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U.19 Long Civil Rights Movement: Breaking New Ground

Interview U-0894

Albert (Peter) Baker Datcher IV

28 May 2012

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ABSTRACT - ALBERT BAKER DATCHER, IV [PETER]

Interviewee: Albert Baker Datcher, IV [nicknamed Peter]
Interviewer: Shane Hand
Interview date: May 28, 2012
Location: Peter Datcher's living room; Harpersville, AL
Length: 03:54:55

The interview with Peter Datcher centered on the following themes: family, farming, racism, and education. Topics include: family background; family bible and historical documents; mother's family history; lessons learned from doing historical research; blacks and farming in rural Alabama until 1930; farmers, sharecroppers, and farm laborers; Peter's maternal aunts and uncles; father's side of the family; four generations of Datchers beginning in 1812; Red and Datcher and other black farmers in the Harpersville, Alabama, area; growing up as a black child on a farm; child labor on the farm; local black farmers become county agents; being raised old school; assisting the community; great grandparents, slavery, and the old plantations; Albert Baker, Dr. Singleton, acquiring the family land, and the original 1879 deed; two elderly white women knocking on the door in 1958; Ruth Datcher, family historian; three generations of Datcher women working as mid-wives; Red becomes the dominant farmer in area for three decades; education; first black schools housed in black churches; a second school constructed in 1940s; a third school constructed in the 1960s; black students bussed to an all black school twenty miles away; running the Datcher farm; Red moves his family onto the farm; Ruth Datcher the primary care giver for the family; a racist white doctor and the death of Ruth Datcher's first child; Peter remembers eating food not prepared on farm for first time; making moonshine; breeding cows and hogs; making syrup and wrecking the tractor; driving to Birmingham, Mr. Creswell, and Peter's first bank account; gender roles on the farm; grinding corn meal; training local children to work; making corn meal, buying flour, and using flour sacks to sew clothes and quilts; hog killing time in the fall and on the Fourth of July; farming, the Great Depression, and government assistance; Peter addresses Congress twice; mechanization of farming; Red's dance hall and moonshine; remembering discrimination; good whites; Peter's daughter; reviewing the first two generations of family history; making syrup; Curtis Brown teaches Peter how to drive; life on the farm as a child; castrating hogs; developing a love for farming; Peter goes to college; marriage; illness on the farm; growing marijuana in the 1970s; alcohol versus marijuana; travelling with dad; death in the family; embalming; hospitals; and, Peter's first visit to the doctor.

FIELD NOTES – ALBERT BAKER DATCHER, IV [PETER]

Interviewee: Albert Baker Datcher, IV [nicknamed Peter]
Interviewer: Shane Hand
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THE INTERVIEWEE. Albert Baker Datcher IV, nicknamed Peter, is a retired farmer and landowner in Harpersville, AL, who still resides on the land that his great grandfather, Albert Baker, purchased from his onetime slave owner following Emancipation. Peter Datcher has been a vocal participant in black farmer protest movements. In 1970 he testified before the United States Congress on behalf of black farmers. He has done much for preserving his family history as well as the larger story of black farmers in the South. The work of documenting the family history began with his mother who meticulously recorded and saved material such as deeds, contracts, letters, certificates, photographs and artifacts during her lifetime, which Peter Datcher has recently donated to the Alabama Department of Archives and History. The family's material is still being processed by the archivist and is not yet available to the public today, July 10, 2012.

THE INTERVIEWER. Shane Hand is a PhD student at the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, who studies the Southern United States during the twentieth century with a focus on race and culture. Current research interests concern the experience of black Americans in the Gulf South's moonshine industry from 1900 through the 1960s.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW. The interview was conducted in "Peter" Datcher's living room, and he warned that it would take several hours as he had a lot of information to share. Mr. Datcher has documented nearly six generations of family history dating back to his great grandparents who lived as slaves in antebellum Alabama well into their adult years. The interview lasted almost four hours and was recorded on two separate days, which were two weeks apart. Also, there were multiple times when "Peter" Datcher asked to stop the recording when he either shared sensitive information or a break was necessary. There were several noise disturbances during the interview, including: ringing phones; an occasional sound of a camera taking pictures; the shuffling of books and papers; and, a couple of vehicles in the third audio file. The noise disturbances, however, were not only rare but lasted for only brief moments. Justin Randolph sat in on this interview as did Peter Datcher's wife.

TAPE LOG – ALBERT BAKER DATCHER, IV [PETER]

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Interviewer: Shane Hand
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Location: Peter Datcher's living room; Harpersville, AL
Comments: Only text in quotation marks is verbatim; all other text is paraphrased, including the interviewer's questions.

TAPE INDEX

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
	[Digital Recording, Starts at Beginning] [Audio File #1 – 1:23:50]
0:01	Introduction: Shane Hand, along with Justin Randolph, interviewing Mr. Albert Baker Datcher, IV, nicknamed Peter Datcher, for the Breaking New Ground oral history project on Monday, May 28, 2012.
0:26	Family background. Peter Datcher was born December 1, 1950. Parents were Albert Baker Datcher, III and Ruth Datcher (Peter's dad was also referred to as Albert, Sr.; Red Datcher; and, 50 Cent Red Datcher). His father was born on March 23, 1908 and he passed on February 28, 1978. His mother was born on May 25, 1913 and passed on July 1, 2001.
3:00	Peter's dad Red Datcher was one of eleven to thirteen children born to Rachell Baker Datcher, and she was married to Frank Datcher. He lists the names of Red's brothers and sisters.
6:45	(cont'd) While listing names, spouses, and children of aunts and uncles, Peter picked up an old family bible from before 1930 to check the spelling of names. He also points out other items that had been stored in the bible years before.
9:05	Peter's wife, Netty Datcher, is introduced in the interview. She occasionally assisted Peter during the interview with information and fact checking. She also recorded her own oral history as well with Justin Randolph.
9:45	(cont'd) Session begins with his mother's side of the family. Peter's mother, Lillie Malerie Garrett, was married James Garrett. Lillie's aunt helped start a school in Talladega, Alabama. That side of the family was educators.
13:05	The history being shared by Mr. Datcher was originally saved by his mother over her life time. No one in the family knew she had saved all of this information. Peter has recently donated most of the material to the Alabama Department of Archives.
14:00	He shares a random document in his mother's old bible to illustrate the lesson he learned from the state archives that material stored in bibles before 1930 were very important. He talks about doing historical research, and offers advice, such as: using cemeteries as a means of finding people because families tend to be together.
16:45	Says that 90% of all blacks around Harpersville, Alabama, from Emancipation until 1930 were involved with farming.
18:10	Using the census to distinguish between farmers, sharecroppers, and farm laborers.

- 20:14 Maternal grandparents had nine children: four girls and five boys. He lists their names and the order of birth.
- 22:40 Both sides of Peter's family were farmers, but the Garrett side was not as successful as the Datcher family.
- 23:28 The conversation turns to the paternal side of Peter's family. There are four generations of Albert Bakers that goes back the original who was born a slave in 1812.
- 25:20 Red Datcher was not the only black farmer, but he was the largest black farmer in the county from 1935 – 1972. He also lists the names of other prominent black farming families who were friends of Red's family during the 1950s and 1960s and the families remain friends today.
- 32:00 He briefly discusses how few black farmer farming families were able to record family histories. He then moves on to other families of black farmers.
- 34:58 Growing up on a farm and being black led Peter to develop close relationships with other children in similar situations, which made friendships difficult for those in unique situations.
- 36:00 Farm children often had to do a lot of work while on the farm. One of the Threatts became a County Agent in south Alabama, and Peter's cousin also became a County Agent in west Alabama, Willie Earl Datcher.
- 38:18 Being raised on old school.
- 40:55 Peter's parents ran such a large farm, he often helped other families because he owned land.
- 41:24 Back to the beginning of the family history with Albert Baker, Peter's great grandfather. Peter remembers being shown two old plantation houses by his mother who always made sure he knew of them. His great grandfather was a slave on one of those plantations, and his great grandmother Lucy baker was a slave on the other plantation. He tells a story about Lucy Baker explaining to their children why Albert had scars on his back. It was from whippings when he had ran away to visit Lucy.
- 45:00 Taking pictures of Albert Baker's clock that has survived until today.
- 45:54 Story returns to the plantations where Albert and Lucy were slaves. Peter gives the names of these two plantations.
- 48:45 Peter shows us a copy of the original 1879 deed to the property that Albert Baker purchased from his slave owner, Dr. W. R., and his father who was also a doctor, were both slave owners who came to are no later than 1830. The original deed was donated to the Alabama Department of Archives and History.
- 52:40 Albert Baker's friendship with Dr. Singleton. Around 1958, two elderly white women arrived at farm and spoke with Peter's mother and they were looking for the descendants of Albert Baker. The mother pointed out her two of her boys in the yard. They needed to know if the land that Dr. Singleton had sold Albert Baker had remained in the family. These were the granddaughter of Dr. Singleton who had made them promise they would, before they had died, to go see if the land was still owned by the family.
- 55:35 Peter says his mother, Ruth Datcher, is responsible for saving this family record and impressing Peter with its importance.

- 56:50 Albert Baker's wife, Lucy Baker, became one of the few licensed midwives in Shelby County, Alabama, although she could not read or write. She taught this skill to her daughter and granddaughter who may be the first triple team, registered, from slavery, black, had pictures of them, and to become midwives. Peter says that Lucy becoming a midwife was likely due to their connection with the Singleton family.
- 1:00:05 Lucy and Albert Baker had six boys and three girls. He lists their names, whether they had children.
- 1:06:25 Albert Baker's youngest child, Albert, died at 27 years of age in 1898 (born in 1871) and did not have children. He had gone to see his fiancée, which began running in the 1880s, and tried to impress her by jumping from the train and died from his injuries.
- 1:08:32 While Peter conducted his research via census records, the Shelby County Archives and Museum, Ancestry.com, and the Birmingham Public Library he became aware that very little had been written on the rural experience of black Americans. Said the US had slaves and then after Emancipation blacks disappeared until the 1950s or 1960s asking for civil rights.
- 1:11:55 While Albert Baker was able to help many poor blacks because he was a landowner, there were many others who did not like him since he had to be ultra-conservative in order to keep the land. While a lot of black people did not write wills at the time, Albert Baker deeded his land to his six daughters.
- 1:14:38 Mayor Perkins, the first black mayor of Harpersville, AL and Bailey's Cemetery. Peter visited about three years ago and found the tombstone to the Albert Baker's son who died while jumping off the train. He then found the grave of Dr. W. R. Singleton there in the same graveyard. It also had the grave of Dr. Singleton's daughter. He discusses the significance of people being buried together. There are two significant graveyards: Bailey's and Baker's Grove. Bailey's was a cemetery for pre-1900 and Baker's Grove was for after 1900.
- 1:19:18 Two ladies from the Vincent Historical Society visit Peter Datcher for information about Bailey Cemetery. They then decided to clean up the cemetery and register it as a historic site. They learned it had between 1,000 and 1,200 graves. Seventy percent of the cemetery is black. The front portion, and enclosed by a fence, was only for its most recent owners named the Masters. The other portion was much older and included indians, slaves, and whites.

[Audio File #2 – 2:02:29]

- 0:01 [Continuing interview after changing batteries in the recorder]
- 0:20 (cont'd) Bailey cemetery and the Datcher family. He discusses the family line of Frank and Isaac Datcher whose parents' names were changed to Tubman when they were sold to the Tubman Plantation near Harpersville, Alabama. When this became known years later by the children, including Frank and Isaac, they legally changed their name from Tubman back to Datcher.
- 3:37 The interview progresses to the next generation of Datchers. Frank and Isaac, sons of Albert and Lucy Baker, were farmers. They kept part time work building roads. They were cotton farmers. Peter emphasizes the book *Slavery by Another Name* and the importance of the land and not having trouble with the whites. Having

- land was also important for women as a means of protection because it gave them a place of protection away from being a domestic in the homes of whites. He also mentions the movie “Help” as a reference.
- 6:04 It is ok to work for whites, but one needed a place of protection so they could not touch or hurt you; and, the land offered that kind of protection. Lighter skinned blacks, especially women, were told that their fathers were Indian (during time of slavery, especially before 1900 but until 1920), but not that no one had a mixed ancestry. Parents tended to tell their children this in order to protect them from this knowledge.
- 7:50 Peter applies this knowledge to his family and Albert Baker’s daughters having a safe place. He said they still worked occasionally for extra money, but she had a safe place in the evening. She also had more land than many of the folk she worked for.
- 9:18 Discussing money and inflation over time. Frank and Albert both worked on ferries for additional money.
- 12:05 Connecting Frank Datcher to the family. He is the only black person in the area with a Woodsman of the World tombstone, which is shaped like a tree cut-off; also, there were only two whites that Peter knows of, who also have one of these tombstones. Also, at Baker’s Grove there was another significant tombstone. There was a marked tombstone, from a forgotten organization, that had an emblem with a circle and an X and it had letters that read MTAV. Baker’s Grove cemetery had three of these tombstones and Bailey Cemetery had one there as well. Peter had to talk to one of his friend’s grandmother who told him it stood for, Mosaic Templars of America. Peter’s wife later learned that it was a rare marking.
- 16:00 The tombstones, their relevance, and the Mosaic Templars of America, which was a fraternal organization for black Americans in the late nineteenth century.
- 17:45 The interview progresses the third generation of Datcher family history. All of Albert Baker’s children had descendants, especially the girls. He lists their names, where they lived, and whether the family has remained in contact.
- 19:30 Albert “Red” Datcher, married to Ruth Datcher, became the dominant farmer in the Harpersville area. He added approximately two hundred acres to the family farm. He owned nearly three hundred acres.
- 20:30 Red Datcher was the only black farmer in the area to have his own syrup meal. He owned and operated a dance hall on the weekend, and ran a community store. Peter lists the several crops and animals raised by his dad Red Datcher. Red Datcher also kept meticulous records of his farm business. He also had three to four tenant farmers. He had farm laborers who worked the land as well. He sponsored community baseball games from the 1930s until the late 1950s or early 1960s. he would sell food at these games. Red Datcher only had a fifth grade education.
- 23:35 Peter reflects on traditional black history, slavery, money, capitalism, and how these are tied to education.
- 25:53 Baker’s Grove, Coosa Valley, Mt. Olive, and Duncan’s Chapel were all churches founded by ex-slaves, and they doubled as schools. They were the only schools

- that black children could attend. Red Datcher is shown to have attended Baker's Grove Church as a school and he made it to the fifth grade.
- 27:20 Rachel tried to get a higher education for her daughters, and Peter has a picture of them at Talladega College High School. The churches ceased to function as schools around the 1920s, black children from the Harpersville area began to attend Union Hill School. The next school, Vincent Elementary School, was built in the 1940s and Peter Datcher eventually attended this school himself.
- 29:08 During the middle of the 1960s, W. A. Jones School was built to avoid segregation, and it was named after the only black doctor from that region at that time. He had donated money for its construction.
- 29:45 The school attended by Peter Datcher is recorded in a book titled, *The History of Shelby County*; however, it was recorded as though it was a white school, with no record of the black children who attended the school or the black community who built it for their children.
- 31:28 Peter looks thought and discusses some of the documents he has regarding to his family's experience as being a mid-wife.
- 33:10 He finds the article and picture of the Vincent School that was recorded as though it were a white school. There were eight classrooms. There eight teachers with about thirty students in each class.
- 37:30 Peter reviews the educational history of education in and around Harpersville, Alabama, for black children. After the sixth grade, they were bused almost twenty miles to Columbiana, Alabama, even though there was a high school in Vincent, Alabama, (right next to Harpersville). They went to the new Shelby County Training School in Columbiana. They were only two other options, one in Montevallo and another in Talladega.
- :41:44 Peter Datcher never had to leave school early to help work on the farm, although he was certainly expected to work on the farm as a child. He continues to talk us through some of his family photographs of schools.
- 45:44 Running the Datcher farm. Red had almost five families who stayed and worked on the farm. Not counting cotton picking and chopping times, Red's record books reveal that approximately ten to twelve laborers were needed for working the farm most of the time. However, he also had sharecroppers in addition to the tenant farmers.
- 47:45 Tenant farmers for Red had their own housing on the farm. Red did not move into his mother's house on the farm until around 1949. Peter's mother was the primary caregiver for most of the family's ancestors.
- 49:58 Midwives were the ones to trim the umbilical cord, and one of the Datcher women, Ada, was known for giving children longer navels. Peter shares a story about a racist white doctor, who lacked compassion for a black newborn baby, used non-sterilized scissors to trim the umbilical cord and caused the baby's head to swell, which is now called spinal meningitis. She stayed in a clinic for years and eventually died around six years of age. The white doctor's wife was sympathetic and promised to make sure the mother's next baby would live. That baby is Peter Datcher.
- 52:30 He continues his story of his mother being the primary caregiver for the family. She also cooked for the farm. No one would eat outside, they would always come

- inside. She was famous for her pound cakes with sugar icing. Peter says she was the only person he knew that would Shake-n-Bake an opossum. She canned a lot of food as well.
- 55:30 Peter remembers some of his first experiences eating food that were not from their farm, like: chicken, bacon, and hamburgers. He said he preferred the hamburger from off of the farm.
- 56:20 Making moonshine. Red Datcher operated a dance hall, and when he sold moonshine he kept a record of it in his log book as either corn or pint. It sold for \$0.25 a half pint at the dance hall. He had to give up selling the whiskey though when he became a deacon of their family church in the 1940s. He kept records of everything, even when Peter went to college; and, all of this with only a fifth grade education.
- 1:01:01 Red also bred cows and hogs for local folks. If it had anything to do with making a dollar, Red Datcher would do it.
- 1:01:32 Growing up on the farm, working the syrup mill, and driving a tractor at six years of age. He had originally used a mule for making syrup but eventually began using a tractor. Peter shares a story about being six or seven and the tractor around in circles for three hours, getting dizzy, and having his first wreck and running into a tree.
- 1:02:30 Red Datcher also offered credit and lent money to those in his community and in his family. He dealt with the banks as well, and was a respected man in the county not only by blacks but whites as well. Peter once got a \$10,000 loan just by stating that he was Red Datcher's son.
- 1:06:50 At eight years of age, Peter drove to Birmingham with his father, and a white man named Mr. Creswell gave Peter ten dollars. Later, Red took Peter to the bank to open up his own savings account. Mr. Creswell was the grandson of the people who owned the Creswell Train Station, and Red Datcher had bought some of his land from him.
- 1:09:07 Gender roles and working on the farm. Red's wife Ada also helped Red with weighing the garden. She also kept her own garden, which was a large one acre garden. Very few of the Red's brothers were able to cook, though one of them, Elgin Datcher, was a good cook. He lived in Cincinnati and came down to the farm each year. Elgin was a concrete worker. Peter's mom loved it when Uncle Elgin was visiting because he could offer her a break.
- 1:13:05 Ada could cook most any dish and do so from the garden as opposed to using canned goods. He also talks about grinding corn meal, which they until when Peter was about fourteen years of age. Many families from the community and outside the community, from family and from non-family, sent their children to the Datcher farm, from the 1930s to the 1970s, to learn how to work. They would also earn a little bit of money as well. Maybe at least 100 children at some time or another have worked on the farm. Almost 50 have stayed overnight. Six generations of Datchers have lived in the old family house, which still stands today.
- 1:16:18 Peter shares a story about a family member sending a child to work who disobeyed. The kid had been put out of school and his dad wanted Red to

- straighten him out. The kids were instructed to shell a load of corn, and the new kid did not want to work. Red sent them home on a bus that very day.
- 1:22:00 Describing the process of making corn meal and carrying the corn to a local grist meal. Red did not make flour, but he bought it by the sack. Ada used the flour sacks to save records and make quilts and clothing.
- 1:24:56 Other items Red would have purchased from the store in addition to the flour, including: flour and octagon soap. They did, however, make lye soap.
- 1:28:00 Hog killing time was usually in the fall, and it was occasionally done before the fourth of July, when they had big family barbeques. Peter talks us through more of his family pictures at this point.
- 1:30:25 (cont'd) After slaughtering the hogs, they were hung in one of the two pecan trees by a chain. He describes the several items that were made from killing a hog. Very little was wasted. He talks through more pictures.
- 1:35:24 Peter discusses his father's farming operation during the Great Depression and the government. Red never received any aid from the government. Peter and his brother, however, did receive a housing loan from the government, but Peter the only black farmer from the area who was turned down by the black farmers' settlement with the Pigford case in 1999. He was turned down twice.
- 1:36:43 Addressing the US Congress in the 1970s. Peter was the only one on record, from his community, to speak before Congress' Agricultural Committee on the plight of black farmers. He was the only one from Shelby County and possibly from Alabama. He testified twice. The price of fuel doubling in price, but the price of farm goods did not increase, thus everything became more expensive. They were concerned with fair trade.
- 1:39:20 (cont'd) Peter describes his experience in Washington, D. C. Many white farmers were there speaking, but they had wanted some black farmers to speak out as well, so they had recruited Peter to speak. They gave him about one days notice to prepare his speech. He received four standing ovations from his speech. This was in 1978 and his close to dying at that point. Once back home, after his dad died, a sympathy card was sent to him and it was signed by farmers from about twenty different states (this card was donated to Alabama's state archives as well).
- 1:42:05 Mechanization of farming. Red bought first tractor in late 1940s and he was the first black farmer in the area to purchase a cotton picker or combine. Even after buying the cotton picker, Red still allowed children to pick some cotton to raise money for the family and school. Red specifically left rows of cotton to assist his community in this way.
- 1:43:57 Conversation returned to the dance hall and selling moonshine. He even sold some of his liquor to the local police. The dance hall was standing until 2005.
- 1:45:12 The Civil Rights Movement and the Datcher family. Surviving in the South as a black person up to the 1970s by maintaining the "right attitude." Peter shares how being on his own land, especially while standing on it, allowed Red Datcher to be more firm with whites and even telling inappropriate whites to leave. He shares a story about a white man calling Red Datcher boy.
- 1:49:25 Peter thinks over the discrimination in his youth, and not being able to go through a front door of a public building until he was around eighteen or nineteen years of

- age. He mentions the dentist having a different set of tools for black patients. He even remembers being asked why he used the front door during the 1970s.
- 1:52:00 Peter and other local black farmers took a trip to Mississippi during the 1980s and almost forgetting about some of the racist thinking. He remembers some of the Mississippi blacks in the back of the shop (where Peter and his friends were looking to buy a picker (cotton picker?)) looking down so as to not offend whites. He describes some of the racist comments and attitudes of these Mississippi whites.
- 1:55:05 Another experience of racism during the late 1980s in Lexington, Alabama. They were trying to sell a tractor, but it did not sell. While in a restaurant, they called a towing service to have the tractor towed a couple of miles. But, the business owner claimed that his wreckers would crank. A friendly white that witnessed the event sent them to a farmer who could help them.
- 1:59:00 Peter shares the lesson he learned from that experience, which was while black Americans have a hard experience, “but a lot of the stars in our life, a lot of the help that we got, come from the same side of the fence that gave us hell.” He says there are good people black and white, and sometimes black people needed help from good white people: just like the farmer in Lexington and Dr. Singleton.
- 2:00:09 Red Datcher’s ability to purchase his land, as well as the necessity of getting the land deeded with clear titles, was able to be done due to the kindness of white lawyers, although they still made them use the back door.
- 2:00:40 Peter has one daughter who is a laboratory technologist and works in Birmingham, Alabama, Altonet Datcher. She earned a degree from Auburn University.
- [Audio File #3 – 28:36]
- 0:01 Introduction: Shane Hand, along with Justin Randolph, is interviewing Peter Datcher for the Breaking New Ground oral history project on June 9, 2012. While this is the third audio file, this is the second day of interviewing Mr. Datcher.
- 0:40 Peter begins with a brief review of the first two generations of the Datcher family history.
- 1:35 Peter shares early memories of his time on the farm in the late 1950s. The syrup mill was about fifty yards from where Peter’s home sits today. Red would whip his children with whatever was handy.
- 3:48 Curtis Brown taught Peter how to drive on the farm, and Peter said Curtis was like a brother to him. Peter describes some of the tricks about driving a tractor that Curtis taught him.
- 4:55 (cont’d) The torture of getting a haircut from Red Datcher.
- 5:30 Remembering farm life from the start of the day and the morning’s chores, eating breakfast, and then being ready for school. He remembers castrating pigs with pocket knives. Peter began using razor blades in lieu of pocket knives. They hauled hay on the weekends.
- 7:40 Peter ended up loving farming and the skills he learned on the farm helped him when he went to school. He remembers making cuts on boards without using a rule or a level. He said his father built houses with never using a rule or a level. He had to be able to differentiate between nuts, bolts, and wrenches by sight.

- 10:10 Going to college, but Peter never quite finished. He had one more year left, but he had married and wanted to return to work.
- 10:54 Handling illnesses when Peter was growing up on the farm. They did go to hospitals.
- 11:54 In the 1970s marijuana came out. He said he never sold any (he gave some away), but he really just wanted to know if he could do it [you know, he is a farmer after all]. He said he did not like liquor. But he eventually gave it up when his daughter was born. For Peter, it was only for recreation and only for a short period of time.
- 16:19 (cont'd) Peter describes the difference between alcohol and marijuana. He says alcohol could give people a bad attitude and lead to violence but not with marijuana that tended to make people relax.
- 17:08 Travelling with his father. He revisits the story of the Creswell community in Birmingham and visiting with his dad when he was around eight years of age.
- 20:20 Peter speculates on why Mr. Creswell may have given him the money, which is based on idea that sometimes people do things for multiple reasons. He says that Mr. Creswell may have given him the money because Mr. Creswell: liked Red Datcher; was a kind man; and, there have always been good white people who have helped blacks.
- 22:45 Reflecting on his studies of black America [he stops mid-sentence before he comments on the irony of white Americans looking at how other nations have oppressed minority groups and called it genocide, while these same Americans have a long history of crime, which includes genocide. While he did not finish his statement, I believe that is what he was about to say (remember the story of his mother's first baby being killed by the doctor).
- 23:23 Dealing with death in the family. Peter never had to sit up with the dead, but he knew persons who did. Embalming was rare for them in the 1930s and 1940s. The first time one of Peter's family members was embalmed was in the late 1940s or 1950s. Bodies were either carried by a mule, or folks had to come to someone's home.
- 25:15 Hospitals, going to the doctor, and an example of pre-1970s racism. Peter's first visit to a doctor was the black doctor W. A. Jones. The local elementary school built in the 1960s was named after him. Dr. Jones either died or left the area in the 1960s. The first time he saw Dr. Jones was to get a circumcision at about five or six years of age because a mid-wife handled his birth.
- 27:02 (cont'd) The majority of the doctor visits the family made, however, were to the very racist white doctor who was responsible for the complications and eventual death of Red and Ruth's Datcher's first child. Since that experience, Peter's mom Ruth refused to see him again and went to Childersburg to see the doctor there; although, she still had to use the back door there. His aunt did a lot of "minor doctoring" was done by Peter's aunt who was a midwife.
[The audio ends abruptly when Peter took a break as he was cooking fish during the interview. It was actually cooked in an old cast-iron pot that was originally owned by his great grandmother, Lucy Baker, who was born a slave in 1831 and married to Albert Baker, born in 1812. Unfortunately, the interview was not continued at this time. I still hope to meet Mr. Datcher in the very near future to finish the final two generations of his extraordinary family history.]