

About 1939, an instructor from A&M College took the initiative in getting a school bus for the Black children. Walter said that Mr. Mayberry was an aggressive agriculture instructor at the college. Walter said Mayberry used his own money to buy the bus. The bus probably cost about \$40. It was in the junkyard. It didn't run. They [people at the junkyard] were glad to get rid of it, and they gave him a rebuilt engine. Walter said they [people at the junk yard] wouldn't have sold the bus to Mayberry if they had known what he was going to do with it, but they assumed he was going to use it to haul fieldworkers to the larger plantations, which was a common practice of the time. Walter said Mayberry had "jumped across."

The bus had wooden sides and roll-down canvas "windows." Walter helped to get the old bus running. They succeeded, and the Black youth from Pond Beat had a ride to A&M. Walter said:

We got it running and took the kids from Pond Beat to school. Then the county said we couldn't transport children on the bus because we had no insurance. The county agent couldn't get insurance, so he decided to make certificates. Every week a kid would pay \$1.25 to ride the bus and would get one of those certificates that said that the kid had part ownership in the bus. So they couldn't say you paid to ride.

Once we picked up three kids from Whitesburg Drive, and a man named Hays met the bus and said if we picked up the children from that farm, they would seize the bus. Walter Fleming said, "You pick up any children off my place, I'll burn the bus." He died last year [2000]. His son Aaron is almost 80 now [stated in 2001].

Walter explained that the plantation owners did not want the Black children picked up to go to school, because they were the work force for the crops. The plantation owners, who had both sharecroppers and tenant farmers, were determined to control the people on their land. The Fleming plantation had both tenant farmers and day laborers living there.

Walter said the bus driver lived just below the Center Grove Church, and he said that was the area shown as Green Grove on the old map the researcher had. It seemed that he did not know it as Green Grove. Once they had the bus, Walter was able to go to school that winter, as he had a way home and back. When the researcher talked with Alva Jacobs, he said he had ridden the bus, and he remembered Walter Joiner driving it sometimes, because he was one of the older kids, maybe 19 years old at the time.

Gins and Mills

The Gin. Walter said all the Blacks got together and formed their own gin. He stated: