

**Oral History 4425 Adairsville Project**  
**Ray Ellis, Corey Evans, and Al Willis Interview**  
**Conducted by Camille Coe and Kyle Rowe**  
**Location: San Souci Women's Club, Adairsville, Georgia**  
**October 4, 2018**  
**Transcribed by Camille Coe**

Coe: Alright, this an interview by Camille and Kyle. We are interviewing Ray Willis, Corey Evans, and Al Willis

Willis: Ray Ellis.

Coe: Ellis.

Willis: E L L I S.

Coe: Ray Ellis, Corey Evans, and Al Willis in the San Souci Clubhouse in Adairsville on October 4th, 2018. Ok so for the record, can all three of you state your name?

Evans: I'm Cory Evans.

Willis: I'm Al Willis. Tell them your name.

Ellis: Ray Ellis.

Coe: Alright.

Ellis: Senior.

Coe: Alright, and where were you born?

Evans: Adairsville.

Coe: Alright.

Willis: I was born in Cartersville, Georgia. [to Ellis] Where were you born?

Ellis: Springfield, New Brunswick, Canada.

Coe: Alright, can you tell us about growing up in Adairsville. What were some of your best memories?

Evans: I mean the festival's one. Then going to Friday night football games. Plenty of sports here in Adairsville. Played baseball, football.

Coe: [to Willis] and you?

Willis: Mine was growing up in a small town. You knew everyone, met everyone in school, high school. Now they're building...well they just recently opened a new elementary school. And uh, whenever I was going to school on that same area, that was the elementary school, middle school, and high school and football field. [laughs]. So we...I can remember the time before there was one red light.

Dickey: Mr. Willis, When did you come to Adairsville?

Willis: I was...I started school in Adairsville, and I lived just a few miles up the road. And I think I was about three when we first moved from Cartersville to Adairsville. So, I've been around here all my life.

Coe: And then um [to Ellis], you said that you did not grow up in Adairsville, so I'll exclude you from this question. But could you talk about some good memories you've had in Adairsville since you lived here?

Ellis: I came here...well I came to the United States in 1950. On a whim, my uncle came by and I was working on a dairy farm in New Brunswick, Canada. He said, Ray, do you want to go to the United States? And I said when are you leaving. He said nine O'clock in the morning. And I said I'll be there. I get to the border. The customs agency says where are you going? I said I'm going to the Wayland, Massachusetts for six months to see if I like it. He says why wait six months. He said you do these three things, go back into Canada, get these three things, you can come across the border for good in thirty days. I thought about it, and I said okay. So I went back into Canada. I got a physical, I got three letters of recommendation, and I got a clearance from my doctor. Couple or three weeks later, I went to the border again. Custom agent says where are you going young man. I said Wayland, Massachusetts. He says for how long? I said I've got a passport for five years. He said how much money you got? I said I've got five dollars and twenty-one cents and a one-way bus ticket to Wayland, Massachusetts. He looked at me and said if you can live in Wayland, Massachusetts, with your uncle on five dollars and twenty-one cents for five years, you get on that bus. I got on that bus. I ended up in Boston, and I got a bus to Wayland. And I told the bus driver, you tell me when you get to Wayland, Massachusetts, because I don't have the slightest idea, and I didn't. And I get to Wayland, he hollered Wayland, and I looked out the window and thank God, there was my uncle, waiting on me. So, I stayed there. I got there on a Thursday. I went to work in Waltham, Massachusetts, and I learned to be a printer, to run the big presses, you know. He had, my uncle asked me, Ray you want to vote. And I said sure, that was my damn fault. I went and voted, and a few months later, I got greetings young man, from Harry Truman. It said "greetings" to join the military. And back then, you could enlist in whichever you wanted to. So I went to the recruitment office, and I told them I wanted to join the Air Force, and the Air Force is only young men. I told him I'm a Canadian. He says you want to be an American citizen. I said yeah. Went down there, got my test. Next thing I knew, I was in the Air Force. I went to someplace in upstate New York, I can't think of the name of it now. Then I went to

Biloxi, Mississippi, and left there and went to Kimpo, Korea, in 1952. The Korean War was on. I come back to Andrew's Air Force base in Maryland. I got my citizenship papers there. One day, I was standing and one of the education officers says I see you aren't a high school graduate. I said yeah. He said you want to be one. I said yeah. He said you go to a certain place at a certain time, and you can take the GED. I thought about , and I said okay. It was on a Thursday. I looked at my calendar...Thursday...Friday...Saturday. You get a three-day pass, in 1950...I guess it was around 1954. 1954, you got a three-day pass in the military if you did something outstanding. And I didn't do anything, but I said I'll go get it. Come twelve noon, I finished it. All six parts of the GED, I think. I finished it all. He said you finished? And I said to the best of my ability. They had the commanders back then, and they called me up and said you passed the GED. I said well thank you. Then I stayed in the military for twenty years.

Coe: So after you left the military is when you came to Adairsville?

Ellis: How did I get here?

Willis: No, you met your wife, and then you moved to Adairsville.

Ellis: I met my wife on the Fourth of July. I guess it was 1954-55. We were out driving around. I said how about you and I get married. She says ok and I said Ray, I said to myself, what in the world did you do now [laughs]. So, I left and went to Tampa, Florida. I was stationed there, and she went back to Texas. She had a relative back there in the Army. So, we came back and that was in August. We talked and said we'd get married September the tenth. We got married. I left to Alaska, and she had to come back up here. Then we traveled to California. We went to Newfoundland. Come back and went to England for four years. I flew in the SAC Airborne Command Post as a communication specialist. When I was in England, I got my two boys in Cub Scouts. They didn't have a scoutmaster, so they said, you. I was tech commander then. They said you can be Cubmaster. So, I was Cubmaster until I left. I get to headquarters in Nebraska. And they needed a scoutmaster there, for their cubs, and I put my boys in them. Then I said, told my wife, I'm not going to put up with it anymore, and I retired. I retired, and I came here. Then I put boys...

Willis: That was in '72 correct?

Ellis: '71. Yeah, September...well it was the first of August '71, I retired and came here. I had them two boys enrolled in cubs. So, I came up here to the scout hut, and I put them in there. Well, then they had a Chief Boyd day. They brought him out of the hospital, because he was disabled. So, they brought him out of that, and just as soon as that day was over, the Scoutmaster left. And left me hanging with a bunch of boys. And I said no. So, I took over as Scoutmaster. I held it for forty-four years. I was Scoutmaster for forty-four years. I tried to get out of Scouts, but they won't let me. I'm still an honorary Scout now. I can come and go whenever I want.

Coe: That's a pretty nice position, and we are going to be talking about Scouts more in just a minute. So, Mr. Evans, I want to ask you a little more about living in Adairsville since you did grow up here. Was there a specific spot local kids liked to hang out, specific events you guys went to?

Evans: Well we always had to leave town to go do something. Calhoun, Kennesaw, which when I was growing up was not like it is now. Like Al said, I remember when there was no red lights. The only restaurant was Little Rock and two truck stops. And Dairy Queen.

Willis: I remember when all those were built, except for Little Rock. There was a, believe it or not, there was a time, it was a volunteer fire department in town. It was right up here, and whenever they would get called out to a fire, the Mayor who was also the fire chief, they would have to jump the firetruck off to go to it. Of course, we've had some good, pretty good characters living around Adairsville. We had a man who raised a whole family, all he ever did was make whiskey. He had a big write up one time in the Atlanta paper. That's all he ever did and people thought the world of him. He was a good man even if he did make whiskey. They said he made good... but there have been a lot of changes in this town. They, you can go down and see four-lane red lights. Now, like where I said, there are several places to eat. Whenever I was growing up, I could not imagine a Mexican restaurant in this town. There was no way.

Evans: Serving beer...

Willis: Serving beer! You know, there was a little cafe behind the main part of town. It was called the Little Rock Cafe. You just walked in, and there was a huge rock by the door when you walked in, and that's where they got the name.

Ellis: It had good food.

Willis: Yes, sir. It had some good food. It was opened up during the day, and at night, you were on your own. There wasn't anything here.

Evans: Everything closed down.

Willis: The big thing in town...well obviously the San Souci Club was a good thing for the ladies. But what was going on at the high school, the ballgames. That was it. As a teenager, if you wanted to see some action, get more people, you went to another town. Because that down there, that was it. And it was closed at night. There was nothing wrong with that, everyone enjoyed a small town. We were Mayberry. We had just one police officer. What was his name...Jay Saxton was his name. Period, that was it. Then the mayor. Lots of changes in this town. It never came to my mind the things going on in that school. I've got four grandsons in school. At our high school down there, they've got a swimming pool. That was unheard of. That happened in big cities up north, or maybe in Atlanta. That didn't happen here. Wrestling, there was no sports like that here. Soccer, that was unheard of here. We were all country folk, even if you lived in town.

Ellis: Still country folk.

Willis: Everybody knew everyone else. You didn't have to call on the phone and tell one another that someone is sick or they had a bad accident, because, by the time you got to the telephone to call anyone, everyone knew anyway.

Ellis: That's right.

Willis: That's just the way it was. We were family. You had telephones with four or five people on it. You had, y'all don't remember what party lines are. The last telephones we had was two party lines. Which, in other words, now you pick up the phone and make a phone call. Well, now you just take it out of your pocket...but on a house phone, you pick up to make a phone call. On two-party lines, it was you and somebody else on that line. So if somebody was using it, you couldn't use it. You had to wait for...and they went up to four or five party lines. Sometimes you would have to wait. You were lucky if you could make a call. And you could pick it up and hear to someone else's conversation. All day long.

Ellis: All day long.

Willis: You don't know what they would be talking about. You didn't want to be talking about something you didn't want anybody...everybody to know.

Ellis: When I came here in 1971, and I asked for a telephone, they gave me a party line, and I told them I couldn't have a party line because I was working for the postal service then. I would be on call, so they gave me a single line. I got a party line because I worked at the post office and they called me at all times to work so I worked there. And I guess that was the beginning of the outcast of party lines, because I had never heard of anybody else having a party line. Because when I was in Canada, they had party lines. But it wasn't one or two, it was half a dozen. And you picked up to talk, and you hear the other ones click. You couldn't say anything that was

Willis: Private.

Ellis: Private or out of order because they would jump on you. That the way it was.

Coe: So you all mentioned the school was a big part of the community. So what school did you go to- elementary, middle?

Evans: Adairsville.

Willis: Adairsville.

Coe: That was all combined?

Willis: That was all combined.

Coe: And did you all have the same classmates generally, all throughout school?

Willis: Oh sure. Graduated in 1971, there was 31 in my graduating class. The year before us there was 50 in the graduating class of 1970. That was the biggest graduating class at that time to ever graduate from Adairsville High School. We had 31. It would have been 32, but we had one gentleman who decided to quit a week before we graduated. But you knew everybody. I'm still friends with many people I graduated with. Several of them have passed away but we are still good friends.

Dickey: Can you tell us a little about that building, where it was located? That big brick building that had been built by John Schmitz?

Willis: Undoubtedly it was. It was my understanding that at one time it was a college, because the name of the street...

Evans: It started off as an academy.

Willis: That's College Street.

Dickey: Okay

Evans: It was an academy, and it closed down and the city bought it. The school was actually run by the city of Adairsville until the 60's, maybe late 50's or something. The only reason I know about it is because I heard Mr. Bass talk about it. But then the county took it over, and then it was county ran. Because I didn't go to that one, I went to middle and high school there but they had built the elementary school, 80, or 81.

Willis: Something like that because all my kids went there.

Evans: So, once we got that elementary school, we went to middle school. You had Pine Log Elementary and Mckeithan??? Elementary School coming in.

Willis: Been a lot of changes. There's a lot of sad memories or good memories that turned bad. Made you feel bad when they tore the school down. Because my first-grade room was still standing. Whenever I started school there were two first grades. And I don't even know how many there are now.

Evans: Six.

Willis: Because like I said my graduating class was 31. There was one homeroom, and you knew the teachers from year to year, and they know you. Tell you how small schools work. Now, if you even mention having a firearm, you are locked up. Period. Then, you either brought your truck, or pickup, or car, and you might have had your gun in the gun rack, and your truck was unlocked. Nobody bothered it. And you might tell your

teacher, who also hunted, about it and say let's go take a look at it. They would go look at your guns. That was just another time.

Ellis: You stuck the flags, stuck the American flags on...now you put a flag up and somebody will be stomping on it. They'd get stomped to, if I was around.

Willis: I'm thankful my son, and Corey knows it too, they grew up together, but even some of his teachers. They would go fishing together. You know, we are country folk and I wouldn't take anything for growing up in a small town.

Ellis: When I came here, I didn't know what cotton was and there was cotton fields all around. Now there are no cotton fields around.

Willis: I was telling the Scouts the other night, I said whenever we grew up, if you wanted some spare money you picked cotton, or you hauled hay. You didn't go to Burger King or McDonald's and get a part-time job. One of them asked me why, and I said it wasn't here. There was no such thing. But you did manual labor, but I loved a small town.

Ellis: It was good.

Willis: It was good.

Ellis: My wife said you ever picked cotton? I said no. When I was in Arkansas, you know the big cotton fields. She said you just go up and put your fingers and do this. I went up there, and I did my fingers like that and looked down, and there was a hole there, and a hole there, and a hole...

Willis: Ah, cotton holes. [Laughter]

Ellis: I hadn't cut the cotton yet. I told her, look at my fingers. She just laughed and nearly killed herself. But I said I'm not picking anymore cotton, that's it.

Coe: Alright, so I assume based on your previous answers what your answer will be, but, do you consider Adairsville a special place?

Evans: Oh yeah

Willis: Yeah

Evans: Unique people.

Coe: Just...

Willis: You meet unique people. There are still unique people around Adairsville. This man right here [points to Ellis], he's a landmark. There's no telling how many of us adults and how many kids he has helped along the way. Ray and myself rolled thousands of

miles on different scouting adventures. We went to two national scouting jamborees, where we'd spend two or three weeks at a time, paid to work. Spent thousands of... no telling how many times we camped out and we never had a cross word. It's hard to say. It's hard to say. I'm proud to say but it's hard to say. How much money did we make?

Ellis: Nothing!

Willis: Not one nickel.

Ellis: We took a trip to mount Katahdin. Everybody wanted to go to the end of the Appalachian trail. We made eleven thousand dollars, we did, before we left this place. We got us a bunch and some of the adults went and we went to mount Katahdin...

Willis: Katahdin, in Maine.

Ellis: In Maine. We went into Canada. The border agent says who's the boss. I said I am. He said do you vou've for all of them? I said yeah. So we went into Canada and spent a day in Canada. Come back out and the same custom agent said coming back? And I said yeah, I'm coming back, going to come back in. What we did, we left here in a bus, went to Washington D.C, to the tomb of the unknown soldier and had one of the guards talk to us. We left early and went to, what's it called...

Evans: I didn't get to go on that trip.

Ellis: Anyway, went to the army thing and one of the boys climbed up a ladder and fell off and hurt...broke his arm so we had to fix...we went on into Mount Katahdin. We stayed there I think two weeks. The boys tried to go to the top of Mount Katahdin but it was icy, it was slick. They couldn't make it. So, we come and we stayed there and we came back and the bus driver said, they were staying by themselves, him and his wife, because it was their last trip. He said I want to stay with y'all, you seem like you're having a good time. I said yep. So, he said, I said you can come on down and be with us. And they came down to be with us. We stayed in New York, in the country of New York. Then come back into, some place in Tennessee. And they'd come back in here and everybody was so happy. I guess so, everyone enjoyed themselves.

Willis: Yep, two weeks.

Ellis: Like Al said, we used to go camping. We used to go caving. There's a cave up here on highway 20.

Willis: There's one that's called Lost City. We spent the night at Lost City.

Ellis: What's the one, which one did Jamerson get caught in?

Willis, Evans: Cumberland Cavern.



Ellis: He tried to come up through it and he was my assistant. He got half way and he couldn't get any further. Because he was too big, he got hailed, stomped in there.

Evans: We all thought it was Rodney Curtis. [laughter]

Ellis: He ended up...he was puffing, and you know, getting bigger because he was nervous. So, he said, just let me relax and maybe I'll slip back out. I happened to have another adult with me, so we pulled him out, and he say oh, so we pull him back out and we went to the manager of the cave and told him about it. Now to go in the cave you have to put a rubber tire around you.

Ellis: PVC pipe. [laughter]

Willis: Were you there with us?

Evans: Yep, both times.

Ellis: Huh?

Evans: I went both, I went both times.

Willis: And where is that one, that was up in Tennessee?

Evans: Cumberland Cavern.

Ellis: What's this one here in Georgia?

Evans: Nope, it's in Tennessee mountain.

Willis: Raccoon Mountain.

Willis: We, as adults, try to teach the boys something, try to teach the boys a lot of stuff. But we learn from them also. I had a boy for a while who was paralyzed from the waist down, and he still lives in this town. We went to the Lost City one time. Ray and myself pushed this boy in a wheelchair all around the place, as far as we could. The when you get to spend the night in there, you get to go on something called a wild tour. Where you do the crawling and climbing. Young man looked at me and said I'm going. I said son I've been on this before and I don't think you can. He said oh yeah, I'm going. So, I said oh well he wants to try, let him try. We pushed that wheelchair as far as we could get him and he came out of that thing and he dragged himself on his stomach with his elbows and his arms till he would give himself out. Then he would turn over on his back. Then he'd turn back over. He'd finally done that four or five times when he said I am exhausted, that's as far as I can go. That will do something to you to watch that. One of the older guys said, I'll take him back. And picked him up and carried him back to his wheelchair. I looked around at the other adults and we realized at that point, I said I don't ever want to hear anybody young or old say I can't do something. Tell me you don't know how but

don't tell me you can't. And that will do something to you. I got asked one time how much money we made from this. I said nothing. He said you carry kids all over everywhere and you don't get a dime off of it. My answer to him was if I can help keep one kid off drugs, just one, its worth it. And it is. It really, really is.

Ellis: [to Evans] At the end of Paul Station Road...[inaudible]

Evans: Well I was talking about...[inaudible]...he's a fine young man, I saw him here recently in the store.

Rowe: Alright Corey, I want to start with you. Can you tell me a little about your childhood home and some of the memories you have around that house?

Evans: My childhood home? Well, it was little. But it was home. Where I grew up, within a ten mile radius. Family. If they weren't family they were real close friends, like family. So if you'd done something you thought you could get away with, because you mom or dad was two miles that-a-way, the neighbors, usually your cousins or your aunt or your uncle would see you. So you'd get a whooping there. And then they'd call your mom or your grandmother. If you're lucky they'd bypass your grandmother. My momma worked second and third shift, so when I got back my grandmother had caught word of it and I get the hickory then. When momma did wake up, I'd get another spanking for embarrassing her in front of so-and-so. [laughter] It's the same thing here in town. In kin to the Hallcoms, Kings, I mean pretty much, Edwards. Everyone in Adairsville pretty much knew me so I had to walk the line because I'd be punished four or five times for the same crime. So you learn pretty quick.

Rowe: Ok, Al.

Willis: Well, myself, I was raised a few miles from here and my parents both worked. One of the things, when we got home in the evening, we knew to take off our good school clothes. You put on play clothes, or work clothes. You had chores to do. Now I'm not saying we were dog poor or anything like that. But we knew what we were supposed to do. First thing I had to do, I was assigned to do, was get my homework up. First thing. And then I didn't have anything to do, I played or whatever. I live, now I live next door to where I was raised. My mother still lives up there, my father passed away in 2014. But my mother still lives up there. Matter o'fact, my son and his family live right below. So, we country folk just enjoy it. Worked, had a good time. Enjoyed life.

Ellis: You can't get anything better than country folk. Because my dad was a cheesemaker. He was from England, came to Canada to marry my mom. So he made cheese. He had three mats, two five thousand gallon and one seven thousand gallon one. My brother and I took the two small ones of give thousand. We made cheese.

Ellis: I said keep doing something because the body is made to move it is not made to sit in that chair and watch that tv. Although I do my fair share. [Laughter]

Willis: That's what you tell them to do. That's what you tell them to do is it not? Do as I say not, do as I do. [Laughter]

Ellis: But, I mean, you know, use common sense. Sometimes I think common sense went flying up in the air. But as long as you use common sense and good judgement, you can get anywhere you want to with no problem whatsoever. No one is going to tell you no.

Rowe: Cory can you tell us what you do for a living?

Evans: I'm an electrician.

Rowe: You're an electrician?

Evans: Yes, I am an electrician.

Rowe: And how long have you been an electrician?

Evans: Well, I started when I was little. I had two uncles that were electricians, and when I was little, it was fun crawling in the attics and underneath the houses, and now I recruit other people to do that for me. [laughter] I have been an electrician since I graduated high school.

Rowe: Okay, and Al?

Willis: I'm retired, and you are retired.

Dickey: We know Ray was in the Air Force and worked for the post office, but what did you do Al?

Willis: I worked for a carpet mill for 25-plus years. I was a lead mechanic there, and I decided it was time for me to do something else. So I went in there, and I retired in 2015 from the Georgia Department of Transportation. I was an equipment operator.

Rowe: Cory how did you first get involved with the Boy Scouts?

Evans: Ray Ellis. I never got the other little guy he was the council district guy. They came to the elementary school, and they handed out all these little flyers to you...

Willis: Walter

Evans: Yea. [laughter] That was his name I was wanting to say?

Ellis: The only Boy Scout I had that did not want to make it a big deal when he made Eagle Scout. He said you give me Eagle Scout on the tailgate of a pickup truck, and I said alright, and that's him right there. [Points to Evans] I gave him Eagle Scout on the bed of the pickup truck because that's what he wanted, and that's what he got.

Evans: But they came to the school and handed out all those little flyers. I mean who didn't want to go horse back riding, rappelling, fishing, and all this stuff. You went that night your mom and dad and they signed you up. October 31, 1988.

Evans: Is that when you got in?

Evans: That was my first meeting.

Dickey: And how old were you then?

Evans: Eleven, I think

Dickey: Okay.

Willis: I was in Boy Scouts in a town close to here called Pine Log. They started at Troop 100, and I am a charter member. I was there when it started. After several years I dropped out, and then I got married and had a son, and he decided to go into Cub Scouting, but they did not have a Cubmaster, so he recruited me for a few years. And then for a year or so, I was Cubmaster, and I was assistant Scoutmaster, too. I wore several different hats for a while there, and I was assistant Scoutmaster for what, twenty something years, under this man right here. [Points to Ellis] And you guys know how he got started in the Scouts.

Rowe: Alright, so how did joining the Scouts program impact your life?

Evans: Oh, I had a ball. [laughter] It was like going out with your friends, man. I mean, nowadays it is not like it was then. I mean, there is so many new rules, and you no its about like that everywhere. Kenneth King was one of our assistants, and we went hiking with him 50 miles up the Appalachian Trail, and he was the only one there with us. You know you broke so many rules doing that nowadays you would be banned for life. I mean, but I have seen propane cylinders thrown in a fire and blown up. I have seen Ray Ellis and Bob Zimmerson flip over a log. You get a bunch of kids that age together especially around here. I mean, like I said, Adairsville is a unique bunch people. You get in a small town, there is not a whole lot to do, so you find things to entertain yourselves. You see some crazy stuff.

Willis: We were very laid back. Troop 12 was very laid back. Myself, 'Im a prankster. I love to play pranks on people, and some of the other guys did. But I also said if you play a prank expect to have one played back on you. Do not get mad. And I will give you a fine example. Ray and I had a bunch of boys out camping one night, and he gets up in the morning to go outside the tent, and this is before daylight. He grabs the zipper to go outside, and both zippers followed him. What's wrong with this, so we started both doing it. One of the guys had tied the outside zippers together and you could not get outside that tent. [laughter] That was just us. We always had a good time with the boys. I have had leaves put in my sleeping bag. I have had holly leaves in my sleeping bag. I

had a brick put under me anything like that, and we just had a ball. Now we can come along with these boys that are grown--he will always be a boy to us--we can come along, "do you guys remember when did so and so over there in we went here," and, "yea, I remember." We carried boys as far north, like Ray said, in Canada. We carried them as far south as Tybee Island in Savannah.

Evans: What was it that battle ship?

Willis: Oh yea, we have been to Charleston, South Carolina, and stayed on a battle ship a couple times, I mean a aircraft carrier, a couple of times, and that is fun. Anything with the boys, we would have a ball. Mostly they learned respect. Not a lot of people are teaching that these days. Anything like that. They are not teaching respect. Our main rule, whenever we would tell the boys, was obey us, mind us. Other than that, be a boy and have a good time. Just obey us. Never had any trouble with them

Evans: I had more things happen to me than... I was down in Altoona in a tent, and I had to go to the bathroom. I went to the tent...

Willis: That's what I was telling them about is them zippers.

Evans: Yea! The zippers. I go try one side, and it would zip right back up. [laughter] I just wanted to go to the bathroom. I said what's going on here? I finally figured out it was one in the back. It had a single zipper, so I just unzipped. I had more things pulled on me than I do not know what. Now my grandson came to the house the other day, and I went and put on my slippers and in my slippers is a round knife sharpener. So, I went over and I went to bed, and I put my head under my pillow and there was a another bug. There was another he put in there, and I mean these where just tricks they played on us. Poor Al had tricks played on him. I have had them on me, and Cory has had them on him. It's part of it.

Willis: Like I said, we went different places. We went all over the southeast, and we would teach guys things. One night... let me give you an idea about something one night. I told the guys, I said, next week I said bring a necktie. Why? We taught them how to tie a necktie. My wife taught me how to tie a necktie. I did not know how to tie one. Such as that, we would teach them all kinds of things. As a matter of fact, one night we were having a recruitment session, and Ray and myself were talking, and no Ray and the counsel guy where talking trying to get them to join. They were telling about the different places we had been, and it came my time, so I said, well, we do not always go to exotic places. We go camping, and we learn things. I said who knows how to cook? Of course every ten or eleven year old boy knows how to cook and make a fine meal. They can cook a hotdog. Might can cook hamburger. They can cook a sandwich. They can cook a bologna sandwich. I said, who knows how to cook an egg on a stick? How? I said, you come along, I will teach you because it can be done. [laughter] Right? It can be done.

Evans: I had a pair of stilts. You know what stilts are. You walk on them. There was a pair down there at the sky hut, and I told the boys I said I can walk on them. Oh no, you cannot. One says, I will give you a dollar to walk to the sky hut back to here. I said put the dollar right there. I got on those stilts, and away I went. When I got back, he looked at me...

Evans: Before long every one of them boys knew how to...

Evans: He said how can you do that? I said all you gotta do is get up and walk on them. We used to put cans on the bottom of them and walk through mud puddles so we would not get stuck. You know stuff like that. You can build a stilt to be that high off the ground or you want it that high off the ground. I have been up that high off the ground and walked. That's things that... somebody swiped my stilts. I do not know who took them, but anyway. Do you know?

Evans: No.

Evans: That's it in this, but it is amazing to me that I come in here, and they were saying years ago, forty years ago, there was not that many people here. Then to have a Boy Scout Troop, and I have had 50 boys myself down there all at once ??? and how can a little town like this, with a Scout troop that right now is one hundred and two years old, it's said that this Scout Troop in Adairsville is the oldest continuous Boy Scout Troop in the world. Now that's unheard of, because Scoutmasters come and go. And the one Chief Boyd stayed here sixty-five years, and then he retired. Then they had a couple come in before that, and then I came in, and I got forty-four years when I was still in there. I got fifty years this year. It's unheard of in a small village, but if you wanna call it that, but years ago it used to be a small village. You could come up and go through town, like they say, in half a second.

Rowe: Now you were just talking about chief Boyd. Did you actually know chief Boyd?

Willis: You knew chief Boyd did you not?

Evans: Yea.

Rowe: What can you tell me about him? What can you tell me about Chief Boyd?

Willis: What can you tell him about him?

Evans: What Chief Boyd?

Willis: Yea

Evans: Chief Boyd was in World War I, and he went to God knows how many universities, and he stayed in New York. How he found out about Boy Scouts was, he was in England, and the fog was so thick, he could not find his way, and a Boy Scout came in uniform,

and asked him what was the problem. So he told him, and that Boy Scout said, follow me, and took him to where his destination was. He came back and he went to New York, because they did not have Scouts here, he went to New York, and went to a university. I do not know, he went to several universities, but while he was in New York, he registered this Troop down here in nineteen fifteen, I think it was.

Willis: Before he went to war. It was before he went to war, was it not?

Evans: Yea, it was before he went to war, because then he went to war and got injured, and he came back and 1916, the Scoutmaster who was here left, or whoever it was, God knows. The Scout Troop has been here since 1916 until today, it has been active. He had it until I think it was 1965, I think it was. He had it for 65 years anyways, and he came in here, and he had different Scoutmasters, and I came in, and I got hooked with it. I stayed here, but to think that Adairsville would have a Scout Troop that would stay here for 112 years is unheard of, because they come and go.

Dickey: How active is the Scout Troop now? How many members?

Willis: I do not know. You will have to ask him.

Dickey: Are you still involved Cory?

Evans: Yes, Ma'am.

Dickey: Tell us about your involvement and how active the troop still is.

Evans: Well when Ray stepped down, he kind of dumped it on me. He wants to tell everybody it got dumped on him, but it got dumped on me, and so I think we got down to two. We had two in it. We got down to three boys, and like I said we did not have any leaders, so I was actually having to go to Shannon, our neighboring town, because we had to be two leaders deep. So we were going over there just to have a meeting, and then we picked up some boys here and there and picked up some dads here and there. I mean it's like a roller coaster. When I joined in 1988, I think, we had sixteen of them, I think, maybe I made seventeen. Within two years, we had fifty-something boys, and the next year you may have had sixty-something. Some were active some; were not. It just it goes back to Adairsville atmosphere. People from Florida and their kids were in Scouts in Florida, and they would come here, and you know it did not mesh well. You got country boys and then you come up with somebody that grew up in a big city, and everybody just likes different things. I have seen it, you know, we are up to eleven boys now expecting to get five more. We picked up a pack again because we did not have a Cub Scout pack for a while. We have a pack now feeding directly into us. I had to step down because my job. You know, I am working sixty, seventy, even eighty hours a week. It is hard to do something because Scoutmaster is really tough. It eats your time up, and it eats your wallet up. I mean both of these gentlemen right here, there is no telling how much money they have spent. Not on their kids but on other people's kids. You go somewhere, and it's like I forgot my deodorant. So you spend two dollars and

fifty cents, because you are not going to smell them all week. I forgot my toothbrush. I had a boy go camping for three nights. I forgot my sleeping bag. I mean, and then you got kids that really need scouting, maybe from a single parent, or maybe both parents are gone, and grandma is raising the kid. I'll pay for the kids to go to summer camp. I got two kids in it myself, and I paid for five kids to go to summer camp before. In my mind every kid needs to go. It is a good thing I mean the last time I went to summer camp with the kids, they had a foster boy. He had just joined the troop because he had just came to these people's house. I met him up there Sunday night, and you know he just stuck out. He is over there by himself. I said you alright? He said, yea, I just do not want to be here, and I do not know why they made me come here. Next day I saw him, and he is a little bit of a better mood. By Wednesday, he said I want to live up here. It grows on you. Kids in that position really need to do that stuff. It's just getting harder and harder to do it. It's becoming more of a business than a youth club. I mean it's bad when you gotta sell popcorn that you can go to Walmart and buy for five bucks for twenty dollars. To make payroll. So the boys are not getting a whole bunch of that, and that's my biggest problem with it, because people who are on the front line are not getting paid for it. I mean we are spending money hand over fist, but to make payroll... I am getting off topic here but...

Dickey: It's good

Evans: I mean but it's something to really see. You can, the kids, especially the kids that have never had the opportunity to do something like this. You take a kid fishing. Well, I did not think much about it, and so we run into some other boys, some Cub Scouts, and I think they were from the Atlanta area. Me and my two boys, we was up there fishing, and this boy came up, and he was watching us. I said do you want to fish? He said, I do not know how. So there I am the rest of the day untangling lines and tying up hooks but it's a great feeling to actually help the youth. There is no telling how many grown adults know that man personally because, like I said, when I was in it, late '80s early '90s, about everybody I knew was in the Troop. You see people, and they know I am still involved, and they ask me how is Ray doing? How's this, and how's that? It's a small atmosphere. It's getting harder now because we are getting a lot of subdivisions. Everything's just growing on me. When I was growing up you had S&H supermarket, and then you had MacIntyre's up there, and that was it. Now we got a Food Lion and more coming.

Willis: You asked a question a while ago... Can I butt in?

Coe: Yea!

Willis: You asked a question ago about Chief Boyd. I can remember when Chief Boyd would come to school before I ever joined. I was still in school. I went to school by the way. I can remember everybody respected Chief Boyd. A gentleman I used to work with, now he is passed away, he told me one time, he said, I want to tell you a story about Chief Boyd. I said, okay. He said, everybody respected him. Now this is back in the fifties, I guess. He lived in Pine Log, which is a little town I am talking about. He said, and we



have a meeting once a month and we would get to go up to Chief Boyd's place, and he had his own camp up there. The name of it was High Lonesome. What's a greater name than that for a Boy Scout's camp? He said, we get to go up there, and everybody loved Chief Boyd. Then times were different. You could write Chief Boyd a letter and say I have not smoked a cigarette in a month, and Chief Boyd would mail you fifty cents. Two quarters. He said one day a cousin of mine was behind a school, and he said, he had found us some cigarettes. He said, I put one in my mouth, and I struck the match, when I heard Chief Boyd say on my honor. He said, I blew the match out, and I never smoked a cigarette. Cause I had gotten my fifty cents. He said, but I never smoked a cigarette. He said, Chief Boyd was the reason I did not. He would do stuff like if a boy did not have a sleeping bag, he might sew whips together and give it to him. In never served under him, but I can remember it. He had to have been a good man. He had to have been a good man. Even after my understanding, according to what Ray said, even after he was in the hospital, he was getting in bad shape, if a boy did not have the money to go to summer camp or jamboree or something like that, he would write Chief Boyd a letter, and the boy would get to go. He wanted you to have a clean haircut and stay clean. Do right and live a good life. He helped you out.

Evans: He did not like boys... he said I... I got a letter from him, and he said I will send a boy to Philmont, but...

Willis: That's a Boy Scout troop range out of Cimarron, New Mexico. I do not know if you know this.

Evans: He said if he has got long hair, I am not sending him. If he had long hair that was it. You had to have your hair cut, you know. know I have got it all the way to the ground, and he says if you got long hair that's all she wrote. He would not do it. I got letters. I got a couple of letters at the house that I got from chief Boyd. I got to bring over here to the museum. I think they got some stuff over there on the Scouts. They did anyway.

Willis: I put a bunch of stuff over there.

Evans: I am going to bring them up there to the library to the museum and give them to them. I was going through my stuff the other day, and I do not what to throw away and what to keep because I got so much of it. Scout magazines from back in the '70's. I still got them. Now whether they are antique or not, I do not know. I got them. I sometimes think I should put that stuff in a box and give it to the library or the museum and let them look through it--that used to be a train station at one time--and give it to them. I am getting up there in age where I do not have that far to go. Do not say nothing.

Dickey: You guys have any final questions you want to ask?

Coe: You guys pretty much touched on what Mr. Evans did. I just wanted to have your take real quick on what it means to you to be part of this Troop? The legacy of it and just the impact it has on the community.

Evans: Well I mean it is like a family thing for me. I mean I had cousins. Older cousins. My mom was the youngest of seven, so I got first cousins that are older than my mom. I had a cousin who Eagled out at twelve. He Eagled out from under Chief Boyd, and then I came along and I Eagled out from under Ray. My son's last Scout last merit badge is the Eagle Scout project. He is going to Eagle out, I'm hoping at twelve. It's like a close knit family because we do community service every first Friday. We have a little dinner down there. You have people come in, I was in Troop 12 when I was younger. These people are seventy, eighty, ninety years old. I was in Troop 12. I mean it's... I actually I forgot where I was, I was in Pennsylvania, and I had one of my shirts on like this.  
[Points to Troop 12 t-shirt]

Evans: I got some of them myself.

Evans: A boy come up and he just saw the Troop 12, and he said, are you from Adairsville? And I said, yea. And it's not Adairsville. It's Dar-es-ville. The first A is silent. I am like, yea, why? He said, my dad was in the military. My mom had some family that lived in Adairsville, and he was stationed out in Atlanta I suppose. Out in Warner Robbins or somewhere in there. He said, I stayed two years there, and I joined Troop 12. He said, I was in Troop 12 for two years, and he just saw the 12 saw Adairsville. I mean Pennsylvania. It's just wild. We had a little dinner for Ray two years ago, and a guy from Mississippi came. He was an Eagle Scout in Troop 12, and he caught wind of it. Well, he was in town visiting family and stayed. What was he stayed an extra week or an extra two weeks?

Willis: Something like that.

Evans: Stayed an extra two weeks to go to this dinner because we invited anybody who had ever been associated with Troop 12. He stuck around. It's just wild the people that you meet out and about that's actually come through Adairsville and been a part of Troop 12. It's like an extended family.

Willis: It is.

Evans: I mean you all are in college, so you know frats and sororities. It is kind of like that. You are a member for life.

Willis: Just like me I started out as a Cubmaster.

Evans: I was your den chief

Willis: He was one of my den chiefs. You guys may not know what those terms are. Anyway, we had kids that started, and the parents came in and said, what do you want me to do? Now those kids have kids in them. Like he said their parents... and people will come up to me and say, are you still in scouts? Are you still involved in the scouts? I will say, no, I am not anymore. Do you remember when we did this? Whenever we did that.

Evans: We sure do!

Willis: Yea. And they will come up to me and say do you know who I am? I say no. You were over me in Cub Scouts. My son is now a Boy Scout now. This is just the way it goes. Once it gets in your blood, you're in there. I have met some of the finest people in the world through Boy Scouting and they do not have big names, but they have done so much for the boys through the years. A lot of them have been there a lot longer than you and I have. Like Ed Edmonson.

Evans: Yea.

Willis: He is in his nineties. Excellent wood carver. It just gets in your blood and you sort of try to help raise kids, I guess, so to speak.

Evans: Gets in your blood.

Willis: Yea, it does. My grandsons are not involved in scouting, but they will say they do not know how to build a fire. I am going to teach them how to build a fire in my front yard, because they do not know how to build one. Do you know how to do that? I said, I am going to teach you how to cook in a dutch oven. I said, we will cook a peach cobbler out in the front yard if you wanna do that. Whatever you wanna cook. Ok? I am going to teach them how to do that because that is what scouting does. Also, scouting teaches you how to get along with other people. Whenever I was at the National Jamboree in 2005, I am a licensed Baptist minister, there was any denomination that you could think of was camped around us. I had a good conversation with a Jewish rabbi, a Catholic priest, a Methodist minister. You get to know people from all over the world. I got a great friend, the first time I had seen him in Boy Scouts, he was dressed in Cub-Scout blue. He was a Cub Scout. Now he was way on up the ladder in South Georgia in the big city of Hiram and Valdosta. He is a great friend of mine, and he is a paid Scout. His two boys made Eagle Scout. But it gets in your blood. You make friends. Not just associates, you make friends. There is difference between a friend and somebody you just met up with. Gentleman came to my house last year, in 2010 we spent time together at the National Jamboree, and me and him, we both cut up and everything, and he is from South Carolina. I have not seen him till then he called me and said, what are you doing Friday? They came. We met out there at Cracker Barrel, had lunch, and they came and spent time with us. Him and his wife spent time with me and my wife, and we are going up there to visit them. You make friends. It just binds--you cannot explain. I cannot explain. There is just something about it that draws people together. Family's together.

Evans: That's like me. I went to Cracker Barrel. Before I get to the store in the restaurant, someone yells, hi, Ray! I look over there, and I do not know him because we he was...then they grow up, and I do not know them. Then they come and say, I did this, if they did something wrong. Well, I do not recognize, and I say now I know who you are. The majority of them came, and I cannot go nowhere without someone saying, hi, Ray. That and the post office. I was standing in line over there at the post office, and the man

was two behind me, and he said did you work for the post office? I said, yes sir, in Rome. He said, that's where I have seen you. To this day I wonder how he did it. I was in the post office the last four or five years. I trained window clerks for this area. I went in the post office down in Cartersville. The wife was there, and I went in with her. She does not talk. I did not do my stuff. I sat back and listened. Then I said something. That girl said, hi Mr. Ellis. [laughter] I said, how for the love of god do you know who I am? She said, you taught me to work the window. Just because, I asked her, I said, how did you recognize me? She said, the voice. Some people say I have a different voice than the regulars. I do not know whether I do or do not. It's just the same thing as Boy Scouts. If you teach them right, they know the rest of their life. For me it is a miracle for such a country place to start out with. When I came here all there was was cotton fields. Now you do not see a cotton field unless you drive west. It is just amazing how people stay and know you. I am eighty-seven years old, looking at eighty-eight around the corner. Now how I got there, I do not know, but that's alright with me. When I retired from the postal service, I had a heart operation. I got a cow valve in here, and I know how to moo. When the cow moos back, I can moo too. I mean but they give you eight years.

Willis: Can you give milk I wonder?

Evans: What?

Willis: Can you give milk?

Evans: I mean when I first came here my, in-laws had cattle, and they said you are a city slicker you cannot milk a cow. I said I have milked more cows than you have seen. It is nothing milking them. It's just that way here. People will still holler at you because you were in the Scouts with them. Just things like they say. When I first got here you could run down the middle of the road, down Main Street five minutes, and you would be gone. The only thing was a restaurant behind the police station. What was the name of that?

Willis: Little Rock

Evans: Little Rock Cafe. Now look at it you cannot move without a restaurant. They got some more coming in.

Coe: Alright well...

Evans: So, what can you do? Nothing.

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