

CREEKIE AND BROTHER MAYS

149#-58 interview 12.
with Bro
Harrison Mays
Middleboro, Ky.
by Elmer D. Dinsmore
(Child on Peter + Katie
seen too)

Bro. Mays -- You're thirty-five?

E -- No, thirty nine

Mays -- Thirty-nine -- and you're how old?

Peter -- Nine.

E -- He's nine.

Mays -- And how old are you?

Katie -- Twelve. I'm twelve.

Mays -- Well, see, I'm pretty near as old as all of you together. No,
I mean I've been putting up signs pretty near as long as you'uns ^{is} are all
old.

E --b How old are you?

Mays -- I'm seventy-two. Isn't that wonderful?

E -- That's tremendous.

Mays. I hope to live forty more years -- be a hundred and twenty, you know

E -- Great.

Mays -- Well, if I don't make it I'm going to put a terrible fight.

E -- Be sure and take some signs with you.

Mays -- Well -- Maybe.

E -- Put some up. That'd be the farthest place.

Mays -- Well, I got some made out there. This sign is to be erected
in New Jerusalem after the Judgement. And this one is to be erected
on the banks of Hell after the Judgement. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~. You seen
them, coming out, them crosses out there.

E -- Yes.

Mays -- When a man looks at that, feel himself at the judgement and got
his reward, and what's caused him to have it. But Sister Mays thought
maybe they might misunderstand it, and she kind of covered it up, you

E -- I was wondering. Some are kind of hard to read.

Mays -- Yeah

E -- How many miles have you travelled in all?

Mays -- Oh --

E -- ~~XXXX~~ Would you say about half-way around the world?

Mays -- Oh, this here bunch right here in ten years -- is about three times the distance around the earth -- or four -- from sixty to seventy.

I've been doing this for fifty-two year, and Lord have mercy, I've made enough mileage to go around the earth ten times I guess.

E -- How many signs have you put out in all?

Mays -- Oh, I don't know. I don't have the least idea. Plenty of em. I'll tell you.

E -- Do the churches help take care of them?

Mays -- No, No. You see, here's what I have to do. Now forgive how I say this. No reflections on churches. But -- say, for example, Virginia. You can put a sign within 350 feet of a church in Virginia anywhere, ~~just anywhere~~ just off the right-of-way. without having to put a license plate on it. You have to if you don't. But But, you undertake to put them around a church, now, -- you see, you walk up to the pastor and say, "Preacher, I want to put a sign around the church." And he'll say, "Well, I've got see the deacon board first. I'm not allowed to do that. ~~As~~ you see." Well he ain't. Well, the deacon board maybe will meet in two weeks. Well, I can't wait. So there you are, you're just. You just can't do that. So I just got to put a sign up when I can get it up. Oh, I've put a ~~XXXX~~bunch up here in Virginia. Just that very way. And I lost come of them before I even got back. I put one up at a church house. . . . Now I give you this for a sample. I put one up and when I come back, I was checking on it. Didn't ask nobody, just put it ^{pretty} close to the church. And when I come back, ^{by} ~~why~~ that sign was pulled up and

and hunted another place to put it. I hadn't gotten a little piece til
~~before~~ the state man pulled me over. He said, "Is that your sign?"
 I said, "Yes." He said "What are you doing with it?" I said, "Well,
 I put it up there areound that church house and they didn't want it,
 and I was hunting another place to put it. And the elderly man that
 owned the land ^{right there} was right behind him. He'd had him to stop me of course.
 And when the state man found out what it was all about, he said, "Now
 you and the old man here work it out." Well, he asked me all about it
 and I told him -- just how I had to do this -- that no state in the
 United States would give me ~~extensive~~ the right to put a sign up, and
 very few individuals and ⁱⁿ Virginia, I ^{didn't want to} ~~couldn't~~ put it close to a
 church house. ^{or else get longer with it} Well, when he found out about it, he sayd, "~~well~~ you just
 take that sign and put it back up there in that hole it came out of
 if that's the way it is. He says, "~~We're running a revival~~ "We's a
 running a revival, and we got in a argument. Some wanted to take it
 down and some wanted to leave it. And we got into such an argument
 that it broke the meeting up. Well, I said to myself-----
 but I didn't tell him that. So that's the way that was. So. So you
 just -- I'll tell you. I wouldn't take a million dollars -- I could tell
 you but I wouldn't tell you some of the teenth in it. I wouldn't take a
 million dollars and suffer all the heartaches that I've had to suffer in
 fifty-two years of carrying this work on I just wouldn't do it,
 cause it's just ook everything that's dear ~~xxxx~~ in life out of me
 Other than, well, I feel it's doing good. There's not a man living on
 this earththat's had any more heartaches than I've had in fifty-two
 years. But turn it right over, there's nobody's had any more happiness
 than I've had a doing it.

E -- Well, maybe that's better than most people who don't have much

Mays -- If you have everything easy, you just get to where you're not worth anything -- your business. For a sample, I was up here at Raleigh, Durham Airfield last week. I put a sign up there at that air field. Well, I got down to the west end approach. Well, then there's a farmhouse. I was too far anyway, but I was ^{aiming} ~~going to try~~ to put in there anyway, and I told her what I was going -- the lady -- And she said, "Now, that racket has been ~~around here before~~ in here before." I'd had a sign pretty close to there, ~~years ago, thinking they lengthened the field out, and I had to tear it down.~~

for years you know, up till they lengthened the field out, and and had to tear it down. Well, she just kept on, kept on "Racket, racket!" I said, "Now, listen. Now this is not a racket. Now, I'm a telling you know and I mean this. For the good of man. Well, she just went just ~~about~~ good as to say up right then. ~~She said~~ "You better get yourself away from here right now. Well, I did. And I went down to the -- out and down to the east approach and found the best place that ever I put a sign since I been putting signs around the airfields. I've got ---- of em, I guess twenty-five or thirty -- at these airfields. So she didn't know she's ablessing me by blessing me out.

E -- Why did she think it was a racket?

Mays -- Well, you know how people are. I don't know.

E -- Well, at some of the revivals I go to, I think some of them are rackets. I won't go to the ones where they advertise in the paper and take up a big collection and ~~the~~ One man down in Knoxville was having people raised from the dead. They always happened to be his relatives. He used the same casket, had them come in pretend to be dead, and get a lot of money. They can be a racket.

Mays -- Anything that's ~~right~~ in the middle of the road, I'm right in for it. Now listen to this little thing right up here. There're several preachers around here, well, a few, that's teaching things that disturbs the people, that ain't a doing good. Well, when it comes my privilege, I'll have em to come over here. Now come over here, brother, Come in here. Now listen, you sit down here. I'm goinna do the talking till I get through. You're doing things that's tearing the country up. Now you're my friend and you're my neighbor, and I want to help you, but you just have to stand at attention now till I get through. I just lay it out thata way. There's men a doing that that ain't a doing no good. They're tearing up folks. For a sample, now, there's one man in this city -- that he couldn't preach no time nor no where -- he couldn't say howdy doody without his saying that there's just one in the Godhead -- Jesus only. Well, what do we care, whether there's one or ten, just so there is. See? But he'll stress that and he hurts people's feelings and he tears them all up. Well, if he'd say something else and get folks saved, he'd be worth more. That's the verything I'm talking about, right there. I know him well. He's a good man, too. So I'm gonna get him in here one of these days and tell him you ought to say something else besides just that cause you're just causing confusion. You might not think it, but I know it. I might help thatta way, maybe some. It won't worst him I know that for sure.

E -- Are you Church of God?

Mays -- No, I've done all my work interdenominational. My wife belongs to the church. I'm doing it all interdenomination. There's three -- two hundred and fifty-nine chartered churches in the United States --

~~xxxx~~ besides the ones that don't have a charter. And I'm a friend of all of em. I'm just working through all of em. Any man who just looks like he wants to live right, I'm. And them that just ^{ain't lookin} ~~don't look~~ noway, I want to help them, too. So there you are.

E -- The papers I was showing you in the other room -- I had to write down what a revival means and what what preaching means and what faith healing and -- a lot of people never heard of these things and I was trying to write them down. And of course I go to any revival. And I had to write it so that it would mean -- ~~xxxx~~ so that it would be kind of right for -- you know, if it was Holiness Church of God or Baptist. And at the show down here in Knoxville, some of the people were saying, "Oh, our revivals are seven days and I'd written down ten. Others would say, Well, we don't have faith healing." Well, you have to kind of get what mostly happens and somebody's going to take exception to anyting you write down. They get awfully upset about it. Some of the people from, let me think now, it wasn't Holiness church, it was Holy Ghost People on Middlebrook Pike. Now this film we're showing with the exhibit is called Holy Ghost People. Now they're up in Sorabble Creek, West Virginia. And they have snakes. Well, the people on Middlebrook Pike were furious cause they said they didn't have snakes anymore. But West Virginia's different. All you can do is just just show what it's like different places and hit a little bit of every church. Mays -- When you're fooling with the public, now that's it. But the only thing just common people to do real good and just take the go between, that's all you can do and make the best of it. It'd surprise you what I run into out on the highway. Well, it's just got so you don't ask nobody to put a sign up. . . . The state won't let you. Individuals

won't let you for different reasons. They've been bothered to death for years and years and --

E -- But if you just go ahead and put on up, is it likely to stay there?

Mays -- Well, it's just more likely to stay there than if I asked. Here's what happened. I put thirty. Let me see, let me get this book out.

E -- Let me see. You're just back from a North Carolina trip.

Mays -- Yeah.

E -- Now what did they say about it?

Mays -- Oh, ~~xxxxxxx~~ I didn't ask them.

E -- Now how long are those like to stay there?

Mays -- Longer than they would if I'd asked. If I'd asked, I'd never gotten none up.

E -- But like if you go back next year.

Mays -- I'll miss some of them. Yes. Now right there's the trip I made to North Carolina. Well, these big ones is the ones that got on the Interstate. The others is the small ones. I didn't ask noplac to put them. Nobody, except this air sign that I put ⁱⁿ ~~in front of~~ Raleigh Durham airfield, because you don't have to get no 660 feet from the fence in North and South Carolina. But you do in Kentucky. When you get 660 feet away from a fence, you better be asking somebody when you put one of those big ones up. That's what I done. But narry a one of these did I ask.

E -- Those concrete ones, they weight what 2200 pounds?

Mays -- 1400 pounds, yes.

E -- Now, can you do that by yourself?

Mays -- Oh yeah, me and the driver can put them up. Now here's the ones

I put up a month ago in Chicago -- I mean up to Detroit and over to Cleveland and back down. Now thesese --

E -- Is that Akron and wheeling -- Freeport.

Mays -- Now here's where the big ones went. Now I had to ask. I put up 500 dollars worth of ~~energy right there~~ energy right there getting permission to put them five up. That at one and this one.

E -- And do the big ones do more good than the little ones?

Mays -- no, well, yes. The masses of traffic is on the interstate. And I've been laying off of them up until last year. And I've got to begin on that. Now here's what I do. For a sample next year I intend to go ^{make to} California. I'll get on this interstate here. And on them highways that crosses, I'll run up and put on, a small one.

E -- So the big ones will go on the Interstates, and the small ones --

Mays -- Oh yeah, the small ones -- cause if you've got to get 660 feet from the most -- well, this here right here, this state, all around through here, even Texas and Las Vegas and Arizona, you just have to get across the fence. But all those up in here, just about every one of em, you've got to get 660 feet from the fence on the Interstate.

E -- You have to do a lot of studying the laws of each state you do into.

Mays -- Well, you've got to know what you're doing. I've got there at the back, there practically all the states, rules and regulations on them.

E -- You've got a pile of things here.

Mays -- You've just simply got to know what you're doing, or you're just losing all your signs.

E -- Now those bottles that you put in -- do you have to get permission to put the bottles out?

Mays -- You mean the whiskey bottles? No. Now, I was over to Wright

Field, carolina Beach and Myrtle Beach this time. Just walk right on them big old things ~~right out there~~, where they fish out there, then take me a gang out and just throw them out, you know.

E -- And then they just start drifting around?

Mays -- Oh yeah.

E -- Do you -- In the bottles that you have there, did you ask them to call you?

Mays -- Yeah, it's a -- wherever they find it, set and write me a card so I can tell where it's went to, you see. For a sample, I put some in at Long Island, New York ^{you} some time back. Six months later, I got a letter from one of them in the English Channel in England. See? Well, that's bound to have got in the Gulf Stream. That's a long way just to leave a bottle, you know. ~~xxxxxx~~ Six months.

E -- How many languages is it written in?

Mays -- Fourteen. Hand me one of them, honey, one of them bottles there, and I'll show you. Well, that's the way she works right there.

E -- I see.

Mays -- Now I didn't ask nobody about these small ones, but I did ask permission on these. But on all these states that you don't have to, I just get up to the exit and I come down Farmer Brown's road there. That belongs to the county. In other words, where the Interstate is there's a little road ^{that just belongs} there that belongs to the county. Nobody cares about it. I get right up there and put it up without asking. Now this language right here at the top. Now that's the way they speell PREPARE TO MEET GOD IN TURKEY., Indonesia, ~~French~~, Greek, German, French, Italian. Spanish, Russian, African, English, Chinese, Syrian, Jewish and Japanese. ~~xxxPREPARExTOxMEETxGODx~~ Now that's all PREPARE TO MEET GOOD, just Jesus would as soon come and get ready as Greek, German, French, Italian

send a little message home that they'll never forget. Everywhere I eat now, I'll come to pay -- where it's collected, usually a lady, a girl or something. I'll say, "Now, listen, I have a quarter right there, ~~now~~ she knows I'm going to give her a quarter tip. "Now I want to tell you something that you never will forget. And she'll look right straight at you, you know. I'll say Gesu Vine Sobitto. She'll look at me wondering what kind of WOP that is. ^{hey!} ~~and~~ do you know what that means? "No, I have no idea." That means Jesus is soon coming. Get ready, and that's exactly what I'm telling you. Don't you forget that. Then give her a tip.

E -- What language is that?

Mays -- That's Italian. Gesu Viene Sobitto. Now, sometimes I use ~~thaxx~~ this Budi Gotov Vstretit Boga. That's Prepare to Meet God in The Russian language.

E -- How did you get it in all the languages?

Mays -- Well, I had the University of Tennessee to translate a lot of it. ~~And then I run into some -- well for a sample,~~ this Syrian. ~~Thinx~~ A syrian down here run a store down here, and I got him to translate. In other words, most of it, the University of Tennessee translated. I wanted it exactly right, because if you don't expecially in this -- one little bitty old ^{quirly} ~~curly~~ gig ~~can~~ change the meaning, they tell me, of that -- I call it chicken scratching, I do. That's what it looks like to me.

E -- Yeah, and it would make a big difference. It would be like like making a mistake in our words.

Mays -- That's what they tell me. Just one little twist around there make a difference. -- change the meaning or not make it mean anything.

E -- When did you start doing this?

Mays -- Fifty-two year ago -- Oh, ^{ain't} throwing these bottles in, O've been at it about fifteen, about fifteen years.

E -- But the roadsigns. How did you start. Was somebody else doing it before you were? Or were you the first one to think of it?

Mays -- That's the first I knowed of it. I used to just get me a tablet and write it on a -- You know we didn't have much money back then, and there wasn't none to get, much -- fifty-two years ago. I'd just get me a tablet and write out whatever I wanted to and tack it on a telephone pole and kept coming on up ~~xxxx~~ till I've got it to hurtin now ??????? All these out of alumium.

~~Fourteen hundred pounds~~ E -- fourteen hundred pounds. And that other one -- How many feet long? That big one -- twenty-four feet long?

Mays -- Forty-eight.

E -- Forty eight.

Mays -- These I put around these airfields is two hundred foot. Eight foot by eight foot letters. And I'm a making them a little smaller than that now.

E -- You make them all yourself?

Mays -- Oh, I make them all. Yeah.

E -- You cast the concrete and.

Mays -- ~~Yxx~~ Well, yeah I make all these signs. I'll show em to you back there. You ain't rushed for time, are you?

E -- No, I'm fine. I'm just -- Curious as to ~~xxxx~~ how you made it and what gave you the idea in the first place.

Mays -- Well, it's just like a man preaching. He gets converted, and

-- maybe you don't feel like you ought to say it -- testifies. First thing you know, It's puts them over the first time. Stage frights them, you know. First thing you know, he's talking a little bit. Next

thing you know you couldn't stop him with a maul. You couldn't stop brother Roger Powell with nothin. Now he'll preach or bust . . . and that's the way it is. The only way you would stop me from putting up signs is to cut my throat, that's all.

E -- You mean people get mad about this.

Mays -- Yeah, Lord have mercy. Now let me tell you this for a sample. This sign right there. It's on Interstate -- it's either this one or this one. in Ohio. That's the one right there. Right there.

E -- Between Canton and Cambridge?

Mays -- And Akron. Right there. You know what I had to do? I had to make a man think that I was positively having a heart attack to ~~xxxx~~ get him to let that sign stay there. Now you wouldn't think that.

Now what happened -- I went up and got permission to put it. And paid him. It was a pretty good piece down there to where we had to take that sign down. And he said, "now you'uns go on the first side of that grass over there, and drive your truck down there so you won't have to carry that sign so far. Well, we got down there. And it started raining. And when we unloaded that sign, I told my buddy. I said, now, buddy, you'd better take this truck ~~xxxxxxx~~ back up ther to the road. We'll have a pull job if we don't watch. And right where he parked that truck up there, the man that owned the place, his chain was a laying there. Well, my buddy thought it was my chain -- it had fell out of the truck -- and he brought it back down there and put it in the box. Well, I didn't know the difference. Well, we got that sign up in the rain. It's was araining, and I had rain shoes on and a gum coat It was burning up. And I can't hardly walk on that ankle nohow. -- I've got arthritis. And we got all our tools back over there ready to load them back up. He come down there just as mad as he could be. He reached

right down there in that teel box and drewed that chain ~~xxxx~~ up and said, "What'd you'uns think you're doing?" Well, I said, "Man, what are you talking about? " "Well, this is my chain and it was right in your box ~~xxxx~~ You're going to carry it away from here." I said, now brother, ~~xxxx~~ I don't know nothin about that chain." My buddy spoke up and said, "I thought it was Harrison's chain that fell out of that truck." "No, you didn't. You's gonna take that chain." Now, the longer he talked, the madder he got. I never have seen a madder man except one in my life. And he said, "You'uns go down there and take that sign down. Get it away from here right now before you steal everything I've got. Looking right at me. I said, Brother, ain't no way in the world of my apologizing, or paying you? I've not got the strength in me to take that sign down now, til I rest a while." He said, "You just wait till you rest a while, and go get it. Get it out of here. I wouldn't have it on my place at all, dirty fellows like you'uns." Well, I said to myself, "I'll just make him think that I'm having a heart attack. I didn't feel good nohow. And that ground waz just as wet as it could be. I just said, "Bud, you'll have to wait till I get to feeling better. I couldn't take it down to save my neck. I just laid right down on that ground, wet ground, turned over on my tummy, and I said, "You'll have to wait a while. I heered him tell my buddy, "Well, I'd better not say anymore to him. I'm liable to cause him to have a heart attack. That acts like what he's having now." Well, I knowed right then it was working. And I just left it that way. ~~xxxxxx~~ And that's the only way in the world I could appease his anger, I'll tell you . . .

E -- Did he care that much about the chain? Did the chain matter that much to him?

Mays -- No, it was just a matter of, he thought it was stolen -- that we's stealin it. My buddy was honest. I didn't know nothin about it.

He thought we were stealing it. No -- well it was a pretty good chain, just like it. I had one. But I went limping over there at the truck. I got -- when we got through, I told my buddy to carry the tools over there and I'd be there in a little bit, and I got that little post and went walking over like I couldn't hardly stand up nohow. I wasn't feeling good, but I was a putting it on good. I was afraid he'd say, "I believe you're feeling better. Just go get it. That's the way ^{SHE} ~~it~~ works. Man up in New York, he had a forty-five hanging right out here. I ^{was} ~~was~~ up on the truck getting the sign off and my buddy ~~was~~ digging the hole, and he was talking to my buddy over there. and he said, "Over there's the man that's doing it. And I went over there. And he said, "What do you think you'uns a doing?" I said well, I thought we'd put a sign up here." "Don't you ~~thinkxxx~~ know you'll get shot? " Well, I could do it. I was looking right at the maddest man I'd ever seed. This one's the second one. And I said I'll just not put it up here. well, ~~I just won't put it up.~~ "No sir, you're not going to put it up ~~here~~ He said, "Get that sign out of here. Fill that hole back up and get awy from here. Well, I hadn't got the sign off the truck yet. And I could have said, "Listen, buddy, you don't own the right of way. That's on the right of way. But I would have got shot sure enough, man that mad. The only way you can do, if a man rolls up on you -- he's got only five minutes to catch me. Cause I'm a putting that sign together right there at the truck. My buddy's a digging the hole up there. State man come along, and he thinks Farmer Brown's putting something up up there. Farmer Brown come along, he'll think the state's a putting something up there. When I get that hole dug and that sign together, then I bring it right up there and stick it down in that hole, and he's got five minutes to ~~xxxx~~ catch me. I'm gone. If he catches me, I've got to do something about it. Pay him, apologize, or take it down.

May -- ~~Yex~~ Oh Yeah. I'll say I'd lose -- I'm making ten per cent to
 I'll not
 lose. ~~xixxx~~it lose over ten percent in a year. If I get a sign on a
 highway, and it stays a week, I've got value received out of it.

Thousand upon thousand -- it'd surprise you how many people read it.
 E -- Well if they leave it, is it because they decide they like it or
 it's too much trouble, or they don't notice it, or --

Mays -- Well, a -- Well, I got a letter from Columbus right there. I got
 a letter from this section right in there, the other day and I answered
 it yesterday

E -- These signs are really interesting. Sacred signs in fifty states
 82 nations, seven seas and all the big rivers and lakes in America.

Mays -- They're on the right-of-way. Well, I knowed that. You see,
 there was five of them. And he told me right where they's at. Well,
 I know they're on the right of way because I can't do nothing else.
 I get them just as near the right of way as I can get. So that's the
 size of it, right there. ~~xixxxx~~ Now that man -- that's in this section
 right around here, right around this columbus, he's just predudiced
 against something sacred. That's it. Lot of state men moves them back
 and so on.

E -- Well, it's kind of nice letter. It's. not being mean about. He's
 just say9ng it's going to get taken down.

Mays -- No, he just a doing his duty.

E -- He's not threatening to fine you or anything like that.

Mays -- He's doing his duty. I'm a doing mine. And what we got to do
 is to work it out. No, he's a nice man.

E -- Will the highway department usually leave them up if no one complains

Mays -- More less, yes, if they can. But . . . If someboey objects.

They've got to take care of the public --
 Now they've got to take care of their job. Now that's the size of it.

If the pressure's put on this man, he has to move ~~them~~. *it or leave it*

And I told him what to do with it. Leave them stay there till -- as long as possible , or till I can pick them up. Well, I'm not picking them up -- I'm being back in five years, but he don't know that. I didn't say that. I said, "Leave them as long as you can or till I can pick them up. And if you have to take them down, before I can pick them up, why you have Farmer Brown to set it back, just a foot. They're all within a foot of the Right-of-way. Set it back, just on Farmer Brown's place and send me a bill for five dollars for just setting it back. Or get some man that's retired and wants to make him twenty-five dollars, for setting them five back, why, just set them back and send me a bill. and I'll send him twenty-five dollars, or if you have to take them up, why take them down to the state garage where you're gonna put them for me to pick up in thirty days -- after thirty days -- and set them up there where people can read them. They'll do that. They'll help you out. I say, "Help me any way you can because it cost me too much money. Them cost me thirty-three dollars apiece. A thousand dollars is what ^{THAT} truckload of signs cost me. Two thousand dollars for these two truckloads and now this next one acoming up, I'll show you. in another thousand dollars -- three thousand dollars this year.

E -- Whare does it come from?

Mays -- I make it. I'm a sign painter, you know.

E -- But the materials and all that. That must cost a lot.

Mays -- Well, it's all alumium. Sure does. And they sure don't give you that stuff, I'm a tellin you. I do all this -- Giles industries up here that makes all these trailers -- I do all their truck painting and take aluminum instead. And they give me a reduction -- in other words twenty-five cents a square foot ~~xxxx~~ 's what that alumium cost,

but they let me have it at fifteen cents. ^{Well,} When I paint a truck for them, or one of them tractors, they'd pay thirty-five or forty dollars for each one of them. I do the job for fifteen. I can do it in a hour and ~~fifteen~~ ten minutes.. That's pretty good money -- an hour and fifteen minutes, fifteen dollars. A lot of days a make forty and fifty dollars. Some days I have -- a couple of days -- made a hundred dollars. But now I don't do that all the time. The Lord's running this machine, and when I need money, I can make it just as easy. I paint all the coca-cola signs, the RC Cola signs and Giles up here and a lot of the folks around here. It takes a lot of money to carry ~~me~~ on. I don't need ~~me~~ any money. See, I'm retired on Social Security and pension, miners pension. Me and my wife can live on that. All I make I put it into the work of the Lord, all of it.

E -- Oh, that's right, Rev. Powell said you were in the mines.

Mays -- Yeah, forty-three years I worked in the mines.

E -- Are the mines still open around here?

Mays -- No, they closed down in fifty-five -- where I used to work. See, I draw a miner's pension. That's a hundred and fifty dollars a month. And Social Security, Me and Sister Mays draws a little over three hundred dollars a month. We don't owe nobody or nothing. ~~We have~~ We got our own place to live ^{here}. Now we can live on that. That gives me and her a chance just to work for the Lord. She goes to church all the time. And I go on the highways all the time.

E -- Your house is almost a church. You built the whole thing yourself

Mays -- Oh yeah, made the blocks even. -- everything.

E -- I wish I could see it from here -- the shape of a cross is an unusual shape for a house.

Mays -- Oh, they ain't nary another'n like it in the world, *I don't reckon*

E -- I've seen churches in shapes of crosses, but never a house.

Mays -- Yeah. Now, I don't guess there's another house, anywhere.

~~In the world~~

E -- Did you grow up ~~in~~ here in Middlesboro?

Mays -- I lived right ~~in~~ up here in this hollow here ever since I was about six years old. I was born over here in Claiborn county. (Tenn.) but my dan moved to the mines up here in Mingo Hollow when I was about six years old.

E -- Mingo ?

Mays -- Yeah. I've been right here all my life. Right here in this area. Worked forty-three years ~~up~~ right up there at one mine -- Spark Ridge. About seven miles up there. All my working life. But they shut down in fifty-five. Then I had to go to -- Well, I've been painting religious signs for years. ^{and years.} And then I just had to go to painting signs for a living cause when you get -- oh, ~~as~~ old as I was then, you can't hardly get a job nowhere. ^{anywhere} Especially in the mines because you're out. And I had -- they's a period right there where I had to wait between the time the mines shut down and I I got elegivle for the pension, that I tell you I had it hard.now, that's all there is to it, trying to make a living and keep this work going, too.

E -- You're a good sign painter.

Mays -- Well, this right here behind you here. Now that's a contrast between good and evil. See this right under here, you see these Bibles, song books, testaments, things you take the sacrement in, the bread and -- there's my little shurch house up here and everyinything on this shelf up here, a little bit of Heaven. ~~and~~ And on the next shelf, that's a slot machine you're looking at right there. And this is actual whiskey you're looking at right here. Whiskey, wine, beer, canned heat, legal whiskey and moonshine and everything. pistols, all kinds of gambling devices, of every description.

E -- ^{snuff} Cigars, cigarettes.

Mays -- Everything I can think of that's evil, I--

E -- Cigars and cigarettes.

Mays -- Oh, yeah, well, that's kind of less -- lightly -- Oh, that's not bac. . . . I just got thzt in there kindly -- it ain't good anyway. Pistols. That's my aunt's pistol there, it's about seventy-five years old. That's an antique sure enough.

E -- That slot machine's an antique, too.

Mays -- Yeah, I've had it twenty-five years. Man give it to me down here twenty-five years ago. Down here at the drug store. Now everything in the world that's good, that I can get a hold of, goes up there. Everything that I can get a hold of that evil goes ~~down there~~ right thee.

E -- That one in the middle's home brew.

Mays -- Yeah. It froze and busted down there. That canned heat, I believe one of them bottles froze and busted. Now in this thing right here -- I've got them closed in there because the children's in here, and in that box over yonder is everything in this world pertaining to nudistry. is in there. Now it would surprise you how much Satan -- how big Satan's got in them things.

E -- Oh, they're books. I see. It's kind of hard to see.

Mays -- I've got them in that box there. And then this thing right here.

E -- Oh those are magazines.

Mays -- Books and magazines. See for a sample right here's some of the. There's some of the nuddist colonies -- where they're all at and in there all them packages that tell you where they're at. How they're progressing and where it's at. I know where they're all at all over the earth.

E -- Did you ever put a sign up at a nuddist colony?

Mays -- Oh, yeah, I've put em. Anywhere you put em in the United States, you got pretty close to one of em. Fort Lauderdale, down here

in Florida has got one the whole business end of the city belongs to the thing. About three hundred and some few members. I keep them close up in there because I don't want the children to see those. Preachers come in here and so on. I'll just show em what's going on, to give em a , you know, a desire to preach more stronger and, because if we don't go to doing better, we -- the Lord's going to take the hid^off all of us, I'm telling you. Now this little clause right here on this side, Now you might say that that would be bad for that to happen. But hit'd be the best thing could ever happen if we'd have a kind of sacred persecution to frum out the dross that in us, see? Folks is aiming to please their preacher if you take their head off, but folks that's preachin for a livelihood will tell you anything to get -- you know -- to get your sympathy. See they won't tell you the truth to get your sympathy. So there you are. After all, the essence of that is what I'm a trying to get over. And this little thing right here, that should be told youngsters at all times. Because it brings about trouble if you get mated wrong. Just as sure as you marry the wrong person, you've got troubles from then on. If you don't get the one that you should get. Now that over yonder. Still, you don't know what that PAE PAE means. The day after the Lord calls me away from here, a protestant preacher, a Jewish Rabbi, and a Catholic priest will tell you. That's all.

E -- Do they know, or does each one know part of it?

Mays -- No..Two of my granddaughters is the only ones that know in the world. I made them swear to me they wouldn't tell it till the day after the Lord called me away from here. And then they'll tell you.

E -- Here's your bicycle with that sign.

Mays -- Yeah.

E -- do you ever ride it now?

Mays -- Yeah, oh yeah. Parade days and things. Yeah, it's my parade bicycle. I get on it and ride in these parades.

E -- They're having a fair here. Are they having a parade with it?

Mays -- No. No, they hardly ever have it anymore. They have Christmas parades and laurel festival parades and so on and Fourth of July parades.

I keep a lot of these things, little odds and ends here. That's Father dāvine. Claimed himself to be God, you know. See, there's the skulls that I believe the Japanese overran the Chinese at a certain section and killed thousands on top of thousands and they put them skulls in a Memorial place as a memory for something or other. Shame, or something or other.

Anyway, I got everything in the book in there. that's odds and ends

I keep everything kindly. Here's a lot of odds and ends of pollution.

I think Florida's got about ten years to live if they don't do something about the pollution of the air. Well, is that about all?

E -- Really interesting room. They're just signs all over the place.

Mays -- Here's one that's pretty interesting. "Our religion is Catholic, protestant and so on and so on.

E -- My religion is Catholic, Protestant, Jew.

My politics is Communist, Democrat and Republican.

All three races are one. white, yellow and black.

Mays -- Now a lot of people would go up about that. But now I'll tell you. Now forgive how I say this. There's no way in this world of stopping race prejudice other than the race be of one blood. Now while that was a taking place, be a lot of unrest. But when it did happen, then I couldn't say, "Now you're a Negro, or you're of the yellow race. They'd be all one blood, see what I mean. Now -- while that's taking place, it's just cause a lot of trouble. But now, I like a colored man just as good as I do a white man as far as -- you know what I mean

He's one of us, and he's got as much right to this earth as I have. I'm no better'n he is. And the yellow race -- there's only three. White, colored and the yellow. Course they make it about five sometimes. But that's really it. Black, wite and the yellow. So, that may never happen, but if it ever does, it'd take away race predudice. It's always been here, and it always will be here.

E -- I think the churches are doing more than they get Credit for. In the revivals I go to the preachers are trying hard to mix them. Of course a lot of the revivzls I've been at, they're little tiny communities back in the mountains and it's whatever people happen to be around there. But towards the big cities they're more likely to be mixed. I think preachers are good about that. Out in California, they don't think so, but -- they think the churches are all prejudiced. But I haven't seen that.

Mays -- I ain't got round to telling you about these signs that I got ready for the planets yet.

E -- How are you going to get them there?

Mays -- I'm got em in all fifty states and 82 nations outside the united states, and these whiskey bottles in all the oceans and rivers ~~and~~ on earth. Now I'm getting -- I've got some made out there -- them concrete ones -- for the planets. for a sample, Jupiter and Mars & Venus. What I ain't got out there I'm gang to make' for the rest of the eight to recognize out of them concrete ones. . . . Transportation -- I'd say within twenty years, they'll be taking bulldozers up there, ~~everything~~ and everything else and jet loads -- I don't know what kind of a jet -- of people. Maybe it would be possible that they'd have to have gas masks or something. I don't know how. And they may not. The planet Jupiter -- Maybe when we enter the planet Jupiter, we may start living

forever, because they may have not transgressed the laws of God like Adam did. We're going to leave here, because we've transgressed. But they may not. I don't know that. I believe as much as I'm a settin here

I don't know that. But I believe as much as I'm a settin here that and millions of what we call stars is inhabited. Cause there's a hundred million visible from this earth in this galaxy, much less the rest of them -- that's got life on them. We don't know that. Now the Moon -- it's highly possible that the moon has done exactly what this earth's going to do if we don't do something about this polution. It's going to be a question of well, I don't know how many years, but in the future the oxigen gets why there'll nothing -- grass nor nothin else'll grow and this will be a baren place. No life, no nothin. Automatically. And that's what happened on the Moon in my opinion. Now in Wyoming -- you might have notice noticed that -- and Arizona -- You notice them ponderosa pines just dead by the millions. ~~and~~ you notice that?

E -- No, I haven

Mays -- Anyway when I was out there I noticed and I wondered what caused it. I got a magazine the other day and I was reading about it and the air polution from California blowing this way had killed them. By the millions. I mean millions of them. Just wait till you see a forest of that Ponderosa pine. It'd be some sections worse than others-- maybe they'd be half of them dead -- just as dead as they could be. A fallin over. And that could get worse. And the worser ir gets well, you know what they all are saying about polution. For a sample, Florida here's got ten years if they don't do something about it. It's a ghost town down there. And California'll be the same way because there's so much -- a -- to polute the air. automobile fumes and I think about five percent of the polution is caused by aviation.

I think. I believe that's what it was. I read an account some little bit back about it. I believe it's five percent. Well, it ain't going to get no better. Well, I don't know why they can be after -- say for a sample the air is polluted five percent. I wonder if there's any way to ^{do away with that five percent} ~~get rid of~~ that five percent -- if it gets polluted. I don't know about that.

E -- The plants freshen the air. They breath out oxygen. And I know there were bumper strips in California before I left saying, "Have you thanked a green plant today? because the [#]pollution you breathe out the plant breathes in and breathes out fresh air. So here in Kentucky and Tennessee, . . .

Mays -- so these planets, I want to get some signs on them. I've got one hundred out there made of them concrete. What I ain't got of that hundred I'm gonna make em. Four of them goes around each state capitol. That's two hundred signs. They're supposed to be put around each state capitaol. ~~When the 1990's comes~~ Now when nineteen and nineties comes, why three of them's supposed to be took up and took to the designated place they're made for China, Russia or whatever it is and leave one in the States. In 1990's. I put it ^{off that far} ~~there~~ so I wouldn't have to fool with it. It's up to me if I can to get four around each state capital. And then I'll take care of the -- Well, I've got four of them, one for the north pole, and the South pole and seven of them for the seven seas to be erected in the bottom of the sea. You might say why? First thin you know we'll be traveling at the bottom of the sea just as easy as we're traveling at the top of it. ^{Might be} ~~Much~~ safer, probably, I've got one out there for Russia, already made. I lack about I guess about seventy-five of having em all done. I've got about a hundred and twenty-five I guess up and standing out there. But I'm not in no hurry. Somebody'll put them up

Four is all you can take on a truck and I can take a hundred of these small ones ~~and~~ as easy as I can take four of them and they answer the same putpose. And then when I get ones on a man's place. Well, maybe he'll want to build a building after while right where that's at. Well, he ain't got nothing to move that thing -- fourteen hundred pounds. He'll just take a sledge hammer to it, that's all. But these light ones, he can set it back. Or I can pick it up. But that's the end of them, if he has to move them.

Now, I better tell you about that little sign I got down at Cape Kennedy.

Before the first flight to the Moon, I fixed one three feet tall. weighs six pounds, out of sent it down there to the manager of the Cape -- to set it up on the Moon. Well, he wrote me back and ^{everything} ~~said the thing~~ is dangerous and everything and they hadn't ^{you know} got there yet. And they were afraid to ~~go with it~~ fool with it. I wrote him back and told him, I said, Well, set it up down there someplace where everybody can see it.