, you were from Hog Fork, Poarch, and Hedapeada.

While the population of these communities wasn't large, the families in the communities were pretty big, though not as big as the previous generation. These men and women had anywhere from three to six brothers and/or sisters. Everyone talked about their family and many other people in the community taking care of them. Arlie shared, whether people were biologically related or not, people helped take care of each other.

They didn't have record keeping; there wasn't DNA... A lot of people raised a lot of young'uns that they don't even know who their mama and Daddy were. A mama and Daddy, something would happen to 'em where

they'd have to go off and work, and somebody else in the family would raise the young'un.

Arlie and Jimmy shared that their aunt helped raise them.

She was really like our Granny, 'cause every time my birthday came around, Jimmy's birthday came around, if (our oldest brother) was still home, I don't know, but surely (our youngest brother), she would always make us a birthday cake on that day, and bring it to us that day. She'd always bring us a birthday cake. She raised us like her young'uns... her grandyoung'uns or something. She loved us.

Arlie and Jimmy shared a lot of family stories. One story lead to another as they began reminiscing and sharing their memories. Arlie shared,

when we were young, we used to go over to the rivers. We'd take a big old wash pot and go over there and stay all day. We'd cook fish and stuff. Clean the fish and cook it in the wash pot. Papa would go over there to that river, cook all that food outside... Daddy worked off on a boat and he was thirty days on and fifteen off, and every time he'd come home, we'd have a big cooking.

They couldn't think of the name of the pond but Jimmy said,

I've gone driving recently and wasn't able to find it... we used to go over there and buy vegetables and stuff when they used to sell corn and different stuff... 'cause we were on somebody else's property. We just didn't know any better. 'Cause there was just a little creek in the woods... When Daddy came home, we'd go fishing and cooking somewhere.

When they were growing up and still today, their immediate family as well as the larger families and communities did many things together. Jimmy remembers, “going to a lot of family... seemed like every Sunday, we’d go eat dinner at a big function. It would either be a church or a family thing.” Arlie added, “we all got together and different ones cooked different stuff or we went to that person’s house and ate or whatever.” Both this generation and the first generation talked about the love that the family and community had for one another that is different than today. Arlie shared,

People back then we were closer and loved one another, more than they do now. Back then, they used to take care of older people. They didn’t have nursing homes and other stuff. You took care of your grandmother and your Granddaddy or anybody that was related to you. If they were sick, you always took care of ‘em. You didn’t put ‘em in a home or nothing like that.

One of the common phrases that described their childhood was, “we didn’t have much. You had love.” The communities had each other and they took care of one another.

These Indian communities were families that made up one big family. The communities grew up together and cared for one another. Just as in any community, there are divisions within the community. This Indian community was separated by location into three smaller communities: Hog Fork, Hedapeada, and Poarch Switch. From generation one, we learn that churches came into the communities and became part of their lives. In this generation, we learn more about how churches were part of these communities, and also how they served as a divider between the three communities.

Church

Church was a huge part of the lives of Indian people in these communities. There were different churches in each of the communities and most people attended the church in their community. In Poarch Switch, Rachel shared, “all the young people, us growing up, that was the thing. Everybody went to church together.” In Hedapeada, Laura shared, “I remember, when we were growing up, the Episcopal Church was just a big part of our lives.” Rachel shared,

when we were growing up, church was the main thing. Mama and Daddy, I mean you may not go nowheres else but you went to church... and it's always been that way. Mama always made us go to church. And I mean we grew up learning to love church and putting God first. I remember as we grew up, Daddy has always, you pay your tithes. 10% of what you get goes to the Lord and it wasn't only on your income, it was everything that he made on the garden, on the farm, everything. 10% of it went to the church. God has blessed us.

Everyone shared memories of the church they attended. Jimmy and Arlie talked about attending two different churches in their community of Hedapeada.

We went to Episcopal Church until Mr. Weaver and the Mennonites came to Poarch... they came and stayed with Aunt Bert and Aunt Willie Lee.

We went to the Episcopal all the time and then we branched off and went... where there was more family than anything.

Laura remembers the first year that the Mennonite Church came to the community.

They moved in, and they had Bible school and they pitched a tent in front of our house across the road. And that's how we got started in the Mennonite Church, they would run a bus or truck or whatever and pick us up. We would go down there for Sunday school, and then they started the church over there at Roberta's... For a long time we had church in that shed... and we'd have dinner on the ground. You didn't have a whole lot but you were happy.

During this time, the churches were not only different in beliefs but also in their physical structure. In Poarch Switch, Rachel shared,

on Sunday morning, the Bible class was under the brush arbor, and each little group had a spot and they would just have split logs and you sit on them logs for the seat or either be downed pine trees and stumps and some of them would be sitting around on the stumps.

As many in the community today know, the Episcopal Church has done a lot for the Poarch community. Jimmy said that they would give money and have sent people off to college. "Yeah, they did a lot of stuff for Poarch... from the people I was around I learned (Ms. Bradshaw) was the one that made sure the tribe got the money." At Christmas, Jimmy shared, from the Episcopal Church

we got a candy bar, orange, and an apple in a little brown bag. They gave us an apple, orange and a candy bar. And then we used to have a lot of Christmas plays, at Christmastime. We had big Christmas plays. They really were into all that stuff back then. They aren't into it nowadays.

Many of them remember the Christmas programs that their churches practiced and performed. Laura shared, added, “we would have the best time doing the Christmas program. We would practice weeks, weeks at a time... it was just fun getting together and we’d just have the best time.” Rachel shared lots of stories about one of her favorite memories.

We’d start working on our Christmas play... in October. When you put on the drama, you didn’t read it out of a book. You memorized it. And we had big drama plays. I mean, you know, the manger scenes and everything. I mean that was your favorite things. You looked forward to time to start practicing for the very reason that you usually had a couple of adults there that overseen what was going on. But that was the fellowship for the young people... I remember back whenever (my Sister and her boyfriend) were dating. (He) had a car, seems like it was a 1950 car. Anyway, none of the rest of the group had a vehicle and we were practicing for a Christmas play at church and we all piled in that car. I think, wasn’t it 17 of us. We were in the back seat. You know, cars back then were so big. The biggest ones sat down in the seat and then somebody was sitting in their lap. Then in the front seat, same way, and we had all the people in that one car. That’s how we got back and forth to go to the Christmas play practice... That was one of the biggest past-times for the community, we all came together for the Christmas play.

Church was a huge part of the community and their lives. The people in the churches had a huge influence on these men and women. One of Laura's role models was the preacher at the Mennonite Church,

Mr. Weaver. He was just an honest, caring person. I know Olivette says a lot of times, you know when we used to go to the conferences, he never left us. He was always with us and always seeing that we were all right. I know in church that we refer back to Mr. Weaver a lot of times, and I don't know if anybody else is offended by that... Mr. Weaver lived in the community. And a lot of times when people like that, when their children would get a little bit bigger, see they would move out. I guess they were afraid they'd wind up marrying an Indian. But David and Mark and Naoma, they went to school up here. And then times just really got so hard and they needed a pastor in Mississippi and that's when he moved to Mississippi.

Indians were one big family, but like many families there were divisions within the group. While there was physical separation by land between the communities, they were also separated by church and beliefs. Arlie shared, "Yeah, it was separate... you didn't really know 'em that well," referring to the people from other communities.

Jimmy added,

well, the church played a big part in your life and that's where you went and who you stayed with, depending on what church you went to. Right now, the Episcopal Church and the Mennonite Church people go back and

forth and kind of split. Mamaw went to the Mennonite and then she got up here and now she's up at the Episcopal. That's been going on forever.

I didn't talk with people from different communities at the same time, and have never heard them discuss the differences in their communities. However, they all shared that each of their communities were raised differently.

Actually growing up, you could tell a distinction between 'em as far as families and stuff like that. It was very distinct. It was more or less church oriented... Hedapeada, most all of us went to the Episcopal Church and then the Mennonites showed up and had that church down there. So those were two dominant churches here. And then out at Poarch, it was the Holiness Church, and then down there in Hog Fork, it was still kind of a Holiness Church but it was a little bit different.

Today there are still divisions that remain. People from generations one and two notice and point out these divisions mainly in churches and families. As I was talking with Mary about the divisions, we started talking about how these divisions play out in politics today, in our tribal elections. Mary said, "if you think about it, it is mostly family. It's strange how you can see that, but you do. And you still do to a certain extent." After elections in June 2011, Arlie looked at me and said, "well that worked out good, we have one from all three communities, Poarch Switch, Hog Fork, and Hedapeada." She talked about how each of the three elected tribal council members came from families from each of the three communities. This showed me that for this generation, these divisions are still very much present.

While the separation of communities still exist in the minds of this generation, throughout their lifetime Poarch has gone from separate communities to one larger Poarch community. Just as the previous generations shared, people in this generation have varying opinions for when they feel the communities came together to be one.

Rachel shared,

until school started and a bus picked you up, we never saw the ones from Hedapeada, like for summer. They had their church up there and we had our church. Like that picture in there, you won't find any of the ones from Hedapeada. None of them on that picture because they lived in another community. They had their own. (Christmas plays) Now, maybe when they'd have their Christmas play or we'd have our Christmas play, they may come and visit for that.

Mary made similar comments. She talked about how the three communities would get together for bible schools and a few other things.

All different ones would kind of get together and then different political things... that was the only school for most of us, and so if anything was going on it would be at one of the churches or at the school or something like that. When it was really bad weather, that's mostly where we would go to, out there at the school.

Church is a huge part of the community and has always been incorporated into the lives of this generation. Everyone was raised in a church in their community, which caused some separation between the communities in beliefs and values. Other parts of

their lives included their childhood experiences in these communities, with their families. All of these things contributed to the way these men and women were raised.

Childhood

Everyone in this generation grew up in one of the three Indian communities. Their living situations were very similar to the generation before. Some people lived with just their immediate families, while others lived with extended family. Mary shared that she doesn't ever remember her parents being together.

I can never really remember living with my Daddy ever. It's always been Mama and Granny and Granddaddy and (my Aunt and Uncle) and that bunch as far as I can remember... when I was going to school and everything, I lived in what used to be that little white house that used to sit up there. Granddaddy and Granny lived in that 'cause he was the caretaker for the church then, so we lived with them. At the time, Mama was working in Pensacola down there at a weenie place... a packing place and she stayed down there with some Walkers. She stayed down there through the week and then she'd come home on the weekends and so we just stayed with Granny and Granddaddy. I think (my Aunt and Uncle) lived in the house with us too when we lived up there.

Most of their Mothers did not have an official job outside of the home. They would do seasonal work "pickin up pecans," "working in the cornfield, pulling corn," and "gathering food and canning up stuff and putting it up." Rachel shared,

Mama's never worked outside of the home other than pickin up pecans.

She would go once a year. Mr. Pickren up at Uriah had a big orchard and

mama would get a load of hands together, about six or seven in the car. And mama would take 'em to pick up pecans. She could pick up a thousand pounds of pecans in a day. She would beat me altogether. I went a couple of times and got laid off from Vanity Fair and so I went with 'em to pick up pecans and it took all I could do to pick up 200 pounds. And mama weighed hers up and she'd have eight, 900 pounds of pecans.

Jimmy and Arlie's Mom never worked, except when

she worked out in the cornfield most of the time, helping Aunt Willie Lee and them pulling that corn. Mama used to can a lot of stuff. Gathering food and canning up stuff and putting it up. She liked to quilt and stuff like that. She canned a lot of stuff in the summertime, peas and beans and pickles and stuff like that. They'd get that corn, shuck that corn, take that corn to the mill and let 'em grind it for meal.

Even though their Mothers didn't have "official" jobs, the work their work was very important for feeding their families and taking care of their homes.

Everyone talked about how their Mother's jobs were to take care of the house and raise the children. Arlie and Jimmy remember,

Mama didn't have to work. Daddy never let her work. She always had us and she had to take care of us 'cause Daddy was gone to work. Back then, the women, they didn't work, that's their belief. Her job was to do take care of the kids and stuff, and men worked.

They shared stories of the houses they lived in growing up. Rachel remembers her Dad buying some land and a house.

It was just a shell of a house. It didn't have no ceilings in it and he went to Bateson's Furniture or one of the furniture stores and got mattress boxes... mattresses then come in a box instead of plastic like they do now, and they would throw the boxes away out behind the store and so Daddy went down there and got those mattress boxes and we used it like sheetrock and put that cardboard up... well it did help keep the wind out.

Laura also remembers the house that she lived in as a young child. She remembers, the house was located in Poarch Switch and it had a windmill.

I don't know how old I was when we moved up here... When they tore down Saint John's, Daddy bought the lumber and built our house on Martin Road. And we were the only house there. And Daddy would park over at Leola's and he'd have to walk across the field to our house, 'cause there wasn't a road... and then when they did have a road... he'd go way out there in the woods and circle around and come up by the house.

Laura remembers people building houses out of whatever materials they could find. Laura said,

they would go out and find a cypress pond and take the cypress and make the shingles. I don't know if they went to a sawmill to get the lumber for the floor. We were talking about that last night while we were sitting there making baskets. (One lady) she said they would get the cardboard and put the cardboard around the wall. She said they had wallpaper. I

said, I don't remember seeing any wallpaper... Without any insulation you'd freeze to death. But mama said Papa couldn't wait to move in so he moved (my brother) in before they got the windows fixed. He nailed cardboard over the windows. Well, a storm came and she said back then, they didn't have any radios so they wouldn't know when a storm was coming. The older people would look at the sky and if it changed and the animals sensed something was wrong, they called 'em gales back then. But anyway, she said that storm blew the cardboard away from the window and she said Papa had to stand at the window with a quilt over the window. But she said they just picked up and they just built houses anywhere. I said you can't do that now or they'll shoot you for trespassing. Mama said when they were growing up, there would be cows back in the woods and they would go and round 'em up and milk 'em. The "wood house" that Doris began describing in the previous generation is the house that Arlie and Jimmy grew up in.

We never had a brick house. We had a small wood house. We lived in that house all our life. The house started off as a... four-room house and then he just kept adding on. At first we didn't (have our own rooms), but Daddy added more on and we all had a different room. Yeah, he'd keep adding on. I remember we'd have so much covers, you'd be cold and blow smoke... And the houses were high on blocks and as young'uns we used to play... that was where we stayed, under the house. Chickens everywhere. The boys played with them more than what I did.

As I listened to everyone talk about their houses I learned many things that I didn't know and would have never thought to ask. One thing was that they didn't have grass in their yards. They all shared,

they used to not have a speck of grass in their yard. It was always swept clean. You'd go out in the woods and get these long bushes sort of like and you'd tie 'em together with some rags and you'd sweep your yard.

We didn't have grass. It was swept clean all the time. You could eat off that ground, it was so clean.

Laura can remember her Grandmother living in a log house that had a spring across the road from it. This place is where a bridge is now, over in some bushes but she doesn't think that the spring is there anymore. She shared that her Grandmother, "she would wash her clothes there. She would boil 'em in that big iron pot and rinse 'em there and she would hang 'em on the bushes to dry. I can remember her doing that." Mary remembers having a community wash place.

You can't tell too much about it now, where the creek used to be. Up from the creek there was another little old spring like thing and people would bundle their clothes up and take 'em down there. It was like a community washing place to wash your clothes... I can remember most of the time when we lived in this little white house up there, we had just wire and everything and you just kind of threw your clothes over it or whatever. We had some barb wire too that you used just so they would hang on there a little bit and not blow away. I don't know too much about clothespins though. They came a little later... And then when we'd fix clotheslines

and that's when clothespins started showing up. You'd have a line of wire strung from one post to the other and you'd have this plank thing and have a little thing cut in it so you could stick the clothesline, to kind of push it up. So if you're up higher you wouldn't be touching the ground and your clothes would kind of flap in the wind and they'd get dry quicker.

As you can hear in the stories, growing up, these men and women didn't have very many resources. Mary shared,

I can't exactly remember when (we got electricity). I can remember having to do everything by lanterns. We didn't have inside plumbing either. You'd have to heat the water on the stove to wash dishes, and usually you'd wash dishes in a big old dishpan. You had to pump your own water with a hand pump. We had the outside toilet. I can remember all that.

It was very common for the children to have to help around the house. To wash clothes and take baths, Rachel remembers having to pump water.

You pumped water getting ready for the next day. Mama would do the washing while we was gone to school, but you had to have that water ready for her to do the washing.

To take bathes, Rachel explained,

we would pump the water one day for the next day to get a bath and you would set your #3 washtub up behind the house so the water would warm up from the sun during the day so you could get a bath at night... And in the wintertime, everybody got spit baths. We had a big reservoir on the

side of the stove that held what, five or six gallons of water? And you would just get a bath in a pan, you know, washing in the wintertime. But in the summertime you've got the #3 washtub.

Rachel talked about how her and her siblings split the work amongst themselves. Rachel was the person in her family that did the outside work, mainly farming, and her sister was the inside person.

(My Sister) would raise whichever baby mama had at the time and she didn't know nothing about getting outside. But I guess that's the reason I love it now, 'cause that's all I ever grew up to do. But if we was speaking about what did you do for pleasure or play stuff, but we didn't ever, you didn't get a break. You come in from school, you had to pump water, you had to cut wood and feed cows, milk cows... everybody done that. You went to school. Soon as you got off the bus, Daddy always had a big farm and he worked in the shipyard... but as soon as we got off the bus, we had to get our clothes changed. Mama would usually have us a snack or something to eat, and you got off of the bus, you went in the field. If you was picking cotton, pulling corn, or whatever... At nighttime, in the spring you started, pulling weeds out of soybeans or chopping cotton or whatever... I mean you worked hard and that was just the normal thing. Everybody was doing it so you didn't think, well why do we have to do something 'cause so and so's children ain't doing it? But it was everything, either you got wood and water or you didn't have nothing to eat and drink... But we had a pump out there right behind the house, but

you'd have to prime it. Pump water, you know, for washing... It was fun. Everybody had their job to do. Eat and then work til dark. Dating was working in fields. Me and (my husband) picked cotton together to date. Load on back of (my) Uncle's truck to go pick cotton.

They all talked about transportation. The older people in the generation remember not having vehicles and getting them. Rachel shared,

there was not no automobiles. I mean I'm 67 years old but I remember us walking to church. We would walk from there and Sister Lily Mae and them went down here to church with us and we'd meet in those woods over by the pine trees and walk on through the woods together going to church. And then when we get back to that spot, Lily Mae and her children would go that way and we'd walk on to our house.

Laura shared, "I can remember riding the horse with Papa to (a) store over there in Freemanville. He was a Black man, he had a store and uh, Papa had a horse named Ted and I would ride... he would put me on that horse with him and I'd ride with him to the grocery store." Mary remembers her

Granddaddy had an old Ford, a real old-timey one. Mama used to travel by mule and wagon a lot. I can't remember much about the mule and wagon. A lot of times if we were going places, if somebody had a big truck you'd ride on the back of the truck.

From these stories, you can see that to get from one place to another they walked, rode on a horse or mule and wagon, or caught a ride with somebody that was fortunate enough to have a truck.

When they did get vehicles, they had to learn to drive them. Rachel talked about her experience learning to drive.

I learned to drive before mama did. I was 16 years old and driving a tractor really. Daddy taught me to drive the tractor and I did the disking and plowing and whatever and mama couldn't even drive. But uh, she gradually started driving a little bit. We'd take the truck and go over in the back of the field to weigh up cotton in the evening. She did learn to drive. As soon as I got 16, I was ready to get my driver's license 'cause I had been driving, you know, driving the old truck or driving the tractor or whatever... Daddy one of only one in community that had a truck. He had land and others picked corn and cotton for Daddy.

Others in the community that had transportation would take people off to work for people that had fields or work for them to do to earn money. Laura remembers going away with her Father to nearby towns to do work.

Daddy would take us... all the teenagers went to Baldwin County and worked. (A man), he farmed and he had a potato shed. And we would go down there and stay all week and work. We rode in the back of the truck. He'd haul them youngun's down there. That's what we would do when school was out, and after school. After potato season was over, then he would take us and we'd pick cotton. And when Daddy stopped doing it, see (another tribal member) would haul us. We'd have the best time... You'd leave here in the morning and you *might* make it home at 8:00 or 9:00 at night. I remember one time her old truck tore up and we had to

wait until the man that she was picking cotton he took her to get a part and helped her fix the truck. Nobody knew where you were 'cause nobody had a telephone... He would also take people to North Carolina and they would stay up there, and pick tobacco. Daddy never did take anybody to Wisconsin, but Eugene would. All of these boys, they didn't have an education, there wasn't anything here. They just worked seasonal work and when they went up there they met girls, married, and raised their families there.

Many people in the community earned their money by doing fieldwork as Laura described. After working in the fields, Rachel shares, "Saturday was pay off and he would take people on the back of his truck to town to buy stuff with their money."

Once people got electricity things were done a little differently and life was a little easier. Washing was one of the things people remembered changing. Mary shared that they

used to have those wringer type washing machines where you'd have big washtubs. With the wringer type washing machine, you'd put your clothes in there. That's when we had electricity. It would just pull 'em right on through there to wring out the water and everything, and then you'd put 'em in another big old wash tub for water to kind of rinse 'em and then put 'em back through there and wring the water out again... Aunt Clara used to have one for ever so long, even after we were living up here.

She had that old wringer type washing machine on her back porch for ever so long.

As Mary looks back on the way they washed clothes, she said, “it has come a long way. We’ve got a washing machine and a dryer now. It’s not like it was then.”

As you have heard, the older people in this generation grew up without electricity. However, the younger people in the generation, Jimmy and Arlie shared that they “always had electricity. However,

we didn’t have insulation in the house, and it was an older house. We didn’t have central heat. We had a fireplace. We had gas heaters. We used to dry our clothes sometimes or jeans and we used to have to put ‘em in front of the fireplace and dry ‘em. Um hmm, sure did. We didn’t have none of that kind of stuff. We’ve come a *long* way. God’s been good to us.

Jimmy and Arlie shared, one thing that they remember getting was a telephone. They remember,

the party line, the phone line. Everybody could listen. If you had a phone, everybody could listen to everybody talk, ‘cause when they called your number, the phone rang everywhere. Everybody could listen to your conversation. Yeah, you didn’t do that though. You got your butt beat. We didn’t do that... they might talk three-way, like you do a three-way line. They might do that, but you didn’t play with the phones and stuff or you get your butt beat.

When talking about food, Arlie remembers “we always had plenty of food.” Jimmy added, “we didn’t eat it if you didn’t raise it. We didn’t have much more.” Arlie shared,

mama didn’t drive... when I got on up, I went with (my aunt) or somebody to get the groceries... We had to go get flour, sugar, and bread. Stuff was cheap back then... Stuff wasn’t expensive like it is now. I mean, you’d go to the grocery store and spend \$25.00 and have two buggies full. I remember when bread was ten cents a loaf. Sugar was five cents a pack.

We talked about the poverty in the community and how people just didn’t have much. Arlie and Jimmy shared, “ we had more than other kids did. Daddy went off and worked, so we had more.” The only way for their parents to make money to support their families was going off to find work. Because their Dad went away to work, they were able to have the things they needed. While they had more than others, their “more” meant having necessities such as food and clothes, and having extras such as a car and house. Arlie and Jimmy shared,

Now, one thing for sure, we had a lot of food. Daddy always bought stuff in big boxes. We always had to share with other people ‘cause we always had nice clothes, we always had food... mama can’t sew, so we bought ‘em (our clothes) from here in town... B. C. Moores, and there was a store called Thompson’s Greater Fair. We used to buy a lot of stuff from Greater Fair. We found a lot of stuff at Tot Shop... And we got new clothes... once we got back home, we had to take off our good clothes and

put on old clothes. We couldn't play in our new clothes. We had to put on old clothes and put the good clothes up. We didn't have many. We had to take care of 'em.

Everyone talked about how they were expected to behave as kids. Arlie talked about how they would get in trouble if they didn't "mind." "Oh, it's nothing to get a whipping. Now, we got some whoopings, and you minded too. You could get a whipping by more than your mama and Daddy too. Your aunts or whoever, they could whip you."

Arlie and Laura talked about how their parents were strict on them growing up because they were girls. Laura shared,

Daddy wouldn't let me go much. I mean, he might let you go on Friday night and you might get to go on Saturday night. But Sunday, that was it. You came in and I remember every Sunday night, Daddy would make us polish our shoes and get our books ready for school, and that was it. And you went to bed at 8:00. You didn't watch TV.

Arlie shared that she, "I never hardly got to go anywhere, 'cause see, I was a girl...back then they wouldn't let girls go do stuff like they do boys. They wouldn't let girls go off and stuff. They were strict back then." Arlie remembers that her brother,

Jimmy had a car before I did. A little green Datsun car. He had a car he drove, but I rode with him. He dropped me off at school and he and (our youngest brother) would ride together, but they stayed 'cause they played football. They played football. Mama didn't drive. (Our oldest brother) is five years old than us. He was gone.

Jimmy responded, “really, not knowing I wanted a car or nothing like that, it was more that mama couldn’t drive. I didn’t know it until now, but that’s what it was.”

Everyone grew up in a community of family. Their means and resources were limited, but their love for one another was far from that. There were many differences in living situations between the oldest and youngest members of this generation. As time went by more resources and opportunities came available for this community changing people’s ways of living. Electricity and transportation had huge affects on living situations. As you can see in some of these stories already, the communities were close and one of the things that made them so close was their participation with one another in their everyday lives.

Participation

People in this generation grew up with each other, doing activities in the community. Church was something that most everyone in the community participated in weekly as well as through Christmas plays, bible schools, summer activities, or just church functions. Community activities that were passed down from the previous generations were swimming in the creek, and growing up together. However, community activities that emerged in this generation were watching TV at people’s houses, going on day trips to nearby towns, and visiting relatives that moved away.

Swimming or going to a creek was a fun time shared by everyone. Laura shared memories of going swimming “over there where the pumping station is. It was a big ditch there and when it would rain, we’d go swimming. That was a good time... We would stay at the creek all day long.” Laura has fond memories from that creek and shared, “I wish the tribe would dig that out and make it like it used to be.”

Rachel also remembers going swimming. However because she lived in a different community, she “used to go up there to Wet Weather Creek or either out here to Bell Creek or the gravel pit all the time. That was our favorite pastime.” Just like Rachel’s Mother Mae, she “never went swimming in our bathing suit. If I was going swimming I went swimming in a dress or denim something or the other that was thick enough that you couldn’t see through.” They didn’t wear bathing suits because of religious reasons.

Some of the games they remember were making and playing with toys, playing together were baseball, red rover, and Tarzan. The older women described the toys they used to make and play with. “We used to have soda cans or syrup cans and stuff like that and fill ‘em up with sand and poke holes in ‘em, put wire in ‘em, and pull ‘em like trucks.” Jimmy shared this story,

We used to go out in the woods and look for vines and swing like Tarzan.

And there was a gravel pit by the house. We’d build caves. It’s a wonder we didn’t get buried. We stayed outside all the time. We let (our cousin) climb up in a little tree and tried to shake him out.

They also loved to play baseball, which was informal until they got out of school and then “that was when they first got started and they’d go different places and it wasn’t really anything really organized. It was just something they did for fun and it escalated and got better and better.”

Both Rachel and Mary remember having a play house and playing house. Rachel shared that she “had a playhouse and cook with fires and garden stuff in my play house. We had our own boilers and everything.” In the woods, Mary “would use pine straw a

lot of times and make our houses with it, square off things for different rooms and whatever.” Arlie also loved to cook, but she used her Mom’s kitchen.

I make pies and candy and all that kind of stuff. I used to cook a lot. I started cooking when I was about ten... I used to cook popcorn on the stove too... you have to use that grease and plain popcorn. You can see the burn mark where I got burned.

As Arlie looked at her burn mark, she remembered these stories. She made me think about how scars are permanent marks that capture a story that is always remembered.

Other ways that these men and women participated with one another was in church. Rachel shared,

When we were growing up, our age group (a bunch of teenagers), we walked. Sunday evening, we went from one house to another. A lot of times they wouldn’t let us go have lunch at their house but as soon as you got through eating lunch, you’d all walk and get together and be together and go to church that night, and then you may get to go spend the night with somebody but most of the time it was time to go home after church.

Because televisions were first introduced during this generation, everyone remembers going to each other’s houses and having community and family events around the TV. Laura remembers that

Wolf was the first one in the community to have a television and then Daddy got one. Saturday night, *Gunsmoke* would come on and everybody

would be at the house watching *Gunsmoke*. Every Saturday night, we had a living room full.

Jimmy and Arlie added, “I can remember when we were little, we didn’t have a TV. We’d go to Granny’s and watch Elvis.”

Going out of town did not happen often, but Jimmy and Arlie remember going on day trips to Mobile, a town that is about 50 miles from Poarch.

We used to have that white Chevrolet truck and Mama and (her sister) would be in the front and all of us young’uns would be on the back of that truck, headed towards Mobile. Sometimes going to movies or go shopping, go to wrestling or whatever... I used to love wrestling. Oh yeah, we went there many a times. I used to get a ringside seat, doing like this. (punching) We used to go to that wrestling... No, it didn’t cost that much back then.

In the summer they remember going to the beach and Little River. These were all places that were in distance close if you had a way to get there.

Though going on vacation as children was unusual, Arlie and Jimmy shared stories of going with their family to Disney World, California, and Illinois.

We went to Disney World one time when we were little; we went down there and stayed there. We rode in a big old, long station wagon with (my aunt’s) young’uns and me and (my youngest brother) and Jimmy. They’re like our brothers and sisters really, ‘cause we grew up with them. Yeah, if we went somewhere, (our aunt) was the one that took us. Yeah, she always took us wherever we wanted to go, ‘cause Mama never did drive.

Arlie also talked about a trip that she went on. “I went to California one time when I was about thirteen-years-old. Me and Granny and (my Aunt) went to California to see (my Uncle).” Then, Arlie and Jimmy talked about going to visit another Uncle in Illinois.

We rode the train. I remember jumping them cars. One car to another car.

I was young then, I probably didn’t know any better. I was probably about ten or twelve... One of his girls was born. He was working for Goodyear.

See, probably... Lord, ten families went up to Illinois and worked for

Goodyear. Whenever an Indian would get a good job, another one would

go, another one would go, and they’d keep going. Yeah, they paid good

money and a bunch of families there, and then Goodyear busted up and

sent a bunch of ‘em to Gadsden, TX, close to home; that’s how he got

back.

Participation in the community was the glue that kept the community together.

Everyone grew up together and was raised together so they got to know each other, form relationships, and care for one another. Through participation in the community and cultural activities, the Poarch Creek carry on their history. Culture is one of the things that makes Poarch Creeks unique and different from others.

Culture

A conversation about Poarch Creek culture was extremely hard for us to have.

Not because people didn’t want to talk about it, but because being Indian was something they were and lived throughout their everyday lives, and there weren’t specific cultural things that we could think of. The previous generation defined culture as things that were passed down to them and things that they did that were different than non-Indians. This

generation had similar conversations around culture. Something that kept coming up was food that Indians cook that others don't cook. Things such as rice and tomato gravy, salmon and rice, "spam in an egg salad," and ho cakes, which is "bread that you cook in the skillet, on top of the stove." All of these foods were mentioned as specific things that Indian people in our community discussed making.

Other stories that the previous generation named as cultural that was passed down were funerals and woodsawings. In this generation, Laura was the only person that remembered the woodsawing that the previous generation talked about. "We would go to her house and they would have a log saw and cut trees for firewood. People would bring cakes and they'd make cakes and sit up. They would cut up wood. I can just vaguely remember that." Jimmy shares,

One memory I have that people don't do today is that... and I don't know if it was we were being young and scared or what. But when people used to die, they would bring the body back to the house and leave it open all night and then bury 'em the next day. Granny, all of 'em were done like that. That was the Indian way. They didn't ever want to leave 'em down there by themselves.

Arlie and Jimmy had a conversation about whether or not this is how they would like their funerals. Arlie shared, "No. No, not really. But they believed in it... Mama wants somebody to stay up with her all night... She did at one time."

Some of the stories you have already heard are ones of growing up in this generation in a community and family through living, participation, and culture. Another aspect of the community was education. In the previous generation we know that schools

came into the community, but were Indian places. In this generation, though the school is a different facility, the community still has an Indian school, which is incorporated into the community.

School

In 1950, the county built the school that the previous generation fought for. Poarch Consolidated School also known as Poarch Elementary was built in the Poarch community. It was “located on 18 acres of land provided by the Episcopal Church for a token sum of \$1.00 and for the first time children were allowed to ride school buses to junior and senior high schools in nearby White communities” (Poarch Band of Creeks, 1980, pp. 13-14). Everyone in this generation went to 1st through 6th grade at the Poarch Consolidated School. Mary shared, “at the Poarch Consolidated School we had three teachers and classrooms 1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 5th and 6th. The school was pretty sufficient for then. We had White teachers: Mrs. White, Bryers, and Alverson.” The Poarch Consolidated School also known as Poarch Elementary remained open from 1950 to 1970.

The school is a place where all of the communities would come together. Laura remembers,

Daddy and Wolf were trustees at the school and to raise money they had brought a projector and Daddy would show movies. They bought a screen and projector and they would charge so much, probably about a dime, for people to come in and watch the movie. Nobody had television. I remember we’d go to the school and watch those movies.

Rachel remembers this also. She added,

the whole community came together and packed the auditorium out. Everybody was watching that movie and you couldn't hardly see the thing. It was a big old screen... and I don't know if it was every week or every month but the school bus would run and it would go to the school and you'd watch a film. They rented a film or something. It was some kind of what you call, the Disney type film... the film was on a big old wheel, you've probably seen pictures of 'em, and that was a community project. And all the communities came together and everybody pretty well loaded down on the school bus and went to the school. Mama was PTA President for a long time and she was in on that, with getting the projector for the school and our community project coming together. Boy, that was uptown to have a film in school.

This story shows the significance of the school in the community. It shows how the school brought the three Indian communities together.

Many of the people talked about different teachers and people in the church that they thought were "good people" and they "looked up to". Laura shared,

I guess the person I look up to now is my mama and her Daddy. But when I was growing up, other than mama... when we were going to school. Miss Broughton the teacher was just so talented and she was our first and second grade teacher. I used to think she was the prettiest lady. And you know, she just cared about you. She was nice and friendly and she was just different from any teacher that we had up there.

One of the teachers that many other people mentioned and thought very highly of was Ms. Bradshaw. Laura said, “Miss Bradshaw was one of the people I really admired... She was just a sweet lady. She accepted you for who you were.” Arlie added, she was

a lady that really cared about us... she was a good woman... she had a caring heart... she was a sweet lady. She’d come down here and stay for days and days, weeks and weeks. She was a good lady. She really loved Indians... she was real educated.

Laura added,

she lived in Birmingham. During the summer, she would come to the Episcopal Church and she would have Bible School. We had the best times. They would take us swimming. I know we went to a creek somewhere and swam. But you know, with us, you didn’t have a car. I mean, all the week when school was out, you didn’t do anything. But maybe on a Saturday, you would go to town. Everybody would go to town and we would stay in the movie all the day. That was when we got a little bit older. But we always looked forward to Miss Bradshaw... she introduced us to things that we didn’t have. She came into the community and we just looked forward to bible school during the summer because we didn’t get to do a lot of things.

Arlie and Jimmy added, “the Episcopal Church would bring kids from college up north down and help every year, to do something every summer.” Laura shared, “years and years later, when she was in a retirement home in Birmingham, we went up there one

weekend... I went over there to see her. I think maybe that might have been the last time I ever saw her.” Jimmy added, “I went to her funeral.”

Arlie remembers another teacher with the Episcopal Church that was very helpful to her, leaving an impact on her life.

Ms. Robertson helped me learn how to read. She used to teach me a lot of stuff on the side, tutor. She’s the one that came through there and found out that there were a lot of us that were dyslexic. And see, Jimmy’s dyslexic but they didn’t put him in it. They put me and (my cousin) and a bunch of people, but I don’t know why they didn’t put Jimmy in it. I had to go to a school down there in Brewton. I used to ride with this man... they took me up to Brewton, to a school down there... it was in the summertime... for dyslexia. You learned all the sounds... They didn’t do it in school. They had a separate thing that Ms. Robertson used to help people at the old school. She would help you learn how to sound out letters and words and all that stuff, to help you to get better and be better.

These men and women share memories of the Indian school in their community that all of the communities attended. Though there are few stories of this school, the ones that are told are of the communities using the school as a place to come together and of the teachers in the school and church that had a big influence on these men and women. After finishing school, all of these men and women were married and started a family, some in this community and others outside of the community.

Adulthood

Marriage in this generation was a little different than the previous. Laura and Rachel are the oldest in this generation and only ones I talked with that married tribal members. There were no stories of running away and getting married or even of getting married at young ages before graduating high school. Rachel shared,

I finished school in 1960. I got married in '62... Brother Stark had just become our pastor and we just got married here at the house. I had a white dress but it was an old dress, I bought just a plain dress. It was not a wedding dress, it was just a white dress and he just had on regular dress pants and a shirt, black pants and a white shirt. We didn't have a best man or best woman or nothing like that. The preacher came and married us and that was it. We didn't have a reception or anything... And didn't have a camera. I was 20 and I had been working at Vanity Fair and he was working, and so we had saved up enough to get what we needed to get started... (my husband) and I lived together until he got killed in 1990.

The younger people in this generation had more formal weddings in their church with white dresses, tuxes, flowers, and cameras to mark the occasion. The interesting thing about this generation is that the older people married or had children with tribal members and the younger people married White people. When talking with them about this, Laura shared that her and her husband "grew up together". Jimmy and Arlie shared that they met and dated White people when they "went to school together." When Mary and Jimmy got married they moved to the towns where their partners were from. Mary

moved to a nearby town and Jimmy moved to “town” in Atmore. It was common among this generation for the Indian person to move to where their non-Indian partner lived.

After getting married many people began their lives in a small house by themselves. Laura and her husband live in “the sugar shack.” She described what the houses were like when she was an adult.

The houses back then, they didn’t have a living room. You just had a kitchen and bedrooms. We heated with a fireplace and that’s all we had. When we moved here, we had that fireplace but I had electric heaters and had one in the hall. We had that fireplace and we would have to chop wood. That was (my son’s) job to bring in the wood. (My husband) would be gone to work and it was just us. I was working at Head Start and that’s when they were in (a local elementary school) ‘cause they had already closed that school. I’d always fix the wood in the fireplace in the morning. They would get off the bus just a few minutes before I got home and I wouldn’t let them fool with fire. But I said, y’all just keep your coats on until I get home ‘cause I’d be home right after they were. I was coming down the road and I saw smoke coming out of that chimney. He had already beat me to make a fire. That little boy would just do anything. Rachel also remembers, “I used to saw wood all the time. Me and (my husband) did. With the old crosscut saw.”

For food, many people didn’t have much. They ate salt meat, squirrels, possum, coons, chitlins, and anything they could catch. Laura remembers always looking forward to Sunday dinners. Laura explained, “we had fried chicken every Sunday. I always

looked forward to having that chicken... you didn't go to the store to pick it up - you had to kill it.”

The ideals of family that were passed down to Rachel she felt were important to teach her children.

If you instill that into your child as they're growing up, that child will always have plenty. But if it's not instilled in that child when they're growing up, they're going to have a life of misery because one minute they can't make ends meet and the next minute they may have a little bit, it's going to be an up and down situation.

All men and women in this generation have worked all of their lives in different occupations. Laura “worked for Head Start for 38 years... I started out as an aide and they moved me up to a teacher and then I was a supervisor when I quit.” Rachel and Mary both worked at Vanity Fair, a sewing factory, when they finished high school. Rachel shared,

Vanity Fair was in Atmore and everybody, as soon as you got out of high school, you went, put in an application at Vanity Fair or either there was another sewing factory in Frisco City, Landlovers. And so as soon as I finished high school I put in my application and got called to Vanity Fair. I went to work, seemed like September of 1960, the year I finished school. I worked there for 17 years and then they was cutting back. I got laid off from there and I left there and I went to Frisco City and worked at Landlovers for 3 years. And all those years, I really wanted to go back to school, so in 1980, Reid State started a class in Atmore, LPN class. So I

got laid off from Landlovers and I went and put in my application and got accepted at Reid State. I went through that program, 18-month program for LPN and then right after I finished nursing school, I got on at the hospital in the OB Department and I worked there 20 years, labor and delivery, delivering babies and taking care of babies, until I got ready to retire.

Mary shared, “after that (Vanity Fair) I went to stay in Georgia with my sister and worked at a cookie plant for one year. I came home and started working at Masland and worked there until I retired last year.”

Arlie and Jimmy both took advantage of the CETA program which was a program the tribe had that paid them to learn a trade or get a certificate that would help with a future job. Arlie “went to work at the nursing home, they paid for me to take this course to be a certified dietary manager... I’ve been there 29 years. I have to do paperwork, visitations, cook, parties, whatever, order groceries.” Jimmy has had many jobs. One of his jobs was working on the tugboat.

I got on the boat ‘cause Daddy worked on the boat, and it’s easy and it made good money. With no education, you can make as much on a boat as you could with an education, so that’s what I did. Then I got on there and I had back surgery. The tribe had more jobs. I started out with something with the tribe and then I ended up in my own business doing something for myself. Then I got into tribal politics and so ever since I’ve been out of high school, I’ve been... I was on the dance team, so I’ve been involved with the tribe all my life... I’ve been working with wood all my

life. When Daddy would come home, he'd go buy an old building and we'd have to tear it down and build a barn and add on to the house. We were always building something or tearing something down... Like an old house that somebody didn't want, and they would give it to you to tear it down. Some of that wood in there would be good, and you could reuse it... So I ended up as a general contractor.

In addition to their other jobs, both Jimmy and Laura served on the council.

Laura "was on the council a lot of years ago," when her children were small. Jimmy was on the council for "about nine or ten years... I think I was about 22 when I first got on. As soon as I got off the boat, after I hurt my back, I went on the council." Throughout their adult lives, many of the people mentioned serving the tribe in some capacity on boards such as the Best Western board, housing board, enrollment committee, cultural authority, and Creek Indian Enterprises committee.

The adults of this Indian community have grown up here and lived in or around the community all of their adult lives. They share stories of what they feel make up the Indian community including their community, family, participation, work in the community, and marriages. This generation saw many changes over their lifetimes as opportunities were made available which affected their living and education. However, with all of these changes, the ideals of family and community passed on from the previous generation remained very similar. The changes came not as much with who the community is as a whole but how they are in relation to others. Though they are internally the same Indians as the generation before, the external image of a legal, racial, and cultural Indian changes.

Indian in Relation to Others

In this generation, being Indian is a racial identity created in relation to others. Being Indian is also a purposefully created identity in fighting to become legally Indian by fighting for federal recognition. Being racially Indian is an identity that both them and others recognized. However, in fighting for federal recognition, the community had to plan how they were going to nationally show others that they were an Indian community and that Indians still existed in Alabama. The history chapter shows us how they do this. you know how they did this. Some of the roles this generation played in the fight for federal recognition was as children by being on the dance team, as community members helping raise money to send Calvin to Washington, and then as adults by helping with papers and logistics and serving on the tribal council.

Racial Identity

In the previous generation, being Indian is a racial identity. This identity is carried into this generation. Being racially Indian meant being Indian, separate from the White and Black races in the surrounding communities. This meant a physical separation of a group of Indian people in many aspects of their lives including where they lived and where they went to school.

Location. The Indian community was geographically located outside of town, which meant that until people got transportation, it was difficult to get to town. However, people came to sell things in the communities. Rachel shared,

No, we didn't have no refrigerator. We had ice but you only got ice maybe once a week... from the ice truck... And we'd get a fifty-pound block of ice if you had some money to get it. Most of us didn't have no

money... fifty pounds of ice was about all you could get in the refrigerator and it would only last three or four days. 'Cause you would have to chip you some ice off if you wanted.

Everyone talked about rolling stores in this generation. Rachel shared, About once a week, the Rolling Store would come through. It was a truck... looked like a big body on the back of it and he had pretty well anything you needed as far as grocery wise and always have some candy, penny pieces of candy... We'd watch for that Rolling store 'cause mama would always get us a nickel or dime's worth of candy. And that's where she got most of the groceries, anything she needed... But we'd watch for that Rolling Store so it couldn't go by. Mom could be busy in the house but we'd holler when that Rolling Store was coming 'cause we knew we was gonna get that penny piece of candy. There was kool-aid in a bottle that was sort of big around at the bottom and then it went up straight for a ways, but it used to make a lot of kool-aid.

Mary added her stories of the Rolling stores,

Well, I wasn't very old. I guess I was probably in my early kindergarten years, like first through sixth grade or whatever. Rolling stores would come by and it was just like you'd step up and walk in and pick out whatever you wanted. Usually little knick-knack stuff like sodas and cookies and candies.

Arlie remembers her favorite snack, "charlie chips. They used to come down with all kind of stuff: potato chips, chocolate chip cookies, everything." Jimmy said they stopped

coming, “when everybody started getting vehicles. Nobody had a car so the storekeeper would come around and sell. When people started getting vehicles then there was no purpose.”

While the Rolling Store was a memory that everyone shared, each person also remembered other stores or places where they bought different things. Mary remembers going to her aunt’s house to buy sweets.

I can remember that Aunt Alice used to sell cookies, those coconut square and round cookies. We used to get ‘em three for a penny... She used to sell those and we’d save up our pennies and walk over to her house and buy cookies... I don’t remember where she got ‘em from but that was her little thing: having cookies to sell. And it used to be a treat too.

Rachel remembers, “Briscoe’s used to sell peanuts out of the truck.” Jimmy remembers that his aunt and uncle

Used to run a farm and they had a fruit truck that would come around once a week. They ran that a long time. Yeah, we used to buy all kinds of watermelons, all kinds of fruits, sweet potatoes, oranges, apples, everything. That was like a rolling truck but it was vegetables and fruit.

Jimmy and Arlie lived by a “man that worked with the milk company... and if we needed milk, we always got milk from him... We’d walk up and buy milk.”

In addition to selling food, Mary said there used to be a Watkins man come around in his car selling those liniments... You’d rub... sort of like pain medicines and stuff like that.

Liniments that you rubbed on your legs and everything for aches and pains

and stuff like that. You can still order some of 'em out of some of these books you get in the mail sometimes. You can see some of the Watkins stuff down at... I think David's Catfish has some stuff on that wall. They have flavorings like lemon and vanilla.

Communities were separated geographically, and very much by race. Because of limited transportation, people came into the communities selling things giving them access to stuff that they didn't have access to before. Though separated by location, another major separation was in school. Throughout this generation, much happened in schools within and outside of the community, which affected Indians as a community and race of people.

School. Lots of laws were passed which affected these men and women's junior high and high school experiences. In 1950, Indian students were allowed to attend White junior and senior high schools and were provided buses from their communities to these schools. In 1969, a court order required the state of Alabama to desegregate all school systems. In 1970, Poarch Elementary/Poarch Consolidated School was closed and children went to public schools. (Poarch Band of Creeks, 1980) All of these experiences affected education in many ways. Unlike the generation before them, they were now allowed to get an education in their county past the 6th grade. With these new opportunities were schools that were run by non-Indian people and the non-Indian community, which positioned Indians as sort of an in between race, sometimes separate, sometimes White, and at other times Indian.

Integration with Whites. The oldest people in this generation remember being some of the first Indians to be integrated into White schools. Rachel shared, "Uncle

Calvin really got it to where the Indians could go to school.” Indian students were “bused to the (the town’s) Jr. High and Sr. High School. Went to school Indians and White people.” Laura added, “they didn’t have the middle school or high school. The YMCA was the 7th through the 12th grade school.” Rachel shared,

I am in the earlier generation of the ones that did get to go to school, but I never will forget... Bennie was about the first one that went on to school out of this community, and then (my Sister) and them age group was next. And of course I’m two years younger than she is.

The bussing situation was something that everyone talked extensively about. The bussing situation was a daily reminder for these men and women of their separation as Indian people. Rachel, Laura, and Mary recapture their bussing experience for us.

I went to the consolidated school through the sixth grade, but then when we passed to the seventh grade. Uncle Dan was our bus driver, he would pick us up and we would ride with him to Terry’s store. There we met Bunk Vickory’s bus... Bunk’s bus hauled the Indians and... we all went and picked up Indians through Robinsonville and on out that way and around because some of the drivers didn’t want to come out there and pick us up... And all of those elementary children, they would put them off there and we would go on into town.

Mary said her “Granddaddy drove the bus and since we lived in his house with him it was easy for me to get to the bus and to school.” However, Laura shared,

We were the first ones to catch the bus and the last ones to get off... Oh, it would be late when we got home in the afternoon. We’d have to get up

early. But then, I don't know what grade we were in when they changed the bus route and they made us catch the Huxford and McCullough bus that came down the road. Now it didn't go house to your house. All of them over back that way would have to meet the bus at the old school... I would walk across that ditch and catch the bus with William and Buford. (My brother) would not ride that bus in the morning. He would walk, I don't care if it was storming and freezing cold, he would not get on that bus... Sometimes he would catch one of Daddy's trucks and they would drop him off to Dan's. He wouldn't ride that bus in the morning 'cause we would have to fight for our seat.

In these stories, Indian children had to ride separate buses. The bus drivers were people from the communities or people that liked Indians, because some people refused to drive the Indian bus. The buses kept Indian children separate from White children, even though the schools "integrated" them at this point in time. They had long bus routes, which meant that they were away from their families longer, and couldn't help as much around the house.

They also shared memories of what schools were like for them inside the actual buildings. Rachel shared,

It was a good school system because see, it was not integrated. There was no Blacks in the school at that time. It was a good school system and the only difference was they knew that you was Indians and you were shunned. At recess or lunch... when you got to a table, no one else would want to sit with you. You know, the little group of Indians grouped up

and sat at a table. There wasn't no fellowship. You was there and you got what you could, uh, education wise, but it was... you were still segregated because you, your group of Indians grouped together and none of the Whites would have nothing to do with you... I remember, we really had it rough in school. We were looked down on. They had to let us go but it didn't mean that we didn't have a lot of people looking down on us because we were Indian.

Mary remembers having mostly White teachers in the junior and senior high school. She shared, "they didn't like the idea of us being down there. We were seen as low class. We weren't truly welcomed. There were many more that had it worse than me and were discriminated against a lot more."

Laura added,

Indians had a rough go of it. You better not tell nobody you're Indian or they could look at you and tell who you were. If you were a McGhee or Rolin then they automatically knew that you were Indian. But see, we were (a different last name) and, had it a little bit easier. But I know (my friend) was a grade lower or two, and she was really dark... And I have been asked at school was she Black, and I said, no she's Indian.

Indian people were treated badly by White people in schools, which these women remember clearly. These experiences tell us a lot about race in the south in schools. While people don't explicitly discuss divisions, their stories give us insight in the divisions between White, Black, and Indian people.

Racial relations in school carried over into dating and relationships. Rachel disused how White people wouldn't date Indians. Rachel said that at school, all the boys would say, you don't want to fool with them girls 'cause you can't go out there and pick 'em up. You'll get scalped if you go out there in that community. You know, it was that kind of talk... All the time. You heard it because you was an Indian girl, you didn't associate with none of the rest of them, the people in school. But it wasn't true though. Just a lot of talk.

The comments that people made show the thoughts that others had about Indian people.

These women reflected on their schooling experience. One of the things they all talked about was people that are Indian now that "wouldn't associate with Indian people in school."

I was in the grade with one and... he didn't like it not a bit because they asked him did he have some Indian in him. You know how you have to do that pedigree sheet in one of the grades, 9th grade or something, back then. And so whenever he was asked was he of Indian descent, he said, I might have a little bit. That's just the way he put it, and he hung his head. Me and (two other girls) got up there and we said, we're Indian. But um, (he), I might have a little bit. (He) probably had as much or more than I did.

This memory shows the shame that people had in being Indian.

All of these three women graduated from high school. However, they all shared that this was not the case for all of their fellow classmates. Many Indian people didn't finish high school. One reason Laura shared was that "I know (a guy) just gave up. They

couldn't handle it." Others talked about people having to quit school to get a job to support their families, whether that was their mother, father, and siblings or children and a wife that they had.

Some people in this generation also attended college. Mary shared, "I graduated from (the local high school). I got accepted to Troy but couldn't go because I was pregnant with my oldest child." Laura explained,

I went through the 12th grade and I've taken courses at a junior college...

We were taking classes and we had to get a CDA, Child Development Association... I think the license would last maybe five years and then we would have to renew. But when I quit, well some of the girls were already going to school but we had taken classes before from Faulkner, and they're in the process now of going to school. They've got to get their Associate Degree, and some of 'em have already gotten theirs. But I knew I was gonna quit working when I got 62 so it wasn't important for me to go back to school.

Later in life, Rachel and another tribal member went back to school for nursing.

I had already done all my prerequisites and was starting into the clinical whenever (my husband) got killed. At that time, you had to go out of town mostly for the clinicals. You had to go back and forth to Pensacola, different hospitals... then you had to be 60 years old to draw your Social Security from your spouse unless you had minor children at home. My children was grown and out on their own so then I still had to have an income. I was planning on taking a leave at... when I got into the clinical

for that year, and so after (my husband) got killed... I quit RN school and just continued to work as an LPN... I was only three-quarters from finishing my RN.

Integration with All Races. As Rachel, Laura, and Mary were graduating high school, Arlie and Jimmy were in grammar and middle school. Because of the many changes in this generation, the experiences of the younger and older people in this generation are very different. While the location where they grew up stayed the same, the school systems changed. The Poarch Consolidated School closed in 1969 mandating forced desegregation of all races into public schools for the 1970-71 school year. (Poarch Band of Creeks, 1980) No one really knew why they closed the school or talked much about it. Arlie explained, “when they closed down Poarch, I was in 7th grade and went to the middle school. Jimmy went to Freemanville school when he was in the 4th or 5th grade.” Jimmy explained, “now see, that’s when they busted the community up then, because the people that lived in Hog Fork and Poarch Switch, they went to (a local elementary school) and we went to (another local elementary school), to the old middle school.” After talking more with Jimmy and others, we think that the county re-zoned the elementary schools in the county when desegregation first happened, which essentially kept elementary schools segregated by race.

Because the communities were separated, when going to school in town, “we didn’t know anybody. We just stayed at Poarch. You did when you got up in high school. Everybody sort of mingled together, started liking one another, and getting along. When we were young, they didn’t. Nobody knew anybody.” And while Arlie “doesn’t remember” this, Jimmy shared,

I would say the first time I knew or felt different was when we went to the (town's) school and they would say, anybody that's Indian hold your hand up and we had to go in a room for something because there was a government aide that came and talked to us about something, so he singled us out, so that was different.

This is the first time I heard anyone from generation one or two talk about being singled out in this way.

While their bussing stories are a little different than the others, they remember the bussing situation to get to school. Arlie explained,

They wouldn't come by our house and pick us up on the bus. We had to go to the corner. Mama didn't drive... my Daddy would drive us down there or my Daddy would be gone and we'd drive the truck down there and park it and sit in the truck. Sometimes we had to stand out in the rain or the cold weather, to catch the bus.

Arlie shared that when she was younger they rode the bus with different races.

I remember when (my oldest brother) was on there a lot of times and they wouldn't let us sit on the same seat with them on the bus... when we were older, they would have to have Shirley to drive the school bus. They had a bus just for the Indians. They wouldn't let us ride with all them other folks. And Uncle Dan drove the bus too.

Jimmy added, "see for some reason they kept us separate. For whatever reason they kept us Indians together."

In high school, Arlie said, “it changed and everybody started getting along with one another and everybody liked one another and talking with one another and then they were hanging around with all the Indians. It was different then.” Jimmy told me,

When we went to high school and they changed schools, Indians were popular. The Blacks liked ‘em ‘cause they were closer to color, and then the, I’d say the girls and boys both, it’s that thing you’re not supposed to do that you do it anyway. I remember people getting mad with class favorite and stuff like that ‘cause most of the time it would be the Indians and the Whites in one category, ‘cause they didn’t say White, Black, and Indian, it was Black and White, and we were considered White. And then when you put a mix in, the mixed races stayed together. It’s just like the Blacks wouldn’t fight us or bother us before they would a White, for whatever reason.

Jimmy said that him and his brother were both in the White category in high school for different things. He talked about how they were both voted most handsome in high school and his senior year he got class favorite.

Though the negative thoughts about Indians were changing for the better, Jimmy and Arlie shared stories of people not being allowed to date White people because they were Indian. Jimmy shared, “I couldn’t date (my wife) at first ‘cause I was Indian.” His Wife and her parents are White, and because he was Indian, they weren’t allowed to date. “He didn’t know me... he was scared about his daughter... but she worked it out.”

Jimmy and Arlie shared stories of how people “talked about Indians bad in Atmore.” However, they both recognize that these thoughts about Indians while

somewhat based on true stories, labeled all Indians as bad. Jimmy and Arlie went back and forth sharing one of the stories that illustrate this.

We had a bunch of Indian boys that would go to Atmore and before it was over, they would get in a fight. And not knowing, that's all you know, a bunch of troubled old Indians coming to town to fight. Of course, the town was waiting on them to fight too. But the Indians always got blamed. If one Indian does something, ever one of 'em is labeled that way. Well that's the way it was, the labels and stuff... Back then they didn't take nothing off anybody, especially when you downgrade somebody, picking at somebody.

This story tells shows us many things with two being the tensions between races and the stereotyping of all members of a group based on race, within this town. As Jimmy and Arlie finish the story, you can hear them go back to talk about the community of Indians during this time.

That's the reason Indians stay together is because they'll fight amongst themselves but when there's a fight, they stay together because they have a bond and because they are a race. The White race, you don't have a bond. You're either poor, middle-class, or rich and none of 'em step in and help each other. The Indian, from a poor to a rich or whatever, they're all the same and it is that way today. Look how much education you got. I know your mama. I know such and such. And they're all kin somewhere down the line. Yeah, I'm kin so you don't give up.

This story shows us the strong bond that Indian people have formed with each other.

Though the group I talked with is only a few of the people in our tribe in this generation, everyone graduated high school and most have some college education. Jimmy and Arlie shared that the tribe had a program called CETA that helped them go to school. Jimmy shared,

When we were in high school they (the tribe) would pay us extra money from the CETA program that would pay to go to trade school. So we would go to trade school at night and that's how we earned some money. But at the same time, I was in cabinet making and you learn a trade too. Got a cabinet degree.

The CETA program paid for Arlie to "work at the hospital... one year to get a trade. Then when I went to work at the nursing home, they paid for me to take this course to be a certified dietary manager." This program was one of the ways the tribe helped the younger people in this generation learn a trade that often times turned into careers.

Everyone in this generation had between one and three children, which are much smaller families than the previous generation. They talked some about their children's experiences in school. Laura said that her kids went to school in the nearby community of Freemanville.

'Cause they closed Freemanville when (my daughter) was in the 5th grade. I think she had to go to the 6th grade in McCullough. I was involved with the PTA when they went to Freemanville. It was just like you knew a lot of those Black families and you felt comfortable over there. When they went to (a local elementary school), it seemed they didn't care that much for Indians back then and I never got involved with the PTA up there. I just never felt comfortable. I'd go to the meetings but as far as doing a lot of participation, I didn't... When she (my

daughter) was in high school, she said they made them stand up to be counted. And (my daughter) said there was a student in her class, and she never knew he was Indian until they were adults, 'cause he wouldn't stand up... and she said she would be the only one standing up. A blonde-headed Indian.

Opportunities were something that this generation talked about wanting to provide for their children whether that be piano lessons or help with college. All of these parents had at least one child that attended some type of college at some point in their lives.

Laura shared a story with me of her daughter going to college.

I remember when (my daughter) was out here sitting on the steps crying. I said, (my daughter), what's wrong baby? She said, mama, what if I go to school... I mean, it was just foreign, you know. She said, what if I fail? I said, (my daughter), do you want to go to school? If you fail, so what? You have had that opportunity that we didn't have. She said, but then you and Daddy would have to pay that money back. I said, (my daughter), we can always work to pay that money back but you cannot miss this opportunity. If you don't go, you will always regret where you could be today. But that's all she was worried about was what if she went and failed and we had that bill hanging over our heads. And nowadays, children have that opportunity. The tribe has given them the means of going to school, and then we didn't. (My husband) was paper wooding and I was working with Head Start. We got a student loan from the bank that first year. I'd go and borrow that money and I'd work that next semester to pay it off. I remember when I'd go see 'em and they'd say, is it that time again? and I'd say, it's that time again. We had to sacrifice 'cause we just didn't have that much

money. I know one summer when (my daughter) went that I made her clothes. She didn't have any fancy clothes. (My son) was back here and he was going to Faulkner and he was working. But we just had to sacrifice for her to be in school. I remember we bought her a little car and that car scared me to death. Someone from Atmore would ride with her to Tuscaloosa... It was hard but I don't regret it. I even borrowed on (my husband's) life insurance and one of my paychecks would pay her rent. I don't regret sacrificing for her to go to school and giving her that opportunity 'cause she has worked hard.

Laura shared stories of her daughter using things she learned from home to help her through living on her own and going to college.

When (my daughter) was in college, it was one winter that was so cold and it might have been (another tribal member's) first year up there. (My daughter) and her roommate rented an apartment but it had what we call a picture window. The window faced the north and it was so cold. Her roommate's parents had money and so (my daughter) was putting blankets over the windows and dripping water and she said, (my daughter) what are you doing? She said, I've lived with my mama. We had to look after ourselves 'cause Daddy was always gone. And (the other tribal member) went over there and stayed with her. But it was extremely cold and she said, why are you putting a blanket over the window? She said, 'cause it keeps the cold wind out. And (my daughter) taught her a few things. She said, I'm just doing what mama would be doing if I was home.

This is one example of how their children have used the knowledge that they learned in the Poarch community to navigate the non-Indian world. We will talk about this more in the next chapter.

In school, Indians were treated as a race. Sometimes that was a separate Indian race, sometimes Indian was not really its own category but fell in the space in-between the Black and White race, and at other times it was incorporated into the White race. However, being racially Indian was always understood by everyone in the town and surrounding communities. The identity that this generation fought for was a legal identity as a federally recognized tribe. Among many things, in order to create this identity, the tribe used the image and public's knowledge of cultural Indians to create an outside image of Indian that people would recognize locally and nationally.

Legally and Culturally Indian

As all of these changes were happening throughout this generation, the tribe was also fighting nationally for federal recognition and raising awareness of Indian people in Alabama. They formed a dance team, which combined cultural activities of powwow dancing with promoting awareness of Indian people. As the tribe was strategically planning ways to fight for federal recognition, they began to raise awareness of their existence to outside people. One of the ways that they did this was by creating an image of Indian that outsiders wanted to see. Because many non-Indian people thought that all Indians look and act a certain way, the tribe decided to use this image as a way to make others see that there were real Indians in Alabama.

Jimmy shared one of the memories that many boys in this generation he grew up with and talk about.

I was a dancer. When we were 12, Billy Smith used to take us everywhere. We'd go to Panama City and there was a fair, and one summer we went there and made enough money to take us to the Gulf Shores for a week and rented a big old house. It was about fifteen young'uns. Yeah we'd perform there just because that's what we did, not to get paid, just for the people in the community. We rented a big old house and they had something... All we needed was a drum. I don't know who taught us how to dance. He took us all but Billy never danced. He would beat the drum and always talk. The older boys taught us how to dance and I don't know how Billy taught them how to dance or what. It'd be like O'Dell and Maron and then the Vickory boys.

Arlie added that Billy, "took up a lot of time with y'all." She remembers, "mostly a lot of Indian boys that danced were the ones in Poarch. The ones out in Hog Fort and that other Poarch, they never hardly... just a few of them participated. The other ones didn't hardly participate."

Laura remembers stories being told about this dance team. "I think they ate somewhere. He left a tip on the table and when they got in the car, the boys turned and said, Mr. Billy, here's your money you left on that table. I will never forget that. I said, at least you know they were honest. They could have taken it and put it in their pockets. So I guess he had to explain to 'em why he left it there. So you know, we didn't go out to eat. It was a big thing. The only time you ever went to Pensacola or Mobile was when you were sick."

Conclusion

This generation that is 51 to 67 years old today, adds to the Poarch Creek basket many more stories of family and community along with stories of change. This generation weaves strands into the basket of stories of community, location, family, participation, work, marriage, church, living situations, culture, school, race, and legal identity. This generation is very much like the strong and solid basket they are creating. This generations works together to build a strong and cohesive community.

This generation discusses all of Lowery's (201) four layers of Native American identity: a People, a race, a tribe, and a nation. This generation tells stories of change. Throughout their child and adulthood, changes occur in all four layers of their identity.

As "a People", this generation grew up very similar to the previous generation. The three Indian communities were the same cohesive communities and family from the previous generation. They expressed a sense of pride in the community that they came from. They talked about being related to everyone in their community. They also shared stories of participating and growing up with everyone in the community by doing things together such as playing outside, eating, swimming, going to church, and going to funerals. The outside institutions of church and school that came into the previous generation were major parts of the lives of this generation. In this generation, church was a huge part of the Indian communities and lives of Indian people.

Though many of these things such as community, family, and participation remained very similar to generation one, this generation faced many changes in their living situations and education opportunities. They gained electricity, running water, and

transportation, which changed their lifestyles. These changes led to many opportunities like an easier way of life and being able to travel to outside of the community.

One of the major changes in this generation was access to education. The first major change was that Poarch Elementary was opened as a county school for Indian children to attend the first through sixth grade. The next change was that the older people in the generation were integrated into White schools. The last change was when the younger people in this generation were integrated into schools with all races.

Integration of Indians into schools heightened the racial identity of Indians. Being integrated into these spaces created a racial identity of Indian in relation to others. At first, when Indians were integrated into White schools they appreciated the opportunity for education but were still racially segregated and treated negatively by their peers within that space. Indian people did not like this separation between them and Whites. However, some people talked about appreciating schools systems that were not integrated with Blacks. This shows some of the dynamics of race in the south in the 1960s.

The last wave of change that this generation saw in schools happened in 1970 when all local schools were required to integrate all races into the school system. Though Indians had already been going to junior and senior high schools, the closing of the Indian elementary school took away the school in their community and placed them totally into schools in other communities. Structures set up in schools complicated Indian identity. Being Indian in school meant being in-between Black and White races, sometimes being Indian, and at other times being White.

The younger people in this generation talk about their experiences being Indian in school as a much better than the older people in this generation. Both generations shared stories of dating and marriage with non-Indian people. Throughout this generation, everyone talked about themselves and/or people they know not being able to date a White person because they were Indian, however these boundaries were let down more as the years went on. Everyone in the later part of the generation married White people, technically putting them in “interracial relationships” as adults. These interracial relationships led to their children being part of two racial groups.

Throughout this generation, our tribe and nation faced many changes. The Indian communities came together as they began to fight for federal recognition. In order to raise awareness of Indians in Alabama, this group created a national image of Indian for their tribe. In order to do this, community members helped raise money to send the chief to Washington to represent and fight for them nationally. Also, the children in the later part of this generation formed a traveling dance team that performed throughout the state to raise more awareness of their existence. This group of Indians fought for federal recognition and as adults were granted that recognition as a sovereign nation, making them legally Indian.

This generation told stories of Indian identity. Being Indian was part of their everyday life and it was their race. However, as they fought for federal recognition being Indian had to be represented in different ways than just the everydayness. This generation also created an image of Indian that was locally and nationally recognized, raising awareness of Indians in Alabama. This generation passes onto the next

generation, a legal, cultural, and racial Indian in relation to the rest of the world. This generation passes down a federally recognized tribe, Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

GENERATION 3: POARCH CREEK NAVIGATION

Starting in the mid 1960s and through the mid 1980s Rose, James, Ana, and Suzanne were born. They are all Poarch Creek, and today range in age from 45 to 26 years old. All of them have very busy lives working and raising families, so it was best for me to talk with them separately. I talked with Ana and Rose over a long lunch break, one at her workplace and the other in a restaurant. I talked with James in his home around his kitchen table. I also talked a separate time with Ana and James with their children there, allowing me to see and understand generational differences in responses to questions. Because this is the generation that I am part of, I have chosen for this to be the place where my stories are told, mixed in with all of the others.

This generation inherited a basket woven of family and community passed down through the previous two generations. Generation two added to the basket stories of a fight for federal recognition and inclusion into society. Therefore this generation grew up in an integrated world as a member of a federally recognized tribe. Generation two also passed down some tools and knowledge of how to live as an Indian person in both their tribal community and non-Indian world. Generation three shares stories of their lives as racial, cultural, and legal Indians. They show us how they navigate life, school, society, Indian Country, and the developing tribal nation.

Communities

The community was divided into three sections, which now it's collectively combined and called Poarch. But if you remember, and you may not, but Poarch Road going over the overpass, the area where I live that area was always called Hog Fork. I don't know why and I don't know where the name came from but that was Hog Fork. Then as you went on out and around the curve past Houston's house and Billy's, once you got out there where mama lived, that was called Poarch. Then the area where the tribal complex is now, that was Hedapeada... So you had three different towns. How did we get to be called collectively Poarch Community? I don't know... I mean when you think of Poarch, I think of where I grew up. Now I think that's where I work, it's the complex out there but Poarch is where I grew up. -Rose

This generation inherited the ideas of family and community passed down from the people that came before them. In this generation you see changes not in the idea of community and family but in the words used to refer to this idea. While everyone knew that Poarch was once three communities, most people in this generation described the community and family with the words, Poarch, tribe, and family. Suzanne said, "a lot of older people say, it's not really Poarch, it's Poarch Switch, Hedapeada, and Hog Fork. I've noticed that's kind of changed but it's like our generation. But I think it all comes from federal recognition."

As you heard in previous generations, Rose and Ana remember hearing about and seeing tensions between the three smaller communities. Rose shared, “tensions or I’ve heard people talk about oh yeah, he married somebody from there or whatever. But once upon a time back when I was younger, the people from Hedapeada were considered to be wilder.” As Ana shared, before, “you stayed within your community, and so I mean it is really interesting to see, just the rate of marriage like that.” Rose discussed how a lot of people married one another because those were the people they were around and the people they could marry.

So when you think about it, they weren’t allowed to date anybody outside of there. So the people they didn’t see very often, I guess when they saw them that’s who they dated, even though they might have been second or third cousins. My Mama and Daddy were third cousins. They are both tribal members... My Grandfather on (my dad’s) side... I never knew him, he wasn’t a tribal member, his mama was... And my Mama’s parents... they are both tribal members.

Because of people in the Indian communities continuing to marry and have children with one another, most of them are “kin somewhere down the line.” Rose shared,

even though we’re all tribal members. I can say we branch off from just about the same families. I remember looking at a family tree the other day and it was on Granny’s side, her Daddy’s family. And somebody said, they don’t have a family tree, they only have vines because they’re all intertwined.

As Rose and Ana explained, when talking with many people of this generation, they all describe the tribe as a group of people that are kin to one another. One person shared, “we’re all cousins, whether we really are or not. We grew up together and are kin somewhere down the line.”

The Poarch community they grew up not only married Indian people, but started marrying non Indian people as well. Ana recalled stories that have been shared with her from older people about Indian and white marriages.

It was so frowned upon. Atmore discriminated against us and we’re not allowed in town. But she said once somebody did it, and it became accepted, like in the community, then they were like oh yeah, I’m going out here because they never could. It was something new... it’s like the forbidden fruit. There was something there that you couldn’t do, and then once it kind of became socially accepted, then that’s what everybody said they were gonna go do. They were going somewhere else to go fish in a different pond, for a mate.

These stories, help you to understand who was part of the Indian community that this generation grew up in.

Ana shares with us a description of where the Poarch community and tribe are located.

It’s just a small, little community. We always tell people we’re just a small community from southwest Alabama, just kind of out in the middle of nowhere. An hour in either direction from any kind of big city and

thirty minutes from Wal-Mart... I have also heard that it's the name of a railroad stop or it came from the railroad.

Though each of these people described the Poarch community, everyone in this generation also talked about the different communities they lived in. Suzanne was "born in Atmore and have lived there all my life with my Mom, Dad, and younger sister." Ana shared,

I was born and raised in a (nearby town) by Mom and Dad until they divorced the summer between my fifth and sixth grade year... so then I moved here with mama and lived with her and went to (a local elementary school) my sixth grade year. And then after that, I moved back to (a nearby town) and graduated there, stayed there until, I started working for the tribe at 20 and have been here ever since.

All of the people in this generation grew up in different communities as well as the Poarch community.

This generation was very much a part of the Indian community and family that the previous generations established. However, non-Indian people were added to the Indian community and Indian people were added to non-Indian communities. These additions were done mainly through marriage and families.

Family

As the generation before began marrying non-Indian people, this generation was born and raised in mixed Indian and non-Indian families. As the families changed and included people that weren't normally part of the Poarch community, the community changed to include and incorporate these men and women. This is one major difference

in this generation that the majority of people were raised by one Indian and one White parent. Suzanne shared, “my Mom is White and my Dad is Indian, which makes my blood quantum 11/32... it is pretty normal for people my age to have one non-Indian and one Indian parent.”

Because these people were part of mixed families, they talked about being able to easily see some difference between races. James shared,

My Mother’s family was really different than Daddy’s family... I mean just compare everything; jobs, houses, how they carried their self, what they ate, what they did, how they acted, how they interacted... Daddy always tried to... as far as his job, he always tried to over perform, overdo or whatever to be accepted, ‘cause like we were talking about the interracial thing. Back then, I’m sure it’s pretty taboo for (my Mom) blonde haired (last name). To be going out with an Indian. And I really would like to be a fly on the wall if I had a time machine, to see how that went down with her parents.

Though the racial makeup of some of these men and women look different than the generations before, everyone identified as Indian and Poarch Creek and considered themselves just as much a part of the tribe as anyone else, it just looked different. Having parents of different races complicated how some people racially identified. Some people labeled themselves as “biracial,” “interracial,” or “mixed,” and others just saw themselves as Indian. James said,

Well I’ve been interracial my whole life... because I just didn’t really look Indian. I’m kind of middle of the road. That’s why interracial

relationships are not a big deal to my household and I know that freaks other people out. I say, well you know... I am interracial... And what's the difference? And they say, well you know what I mean. You're saying it's okay over here but not over here. And our thing has always been if you're in a loving, committed courtship, all this kind of stuff. You're not doing it just to be rebellious or whatever, anything goes. Always has.

James is a very accepting person and has always grown up with this mentality and raises his children this way. Even in the South where prejudice and discrimination between races occurs, James shares that him nor his father were ever raised to treat people bad because of their race. To James this is also something he teaches his children.

I would like to believe that at this point in time, my kids... are above that, that's not an issue... But that it'll just be based on their character... 'cause there are bad of everybody and there are good of everybody... and to judge people on that and not their looks.

Though the generation before talked about race being a factor that affected who they could date, this generation never had that experience. Rose shared that her and her husband began dating after she finished college, in 1987 and got married in 1988. Rose married a White man, but shared that dating him "wasn't an issue back then" for her. She said that she was never treated badly or not allowed to date him because she was Indian and he was White. "I never had to experience that. There are some that have."

However, Ana shared her experience as an Indian person in a mixed-race marriage was affected by her being Indian.

My first marriage, he was a White guy. I grew up in (a nearby town).

And there was no other... Indians there that I even know of. Come to find out later on, there were some but they never claimed it... it was natural, high school sweethearts. That's what you did.

She shared that some of their problems came in,

As I've grown and gotten more involved in cultural activities then you could see a definite split in our lives where I needed to go this way and he needed just stayed what he was doing. And it wasn't so much of you're White I can't stand you... but you could see a definite growing apart... the sad thing is the White people have no culture. They don't have anything that they can say this is ours... Like I said, if we ever have a school, they're (our kids) going to this school. He's like what makes you think they're going to an Indian school? I'm like because they are... that's who they are and that's where they're going. He's now come around to halfway agreeance... It's kind of sad 'cause I didn't want to be a statistic. You know, children, products of broken homes and blah, blah, blah. But life happens.

Unfortunately, Ana and some other women that I have spoken with have had these same experiences when marrying non-Indian people. Some of the tensions in their mixed-race marriages revolves around raising children, being involved in the tribe, being involved in cultural events, going away on trips, and many other things.

When talking to women in this generation that are not married, they share some concerns that they face in choosing a partner. These concerns are quite different than

most people in the previous generations, but will face the future generations of our tribe.

Suzanne shares,

People always ask me why I'm not married but the older I get the more I think about it and worry about it. I tell my friends all the time, I wish I would have been young and dumb and just went ahead and got married to whoever. A lot of people will never understand the pressure on me, deciding whether or not I will date or marry or have kids with an Indian person. My decision affects whether or not my children are Indian. I know in the end I will marry for love and have kids or adopt kids, but the more I think about it the more I worry that my children won't be "officially" Indian like me. But then I also realize that whether they are on a roll or not, they will always be Indian because I will raise them... it's just a lot to think about.

Ana understands and agrees with Suzanne, and comments, "that's some insane burden to carry... whether you're gonna perpetuate this race or it could die with you... And it's no longer, marry for love, marry for happiness. It's like I've got, an entire race of people to protect."

Both Ana and Rose talked about their children having enough blood to be on the roll. However James's kids are not on the roll but are 1st generation¹¹. Rose has two children that are "a quarter. I don't know exactly... you know how they break it down to minute percents." Ana shared,

¹¹ To be considered 1st generation, you are not on the Poarch Creek tribal roll but your parent is. To be considered 2nd generation, you have a parent that is 1st generation. People also use the word Indian descent to refer to people not on the tribal roll.

I'm half, (my kids) are a quarter. So with them, right now we don't really talk to 'em too much about it, but as they get a little bit older, it's gonna come. If the tribe doesn't lower the blood quota, it's gonna be like, all right, look this is what you gotta look for in a mate. And because of that reason, because so many people are talking blood quota stuff, these kids are starting to say, well if I'm a quarter and you're a quarter, then what does that make our kids if we had kids? They'll say things like I want to stick with so and so because they're this much and I'm this much, and we're good. And I'm like wow. I mean, it's good in a way, it's bad in a way. It's good that they're thinking ahead, thinking on toward the next generation. But then... the federal government's running your life.

Parents didn't talk much about mistreatment of their own children by others because they didn't see it happening. Both tribal members and first generation children now are accepted. Ana shared,

So far (my daughter) has never complain about anything, discrimination or negative treatment because she doesn't know. I mean that's one thing about her that I try really hard not to teach her color. To not teach her differences in people. I try to teach her like that, and so she wouldn't know she wouldn't recognize if they were being mean to her because she's Indian... I mean you know how some people talk, the comments that they make, that they were taught.

Though the previous generations ideas of community and family are passed down, this generation expands the definition of family to include non-Indian people. Because of

many things like work, this generation grew up in different communities with both Indian and non-Indian people. Their definition of community expanded to not only include their Indian community but also their non-Indian communities.

Work

As you know from the previous generation, all of this generation's parents worked for companies outside of the tribe such as the Army, a nursing home, a construction company, sewing factories, Head Start, and the hospital. As this generation was children, the tribe was just establishing itself, as it's own nation and didn't have many jobs available. While most tribal members found work in the surrounding communities, some people had to go away to find work.

James was part of one family that had to go away because his father was in the Army and then worked for the railroad. James remembers,

In the 70s, you had some families around here that really started progressing, you know with education, jobs, whatever. And I think there was a lot of resentment because you know like we were talking about Mamaw and them during their timeframe, it was so different. And then you had a lot of these come along during the Civil Rights era, that were kind of crossing over and being pretty successful and well-accepted and respected. And then a lot of those are considered sellouts... And even some of those families still today, their children are just like off the chart successful attorneys, doctors, whatever... I don't know if it's because it's like the sour grapes thing, like they can't do it. I don't know why. But that's one of those bad things around here. That's one of the worst is

jealousy and resentment... Not so much, I mean, now the college, but I think just the work ethic. And I think all of our families that are real good in whatever they were at, whatever they put their head to, but as far as being different, let me go back to this. Especially 'cause most of 'em married White people... And, you know, even when you look back at some of the, um, some of the ones that were really doing good, that went on to either be teachers or leaders or Indian politicians or whatever. You know, they tried to be politically presentable so they always dressed differently than your agricultural, 'cause most of this out here would have been just manual labor, farmers, that kind of stuff. So, it comes out to that thing you think you're better than me, just 'cause somebody tries to put their best foot forward. You know? Strange resentment. And um, you have some that are happy 'cause they're like seeing 'em succeed but you have some are just really resentful. I don't know why. This day and time, you can be whatever you want to be. There's no opposition to you. You know, if you want to do it, you will. And I think that's the difference 'cause a lot of them do want better. I think that's what most parents want is better for their kids.

James painted one picture of what work was like for the community when he was growing up. He shares, "back in the day, it was the mentality of work my job, work my thirty, forty years, and then retire, and that's what they did." Rose shared, "my Daddy was on the council many years ago." Suzanne shared,

My Mom paid her way through school at a junior college right after she graduated high school. She went back to college when I was in middle school and graduated with her Bachelor's degree. My Mom has always worked as a computer person for a phone company for most of her life. My Dad got his technical degree in cabinet making. He worked on the tugboat until he got hurt around the time I was born. He has had a few jobs throughout my lifetime, and now owns his own business. I have seen my parents move up the ladder of success and I am so proud of them. They are now able to have the things that they have always wanted and worked so hard to get... my Dad has always been involved in the tribe serving on the council and on boards. He has taught me so much about our tribe, Indian Country, politics, and just so much about Indian people. I learn from him everyday and we have great conversations still to this day about Indian issues or what's going on with our tribe and different tribes.

One of the differences in this generation from their parent's generation is that all of these men and women have worked for the tribe in some capacity throughout their lives. Rose has worked for the tribe "since '86 but I've worked in Accounting since '88. I went to the Director job in '96 and now they change my title... but I'm still doing the same thing I was doing as the Director." Rose explains what her job entails,

I've gotten to see how far we have come because basically all it's there for is to offer benefits for tribal members. But when I've been to other reservations, and you can compare what they've got and they've been there and been recognized longer and we've just been since '85 doing what we're doing and offering the benefits that we're offering. We have

far exceeded what most tribes offer. We've got a lot of benefits and we've got leadership. I went to one meeting where this lady was saying they don't have electricity. She just got electricity in the last two years but the reason being they're not allowing electric companies to come in because they consider that infringement on their sovereignty. I guess we grew up in a culture and we didn't have our culture and are just now learning things because we had to fit into the White man's world, to survive it. So that's why we didn't have those kinds of hindrances, which could have helped us get to where we're at further and quicker. I mean, that's the way I see it. They don't want people coming in there because of their rights, but that's a right that we've always taken for granted. If electricity comes by our house, I'm entitled to that. But another thing is they all live on the reservation and we don't. I think (their reservations are bigger than ours). The lady I was talking to led me to believe that it was. Not necessarily checkerboard like ours is.

Both Suzanne and Ana shared that they were involved in summer programs and the princess contest¹² but growing up there was not much in the tribe to be involved in until now that they are working with children. Ana said,

¹² The princess contest is an annual contest held at the Thanksgiving day powwow for tribal members that are girls. While the contest often changes, in the past it has been for girls ages 8 til age 25. In the contest girls practice for months ahead of the contest learning how to dance; learning how to do beadwork and other arts such as basketweaving; making parts of your regalia; and learning the language. The night before the contest there is an interview that each girl has to go through about the history of the tribe. Recently a talent competition was also added to this night. On Thanksgiving day, the girls compete in the dance part of the contest. The girls are judged on all of

I got my first job out here in July of 2000... I first got a little bit of experience like working with kids and stuff, 'cause I had to chaperone Close Up like twice in a row... it wasn't 'til I started working with the Cultural Department that we started really getting out there and doing things, actually trying to make a difference... once we started learning more and more about culture, and like we were talking about earlier, you know, the possible extinction of our tribe, is when it became like...like life changing and like life threatening work. 'Cause if you... it's like again, on our shoulders not only as far as child raising in your own home, it's everybody else tribal wide. It's like what if I'm not here to push this? Not just me but you know all of us. We're all like that. It's like, what if we're not here to do the work that we do? Then what happens? What happens to everybody else?

These men and women have lots of stories from working with the tribe that include outsiders' thoughts and perceptions of Indian people. Rose shared, Tribal member benefits is in the same building I'm in, and one girl came out there with an older lady and she's complaining to (my co-worker), I've had all these problems since I've become an Indian... I was like you don't become an Indian. You're born an Indian. And to me, that's where the people wanting to join the tribe now, didn't want to be recognized for their tribe because the Indians were looked down on worse than a Black person.

these things in three levels: elementary, junior, and senior princesses. The winners of the contest are announced Thanksgiving day after the dance portion and the girls serve the tribe as ambassadors for that year, until the next girls are crowned.

So, where were you at whenever we were fighting all this? So that's a part of the culture that we lost and not necessarily traditional things. But we have to remember what we suffered to get us to where we are now.

And Ana shared a story from a few months ago when taking the tribal vehicle to a car shop in the nearby town and being approached by a non-Indian person,

I'm just standing there like... hurry up, got stuff to do. And the guy is like so, you're a real Indian?... Just in my head I'm like are you kidding me?... I said yep and he said really? He said, so you live on the reservation? I'm like dude, you're five miles away from us, are you kidding me? You're really asking me these questions? I said yeah, and I work for the tribe. He said, I think you're the first real Indian I've ever seen. I'm like... surely you're kidding? I said, you've seen more, because there's all kinds of tribal members in town. And he said well, you're the first one I've seen that really looks like one... I said, that must be pretty neat for you, huh? Seriously? This is so crazy... I mean, other than that, I never really had to deal with anything crazy.

As this generation incorporates non-Indian people into their families and non-Indian places into their communities, they begin to deal with different things than the previous generation did. While this changed their families and the community, the ideals about the Indian community didn't change. This generation, no matter where they lived, still participated in the community and sees value in this participation.

Participation

Participation in this generation is very similar, yet very different than what the previous generations talked about. Participation still meant being part of the Indian community and family. However, with this generation living in different communities, most of their participation meant coming back to the Poarch community and doing things in and with the community. For some people that mean coming home from out of town every so often to take part in events and for others it meant driving fifteen minutes from the nearest town to be with their family. However, no matter where people lived, this generation continued their participation with one another, as part of this family.

James was “born in West Germany when he (my Dad) was in the military, and then when he got out, we moved to... I think they were with Mamaw for a little while until they got a place.” After the military his Dad worked for the railroad so he was “raised all over the place, Pensacola, Atmore, McCullough, Mississippi, Oklahoma, a couple of places.” James shared that his experience moving from Oklahoma to Alabama was very hard.

When I got to be a teenager and moved back here, I just felt like it was the end of the world. It was so much culture shock from what I was used to... Not a good experience... there was financial hardship with my parents and all that kind of stuff.

Even though, James’ family lived away, they always came back to the Poarch community to visit and participate in family and community activities when they could.

When we were little and we lived off, it was always really cool to get back together with everybody because we were like, you know, how (my

daughter) is when she sees everybody? We were like that. We just loved to see aunts and uncles, cousins, grandmas and all that, 'cause we didn't see 'em every day... So that was really neat, and it was always nothing but happy times. You know, because when you see just somebody, it's always good... but that's my feeling. It's just the getting back together more a little, on either side, Mama's or Daddy's.

During our conversation, Rose talked a lot about her family, which showed how much they meant to her. She shared that when she thinks about family,

I guess what comes to my mind is we've always been close. My husband never had that kind of closeness and we've gotten away from it now 'cause (my Grandmother) is so sick, but on the weekends we used to be at (her) house. My Granny's got seven children, so all the children would come and all the Grandchildren would come and that was a weekend thing and we would just sit around and play and usually fry fish or fry chicken or something out of the wash pot. That was a time of getting together and just being together. That was basically what we did. He told me when we got married, y'all don't ever need to lose this. And to me, family means the time of being together... It's like somebody says, my Daddy always worked the 3 to 11 shift, and mama worked 3 to 11 at the hospital. After I started going to school and working and stuff, they would cook lunch and expect me to be there 'cause that's part of family. You don't get to see each other. My cousin asked my Daddy one day after I moved out... do you get tired of her coming and mooching off you? He said, no, I told her

I want to see her. Family is when we can get together so whenever you can see your family, you do it... And even after Mama retired, my Granny lived by herself, she didn't want to cook, she'd nibble... See, she always cooked at Granny's and I would go and we'd have lunch together just about every other day up until a couple of years ago. Now it's not as frequent. We get together like that at lunchtime when I can come... Christmas has always been special at Granny's. I mean, we always... She's the last of thirteen. So you think about it, everybody calls her aunt and are tied somehow, 'cause she's got a lot of nieces and nephews. She's got seven children of her own so that's a big family. That's why it's so unique, four generations, there's a lot of them there.

As Rose shared, families in the community are very close to one another.

Suzanne also told many stories of the close-knit family that she comes from.

Most of the time we celebrated holidays different occasions with each other over a meal at someone's house. When I say family, I don't just mean my immediate family. I mean like all of my cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, great-aunts and uncles, 2nd cousins, a lot of people. I remember for each of our birthdays we would have birthday dinners where the person with the birthday could choose what they wanted to eat and we would have their Sunday lunch most of the time at Mamaw's house. And we still do that today... Our family is so close, we have so many stories of things we did together. Me, my mom, dad, and sister always went on beach trips and went to Disney world a few times. One time when I was

like 12 my aunt and uncle decided to take all of my cousins to Disney world. We loaded up a big van with four adults and lots of kids and we had such a good time. That was the first of many of our family vacations together... I think I have the best family in the world. My parents are amazing, sister is such a great friend, my cousins grew up with me so they are like my siblings, and my grandparents, I don't know what I'd do without them. We are all so close and love each other so much.

As you can see from the stories, Indian families in this generation are still very close to one another, which only strengthens the bond throughout the Indian family as a whole. As you have seen over the last two generations, participation and culture are two aspects of people's lives that make the community what it is, carrying on traditions from one generation to the next.

Culture

The definition of culture in this generation changes as the tribe becomes more "established" and there is money available to preserve culture and for cultural activities. In the previous generations, the discussion around culture was about the everyday things that Indian people did that made them different than others. Understandably survival was the main concern of generation one and many cultural ways such as arts and ceremonial ways were lost. As generation two was fighting for federal recognition, powwow dancing was introduced and taken up. In generation three, powwow dancing, stomp dancing, the princess contest, and cultural programs were all things that young people could be involved in.

When talking about Poarch Creek culture, things from past generations such as funerals were mentioned. Rose remembers funerals as people in the past two generations. “They used to take ‘em to a house or to a church. I don’t know if you’ve ever been to one that was at a house... they would take the body and then they would come get it and take it to the church.” Both Suzanne and Rose have been to these types of funerals. Suzanne added,

When I was really young, I feel like one of my great-grannys was at her house. But then my other Granny we stayed up with her at the church all night and they had food for everybody in the back of the church. I remember some more people that we stayed up with all night also when I was a kid and teenager... I try to compare what my Mom’s and Dad’s family does for funerals and they are just so different.

Rose shared, “I remember one in particular, I don’t remember whose it was. I was little but I remember going to that house and thinking, ooh, this is strange.”

Powwow culture was one that all of the women had been a part of at some point in their lives, learning and getting involved mainly through the princess contest. Rose shared, “I was princess in ’81, senior princess.” Rose still remembered the “figure eight” they had to do as part of their dance competition. Suzanne shared,

From the time I was old enough to be in the princess contest I was in it. Even though I was very nervous in the actual pageant, I always looked forward to starting princess practice on Sundays in the fall. I loved learning how to do beadwork and dance and getting to go to different powwows. I really liked spending time with other Poarch Creek people

my age, learning all kinds of new things... And then when I won princess I always liked going off to represent the time at the different schools and parades and powwows... and now it has come full circle because I have judged the princess contest two different times since I've given up my senior crown.

Ana has always been active in cultural activities. In addition to being part of the princess contest, Ana shared,

When I was 13 or 14, I went with my sister to powwows a lot on the weekends and stuff. She was like my second mama... She'd always take me places, like that and then we had a little drum practice, and then there was a few years where I didn't do anything...

I talked with Ana about how her and her sister got involved into powwow dancing, stomp dancing, and drumming. She shared that neither of her parents or grandparents were involved but her sister had a very close friend that invited her along and got them involved. "They have always been close... he always was a powwow dancer, was a stomp dancer, and he would start trying to get her to go and so I would go because of her."

Today, Ana is more involved with cultural activities than ever before. She is very talented and enjoys learning and doing arts, she does

Basketweaving and a lot of beadwork. And starting to dabble in sewing. [laughing] I don't even know how I learned how to read a pattern, but I do it... I actually started trying to sew when (my daughter) was one, I think. I made her very first little dress and I made her a jingle dress and I

was like, this can't be hard... And so I cut out material and cut out material and I'd sew it and try it on and it'd be too tight, and so it wouldn't fit right, and I'd sew it some more, and then finally I was like okay, this works... So, I do a lot of that, and then of course, we go to powwows and sing and stomp dances... other than that, we work non-stop. But, I mean, I don't know, it's different... that's fun. Going off with these kids and doing things like that. You would say... you get paid to have fun because I mean, it really is fun, to go and do stuff with them.

Ana and Suzanne had a conversation about cultural preservation in our tribe. Ana shared, "people are starting to come around and learn, everyday's so scared we're dying out, we're dying out. So now you gotta push back, you know to get back into that intermarriage." Suzanne added, "it's so weird because I think people our age are like in a middle place where we grew up with some cultural activities, but not much." Ana added, "like us, once you do have that little bit of taste of cultural activities or tradition, then you feel a duty and a responsibility to carry it on."

Suzanne and Ana told stories about cultural activities they were involved in as children that they want to do again as adults. However, they share the things that hold them back from doing this activities.

I have this like... I don't know, it's something. It's like a fear. It's like once I went from kid to not a kid anymore, I'm scared to dance again. And I don't know what the fear is. It's that self-consciousness... I don't want to do it wrong. Because there are people older... And you open yourself up for criticism and you're like you're old enough to know better.

You know, but when you're a kid, you're okay. You can get away with it. I'm the same way. I want to dance so bad but I am so scared to get out there, I just am. Cause it's been there such a long time, but I know that if I would get out there, it would encourage them (my kids) more. So I'm like I just need to just bite the bullet and do it... actually getting dressed and going.

Being Indian for people in this generation meant being part of a tribe, community, and family. It meant participation in the community, family, and cultural activities. It also meant living as a Poarch Creek person in these Indian places while at the same time participating and being part of non-Indian places.

Navigating an Indian Identity

As opportunities for Indian people were created in the previous generation, Indian people worked and went to school alongside their non-Indian peers in non-Indian places. Though these places were not controlled by Indians, Indian people lived in them and made them part of their lives. They lived in both Indian and non-Indian spaces alongside one another, learning how to navigate all of these spaces from their Indian and non-Indian families. In looking at stories about school, we can learn what it was like for Indian people to live in non-Indian places.

School

Because integration of all races happened in the previous generation, everyone in this generation attended integrated schools all of their lives. However, education throughout this generation looked very different because everyone I talked with lived in different locations: in a surrounding town, in town, on the reservation, or in a different

state. For elementary school everyone went to a different school, except for one year when one woman went to the school zoned for the tribe, which is the school that another woman had gone to for K-6th grade. However, for middle school Rose and Suzanne went to the same school and for high school Rose, James, and Suzanne went to the same school. Though they went to different schools, their experiences in school are very similar to one another.

While schools have made progress and are providing an education for everyone, Indian students discussed how they were treated during this time. Some students shared stories where their school embraced Indian culture, allowing them to share and teach the school about the tribe and Indian people. However, others shared experiences of Indian students being publically called out and separated. Lastly, Indians shared experiences of Indian students being the middle race in the Black and White world that their school had set up. All of these experiences shed light on the adaptations and negotiations in identity that Indian students were constantly making because of how others situated them in school.

Rose is the oldest person in this generation and remembers school being a mix between the generation before and the younger people in this generation. “People, when they got to our age, they started accepting Indians.” However some of the same mentalities were carried from the previous generations to this one in the way that outsiders treated Indians. Rose shared,

In high school, we were always told that nobody could come out to Poarch after dark because you didn’t ever pass on this side of the underpass or on the other side. But I mean, we always knew we were Indians. I guess it

didn't register with me the difference because I went to school at (a local elementary school) and mostly tribal members went to (a local elementary school). I didn't have to deal with it in town, what Mama and them had to deal with, not being allowed to ride the school bus and stuff. I didn't experience all that. The middle school was different but, I don't remember having to deal with the differences. But I do know they weren't allowed to come out there, anybody dating girls out there. They said, no, you can't go out there after dark or something like that. But I didn't personally experience that kind of stuff.

As schools changed in their treatment of Indians, there were still times were Indians were treated badly by their peers.

For early elementary school, James went to school in Alabama, Mississippi, and Oklahoma. James was the oldest one in this generation that remembers doing Indian activities in school.

I remember when they would have some Indian activities. This is way before federal recognition. I remember some people would do some little activities and we would go and they would talk about some stuff, maybe thirty minutes or an hour... When we moved to Oklahoma, I think I was listed as Indian out there too. But you got to realize Oklahoma is made up of a bazillion tribes and... Um, so that was no big deal out there.

Actually, I felt a little less Indian out there because you had these people that were like full-blooded... dark... but really... most of my life, never really came up... You know, they might have some kind of recognition

class just to discuss it. But nothing... no big deal. I mean, literally one of 'em I remember, we ate some corn and some chocolate and something else that they thought the Indians might have made, you know, because of the corn, all the Indians ate that, they thought. The Indians... the Aztec and the Mayan with the chocolate... So anyway, we had some corn and ate some chocolate, and something else... maybe some colored pages, and it was probably around Thanksgiving, if I'm not mistaken. You know, when all that comes up. That was it.

James told me that he wasn't treated badly in school. "Nothing... all the way through elementary or junior high, even high school, no different than everybody else."

James shared,

Yeah, so when they started coming along, this is the only thing I can brag about from high school... We was rocking some high school with the most handsome stuff, from (my uncles), me (my cousin), all of it... Very accepted... Very... That's the difference from the early 70's to the late 70's. I think, especially around here by then... the other generations come along, really probably made it easier. 'Cause, a lot of the guys were dating White girls.

Suzanne had a little bit of a different experience. She went to school in the local town all of her life.

In comparison to the overall population of the schools I went to there were small numbers of Indian students and probably 10 of us in my grade. My memory is really bad from my early childhood but I remember being in

kindergarten and the teacher made us stand up and be counted. It was really weird. I remember her saying all White people stand up and she would count and then all the Black people stand up and she would count. I don't remember her saying anything about the Indian people nor do I remember what I did in that situation but even now I think it's weird looking back on that and being in the public schools and having to do that and then we had to be counted by free, reduced, and paid lunch, and gender.

Ana had a different experience growing up in a town close to the reservation where she was the only Indian in her school.

Growing up and school in (another town), there was not, really any other Indian kids. There were some and I never knew it... I mean, I never really was one to go in school, oh, I'm Indian and you're White. I mean, but every now and then, they would have those questions like... I guess whatever paper that was going to go out or something.

In elementary school, Suzanne remembers "the school the aides would come and get the Indian students out of the classroom and help us with whatever subject we needed help with... mine of course was reading." However, the three younger people in the generation remember "the calls over the intercom." Ana describe one of these scenes.

They'd come over the intercom... if you have any Indian students in your class, send 'em to the office or whatever... And me and one other boy who thought he had some kind of descendency or something, would go, and I'd be like really, you're Indian? No, you're not. And that was about

it. But other than that, like me, I was never treated any differently. I mean nothing.

Suzanne adds,

It was really only in middle school when they would come over the intercom and say all of the Indians students should report to usually the lunchroom. Most of the time all kinds of people would come just to get out of class. And once we got there the Indian aide would tell us something or give us some paper to take home that was usually from the tribe or about some program the tribe or school or someone was doing that we could participate in.

At the time no one thought anything about them calling out all the Indians and never calling out another race to a location, but it is interesting that today everyone remembers that happening.

Ana attended a school in a nearby town. She remembers having an elementary and then later junior high teacher that was married to a tribal member. Ana shared, she knew all about it... she used to be real active out here... But it seems like she was my teacher the year that I won Junior Princess. She told me, if you win you gotta bring everything and come show me... when I would win titles and stuff, like when I won Junior Princess...were we in seventh or eighth grade? I don't remember what grade I was in. But whatever grade it was, it was Alabama History or something, and so my teacher asked me to come and dance for the class and all this stuff. And so, I did that, and then I did it one year for the second graders. They just thought

that was the coolest thing. And we took these big group pictures and stuff, and I'm like this is so crazy... But nobody ever said anything negative to me or anything like that... Little kids are funny, 'cause they'd be like are you a real Indian? Can I touch you? I'm like dude, I'm not out of a fairytale. I think that's what they're made to believe, that Indians don't exist anymore... So then, everybody was like, no big deal, Ana's going and doing her Indian thing... nobody ever made those thumpy little noises. They just didn't, I don't know if it was just a different time.

When going to school, being Indian was different and sometimes confusing in the Black and White world that schools are accustomed to. Suzanne shared,

In high school to be on the homecoming court your homeroom class had to nominate one Black person and one White person. One year they just nominated two people. Anyways, our school was predominately Black with about 30% White and other. With a few of us Indians sprinkled in the middle. I remember one year someone being nominated for the Black and White category for a second, and it was kind of a joke but then got officially nominated in the White category. It could have just been a girl thing but there always seemed to be tension between the people making up the White category because often times Indians and others won those categories taking the white spots. But the tension only really arose at homecoming whenever they made these separate categories by race... I like it better now because they do minority and majority categories, which I mean, are the same but have different names and are more inclusive.

At Ana's school, "we never had anything like that. We didn't have Black and White categories. I mean, we just didn't do that. And so it floored me when I found out that (school) actually does that."

However, Ana remembers getting into debates with other students in her health class. Anna remembers one event vividly,

Honestly, the closest that I ever came to distinctly saying, I am Indian, look at me and see me for who I am... we got into, um, like a racial debate, biracial couples, 'cause that is about the time when it all started, when you started seeing all these mixed couples and people were just flipping out. You know, small town, Alabama. It's like you don't do that. And it was... it's mainly White and Black. It's not really any other... It's not any other ethnicities, and it's like that's all we had. We had White, we had Black, we had me and we had a Japanese guy... well, his mama was like half Japanese, half White, so he's like a quarter Japanese or something, so that's it. So, we're sitting there and they're all talking about oh, I don't think White and Black should be able to date, and blah blah blah. Whatever, so I was like okay. I stuck my hand up. I'm like what would you say about me if I dated the Japanese guy? Oh, that's fine. What would you say about me if I dated this person and he's White. Oh, that's fine. What would you say about me if I dated this person, he's Black. Oh no, we'd have a problem with that. And I'm like, really? I said, do you know me? Do you know what I am? And they're like... I'm like no, I'm Indian. I said, every single one of these is a biracial

relationship. I said, you're telling me that just because I'm lighter than this guy that it's okay? I mean, I don't know. I wasn't trying to prove any other point besides I'm in a biracial relationship wherever I go. But yet because the color of my skin makes it wrong or right. But that was the only thing. I mean, people just stopped and looked at me like... Oh my god. They're like it never occurred to me that you were... you know, another race. It never occurred to me that (the Japanese guy) was another race. You know, and that him dating a White girl or him dating a Black girl is biracial, regardless of wherever you go.

Everyone I talked with in this generation was successful in navigating schools because they all finished high school and have some college. Rose, James, and Ana talked about how going to college meant paying for it themselves, not because their parents didn't want them to go to school but because their parents didn't have the monetary resources to pay for their college. Rose shared that winning the princess contest

Meant whether I got to go to school or not 'cause Mama and Daddy couldn't afford it, it was a scholarship. I got a scholarship to go to (the local community college) which is where I went cause that's where my scholarship was. It wasn't enough to pay all of it but it was enough to get me started... And I had to pay my way through school. Mama and Daddy did what they could but I knew they couldn't afford it... That's what princess meant to me.

When talking about experiences in college, James and I had a conversation around education being a new thing for Indian people and him being a first generation college student.

I think the biggest thing with recognition is the adult scholarships...for my age, because all of the scholarships came around after I had already passed the age... so I just think okay I'm not gonna finish college unless I pay for it... And it's kind of hard at this point in life because my parents neither one of them had a degree, little bit of college, but my Dad's in college now full time, working on his... so there again, back to the newness of it. You know, it really is new to us as an immediate family... and then look at my grandparents, they are working class.

After high school, Suzanne went to college at a town a few hours away from her community. There were many challenges that she discussed that included applying for college, paying for college, and not knowing people at college.

Luckily my Mom had gone to college and could help me fill out my university application, scholarship applications, and financial aid form. We only visited the university right before one time the semester before orientation, so I signed up having only visited one time when I went to cheerleading camp. I can remember my parents always telling me that I will go to college, but we always thought I'd go to a junior college or local college. So when I decided to apply to a school away, I remember them asking me how we were going to pay for it... something I didn't really think through and just figured it'd work out. When I was getting ready to

go to college my Mom lost her job so I didn't really think that I was going to get to go and remember being at college my first semester and worrying about how we were going to pay for it. But with scholarships, my job, and lots of financial support from my parents, I graduated with my Bachelor's. The last year the tribe started their scholarship program and that helped a lot.

She shared, "I knew my roommate and a few older people at the school but for the most part college was very new and I didn't know anyone or know what to do."

After Suzanne finished her first degree at college, she continued going to school for her Master's degree. During graduate school she faced many of the same challenges as well as many different challenges.

After I graduated there I got a scholarship to attend a college in another state, which was a lot further away. I was worried about this and have to admit that the first year was very lonely because I didn't know anyone and was very homesick. It got better as I made friends but I still went home a lot and people would always joke about me going home but I really don't think I could have done it any other way... My sister started college when I was a senior she was a freshman. Me and her helped each other out a lot on navigating the university, especially in graduate school sharing our experiences and conversations as the only Indian person in most of our classes. We both had lots of students and teachers make crazy comments about Indians, but I would have to say that my parent's and family have helped me throughout my whole college career and I wouldn't have been

able to get through all of this schooling without their support and help.

Even when they didn't know or understand what I was going through they always knew how to help me. I am forever indebted to them. The degrees I have are definitely shared with my family and friends.

Suzanne shared many experiences about her frustrations with issues that she faces as an Indian person in college.

It's like every day, I see how different it is to be Indian by being in that environment. It's so apparent. It's all the time, people constantly... my advisor told me, you're more Indian here than you are there because people always question you, and I was like that's kind of weird but it's true... we're always having to defend or tell history and speak for our group. And that's what's made me even get more interested in history than I was before... me and my Dad talk all the time about people that grew up here when nobody else was Indian and when there were no benefits and how they have a whole different perspective than many others that just have a roll number. Being Indian is more than about being able to check a box it is about being part of a family and participating in and helping with whatever you can.

Rose and Ana both have an Associates degree and Suzanne and James are still attending college. Both James and Rose talked about going back to school. James shared that he is in college now and so is his Dad. They are both using the tribe's scholarship money to go to school. Rose shared, "now that I have kids, I'd like to go back but it's real hard to go back."

While all students went to integrated schools and were accepted as Indian people, their racial identity was very much on the forefront throughout their entire schooling experience. From early on, Indian students were included as well as separated by race, at times their heritage and history was celebrated, and racially they were the in-between race in a Black and White society often being put in the White category and begin questioned by others. If we measure success by whether or not these students graduated school and went to college, then these men and women were very successful in navigating school as an Indian person. From a few stories, we hear, these students used their parents' tools to learn how to navigate the school systems.

Being Indian meant different things in different places. Being Indian in school was very different than being Indian in Poarch. In school there were distinctly different groups of people and races. Within the Poarch community there are different beliefs about what an Indian is and should be.

Poarch Creek Community

What it means to be Indian is a very controversial topic within and outside Indian communities. Who has the authority to say what it means to be Indian? What it means to be Indian is different depending on where you are and whose opinion is being shared. Throughout this chapter we have heard stories about what it means to be Indian in different contexts. In our Indian community there is lots of discussion about culture and its place in Indian identity.

Within the Poarch Creek community, there are now lots of conversations around what it means to be Poarch Creek. Ana shares her frustration with the “assimilation” that she sees with people in our tribe.

You have all these people and they make me so angry... who are Indian just for namesake only. They know nothing about being Indian. And all it does is help them like... in a federal light for grants and all this stuff... But it's insane... the attitudes that people have, or don't have. It's like how can you walk in two worlds so easily? I mean just flip-flop back and forth. It's like, oh, I'm Indian today. But... I don't care anything about cultural life ways or values, my history, knowing where I come from. They say things like, I don't care. I'm just Indian. I got a roll number. How do you have that mentality? I just don't get it.

Ana shares her frustrations with culture and being Indian in the community. Ana and others in the community refer to some of the people from our tribe as "a bunch of white Indians." Ana compared these types of Indians to

apples... Red on the outside, white on the inside. That's the majority of the people around here. It's like how do you even call yourself Indian if you don't know anything about it? You don't know anything about being that way. (People) don't want to fund cultural programs, they care nothing about culture... It's always, if so and so does it, oh, it'll be about culture. We are a flipping Indian tribe. What else do you have? That's what it's supposed to be. But then, when they need to put on a dog and pony show, who's the first one they call? Then it's like they pimp us out. I swear, that's exactly what it feels like. And I mean, that's what it feels like. That's what people want. That's what "Indian" is.

The tribe is made up of many departments such as housing, education, health, and legal. Ana talked about dilemmas that the cultural department faces. When having cultural programs for the tribe, “it’s the same people that come to the classes over and over again. How do we get other people involved?” This summer, a Creek preacher visited a church on the reservation and sung hymns in the Mvskoke language. A few people from the community came, including a few elderly women. Ana shares,

she was looking at her little hymnbook and you’d see her and she was kind of looking around, she’d just set it down. And I was laughing. I was like look at her. And then um, when (another older tribal member) came in, she’s just all looking around, smiling, talking to people. She leaned over and she’s like hey, what are we singing? And she’s like it’s in this book right here, and she’s like you ain’t singing? She said, girl, I can’t sing it in English. She’s like I can’t read this.

Suzanne added, “my Granny was trying so hard to read the hymn book... the syllables and the sounds aren’t the same... But she had that book up to her and was trying so hard. I was like I’m proud of you.” Ana commented,

at least she was trying.” The next night, Ana shared, “after church, the preachers are coming by, shaking everyone’s hand, I heard (an older tribal member), say mvto... But it’s funny how that generation, they know what it was like and the discrimination that they faced, you know, for who they were. But it’s so wild that they’re like, I’m Indian and I know I got discriminated against and I know I got treated differently because I am. But I know nothing about being Indian... It’s just mind boggling to not

even understand why you're being discriminated against, 'cause you know nothing about that lifestyle... And like even in some of these tapes that we found. I don't know who the lady is, but there's one... There's an interview that they done, um, back in either the late 70's, early 80's, something like that, and that lady, she's from here, but she was talking about some of the ways of cooking and things like that. And you know that the stuff she learned, she learned from like a ceremonial person... just a truly Creek person because of what she said. And there were even some words that she knew, some Creek words that she knew, and it's wild to see. I mean, she only knew a few, but she did know some things. And then you had that generation gap where now these people knew nothing about who they are. And then, you have your children learning and going back home and trying to teach 'em, but there is such a resistance to learn. It was like we didn't do that. We didn't talk like this. We didn't talk like that.

While Ana shares one opinion, many others share a very different opinion about what culture is and what being Poarch Creek means. There are many other opinions about what it means to be Indian that have nothing to do with culture. As we were sitting at a Christmas party James said, "why isn't my family Christmas a cultural event? I am Poarch Creek and anything I do is Poarch Creek so instead of having to learn a culture can't I add traditions with the things that me and my family does." While everyone understands the importance of learning and preserving arts and culture, most agree that they as Poarch Creek people are Indian people that carry out Poarch Creek culture, in

everything they do. This culture that they are discussing is similar to the everydayness that generations one and two talked about. To all of these generations, Poarch Creek culture are things that are distinctly Poarch Creek that are passed down and carried own from one generations such as cooking, ways of living, arts, and participating in the community.

Conclusion

This generation adds to the Poarch Creek basket a racial, cultural, and legal Poarch Creek Indian, navigating Indian and non-Indian communities. This generation weaves into the basket stories of communities, family, race, work, participation, culture, school, and Indian identity. Their stories show us how they navigate life, school, society, Indian Country, and our developing tribal nation.

In reflecting on all of their stories, I turn to Lowery's (2010) four layers of Native American identity: a People, a race, a tribe, and a nation. This generation tells stories of all four of these layers, however tribe and nation become one category with the federal recognition of our tribe that the previous generation fought for and our generation grows up in.

This generation grew up in an Indian community and family, "a People" that the previous generations passed down to them. Everyone described this community as a family, a tribe, and a location. While everyone knew of the three Indian communities that the previous generations referred to, they see their Indian community as one Poarch community made up of these three different communities. Therefore, while the location hasn't changed, the communities have come together to form one larger Poarch community. The ideals about family from the previous generations have been passed

down. These men and women shared that basically every Indian is kin to one another, making the community one big family. What we learn from this generation is that while the ideals about family have not changed in this Indian community, the words to refer to them have. This Indian community and family are also described by this generation as our “tribe” and “nation.”

This generation grows up in a federally recognized tribe. They shared stories of having more opportunities but also more boundaries. They were given more educational opportunities and tribal and cultural programs in which to participate. However, with federal recognition came the requirement of a ¼ blood quantum to be considered Poarch Creek. With this requirement for membership is a boundary of who is and who is not Indian. These men and women discuss how these boundaries affect their decisions in who they can marry and have children with. This generation is forced with the task of not letting our tribe die out. These boundaries also bring up questions of Indian identity. Who is Indian? What does it mean to be Indian? What does it mean to be Poarch Creek? The boundaries created through federal recognition are maintained through membership requirements.

Indian as a race was a huge part of the stories in this generation. Being racially Indian showed up in stories about their families, marriages, children, school, the south, and outsiders perceptions of Indians. Because many of the previous generation married non-Indian people, these men and women grew up in mixed Indian and non-Indian families. Therefore, many talked about how “technically” they are “biracial,” “interracial,” or “mixed,” often times complicating their racial identity. Everyone identified as Indian and Poarch Creek, but only some mentioned being part of an

additional race. Many people talked about growing up in these mixed race families and how being mixed race affected their identity. They also shared stories about being in mixed race marriages and having mixed race children.

Every person in this generation went to at least one school different from the others, however all of their experiences being Indian in school were similar to one another. Being Indian was at the forefront of most everyone's identity in school. Indian as a race in school was often seen as an in-between race in the Black and White world that school and society has set up. At other times, this setup placed Indians in the White category. The older people in this generation remember some of the negative treatment from the previous generation. For the most part, in this generation Indians were more accepted as Indians and were not treated negatively because of their race. Everyone talked about being separated in school because they were Indian, whether that meant being pulled out of class to participate in Indian activities, being called out of class for different things, or being part of history lessons or celebrations at school.

Other stories told about race referred to living in the south, where race is always in the forefront of people's minds. One person discussed how he grew up in the Civil Rights Era, where all races began to get equal opportunities. Others discussed how outsider's perspectives of Indians often caused them to be questioned or compared to "real Indians."

Generation three shares many similar stories of family and community as the previous generations. Therefore we know that this has been passed down from one generation to the next. This generation tells many stories of being legally and racially Indian. This generation teaches us how identity changes and how people adapt and

change with it. These men and women share stories of being Indian in society. They show us how they maintain the ideals passed down from previous generations, about things such as family and participation while also successfully navigating non-Indian spaces. This generation passes on the knowledge and tools they have learned and used to navigate both Indian and non-Indian worlds consecutively.

GENERATION 4: BEING A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY INDIAN: INHERITANCES AND POSSIBILITIES

Like many things in life, this story has come full circle. We are back to the original question, what is it like being an Indian of the 21st century? Chase, Nat, Cinderella, Nicole, and Bailey, all children ages 7 to 12 years old, will help us to understand who they are as individuals and part of the Indian community and what their experiences are being an Indian today, in 2011. Because I talked with these children in the summer, we talked throughout the day at wherever they were staying. In the summer the tribe has a summer program where two of the girls spent their days, so I pulled them out of their classes and talked to each of them individually around a table outside. I spent two different days talking with the other three children in their homes.

Generation two creates much of what generation four lives in. Among many things, federal recognitions gave us power as a sovereign nation and created a legal identity of Indian. Sovereignty allows these children to grow up in a developing nation with economic assistance and the creation of many programs for Indian children. However, the legal identity creates borders that divide tribal members and 1st generation descendants. Though this is the legal context that is very much present in the fourth generation, the children of the fourth generation discussed living in an Indian community similar to generation one. This generation asks us to think about what their experiences mean for the future of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

These children have inherited a basket from the generations that came before them built of a family, a federally recognized tribe, and the tools to navigate society as a Poarch Creek person. They have also inherited the legal, racial, and cultural identities as Poarch Creek person. These children are still very young, so they don't have a very long history to share with us. Therefore, they are continuing to weave on a basket that will be given to the future generations. Through their stories, we learn what they are inheriting and how that plays out in their everyday lives as Indian people.

Community

As I looked over the interviews with these children, I noticed that there were three main things that they all talked about: family, education, and Indians. I couldn't understand why they didn't talk about community as the previous generations until I looked more deeply at their descriptions. For these children, their family is their community. Their educational experiences at school and in the tribe are with other Indian children; therefore these experiences are also part of their community. These boys and girls define community as what they live in. All of them live in Poarch, participate in the tribe, and go to a predominately Indian school. Being Indian in this generation is very different than in the older generation. This generation is growing up in the context that has proceeded them with the idea that this is what Indian is, not something that you have to prove or fight for. Through their experiences we can better understand what it means to be Indian in their generation.

Family

When talking about family, Bailey, Nicole, Nat, Cinderella, and Chase gave descriptions similar to the generations before. To these children, their family is a group of people that care about each other. Cinderella said, it's "a group of people that live together," and Nat adds, "I think of family, friends, hugs, and love." Nicole and Bailey talked about what family does. Family is "when you get together and spend time with family and friends" and family is "love, always being there, money, together, love is the main one."

When we talked about their family, they each listed many people in their immediate and extended families, in the community, and in their classes at school. Most of their lists ended with something like "do I have to name all of their names?" Nat says,

I can name a lot of people in my family... I mean, we are like a humungo family we are like a very big family. That's what I say when I say who my family is, I say it's this big, big, big family.

All but one person said their family included cousins, grandparents, parents, stepparents, sibling, aunts and uncles. The sentiment in their conversations was as Bailey said, "everybody's kin down here, it's just like a big circle."

Everyone shared with me his or her favorite family memory, event, or tradition. While many of these children have gone on trips and vacations, most of their stories were about everyday occurrences. Cinderella said her favorite family things were "making up jokes, really funny jokes, me (and my cousins and siblings). We made up funny, funny jokes." Bailey said her "favorite family thing is the family reunion at the creek where we cookout, swim, and tube." Nicole said her favorite memory is going with her family to

Oklahoma and swimming in the creek. Chase's favorite family event is "whenever me and my Dad went to Georgia to Yellowstone Mountain Park. Actually it was for a summer youth thing, but my Dad was camp counselor and I was in his group. (I liked climbing the mountain."

When talking with Nat, I could see the love that she has for her family in her eyes and facial expressions, and through her excitement that she gets when talking about them. Nat couldn't pick just one favorite memory; she shared stories of family traditions and events that they celebrate every year. Nat got so excited about her family's Christmas,

What really gets me tickled is whenever I come down to Mamaw's house for Christmas and everybody's there and I'm like I wanna gonna to Mamaw's house cause y'all really are a good family. I always wanna be with y'all. It's like y'all's faces just tickle me. Cause y'all have such big smiles and y'all always look at me like y'all wanna hug and all that... we're surrounded by each other. It's so great.

It makes me so ticklish. It's like I'm going to throw up; it makes me so excited. Nat drew me a picture of her family at Christmas at her "Mamaw's house. I'd draw Mamaw sitting in her rocking chair over in the corner. I'd draw Papa sitting in his rocking chair... and all of my cousins and family sitting in a circle around a Christmas tree."

Nat's second favorite memory that she shared was a very similar experience at Thanksgiving.

I just love that. Cause we go down to the powwow and that tickles me a bunch cause I see all of y'all and we go down to Mamaws cause it gets really cold during powwow season and then we go down to Mamaws and she has like

dumplings and all that and then we eat dumplings at her house. And everybody's there from our family... And we eat dumplings and start to warm up cause we always sit down and talk and have a great time. It's really fun.

All of these children's ideas about family, definitions of family, and family stories definitely mirror what the three generations before them have said. Over the generations, Poarch Creeks have named family as people that are biologically kin to one another as well as people that are significant parts of their lives. Also, within all of that, everyone sees that the tribe is one big family, and in the end everyone is related somewhere down the line. Kinship has always been and is still an important part of the Poarch Creek tribal community today.

While family is the main aspect of these children's lives, another major part is education. Education includes their experiences in school as well as their experiences in the tribe's cultural, sports, and education programs. While the schools that these children attend are not Indian schools, they are made up by most of the Indians their age. Therefore, these children grow up in grades K-6 with each other everyday in school.

Education

The tribe has a pre-kindergarten program on the reservation, the Fred L. McGhee Learning Center or "Even Start." Nicole and Cinderella were the only children in this generation that I talked with that went to school there. The town of Atmore has three public elementary schools: one which is zoned for the reservation and serves children in kindergarten through 6th grade, one in town that serves kindergarten to 2nd grades, and another in town which serves 3rd and 4th grades. There is one public middle school serving grades 5th-8th and then one public high school serving grades 9th-12th. There are

also local Christian schools and one private academy that serve children from kindergarten to 12th grade. Some of our children also attend those schools and schools in surrounding towns.

All of these children attend the K-6 elementary school zoned for the reservation, where most of the Poarch Creek children attend elementary school. When describing their school Nat named her school and shared,

It is a great school but not that many great kids. The food is great. My teacher is a nice teacher. Everyday we do work. We do spelling, reading, math, grammar, science, and history. And that is my work. My P.E. teacher is a mean man. Chase shared his description of the same school. "I think the school is very good at teaching students. Our school makes us wear uniforms." Cinderella added, "my teacher is so sweet and nice. Sometimes I get B+ but I get A+ too."

Like many other kids, Cinderella and Nicole talked about the fun things that they like to do at school. When Cinderella was in the first grade, she loved to do

Math games, playing outside, and fun Friday. Fun Friday is where you get to color, you don't have to do worksheets or math sheets, you don't have to do anything all day, you can just color you can do fun stuff there.

Nicole and Cinderella were both in the same class in the 1st grade. Nicole shared that she loves that "we get to go outside and play and we get to eat... and coloring and talking."

Nicole shared that school "sometimes it gets boring."

It was interesting that all of the children were able to name the Indian kids in their class and some named the other kids including their race. However, it really isn't that surprising because after visiting/helping in the school one day I saw that as the Indian

Aide goes around to each class, she pulls out the Indian kids and helps them with their work. So all the kids knew who were the Indians and who were not, but it wasn't a big deal to the students -- just a normal activity. However, in one of the classes I saw two 4th grade boys getting into a debate about whether one of the boys was Indian or not. These are only two examples on one day of how Indian as a race and distinct group is normalized in the public school.

In the monthly tribal newsletter, I saw that Nicole won an art contest at school. We talked about this and she shared, "I had this little art show at school, and anybody could do it. So I drew a picture of three little Indian girls walking home from the powwow towards the sunset... I got a ribbon for winning 1st place." Her picture was beautiful, filled with bright colors and so many details. Nicole loves to color and draw and through this contest was recognized for her ability at school.

Everyone talked with me about the tribe's cultural director coming into the schools and teaching Poarch Creek history and language. Nicole said they go to the class during physical education (P.E.) time. Chase remembered that, "they practice the language and look at animals outside or something." Cinderella shared, "I choose to go sometimes but sometimes not. We have to do Indian work... it is so hard." From their descriptions and my informal conversations with the cultural director, I learned that he goes into two of the local public schools and the tribe's "Even Start" school to teach Indian children the language.

Chase had a different experience than the others in school because he's in "the gifted program." He goes to this program, "one day every other week... right next to the Escambia Country High School... we do projects. I like that better than school. My

teachers work with me to let me leave.” Because this is an elementary school it doesn’t have many extra programs such as sports teams or clubs. However, Bailey shared that the school does have “an afterschool program... you’d get to do homework, get to go to the computer lab, and you’d stuff like with money... they’d teach you how to count money and all kind of stuff.”

Education encompasses more than just schooling. In addition to what the schools do, the tribe has its own education, sports, and cultural programs that these children all talked about participating in at one point or another. All of them participated in the tribe’s summer youth program and the afterschool program for at least one year. Bailey said that in the summer program she learned Creek language. Cinderella and Nat were cheerleaders for the Poarch Warriors, a team in the tribe’s football league. Bailey also participated in the 4-H program.

All of these children shared that they went to a school that was “mostly Indian”. As I learned about their education experiences and them as Indian people, I wanted to learn more about what they are learning about Indians and what it means to them to be an Indian today.

Indian

To understand more about Indian identity, I talked with the children about what they have been taught in schools, society, and their families about Indians. I asked all of the children, what are the first things that come to your mind when I say the word Indian? Nicole is seven years old. She said, “it’s a person that dresses up in an Indian outfit and dances Indian style... people getting dressed with feathers in their hair.” Cinderella is also seven years old. She said,

Indians talking, and they have a straw house. You know how Indians had straw houses a long time ago. A little boy working. (He's working on) a house... making it for the Indians. And a little baby Indian with its momma and daddy, sister and brother.

Chase is eleven years old. He said, "my heritage, Poarch Creeks, spears, drums, that's all... (If I had to draw a picture) I would put on them, a feather hat with a flute and for some reason have a wrinkled face and a hawk nose." Nat is ten years old. She said she thinks of her "uncle and you (the interviewer) and mostly everybody in my family. Cause we're all Indians... we're all in this together." Bailey is twelve years old. She said, "nature, Indian, Creek, a lot of different tribes: Muskogee, Shawnee, Apache, dance, colorful regalia¹³, language... este-maskokvlet omis, estofis¹⁴. I am a creek people always."

Though no one said that an Indian is them, their initial descriptions are of themselves. Nicole is a powwow dancer so to her dressing up and dancing is something that she does and she sees it as "Indian." To Cinderella, the Indian family she described is the makeup of her family. To Chase, Indian is his heritage and it's Poarch Creek, and other cultural things. And to Bailey, Indian is being part of one of many different tribes, it's dancing, and speaking the language, all of which she is or has done.

Bailey and I had a quite extensive conversation about the Indian people she knows, who they are, and what they are like. Bailey shared, "an Indian is a person that's

¹³ Regalia is the word that most Indian people use to describe the clothes or outfit that they wear at powwows.

¹⁴ This is a sentence from the Mvskoke language.

true to theirselves no matter what they do.” She said, “who is an Indian? Me, my Mom, my Granny, my big Granny.” When describing Indians, Bailey said,

looks vary. You can’t tell that I am an Indian but I am. You aren’t supposed to separate them from others like my Granny was. Indians are people that came back from long ago, that had nature to be their friend and nothing else. We made leather and colors out of berries.

Bailey wants others to know that today Indians live in “modern” times, very similar to others. “We have electricity and we don’t live in teepees but we still are true to our culture and how we are... we’ll go to college and stuff like that, but we usually always come home with the tribe.”

As I talked with each of them about Indians and what they know about Indians, I asked them if they were Indian. Bailey was the only person that described herself initially as “a Creek Indian.” She named everyone in her family and then specified that her Dad is not Indian. Everyone said they were Indian and then we talked about what makes them Indian. Nicole said we are Indian because, “we were born Indians.” Cinderella said, “I’m half Indian, because my Dad is Indian and my Mom isn’t.” Nat added, “I am whole Indian because my Momma is Indian somewhere, and my Dad is Indian.” Chase shared, “I am Indian cause my Dad’s part of the Indian group, and summer youth, if you’re Indian you’re allowed to be in that. And that’s pretty much one of the best reasons I know.”

These answers, while they seem simple, highlight the complexities of who is considered Indian and who gets to decide. Technically to be Poarch Creek you have to have $\frac{1}{4}$ blood quantum, which is calculated by adding your Mother and Father’s blood

quantum together, and dividing it in half. However, most of the children had never heard the word blood quantum or heard people talk about how much Indian they are. Nicole said, “some people ask me if I am Indian,” but that’s about it. At this age, and to these children, being Indian has more to do with who your parents and family is and if they can participate in activities and events in the community, and not as much to do of whether or not they are on the tribal roll.

Bailey and I had multiple conversations about being Indian and what that means. In the first conversation, Bailey immediately said, being Indian means “I’m a part of a big and growing nation and that it means that I’m different than everybody else, even if they might not notice it and I have a lot of history and ancestry behind me.” Though Bailey sees herself as Indian and is on the tribal roll, she shared how others sometimes question her identity. “My Daddy calls me a White girl and I said no I’m Indian... but it doesn’t come up in school because our school was the majority Indian.” Some people tell her she doesn’t look Indian. “It don’t bother me, ‘cause I know I’m Indian and people that don’t believe me, they don’t have to... I’m pretty sure that they know I was in the princess contest. I’m pretty sure they know I’m Indian.” I asked Bailey what makes you different than other races or people you know? She said others are “different because they don’t get money on their birthday... Their ancestry goes back, where they are White I’m Indian, there’s a differences, but we are both human.”

All of these boys and girls have participated in cultural activities in some form in the community. Some of the cultural activities that these children named they have participated in are powwows, the powwow club, and the princess contest. They have also taken cultural classes in the Mvskoke language, basketweaving, moccasin making, and

cooking. Nicole shared memories from the last year of some of these activities: a stomp dance and Creek ceremony in Oklahoma, dancing at different powwows all over, and going to a stomp dance and stickball game on the powwow grounds at Poarch.

Yeah, I do dance in every single one I get to go to. The only thing you get to dance to is intertribals and I get to dance tiny tots... I do fancy dance. My regalia is kind of the darkish yellow. It has an eagle on it and it has flowers.

While Nicole didn't want to sing for me, she shared, "I know some songs, some are hymns and some are just songs that you sing with a drum like at a powwow or something."

Chase joined the powwow club this year. He LOVES it and now he and his family are very involved and go off with him to different powwows. He was so excited when talking about the powwow club and the fact that he is a member. He showed me his regalia and eagle feathers and explained to me that it was passed down to him from an older person in the powwow club that outgrew it. He talked about three older guys that have mentored him and helped him learn how to dance. He and his family shared stories from the first powwow that he competed in, in Louisiana.

An eagle feather hit the ground while somebody was dancing and we didn't know what to do. Everybody stopped and they did a ceremony for the feather and put something on it. Me and my family didn't know what to do.

As Chase's parents shared, many people like them that are unfamiliar to powwow culture don't know that an eagle feather hitting the ground is a big deal. They shared, "I wish we would have been taught some powwow etiquette before we went. Two of the older kids

helped us with everything and (one parent) took us under her wing, or we wouldn't have known what to do.”

Bailey shared that she used to be in the powwow club but “my church believes the only spirit you are supposed to entertain is God. Powwow dancing entertains different spirits.” She said that princess contest dancing and some other dances are just a dance and don't “entertain other spirits.” She was unsure of whether she would participate in the princess contest or not because it has turned into more of a “Malibu Barbie contest and not Indian princess.”

As we know from previous generations, being Indian has a lot to do with who you are but also what others see you as and how they treat you. When I talked with these children about how others treat them as Indian people, both good and bad, only one person could name a time when someone said something bad about Indians. Nicole said, “I've never heard anyone talk good or bad about the tribe or Indians.” Bailey shared, “I'm treated good... pretty much by everybody. Everybody likes Indians down here.” None of these children have been treated badly because they were Indian or heard anything said badly about Indians. Bailey says she thinks it's because usually the people she is around are “mostly Indian.”

Bailey recalls an experience at school where a boy in her class was talking bad about Indians. “We had this one boy who was at our school and he started smarting off saying he didn't like Indians, and our school is almost like 90% Indians, and everybody just looks at him. He just kind of sat down and when he got off the bus... it was like, what do you have to say about Indians? And he's like oh, nothing.” Bailey said that this boy was White and that he “made me mad because almost everybody on our bus was

Indian and these are the people that wasn't... Most White people love Indians at our school, and everybody's just like... he had no friends at school after that." However, this was the only negative experience that was mentioned in all of the five children's stories.

While I would like to imagine that all Indian children are treated wonderfully, I know from the adults' stories of Indian children's experiences in school that this is not the case. However, we can learn from these children that at their age they see all races treated fairly in and out of school and personally haven't experienced any racism or mistreatment because they are Indian.

All of these children's conversations around Indianness tell us that they all consider themselves Indian because of their families and participation in the community. This is similar to the ideas of Indian family and community from generation one. As young children, blood quantum, being on the roll, and the legal status of Indian doesn't seem to be in their conversations. Because so many programs are now open to 1st generation and sometimes 2nd generation children¹⁵, my thoughts are that these children haven't encountered spaces yet where they are separated or denied access to things based on tribal membership.

From my observations, other children their age are talking about these issues and do know how much Indian they are and how much others are, often comparing that to one another. As children become teenagers and learn more about what's going on around them, the conversations of who's Indian and who isn't seems to appear. The separations of who is allowed to participate on softball teams, get into the creek for free, run for

¹⁵ To be considered 1st generation, you have parents that are on the Poarch Creek roll, but you don't meet the blood quantum qualification of ¼ to be on the roll. To be considered 2nd generation, you have a parent that is 1st generation.

princess, get a trust fund statement and payment, and go to college for free become real dividers for who is legally Indian and who is not. However, what these children show us is that these separations between Indians don't exist in their worlds. Instead their definitions of what it means to be Indian is whether or not your parents and family are Indian, how you are raised, and if you are part of the community.

These children also teach us that though this is their definition of Indian, they are learning other definitions of Indians as well from school, society, and the media. While they know they are Indian and what it means to be Indian to them they also are learning history about Indians in the past, which carry over into their thoughts of Indians today. Because of their young ages, these children don't have much history. However the lives they have lived and history that they do have is one made up of family, education, and an Indian community. These children's stories have brought us to the point where I will begin to wrap up this overall story of Poarch Creek identity. Next I will share all of the generations' thoughts on the tribe today, giving a brief overview of the current tribe that all of these generations live in and that the fourth generation has inherited.

The Tribe Today

Every person I talked with gave descriptions of the tribe today. Most people talked about the tribe's economic stability, what it means to be Indian, the current state of education, and tribal events. All of these things and many more make up the tribe that we all live in today.

When reflecting on the past, Doris and Mae said, "I tell you, we got a lot to be thankful for. We've come a long way." Doris added, the tribe, "it's good! Very good! The clinic, the money, all of it. I ain't found nothing wrong with the tribe, and I

appreciate the tribe. They're good people." Maybell added, "they've always been good to me." Mary shared, "our little tribe is getting better all the time... We're into the money now." However, Maybell shares, "a lot of people though, when they get money, it goes to their head." Laura added, "I feel like now that all they care about is making money and they forget some of the important things."

Today the tribe is economically in a much better place than in any point in our history. Therefore there are many tribal programs and events for people of all ages. The first and second generation talked about all of the things the tribe has for the seniors. They have lunch at the SAIL Center everyday, go on trips a few times a year, and do many other things together. Maybell "eats a little lunch over there most of the time" and likes "to go with them seniors. I never did go long as (my husband) lived. But since he's been gone, why me, (my daughter and granddaughter), we went to Winter Park, Colorado. She said she would ride with... we would go with her. That wasn't too long after (my husband) died. So we went with her." Everyone talks about how good it is to have a group of people to do things with whether that be growing up going to afterschool, summer, sports, and cultural programs as children or going to community events as adults. The elders really talked a lot about how community is very important, because that's their family. Maybell shared, "just about everybody I grew up with are just about dead now. We're all getting old... there's a lot of widow women. Seems like more men die than there are women." While Mae isn't able to get out much now, she loves to spend time with her friends and family and just to "sit around with each other and catch up. What's going on. Where are people. What are they doing."

When reflecting on the past, everyone agrees that the tribe has more resources and opportunities than ever before. As we talked about what the tribe is like today, generations one, two, and three shared their thoughts on what it is like to be Indian today.

Being Indian

Being Indian today is much different than in the past. Jimmy said, Being Indian is different because then... not that you were ashamed of being Indian, it just didn't mean anything. Now, it means something. It's like your race is getting better, instead of before, you didn't even know what it was.

As we talked more about how being Indian has changed, Jimmy said, "what's been diluted is not necessarily the blood quantum but the Indianness. Indianness as defined by the older generations. What they did to survive and how they lived." What Jimmy is referring to when talking about the "Indianness" defined by the older generations is their ways of living as Indian people. Yes, being Indian today is much different than when generation one was growing up. Because of the many changes each generation had to make, they also had to make adaptations. However, this raises an important point, does this make one generation any more Indian than another, or just a different type of Indian?

James shared, "the fact that the language is dead here... that does make you feel a little less Indian, to me... For this version of the tribe, English is our language." Suzanne shared,

yeah, I almost feel like now we're trying to make it a little bit different. They're trying to make kids a little bit different, like this pride kind of... there's something different. I don't know what it is with the kids now, but it's good to see this pride that they have with being Indian.

James added, “yeah, it’s like the revival of language. And maybe some of the Indian pride stuff. Maybe some of that’s being instilled in ‘em too. But too, I think... if both my parents had been Indian, it’d be different.”

Today, the tribe is very united as a family and group of Poarch Creeks. However there are still divisions within this group. While generations one and two saw divisions in communities, today there are different divisions within the group. There are divisions between tribal members of those that have always been Indian and those that are newer members. There are also divisions within Indian families of those that have enough blood to be on the roll and those that don’t have enough blood and aren’t considered Indian. In a conversation with Michelle, another tribal member, she explained,

today, how people know that a person is Indian or not is whether or not your on the roll... the reason new Indians want to be Indian is because they have seen the benefits. Nobody wanted to research anything til now we have healthcare, education, burial plans. There are lots of older people joining because they want medicine. People our age want education money. Younger kids it’s about culture, fitting in, having an activity they are good at like a sport. However, there is some divide between the younger kids that participate in cultural activities and the ones that don’t but, that’s the same as those that participate in sport and don’t. Michelle highlights the divisions between tribal members which are people on the roll and Indian descent or 1st generation which people not on the roll; as well as the divisions between “new Indians” and “people that have been Indians all of their lives.”

In our tribe, while blood quantum is important, it does not divide tribal members into categories. If a person meets the minimum $\frac{1}{4}$ blood requirement then they are

Poarch Creek. Within Poarch Creeks, these divisions in blood are not made. So unless you ask someone, you don't really know someone's blood quantum. The only time blood quantum does come into play is when you don't meet the ¼ blood requirement. This is where divisions come into play between tribal members and Indian descent. In this generation, the division lines are blurred because most of the programs that the tribe has services tribal members and 1st generation Indian descent and sometimes 2nd generation, community, and employees children. Therefore for the current generation, who gets to participate in Indian activities has changed. This change has changed for this generation who considers themselves to be Indian.

Ana shared, "right now, like the princess contest is the only program we have left that is strictly for tribal members. That's it. Everything else services first generation, sometimes second generation." With the programs servicing all of these children, people don't really know who is a tribal member and who is 1st generation. Ana shared, "I just take for granted that the kids we work with, in powwow club, in the youth council are the applicant pool for the princess contest. I ask if they are going to run, and they're like no, I'm first generation." While we sometimes aren't sure if children are on the roll or not, the children know whether they are on the roll or not. Because of this, there are times when blood quantum or "being Indian" come up between the kids.

Now, with these programs, they're all like we're Indian. They don't care whether they have a roll number or not. But then it comes up, especially when they get mad with each other, or when they're arguing about something... They'll say, I can't do this because I'm first generation or I'm not on roll. It is honestly a look

of shame when they tell you I'm not on roll. They won't look you in the eye, and they'll look down.

As Ana described, Indian descent children handle these conversations in different ways. Some are embarrassed because they are not on the roll, to others it doesn't matter because they know they are Indian. This is a conversation that many of these children never have, but is confusing when it comes to them being Indian descent. In an informal conversation, one person explained to me, "I am Indian at school but not enough for the tribe, so am I Indian or not." Indian identity becomes confusing in trying to figure out because of the different definitions of Indian that they see and hear.

Today the words used in stories about being Indian are pride, culture, revival, united, family, divisions, blood quantum, tribal members, and Indian descent. These words are very different than those used in previous generations to describe being Indian. Today, there are many pushes to revive culture and language and instill pride in being Indian. As this generation has discussed, while the tribe is united as a family, the boundaries set using blood quantum for tribal rolls have divided many people in this generation into categories of tribal members and Indian descent. However, these words are mainly used within the tribe. Outsiders often see all of these people as one group of Indians, especially in places such as schools.

Education

Everyone talked about the education that our children are receiving today. The tribe is more involved in local schools than ever before. However, many stories were shared about the tensions between non-Indian faculty, staff, and students in schools and

Indian students. “I honestly think the negative treatment has gotten worse because of the money. Because Indians have some money now.” Suzanne said.

As someone that works with children, Ana hears stories from the kids about what goes on in their schools and classrooms.

Even now, some of our powwow club kids, they’ll say so-and-so hates me because I’m Indian. Really? I mean we shouldn’t be dealing with that stuff... the first time I ever heard it, I went to the legislative event this past year, and they were getting their homework done on the bus, on the way... somebody made a comment, I have got to finish this homework or so and so is not gonna let me turn it in... They’re like she hates us, because we’re Indian... she said when the announcement came over the loud speaker that was for them to go, she said (sarcastically) well all you Indian kids, it’s time for y’all to go. They were being really hateful and I just couldn’t believe that.

Though the students that I talked with in this generation didn’t talk about the negative treatment that they had been given at school, these are examples of things that students in this generation is dealing with, because they are Indian.

In working with these children, Ana also hears stories about school from their parents. Many parents share their frustrations with her about their children being part of the powwow club but their schools not allowing them to attend powwow club trips. Other stories are of things such as how schools handle children with diabetes. This is a big deal because many Indian children do have diabetes.

Ana is a parent and shares many of the frustrations of parents and community members about one of the local public schools that serves lots of Indian children. What

they don't understand and are frustrated about is that if that the tribe has always helped this school significantly, and most of our children attend this school, then why are Indian children being treated negatively in this school. Ana explained,

It makes me so angry because we keep that school open... paying the bills, taking them on field trips. Honestly you would think those people would be appreciative, but they're not. If you look at their PTO, who's their PTO? It's either tribal members or they're married to tribal members. We went out there to decorate for their fall carnival. The gym was bringing in tables and chairs, public works brought bleachers and trailers and hay and all this stuff. The majority of the parents that were volunteers were from here... but I just think that it's so wrong... I mean, how can you sit there and treat these kids like that, when if you have assemblies at school, who's the first one they call? These kids. If (the school) needs anything, from stuff moved, stuff delivered, bills paid, whatever. Who do they call? When they go on field trips, they never ever take a school bus anymore. It's always these charter buses. Yes, from the time (my daughter) had been in kindergarten, she has never rode a school bus on a field trip. It has always been on Poarch's charter buses. We pay the gas, we pay the driver, everything. It's a free ride for them. All they gotta do is the kids pay admission for wherever they're going, and then they turn around and treat us like that.

Ana shares her frustrations with the public schools. She explains that while the tribe and tribal members contribute significant amounts of money and time to their children's schools, the schools still treat many Indian children in unfair ways.

Suzanne elaborates on Ana's frustrations, "if we're donating to the schools then we should get something in return." Suzanne explains that one of the solutions to this problem is for schools to change their mindset and the way they deal with Indian children.

I'm not talking about something that they have to give us, I'm talking about things like the administrators need to let (our cultural educator) come teach language classes with no hassle. The (school) should not be celebrating Columbus Day, give 'em Native American Day. You know? And why in the world is the school letting children dress up as cowboys and Indians for homecoming? Really? Really? Indian people are real, not something to be dressed up as... We really need to start thinking about the mindset of things. The way schools think about, teach about, talk about, and treat Indian people.

Suzanne and Ana talked about how the teachers and schools need training in "cultural sensitivity." Ana shared, "they tried that one year but it didn't do any good. (The cultural educator) came in and was teaching 'em how you're supposed to teach Indian kids, 'cause it's a very different way of life. But they didn't care."

All of these parents and community members' frustrations with the local schools seem to be around the tribe giving money to the school and the schools not treating Indian children fairly. While this is not going to change over night, many students, parents, and community members continue to do little things to fight for better schools. While schools are places that the tribe has no control over, the tribe has complete control over the events that they plan for the tribe throughout the year.

Events

Our tribe hosts many different tribal and community events throughout the year as well as numerous wellness, education, cultural, and senior programs for children and adults of all ages. Being at home, I was able to attend most all of these events. Through my observations and other's recollections of these events throughout the past year from March 2010 to March 2011, I will share with you the events and programs that people are participating in, today in the community.

Some of the events people mentioned were the Thanksgiving day powwow, tribal elections, annual celebration, and the New Year's Eve powwow and ball drop which were both new this year. In addition to these events, there are also daily and weekly family get-togethers, celebrations such as baby showers, weddings, and birthdays, and benefits to raise money for people. Suzanne talked about one of these family get-togethers.

When I returned home one May afternoon, my Mom had cooked for our entire family. We all ate together crammed around the same table. It was amazing.

These are the simple things that I enjoy and miss the most when I am away from my family and community. The conversations were ones we always have with Mamaw and Papa telling stories of their pasts and us listening, joking, and talking about what's been going on. The food, family, love, and conversations were all home.

Community Events

Elections. Every year on the first Saturday of June, the tribe holds its annual elections where there are three seats voted on for the tribal council. The polls are open all

day and in conjunction tribal departments usually have booths set up in the gymnasium for tribal members to learn more about programs and most importantly to have the opportunity to get health checkups. Suzanne described the elections as,

an all day event. Our big family has their family reunion on the powwow grounds that day. So basically we go eat lunch and hang out there and then we go vote and hang out around the voting place for a little while then we go to my Granny's and wait until 7:00 when the polls close and everyone comes back to the gym and waits until the results are announced. This year's elections were different in many ways. As I walked into the SAIL center there was a long line of people waiting to vote. As I looked around I noticed familiar and unfamiliar faces. There was a huge turnout. I waited in line for a long time. It was the first time that we voted not just for three council members but for three of the officers.

Suzanne and Ana discussed the changes that occurred the summer of 2010 with blood quantum rules. Basically the tribe voted to change the wording to only allow "Poarch Creek" blood to count in the $\frac{1}{4}$ blood quantum required to be a member of the tribe, instead of previously allowing "Poarch Creek and other Indian blood" in making up the $\frac{1}{4}$ blood quantum required for membership. This changes the possibility of our people marrying other Indians and combining "Indian blood" for their children's membership. Below is the conversation between Suzanne and Ana about this situation.

Suzanne:

I was talking with (another tribal member) and asked if she understood what was written, and she said no. I said, I didn't either and that's ridiculous, you have a PhD and I have a Masters, and I can't even understand what we were voting on. I

mean... I was in the voting line and there was fifty people in line and all of them were talking about how they didn't understand... one person asked me how we were supposed to vote and I couldn't help because I didn't even understand what it was saying myself... after talking with my Dad he explained it how someone had explained it to him but we argued because that's not what I was understanding from reading the paper.

Ana:

I hate that. And it makes me so mad... I think it was just a misuse of power and a misunderstanding... It makes me so mad... I mean, it's who you talk to and which way they wanted it to go... They had this community meeting... and you can understand why... it's scary for people and why they chose to vote the way they did. But it really upset me because, I just don't understand what the intentions were... Because it was wrong. Like the information that they gave had nothing to do with it... And they're saying, well, if these people come onto our roll, this is what's gonna happen, but there's provisions in the enrollment requirements. But they didn't explain it to people, and I don't understand it... In the (old) enrollment requirements, it says you can use the blood from another Indian, provided that the parent who's claiming membership for that child is on roll.

Suzanne: "I wish it'd go back up. People didn't understand it. It should go to a revote or whatever."

Ana:

yeah, you very well could do it... But like me, my thing, I can understand not honoring blood from a Navajo, I can understand that. But what I think that they should do, like to make a happy medium between the people that are totally against it and the people that are for it, is what if we just honored the blood from the five civilized tribes? Tribes in this region or any tribe that has branched off the five civilized tribes. Because you knew... you've got to know that there was intermarriage. You know, among trade routes and, people meet... so you would end up with Creek, Choctaw Cherokee, Chickasaw, and like Seminoles, all that. You'd have Coushattas, you'd have, Alabama, Alabama Coushattas. It would broaden up your...your mating possibilities. But if you would still honor that blood, because it's culturally relevant. And I think that would make... a good happy medium.

Suzanne and Ana's conversation shows that within the tribe and in tribal events there is disagreement between ways that things are done. This conversation also shows that people in our tribe are informed as they can be on things in the community and are active parts in making decisions that affect our tribe.

Annual Celebration. This year on September 4th, the tribe had its Annual Celebration at Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve, which is an area around a creek that the tribe purchased a few years back. The event, Maybell shared is "what they called that Magnolia Branch thing, the Celebration. When they was federally recognized." All tribal members are invited to spend the day with other tribal members and their guests. There is lots of free food, swimming, fishing, floating down the creek, camping, and spending time together. Bailey said, "we have a celebration "at the creek. I'd describe it

as fun, food, family, friends, and floating down the creek.” However, the highlight of many people’s day was the \$25,000 worth of door prizes for tribal members that were drawn at 2:00pm, which began the end of the event.

Laura and I discussed that this year there were a lot of people at the celebration that we didn’t know.

I know where we were sitting where the senior citizens, there was this man walking and they said, do you know who that man is? I told them no. They said he had more Indian in him than a lot of people around here. I asked if he had a wristband and they said no, so I said he’s not Indian. (My daughter) and I were talking about that last night. There were so many people over there and I know there’s Indian people marrying out of the tribe and their children are not on the roll.

Suzanne added,

it was so weird because where I was it was like all the people old and young that have always been Indian and we were constantly talking about how we didn’t know hardly anyone there. After that day, I was talking to some people and they were saying they didn’t go because the celebration is turning into something for people that are new to being Indian... I thought, wow, we are celebrating our federal recognition and the people celebrating it are newer Indians... wow, how things have changed.

Calvin McGhee Memorial. In September, the Calvin McGhee Memorial was held in the community for tribal members and their immediate families to honor the late Chief Calvin McGhee. A family fun day was planned with gospel singing, a stickball

game, an introduction of the princess contestants, a powwow club performance, activities for kids, and lunch. However, the two things everyone talked about were the pony rides for kids and the art show where community members entered art that they made.

Powwows. On Thanksgiving Day and the day after, the tribe held its annual Thanksgiving Day powwow. The first day was very nice but the second day was rainy so the powwow was moved to the casino. About 6,000 people attended, with most of those being on Thursday. About 240 dancers competed representing 44 different tribes. Opening ceremonies were held on the mound Thursday morning and included the powwow club, Oklahoma Creek stomp dancers, a performance by the Fred L. McGhee learning center, and the princess contest. Bailey described the powwow with these words, “fun, pretty, good food, colorful, culture, and our church has a booth.”

This year, the tribe had its first ever Poarch Creek New Year’s Eve Sobriety Powwow. There were nine tribes at the powwow and along with the regular dance competitions there was a marshmallow-eating contest, powwow-style musical chairs, solo hand-drum competition, and a potato two-step competition. Mary went to the powwow. She said,

It was good. It was just a mini thing compared to this out here, basically the same thing. They had a good turnout. It was a good little crowd down there. We didn’t stay very long but I think a lot of ‘em stayed ‘til about 2:00. It was nice. They made a tribal symbol that they planned on dropping at midnight. “They were supposed to but they didn’t because of the weather... it had been raining and everything, so they just called it off. They say they had a really nice ball to drop.”

Christmas. The community had a Christmas parade in early December. Each of the tribal departments decorated floats for the parade around the theme “Christmas on the Farm.” Many people lined the parade routes in the community with their families to catch candy. Also, the tribe hosted its annual kid’s Christmas party for tribal members and 1st generation children ages birth to twelve. About 190 children and their parents were there to see Santa and enjoy the festivities.

Governor’s Inauguration. In January a new governor, Governor Bentley was sworn in for the state of Alabama. The tribe had a float in the Governor’s Inaugural Parade. The theme of the float was the slogan on many of the tribe’s commercials “Alabama Natives, Alabama Neighbors.” The float had a huge picture of the late Chief Calvin McGhee and the tribe’s princesses, some dancers, tribal members, and council members rode the float.

Burning of the Mortgage. In January, the tribe hosted a burning of the mortgage party to celebrate the paying off of our new casino, Wind Creek. Tribal members and their guests were invited to celebrate with free food, a gift, the ceremony, the burning of the mortgage, and a concert by Patti Labelle. Throughout the ceremony, as I sat in the audience, I saw many emotions and had many different conversations about what this means. Everyone was amazed that this seven year mortgage was paid off in two years. It was definitely a day of celebration but also a day of talking about the future. Many asked if they would get monthly per capita checks now. Others commented that we needed to save our money because we don’t know what the future holds. However, as the tribal council gave speeches about what this meant, there was an atmosphere of pride seen by smiles on people’s faces, tears in people’s eyes, and claps and cheers from the crowd.

As the council members spoke, they acknowledged the many people such as previous and current tribal council members and board members for all of their hard work to get us to the point we are today. For everyone knows and appreciates all of the hard work our ancestors have done to get us to where we are now. When listening to the speeches, I noted a few of the quotes that tribal council members said that really stood out to me. “Our ancestors believed in leaving our tribe better than they found it.” “Success has brought us a lot of opportunities.” “We are a people that take advantage of every opportunity.” But the quote that stuck out to me the most is that “we must leave our tribe better than we found it.” This ceremony is a great ending to the story of where our tribe is in 2011.

Wellness Programs

The tribe has a thriving sports program that is a huge part of the community. Throughout the year, the tribe has a Poarch community league for different sports. People in all communities have the opportunity to sign up and pay a fee to participate in any of these sports. In the summer there is wee-ball/t-ball, softball, and baseball. In the fall there is football and cheerleading, and in the winter there is basketball. A new activity that was added this year is dance classes for children and adults. There are also things such as baseball and softball clinics held throughout the year on the weekend. At the beginning of the year there is a sports banquet held to honor all high school athletes and those participating in the Native American Youth Association (NAYO) tournament.

Throughout the school year, the gym has an afterschool program for children in pre-K- 6th grade. Throughout the summer they have a summer youth program for this

same age group. In the summer the students practice skills learned in school as well as go on field trips, swimming, play tennis, and many other fun activities.

The biggest sports in our tribe are softball and baseball. Throughout the summer, the children and adults participated in annual Indian softball tournaments. In July, NAYO softball and baseball tournaments were held in Poarch. The tournament included many different tribes: the Seneca Tribe of New York, the Mississippi Choctaw, the Eastern Band of Cherokee from North Carolina, and the Seminole from Florida. The girls and boys teams were divided into three age groups: nine to twelve, thirteen to fifteen, and sixteen to eighteen years old. It is always amazing to see how much pride the children take in their teams and the community takes in supporting children in the tribe.

In August, the Native American Sports Association (NASA) had its annual softball tournament in Cherokee, NC. Poarch sent a total of four teams, one woman's team and three men's teams. Many family members and friends attended the tournament to show their support for these men and women. In January, Poarch hosted the NASA Basketball Tournament. Throughout the year, Poarch has a co-ed softball league with teams from the community.

Cultural Programs

Throughout the year there were many cultural classes that adults and children in the community participated in. Classes were taught on the Mvskoke Creek language, fingerweaving, gospel hymns, beadwork, basket weaving, and patchwork. All of these classes are free and open to tribal members and 1st generation descendants, and their families if there is space available, and all supplies are provided.

There are also specific cultural groups for the children and teenagers. The Tribal Youth Council is for teenagers in the community. The students in the group are very close to one another. They meet each week and plan community events throughout the year such as a clean up day and a 5-mile walk for Earth Day. They also go each year to the UNITY conference with people their age from other tribes. This group learns many things about the community, history, and other Native groups.

The powwow club is a dance group for girls and boys ages seven to fourteen. However, the children and parents shared with me that they learn much more than just dancing. Through trips to powwows in different states, performances at schools and community events, and weekly practices, this group has become very close and is like a family. They learn not only about Creek history and traditions but also about powwow dancing and history. In performing for non-Native groups they educate others about Native people and our tribe. As I talked with James about his son's participation in the powwow club he wanted me to share that "the powwow club's main focus is education." We talked about how many people share their hesitations and questions about the conflicts between powwow dancing and religious beliefs. He shared,

Based on some negative experiences when I was younger, I was a little nervous about it being about different religious beliefs. I have learned that while there can be spirituality components those are only if you choose for them to be. Just as anything else you can choose to worship whoever you want in whatever kind of way you want. So if you choose to sing and dance to a creator then you can. Or you can choose to carry out traditions and history by choosing to dance with that purpose in mind. While this is what some of our people are worried about,

religious indoctrination and/or spiritual persuasion is not part of the powwow club. The powwow club teaches the kids how to dance, about Creek history, Creek language, how to do beadwork. Most importantly, the tribe gives Indian children a place to socialize with other Indian people their age around dancing.

Education Programs

The education department offered many programs throughout the year for all ages. For preschoolers there was the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program and the Early Childhood Literacy Fun Event. Both of these events focused on reading with parents and preschoolers.

The education department has a 4-H program. This year they had their own fashion show, attended cooking classes, made arts and crafts and food, planted herbs, and attended a Auburn University women's basketball game. The education department and tribal court together organized many events for youth in the community. In the summer they held a Youth Leadership Academy, at the end of the summer they had a Back to School Luau, and the Teen Christmas Party. They also sent a group of high school students to Washington, DC to participate in Close Up, which is a weeklong trip that allows students to learn about US government and their tribal government as well as tour parts of Washington, DC.

The education department helps adults and teenagers with their GED. The tribe offers college assistance for all tribal members through the McGhee-Tullis Tuition Assistance Program. A scholarship for \$30,000 is given to every tribal member. This year, the council approved the opportunity to request an additional \$10,000 that can be

applied for after their other money is used. The Fred L. McGhee First Generation Scholarship program was created to give scholarships to first generation students.

Senior Programs

The staff at the SAIL center planned many events for the seniors throughout the year. Every day seniors eat lunch together at the SAIL center- the senior's building. Sometimes they play games afterwards or shell peas, but most of the time they quilt with one another after lunch. Doris told me that "we will play bingo and the prizes will be things like laundry detergent or toilet paper, things that we need around the house." During Christmas time they have a big dinner and will draw names and buy each other gifts. They go on trips throughout the year with each other. This past Christmas they went to Orlando, Florida.

While these descriptions highlight a few of the things that went on throughout the tribe in the past year, they give you an insight into what our tribal community is like. All of these events and programs give people things to do with each other. These events help us understand how the themes of community, family, participation, education, and being Indian play out in the tribe today. These are five things that have always made up our Indian community, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. All of these things are very important parts of the community and strengthen our tribe as a community. This is the only tribe that the children in the fourth generation know. They are growing up with each other and in this tribe. At this moment in time, this is the tribe that is being passed down to the future generations, and my only hope is that this community will continue in the future generations.

Conclusion

In generation four we see how all of the inheritance from the three previous generations are enacted. We use the stories from generation four as a glimpse into the future. Their basket is woven with stories of family, education, and Indian. However, there is still much left to be woven on this basket before it is passed down to the next generation. We can use these stories to help us think about and plan for the future of our tribe.

CONCLUSION

All four of these generations and the generations that came before them have started weaving on a Poarch Creek basket that the future will inherit. Their stories have woven a basket of knowledge, strength, and history. Though each generation lives in a different time and context, when looking over the generations, I see remnants of each generation's stories in the next. While this group of Indian people has changed over time, they change within the history and lived experiences of the previous generations. These stories show us the change and continuity in Poarch Creek identity over four generations.

Generation one told many stories about family. They built a community of family where they lived together and cared for one another. For this generation, them, being Indian has always been about family, community, and who they are. Their communities were made up of Indian people until outside institutions of school and church came into their community and became part of their lives. In their Indian community being Indian was about family, love, and support, which they built together. They talked about the boundaries that separated their communities from others and as they crossed these boundaries they were often treated negatively because they were Indian. This generation tells stories mainly of being Indian in their community, but also in non-Indian communities.

Generation two grew up in the community that generation one built. This generation told many stories of change. Changes occurred with access to education and Indian identity. While Indian continued to be a racial identity, this generation fought for Indian to be a legal identity. Through the fight for federal recognition, the Indian community created an image of Indian that was locally and nationally recognized. As adults, the fight ended when the BIA recognized this Indian community as a federally recognized tribe and sovereign nation, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. While the Indian community remained very similar to the previous generation, this change made this community a tribe and sovereign nation.

Generation three grew up with the ideals of family and community that the previous generations passed down. With all of the changes made in the previous generation, this generation grew up as part of a federally recognized tribe as well as a developing nation. As the previous generation met and married outsiders, the racial identity of this generation changed. This generation tells stories of being racially and legally Indian: growing up in mixed-race families and communities, attending integrated schools, and being part of a developing tribal nation. They show us how to move between different communities and the tools they use to navigate all of these places. This generation shows us how Indians change and adapt to the things in their lives, while still maintaining who they are as a group.

Generation four is the current generation of children growing up in the community and tribe which all of the previous generations have created and passed down to them. Though this generation has so much history left to make, stories of family, education, and being Indian are already huge parts of their history. Their stories are a

good indication that these values, while they change over time, will continue to be passed down to future generations.

Though each generation has their own stories, together they tell a much larger story of the history of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Across generations, they tell stories of community, family, participation, place, tribe, living and economic situations, outsiders, institutions, and identity: racial, legal and cultural. In looking at the similarities and differences across these generations, we can see the change and continuity of Poarch Creek identity over time.

All of these generations share similar stories of the Poarch Creek family and community which they belong to. Generation one created a community of family through their care for one another; daily living with each other; and participation in community, cultural, and everyday activities. All of the other generations have been raised in this Indian family and community, passing down its importance to the next generation. We are all one big family, carrying with that all of the positives and challenges that families and communities face.

Place is a big part of this family and community. Everyone in all generations talked about the importance of being in the community and participating. There were lots of conversations in all generations about how the “people that didn’t grow up here,” “people that never lived here,” and “people that weren’t ever Indian before” were not seen as Indian. These quotes show us not only the importance to this group of being part of the family and community, but also the importance of “here,” the location of Poarch as their Indian community. Whether it was the three communities that generations one and two refer to or the one Poarch that generation three and four refer to, everyone talked

about Poarch being the “heart of the Indian people.” This location is a significant part of this tribe, a location and land that has so much history and significance.

All of these generations share stories of being Indian. Across generations, everyone talks about their identity as racially, culturally, and legally Indian. However, those stories come at different times in people’s lives because of the many changes in our tribe’s history. Generation one and two remember growing up as racially and culturally Indian, but not being legally Indian until their adult years when our tribe received federal recognition. Whereas generations three and four, for the most part, have always had identities as racially, culturally, and legally Indian.

What it means to be Indian and how Indians are treated are two of the other stories about being Indian that they share across generations. Their experiences with their treatment as an Indian person are similar in their experiences with outsiders and going to school. Across generations, all of these experiences had to do with the racial identity of Indians in relation to White and Black races. As access to education and in all places changed, treatment of Indian people by outsiders changed for the better.

All of these things and many others contributed to the changes in what it meant to be Indian. The first two generations shared stories where being Indian meant being mistreated and being denied opportunities. The end of the second generation and third generation talked about the changes in what it meant to be Indian. While some of the mistreatment still occurred, and Indians were still separated in situations by race, people began accepting Indians. People saw Indians as a safe and/or popular race in-between other races. In generation four, with the tribe being a prosperous nation, being Indian is much more popular and beneficial. As a result, many things have happened such as more

and more people “becoming Indian.” In addition, outsiders are now viewing Indians as something good and special, opposed to before when they were inferior.

Poarch Creek Identity

Throughout these generations, I have used Lowery’s four layers of Native American identity: a People, a race, a tribe, and a nation, to understand Poarch Creek identity. When looking across generations, using this framework I see continuity in stories of Poarch Creeks as a People and a race. While there have also been changes in these two layers, the overall stories of Poarch Creeks being a family and community and being a race have stayed the same. There have been major changes in the layers of tribe and nation. Generations one and two grew up as a People that fought for recognition by the federal government to become a tribe and sovereign nation.

Poarch Creeks while similar to other tribes, are also different. As I reflect on all of these individual, generational, and tribal stories, I begin to think about what all of these things say about Poarch Creek identity. Each person shows us a different way of being Poarch Creek. However, all of their stories tell us that within each of those ways of being are some common themes that make up Poarch Creek identity. Some of the markers of Poarch Creek identity are place, community and family, participation, race, culture, legal status, and membership.

Being Poarch Creek is not something that people choose when to be and when not to be, it is a lifestyle and a way of being. Being Poarch Creek means being part of the everyday things such as cooking and eating meals with other community members, visiting and checking on people at their homes, and being part of special occasions like birthdays, weddings, and funerals. It is participating in events like tribal softball

tournaments and powwows. It is also the responsibilities that you have such as helping your elders, voting in tribal elections, learning and passing down arts and history, and contributing to making the tribe a better nation.

While being Poarch Creek is something that all Poarch Creeks do everyday, recording these stories is important for our tribe. While there have been some stories recorded in the 70s when trying to gain federal recognition, many of our stories are lost with Poarch Creeks that have passed away. Those stories that were not passed down orally or written down are no longer with us. This dissertation is an attempt to record memories from many different Poarch Creeks so that the future will always have their stories and be able to have a piece of their history. This is why all of these stories mean so much to our tribe today.

This story is also important to history. Our tribe is located in the South, United States, and Indian Country. Therefore it adds important pieces of history to all of these places and many more. This story of Poarch Creek identity is part of a larger story of Indian identity. On the most basic level, this story adds a different tribe's experiences and identity to the larger story of Indian identity. It adds a story of a tribe based in the South that avoided removal, and lived in the aftermath of many U.S. policies. This story shares the voices of many Poarch Creeks that fought for and lived through many changes in their nation. This Poarch Creeks story is one of a tribe that was "forgotten" for so many years, that fought for and gained recognition by the government, and has worked to become a prosperous nation.

This is a story of Poarch Creek's family identity, racial identity, and tribal/national identity. Together all of these generations tell stories that create a basket

made of a family and community; a racial, cultural, and legal identity; and navigating Indian and non-Indian worlds parallel to one another. This basket is passed on to the future generation.

FUTURE GENERATIONS

From 1920 to 2011, our tribe's history has changed so much. As everyone has reflected on the past, we now look towards the future. From the stories told by generations one, two, three, and four we know that the future generations will inherit a basket built of the history of our tribe and community based on family, participation, and love.

Because all of these people are still living, their histories are being written, so we can't know what the future will be like. The future is in the hands of the Poarch Creeks living today. Poarch Creek history and identity is contingent on current decisions being made. Therefore, it is very important for the tribe to think about the future they want and to plan for this future.

As I talked with each person, they shared with me their wishes for the future of the tribe. We had dialogues around their hopes for the community, membership, economic development, education, and the history and culture that should be preserved and passed down. While these things will likely change and look different in future generations, they are not likely to go away.

Community

When talking in a group with the oldest generation, I asked what things would you want to pass down to the future generation? It was hard to hear Maybell's words,

“we are survivors and wouldn’t want our Indian traditions passed down.” Bernie added, “we were judged by the group Indians. Whatever one did, others had to be judged by it.” The emotions I saw and felt and words I heard in this conversation show me the memories of hard times and mistreatment that our elders went through to get us to where we are today.

While these are times we don’t want to ever forget, I agree these are times we never want to relive. However, in these hard times our elders found a sense of family and community, a joy and happiness, and closeness that is not as strong but still present in the community today. These are the parts of their generation that people want to pass down to the future generations. Bernie shared, “to me, I think that would be one of the things but it’ll probably never come to pass. If everybody could get closer.” Mae also said she wishes people would “come together and be happy together.” Bernie says that one way for communities and families to come together would be for the churches to come together. “That’s why I say, if the churches could ever come together and wouldn’t be against each other so much, then that would make a real good change.”

Bernie talked about going to Doris’ birthday party this year and not knowing a lot of the young people there. She shared,

I wish we could be closer and have more love. If it took community meetings to get to know each other then that’s what we need to do. We need to do a better job at identifying each other and getting to know each other... learn and know who family is.

As I sat with the older generation, we talked about how there are more Indians today than there were when they were growing up, which in their opinion means that “people don’t

know each other like we did when there was only a few of us. We'd really like to see everyone go back to the way it used to be where you knew everybody."

Though many outsiders would say the tribe is a strong and united family, after talking with people that belong to the tribe they shared a need for wanting to be more united. Our tribe is divided into factions, just as many other communities and families are. Many people would say that these factions are actually family divisions that stem from things in the community such as church, communities within the larger Poarch community, and politics. No matter what community, family, or church these men or women came from, they all had discussion about wanting to be more united and be even closer than they are today. Maybell shared,

I would love to see 'em more unified. Not pulling against each other. To me, that's what I'd like to see, being more unified. Not on account of money but to love each other... If one's down, help him, not keep pushing him down. Pick him up, that's what I'd love to see the tribe do. Right now, I think they've accomplished a whole lot.

Ana shared very similar words. While she wants to tribe to be more united, in that she wants people in the tribe to

become more... community minded. To better the community regardless of who they are and their financial standing. I mean, if you would just do stuff just to help your community out, just to make your community a better place, your people would be happier, you'd have better services.

She talks a lot about how "if people would go back and embrace the cultural way of lifestyle, it would solve so many problems." Ana explains that living a cultural lifestyle

would stop some of the problems like domestic violence and substance abuse. She also talks about how this lifestyle is a communal lifestyle where people work together for things for everyone in the community. Ana explains,

If you can go back and really focus on cultural teachings and living a cultural lifestyle and go back to that communal way of living, where, you have a community garden... where people go and everybody works in it so long, but whoever needs something can come and get... but I think it all comes back to caring about your community...

Ana shares her solution for many of the problems that our community is facing.

Everyone hopes that our tribe becomes a self-sufficient nation. However, many people do not like the way that our tribe is becoming because of this prosperity. Many people discussed how the perfect tribe would be one with economic opportunities that maintains past ways of being. Ana shared,

we were talking about stuff and people fighting and arguing over this, that and the other, and he was like, you know we ain't poor anymore. He was like we've got money. We can do this. We can do that. All this stuff. And I said, honestly, I'd rather go back to being poor. I really would. 'Cause people cared about each other. They truly cared about each other then, and it wasn't about you're doing better than me and I don't like you for it or I'm doing better than you and I'm looking down my nose at you. I'd much rather give it all back and go back to being poor and just doing what we had to do, I think it's just a happier lifestyle because we cannot manage money, obviously. We can't handle money and the possession of money.

Ana's words are very powerful. Her main concern about the tribe today is that in gaining economic prosperity, we are losing the community and family that truly care about one another.

Some of the changes people wish that the tribe would implement are around diversifying economic opportunities, leadership, changing the blood quantum, being more resourceful, building a better community, and creating more programs. Jimmy wishes,

the tribe would branch out and find other economical things besides gaming that make money, so when gaming goes away, you've got to be diversified. And they are doing that by getting people educated, so hopefully, something else comes along that we can do.

With the tribe changing so quickly, people have very strong opinion good and bad, about the tribal leadership. While some think that older people need to go back and start running the tribe, others wish that young people would come in and take over.

Another thing James points out is,

I think people in our generation... I don't think they're as power hungry as some of those at the top end of that... just that some of the younger people that have been on Tribal Council have made some really good changes for us, that I've heard that the other ones would never have supported... That's where your tribe's not an organization. It's not the buildings. It is actually us. We are it... It's kind of like *The Bug's Life* movie. I hope eventually that the ants will realize that this is their tribe and will really utilize their say, and get it like they want it, and not tolerate the other.

Suzanne commented, “I think our tribe forgets, and... I didn’t really think about this until I left... we are our own nation. We can change our rules at any point in time. We run our own nation.”

When thinking about the future, many people think about tribal membership. James shares that his one wish for the tribe would be that his kids be on the roll. One of his frustrations with tribal rolls is that because each tribe can determine their own membership allowing for some tribes to require $\frac{1}{4}$ blood and others to have no minimum blood quantum. He explained,

When I’ve seen at the clinic, people come in and they’re $\frac{1}{256}$ of something and we’re servicing ‘em and my kids, after they’re 18, can’t even get it. I mean, stuff like that... And I know that those funds are from IHS to service those people. I get that, but in a tribal setting, when you see that just right up in your face... I would like to see that changed. I don’t know if it will.

People feel very strongly one way or another about what should be done about tribal membership, either keep the roll at $\frac{1}{4}$ or lower the blood quantum. These conversation around membership that everyone has been having becomes more complicated every time tribal members get a new benefit. Today, tribal members are “benefiting from being Indian.” This creates problems with changing membership rules to open up more members because that changes the benefits that the current members will receive. So it is inevitable to have conversations now around tribal membership or what it means to be Poarch Creek without talking about benefits.

As James and I talked more about his suggestions for how to change membership rules, we discussed how no matter what the rules are somebody will always be left out.

“But then you say, what’s enough? And people will want their kids... so I know there’s got to be a point that you got to draw the line.” Ana shared that one solution could be to do like

Creek Nation in Oklahoma. They’ve got 60,000 plus members. But like they don’t have blood quota... blood quantum requirements if you can prove lineage. But you have to be at least a quarter to have voting privileges. So, I mean, there are ways. You know, that you can get around stuff like that.

In Ana’s solution while there are no blood quantum requirements for membership, only proof of lineage, there are blood quantum requirements for privileges.

Many people wonder how something like this would work. “Why would somebody want to be Indian when they don’t get the same benefits as the others. When there are rules, there will always be lines drawn.” Suzanne’s response is that

there are more reasons that just tribal benefits for being able to be on a roll. Even if you did say that people past a certain blood quantum couldn’t get benefits, it would ensure that our tribe doesn’t die out. Also it would make more opportunities available outside of the tribe for these people.

Suzanne wants the tribe and tribal members to talk about this in planning for the future of the tribe. “What do we want the future for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to be and how does membership requirements fit into that future?”

As a child, Bailey sees that most of the opportunities and benefits the tribe offers are “centered to grownups.” However, many people between the ages of children and senior citizens see that “the tribe has nothing for our age group.” As the tribe grows and opportunities grow, people begin to focus on things they want and not what they have.

As I was sitting in a meeting one of the tribal council members said, “it’s sad but as soon as we pass one benefit in about a month people forget about it and worry about the next thing they are going to get.”

As the tribe becomes more prosperous, many people see them as increasingly “wasteful” with their money. Mary shared, “I think we should use our resources a little better than what we are. We’ve come a really, really long way.” Bernie adds, “be thankful for what we got now. For where we have come from. But some of ‘em are still greedy. The more they get the more they want.” Because the tribe is making money with casino revenue there is lots of talk about how the people want to get per capita checks. Mae shared,

I am not for per capita because it will make you more sorry. The seniors deserve the money and it’s extra help for them. Per capita would make people lay up, have illegitimate kids, destroy themselves with drugs and alcohol... Like the birthday check and appreciates it as an extra.

There are many wishes for the future of the tribe such as adding stores, an assisted living facility, or a school to the area on or around the reservation. Lots of people that live in Poarch wish they had some type of store and more restaurants in the community so they wouldn’t have to drive 15 or more minutes into town to get anything they need. Maybell shared, “I wish we had us a store out here. A grocery store, a dollar store, I would love. What we would really want was a little, mini mall.” Nat says, “they just need more stuff... a humongous shopping mall. I would also like a McDonald’s and all that, and we could use a park.” Cinderella adds, “I wish we had restaurants.” Arlie hopes,

they use that money wisely and build more things in Poarch like a Dollar store, a gas station, and different stores out there for the people. And the people to go back to old times, loving on each other more and getting along more and doing more cultural things. More jobs for young people, like an industrial building or whatever. Make something to sell or whatever.

People of all generations wish that the tribe would build a nursing home and/or assisted living facility. This is something that the council has been talking about doing. Mae shared, “Older people know each other and could be together. Lots of my generation (is) headed that way. Me and (other women her age) would get together and do things. Now (one of those women) live in the projects.” Suzanne added,

I would definitely like to see some type of school and senior living center, and I would want both of them to interact with each other. I’d love to keep the traditions we have going now where people from all generations interact with each other and are family and take care of one another. I would also like to see our tribe keep being a community and a family, picking one another up and not putting them down, working together to get things done. We didn’t get to where we are now with one person doing everything but with a community helping each other and I hope that we keep focusing on community and working together to get things done.

Education

Everyone was very appreciative of the education services that the tribe provides for tribal members and 1st generation students. Bailey attends a local private school that

has no transportation back and forth to school. She wishes “we could get a bus that could take us and pick us up from school.” Ana shares,

in general, as far as services and things like that, I think that that we do great things. Everything can be improved... as you go off and you talk to other people, you can see where some of our programs, some of our services are really top notch. Where they’re like really... I wish our tribe had stuff like that. And then we’re the same way. You go to tribes where their focus is on, different areas. Like we were talking about with the school supplies. Things like that. It’s like Creek Nation, you see it in their newsletter and its school time again, come by to pick up your voucher for your uniforms. And it comes out of JOM funds. And you’re like, we can do that. We could be so much better.

Maybell remembers getting her GED and wishes that the tribe would offer classes that were similar to the ones she took.

Why can’t they do something like (GED classes with adult teacher) that now? Because you know, the adults would be more comfortable with other adults and uh, and someone like Eugene, the teacher, you know. There’s a lot of our people that doesn’t have a GED and they would probably be more comfortable in that kind of setting than over here. You have to really want to do it. But they’re not given that opportunity to go to that kind of class.

Many people are very glad that the tribe is reviving lost language, arts, and culture. This is something that many hope continues in the future. Mary is so proud that her daughters and grandchildren are “taking more of an interest in bringing back our culture, and the language too. I would like to see more of that.”

Tribal School. Each generation has vocally expressed concerns and opinions about local public and private school Indian kids are attending. The tribe is looking in to the option of building its own tribal school.

One of the first steps that the tribe sees in even thinking about building a school is doing a feasibility study, which was being done this 2010 summer when I was interviewing. Laura and I talked about the community meeting and focus groups that were held to help the company understand the pros and cons of the current schools and what type of school the community wanted. Laura expressed concerns that many people including herself had with what was said at the meeting.

Over there in that meeting the other night, they were so focused on language. It's more than language. I mean... it's whether a child feels safe. This morning on the news I heard that there is more children harassed over the Internet... I mean a child is being harassed on the Internet, they don't want to go to school and then their parents wonder why they don't want to go to school... And that's what worries me... I mean is your child safe when he walks through the door of school or is he safe when he gets on that school bus? That to me I'm more concerned with that than whether they get to learn the language... it was focused too much on cultural stuff... I mean mostly that language. But the people that was focusing on that culture, was the people that deals with that dancing and the language. But really the other parents should have spoken up and when they mentioned the survey, I said, well that's when I can put my thoughts onto paper.

Laura and I talked about other Indian schools that we had visited in other states. Lara described one of the schools that she remembers that she wish we could build.

It is kindergarten through the twelfth grade and they have three or four gyms in that place. It's just nice and they've got a room with nothing but pianos in it... When (my daughter) was growing up they didn't have that opportunity. I mean, now this community has reached a point where they can offer those kinds of things to our children, where when we went to town or went to school, we felt like we were outsiders and you weren't given an opportunity to do things like that.

Like many others, Laura expressed her concern with the tribe spending money on other things when a school is needed. "That's what gets me so outdone with 'em. They say they don't have money to build something like that but yet they spend money left and right... That's what I told 'em." She explained how the tribe could use the facilities that they already have and just add to them to build a school.

You've got a pool there. You've got ball fields. All you need is another building and you've got people. You've got tribal people that are teachers... You've got senior citizens over there. Convert this building to a senior center. You've got the buildings over there. Put up the building and use the old building that could be turned into classrooms... I mean, you've got buildings, you've got the old school. There's no telling how much money they spent on the ball fields and building that new one over there... Everything is right there.

Laura shared what many other people think, that the location of the school could be in the middle of the community where many other facilities are located, and the school could use those facilities. Ana shares these same thoughts about where the school should be located. Her frustrations are with

people talking about not having space and all this stuff. We've got the space. You just got to make it work. We don't need a brand new state of the art building right now. We just need to get started. And eventually, that nice building will come, and we'll be glad when it gets here, or not. But the fact of the matter is we just need it to start. Plain and simple. 'Cause baby, I don't care if it was in that old school house. This one will be pulled out of (a local elementary school) so fast, her head would spin. I mean, that's plain and simple.

As Ana was talking with me about her thoughts on a tribal school, her daughter Nicole said with excitement, "we're getting a new school!" Ana responded, "keep our fingers crossed."

I talked with them about some of the reasons why people don't want a school.

Laura shared,

They said, you don't have enough children. I said, if you've got ten in a classroom, think about what those ten children could accomplish from a teacher... Just think what those children could accomplish if you had 10 or 12 children in a classroom... Then they said, who would you let come? They get into all of that and I don't know... And I don't know and can't understand why our people are so afraid to venture off and have their own school. I don't know what it is. I said, if they would just build a middle school and a high school and they said, well, the county... I said, talk to the county. Put your money into (a local elementary school). That's where most of our children go anyway. Focus on it and see if the county will let you put 7th and 8th grade up there. I mean, there's more ways to explore than what they are doing. Junior and high school are where they have the

problems. As soon as they leave (a local elementary school), that's when the parent starts worrying. They said, no, you can't do that. I said, at (a small local Christian school), they are preparing to build a gym because their enrollment is larger. Think about what would happen to this tribe if we do that. I don't know why they're afraid to do that when they're willing to spend millions on something else.

Ana and Laura both share the same thoughts of many in the community that we should build a tribal school and it will fill up. It does not have to be elaborate, just buildings. "It's what's in the buildings that matter anyways." Suzanne talked a lot about what the schools are currently teaching in them about Indian people that upsets her. She shared,

In talking with kids and parents I hear stories about what the kids are learning. Sometimes kids say they never learn anything about Indians in school and other times they talk about the teepees and headdresses they made around Thanksgiving. What in the world are the schools teaching our kids about themselves as Indian people and their history?

While a tribal school cannot solve all of the problems found in the local schools, things such as curriculum could be changed.

As people are thinking about what the school should be like, they should also be thinking about how the school will affect the community and future of the tribe.

You don't want the purpose of your school to be matchmaking, but think about it, that is what's gonna happen. How many people do you know that married their high school sweetheart? I mean, it's just a by-product. The idea is get our kids an

education where they can be together, where they're not having to face the discrimination that they're still going through in school. But as a by-product, you end up, you know, with relationships.

Mary shares the biggest concern that many members of the community have expressed, that having our own school will re-segregate our children. "It's not, but we can't really shelter our children from it because they've got to know about life." Mary is not convinced that a school will be built but says that, with "as much money as they sink into these other schools," she doesn't see why the tribe doesn't have their own school.

Until a school is built, the reality is that most of our children are attending local public and private schools. Ana and Suzanne had a conversation around things that could be implemented into the current schools. Ana shared,

This lady was teaching an immersion class and we went, and (my daughter) just had this big assignment at Miss Rosemary's house, and she had some flash cards that they were, maybe Choctaw or something. They were something different and she just put over 'em, Creek words. So she was using 'em like that. So there's like other tribes that have that. But we just never had anybody to put forward that kind of effort, into that stuff. It's coming.

Suzanne added that the schools could do what the cultural educator does at Even Start. He "takes things that kids already know in English like Brown Bear, Brown Bear and Jesus Loves Me, and teaches them in Creek. This would be an easy thing that could be included in school classrooms."

Ana was full of ideas for ways to implement language and culture into all age groups. She shared,

another thing that we have got to have around here and basically call it a Language Nest, but what it is, it's a total immersion daycare. We were talking about it, if the tribe could buy back, (the local daycare) or even buy some land to build on that's close right here. And you hire those elderly women from Oklahoma that we've met that are willing and ready to move. They are, I mean, we've asked them. Like this lady I was telling you about that's teaching making \$19,000 a year. We had asked them point blank, would you move here to teach, and they said, well it depends, how much would you make, and they was like just say \$25,000.00 a year, would you move? And they'd be willing to move for that... The whole idea is you take babies from six weeks old to preschool, kind of like they do with Spanish immersion. And from the time that those kids are dropped off, you'd have your little reception area because obviously, your parents don't speak Creek. You'd have your reception area where they could talk to you in English. But after that, once that child is in there and gone past these doors, no more English is heard, that's it. They talk to them completely in Creek. 'Cause that's how they learn English. They can become bilingual at the same time. Because they're learning English at home, they're learning Creek at daycare, and they can do it. Their minds can process it because it's simple, because it's this is what I'm taught. Now once they get to our age you're questioning everything. The thing is, if we want this language to continue, the hope is with the kids. The adults can't process it. I mean, like me, as much as I would love to, I'm never gonna become fluent. I do not have the time and the brain capacity.

Suzanne shared, “I have a hard time with the language. I can learn it, I can sing it, but I have a hard time speaking it. It’s something about how it sounds in my head...’cause I don’t hear it.” Ana added,

it’s once you get to the age of like humility or self-consciousness and you’re like I know what it’s supposed to sound like but I can’t say it like that, and I’m not gonna put myself out there so that I get made fun of. You just don’t want to say it. But I should, because I mean, it encourages (my kids). And that’s why with kids, it’s perfect ‘cause they don’t know that. They do not know what that is. And if they can become fluent within the first five years of their lives... then that’s when they’ll retain it. Then once they leave this daycare... but see, it’s gotta be modeled after like a Language Nest, but after (a local preschool), how they do a lot of academic work even with three-year-olds. But if you teach ‘em in their language, and then things start to make sense when they’re starting to put sentences together. And then once they go from there to Even Start, and they start learning, you know, like the English stuff, then they’re so much smarter... I mean, and if you can get those first few core years down to immersion, ‘cause if we start that, five to ten years from now, we could probably be in that same boat to where you don’t even start teaching in English until fifth grade or whatever. You speak English at home and become bilingual, but you know once you’re through this door, that’s it. There is no more English spoken, and I mean, once you have it, then that’s it. You got it. Then if you can carry it on with ‘em, you know, on through high school and then maybe...you know, maybe they go off to a different college and they kind of lose it. But once they come back and you get

a little refresher. Then that's what you gotta do to save the language. That's it. And I firmly believe that. I'm just like if we could do, I mean, just that little Language Nest would be awesome. With nothing but just these little Grandmothers in there, taking care of these babies. Seriously. And it's like a home environment. I mean, it may be an idea... But that's like me, I cannot stand driving to town back and forth every day, but I do it because of what they teach. Because of the curriculum they teach. I'm not gonna send my child just to daycare when I know there's a preschool that he can go to.

Museum

Both Ana and Laura are helping with the current designing and building of the tribal museum. Both of them are very passionate about preserving and sharing the tribe's history but believe it should be done in slightly different ways. Ana's thoughts for the museum are that,

The first wing of it to be about Creek life in general, like way before any migrations, like the Creek Confederacy life. Anything that we can point to. Yeah, like pre-European contact... like I want people to know who they are and where they came from. You know. Because they don't know. I mean, this community has got to learn where they come from. You know, I mean, they got to learn where that Indian came from in their life 'cause they just have no clue... And then there'll be a part in there trying to talk about the parallels of Christianity and ceremonial life. Because it's not as different as people think they are. You can walk in both ways, and people just need to learn that they can do that.

Laura has slightly different thoughts on the museum and how to teach others about the tribe's history.

Children now need to know how their grandparents lived, how they had to cook on a wood stove, they had to heat the house with a wood stove. And to me, they ought to arrange furniture in the log cabin and show children how their grandparents grew up. Pictures and that kind of stuff with the movies, that's okay, but to me, a lot of times children need hands on... And a table with the old oilcloths. The only thing we had to play with back then they call em play pretties and one young fellow asked me what it is. I had to describe it was... We used to buy syrup in cans and the can would have a lid on it. We'd put a hole in the center under the bottom and on the top and you would put either sand with a little bit of rocks in it and fill the can up. Before you do that, you'd run your wire through it and then it would be about this long and you'd make a loop and pull it and get the wire where it would have a good hole... a line in the syrup bucket. It would roll good and you'd make another one... back then, all the children knew was paperwooding or they would see log trucks. None of our folks ever logged, they always had paperwood. They would make those things and they'd put sticks across like they were hauling wood. Terry McGhee and I were talking about that a while back. They need to put stuff like that out for children. Terry said he would make 'em some... When we were first living here, Roberta worked at Vanity Fair and I babysat the kids and I would have to make it for them. Children need to know that. I mean, they need to know where this community was when I was growing up... when they used to cut the logs. Florence Tullis, Leon's

Mom... during the summer, we would work and pick cotton or we would pick cucumbers. We had to work to make money to buy our school clothes. We would go to Monroe County with Florence to pick cotton. You talk about having a good time. Me, Jeannette, Olivette, William Thomas, and Leroy. We were teenagers, and we had to work but we were having fun 'cause you go off with Florence and you don't know when you might come back. I mean, we had to work but it was fun for us 'cause that's all we knew... To me that's what they need to do for the children today. They need to put a pump down out there and show children that a long time ago we had to pump water. They ought to have a rub board and a tub down there to show children that's the way they washed clothes. I would love to talk to those people... but children need to know how people lived in the community. It's good to know the history but let the children know that it wasn't always like this, that you didn't go to Atmore and go anywhere you wanted to. I know they have a City Café down there and my Granny was the only Indian lady that I knew of that would go in that café and eat. She would go in and eat. Buford has said a lot of times, you don't know what she'd do if she was living today 'cause she was just a strong minded person... I mean, she ruled the roost. But she worked and I can remember her going barefooted. She hardly ever wore shoes. And she'd make those syrup cakes and we would just go up to her house and she'd have those cakes in a safe and we would just beg for 'em. Mama and them wouldn't cook 'em but Granny would. And they would be so good. But that's one thing I would love to see them do down there.

As she shared, this story, we talked about these things being Poarch Creek and Poarch Creek history. These are the things that she and many others wish would be taught to the future generations.

Both Ana and Laura hope that the museum will not only educate others about our tribe but also people in our tribe about our history. Ana shared,

we hope to teach...to reach out to more of our people because, like our classes are good, but you have the same core people that come, and it's like people are just resistant or they think they're too old to learn. People just don't come. So, we have so many people that stop by here and so I hope this place will teach 'em something.

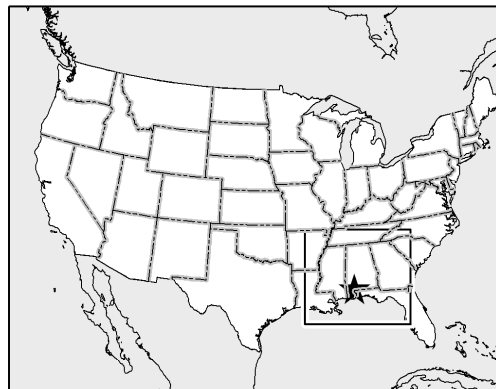
History is not one story but is made of many different stories. The challenge for the tribe is to include those many stories of many generations of tribal people into one tribal history that will be passed down to the future and be carried on longer than any one person in the tribe. The history the tribe tells will be a key part of the futures that are possible for the tribe and for Indian identity in our tribe and in Indian Country.

Conclusion

As the Poarch Band of Creek Indians think about the future of the tribe, the hopes from the previous generations are that the Indian community and family will become closer and continue to stay together; the tribe will continue to work towards economic self-sufficiency; the children will receive a good, quality education; and the stories and histories will be preserved and passed down for many generations to come. As we prepare for this tribe's future, we must remember what one council member said at the mortgage burning, "we must leave the tribe better than what we found it." What we these

generations leave for the tribe, the future inherits. Every decision that we make will affect the future. This puts a big responsibility on us in making decisions that will prepare our tribe for the future. What will the future of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians be?

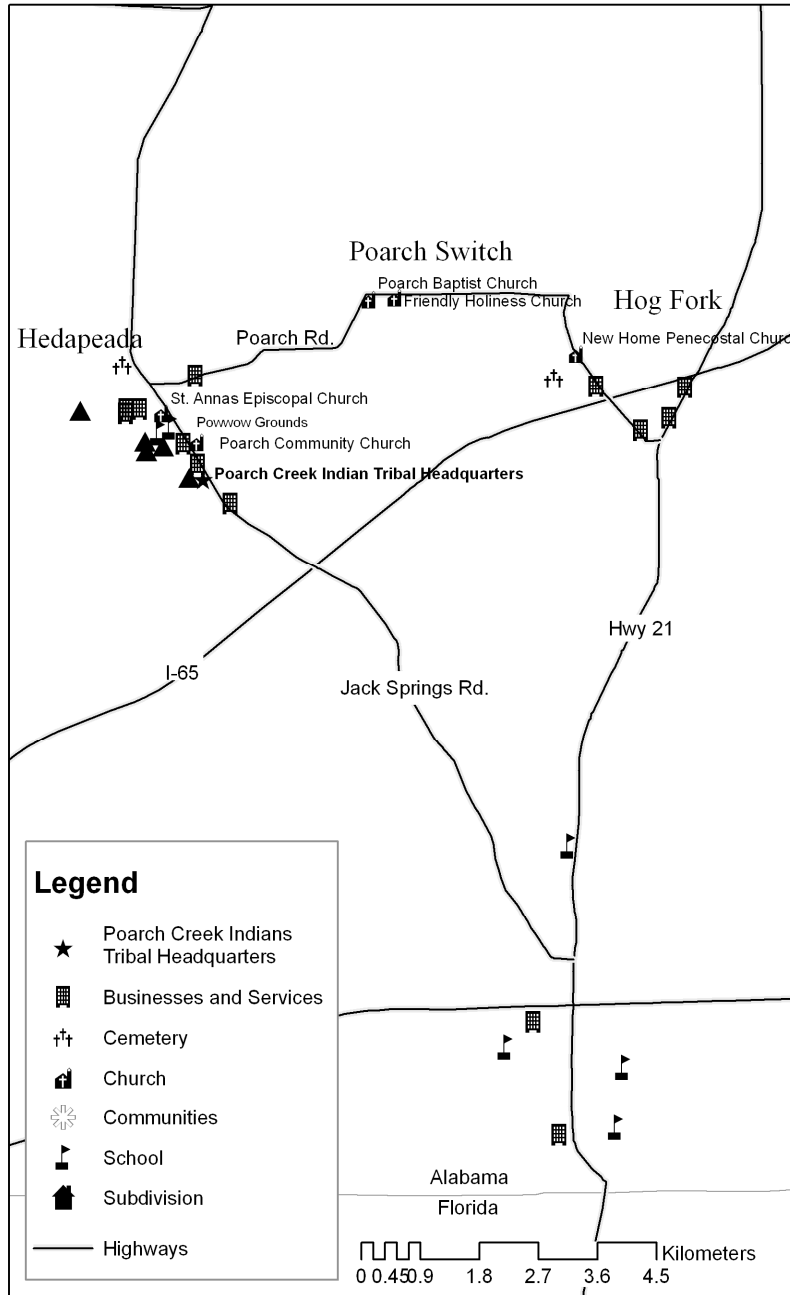
Appendix 1: Map of United States and Southeast in Relation to Poarch



Legend

- ★ Poarch
- State Boundaries
- Neighboring Countries

Appendix 2: Map of the Poarch Community



Appendix 3: Interview Guides

ADULT INTERVIEW GUIDES

1- Adult Family Member Interview Guide (Great- Grandparent, Grandparent, Parent) **Who Are You?**

1. Please tell me a little bit about your life history.
 - Where raised? By who?
 - Parents? Grandparents?
 - Kids? Grandkids? Great-grandkids? (All your blood kin?)
 - Brothers and Sisters?
 - Education level/experience in school?
 - Sports and things for fun? Did and do now?
 - Parents Jobs, Income, Living Situation?
 - Who Married? (any discussion about whether or not they should be Indian/tribal member)
 - Your Work Experience/Expertise/Job(s)?
 - Involvement in the Tribe? How?
 - Who do you look up to? Important in your life?

2. Are you a member of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians?
 - What is your blood quantum? How much does this matter? Does it?
 - When were you first put on the roll? By whom? What was the discussion around that?

3. Describe the first time you knew you were Indian? How did you know?
 - Are your parents, family, spouse, kids, grandkids, great-grandkids Poarch Creek? On the roll?

4. What is your description and/or definition of family?
 - Describe some of your family events, stories or things passed down.

5. What is culture? What is Poarch Creek culture?
 - What kinds of cultural things have you been involved in?

2- Adult Family Member Interview Guide (Great- Grandparent, Grandparent, Parent)
What about the tribe?

1. Discussion from points of previous interview.
2. Please tell me any history you know about the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.
 - Where did the tribe originate?
 - Did we have other names than Poarch Creek?
 - Before Calvin McGhee?
 - Land Claim?
 - Federal Recognition?
 - State Recognition?
 - Casinos?
 - Powwow?
 - Segregation/Desegregation?
 - Indian School?
 - Sports?
 - Tribal Events?
 - Funerals?
 - Culture? (Princess Contest, Dance Team, Stomp Dance)
3. What made/makes our tribe different than others?
 - What makes us different than non-Indians?
 - What are our traditions/culture? (crafts, songs, ceremonies, ways of living)
4. Have you seen any changes throughout your life in the tribe? Please Explain.
 - Biggest Change?
 - How have those changes affected you, the tribe, and/or the community?

3- Adult Family Member Interview Guide (Great- Grandparent, Grandparent, Parent)
Identity?

1. Discussion from points of previous interview.
2. How long have you been Indian? Poarch Creek?
 - What makes you this?
 - When were you added to the roll?
 - How did being added to the roll affect you or change anything?
3. Can you tell me a little bit about what it means to you to be Poarch Creek? Indian?
Today?
As a child?
As a Young Adult?
As an Adult?
As an Elder?
4. In these time periods what have others said about you being Poarch Creek and the tribe?
5. What does it mean now to be Poarch Creek?
Where do you see yourself in that?
6. Now, what do others say about you as a Poarch Creek and the tribe?
What do you say about Poarch Creek?
What would you like people to say about Poarch Creek?
7. What do you think the future will be?

KID'S INTERVIEW GUIDES

1- Kid Interview Guide

Who Are You?

1. Tell me a little bit about you. (In words, by drawing a picture and describing, etc.)
(You are going to be a character in my book, how would you represent yourself?)
 - Age?
 - Grade?
 - School Attend?
 - Friends?
 - Where you Live?
 - Programs, Activities, Sports, Clubs involved in at school and/or with tribe?
 - Are you involved in anything that I can come watch of yours this summer?
When? Where?
2. When I say the word family, what are the first things that come to your mind?
 - Who is your family?
 - Brothers and Sisters?
 - Parents/People that raise you?
3. Describe a family event, story, or thing passed down.
 - What are your family traditions? What do u do for Reunions, Powwow, Elections? On both sides of your family. Is there any differences you can see the ways Indians and others do things?
4. When I say the word Indian, what are the first things that come to your mind?
 - What is an Indian?
 - Who is an Indian?
 - Describe
 - Draw a picture
 - Look like, act like, believe? What kinds of things to Indians do?
 - Where do they live?
 - Where did you learn things about Indians?
 - At school, what do you learn about Indians? (Mr. Alex, your classroom, summer youth)
5. Are you Indian?
 - When you say you are Indian, what does that mean?
 - Are you a member of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians?
 - What is your blood quantum?
 - Does this ever come up in conversations you have?
 - With who?
 - What is said?

- Does this matter?
 - How?
 - When were you first put on the roll? By whom?
 - Are your parents and family Indian or Poarch Creek? On the roll?
6. Do you know people who aren't Indian? How are you different and the same as them?
7. Is there anything else you want to talk about today?

2- Kid Interview Guide
What about the tribe?

1. Discussion from points of previous interview. (Draw a picture of tribe, Indian, Family, yourself, Favorite memory.)

2. Last time, you told me a little about yourself. (Share their character/representation that they gave of themselves).
 - Is there anything you want to add?
 - Anything interesting happened to you since the last time we talked?
 - Anything you want to talk more about?

3. Last time you said that family was _____. Would you like to change or add anything to this definition?

4. Last time you talked about (a family event, story, or thing passed down). Are there any other memories you would like to share?

5. Do you have any family traditions (something you do every day, month, year)?
 - What do u do for Reunions, Powwow, Elections?
 - On all sides of your family.
 - Is there any differences you can see the ways Indians and others do things?

6. Last time you described an Indian as _____. Would you change or add anything?
 - What does an Indian look like? Act like? Know? Live?
 - Do you feel like you fit the description you gave? Why or why not?

7. Who are Indians today? Poarch Creeks?
 - How are they similar or different than Indians of the past? Explain.
 - How are we similar or different to other tribes? Non-Indians?

8. If you had to describe Poarch to someone, how would you describe it? Where is Poarch Located?

9. If you were going to describe the tribe to an outsider, what would you tell them? Who are we? Where did we come from? What do we do? Who's important?
 - History?
 - Leaders?
 - Events?
 - Federal Recognition?
 - Casinos?
 - Powwows?

- Sports?
- Traditions (crafts, songs, ceremonies, ways of living)
- Culture? (Princess Contest, Dance Team, Stomp Dance, Crafts, Sports, Powwows)

10. How did you learn these things about our tribe and Indians?

11. Have you ever met anyone from another tribe? Learned anything about another tribe?

- If so, what makes our tribe different than others?
- What makes us different than non-Indians? Other tribes?

12. Has the tribe changed since you've been born?

- How?
- How have those changes affected you, the tribe, and/or the community?

13. Is there anything else you want to talk about?

3- Kids Interview Guide **Identity?**

1. Discussion from points of previous interview.
2. If you had to describe someone that is Poarch Creek what would you say? (can draw a picture)
3. How long have you been Indian? Poarch Creek?
 - What makes you this?
 - When were you added to the roll?
 - How did being added to the roll affect you or change anything?
4. When you say you are Poarch Creek what does that mean?
5. What do other people and your friends say about you being Poarch Creek/Indian?
About Indians/Poarch Creeks?
Good?
Bad?
6. Are there times that you are treated good or bad because you are Indian?
In your community?
At School?
With your friends?
At Home?
6. When you think about your friends and future girlfriends/boyfriends, does being Indian matter? How? Why or why not?
7. In 10 years, what do you think the tribe will be like?
8. Is there anything else you want to talk about?
9. This is our last scheduled interview, is there anything that you need/want me to come back and talk with you about?

Appendix 4: Duration of Interviews

FAMILIES	Generation	Number of Interviews	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Total Duration
FAMILY 1						
Mae	1 st Generation	2	4 hours	2 ½ hours		6 ½ hours
Rachel	2 nd Generation	2	4 hours	2 ½ hours		6 ½ hours
Rose	3 rd Generation	1	1 hour			1 hour
Bailey	4 th Generation	2	30 minutes	45 minutes		1 hour and 15 minutes
FAMILY 2						
Geronimo	1 st Generation	2	1 ½ hours	1 hour		2 ½ hours
Doris	1 st Generation	3	1 hour	1 hour	2 ½ hours	4 ½ hours
Arlie	2 nd Generation	1	2 hours			2 hours
Jimmy	2 nd Generation	3	2 hours	1 hour	1 hour	4 hours
James	3 rd Generation	2	1 ½ hours	1 hour		2 ½ hours
Chase	4 th Generation	2	1 hour	15 minutes		1 hour and 15 minutes
Nat	4 th Generation	2	1 ½ hours	1 hour		2 ½ hours
Cinderella	4 th Generation	2	1 hour	30 minutes		1 ½ hours
Family 3						
Bernie	1 st Generation	2	2 ½ hours	1 hour		3 ½ hours
Mary	2 nd Generation	1	2 hours			2 hours
Ana	3 rd Generation	2	3 hours	4 hours		7 hours
Nicole	4 th Generation	3	20 minutes	30 minutes	10 minutes	1 hour

Family 4						
Maybell	1 st Generation	3	4 hours	2 hours	2 hours	8 hours
Laura	2 nd Generation	2	4 hours	2 ½ hours		6 ½ hours
					TOTAL	64 hours

Appendix 3: Demographics of Families

FAMILIES	Generation in Study	Age (Reported on March 2011)	Gender	Tribal Member or 1st generation
FAMILY 1				
Mae	1 st Generation	90	Female	Tribal Member
Rachel	2 nd Generation	67	Female	Tribal Member
Rose	3 rd Generation		Female	Tribal Member
Bailey	4 th Generation	12	Female	Tribal Member
FAMILY 2				
Geronimo	1 st Generation	81	Male	Tribal Member
Doris	1 st Generation	75	Female	Tribal Member
Arlie	2 nd Generation	53	Female	Tribal Member
Jimmy	2 nd Generation	51	Male	Tribal Member
James	3 rd Generation	35	Male	Tribal Member
Chase	4 th Generation	11	Male	1 st Generation
Nat	4 th Generation	10	Female	1 st Generation
Cinderella	4 th Generation	7	Female	1 st Generation
FAMILY 3				
Bernie	1 st Generation	81	Female	Tribal Member
Mary	2 nd Generation	61	Female	Tribal Member
Ana	3 rd Generation	30	Female	Tribal Member
Nicole	4 th Generation	7	Female	Tribal Member
FAMILY 4				
Maybell	1 st Generation	84	Female	Tribal Member
Laura	2 nd Generation	67	Female	Tribal Member

Appendix 4: Observation Guide

- Event being observed:
- Location, Time, Day, and Date:
- Describe Event:
- How many people are there at this event? How many are participating?
- Who is leading the group?
- What are participants doing?
- Who is present but not participating in the event?
- Are there any people present who are not a part of that group?
- If yes, what are they doing?
- What is the attitude of the participants and/or people not in the group?
- What remarks are being made about what is going on? (Activity, what is being learned, other students, person in charge, people not in group)
- When is being Poarch Creek or Indian mentioned or acted out?
- Look for things mentioned in focus group discussions and individual interviews.

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