

**Oral History 4425 Adairsville Project**

**David Baker Interview**

**Conducted by Katie Chauvin, Jennifer Dickey, and Amy Young**

**Location: Clear Creek Elementary School, Cartersville, Georgia**

**October 11, 2018**

**Transcribed by Katie Chauvin and Amy Young**

AY: This is Amy Young and Katie Chauvin, interviewing Mr. David Baker at Clear Creek Elementary School in Cartersville, Georgia. The date is October 11, 2018. Mr. Baker, when did you first come to Adairsville?

DB: I guess the first real recollection of Adairsville was about 1964. I'd say when we were going to move to Adairsville. I don't really never remember going there before we were going to move there.

AY: Your family first came to Adairsville in 1964?

DB: Yes, ma'am. I grew up most of my life, or the early part of my life until then over on a farm probably about four or five miles from here. We were tenant farmers. And the thing with tenant farmers is that you have to move sometimes in order to do something else with it. My dad found a little place in Adairsville to buy, and so he bought that place and we moved up there, and, of course, then I spent the rest of my life up there since then. I've lived in Adairsville about 54 years.

AY: What was Adairsville like when you first moved here?

DB: When I first moved here, we moved in a community about three miles south of Adairsville called Stoners community. People were, of course, very friendly. One of the things I remember is how when we moved off the farm, we were a pretty close-knit community there. And I was pretty apprehensive because, you know I really didn't know anybody, but the first day we moved in, in Adairsville, our neighbors greeted us and welcomed us and you know it was just, as I look back, they were very friendly. Very open and receptive to us, and we just sort of, as soon as we met, we became friends. Matter of fact, the day we were first there, one of the boys that came with his mother and dad, had become one of my best friends for the rest of his life. He's passed away since then. But we spent a lot of good years being good friends. And we lived pretty close to one another most all that time, during that time.

But it was very rural then. It was much more rural then it is today. There were mainly farms, there were a few mills just down in Adairsville, and there were still a few of what we still call the chenille places up down 41 here. The new 41 as we always referred to it, they still sold a lot of the old peacock spreads and things like that. Matter of fact I think they designated a large strip of that as Peacock Alley.

That was a way that the farmers, you know, years before I was around here, that was one of the big ways that they helped provide a living, was to make those peacock spreads, and of course tourists would buy them. But I can still remember, down through here, there were a lot of the old spread lines, we called them. Where they'd have the spreads, all hung out. It would be a place where tourists could stop. Because at that time, the 75 wasn't completed, and all the traffic would come through on 41 highway. Also, there were peach orchards, just right up the road here right on top of the mountain. There was still a large peach orchard there during that time. At one time this area was a big peach growing area in the state. And I remember it being in operation.

And it was, as I said, when we first moved here, it was just totally different. A lot of cotton farming was going on. A lot of people grew cotton. And as I said, when we moved up here, we were farming down there, but when we moved up here, we actually had a small chicken house, and we raised chickens. As well as my dad worked at the time, when we moved up here, we called it Red Comb Feed Mills, a chicken producing place. They produced the feed and everything, and individual farmers would buy from them and that kind of stuff. Everything was done by hand, we didn't have no automated stuff at the time, everybody was down there most of the time working in the chicken houses. So, it was a lot different than it is now.

JD: Was that a change where you had been tenant farmers? Where you sort of have an irregular income, to move to where your father had a job with more regular pay?

DB: Well no, not really. Let me explain to you. My grandmother and granddaddy lived with us all my life. And my granddaddy was a tenant farmer during the Depression, and he's always said he'd never completely rely on farming after they struggled through the Depression. They managed as reasonably as they could, but the Depression was the Depression, you know. And we lived on the farm, granddaddy and all us kids took care of the farm. There was nine of us children, we took care of the farm. Dad worked on public jobs. He worked operating heavy equipment for C.W. Matthews, Ledbetter Johnson. I know he worked for years building 411 right up the road here to Rome. That was a big project he worked on. And then he worked on part of the project for [highway] 75. He had a regular income but to supplement the income, because mother never did work, she always stayed home with us kids. To supplement the income, we always farmed pretty much all the time. We raised our own gardens and that kinds of stuff. Most of the time we never really bought much from the stores because we raised everything that we wanted to eat then. So, that was a big part of what we'd done all the time. And you know, the chicken farm was a good supplemental income for us. But like I said, my grandad, he pretty much ran the farm for us all the time. We never were in quite the circumstance that a lot of people were in.

But at the end of the season, during cotton season, see we'd all go to the cotton field and pick cotton for some extra money. Because with that size of family you were always looking for extra income. We'd all pick. I don't guess you all have ever been in a cotton field picking, but at the end of the cotton rows we'd lay out big sheets. Everybody would for your family or for however you were going to weigh up, and we'd always put all of ours together because it was a family thing. We'd lay out big sheets, big burlap sheets, and at the end of the day they'd weigh you up. I can still remember, we'd make \$3 [an hour \_\_\_\_\_??] for picking cotton. Last cotton that we'd picked that I remember, that is what we'd make. Mother always out picked all of us. Even my dad, we'd kid him about it because she could always pick more cotton than he could. Him and mother and all of us kids, if he wasn't working at his other job, then all of us on Saturday would pick cotton, we'd all go to the cotton field. One thing I always told him I was glad of, I was small enough at that time to work. When you were really little, the way they told you to pick cotton, mother would make you a cotton sack out of a flour sack or an old tow sack which was pretty short because a cotton sack was long. They were about ten or twelve feet long and you pull them behind and pack them full of cotton and pull them in to get through the rows. And it would get so heavy a child couldn't pull them. Mother would have us little ones a tow sack which wouldn't hold but fifty pounds of heavy grain, it wouldn't hold much cotton. She'd let us pick in that, and then go back and forth and let us empty our sacks. I was glad of that before I got to the big sacks, they started using cotton pickers. Before I graduated to the big things, they had done away with that. That's sort of the way we made a living then, when I first recall moving to Adairsville.

Of course, we worked hard but we enjoyed it because of family. My granddaddy was always a real gentle and easy-going fella, and he would always make it fun for us. He always used little things, I guess to help us or urge us on. He'd say, "If you all hurry and get done today, I'll take you to the creek to go swimming." So, things like that, we'd have a good time as we went. It wasn't all the drudgery that folks think it was. Didn't worry about TV. The TV didn't have but one or two channels, and someone would have to keep turning the antenna to find that. So that wasn't anything you worried very much about. And most of the time we were outside during the summertime. You didn't stay in the house much at all, pretty much outside.

And one of the things too, I mentioned about back then, when one of my recollections of when we first moved to Adairsville, that road, we lived on the old highway over there, on the old road. You all probably saw sections of it coming up through here. And we lived on a part of the old road. We had a huge pecan tree, and that's where we'd done all our work when we would gather vegetables and stuff out of the garden or whatever we were doing, we would all gather around under the tree. We would break beans or shuck corn or whatever it would come to, that's where we'd work, because it's cooler to have shade to work under.

And it was amazing because a lot of people back then would walk to Adairsville. A lot of folks didn't drive, they still walked. There was always someone stopping by on their way to Adairsville or back from Adairsville. And they would stop and get a drink of water and sit down and have to talk a little while. When I think about it, if they stopped and done that, if we were stringing beans a lot of times, they'd get a pan and help us string beans or whatever. They wouldn't just stop and talk. But that was just sort of the way it was. It was just a completely different time then what it is now, that's one of the things I remember. I think about that a lot because if there was ever someone coming by and stopping, just coming out there and sitting with us for a while or whatever, they might've been walking or sometimes they were riding, they would still stop when they'd see us out there.

AY: About how far outside of Adairsville did they live?

DB: About three miles outside of Adairsville.

AY: Did you walk into Adairsville?

DB: Yes. Most of the time, when we were going to school. The bus, we were on the bus route we were on, it picked us up first, and we had to go all back through the country. It would take about an hour, an hour fifteen twenty minutes ride all the way back through the country because everything was dirt road back then. The road we lived on back then was paved because it was old 41, but the rest of the roads were dirt. And we would ride forever in the mornings. When we were older, in the afternoons, the friend I was telling you about that I grew up with, in the afternoons instead of getting on the bus, of course mother now knew what we were doing. Then it wasn't like it is now, if you got in trouble you could rest assured your neighbor would call and let them know what you were doing. And if they didn't go ahead and correct you their self, they'd call and let them know. You didn't think about nobody bothering you back then. And a lot of times we'd just wouldn't get on the bus, and of course we didn't have cell phones and all that kind of stuff and didn't call nobody. We'd just walk on over to town because the school was right there in town. We'd walk on over to town, walk on through on the old road, and we would start home. Most of the time someone would pick us up, and we would be at home in fifteen, twenty minutes most of the time. At the worst, if we did have to walk all the way home, which was rare, we'd still get there before the bus got there. In the evenings they would reverse the route, and we would have to ride all that way back and instead of being the first to get off we would be the last to get off in the afternoons. Unless it was rainy or cold really bad, we would just walk, or start out walking. We never did get far before someone would stop and pick us up because we knew everybody back then, and everybody knew us. They would just stop and pick us up and take us home.

My best friend's mother worked at Colman's [ \_\_\_\_\_??]. They made drapes and stuff like that and we got to where, as we got older, we'd just ride with her to town every morning because she'd come to work in Adairsville, and we'd get out and spend time down there in town. Go to one of the stores and piddle around and then go on to school about school time. We'd quit riding the bus in the mornings, and she didn't care so that kept us from riding the bus so much. Of course, I don't know why I was in such a big hurry to get home. We always had work to do, but I guess it's better than riding the bus. A lot of times we'd loaf a little bit around town and what have you, and we would still get home in plenty of time to beat the bus because it took so long to get there.

But there again you knew everybody and they knew you so you would talk to folks. Maybe have a quarter or fifty cents or something like that to spend in one of the stores because maybe you'd worked or done something somewhere or another and picked up a little bit of money. If you had a dollar a week or something like that you would be in pretty good shape. It would go a long way. Back then Coca-Cola was a dime and you could get a pack of crackers or something like that for a nickel. Stuff was a lot cheaper than it is, but money was little harder to come by. Still if you had a quarter you could eat pretty much all you wanted to and have a good drink of Coca-Cola, and you were fine then. That was a pretty good treat for us. There were very few things like that. We had plenty to eat at home and all that, but mother and them very rarely bought Coca-Colas or anything like that. We had our own cows and milked our own cows. She would make butter. We had everything we wanted. She would make cakes and things, tea cakes and stuff like that. But as far as store bought stuff, we didn't have a lot of that. That was a pretty rare thing in that time.

AY: Can you tell us more about what it was like going to school in Adairsville when you were growing up?

DB: It was, again, pretty enjoyable. When we moved to Adairsville, I was in the fourth grade. Mrs. Lacey was my fourth-grade teacher, and her husband Marion Lacey, when I went there, he was the music teacher, and then he became the principal at Adairsville. And he was a very good principal, very strict. Most kids today wouldn't like that school because you didn't get by with very much. Mrs. Lacey, I remember her. She was a very sweet lady. One of the things I remember, we had a huge playground. When it was recess, as we called it, all of us would get out there, and one of the things early on that I can remember, there was a chain link fence that surrounded the playground area. But there was a ditch that dropped off short, and there was a gap in between it. And us boys, I guess to have something to do, I don't know what the purpose of us having to do it, but we would sneak over there while she wasn't watching, and we would lay down and roll under that fence and jump up and run back around and get back in before she'd seen us. That was the game. Just to have something to do. And she would tell us and tell us

because she was concerned because there was a street right there. And even though there wasn't hardly any traffic on it, she was still concerned. She would say, "Boys, you all might get hit by a car!" When she'd catch us, she had a little paddle and boy, she would tear us up with that. It didn't hurt us boys; we were pretty tough. And of course, we didn't tell her it didn't hurt because she could've found something worse. If you got in trouble we never went home and told my mother and daddy about it, because we didn't want to share that information with mom and daddy if we got in trouble. She was very good to us, and we just really enjoyed it.

One of the things was that we had a lot of good teachers, and I remember her and Ms. Hobson, and Ms. Fox, Mr. Cousin. He was our math and science teacher. I took him as I got into fifth grade, and one of the things I remember about him, there again in recess, is that he was our softball pitcher. He would pitch for all of the teams. I can still remember him now, he would always wear a short sleeve white shirt in the summertime. He would tuck his tie in his shirt pocket and he would pitch the ball for all of us. As a matter of fact, I got the chance not too long back, me and my wife took him and his wife out to dinner one afternoon because somebody put us back in contact. He was just a super good man. We really thought a lot of him. He was just a great guy. And not only him, but a lot of our teachers.

It was a lot different then, one of the things, first thing everybody would have our pledge, we would have our prayer, and we would read the Bible. And one of the things, too, was our teachers were a lot stricter. Not to say we didn't try to get by with a lot less, but it was a lot different in that sense. They allowed some mischievousness I guess, but a lot of the things I see today, they absolutely, it just didn't happen. They let you know that they were in charge and you were going to do what they told you to do. It wasn't always a paddling, but it was by other means they would correct you. It was just a lot different than what it is today. We enjoyed it, we enjoyed the whole atmosphere even then. We went to school in the old college building, but that's not there anymore. That was the main building back then. It had an upstairs, some of my classes were upstairs. As time went on, of course I can name about all of my teachers, we had good times.

I never was much into sports, some of my friends were. I never really played sports. There again, we farmed a lot, and we did a lot at home. It wasn't that dad and others said, "You can't do that." It just seemed like our time was consumed. That and we went to church a good bit, so between the two we were pretty busy with the things we were doing like that, and we were pretty happy doing it. I just never was that involved with sports and all that kind of stuff too much. I was involved with other things, like I said at home and at church we always had a good bit going on there. I stayed plenty busy without sports, I just never cared that

much for it.

AY: What was the name of where you went to school?

DB: It was Adairsville, we all just called it Adairsville. At that time, see the elementary - well I'll tell you this- we didn't have preschool or kindergarten. When I started, I tell them I spent my kindergarten and preschool years going to the barn milking cows with my mother. That was my preschool. You know it's strange, I will say this, I can really remember that. It was a really good time in my life because between me and my sister, who was older than me, there was a five years difference, when all of them were going to school, I can remember, I couldn't have been more than four maybe five years old, me and mother would go to the barn together, and we would be talking and sharing and everything. She normally would have my hand, and we would go to the barn together. As small as I was, we would milk two or three cows. To start with, she would milk the cows, and as I got a little bit older, she would set a little stool down and she would say, "Now son you sit right here and milk this cow." The cow she would always let me milk was a baby, she was really gentle. She would say "You sit right here, and you start milking baby. You watch me do it, and I'll milk these other two." And she would get done with her two and come finish milking that cow until I learned. It was a very special time, and I know it doesn't seem much to somebody, but we would talk about so many things, and she would tell me about stuff. Little did I know what she was doing, too. I was learning. She was very particular about who milked the cows, because she wanted it done a certain way and make sure it was clean, and guess who got to milk the cows for the rest of the time we had a cow? I did! I got the job after that!

But yes, the school is Adairsville School. Elementary, middle, and high. It was all in one. Most of the elementary building, we did have a building that was out back of the college, the old college building. It housed first, second, and third grade, and it wasn't very big at all. But I was in fourth grade when we went there. And then we moved up into the old college building just directly up in front of it, and that's where fifth and sixth grade was. And then we moved over to another wing of the building when we got into what I guess you would call middle school now, or a little bit more. The high school section was in another wing. In the old college building there was one wing here and one wing here and then a connector hall. And they had it situated where when you came out of the elementary, other grades started up this hall and down that hall until they got over to high school.

And then about the time I got over to high school, they completed a new building off to the side, and all the high school moved over there, and left this building for elementary and middle school then. But it didn't have any air in it, the heat was steam heat, and there was the old furnace in it. I know one winter it was so cold they had to let us out of school for a while because they couldn't keep the

building heated it was so cold. Of course, I don't know why they let us out of school, because all of us kids, all of us boys, would go out and hunt and stuff like that. There wasn't that much for us to do, and mother and them, they didn't mind for us getting out and doing stuff. We'd go hunting and by the time we got back our britches legs would be froze and plastered to our knees. As I got older, I said, "I don't know why they didn't keep us at home. We are just colder out there than we would've been in the school house!" But I guess they thought it was just too bad to sit in the cold rooms, and it probably would've been pretty cold, you know. It was a lot different.

The old building was pretty old, pretty unique, too. Always wished they hadn't torn it down, because it was just really unique, the way it was. It was a pretty old building, but it was a little bit different then how buildings are now. It had the old windows, and the ceilings were really high, and you'd have windows that go into the hall that turn out for ventilation. And then your side windows would turn out and give you a little bit of a cross breeze. It was still hot on the first of September when we would start school, but it wasn't more than we could bear. We wouldn't use air conditioning, we managed alright.

AY: Since you work in the Bartow County School System today, what are the biggest changes that you can see from when you were in school?

DB: Tremendous. I can see a lot of good things that they do today. I guess one of the biggest things that I see, it's really good, is how they work with special needs kids. Then, really, there were special needs kids, but the thought was, that they weren't in inclusive classes like they are today. Most of the time, I know here in this county, there was a school that was basically used for special needs kids. It's called Hickory Log. They were usually isolated there, if I remember correctly. And that's one of the biggest things I can see a great improvement of is the way they try to work with these kids, to help them to be involved with everyone else, and to help them to bring them as far along as they can.

Technology today, you know, we dusted with erasers and wrote on the chalkboard. When I was in school, we didn't have any devices like you have now. No cell phones, nothing like that. You didn't have any kind of calculators, no kind of handheld calculators, anything like that. All that was done, you learned the method of how to do it. It's just like math, one of the things I think about a whole lot. Ms. Fox taught us math when I went into the fifth grade, and I can remember back then one of the things you had to do, when you were in class you went up to the board. When you went into her class, she had all kinds of problems up there. Let's say it was multiplication or division, say it was division, you followed the steps that she taught you, so that you could learn to come to the right answer. And if you knew the answer in your mind, and you started to put it up there, if it was me, she would say, "Okay, Mr. Baker, don't get the cart before the horse, now



follow the steps.” And that was one of the things she really impressed you with—always follow the steps and you’ll come to the right conclusion.

After I first went to work, I went to work for Coca-Cola as a route salesman. Even when I first went to work, they didn’t have handheld calculators. And I had a little book that I took out there. I would sell drinks to A&T [ \_\_\_\_\_??] and Big Star. I would have five or six hundred dollars’ worth of drinks. And you know how I figured it out? I would flip in the back of that little old pad, and I figured it on that. If I didn’t know the steps, I would be in trouble. Of course, heaven forbid that we don’t have the calculators and computers and things like that, but how many kids would know how to do any kind of figuring anymore? That’s one of other things that I think we have that I see is with reading. So many of our kids, they get way down the road, and they still can’t read. Reading is vital to anybody, not only just their education, but also their ability to make things work for them in life. When I was in school, one of the things that you did, when they were teaching you to read, they would give you homework, and you had so much to read, but you would also get up in front of class and read. You know, public reading. And I know a lot of folks say, “Well, you know, that’s not fair,” but I’ve seen a lot of kids then, and even since then, when they were challenged, they shouldn’t be there to be ridiculed because they can’t read the best in the world, but I think it challenges people to do better and not just get along. I wish folks could be more challenged in our schools, I wish kids could be more challenged in our schools and whatever it is they’re doing. If we don’t have some kind of challenge, then they don’t learn. I know I’m old school. Don’t give them a piece of candy and say, “You’re alright,” or, “Here’s what you’ve got to do, and here’s the mark you’re reaching for.” That’s what they did to us. You didn’t get socially promoted. If you had a bad grade, you had to go home and explain to mom and dad why you had a bad grade.

I wish parents would reinforce discipline, and reinforce the learning process that kids have, because most of our parents today, well not most of our parents, I’m not going to say that, but a large part of them just don’t spend time with the kids. There again my mother was at home all the time, and I know that can’t always happen today. As I look back, my folks made a great many sacrifices to where our family could be together and work together, they didn’t mind us kids working. But in the same process, we were all together working. That was just a part of our life, that was just the way we were brought up. It worked pretty good for us. As I tell folks, we still are a pretty happy family. We’ve had some bad things happen, the loss of family. In all of it, we remember what we’ve been taught through the years. Our education system is all a part of that. Then, the education system reflected the principles of the day, and it reflects the day that we deal with. Too many of our parents don’t reinforce discipline, they don’t reinforce the education of their children, they don’t teach them their self. They might enjoy it if they read a little bit to the kids instead of just watch TV or let them sit there on the phone.

I'd tell them a lot of times nowadays that too many children have no life experiences anymore. All they've got is a video game, and that's sad to me. That really is sad. That's my two cents. [Laughter]

AY: Can you tell us a little bit more about the church life in Adairsville and what it's been like throughout your life?

DB: It has always been very important in our area. I grew up the early years of my life just right over here, and the church that I remember as a child. My family, of course, is still a big part of them and still go there. I was called to preach, and I started pastoring churches. It was several years after I started preaching and serving as a pastor that I went on and pastored there for about 6 years. That was a very good time for me. I really enjoyed that, but it was very, very important, I think, to the majority of people then in our area. Even when we moved up here to Adairsville, there was a church right there in the community. Though we never did move our membership, during special things or revivals, we would go to the service over there just like we did to our own church. That was one of the things that took a lot of our time up other than just work. It was where people met. That was our social gatherings. People looked forward to being there. A lot of times, they got to see folks that they didn't see for worship, and it was just a center of attention. Even though the population wasn't even as near as much as what it is today, most of our smaller church areas were like this around here. Our congregation size was a lot bigger because there weren't very many people in the community that didn't go to church somewhere.

JD: What was the name of the church that you were a member of when you were a child?

DB: Mount Pisgah. It's over here on [highway] 293. It began in about 1913. It sits in what was, at the time, called Caves, Georgia, between Cassville and Kingston. That's a pretty wide area, but at that time the Gaines, a pretty wealthy family in the area, had flour mills. They owned a couple of different flour mills. They had a flour mill there, and there were a number of sawmills in that area. There was a mining operation right there, as well as a big creek. Through there ran a creek called Two Run Creek [ \_\_\_\_\_??], and there's as a lot of creek bottom land. They grew a lot of wheat, and there were a lot of farmers. There was no school in that area either, and so when the church began it began as a school and a church. In 1913, they got together and constituted a church and began a school there too. At that time, I think the county was providing schools, but the distance it was, there just wasn't a local school there. I was able to talk to a lot of the older people and did a little history on it when I was the pastor. Some of the older people, one, we always called her Grandma Mullinax, she was in her 90s, and she remembered it. J.T. Mullinax, one of her sons, and Henry Law were ones that were there when it started that actually went to school there. I went to them and recorded on what

they told me about the school, the church. During that time, the community sort of began growing. When the Gaines put the mill there because of the source of power from the creek being where it was, the community just grew from that. And the mining operation came in there. There were folks sawing timber and the farmers. From that it grew and there was no church and no school, and that's what they built the church. There was a post office there at the mill, and there was also a mill store there but there wasn't an actual town there or anything. You had to go to Kingston, which would have been the closest place to go to a regular town.

They still have services today. It's still a pretty good size congregation that goes there now, but the school, I think, lasted up into the almost the 30s. Then, the county consolidated and begin to take more control of the schools, that is the small schools. I pastored a church in Calhoun with the same thing. It began actually in 1898, I think it was, and when it began there was a school there as well. A lot of the people that were going there when I was pastor remembered going to school there. A lot of them met their husbands and wives there. Later, the county consolidated those small schools that the local churches started into the county system, so a lot of the churches here actually were schools or had schools. Matter of fact, Pine Grove Church, I pastored there as well. That was another one. My family moved in that area in like 1900. That was my great-granddaddy. My dad and them farmed there until right after the Depression. During that time, when my dad was going to school, it was there at the church until it was consolidated. He was born in the 20s, no the late teens, I think it was. He went to school there during his school years. A lot of the old churches like that provided schools in this area. They were pretty vital as far as education for the kids back then. It was the only place that they had. Matter of fact, one of the older ones there at Mount Pisgah, where I grew up, was also the pastor there when it started. He taught school there too. He preached until he was a very, very old man, and I can still remember when he was preaching. Everybody always loved for Brother Coward to come. Everybody knew him and thought a lot of him.

I tell people this a lot of times, and this might seem odd nowadays. Folks don't think children can sit still in church and all that. With my dad, you could manage to sit still in church and listen. I can remember a message that Brother Coward preached when I was about 7 or 8 years old. I remember it today just like he was preaching then. Things were different cause my dad didn't care where you sat in church. He was deacon of the church. When he went in, he sat on that very back row against the wall, and he said, "You all go sit where you want to, just remember I've got my eye on you," and we did. We sat where we wanted to, but we knew not to get up, and we knew not to talk. You didn't carry toys; there was no need because you were listening and mostly singing. You were listening to what the preacher had to say. Another thing I'll say back then, the old preachers didn't mind that if you got to playing or doing something and mom and daddy didn't notice you, they might say "How about you all stop playing and listen to

what I've got to say." They would just call you down. Everything was different then. You respected things like that. You respected the older people, especially folks in our community. When we moved to Adairsville, when you addressed them it was like some of our best friends' neighbors. Mr. Howell and Mrs. Howell, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall: you didn't just call them by their first names. Mr. and Mrs. Cantrell, that was all of our neighbors around us. When you referred to them, daddy better hear you say Mr. and Mrs. Mr. Sam Shaw and just different ones like that. People in general had a more, I guess, respectful tone at that time than what you see nowadays.

AY: It sounds like the church was a big part of the community when you were younger. How has that changed now that you're older?

DB: For our family, it really hasn't changed that much because we're still very closely tied to the church. But regretfully, we see nowadays that even though numerous, numerous times I have tried to visit with people, to invite them to church or talk to them about different things like, people's values and their ideas have changed. Their thoughts on a lot of different things have changed, and of course it's pretty obvious this is the way things go in the world. When I was growing up, so many things that are pretty much accepted today was unheard of then. A lot of things that happened then, folks were absolutely appalled by it. That just wasn't their way of living and doing, and I think people had a lot stricter moral code then than what they have today. And it's pretty obvious that they do. It's one of the things I guess that concerns me. They raise their children, but they don't go to church, so their children don't go to church, and then their children don't go to church. It's hard to break that pattern or to get them to start to church. Of course, I know it can be broken like everything else, but still that's one of the things that concerns me, I guess as much as anything today. Because I feel like that there again, if you have a society without a moral compass, then at some point we're all in trouble. There's got to be something that draws us to what's right. I believe the Word of God. The Lord does, and He directs our lives; our lives can be made better, and to me that's the sad part about it. The word of God teaches us it's a wonderful life if we'll live it, and it will draw us to a better way. Because I've experienced it all through my life and I've seen what a difference it can make, to me, it is no life to live addicted to stuff and destructive to your own self. That's what I see that's happening. People are going away from the Word of God, and I believe I'll just take the way I know, as the song says. [ \_\_\_\_\_??] It's just a better way to live, and it's been a good life. I'm thankful for the heritage, and I'm thankful for the old generation that I was brought up with that instructed and gave some good advice. If people would just follow it today... I don't really know what it's going to take to cause people to turn back to the Lord or to the Word of God. I think it's the way of life and I don't know what it's going to take, but I know people need to turn back to that and find what they need in their life. It's not in all this other stuff that they're looking for, I believe I can safely say that.

AY: Alright. Is there anything else you would like to be included in this interview?

DB: Well I probably told you all I know. No, I could talk for hours. [Laughter]

JD: I have one question for you. You talked about before and after school going downtown and loafing a little bit with your friends. What was there in downtown? Are you talking about the public square which is across the railroad tracks from the school? What stores were located there, and where did you go?

DB: Well, at that time, there was the five and dime and the hardware store. Of course, you would know all of these folks. The fellow who ran the hardware store's wife ran the five and dime. Sometimes we would go in there. She always had penny candy, some chocolates, or what have you if you had that little bit of extra money. I was trying to think of their names, but names are hard sometimes for me to remember. The Culberson's [ \_\_\_\_\_ ??] owned a store there, and they had soft drinks or what have you. We would go in there and we would see people we knew. When you would come in, they always had time to talk to you. They'd be talking to you about different stuff and you'd walk around and look in the store. Of course, most of the time they knew you didn't have but a nickel, dime, or a quarter to spend, but they didn't mind letting you look. They didn't shoo you off. You could walk around, look, and sort of wish and that kind of stuff.

One of the things I remember when I was a kid in the five and dime, they always had a toy table, a big toy table. You'd go in and you'd get a little bit of penny candy, and then you'd wear the floor out walking around and around the toy table looking at all those toys, knowing you were never going to get one of them. That's because we were country folks, and you couldn't afford a lot of the stuff like that. But you were thankful for it. You learned at a very early age, just because you said to mom and daddy 'I want it' didn't mean you got it. They didn't go borrow a bunch of money for Christmas. If you got up on Christmas morning and you had a checkerboard and a Chinese checkerboard, or sometimes it would just be a few games and fruit, you were very happy that you got that and some candy.

Most of the time in the stores downtown, we'd have some soft drinks. During that period of time, once we got up in middle school to high school age, they had summer programs or work programs at school you could stay for 45 minutes or an hour and help in the evenings, help clean up. You'd make \$4-5 dollars a month. Mother and daddy would always let us spend that money however we wanted to spend it. That was our pocket money. We'd go to town, get us a coke or get us some candy or something like that, and enjoy it on the way home. You very seldom got anything like that at home. Mother and daddy just didn't buy cokes and stuff like that. It was very, very rare. We had to eat old stuff like ham,

potatoes, beans, cornbread, and biscuits. Now that's a meal you don't get much anymore. Then, we had it all the time. Mother always had, if you went in her house any time of the day, a plate of biscuits in the oven that would be warm. She didn't care for you to eat. Anytime you needed something to eat, there was a pan of sweet potatoes, always something like that. A lot of times, I can remember she would have so many of us kids, she would have one of the dish pans about full of tea cakes. She'd mix up chocolate and different things like that. There was all kind of homemade stuff like that. But the store-bought stuff, man, we thought that was really cool to get something store bought. Sometimes, some of our other friends would come and just sit around or talk a while. Then we'd start home when we thought we needed to. Most of the time, we knew we were going to get a ride, so we wouldn't be in a big hurry to go. It was just something to do different because we knew that we had work to do when we got home. We knew about what time they were expecting us to be there. It's just the fact that we were getting to loafer a little bit because none of us had cars or anything like. There's wasn't any riding around in cars or anything like that.

JD: What year did you graduate from high school?

DB: It was '73.

JD: '73, so you were there during the period of integration. Tell us a little bit about that.

DB: Well now in Adairsville, it was almost virtually no big deal at all. I mean it really wasn't. I honestly cannot remember one instance where we had a problem. Because there in Adairsville were the McConnell's [ \_\_\_\_\_??], the Beasley's [ \_\_\_\_\_??], and the Shaw's [ \_\_\_\_\_??]. All of those folks, we knew all of them, and when they come to school, it just wasn't a big thing. During that time, you didn't go home with one another and have that kind of social interaction. But one of my best friends through school, John Beasley, after he started coming to school, he was really big football player as a matter of fact.

JD: Was it Vic's [ \_\_\_\_\_??] father?

DB: It was his uncle. John died not too long back. He was also a minister, and we were just really good friends all through our school years. But I honestly can say that it wasn't a big thing. I'm sure for some folks it was, but my dad and granddaddy both would talk to us about stuff like that. My dad would often say, because he come up through depression years, "I'm glad I wasn't born a black person." He said this because they had a hard way to live years before that time.

Mr. Shaw [ \_\_\_\_\_??] was the only black man that lived in our community. When you said something about Mr. Shaw, it better be Mr. Sam Shaw. That was

just the way you addressed him. He was the custodian at the school, and everybody knew Mr. Sam. As a matter of fact, he was a preacher, too. He pastored some of the black churches then. Everybody was very respectful to Mr. Sam. Honestly, during that time, I'm going to say, and I know that there were probably some problems somewhere or another, but there was none that I really ever experienced during the time I was there. Like I said the Shaw boys and a lot of the other ones, we just grew up at school together. We played together at school. Now socially, it wasn't acceptable for you to go spend the night with one another and that kind of stuff. But still, you were respectful to one another.

I was talking to [the mayor, Mr. Kenneth Carson] not too long back. He calls me Mr. Baker for whatever reason, I guess because I'm older. There were several other people running, and I don't mean this in a bad way, but people spending a lot more money than he did. But he was local, and he said, "You know, after I won that election and I started going to all these different things for mayors, one of the things that most everybody asked me, because I'm mayor of a small town in Georgia, is if it is a predominantly black area. They're all so shocked when I tell them no, it's about 70% or better or maybe even 80% white, and I won over all the white folks." Then again, his family was well thought of because they were like most of the people at that time. Of course, you always have your upper [\_\_\_\_\_] folks that had a lot of the money and all that kind of stuff. But the majority of people were working class people. They worked on some of the big farms around there, driving tractors and stuff like that. If they had an off day, they'd go around, just like my dad wore overalls. They'd be dressed to a tee in their overalls with creases in them. They had respectable jobs as well. Back then, you know, there were very few families where there wasn't a mom and dad. I never really do remember there being a great big amount of racial problems. There might have been some, but I never knew about it. My dad and others weren't big on stuff like that, causing a lot of problems, if you know what I'm saying.

JD: Alright. Well thank you so much for your time.

DB: Thank you. I hope I didn't bore you too much.

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