

James Madison University
JMU Scholarly Commons

Shenandoah National Park Oral History Collection

JMU Special Collections

9-11-1976

(SNP034) Robert Hilton Corbin interviewed by
Allan Tanner and Paul Lee

Robert Hilton Corbin

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/snp>

Recommended Citation

Robert Hilton Corbin interviewed by Allan Tanner and Paul Lee, September 11, 1976, SdArch SNP-34, Shenandoah National Park Oral History Collection, 1964-1999, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the JMU Special Collections at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Shenandoah National Park Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact dc_admin@jmu.edu.

Interview with Robert Hilton Corbin

Part of the Shenandoah National Park Oral History Collection, SdArch SNP-034

(SC# 4030)

Interview conducted at Nicholson Hollow, Virginia

By Allan Tanner and Paul Lee on September 11, 1976

Transcribed by Victoria M. Edwards, October, 2009

Updated by Mary M. Darrough, January, 2010

Key

[PL:] Interviewer, Paul Lee, Shenandoah National Park

[AT:] Interviewer, Allan Tanner, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC)

[RC:] Interviewee, Robert Corbin

[JC:] Interviewee, Joe Corbin, son of Robert Corbin

[UM:] Unidentified Male, accompanying family member, refers to Robert Corbin as uncle; may be Dickie

[UF:] Unidentified Female, accompanying family member; at times may be Ellen, daughter of Robert Corbin; at other times may be Robert Corbin's niece.

[UC:] Unidentified Child, accompanying family member

[Notes regarding transcription technique]

[unintelligible] Unable to understand more than one word

_____ (??) Transcriber's best guess

- Speaker makes abrupt change in sentence

Refer to the Baylor University Style Guide for consistency in transcription

PL makes a comment at the end of the audio that there are errors in regards to earlier material in the interview, especially in reference to the houses in which Robert Corbin lived.

Total interview length: 02:52:21 min.

[Begin audio file, 00:00:05]

PL: September 11th, 1976, an interview with Mr. John Hilton Corbin. Mr. Corbin was born in the Hot-Short Mountain area and shortly after he was born moved into Nicholson Hollow, up near the Corbin Cabin, and later, then, moved up near Corbin Mountain. He knows quite a bit about the area, he'll be riding on horseback up all the way up the hollow, all the way up to the home site just past the cemetery. Conducting the interview will be members of his family, a Mr. Joe Corbin and Mr. Allan Tanner, Assistant Overseer for Corbin Cabin, member of the PATC. And Paul Lee, North District Naturalist, Shenandoah National Park. In this interview, we do hope to learn a good deal about the lower end, especially of Nicholson Hollow. During our early 1970 interview with George Corbin, by the time he reached this point he was quite tired and unable to remember who lived in the various home sites. Mr. Corbin is now eighty years old and he will be riding up on horseback through special permission from the park superintendant.

[01:34, tape break]

PL: Here with Robert H. Corbin, not George T. Corbin, born April 22nd. He's eighty years old.

[01:44, tape seems to break]

PL: Your father, did he live up here in Nicholson Hollow, or was he over in what they call Corbin Hollow?

JC: Well, my father--this cabin that we're going to up here is where my father was living and his mother and the rest of the family, up until his father was killed down

here about half a mile down the road here.

PL: Okay.

JC: On the right.

PL: So you're going to the cabin that's above the cabin George Corbin lived in, is that correct? Yeah.

JC: See, his father and he also was born on the next hollow over here, a distance of maybe two or three miles over from the cabin that we're going to now.

PL: Okay. So what relation was your father to George Corbin?

UM1: They were--George was Bob's first cousin.

PL: First cousin, okay. That straightens that out.

JC: Father--my grandfather, is, what was it, William, William, what was his middle initial? Our grandfather?

UM1: Bruce, wasn't it?

JC: William B., yeah.¹ And our great-grandfather's name was Bruce, so I guess that kinda gives you the high end of that, so.

[03:22, tape seems to break]

JC: --himself, since the spring of 1924. Over fifty years ago.

PL: My gosh.

JC: So, even though--

PL: So he left long before the park came in?

JC: Yes, even though his mother and the rest of the family lived up here, after he got married and moved off of the mountain, he only came back that one time and hasn't been back up here since then, so it'll be quite an experience for him.

PL: Yeah, I'll bet it will.

JC: To go back and see what he can remember of it from some fifty years back.

PL: Yeah. The trees might give him a little problem. I imagine it's grown up a lot since he was here.

JC: Yeah.

PL: Back in those days.

JC: He was just saying that he, that his father worked for the guy up here by the name of Tom Gore who owned an awful lot of land up here on the mountain at the time, and that they made a dollar a day working for Tom Gore but you had to get out there before it was light and work until dark to earn that dollar a day.

PL: Oh my gosh.

JC: And even though they didn't have a lot of things to do then, he had almost a self-supporting farm there and his cattle and his hay and his orchards and things like

that. So he kept you busy day in and day out and worked hard for what you did earn.

PL: This was Gore, G-O-R-E?

JC: That's right.

PL: I haven't heard that name before.

JC: Tom Gore, yeah. As we get up here, my dad can point out where the farm was that he and his dad used to work on.

UF1: Did you hear what he said, the cabin they restored was George T. Corbin's, and it's pop's first cousin.

JC: They were living up here. The girl that he eventually married lived on the next mountain over, the Hazel Mountain. And he used to ride over there and do his courting on Sundays and come back and work all week so when they did finally decide to get married, then they moved off of the mountain here, and that's why he just hadn't been back up here.

PL: We interviewed a guy from that particular area, I think his name was, oh, I can't think of it right now.

JC: Could have been Hawkins, because—

PL: No.

JC: There were many Hawkins people that lived on the Hazel Mountain, and that was my mother's maiden name.

PL: Oh, I see.

JC: Up here, he was saying that his father used to pay him two dollars per load of tan bark that he could haul off of the mountain here down to Boston. Down and back was a distance of about forty miles and he would have to leave up here around four o'clock in the morning to hope to get down there and get it unloaded and get back up here before dark. And then they would have to carry out another load the next day, in order to get it loaded, to go down, so they could only make three trips per week. (chuckle) And he said the two dollars that you earned for taking it down in reality only amounted to a dollar because you had to work the following day to get it down to where you could carry it out the next day. (chuckle)

PL: Oh boy.

JC: So, it was quite hard on him.

PL: I guess tan-barking was about the major industry or source of income, maybe?

JC: It seemed to be. He said that there didn't seem to be any market for the tree itself, only for the bark.

PL: Of course, nowadays, that chestnut wood is about worth its weight in gold.

JC: Almost extinct, too.

PL: Yeah.

[08:24, tape seems to break]

JC: [picks up midsentence] loads off of the mountain to make one load down here, because of it being so difficult for the team to haul it down there.

PL: Apparently the road did go up a fair ways. The lady who ran the post office and delivered the mail told us, as I recollect, that she would drive up as far as she could go and then she had to walk. And George told us that the closest he could ever get his car, and he owned a car, was within two miles of his cabin.

JC: Mm-hmm.

PL: So if your father's was up above that yet, then he had a little further to walk.

JC: Yeah, well, in the direction which we're traveling now, my father's was to the right of the cabin that's up here now, which was the one you were referring to. And that was the one that I was thinking that maybe he used to live in up here, but he says no, theirs was to the right of that, maybe three or four miles.

PL: Hmm.

JC: So we may not even be able to see the cabin in which he used to live in.

PL: That's what I was wondering, did he live in Nicholson Hollow or Corbin Hollow, there's two hollows here, and-

JC: Right. Well, I think that he lived in Nicholson Hollow because Corbin Hollow is off to our left if you direct-

PL: So if he was off to the right of George's cabin, that would make it-

JC: Nicholson Hollow, yeah.

PL: Yeah, it'd have to.

JC: Yeah. Gentleman that we were referring to earlier, Mr. Gore who owned the farm, was over even to the right of that.

PL: Mm-hmm. I see, your brother who's with us is?

JC: Robert.

PL: Robert.

JC: My youngest brother. My oldest brother, Cleveland, he couldn't come today. We was talking with him last night and he said that he wouldn't be able to come today, but we would hopefully make the trip at a later date. Also maybe come in from the other direction then put him in that group. (chuckle)

PL: And you're Joe?

JC: My name is Joe. I'm the next to the oldest of the family. Like I said, my dad is the oldest living-

PL: I see.

JC: Of the twenty-one children that my father sired, he was the oldest of the living and then my father had six children and I am the second of those. We have--had three boys and three girls.

PL: There's a home, or something right up here.

JC: Yeah.

[11:44, tape breaks]

PL: We passed a home site on the right hand side of the trail going up from the bottom

and it seemed to sit up on a, oh, hundred foot or probably less than that ridge and we don't know who lived there, trying to catch up right now with Mr. Corbin and get him to slow down on his horse a little bit and maybe try to tell us who lived in some of these. This home site I'm referring to is probably the first home site; at least it's the first one that we've been able to see so far, since we started out. The site we're going to is hard to discern right now. In talking with Joe Corbin, it seems as though they lived in Nicholson Hollow and from somebody else in the party, it gave me the impression that they were even further up the mountain from George, which to my knowledge only leaves two possibilities: either the home directly across the stream or the one up above the cemetery.

[13:05, tape breaks]

PL: So you lived here in Nicholson Hollow, then, or did you live over in Corbin Hollow?

RC: We lived in what's called Corbin Mountain.

PL: Okay, you lived over that way.

RC: Yeah. [unintelligible].

PL: Okay. Because I knew George—do you know George Corbin?

RC: Yeah.

PL: Yeah. He lives in Falls Church now.

RC: He do?

PL: Yeah. And we've had him up here a couple of times.

RC: I thought George was dead.

PL: No, he's eighty-eight.

RC: [unintelligible]

PL: Now, and I interviewed him when he was eighty-two, I believe, we brought him down to the cabin up here. And—so his dad apparently married a Nicholson and then they came over here to live.

RC: Yeah.

PL: But you say you lived over in—

RC: Yeah, we—

PL: Corbin.

RC: The cabin to the left of the Nichols*2 Hollow.

PL: I see.

RC: Oh, I'd say from this pole up to the house, about two miles, where we used to live.

PL: Yeah, okay. So that's the area called Corbin Mountain, then?

RC: Yeah.

PL: And you left here, then, before the park ever came in?

RC: Yeah, oh yeah.

PL: Yeah, he seems to be doing all right.

RC: Yeah.

PL: (chuckle)

[14:34, tape seems to break]

AT: In what, '96?

RC: What's that?

AT: What year? Your birthday?

RC: Twentieth of April.

AT: Twentieth of April?

RC: Yeah.

AT: In 1896?

UM2: Y'all let me get by and I'll take them on through.

PL: Apparently, now we have a Corbin indeed from Corbin Hollow, in case the tape doesn't pick it up, Mr. Robert H. Corbin did indeed live over in the vicinity of Corbin Mountain.

[15:09, tape breaks]

AT: [picks up midsentence] home, did you go up this way, right across here and right up?

RC: You turn north here and you can run up right there up that mountain there.

JC: How far is it from here up to where you used to live, then?

RC: It's about a mile and a half.

JC: About a mile and a half.

RC: Yeah. Probably two miles, maybe as much as two miles but I doubt it.

AT: But you didn't go up Weakley Hollow to get up to Corbin Hollow?

RC: Oh no, no, oh no. Right across here.

JC: Well, is this known as Corbin Hollow, going up from here?

AT: No, this is Nicholson Hollow.

RC: Judd Nichols' hollow.

AT: Yeah, but he's-

RC: [unintelligible] Corbin's Mountain.

AT: Apparently they would go up this draw, up-you came, when you went up there, then, you went pretty close to the top of Corbin Mountain to get in, didn't you?

RC: Yeah.

AT: Uh-huh.

PL: I've been told there's a house on top of Corbin Mountain, right up there on the mountain, now did you live up that high or were you down further, close to the water?

RC: We lived down, we was down lower this way.

PL: Uh-huh.

JC: Okay. Would the house still be standing, the one that you all used to live in, you think, or just the foundation would be there?

RC: Chimney's there, probably.

AT: Yeah, so, actually, you were on this side of Corbin Mountain?

RC: Does it give you any details about the old Thrift place?

AT: Thrift place?

RC: Thrift place.

AT: No, we don't have any of the old names on here.

RC: Does it give you on that map about the Stony Man?

AT: Yes, oh yes, Stony Man is located on here. It's--

JC: Stony Man, yeah.

AT: See here's Corbin Mountain, Stony Man.

RC: Well, we lived about ten miles from Stony Man.

JC: Well, that would be about right, then. That would probably be halfway between here and there.

AT: And we're about a mile and a half from the top of Corbin Mountain now.

RC: Just about. Just about.

AT: But you would go up--there are a couple of, couple of streams that come down from Corbin Mountain that come in here to the Hughes River. Did the road go up one of those two streams or alongside it?

RC: There ain't no stream come down by the place we used to live, except, a little stream here to your left as you'd go up.

AT: Oh, these weren't big streams at all.

RC: One of these very small streams--springs, came from the springs.

JC: Well, what's the name of this little stream we're looking at here in front of us now?

PL and AT: This is the Hughes River.

JC: Hughes River?

RC: Yeah, yeah.

AT: We're about here and I guess we were talking about one of these two, I think.

PL: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

AT: And, let's see, this one goes straight up. Did cars ever go up? Was it--it was just a horse and wagon trail?

RC: Cars been up here, [unintelligible] used to be a pair of [unintelligible] right over there, and the big oak tree, I see the oak tree's down, [unintelligible] across there and turn around.

JC: That's as far as the cars would ever come, then.

RC: Sure, that's as far as they ever went.

AT: Later on, of course, they went up much higher.

PL: Yeah.

RC: Them Cadillacs in Washington D.C. used to idle up in here, taking moonshine out. (laughter)

JC: Well, I guess in even in President Hoover's days, 'cause he used to have a camp over on the other side of the other mountain here.

RC: Who?

JC: President Hoover and he used to come up here also.

RC: He lived over here.

PL: Yeah, that's way up there.

JC: Uh-huh.

RC: Yeah, Hoover's camp.

JC: Yeah, that's over on the other side of Syria, going in that direction.

RC: I've been up to Hoover's camp on this other way, to Syria.

JC: Right, uh-huh.

PL: Well, what do you think?

AT: Okay. It sure would be nice to get this located on a map. I don't know that we can, precisely. Perhaps I should have been keeping closer track here. Open note, [unintelligible] in that direction.

PL: No, that's just an old road there.

AT: No, that would peter out pretty fast, I doubt that--

PL: I don't know about the horse.

RC: I doubt you could get a horse up there. 'Course there's boulders and trees right down, right across the road.

PL: Be pretty easy to get lost, too.

JC: Okay, well if we go up this trail here and then if we decide to come back that fire trail, even if it's not too good riding, walking down isn't as difficult as walking up.

AT: Well, there's a lot of walking up before you get there, though.

PL: Is there a connector, though, can we really make a loop out of that, that trail up to Corbin Mountain kind of peters out.

AT: We'd have to--we'd either have to cross some fairly rough country to get over here--

PL: Yeah, yeah.

AT: --or else we'd have to double back and go back to this fire road and down to Weakley Hollow fire road.

RC: And right up here, to my left, about two hundred yards up here, was my grandfather and my grandmother's place.

AT: And they were who?

RC: Corbins.

JC: Your grandfather and grandmother--your grandfather's name was Bruce, right?

RC: No.

JC: What.

RC: My grandfather was named Coon Corbin.³

AT: Coon Corbin?

RC: Yeah. And my father and one of my sisters is buried up here at his cemetery, and he's buried there, him and his wife.

AT: Is that the one near George's cabin, do you know, or Russ Nicholson's cabin? ⁴

RC: I--

AT: There's a cemetery up about three miles from here.

JC: Is that the one that your dad is buried in?

RC: No, he's--the cemetery I'm telling you about ain't over, it ain't over three hundred yard from here up there.

AT: All right, well let's go on up--

PL: Maybe we can poke around for it.

AT: Yes, by all means.

JC: Let's do it.

PL: That'd be great.

JC: Assuming you know where it is.

RC: Now the one you all are talking about, the cemetery way on up there, is known as the Corbin and Aaron Nicholson--Russ Nicholson, Russ Nicholson and all are buried there.

AT: It's right near Russ Nicholson's cabin.

RC: That's right.

AT: Yeah, we know that one quite well.

RC: Yeah.

AT: Are you any direct kin to the Nicholsons?

RC: Yes. Yes.

PL: Your grandfather lived here in Nicholson Hollow, then?

RC: Yeah.

PL: So did he marry a Nicholson, or?

RC: Uh-huh, he married a Nicholson.

PL: I see.

JC: Your grandfather lived up here, too?

RC: Yeah, lived right up the road here about two or three hundred yards.

JC: Well then, Corbins apparently lived on this mountain for the last couple hundred years, then.

RC: Oh yeah. Yeah. Old Man--now, over here to your left, after you get up here to where we used to live, over to your left, Amos Corbin, Fennel Corbin⁵, would be up over in there.

AT: I don't remember those names. Amos Corbin and--?

RC: Fennel Corbin.

AT: Fennel.

RC: He's in that book.

AT: He is in the book?

JC: Yeah, know him.

RC: Oh, he's in it.

AT: So they lived on Corbin Mountain.

RC: No, they lived on the other side of the Corbin Mountain.

AT: On the other side, and that's called Corbin Hollow.

PL: In that drainage there?

JC: Would that be on the other side of the Skyline Drive now?

RC: Yes--

JC: It would be?

RC: It's over what, the edge of what we call Weakley Hollow.

JC: Well, Weakley Hollow, yeah, I see that on the map.

AT: That wouldn't be on the other side of Skyline Drive.

PL: No, that's still on this side.

AT: Matter of fact, if we take this loop around, we'll go down the Weakley Hollow fire road.

JC: Right, okay.

AT: But that would just be on the other side of Corbin Mountain.

RC: Yeah.

AT: Well, why don't we go ahead and see where your grandfather's-

PL: Yeah, if you can find where your grandfather lived, let's poke around there.

JC: Let's see if we can-

[23:27, tape breaks and picks up mid-sentence]

JC: Montgomery College.

PL: Oh, is that right?

JC: Yeah, which is only about four miles from where I live. I retired from the police department in 1969.

RC: Oh, you did?

JC: Yeah, in fact, the day that President Nixon was inaugurated, we had the riot squad out within a block of the White House there and about a thousand of the demonstrators tried to get down through Lafayette Park to the stands and tear them down. And we not only had all of the riot squad up there, but many of the National Guard troops and I was injured there and after that day, the doctor told me he was gonna go ahead and retire me because of my injury, that I could no longer perform the duties of a policeman, so he says I'm not taking a chance on you getting killed, so that was my last official day of working, the day that Nixon was inaugurated on his first term.

PL: Huh. So you teach?

JC: I'm with the security force at Montgomery College.

PL: Oh, I see.

JC: When I retired, they asked me to come up there and take charge of their force, which was a small force at the time and we have more than doubled the size of it since I've been there, and attempted to professionalize it a little bit. And I think we've made great strides in doing that, since then.

[25:15, tape breaks]

PL: -up here, I'm sure that's the location.

RC: [unintelligible]

JC: Farming, then?

RC: No, [unintelligible].

JC: All of this was farm land.

RC: Sure, sure.

[25:29, tape breaks]

UM: [unintelligible]

JC: It sure does.

PL: [directly into microphone] We noticed some barb wire fence here along the road.

AT: If you wander through the woods here, you come across a rock wall.

RC: [unintelligible]

JC: It would have?

RC: [unintelligible] Corbin Mountain road.

JC: Yeah, well this looks fairly level through here.

RC: [unintelligible]

JC: I would imagine so.

RC: I can't [unintelligible] side.

JC: Yeah, well you can still see all of the old barb wire fencing along this, see the post still here?

RC: [unintelligible]

JC: Yeah.

RC: [unintelligible] cut the hay, [unintelligible]

PL: [directly into microphone] At the lower end of this field where the barb wire's located, there was a large rock cliff off to the left hand side going down. It was just below this that there was a ford. Mr. Corbin said this was the ford that crossed the creek and went up to Corbin Mountain.

RC: Getting a little cold up here, I don't know what-

[26:37, tape breaks]

AT: Little bit farther up?

RC: Well, it'd have to be.

AT: Okay.

RC: It's got to be, [unintelligible] up and down here.

AT: Okay, well, no, I haven't seen a sign of a ford going up the edge of that mountain there to the left.

[26:50, tape breaks]

AT: -this to the right?

RC: Yeah.

AT: What was his name?

RC: Jim Polk (??) Nichols.

AT: Jim Polk Nichols.

RC: He was heavy-set guy, weighed about two hundred pounds. (chuckle)

PL: So it was Nicholson or a Nichols?

RC: Nicholson.

PL: Nicholson.

RC: Yeah. Stronger than you, given a bull's strength.

JC: Two hundred pounds and probably all muscle.

RC: Oh, it was good muscle.

JC: Yeah.

PL: Had to be, I guess, up here.

JC: To live in this time, yes sir.

AT: Well, Aaron was supposed to be a pretty big man, too, wasn't he?

RC: Sure, yeah. [unintelligible] the man.

AT: Yeah. Who was, Aaron Nicholson?

RC: Aaron Nicholson, yeah. [unintelligible], land all right.

JC: Yeah, I imagine this land would really grow almost anything.

RC: Oh, anything you put on it.

JC: What we're traveling in now is the road you used to come down, hauling bark?

RC: No.

JC: No?

RC: Down here where I show you that, where that ford is, that's where I come out of there.

JC: You came up it to that ford that we just passed?

RC: [unintelligible] right up on the mountain.

AT: We're close to the Hot-Short Mountain trail, leading off to the right. This is a bearing.

PL: Okay.

RC: We done passed my grandmother's, my grandmother's was [unintelligible].

AT: Was it on the right or the left?

PL: Over here.

AT: Over there on the south side.

JC: You think we have passed by where the graves--cemetery was?

RC: I think so. Yeah, I think so. I don't see any fords.

JC: I haven't seen a ford either.

PL: Was it this side of the ford, or did you have to cross the ford before you got to it?

RC: You had to cross the ford.

PL: And then it was your grandfather's place.

RC: Yeah.

AT: Uh-huh.

RC: There may be another--

JC: Yeah, I haven't seen anything. I've been looking pretty closely to attempt to see something that would look like a road.

PL: Was it a ford on this road or a ford--

RC: It was a ford on this road.

PL: On this road. Okay.

JC: So I haven't seen one.

PL: No. How far do we have to go to get to it--I remember one up here further.

AT: Well, we should be just about here right now, about an eighth of a mile from the Hot-Short Mountain Trail.

PL: And that's where that crosses.

AT: And this is where that first ford was, so we've gone about a half mile from that place where--from the ford where--that you used to take off.

JC: We've already gone a half mile from where that ford was--

PL: So maybe it's up here a little further.

JC: So it might be, if it's only an eighth of a mile.

RC: [unintelligible] hay up to your shoulders.

JC: Right in here to the right?

RC: Right in there.

JC: [unintelligible] the hay up to your shoulders?

RC: To your shoulders. Yeah, and they take those long--

JC: Cradles, that they used to cut wheat with.

RC: No, uhn-uh.

AT: Not that kind.

RC: Just take just a regular grass scythe.

UM: Mowing scythe?

RC: Yeah. Blade about that long.

AT: You called it a hook, didn't you?

RC: Yeah.

JC: Same as they used to use—

RC: All that it would [unintelligible], cutting around the [unintelligible], just cutting around and wind up in the middle.

AT: Are all the rocks that are here left over now from the soil being washed away—

RC: Yeah, that's right.

AT: Or was it still very rocky then?

RC: It weren't as rocky then as it is now. (chuckle)

PL: I wouldn't think so.

JC: So most of the soil has washed off of the rocks, exposing them down, yeah.

RC: Of course, water don't get out in there, but on down here I noticed--

AT: As a matter of fact, a lot of that's been within the last ten or twelve years.

RC: Oh yeah.

AT: We've had a couple of good floods through here.

RC: Yeah, I imagine.

JC: Coming up that road, washing a lot of soil away.

AT: Used to be much—you actually, I think you could have driven over it in the early '60s.

UM: With what, a car?

AT: With a car.

UM: Oh.

RC: Oh yeah.

AT: Well, a jeep anyway.

UM: Yeah, okay.

AT: And now we're at the Hot-Short Mountain trail.

PL: What you say Kenny (??)? Do you remember this being an old road ever?

RC: Yes sir. This here road takes you up to the top of the Hazel Mountain.

JC: This road here goes to the top of Hazel Mountain? This is the road you used to go up, then, to court my mother, isn't it?

RC: That's right. (laughter)

JC: Rode right up this road here.

PL: I'll be darned.

JC: What, horse and buggy or just horse?

RC: Horse and buggy won't make this, no buggy to it. (laughter)

JC: You liked to get up there with a horse?

RC: And don't let him pull a shoe off, either, you do and you won't get back until the next day.

PL: Oh jeez.

AT: That was no big disadvantage, was it? (laughter)

JC: How far was it from here up to where my mother used to live?

RC: Twelve miles.

JC: Twelve miles.

RC: Yes sir.

JC: Gee whiz.

PL: My goodness.

RC: You go up this mountain, and you get on top and you go down another one to get where she lived.

AT: Is that right?

PL: So this is the Hot-Short trail, goes up in here and joins the Hazel fire road.

JC & RC: Mm-hmm.

PL: And Hazel Mountain's up here.

JC: Mm-hmm. And you went on over the top of the Hazel Mountain on over to the other side to where she lived. How did you ever happen to meet her, Pop, with her living way over there and you living way over here?

RC: I was a rambling boy.

AT: Yeah.

RC: I met her when we lived on James Mountain (??) on the Rappahannock.

AT: Yeah.

RC: Had a baptizing up yonder Hazel. There's an old mill dam, and I met her that day, at the baptizing.

JC: Baptizing for? Who was that, do you remember?

RC: Oh yes, about ten of 'em got dunked that day. (laughter)

JC: Was Uncle Warren the preacher?

RC: He did the baptizing.

JC: Uncle Warren did the baptizing?

RC: Yeah.

JC: That's our uncle that was the preacher, Warren Corbin, and he was the preacher at many of these churches up here, in fact I think he had five of 'em that he—

RC: He ministered this one up here, on up the hollow there. Hughes River Church.

AT: He got the one where Hannah's Run comes in?

PL: Okay, we know where that is.

UM: Well, didn't Warren, didn't he preach your wife's funeral?

RC: Yeah.

JC: Uh-huh, he sure did.

UM: I was real little when I was with Daddy, and they would come over--matter of fact, we went with y'all that day.

JC: That was thirty years ago, my mother died in '46.

UM: I was just real little.

JC: I know.

PL: So your grandparents were on up here just a little ways, then, huh? Okay. We might get a chance to find that cemetery yet. (chuckle)

JC: Yeah, we may.

RC: [unintelligible] together on Sundays. Jack Dodson and Charlie Sisk. Of course, you know, you was younger then.

JC: No, I sure didn't.

RC: Charlie Sisk, he was a stonemason, could do anything you wanted done on a rock. He could lift the biggest rock you ever saw in your life. He had a slight of doing it, see?

PL: Uh-huh.

RC: Uncle Jim Polk Nicholson (??) out there. I got [unintelligible] up the road here, you know, drinking. Very serious. Jack Dodson. His father came here. Here's a big round rock. I don't see it now, oh the rock was so big, [unintelligible] around.

JC: Uh-huh.

RC: These rocks up here ain't light and flakey like the rocks down my way. They're solid up here. Jack Dodson says to Charlie, he says, "I bet you a dollar you can't lift that rock." Charlie Sisk, he [unintelligible] months and come out and [unintelligible] man. Charlie says, "By golly, put your money where your mouth's at." Jack says, "I bet you a dollar you can't even lift it." He's putting him money where his mouth's at. So Jack, he got over this rock, reached down and put his hands around it and he, he's strained and he strained up, he says, "Ahh, I lifted it." Charlie then says to him, "You haven't lifted it off the ground." He says, "Let him chuck it (??)." He says, "You're a damn liar." Ba-doom. And down.

JC: Pulled out his gun and shot him?

RC: Shot him right there.

JC: Right there.

RC: He never even gasped.

PL: My goodness.

RC: Charlie Sisk stuck his pistol in his pocket, turned around, looked at us, and, "By God, any of the rest of you going down the road?" (laughter)

JC: Well, what did they do with Charlie Sisk for killing him?

RC: Sent him back to the pen.

JC: Sent him back to the pen?

RC: Gave him life. And in four or five years he got on parole.

PL: Hmm.

[36:40, tape breaks]

PL: Now where would your grandparent's house have been in relation to the church? Was it pretty close to the church or?

RC: A mile of it.

PL: A mile below it?

RC: Yeah.

PL: I see.

AT: So we are definitely above.

JC: So you think the church is a little bit farther up the trail here, then?

RC: It's gonna be further up here.

JC: All right.

RC: Sits right on the side of the road.

JC: Then we'll still be able to see the footings probably of it, huh?

PL: Well, probably-

AT: I'm not sure that we follow the old road through here.

PL: Now, last time when I was up here, we found some old gutter, guttering, y'know, shingles or some metal parts that were maybe part of the church, but we couldn't find any foundation or anything, so we might look for that and see if it's still around.

[37:33, tape breaks]

AT: Falls Church, then?

RC: No, I thought sure he was dead.

AT: He's eighty-eight now and he's—

RC: He's older than I am.

AT: He's had some misfortunes. He had a double hernia a few years ago and was hit by a truck about eight years ago.

JC: Well, George, what relation was he to you, Pop?

RC: First cousin.

JC: First cousin.

PL: On the Corbin side?

RC: Yeah.

JC: We'll get his address from you, if you would. And I'll take you down and you can visit with him.

AT: Well, he's on Virginia Avenue, I don't know his present address, he had to move because they were changing their condominiums in the place where he was living. He had a basement apartment there. That's where I last saw him. But Ed Garvey sees George every once in a while—

RC: George Corbin and Warren Corbin is half-brothers.

JC: They were?

RC: Uh-huh.

PL: Now where do you live, now?

RC: I live four miles from Culpeper.

PL: Oh, okay.

JC: Fairly near Culpeper, yeah.

RC: On 229.

JC: Okay, you gonna ride some more, Pop?

RC: I'm gonna walk, you're the one who rides.

JC: You're the one riding [unintelligible].

RC: Chewin my legs up.

JC: Yeah, cripples his legs up.

AT: Yeah, trail's pretty easy along here for a ways, then it starts getting steep again.

RC: Yeah, but you're [unintelligible].

AT: Well, I think right there, that's the real crossing, but I know there are places where the trail doesn't follow the road anymore because the road's been washed out, now we probably will cross it every once in a while.

RC: Yeah, that's right.

AT: But, I'm not sure about--

JC: I was gonna get a picture of you all standing there--

PL: Oh, well let me get out of your way.

[39:26, tape breaks]

AT: --stands.

JC: I'm just going to get one. I think maybe that it will be enough. Right there, Pop. Hey, Pop.

RC: [unintelligible] over to the road. I think I was sitting back in here like this. It was all [unintelligible] back then, anyway.

PL: Now is this the church that you attended most when you lived over here?

RC: Yeah, mm-hmm.

PL: There wasn't one in Corbin--

RC: No, uhn-uh.

PL: Over in Corbin Mountain?

JC: You think this is where the church is, was?

RC: [unintelligible]

JC: Yeah.

RC: Watch your step.

JC: Right in here?

RC: Right there.

JC: How big a church was it, Pop?

RC: Oh, great big church.

JC: Get a hundred people in it?

RC: Yeah, easy.

JC: You could?

RC: Easy.

JC: Well, then that is enough room right in there where they could have had one of that size.

RC: It was all level. Down through there, we could tie horses on down in there, and buggies.

AT: About how old were you when you left the park?

RC: I was--

AT: Twenty-nine?

RC: Twenty-

AT: Twenty-eight?

RC: Uhn-uh.

JC: No, younger than that, because I'll be fifty-one years old on the 14th, three days from now, and-

RC: I was twenty-five.

JC: And my brother is two years older than I am.

RC: Got married in-

PL: So you left in '24?

RC: No, I got married in twenty-

PL: Twenty-one?

JC: Twenty-one, yeah.

RC: Got married when I was twenty-five.

JC: Left here in 1921, then.

PL: Born in '96 and left in '21.

JC: Yeah, because you got married, what, in 1922 and Cleveland was born in 1923. In December of '23.

RC: Third day of December.

JC: Right. So.

RC: I left the same year I got married. I left here and moved to Rappahannock. Over to Little Washington.

PL: Was that for a better job, or?

JC: Because of getting married?

PL: No room, or?

RC: Well, it was out before I could get work every day, see. Around here, y'know, people weren't able to hire you. Might hire you two or three days a week and then be a month or more before you find another-

JC: Who'd you go to work for when you left from up here?

RC: Well, when I left when I married?

JC: Yeah.

RC: I moved over there next to Little Washington. And I went to farming on my own.

JC: Went to farming for yourself?

RC: Joe Kaiser lived right across the road here, own a big apple orchard, I'd help him pick apples, make hay, cut corn when I wasn't in my crops.

AT: You had to share crops with?

RC: Yeah, mm-hmm.

PL: How bad were the winters up here? Were they hard to get through, or?

RC: Sometimes there's right smart smoke in there.

JC: Yeah. How deep have you seen snow up here on this mountain?

RC: Around there.

AT: Up two and a half, three feet? Three feet deep?

RC: Drifts about ten feet.

JC: Yeah. Well, I imagine the wind blowing down through these hollows would really drift some snow.

PL: Especially if they were cleared, right now, of course the wind doesn't hit the hollow much.

AT: True. Not now.

RC: But then, it was practically clear, you could see something, see where people was living, and everything. And they'd ride around in snow drifts, eight and ten and twelve feet deep, right in the low parts of the road, see? She'd just suck down right there and ride around it. And be there until the first of April.

PL: What relation were you to Fennel Corbin?

RC: I don't remember if I was any.

PL: In the book, Skyland I believe, it mentions Fennel Corbin and talks about a winter that was real hard on he and his family. They had--they ate a lot of sauerkraut that winter and so on. Did you ever have one that bad?

RC: No, not that bad, that much, uhn-uh. I was born the year of the blizzard.

JC: 1896?

RC: Yeah.

JC: Was a blizzard?

RC: We lived up here, where I was born up there, where the line went right across the comb of the house. My father paid taxes in Rappahannock and paid taxes in Madison. And he [unintelligible] with the bonds, so my mother said. And that year, that I was born, I was born in the 20th of April, there come the winter, was a blizzard. And had a big still house out from the house, and they put the cow--didn't have no more milk there--and put her in the still house that night. Next morning, my father got up, said he couldn't see no door, snow had done drifted up over the door and up beside, way up beside the still house. He had to take a shovel there and cut that drift away so he could get the cow out so he could give her some water and feed her.

JC: Good thing he put her in there.

RC: Oh yes. She was, well, if she'd been caught in a snow drift, she would have been smothered to death.

JC: Okay, shall we move on?

[45:23, tape breaks]

AT: One looked like a spring house.

PL: Did we pass a home on the way up here? Was there anybody that lived between the ford where you said went up to Corbin Mountain and where we started out? That you know, that you can remember?

RC: Oh yes.

PL: Were a lot of people, or just a couple?

RC: Well, let's see. One, two, three, four, five. I know five houses used to be down here.

PL: Uh-huh.

[46:03, tape breaks]

JC: These trees here are probably fifty years old.

AT: There's one big stump back there that undoubtedly was a big tree when you were here, right back through there. That certainly would have been here at the time.

RC: Oh yeah.

JC: But these trees that you're looking at here are probably, y'know, thirty-five, forty, fifty years old.

RC: All just come up here since I left here.

JC: Yeah.

RC: None of this in here then.

JC: The first trip back up here in fifty--

RC: Fifty-one years.

JC: Fifty-one or fifty-two years, yeah. You came back in '24, the spring of '24, so it's fifty-two years.

PL: The game when you lived here, was there much to hunt?

RC: Not too much.

JC: How about squirrels?

RC: Oh yeah, there was quite a few squirrels.

JC: Did ya'll eat a lot of squirrels and all when you would live up here?

RC: Oh yeah.

JC: You would? What is this here now?

AT: Across Hannah Run back there [plane noises in the background obscure voices].

PL: Did you know many people up Hannah Run, here? This was--this trail goes by a lot of old cabins, itself.

[47:38, tape breaks]

JC: -a place for it.

RC: [unintelligible] switch back this-a-way [unintelligible].

JC: What, the church, the entrance was here?

RC: Church sit back and [unintelligible] back [unintelligible].

JC: Uh-huh.

RC: And show the front.

JC: Front of it here?

PL: The site of this, too.

AT: Now that metal roof back there-

[48:00, tape breaks]

JC: In all probability, that oak tree was here at the same time, too.

RC: That oak tree? When this church was built--about time that was something right there.

UM: About the size of my arm.

JC: Well, that would probably be true, because heck, it must be two feet in diameter now.

RC: That pine wasn't half that big. It [unintelligible] kinda shade for the church.

UM1: Is this where the church was, Uncle Bob?

RC: Yeah, uh-huh. Right there's old brick.

JC: Is this the church you say you were married in?

RC: No.

JC: No?

RC: I was married in my wife's mother's house. Just the church I belong to. And baptizing hole was on up there further.

JC: Oh. What, did Uncle Warren come over there at the house and marry you all?

RC: Preacher Jim Brown married us.

JC: Preacher Jim Brown.

RC: Warren had done left from up in here and lived over there, lived in Rappahannock.

JC: Uh-huh. And Jim Brown was the preacher up in this area at the time?

RC: He was the pastor of this church and the church on the Hazel6 at the time.

JC: And he came to the house and married you all then.

RC: Yeah. That was his way of going to church, right by the house. It wasn't any out--none out of his way to marry us.

JC: Do you remember what month y'all were married in?

RC: Twenty-sixth day of November.

JC: Twenty-sixth day of November.

RC: Yeah.

JC: And then you left from here, up here in the mountains shortly after you were married then, huh?

RC: I left the same year.

JC: Same year?

RC: Yes sir.

JC: So that would have, in all probability, been November of 1922 that you left from up here, then.

RC: Yes sir.

JC: My oldest brother was born a year later. In December '23.

PL: Any idea when this church was built? Might have been built?

JC: Was it here—

PL: When. How far back?

RC: We moved up here on Corbin Mountain, there weren't no church here. I was twenty years old when we moved up there on Corbin Mountain. And we built the church the next year. I remember being part of--coming down here myself and helping on it.

AT: That'd be 1917, probably.

RC: Yeah.

AT: Seventeen would be the year the church was built, right, yeah.

PL: So where were you born, then, you were—

RC: I was born up here, half in Madison, half in Rappahannock.

PL: In this hollow? In Nicholson Hollow?

RC: Yep.

PL: Okay.

RC: Go on up this road—no—down here where I told you that man got killed?

JC: Yeah.

RC: You turn right there and you go up that road right there and I mean you climb, you're climbing when you go up there. It ain't like this.

PL: So that would be what we call Hot-Short Mountain, then. Right?

AT: Mm-hmm. Matter of fact, it would be right near Short Mountain, just to the east of it.

RC: Yeah.

AT: South east.

JC: Well, would that cabin site still be there?

RC: Up here?

JC: Where you were born? You think there's any trace of the cabin itself or anything?

RC: Something might be.

AT: I don't know. I haven't been up that trail.

PL: Me either.

JC: Something like this here?

RC: Now they tore this church down and moved it over on and built Black Hawk Church out of it.

JC: They tore this one down and moved it over there?

RC: Yeah.

AT: This was a brick church, then?

RC: No, frame house, frame church. It had brick underpinnings, see.

AT: Oh, I see, it's for the foundation only.

JC: For the foundations of it.

PL: I see.

RC: You know what, you know what underpinning is?

UF1: Independent?

RC: Underpinning. It's the foundation under a building.

UF1: Oh! (laugh)

JC: The support for the corners of the church were probably out of brick. Was brick expensive at that time, I don't guess that there was much of it used in construction up through here then, was it?

AT: Well, the hard part was getting it up here, wasn't it?

JC: Right.

RC: That's right, had to haul it up here on wagons. Weren't no trucks or cars or anything like that. Yeah, hauled up here on the wagon.

UM1: What year did you see your first automobile, Uncle Bob?

RC: What year? Well, I don't know. (laughter)

JC: Did you ever see any coming up here—

[53:31, tape breaks]

JC: -you lived up here, pop?

RC: Oh, yes sir, yeah.

JC: Automobiles?

RC: Oh yeah, them Cadillacs come up here come up down around [unintelligible] and go and turn around. Always -

JC: To get moonshine. (laughter)

AT: Yeah.

RC: -up in here, [unintelligible] had to meet 'em down there.

AT: Yeah.

RC: Well they come up here and carry fifty, sixty gallons at a crack.

JC: I would think so, yeah. (laughter)

RC: Fifteen, sixteen dollars a gallon.

JC: They had to make it worth their while.

RC: Well, that's the only thing they had to, y'know, to make a living out of. You never heard tell of a revenue man waiting for something to pass. Never heard tell of it. When you go up and down these here little streams here, you wouldn't go over a hundred yards before you leave this and run right into another.

JC: Uh-huh.

UM1: I've heard Daddy say that y'all run a hundred and fifty gallon one, is that right?

RC: Yeah. Yes sir.

JC: Y'all had one of your own going up here, too?

RC: Oh yeah.

JC: You did?

RC: You know about it. Well, we had to be in the gang.

JC: (laugh) You had-I guess in order to make a living, you had to have one of your own. What was that why you grew so much corn and all?

RC: No.

AT: Was it dangerous not to moonshine?

RC: Oh, it's not dangerous, if you wanted to survive. [unintelligible] was around here, yeah, that's where we got the matter. [unintelligible]

PL: You know who lived in this area? I don't know if those are just rock piles or, or what? Do you remember who was the next person up from the church?

AT: [unintelligible] Brower, Pinnacle Ridge, [unintelligible] Nicholson Hollow trail.

PL: Uh-huh.

AT: Little bit west--or east, rather.

RC: Remember Nichols used to—well, there's two Nichols lived here. Little Jim Polk Nichols, one that used to, one that lived down there, where I told you, before he got killed?

PL: Jim Polk?

RC: Yeah. He lived up here and he sold this and bought that down there. And Chris Nichols. Lived up in here in a house, settled that, on that side of the road.

PL: Up a little?

RC: Yeah.

PL: Yeah, okay, I found that house one time, in the fall. Chris Nicholson lived in that one.

RC: Mm-hmm.

PL: Okay.

RC: That's right.

JC: Hey, Pop, what's this we're coming up on here?

RC: What?

JC: What was this along here to the right?

RC: Chris Nichols used to live right in here somewhere.

JC: Do you think maybe right along here is where the house was then or what?

RC: Nah, no, further back. Set back right far a-ways from the road.

JC: Looks like this was quite a stone wall along here.

RC: This is an old stone fence.

JC: Stone fence?

AT: I'm pretty sure that this was the old road through here.

JC: Yeah, it looked like it was because even there's rails on top of it, on the stone.

PL: [directly into microphone] Referring back to an earlier part of the trail, it's apparent that just two or three hundred yards north of that ford, going up to Corbin Mountain, that Mr. Corbin's grandparents lived along the Hughes River, and he refers there to a cemetery which is not on record on our park files.

[57:18, tape breaks]

JC: This the hole where everybody was baptized in right here?

RC: No.

JC: --quarter of a mile?

PL: [directly into microphone] In the case it's a hole, the second in crossing above—

RC: [unintelligible] baptizing hole right there.

UM: Right here?

RC: Yeah.

UM: Is that right?

RC: Was a whole lot deeper then 'tis now.

JC: I would think so. Well, it's probably two feet deep over in there.

PL: [directly into microphone] Second crossing from Hughes River, above the church site.

RC: Be right up here, she joined the church and was baptized there.

PL: Who was this?

RC: The woman, by name of Nancy Dodson.

JC: Nancy Dodson?

RC: Yeah, and Old Man Jim Polk Nichols, Uncle Jim's father. He was sitting on that big rock over there and the whole crowd--foot bridge come across here. And, was a whole crowd of people here on these rocks and all over there. She went down--there was a mill and--those days, they made you dresses with a pocket like a man's pocket, inside the dress. And she went down to the store and she'd bought her a loaf of light bread and put it in her pocket and got up here at time baptizing come. Old Man Jim Polk Nichols sitting over on that rock when the preacher laid her down in the water, this loaf of bread floated out of her pocket and come floating over the water, he says, "Sock her in there again, brother! See the sin coming on top in large chunks!" (laughter) That certainly was the truth. (laughter) They thought nothing of it. "Sock her in there again, brother. See the sin coming on top in large chunks." (laughter)

PL: Ooh, darn. (laughter) There's some minnows in there.

RC: Trout, too. Yeah, there's a good stream here for trout.

PL: Did you get much trout of here back when you lived here?

RC: Yeah. Oh yeah. Fished some. Yes sir, that's the baptizing hole.

PL: [directly into microphone] Nineteen years old when he was baptized.

[59:48, tape breaks]

JC: --killed in an automobile accident over in West Virginia, about three or four months ago.

PL: Oh. Was Clyde, what's his name?

JC: Clyde Corbin, yeah. His wife died some years back, maybe as many as twenty years, now. And for the last few years, he had been living over in West Virginia and went to the store to get a loaf of bread and was hit by a car coming back from the store. Apparently didn't look--

AT: Well, the women in the family don't seem to have near the longevity that the men do.

JC: No, they haven't.

AT: Was it because of hardship, or?

JC: I guess so. Apparently the women worked so awfully hard, not only in the house but

also outside of it, taking care of the gardens and things of this nature, they just didn't live that long. I know my mother died when she was fifty years old.

AT: George's three wives all died.

[1:01:04, tape breaks]

UF: I don't know where the kids went.

RC: That's the way you went over to, what, Nichols used to live.

PL: Aaron Nicholson?

RC: No.

PL: This was Chris Nicholson?

RC: Chris Nichols.

PL: The one that lived back up there.

UF: That guy should have been put out on site.

PL: Ellen, you been up this road?

JC: What were you saying about this road to the right, Pop?

RC: Well, I think Chris Nichols used to be right up here.

AT: Well, I think this was a road.

JC: Chris Nichols.

PL: Oh yeah.

AT: This is a regular road. It goes down, it's just been washed out in a lot of places, and the Blue Blaze Trail has-

PL: Been rerouted around it, okay.

AT: But. Uh-huh. This is still a main stream along in here.

UC: So what are we--which way do we go?

AT: Well, we follow the Blue Blaze Trail unless you wanna-

UM: We're still going up. (chuckle)

AT: --your way along the--

UF: We sure are.

PL: Can't go down, you gotta go up.

AT: It's still pretty much uphill for the next mile.

UF: [unintelligible] ain't going no mile. (laugh)

JC: We don't have much further to travel, he says.

[1:02:06, tape breaks]

PL: [directly into microphone] -old chimney alongside of the road.

RC: This is Old Man Jim Polk Nichols' house.

JC: Jim Polk Nicholson's house. Yeah.

AT: Chimney's standing about three-quarters of a mile down river from Corbin Cabin. Is that of Jim Polk Nicholson?

RC: Yep.

JC: How big a- [continues to speak with RC]

PL: [directly into the microphone] It's on the right hand side going up.

JC: Great big house?

RC: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. What, did the front of it face this way?

RC: Yeah.

JC: Where we're standing?

RC: Yeah.

AT: Was he one of the earliest settlers here, do you think, or?

RC: Yeah.

AT: Just the most ambitious.

RC: Yeah.

JC: Did he build that house himself, you think?

RC: Sure.

JC: He did?

RC: Sure. He owned all this land in here.

AT: He owned all this?

RC: Yeah, he owned about a couple hundred acres.

AT: What relation was he to Aaron Nicholson, then?

RC: I think they was first, probably third cousins.

PL: Uh-huh, some distance.

RC: Yeah, distant kin.

AT: But they were same age, or?

RC: No, Aaron was much older.

AT: Much older.

RC: Oh yeah.

JC: What, is Jim Polk now, is he still living?

RC: No, he—

JC: He's not?

RC: No. (chuckle)

JC: Is he buried up here?

RC: Nn-mm.

JC: No.

PL: Was he moved off when the park was established?

RC: Yeah.

AT: So he was still here in '38.

RC: Yeah. He was here. They, he bought a place over here in Syria and he died over there.

JC: Syria?

RC: Yeah.

AT: You know it?

JC: Syria? Yeah, yeah.

PL: Your grandparents now lived back here. Did you ever know if they were, if your grandparents were born here, or did they come here from somewhere else?

RC: They was born here.

PL: They were born here?

RC: Yeah.

PL: Okay.

JC: Your grandfather was borned up here?

RC: Oh yes.

JC: Not in the same cabin you said that you were born in though, huh?

RC: Oh no! He was born way on up there at the head of, this, head of Nigger's Hollow.

JC: Way up top?

PL: Oh, okay.

AT: So that's back in the early 1800s.

RC: Yes. (chuckle)

PL: That might even be, might even go back a little further than that.

JC: Probably would. How old was your father when he was killed, Pop?

RC: Fifty-five.

JC: Fifty-five when he was killed?

RC: Mm-hmm.

PL: That was down here at the store, is that what you were saying?

RC: Yeah.

JC: Yeah. Down there where that chimney is, about a half a mile down on your right, going back down.

PL: Oh, was that an accident, or?

JC: No.

RC: No. Uhn-uh.

JC: They-

RC: Called him up to the fence, pulled his gun out and shot him, four times.

PL: Jeez.

JC: Accused him of having reported him for making moonshine and turning him in to the revenue agents.

AT: Where was that store in relation to the church?

JC: Which store are we talking about?

PL: The store's way on down.

JC: Oh, the place where my grandfather was killed, in relation to where we started up here from, was only about a half a mile down, it's a chimney still standing there on your right, going down.

AT: That's in Nethers, then.

PL: Yeah. Who killed him?

RC: John Nichols.

AT: John Nicholson.

RC: He lived up on the top of the Hazel Mountain.

PL: On top of Hazel Mountain?

JC: Mm-hmm.

AT: Were the people just called Nichols? Their name was Nicholson, wasn't it?

RC: Uh-huh.

JC: John Nichols. And you all refered to 'em all as Nichols and not Nicholson?

RC: Nichols.

JC: Yeah.

PL: Well, that's good to know, we've never known who lived in this.

RC: Yep.

PL: Cabin. When we brought George Corbin down, by the time he got—well, there's another one yet up here, and by the time he got down this far, he couldn't, he was too tired and he couldn't remember who and, so I'm glad we found out.

RC: Yeah.

JC: Did he have a large family?

RC: Ahh, yes. Let's see. Velt, Walter, Dan. That was three boys. There was Nedie, Hattie and another girl, I can't think of her name.⁷

JC: So it must have been six of the children, then.

RC: I think so, yeah.

JC: Yeah.

[1:07:05, tape breaks]

JC: —a many good meal in that house.

RC: Many good meals [unintelligible].

JC: What, were you going with one of the girls, come down to court one of the girls?

RC: No, no, no, no.

AT: No? Is this the after church services that you'd come up here?

RC: Well, if you [unintelligible] didn't [unintelligible] church service, you know, we were spending time on weekends, you know, walking around and having [unintelligible] most time.

JC: He would just invite you in for dinner?

RC: Oh, yes sir.

JC: Yeah. What--did your farming?

RC: Oh yeah, I'd help him sometimes, [unintelligible] down with him. Shuck corn or most anything.

JC: And you'd get a nickel for that?

RC: That's right.

PL: [directly into microphone] Hearing that he'd work for Jim Polk Nicholson, picking up rocks, shucking corn, things like that, on a day-to-day basis and it was you got paid a nickel a day.

[1:08:03, tape breaks]

JC: —about.

RC: [unintelligible], cows or horses. Best horse in this country, son.

JC: (chuckle) You probably—

PL: [directly into microphone] Apparently he was quite a bragger. Claimed he had the best of many different things.

[1:08:26, tape breaks]

JC: -father's sisters lived back up here to our left.

RC: No, back in here.

JC: How far?

RC: Oh, from here out there, I reckon a mile and a half.

JC: About a mile?

PL: [directly into microphone] This a ravine.

JC: That'd be back over in Corbin Hollow, wouldn't it?

RC: No, it's right back in here. Ain't hardly nowheres back there to it.

JC: Would that be over in Corbin Hollow?

RC: No.

JC: Wouldn't be that far over?

RC: Nuh-uh. Not that far over.

PL: [directly into microphone] This being referenced to a draw that's just above the Jim Polk Nicholson house, off to the left going up.

RC: [unintelligible] you can't see it, all this shelf grewed up, we got about a mile, about two miles further, that's a powerful mountain.

JC: That's Thoroughfare Mountain, right?

RC: Yes sir. (chuckle)

JC: But on up about two more miles, up that draw.

RC: Yeah. That's Thoroughfare Mountain up there.

JC: Uh-huh.

RC: Slow down.

JC: Huh?

RC: This is getting natural now.

JC: What, this rail fence on your left here makes it look natural to you?

RC: Yeah.

PL: And a clearing?

RC: Well, all this, all this here, about thirty acres in here, all belonged to Kay Weakley.

JC: Kay Weakley?

RC: Yes. He had an orchard up here, all this was his orchard. And he had this rail fence, right along beside the road, it was there beside the road.

JC: Uh-huh. All of that was an apple orchard?

RC: Yes sir. I picked up apples there.

PL: Now, did he live up here, or?

RC: No, uhn-uh, he lived down here at Nethers Store, where his-

PL: Oh, I see.

JC: And he owned this land up here?

RC: Me and my father come up here, he bought the orchard grass seed and me and my father come up here--we lived up here on Corbins Mountain--we come up here and it snowed, oh about that deep.

JC: Knee deep?

RC: No, about half leg deep. Sowed the orchard grass. Sowed it by your tracks, you could see, see? How wide to sow. Next spring, you never saw such a stand of grass in your life. See, when the snow went down, it put the grass in the seeds, in the ground, see.

JC: Seed down in the ground, yeah.

RC: Yes sir, I picked up a many apple right in that orchard.

JC: Uh-huh. You don't see any sign of an apple tree standing now.

RC: (chuckle) No indeed.

JC: Was there a house up in there?

RC: Uhn-uh.

JC: No house? No. Just about a thirty acre orchard.

RC: Next house, where we used to live, on up here.

JC: Okay.

RC: Right on the road.

PL: All right. [directly into microphone] This is a semi-cleared area with a rail fence alongside the road on the left hand side going up, claims owned by Kay Weakley. He lived outside the park. It's a large apple orchard, Mr. Corbin and his father planted orchard grass and gathered apples in here.

[1:11:21, tape breaks]

JC: Side of the creek to our right here that--

AT: I know it was in places. And, but it was very near the Hughes down there.

JC: Uh-huh. Was the road that you all used to come up, Pop, over on the other side of the creek?

RC: No, the road was on this side.

JC: On this side, you think?

RC: Yeah.

AT: But not up this high, was it?

RC: I think so.

AT: You think so?

RC: Yeah. Might have shrunk, not as [unintelligible] just [unintelligible] get off here a little higher.

AT: Well now—

UM: It looks like there used to be a road there.

AT: Yeah, this wash out has occurred in the last fifteen years.

RC: Oh yeah.

JC: Well, that part right along there in front of us looks like it may have been a trail at one time.

AT: Oh, it was. That's what we'll go back on. It's possible that that was the road, but it [unintelligible] farther down

[1:12:09, tape breaks]

AT: —up there.

JC: What'd you say, Pop?

RC: You know what they used to call this little place right in here?

JC: Right in front of us?

RC: Yeah.

JC: No.

RC: Long Level.

JC: Long Level? Why was that?

RC: Well, it was long, level piece of road. Of course they called it Long Level.

PL: Long Level.

JC: Long Level. (chuckle)

PL: [directly into microphone] Just north of the area you referred to as the apple orchard, fence is still on the left, going up.

[1:12:30, tape breaks]

PL: [directly into microphone] Actually, apparently this is the road that we are on. Disregard that earlier statement.

JC: They dig that root [unintelligible].

UM: Yeah.

JC: Make medicine?

PL: Ginseng.

UM: Yeah, [unintelligible] out of 'em.

JC: What, they'd dig [unintelligible] the root.

UM: [unintelligible] dried out. Digging.

AT: It's a thriving business these days.

UM: People went for that stuff all the time.

JC: What, digging it up?

UM: Right.

AT: Did you ever look for any?

JC: No.

RC: Oh yeah. Many times.

JC: Where did they find it?

UM: In the mountains. Any place in the mountains.

RC: [unintelligible].

JC: Any up here?

UM: Oh, there's ginseng, yeah.

JC: Still along here was part of the orchard, this rail fence here?

UM: Well--

PL: [directly into microphone] This whole area, long straight--yeah--is apparently all part of the same orchard, Weakley's.

JC: Do you have, would he get 'em down off the mountain, in a wagon?

RC: He wouldn't pick 'em.

JC: Huh?

RC: He wouldn't pick 'em.

PL: He wouldn't pick 'em?

RC: No.

JC: Who gathered them then?

RC: He--you know Paul Olfen (??) came to pick 'em up and haul 'em out by the ton.

JC: Olfen?

RC: [unintelligible] out, [unintelligible].

JC: Uh huh.

PL: So he got the money for 'em?

RC: Yeah.

PL: Oh, yeah.

RC: Quarter a bushel was [unintelligible] pay you for 'em.

PL: Pay him a quarter a bushel.

UF: How many more boxes?

PL: Any significance?

RC: Can carry a lamp at one time.

JC: No house or nothing was down there?

RC: No.

JC: No.

[1:14:06, tape breaks]

JC: Here's a gate. What was this to?

RC: This was an orchard, where the orchard come up.

JC: This was an entrance to the orchard?

RC: Yeah.

JC: Right here. Huh. All right. That's a good ways from where we first started at the other end of the orchard down there, too.

RC: Mm boy.

JC: Good ways.

UM: Would you say it's about thirty acres in there?

RC: Something like that [unintelligible].

JC: It must have run pretty long ways then.

RC: [unintelligible]

JC: Uh huh.

RC: You take thirty, thirty five acres up here in this mountain, thirty five acres equals about fifty channels [unintelligible]. [not "channels"]

JC: I guess so. Okay.

PL: [directly into microphone] There's a gate at the upper end of the orchard, still along the trail, off to the left. Quite a distance from where he first said that the orchard began.

JC: What's that?

AT: Was Aaron Nicholson referred to as King Nicholson generally or just--

JC: Who did you know this to be, Pop?

RC: Old Man Aaron Nichols.

AT: Aaron Nicholson?

RC: Yeah. I been to his house many a times.

AT: Have you?

RC: Many a time. Hoover lived right down here off the road.

JC: Uh huh.

RC: He used to, his wife used to--

UM: Hey Bob, I want to get a picture with you right over here.

RC: His wife used to trim my hair.

JC: His wife did?

RC: Yes sir. Her name was Alice.

JC: Yeah.

PL: Alice.

JC: Pop, stand over there with him, we'll get a picture.

PL: That's right in the poison ivy there.

RC: It don't bother me.

PL: Okay. (laugh)

UF: [unintelligible]

RC: I can lay down and sleep in it. (chuckle)

UF: Poison ivy.

RC: I was three going the same time, wonder which one was broke. (laughter) Yes sir.

PL: Was Aaron a pretty nice man, or was he a hard man or what?

RC: He was nice, he was treating me nice. Now his voice would've gone hoarse if you made him mad.

PL: Yeah. Big man, you say.

RC: Yes sir.

UM: Robert, do you want to stand on there, [unintelligible] girl?

UF: Why don't you and Bob stand over there with him and let me take you and Pop Pop and Bob's picture together?

RC: Used to be a road.

JC: All right.

RC: We drove along back there.

[UF, JC and RC talking at once; UF and JC talking about the camera, excluded from transcript for clarity of interview]

RC: [unintelligible] live on up there about a mile, mile and a half.

PL: Okay.

RC: High, and Gus Nichols lived right down in there [unintelligible] no way, back there where he used to live.

PL: Gus Nicholson.

RC: Mm-hmm. Gus and-

PL: That would be kind of over in the direction where that Casey-

JC: Hey Robert?

PL: -or who'd you say it was?

JC: Let's stand over here-

PL: Aaron Nicholson lived over on the ridge up on the hill.

RC: Huh?

JC: Stand back here with us. C'mon back here, Pop.

[1:17:17, tape breaks]

[JC and UF talking in background, mostly indecipherable, excluded from transcript for clarity of interview]

RC: And Aaron Nichols, he was kind of king up in here.

PL: Yeah. Did people around here refer to him as that?

RC: Oh yeah. Oh he was fascinating--he was high educated.

PL: Oh, I see.

RC: They come to him for advice, see. And what he told them, that's what they would try to do, take the--do what he done and hope it would be the best.

PL: I know George Pollock who ran the Skyland Lodge, he referred to him as King Nicholson in his book and there was always some question as to whether that was Pollock's invented name for him or whether he was really referred to as the king.

RC: No, I never knew him by nothing but Old Man Aaron Nichols. Only one I heard. Well, I made sure these were all rotted down, couldn't have seen nothing.

JC: He said this house was still standing until just six or seven years ago.

PL: I was here in about '67 or '68, and the walls were still in pretty good shape. The roof was off, but they tell me around '64 or '65 that the roof was still on the house.

RC: Well, I wasn't any more than, oh, four or five years old when I used to come up here

and get Aunt Alice to trim my hair.

JC: Is that right?

RC: And the house was old then, I mean old!

JC: Well, the house was probably built back at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

RC: Of course, you take those huge logs and the way that house was built in those days, they'll stand a whole lot of punishment.

JC: 'Cause you're talking about 1900 or 1901, four or five years old. And the house was old then?

RC: Yes indeed. All these houses.

UM: Uncle Robert, most of those logs is those oak logs?

RC: What? No, they was chestnut logs.

UM: Chestnut?

RC: Yeah.

JC: Chestnut. Is that what y'all would use the wood for when you'd cut it down and take the bark off? Use that log for making houses?

RC: Take the bark off?

AT: Well, you said you hauled a lot of bark off here, what kind of trees were you cutting down?

RC: Oh, they was tan barks.

PL: Chestnut oaks.

RC: That's a chestnut.

AT: That was a chestnut?

RC: That's just a regular chestnut.

JC: But you were cutting the chestnut oaks.

RC: Yeah. Left the bark on 'em that thick.

AT: Yeah.

RC: Real big black leaves.

PL: There's a tannery in Luray.

AT: Yeah.

RC: I'll show you a tree of it. That was where they would keep potatoes and canned fruit [unintelligible]-

UF: Storage.

UF: Yeah.

RC: -many times.

PL: Somebody's headed in.

UM: They're coming in from the other end.

RC: Yeah, see the door down there? Had a nice—

UM: Root cellar.

RC: Had a nice roof over it. And they'd put those potatoes and canned fruit and pumpkins and stuff in there and shut that door.

UF: Never froze.

RC: It never froze. Didn't care how hard she got. How hard the weather got. Sometimes the snow would just be drifted clean over top of it. Uncle Aaron, he'd figure he'd get his shovel and shovel out a path from the door on around to it if he wanted to come in here for anything for dinner. Shovel out past, shovel the snow away so you can open the door and come here and get what you wanted, potatoes and canned fruit—

UF: That was the grocery store, right?

RC: Huh?

UF: That was the grocery store.

RC: Yeah! Spring house.

JC: There's a lot of buildings straight over to the other side of here.

UM: Well, did they just use, did they get the water from—or did they had a regular spring house?

RC: No, they had a spring.

JC: Well, there's some building sites right over on the other side there.

UM: That's probably spring house is over that way, then.

RC: I think the spring house is out that a way.

JC: There's posts over there where—

RC: Old Man Gus Nichols, used to be [unintelligible] over three or four hundred yards there [unintelligible].

JC: Gus Nichols?

RC: Yeah.

JC: He lived on out a little further?

RC: Yeah, I [unintelligible]. Gus, he lived up there about, oh, about a half a mile on or higher.

PL: I think we'll see that place.

JC: Russ Nicholson?

PL: Yeah. There's a trail up through there now, and it goes up here and then cuts up that way. So we'll go right by it, I think.

JC: What was this place here, Pop?

RC: Place where you keep canned fruit and potatoes and apples and pumpkins and stuff in it for the winter.

JC: Oh. Stone sides--

RC: I been there with Aunt Alice many times, whether it was going out getting potatoes or apples. She'd go in there and get me, "Son, don't you want a bag of apples?" I said, "Yes, ma'am." (laughter) She'll--and I'd take 'em and go on down the road. (laughter)

JC: Well.

PL: [directly into microphone] Referred to Gus Nicholson. Apparently from the Aaron Nicholson house, he lived on the same side of the stream but perhaps back further away. If you're standing at the stream, facing the Nicholson, Aaron Nicholson house, he would have been maybe at a forty five degree angle off to the right. And he indicated that it was probably three hundred, two to three hundred yards perhaps, up to this house. One of the other members of the party also indicated that the Dicey Corbin mentioned in, or picture in, the Skyland book selling flowers, that Mr. Corbin here had dated her at one time.

[1:23:11, tape breaks]

PL: There's a home site right here with a chimney. Do you recall who lived here?

RC: The chimney?

PL: Yeah, it's right up here.

RC: That's where we used to live.

PL: He says this is where he used to live. Let's move up just a little bit closer to that chimney.

RC: Yep. That's her.

PL: I think there's a little--

RC: Yes sir.

PL: Is there a little foot path that we can walk up to it? Or do we just have to plow through?

[many men talking at once in the background, indecipherable]

JC: When was that?

RC: When I was about four or five years old.

JC: You lived here?

RC: Yeah.

JC: That's when you walked over to get your hair cut then.

RC: Yeah.

PL: So you lived upstream, then, from Aaron Nicholson's house?

RC: Uh-huh, yeah. Yes sir.

PL: So did you know George Corbin then? You were pretty close neighbors then, weren't you? In fact, you were his neighbor, I presume then.

RC: Yeah, ain't too far back there where George used to live.

PL: Was there anybody between you and he? Living there?

RC: George's father.

PL: Oh, I see, okay.

RC: And we met Corbin--

AT: He bought land from his father, didn't he?

RC: I think so, yeah.

AT: A few acres.

RC: Yeah.

JC: Well, when you all lived here, then, it was only like two or three children in the family then, huh?

RC: Two.

UM: Two. You and Uncle Clyde. And how long did y'all live here?

RC: I think we stayed here two years.

UM: Two years.

AT: Did your dad built the site here?

RC: No, no, it was already built.

AT: I see.

RC: It belonged to the man Kay Weakley. His house.

AT: The one who had the apple orchard.

RC: Yeah. And he didn't charge no rent for it, just told us live here long as you wanted.

UM: Can't hardly beat that kind of a set up now can you? (chuckle)

UF: Even up here. (chuckle)

RC: And the garden, the garden was right out there. Can't help wonder if that's still here, now. All clean, nice grassy yard. Old Man Geedy (??) Dodson and Ed Wigley (??) used to come up here for trout fishing. Had to just flip the trouts out there out of a hole of the water.

AT: But not in Aaron Nicholson's pond.

RC: No sir.

AT: (chuckle)

RC: (chuckling) They'd always skip that hole. Can't help but say, I don't want no trouble with that old devil. (chuckle) Lord, Lord.

PL: So you were just mainly looking for--your folks were probably just looking for a place of their own then--

RC: Yeah.

PL: --and just stayed here for a couple years.

JC: Well, you must have moved here from the house where you were borned in originally then, huh?

RC: Moved from here?

JC: You moved from the house where you were born in to here?

RC: Yeah.

JC: And then y'all later left here and went--

RC: When we left here, my father built a new house on his father's place. Up there built right, built while, I was born then. And moved from here there.

AT: Near Short Mountain.

JC: Uh-huh. Near Short Mountain, yeah. How far was that from here?

AT: Three miles. Four miles. Three or four miles, isn't it?

RC: From down there to?

JC: From here over to where you all built the house.

AT: About three miles.

RC: From here? (chuckle) It's more than three miles.

PL: So coming down from George Corbin's place, it would be his place, and his father's place, then your place, then Aaron's place.

JC: That's it.

PL: Okay.

RC: George Corbin lived as far up there as you could get.

AT: Well now there's another house, not Russ Nicholson's house, but there's another house back up north of Russ Nicholson's and beyond the cemetery there. There's a house back in there. Do you know whose that was? Do you know, Paul?

PL: No, but we might be able to find out. We can go to the cemetery, I think we probably want to go up there and see that and that's just a little ways up, too. [directly into microphone] This house that Mr. Corbin says that he lived in for a couple of years is--right--is the next one up from Aaron Nicholson's house. It's on the left hand side of the trail, going up. Part of a foundation and some rock wall left. An old cherry tree that has fallen over is right there, too.

[1:28:18, tape breaks]

AT: I guess this is the first time you've ever seen this cabin.

RC: Yes sir.

PL: The one was built when George was--

RC: Did he live here himself?

AT: Oh yes.

RC: He did?

AT: And his--

RC: His wife was living, or?

PL: He had three wives.

RC: Three wives.

PL: His first wife lived here and she died in, he said she's buried up here in the cemetery.

UF: Where is the cemetery?

AT: Second wife died here, too, after the birth of one of the boys. Virgil and--well, the last boy, obviously, Franklin--Virgil and Franklin were both born here. I don't know about Stanley.

PL: So was George living with his father? Then?

RC: No. No, he was married.

PL: Where was he living when you were here, then? Did he--

RC: I think he was living here. But I never did come up here, to see him.

JC: Hey Jeffrey? Straighten Old Bill out there. Back him up.

AT: Well, he had a root cellar here and he was working on the addition at that end at the time he left, but really the part that was covered with the metal roof here was the only part that he occupied. It's a two-story cabin. And then two rooms here. Living room--

JC: How many bedrooms did they have in here? One or two?

AT: Two. Second floor and--

PL: So did you know George very well?

RC: Oh, yeah.

PL: Get along with him pretty well?

RC: Yeah. Yeah, George, always get along yeah, at least he was with me. I never had no trouble with him.

AT: Oh, he's a very hospitable person, I think.

PL: Loves to talk.

JC: Well, living so close together as you all did, did you help each other?

RC: Yes we did.

JC: You did?

RC: Sure. Glad to help 'em out.

JC: And you had a lot of stills going all at the same time, I guess.

RC: Oh, yes indeed.

UF: Hey, be careful what you say, Pop, they're recording. (laughter)

JC: Well, that's been so many years ago, statute of limitations has long since run out on that. (laughter)

PL: That's history now, yeah. (laugh)

JC: The statute of limitations is long since gone.

UM: Well, how many stills would y'all run, in like a week? I knew you'd run it along two at a time.

RC: Wouldn't take you about a week.

UM: I mean when you haul it down and sell it. I know I've heard Daddy say a lot of times that they would--some guy would come up around in some big old Cadillac or limousine or something and they'd bring the barrel down there, in twenty five gallon kegs, I believe he said. Put 'em in the trunk of the car.

PL: Did you have much trouble with revenuers?

RC: Never heard of one. But when they did break loose, I mean it was just like you was shooting into a gang of birds. They would scatter.

JC: People scattered everywhere, huh?

RC: Yes. Sakes alive.

AT: I think things got tougher later on, after you had left the hollow.

RC: Oh, yeah.

JC: It must have, yeah.

AT: Because--

RC: Oh yes.

AT: There was a tale about George's--George had two stills, one of which was discovered and he was, he had a man with a bad leg working the still, but he was off at the time and George was there and the revenuers came in and George ran. And they couldn't catch him and there was some remark to the effect that if a man with a bad leg could get away that fast, they'd hate to see what a man with a good leg would be able to do. (laughter)8

PL: Yeah, George told us, too, that two of the revenuers that they had in here were Nicholsons themselves.

RC: That's right, Pete and Paul.

PL: Pete and Paul, right. Yeah. (laughter)

JC: You knew 'em?

RC: Did I know 'em? They weren't worth the salt made out of biscuits.

JC: You all didn't like them I take it.

RC: Pete and Paul revenued and had their brother getting it and making it for them all at the same time. (laughter) Yeah, haul it off at night and sell it and then they'd go the next morning and catch the other man.

JC: They were getting paid from both sides.

RC: That's what I knows. (laughter)

PL: That's what George did, too, said the exact same thing. (laughter)

RC: Knew him like a book.

PL: Now where did they live, did they live on--

RC: Down here at Nethers Mill.

PL: Oh, on out of the hollow, then. Yeah.

RC: Right across from Nethers Mill, right across to your left, that great big house. Old Man Jimmy Nethers used to own it, they bought the property. 'Course they ought to the way they were rolling the money in. (laughter)

JC: Getting it from both sides. What, did y'all have to pay them a little something to stay in operation so they wouldn't bother you?

RC: Thank the good Lord we weren't living around here when those revenuers had. Somebody would have killed 'em.

JC: Yeah, I'm surprised somebody didn't.

RC: Yeah, I am, too.

PL: They said later that the CCC9 boys didn't really come down in this--my understanding that they tore down a lot of the cabins after the park was put in.

RC: Yeah.

PL: But they had better sense than to come down here to get these buildings, they just kinda stayed away and let the buildings stand up. I don't know how much truth there is in that.

AT: Frank Shire (??) made a habit of getting to know the people who lived here. This is 1927 to 1935. But he said he--when he was a good quarter mile off, he'd start whistling and singing as loud as he could so that everybody knew that he wasn't trying to sneak in. (laughter) And wouldn't associate him with the revenuers. And he'd sample all the brandies and the, all the output like a wine taster.

[1:35:50, tape breaks]

RC: Getting mighty [unintelligible], with John Mill, tipped himself (??). You hardly ever see anybody drunk.

JC: Well, they just take a drink before they ate.

RC: You went on and tend to your business. If you had anything to do, you wanted any help, "Yes sir, I'll be there in the morning," so you just depend on it, he was there the next morning, and he come, and if he couldn't come he'd tell you he couldn't come and if was coming he tell you he's coming. And he'd come. Same way with the next house, same with the next house, and you, wasn't no strangers. Wasn't no strangers. (whispering) "That's just a half a gallon. I don't know of anybody that's got any, I'll see if I can

drink it all before I leave." (laughter) No, you shouldn't do that. You wouldn't visit more than but two houses before you'd be down. (laughter)

JC: I don't guess you could drink that much.

RC: He used to make a little, he wouldn't make too much. He'd run off, oh, about once a month or something like it.

JC: Jim Polk Nichols.

RC: Yeah. Your great-uncle.

JC: Yeah.

RC: My uncle. I'd go to his, I'd be to his house, "Son, do you want a little taste?" (laughter) I'd say, "Yeah, I don't care," so Old Dunner (??) go get him a drink of that good brandy. She'd go pour out a table glass booming full. Bring it on and hand it to me. (laughter) Well, I wouldn't think about drinking all that stuff. (laugh) I take a swallow of it, and she'd say, "Son, drink all you can of it." I'd say, "Thank you, that's plenty." (laughter)

AT: How as the quality, was it generally pretty good or what?

RC: Yes sir, yes sir.

AT: George's was supposed to be very good brandy.

[JC and others talk in the background; what can be heard of their conversation is omitted from transcript for clarity of interview]

RC: Yes sir. Wasn't no sugar in it in them days. Nothing but what the grain put in it. Pure. And you had to be a good masher if you, if you mashed, say five bushels, that's three of corn, two of rye, you got two gallons to the bushel. That's what was in it, it was two gallons to the bushel. Of double whiskey of anywhere from ninety to a hundred proof.

UM: Phew.

RC: Two gallons to the bushel. And at that time, he was bringing about two-dollars-and-half a gallon.

AT: Mm hmm mm.

RC: And your meal cost about fifty cents a bushel.

AT: Ain't that something.

RC: (laugh) So you, just, you got enough just to pay you for your work.

PL: Mm-hmm.

RC: They never cut no corn like people do, y'know, cut it and chop it up in the field. The top blade, cut the top off down to the ear. And then stripped the blades off from the ear down, tied up in bundles. That was blade fodder. Well, they'd get the top fodder in, they'd get the blade fodder all in and put it in the barn. Then they pull the corn off, go four rows together. Take a slide, a horse, haul it up, have a great long rick of corn. On there way up there. They'd boil off a ham, kill a couple old hens, getting go raise now gonna have a corn shucking that night. All the neighborhood people go in, shuck, sometimes it would be one or two o'clock before they get through shucking. All you could eat and all you could drink.

PL: Mm hmm mm. So that was pretty much the social life up here.

RC: Yeah. Yeah.

PL: Did you do any other things other times of the year like that, sort of get-togethers?

RC: Oh yeah. Had fence raisings, had the logs all hauled here like that, might have a house raising. Neighborhood people come in, what could throw it up in a day. Had a roof on it and all ready to move in it. (chuckle)

AT: Uh huh. When you—

UM: Must have been something, cutting them out like that on those corners and everything.

RC: Cut out with an axe.

UM: Yeah, I know.

RC: Hewed wood axe.

UM: Uh huh. Well, what type of mud, like in these older houses down here, would they just use mud out of the cricks¹⁰ down here, or what kind of?

RC: Yeah. Oh, dig you a hole in the ground there, pour some water in, make your mud up and go to daubing.

JC: Mm hmm mm. Well how about when y'all made apple butter and all, would you all get together for that.

RC: Oh yes, had bean stringings, apple peelings.

JC: Yeah.

RC: Peel enough apples in a night to make a forty gallon till of butter.

JC: And everybody all around would come and help out in that?

RC: Yeah, they'd come in and help you to stir it.

UM: How much sugar and stuff like, when you—couldn't get sugar and stuff back then, could you?

RC: Yeah.

UM: You could?

RC: Oh yeah, get all the sugar you wanted. Nickel a pound.

UM: Nickel a pound.

RC: Yeah. 'Course, you'd be glad to get that.

PL: Did many people play musical instruments or anything, did you have—

RC: Yeah, oh yeah, some very good fiddlers around here back then. Old time—

PL: What other instruments did you see?

RC: Mouth harp. A banjo. Guitar.

UM: Jew's harp.

RC: Yeah, Jew's harp, I played many a Jew's harp. I tell ya (mimics twanging sound of mouth harp). (chuckle)

UM: I saw one time over there when I was with Daddy, that you had one of them great big ones. Oh and that's been a long time ago.

RC: Jew's harp?

UM: Yeah.

PL: Anybody up here own a dulcimer?

RC: Nuh-uh.

PL: Okay.

UM: What were they?

PL: Oh, it's an instrument that's kind of come back now, it may have been more in the southern Appalachians than here, it's a funny looking thing, we own one, it's almost tear drop shaped, and it's got like three or four strings on it. And you play it on your lap-

RC: Yeah.

PL: Strum it with a quill.

UM: What do you call that?

PL: Dulcimer. Yeah, they're real popular now, folk singers, y'know, use 'em a lot. And supposedly they go way back, but we can't find much record of 'em being in this part of the mountains, so maybe they're further south, I don't know.

UM: We was down in the Smokey Mountains, there, they had the dobros too, it was sort of like a guitar but it had a resonator, whatever that is, I don't know much about that.

PL: Yeah. I never heard of that.

RC: On the Christmas morning, up in this part of the neighborhood, of course they don't do it, they didn't do it when I moved out up in here, next to Little Washington. But on Christmas morning, it was whizzing which, you gonna hear an old shotgun go off, ba-chung. First, cause Whitman (??) gonna shoot the shotgun first. When Marney (??) heard that one, watch out. Ba-chung, ba-chung, you barely could hear just a furl (??). (laughter) Waking people up.

AT: Everybody around would shoot 'em off, huh?

RC: Yeah. Shoot one time.

AT: Christmas morning you said?

RC: Christmas morning. Then they had a great big stew kettle, hold about a gallon. Put that on, on the stove, pour the liquor in it, with the spice and the ginger and the sugar and the nutmeg. Make a hot stew. And you drank a little glass like that, well, not that full, just about like that. You thought you was gonna burn up you'd get so hot. (laughter) And you'd just do this, snow up to your knees, but you had to do this.

PL: Well, what did they put in it to get it so hot?

RC: Ginger.

PL: Ginger?

RC: Nutmeg.

PL: And nutmeg, yeah. Did you get wild ginger, or did you go buy it at the store?

RC: No, at the store. Hot, ground ginger. It was good, I mean, it hit the sore throat, but you'd rim (??) it out for you. (laughter) And your nose stopped up. She opened them tubes up. And that was all of it--that was it. Drink that, after one morning go to the next house and the next house and keep on. Sometimes some of 'em wouldn't get home until the next day or two.

UM: Get drunk?

RC: (laugh) I reckon so. (laughter) Yeah. Mint juleps, you ever drink a mint julep? Yeah, that used to be famous. Hot summer time. Take your mint, and clean it up, wash it nice and clean. Kind of rub it, bruise it up good, put it down in a gallon pitcher.

AT: People cultivate their own mint patches, or?

RC: No, indeed. It would just grow along damp places, spring branches, where it was damp.

PL: What other kinds of things would you gather? You know, just out in the woods, or-

JC: Living off of the mountain, off the land.

PL: I guess you got nuts and berries and things like that.

RC: Oh yeah, you pick a lot of raspberries.

JC: Pick a lot of what?

RC: Raspberries.

JC: Was there a lot of raspberries up through here then?

RC: Oh yes, you-

JC: How about blackberries?

RC: Oh yes, plenty of blackberries. Dewberries, they call 'em, broad, about that high, berries bigger than your thumb. The vine would be so full they'd be laying down on the ground. Sweet-

UM: Daddy often talked about where, the place, some place up here where they got a lot of chestnuts.

RC: Oh yeah.

UM: Used to put 'em in the fireplace and cook 'em up.

RC: All up in here was just plenty of chestnuts, yeah. See those old big trees as you're coming up, laying down? They was all standing then, bearing chestnuts.

PL: Did the chestnut blight really hurt the people that lived up here, do you suppose? I guess that was pretty much after you left, though, when that came through.

RC: I left just before the blight started. But later on, I visited some relatives later on, I know the chestnut time were dying, really wiped it out. When we lived on James Mountain, Old Man Tom Gore's place, Clyde and myself used to get up in morning before breakfast and take a two bushel bag and pick it up full and get to the house before breakfast got ready. My father would take it, put it on a horse, take it over to

Sperryville, Old Man Dick Edkins, (??) he bought 'em, he run a store there in Sperryville, he bought 'em. That's the way we had to get our winter clothes, shoes, and clothes.

PL: About how much money would you make in a year back then living up here?

RC: Just a little, you couldn't hardly keep count of it.

PL: Yeah. Huh.

JC: Nickels and dimes-

PL: What did-

RC: Hardly ever seen any greenback.

PL: Yeah. What did most of it come from? Tan barking, or?

RC: Oh, some of the big shots around had some money, but they was tight with it, I tell ya.

JC: Didn't Tom Gore have plenty money?

RC: Plenty of it. But just so you get it.

JC: You all worked pretty hard to get a dollar out of him, huh?

RC: Oh yeah. Whole day and after dark.

PL: So a lot of the money you made just selling, or, working for other people for a day or two. Did you ever sell chestnuts, or things like that?

RC: Yeah. Oh yeah. Used to pick up chestnuts, sell 'em. I'd go through the mountain, dig ginseng; sell it. I tell you, you had to--as my father always said, you had to cut your goose the way your garment run (??). (laugh) Yeah, he was out. Buy you a-

JC: How long has your tape run, Paul?

PL: Oh, it's a real slow speed, I've done about half.

RC: Buy you one pair of shoes, when about the second or third black frost come, chill the ground about like that, that high. Grass that old cow. Every morning before day, she'd be a laying down, and you'd run down and make her get up and jump in that bed to warm your feet. That been going on before there was milk coming. And you bring 'em, hand 'em to you, "Here, here's your pair of shoes now." And you can stomp 'em out just as soon as you want to, but say that if you do, they're gonna take it. And I know you had to notice where you was putting your feet. (chuckle)

JC: Those you had to make you last all winter?

RC: All the winter, if you didn't, you done without. No difference, snow, the hail or whatnot, you wear them old shoes coming there. And then when hot weather come, bare footed time, they just don't do you strain, if you give a kick like that, off your shoe fell off your foot. And wasn't any more shoes on there until the next two or three black frosts. (laughter)

PL: (laughing) He did what?

RC: Whipped two of 'em to the plow.

PL: Who was this, Aaron?

JC: I saw 'em on both sides of it.

RC: Russ. I mean Gus. Russ Nicholson. To a single shovel lane off there, you know? Just put a cling to it, about in the, about that long. Cut a stick about that long, oh, about like your arm. One get on one side of the stick and one on the other and he'd do the plowing.

AT: How old were the boys when they acted as plow horses?

RC: They was about twenty, twenty one years old--just as strong as mules.

PL: I bet they were. (laughter)

AT: They act like 'em.

JC: They would get the boys to pull the plow?

RC: That's the way he plowed up all his land.

JC: With the boys?

RC: With the boys.

JC: Pulling plow?

RC: Yes sir.

JC: Never heard of such a thing, did you?

RC: Then when they went to laying off, he only worked one of 'em. Lay off the corn rows, the rest of 'em drop and cover.

JC: Well, I'll be darn.

RC: I seen 'em do it. Seen 'em do it. One on one side of the stick and one on the other one. Man, and they'd get this root or something and the plow would hang in it, man they'd dig holes in the ground with their toes trying to get toe hold.

JC: Well, didn't he have horses to pull the plow?

RC: No. Had a little Ginny mule about so big, but he didn't want any men that was strong as that little mule.

JC: Whose people were these?

RC: Old Man Russ Nichols' boys.

JC: Yeah?

AT: And his cabin is still standing--

RC: Johnny and Albert.

AT: --somewhat across the way over here, we'll see.

JC: Russ Nicholson's cabin is still standing?

PL: Yeah, that's right here.

AT: He was George Corbin's cousin.

RC: Yeah.

JC: Mm-hmm.

PL: Where was the school? Did anybody go to school here, or?

RC: You know down there where I showed you the baptizing hole?

PL: Mm-hmm.

RC: Right up from there, just a little, just about twenty five, thirty yards, right up there was the school house.

PL: Okay.

JC: Up above the baptizing hole?

RC: Yeah.

JC: On the other side of the creek?

RC: On the other side.

JC: Yeah. On the opposite side that we came up.

RC: One light school house.

JC: One room.

RC: One light and one room.

JC: One window light?

RC: One window light, cut inside the house. That's all the light you had.

JC: Well, you wouldn't have many people in there going to school, would you?

RC: Have fifteen or twenty, twenty five.

JC: Yeah? One teacher taught 'em everything.

RC: Yes sir. Old Man Kay Weakley taught one session. Ackie Hutchinson's (??) daughter, Lucy. The one your Uncle Henry Hawkins married. She taught one season. Then her sister, Agnes, taught one season. Then we moved away, went to Rappahannock.

AT: The season would be a regular school year?

RC: Yeah, yeah, the regular school year.

JC: Well, you wouldn't go to school in the summer time, just in the fall and winter.

RC: There weren't no school in the summer time. No, we never heard of that.

AT: Did school wait 'til the crops are all in before it started in the fall?

RC: It didn't start early as it starts now. It was—

AT: Late October?

RC: Something like it, yeah. And after I got big enough to do a little work, on a good day, I was out grubbing, splitting rails and stakes. And the bad days, when just pouring the rain down or snow, you can go to school today. My class that, I was in with, they'd be way ahead of me. Used to make me so mad I wouldn't know what to do. Ahh, shoot.

(chuckle) And I did like that studying. Oh, I'd fight to stay ahead. But--

UF: [breaks from background conversation] What was that school teacher's name, Uncle Bob, that got killed? The tree fell on him and killed him? What was his name? Do you remember him?

RC: Sure.

UF: Was that Weakely? Was that his name?

RC: No.

UF: What was his name?

RC: Bailey Nicholson.

UF: Bailey, Bailey Nicholson.

JC: Tree fell on him?

RC: Yeah, about here, [unintelligible] Yeah, he went out to cut some firewood one day, it's windy. He cut a notch of tree and he thought the tree was going the way he notched it and it turned and come back on him. Caught him and killed him, smashed him to death.

UF: He was really a big man, wasn't he?

RC: Yeah. Dark complected, hair just as black as the crow. He was a preacher.

JC: Preacher, too?

RC: Yes sir, he was a good preacher. He used to preach down here at that church.

PL: Where did he live?

RC: Up here next to Skyline Drive.

UM: Very far from here?

RC: Right smart. And he'd walk and got down there to that church.

PL: Bailey Nicholson.

RC: Bailey Nicholson.

PL: And he was a preacher and he taught school.

RC: Mm-hmm.

UF: Papa, where did Nicholson live?

RC: Which Nicholson, Bailey?

UF: The one that, umm, that shot your father.

RC: Oh, he lived on the Hazel Mountain.

UF: Hazel Mountain.

JC: Over near where my mother used to live. Pretty close to there, I guess, wasn't it?

RC: Yeah.

AT: What was his name?

RC: John.

AT and PL: John Nicholson.

RC: John Nicholson. Yeah.

PL: Did he stand trial for that, or?

RC: After they caught him, he did. Had a right struggling while getting him, though, finally got him.

AT: What was the outcome of the trial?

RC: Oh, he skipped. His brother Acre (??)--at that time, Acre, his brother, had a Model T car, but that's all that was in style in those days, was a Model T. And he takes him to Hagerstown, Maryland, and slips him out one night, takes him to Hagerstown, Maryland and drops him, tell him to stay here and change his name. So he stayed about a week or two and he got dissatisfied. He come, big man, he comes back. So I was up to see my wife one night, and she says, May says, "Which way you going home?" I say, "I'm going the same way I been a going." Well, John Nicholson owned a place on out yonder from where my wife lived. And it's apple orchards, about twenty acres of York apples. I say, "Why, why'd you tell me that?" She says, "I tell you something, if you won't say anything about it." I didn't know. She says, "Don't go that way," she says, "go down by Joseph Bennett's tonight." She says, "John Nichols home." Well, he put his threats out, if he ever saw me, he was gonna kill me, too. I say, "You sure he's home?" She says, "He absolutely is." I said, "Okay. Thank you." She said, "Now, now, don't you say anything about it." I say, "No, I ain't gonna breath it." I gets on my horse and comes down by Joseph Bennett's. Rode in there, they was awake, it was about ten o'clock. After they'd gone to bed, I called him. "Come on out," I said. Mr. Weakley?" "Yeah." I said, "John Nicholson is at home." He said, "Are you sure?"

JC: Well, who was he, the sheriff?

RC: No, he was just a good friend of my father's, see. I said, "I'm sure of it." He says, "Okay," he says, "wait a minute." He stepped in that apartment and called Charlottesville. He called them revenue men that caught him, see, Leville and Neville and Wood. Six of 'em, six officers. He said, "Now, I'll tell you what you do." He said, "Now you go around and deputize as many men tonight as you can." He said, "Tell 'em to meet over here at Jenkins's store, in the morning at seven o'clock," he said, "tell 'em to bring their guns with 'em." I said, "Okay." So I rode around and deputized about ten or twelve. Next morning at seven o'clock, we was all standing around there in the road there, in the store yard, up drove these officers. And they said, "All right, which a way?" So Epp, and he was over there too, but Epp didn't go. And Epp says, "Too much of a walk for me," he says, "I can't stand it." I said, "I'll show you the way." He says, "Okay." We struck out. We got up to John Nichols' house about, oh, about 8:30 that morning. And his barn, see it sits here, and his house sit on down a right smart ways from the house. And his wife was in the garden pulling up cabbage leaves, cabbage heads, throwing 'em over the fence to the cows. Mr. Wood, he walked up and says, "Good morning, Mrs. Nicholson." She says, "Good morning." She saw this gang of people. He said, "Is Mr. Nicholson around?" He said, "Get to the house. Surround it." And they all went on down there and on the back end, on the back gabled in, the window, he had the window out and a ladder sitting up to the window. Wood, he just walked up on the porch, set his .30-30 rifle down, he says, "You all surround the house, I'll go in and get him." Well, I thought as bad an egg as he was, I don't know whether you're gonna get him or he's gonna get you. Anyway, in he went. Shoot, it weren't two minutes before he poked his head out the window and said, "Y'all civilians, unload your guns and go back the same way you come." Says, "I got him." He says, "Officers stay." All right, well next I said, "All right.: We went on back, we went to Nether's Store, we didn't go home, we went to Nether's Store. And we walked in, set the guns up in the corner. We kept watching, looking up the road. About two hours, we saw him coming, well we grabbed the

guns, loaded 'em and went out. Festus Hudson walking, walking just about as close to him in front as I am to this fella. One officer walking there, one walking there, one walking right behind him, had him hemmed, see?

JC: They had him surrounded.

RC: Oh yeah. Wasn't no way in the world you could get a shot at him. Festus' yard gate was open, just pushed him through the yard gate, right in the house, went in with him. One of these officers come out, turn the automobile around, put it right beside the gate, he sitting in there with the motor running, they come out with him, and he reached back and threw the back door open, they shot him in and then zoom they went! Couldn't get a crack in no way no how. I mean, we was gonna kill him.

JC: Don't you think it's turned out much better, though, they way that it did, where he spent some time in the pen?

RC: Give him thirty five years and he only pulled ten?

JC: I thought he pulled most of it?

RC: No, he pulled ten. Not that pulled life. Did you see, hear what he did to that fella, let's see, what is his name?

JC: Angel?

RC: Angel. You hear what he did to him?

JC: Three life sentences. For killing those two police officers down in Montgomery County back in March of this year.

RC: Well now, he isn't going to get out, is he?

JC: No.

[2:04:02, tape breaks]

PL: Know who lives—I think, this is where Russ Nicholson lived, I believe, or, I forget. Do you know?

JC: I don't know. What was this house here, Pop?

RC: That been put up since I was up in here.

JC: Yeah.

RC: I don't know who put it up or who's in it.

JC: Y'all lived up here. Probably been built—

RC: Been built since.

JC: Less than fifty years old then, huh?

RC: Just a—

PL: Allan, has this fallen in on its own, or has it been, for taking--

AT: I think on its own.

PL: I knew you all used wood here to fix up the one over there.

AT: Yes, well, we rebuilt the front porch there with wood from this cabin.

RC: Old Man Russ Nicholson's been dead--well, he's been dead over fifty years. Must be one of his boys.

PL: So who lived--who did--who was it you said lived here?

AT: Russ Nicholson.

PL: Oh, Russ Nicholson. Would there have been a son or another younger one.

RC: It must be--

JC: Well, Russ Nicholson died before you left from up here, didn't he?

RC: Yeah. Old Man Russ.

JC: Uh-huh.

AT: Must've been one of the--

RC: One of these boys I was telling you about.

AT: That may have been it, because he was supposed to be George's cousin.

RC: Yeah.

AT: And it sounds as if the Russ Nicholson you're talking about was older, was a generation older than George.

RC: Oh yeah, yes sir. It'd be down along that right fork.

PL: Uh-huh.

RC: Must be one of his boys that built this. [unintelligible]

AT: But you see, now, this roofing is the same style that George put on, so this roof was put on in the 30s. I'm quite sure and the shakes are the same style.

PL: Yeah, I've got a picture of this place, you know, standing up full.

AT: Oh, it was--

PL: And I can remember walking upstairs in it.

AT: You could still do that in the 60s, early 60s. But, no, the park wants us to take this down as fast as we can. Well--

PL: I would just let it fall down.

AT: Well, the wood is awfully useful. First of all, when we were carrying down there with it from this cabin, it's more authentic, and secondly it's quite a chore. You can see the chinking here, where the problem is, this is the same style as George's is. All that mud chinking in there comes out after a while and those are great mice runs.

RC: Old oak logs.

PL: Well--

JC: They want you to take this down because of eyesore or what?

AT: Well, mainly because people have camped over here.

UF: It's dangerous.

AT: You know, used it as shelter.

RC: I wouldn't camp in it. No.

PL: You lean on the wrong one.

RC: (chuckle)

AT: Well, it's, we're supposed to--it hasn't been this bad.

UF: Go back this way?

AT: Collapsing from--no, not yet.

PL: Let's see, this doesn't go. We have to, just kinda head straight out there.

[sound of the recorder moving obscures some talking]

JC: April 27, 1895.

PL: Huh. George said one of his wives thought was buried here. He couldn't quite remember. This place where your father and your grandparents, were the markers just similar to this?

RC: Yeah.

PL: Do you remember any kind of fence or rock wall around it?

RC: No, ain't none.

PL: There wasn't?

RC: Nuh-uh.

PL: So that made it pretty hard to find.

RC: Yeah.

JC: You think you would be able to find the gravesite where your father was buried?

RC: I doubt it.

JC: You doubt it?

RC: Doubt it very much.

PL: Let's see, here's one with some writing. I think. No.

JC: This gravesite here?

RC: I know one.

JC: Who was that?

RC: Elijah Nichols.

JC: Elijah Nichols?

RC: Uh-huh.

JC: He was buried in here before you all left up here, then?

RC: Yeah. Yes sir. He was taken sick when we was down in Charlestown cutting corn. That was the year that flu was so bad. Come around.

AT: Nineteen-seventeen or eighteen?

RC: Yeah.

AT: Yeah.

RC: He was with me, Clyde and myself was down there, and he was with us. So it was all three taken sick, so we quit and go on home. And he come on home and went to bed and he never got out of it 'til he was taken out.

PL: Now where did he live?

RC: Right down here.

JC: How far down?

RC: You know where we stopped over there in Aaron Nichols' house?

JC: Yeah.

RC: Where I told you lead this right out from him, there about, oh four or five hundred yards from Old Man Aaron Nichols.

JC: And they brought him all the way up here to bury him?

RC: Yeah.

JC: What's that, a good mile from here, isn't it?

RC: Yes sir.

JC: Maybe more than that, huh?

AT: Oh yeah, more. More like two.

RC: I helped to put him in the casket. They didn't know anything about embalming then.

JC: No, they didn't even embalm any of them-

RC: You don't do it to about an odor. Yeah, I never smelled such an odor in my life. Anybody in the room with a hot fire was in--they was in December, the weather was cold, very cold. And it was kept right in the room, all day and all night. Great big fire and a sitting stove. Man, he smelled awful.

UF: I didn't think they did that, Papa, back then.

RC: Yeah.

UF: Thought they buried them right away.

JC: Sometimes kept 'em two or three days.

AT: Especially with something like flu.

JC: Yeah. Well, it would take a while to have dug the grave up here.

UF: Had to make a coffin and everything.

JC: Yeah. And they'd, what, it was wooden coffins back then. That they used.

RC: Yes sir. Wooden casings.

JC: Yeah.

AT: That was oak, too, I think. George was talking about some of the caskets that one of the people up here made. Made 'em of oak.

RC: Oh, I don't, I don't know. I know Elijah, he was--Rob Jones down here, he was undertaker. And he lived right there at the house this morning, where we got George--got this horse. That's where Rob Jones lives, made the coffin. And he made my father's coffin.

JC: Right where we went to get the horse?

RC: Yeah. Yes sir, live right there. He's bad health

PL: Yeah, I would bet if you came up here when the leaves were off the trees--

RC: Yeah.

PL: And you wouldn't need to come all the way up here, just up to where your grandparents lived, I bet you could find that cemetery, cause you can see so much farther, just like now, I had to look up here to make sure, but you can walk right by a cemetery in this time of year and not even know a thing.

JC: Maybe we can make some plans for later on.

PL: Yeah, I'd like to--

AT: In the fall.

PL: I'd like to come along if you do it.

JC: Right. We'll be in touch and hopefully plan another trip up--

AT: Would you want to stay overnight?

JC: I think it would be better, yeah. As long as accommodations and all are available and, for that, we could make a trip up and try to locate that, Pop, and cemetery, and stay overnight.

RC: Well, I got a mighty good gun laying there on the rack and it ain't doing nothing no good. (laughter)

JC: It won't do that no good up in here, neither. (laughter)

PL: Up here's nothing. Does that remind you of anything? This had a shake roof on it, looks like maybe a barn sat here or something. You know, when you were talking about Russ Nicholson, Aaron's house would be kind of that way, wouldn't it?

RC: Yes sir.

PL: So when you--

RC: That's Old Man Russ' house.

JC: This is Russ Nicholson's house?

RC: Yeah. His house.

PL: Was there anybody else that lived up here any further?

RC: No, uhn-uh. No sir. Yes sir, that's his house.

JC: That is?

RC: Yep.

JC: How big a house was that? Pretty good size?

RC: Oh, it was a right good size house.

AT: Two rooms, wasn't it?

RC: Oh, it had two rooms upstairs. And two rooms downstairs. It had a shed built off from the kitchen, where they cooked meat.

PL: Okay, that makes sense because there was something to that effect here at one time. I don't know if we can even figure it out.

JC: There was a shed built off from the kitchen?

RC: Yeah. Man, I've been to this house a many a times. I and my father, remember when I used to live down here? Walk up here, sit 'til bed time.

JC: Well, it wasn't that far for you to walk when you lived down there, up here, was it?

RC: No, uhn-uh, no. My father thought a lot of--Old Man Russ lived up here. He and my father used to coon hunt together.

JC: Well, I tell ya what--

RC: Yes sir.

JC: If you walk right over there, I'll get a picture of you being in this house again, in different circumstances.

PL: Here's an old shoe, look here. There's a shoe.

JC: Somebody had built a pretty big house, you think?

RC: Yeah.

PL: I'm gonna get another picture of this too, my gosh.

RC: And these [unintelligible] this country at that time.

JC: Well it looks like it must have had a rock wall there.

RC: Yeah.

JC: What, did it have a basement in it?

RC: Nuh-uh.

JC: No?

RC: No.

JC: The way that wall is built up there, I guess that was the foundation that it was

sitting on, huh. Do you remember, Paul, when you took the pictures of it?

PL: Well, as I remember, this has always been down, since I can remember it. But the house, where you see the walls now, was still pretty much up and the roof was still on it and it was a shake roof, wooden.

RC: [unintelligible]

PL: [directly into microphone] Door on the downhill side.

RC: Come in [unintelligible] over there, tall as that was the door, come in, turn into a sitting room. Yeah, [unintelligible] bedroom and he had a room, went through there in the kitchen, cooking and-

AT: Well, that looks like it may have been the way that they used to come in.

RC: Yeah, that's the way we used to come in through that little door. Sure as you standing on that little rock.

JC: My goodness.

AT: Well how in the world-

RC: If they hung a roof 'bout like your thumb, they didn't get back far, they press again and the [unintelligible] here would go plunk, snap it and keep going. (chuckling)

JC: Gee whiz. Now, that was really torture to human beings then, wasn't it?

RC: That's what it [unintelligible].

PL: Mm-hmm.

RC: I tell you that.

JC: Well how many children did he have?

RC: He had three boys.

JC: Three.

RC: Yeah.

AT: Was one of them named Russ? Do you recall?

RC: Yeah, but his name was Albert, but we-his name was Russ Albert. Albert Russ. But we always called him Albert. 11

AT: Well that probably was his, then, across the way.

RC: That's the cabin he built out there.

JC: He probably went more by the name of Russ after his father died, then.

RC: Yeah. Yes sir. (chuckling) All the land you see here, all out through here. When we lived down there, see, all this here was clear, is what, you could see up here just plain, we'd be out there in our cornfield working, you see up here.

JC: I guess you could, you could see-

RC: See every move they made up here.

JC: You could see the house from where you all lived, huh?

RC: Yes indeed.

AT: Be a lot easier to moonshine now than then.

JC: Oh yeah.

PL: Yeah, nobody'd see you.

UM: You could camouflage now.

RC: I tend to agree with you. (laughter)

[2:18:25, tape breaks]

JC: -been back in here now?

RC: [unintelligible]

UM: You had enough of them when you was a young boy, didn't you?

RC: I know it. I've done hard a work enough in these mountains to kill a mule. Lifting and tugging and pulling.

JC: Working from sun up to sun down.

RC: Yeah, and sometimes all night.

JC: Day in and day out.

RC: Mm-hmm. Only rest you got was on Sunday. Everything had to work, five o'clock, if you got all day on Sunday. (chuckle) Figure out something for you to do. If a cow happened to got out or a horse, well you had to get her back and go to fencing.

JC: Mm-hmm. Well-

PL: [directly into microphone] Mr. Corbin referring to the fact that he would not come back.

RC: [unintelligible] this house? And [unintelligible] on up here.

JC: Is that right?

RC: Yes sir.

JC: Why is that?

RC: Well I don't know, I just liked it. And my father thought so much of him.

JC: Did he live up here until he died?

RC: What, here?

JC: Did he live right here until he died?

RC: Yeah.

JC: He did?

RC: Yes sir.

JC: Is he buried in that cemetery over there?

RC: I imagine so. I imagine so. He was born, Albert, must be up at that other cabin over there. I think Albert got married. Johnny never did get married. Ernest, he got married, but Ernest lives in Winchester. 12

AT: They still alive?

RC: Huh?

AT: Is he still alive, do you know?

RC: Who, Ernie?

AT: Ernest?

RC: Yeah. Yeah, last report I had on him, he was still alive.

[PL and JC talk over one another for a sentence]

PL: Okay. Get everybody together sometime. (chuckle)

JC: Do you know him, Dickie, living over around Winchester? [end overlap]

UM: Who's that?

JC: Ernie. Do you know the guy he's talking about, lives over in Winchester?

RC: Ernest Nichols.

JC: Ernest Nichols?

UM: Ernest Nicholson? No, I don't.

RC: Yep, he owns a place over there, I never seen him, I've just been told that he lives over there. They say he keeps himself in the house, won't let nobody hardly see him, won't come out. Don't know what's the matter with him.

PL: What about the other two boys?

RC: Well, Johnny's dead. And I reckon Albert is. I imagine he is, he was the next oldest after Johnny. And Ernest, he was the baby.13

PL: I see.

RC: He was the youngest one.

JC: Well after all of that hard work they put in, pulling a plow on this mountain, I'm not surprised they wouldn't be dead.

RC: Guarantee you that. And they pulled it from sun up until sun down.

PL: So how old would Ernest have been when you were here?

RC: When I lived up in here?

PL: Yeah.

RC: How old--Ernest would have been about my age. Johnny was older than I was. Albert was older than I was. But Ernest and myself were about the same age.

JC: So he'd be about eighty years old now.

PL: Yeah. So if he stayed here until the park came in, then he would probably remember quite a bit about being up here, too.

RC: Oh yes sir, yeah. You take a stick about like that sapling right there, cut it down, cut about four feet of it, that's the singer tree I had. (chuckling) One on one side and one on the other.

PL: And darn all, this is the last house up, that we know of.

RC: This is the only one I know. And I been all up in here. Sure, the main upper house.

JC: Last one up.

RC: Last one up.

JC: Before you reach the top of the mountain.

RC: Well, you ain't got to go so much further before you be there.

AT: It's a long climb, though. (chuckle)

PL: It's steep-

AT: About a mile.

PL: It's steep, yeah, you pay for that mile. (chuckle)

AT: You go up a thousand feet from here.

UM: Is that right? And now, if you go up, didn't you say there was a trail that goes up to this?

PL: Yeah, there's a trail.

AT: It's called the Hermit of Heaven (??) Cut-off Trail.

UM: Now, how far is it from right here up, about a mile you say?

UF: Is that the barn?

PL: Oh yeah, back here's a structure, still partly standing.

RC: Yeah, [unintelligible] barn, [unintelligible] direction from the house.

JC: What's that, the old barn now?

RC: Yeah.

JC: Yeah, well that's-

RC: Put his shepherd's milk cow in, he didn't have but one cow.

JC: One cow?

RC: One little, one of those old Ginny mules.

AT: We'll see, a square is-

UF: I guess they kept it up, built it up there because the stream's right down behind it.

JC: One cow and one mule and two boys to do the plowing. (laughter)

RC: Well, that's the way they worked it.

PL: Was there any common cause of death, anything that people died of more than anything else? Up here?

RC: No. Just, they lived up here and they just died of old age.

PL: Was there much typhoid or?

RC: No, no, very little.

PL: Uh-huh.

RC: Mostly, they'd take a cold and they didn't know what the pneumonia was, see.

PL: I see.

RC: And most of 'em died from that.

PL: Pneumonia. Yeah.

RC: Yeah.

PL: Yeah, you see a lot of--some of the cemeteries around, you see a lot of child graves, children's graves.

RC: Yeah. Yeah.

AT: Well, you know, George's--well, Franklin was born and his wife died about three hours later.

RC: Yeah. So far off here we had to get.

AT: What did most people die of up here, things like pneumonia?

RC: About pneumonia, most times, yeah.

PL: Did they have a lot of home remedies and things like that? Herbs and--

RC: Oh yeah. They'd get--what they doctored up, what was then medicine, they got that out of the mountains. Roots and herbs and stuff like that.

PL: Was there anybody that was kind of, knew more than anybody else?

RC: Oh yes.

PL: On that sort of thing?

RC: Oh yeah. Yeah, some old granny woman, she knew a little more than we did of it--forty, fifty years older than they was. She knew something that was a little better. She'd doctor 'em and--

AT: Well, you say Aaron Nicholson was supposed to be the wise man of the hollow?

RC: Yeah, oh yeah.

JC: You say Aaron Nichols was the wise man of the hollow?

RC: Yes sir.

JC: Why is that?

RC: Well, I don't know, because he had more brain I reckon. (laughter) Yeah. They looked up to him.

JC: When he told you something, you kinda figured what he was telling you was pretty straight and truthful.

RC: That's right. You aim to do what he said.

JC: Yeah.

RC: And if he said, "Don't fish that hole," you better not fish it. (laughter)

JC: You kinda took what he was saying as being fact without asking why?

RC: Oh, he mused facts. He didn't fool with you. Shrewd looking old gentleman, too. Was just as clean and neat.

JC: Aaron's the one you said had the long beard?

RC: Yeah, well, Russ and Gus both had long beards.

UF: Was his wife named Lizzie?

RC: Who's wife?

UF: Aaron.

RC: Nuh-uh, Alice.

UF: Huh?

RC: Alice.

UF: Alice?

RC: Little bit of small woman. She wouldn't have weighed over 130, 35, 40 pounds at the very most.

PL: Now, is your mother buried up here, too?

RC: My mother? No. Uhn-uh. My mother's buried down at Crabtree Cemetery in Culpeper.

PL: Uh-huh.

JC: Same place that my mother's buried.

JC: Next to Gordon?

RC: Yeah.

PL: These would be your brothers? Yeah. Mm-hmm. Gordon and Lacey.

JC: There were twenty one in my father's family. I think two or three of which—how many was it, Pop, that never did live past the infant stage?

RC: Only one.

JC: Only one?

RC: That's all.

JC: The one that was older than you.

RC: Yeah. Yes sir--

PL: So you've got nineteen brothers and sisters, then, huh?

RC: I did have.

PL: Phew!

JC: There were twenty at one time.

PL: Twenty at one time, my goodness.

JC: How long did your--the one live, that was older than you, Pop, not very long was it?

RC: Mother said two months.

JC: Two months?

RC: Yeah.

JC: Daddy knew a couple when they lived there.

PL: So when you left here, when you left the mountain for good, you had that many brothers and sisters then, I suppose?

RC: Yeah.

PL: Yeah. Wow.

JC: Yeah, because his father, who was killed before he left from up here. Your father was killed, what, the year before you left from up here, Pop?

RC: Yeah.

JC: And you stayed one year after he was killed?

RC: Yeah.

[2:28:32, a high-pitched tone begins here, and the voices speed up slightly]

PL: Did any of them not live until the park came in, did they stay, did not leave until the park?

RC: No, no.

PL: They all moved out before the park?

RC: Well, not all of us. I moved out. And the Nicholson brothers [unintelligible], he moved out. And [unintelligible] he lived, when the park turned over.

PL: Was your mom, was your mother moved out then?

RC: No.

PL: She left before the park, too.

RC: Well, she left after the park took it over.

PL: Oh, I see, right. How did she feel about that?

RC: Oh, didn't feel too good.

PL: Uh-huh.

RC: Said it was a shame.

PL: Had a lot of deep roots here, and didn't want to give 'em up.

RC: Yes sir.

[2:29:35, tape breaks; audio speed normalizes after whistling feedback]

PL: Just opposite the area--we're headed back down now from the cabin, I think we're pretty close to the first ford, the baptismal pond as he called it. And just opposite the area that Allan Tanner referred to as a swimming hole, it's a real nice pool in Hughes River there, and it's got some very, very large rocks around it, and just up maybe twenty, fifteen, twenty yards [voices begin to speed up again] and on the right hand side going down is what's probably an old spring house, log structure, and apparently a spring there that's dry at the moment, and we're going to see if this might have had anything to do with the home site or perhaps the church site, which I think is coming up pretty soon now. I guess this spring house structure is probably fifty, sixty, maybe eighty yards up the trail from the ford where the baptismal pool is located.

[2:30:42, tape breaks; audio speed normalizes]

AT: Sure looks like [unintelligible].

PL: Mm-hmm. [directly into the microphone] About thirty yards above the baptismal pool at the crossing, between the spring house structure and the pool, there's a chimney about twenty yards or so off to the right. Allan Tanner spotted it, I have not seen it. And just for the record, the church is located directly opposite the junction of Nicholson Hollow Trail with Hannah Run, the baptismal pool crossing where the trail is well above that. We're now at the Hannah Run Crossing. Mr. Corbin's full name was Robert Hilton Corbin.

[2:31:39, tape breaks]

PL: At this particular point, the battery pack on this uer (??) ran down and the rest of the information from Mr. Corbin was taken down in note form, which I am now going to relay onto the tape. The cabin, the chimney and the spring house referred to just above the pool, referred to earlier as the baptismal pool along the stream there, that house, Mr. Corbin tells us, belonged to a son of Jim Polk Nicholson. And according to Mr. Corbin, they simply referred to him as Little Jim Polk Nicholson. Mr. Corbin said that when he was baptized in that pool, that he went there to this house after the baptism and to change his clothes.

I asked Mr. Corbin if he had ever--how often they got to town. He informed me that going to town meant going to the Nethers Store. We now have pictures of the chimneys, this is all that remains, this would be about a mile from the parking area, the present parking area for the lower end of Nicholson Hollow, back out towards Route 231, on the right hand side of this road, there are two chimneys. This was the Nethers Store, which was owned by Mr. Weakley, who's mentioned earlier in this tape. Mr. Weakley apparently was later failing in health and just closed the store. Nobody seems to have taken over after that. The post office there at Nethers is the large white house just beyond these two chimneys, on the same side of the road, right hand side as you're leaving the park going back to Route 231. We interviewed the daughter of the postmaster, I believe, in our last interview with George Corbin, this would be the early 1970 interview with George. We stopped at this house and talked to the lady who often delivered the mail for her father up into Nicholson Hollow. Right across from this house is an old brown building and a mill pond, and this was the mill where Mr. Corbin indicated that they took their corn down to be ground there. So this was town, the post office, the mill and the store. He

also indicated that they went to the city, meaning Culpeper, once a year on the Fourth of July.

On the way out of Nicholson Hollow, almost, well just outside the boundary and along the trail, we met two ladies, probably in their fifties or sixties, going into the park. We stopped and chatted with them for a while. The lady told us that she was the daughter of a William Albert Woodard, W-O-O-D-A-R-D, and that they lived in the park, moved out in 1938, I believe, and this would have been about a half a mile from the park boundary up the Nicholson Hollow Road Trail. The house was on the right hand side and there was a spring called Honey Spring and Mr. Corbin confirmed this as the name, a spring with a pipe coming out of it on the south side of the Hughes River, so this would have been across the stream from where this Woodard house was located. This may be the house we referred to earlier in the tape as being kind of up the bank about fifty, sixty feet or so on the right hand side. It seems to maybe fit into that distance and might be worth checking out a little later. Due to the failure of the tape at that time, we do not have this lady's name, however, she does live in the town of Madison. Further information on this lady could possibly be obtained from Allan Tanner, who was also recording at this time. And I believe he probably did get the whole conversation on tape.

At the conclusion of this walk, I asked Mr. Corbin to give us the names, the full names of his parents and his grandparents. His father's name was William Jeridan Corbin. That middle name G, excuse me, J-E-R-I-D-A-N. And his mother would have been Roberta Katherine Jenkins. His grandfather's name was Bruce Corbin. He was referred to as Coon Corbin, no reason was given for this at all. This was just how he went. The person who set up this interview, who set up the trip, rather, was Mr. Corbin's son, Joe Corbin, whose address is 5208 Russett, R-U-S-S-E-T-T, Road, Rockville, Maryland, 20853. Any transcript made of this tape should be edited heavily because a lot of the information that we got at the beginning of the interview turned out later not to be true at all, and this would be in reference to the houses in which he lived, and some of the earlier information, I think it was simply a case of us not really knowing where he lived and the fact that it took him a while to get familiar with the area again. This is then the end of the interview with Robert H. Corbin.

[2:38:42, tape breaks]

PL: The following information relates to the advance sheets of the 1927 to '29 topographic maps which are, several copies of which are owned by the park, I've taken sheet Number 8 and labeled it Nicholson Hollow Detail, on this sheet I have marked each of the cabins in Nicholson Hollow that we know something about. In a few cases where we're not sure of the exact cabin, I have grouped two or three together and indicated them as possibilities that a certain person may have lived here. It'll take a little further checking out to find out for sure, it'll also take some checking with the track maps and the deeds, which are located in the engineering office at headquarters.

Site Number 1 on the map is the cabin furthest up Nicholson Hollow, so we'll be starting really from the end closest to Skyline Drive. Site 1 is listed in the Zimm (??) Report 1944, was the home of John R. Nicholson. In our interview here with Mr. Robert Corbin, 9/11/76, he refers to this as Russ Nicholson's house and it could have been here that John R. Nicholson went by his middle initial, Russ, perhaps. Photographs were taken of this cabin in the late '60s, I have taken photographs yesterday, 9/10/76, showing that the cabin is now virtually almost totally deteriorated, the chimney itself, probably some vandalism, probably some high winds.

House Number 2, listed in the Steer (??) Report and the Zimm (??) Report as the John T. Nicholson house. This is the cabin directly across the stream from the George Corbin cabin, the one now maintained by PATC. Allan Tanner, who at this date is an assistant overseer for Corbin Cabin and member of PATC says that George Corbin referred to this in a former interview as the home of Russ Nicholson. Mr. Robert Corbin in yesterday's interview did not remember this cabin having been there at all and later said that it simply wasn't here when he lived here, which would have been around 1905. So it's possible that both this cabin and George Corbin's cabin, which Mr. Robert Corbin doesn't not remember, that both of these cabins were not there during this time. We know that

George Corbin built his cabin about 1910, so that would seem to fit. This may have been the home of a son of Russ Nicholson, who may have been called Russ as per Allan Tanner's recollection, or it may have been John T. Nicholson. This'll take some checking.

House Number 3 is indeed the George T. Corbin cabin built around 1910. Information on this cabin is well documented in interviews with George Corbin himself.

House Number 4 is located between the Aaron Nicholson house, Number 5, and the George Corbin cabin, Number 3. There seems to be a little confusion here. George Corbin's father did indeed live here, whether this cabin may have been torn down or burned down in 1927 or '29, we're not sure. This may be on the interview with George himself. Anyway, site Number 4 appears to fit as the house that Mr. Robert Corbin lived in for a couple of years as per this previous interview. So I have marked on the map House Site 19 with a question mark as this may have been the location of George Corbin's father's cabin, which may not have been standing when this particular map was done.

House Site Number 5 is indeed the Aaron Nicholson house. There's also much information, both in this interview and in previous interviews with George Corbin. I did not take up-to-date pictures of this, although there are previous pictures in the Big Meadows slide file.

House Site Number 6, located on the north side of the Hughes River, same side as Aaron Nicholson's house, also referred to in the Zimm (??) Report. In his report it's listed as House Site Number 5 and he lists that as an unknown house site. This house sits quite a distance from the current trail and road. You almost have to walk down the north side of the stream just staying on the same side as Aaron Nicholson's house is on. Mr. John Nicholson--Mr. John Corbin referred to this house as being that of a Chris Nicholson. Now, and there is some confusion on the tape, because he mentions this before you get to House Site 7, however I think this might have been due to the fact that the trail, the current Nicholson Hollow trail, leaves the road in a few cases where it got too close to the stream and perhaps washed it away, and maybe that confused him as being the side road that went off to Chris Nicholson's house.

There was another house, which the Zimm (??) Report refers to as being burned down. This would be House Site Number 4 in the Zimm (??) Report, and from our references from the Aaron Nicholson house, this would probably fit about right for the home of Gus Nicholson.

[2:45:19, tape breaks]

PL: This is marked as House Site 20. House Site 22, which is a question mark here, Mr. Robert Corbin referred to one of his sisters or perhaps his father's sister, we need to check the tape on this, lived up a ravine, which would have been on the left going up. I've circled two ravines which go up to Thoroughfare Mountain--he indicated that if you follow this ravine, it did go up to Thoroughfare Mountain, no home is listed or shown on this topographic map, but he did refer to someone living several hundred yards up one of these ravines. This could possibly be House Site Number 9 which is marked on the map.

House Site Number 7 is believed to be that of Jim Polk, P-O-L-K, Nicholson. This is the man that Robert Corbin referred to as being a bragger and also a place where he had many a good meal.

House Site Number 8, referred to a couple of times in the tape, is believed to be that of Jim Polk, Little Jim Polk Nicholson, one of the sons of the Jim Polk Nicholson who lived at House Site 7. This is the house site where Robert Corbin said he changed his clothes after his baptism.

Site 21 is not a house site. This is the crossing, the ford of the Hughes River and this is where the large pool which he referred to many times as where the baptismal pool is located.

I seriously doubt that House Site Number 9 is the house referred to in one of the ravines going up to Thoroughfare Mountain, this would be 22. I think Mr. Corbin had his bearings

pretty well straight here and probably would've mentioned at that time that this was the home of one of his sisters or his father's sisters.

Site 10, just opposite the junction with the Hannah Run Trail and Nicholson Hollow Trail, is the church site. This was confirmed by George Corbin as well.

Sites 11 and 12, these are two possibilities, I tend to favor Site 11 as being the home site of Mr. Robert Corbin's grandparents. There's also reputed to be a cemetery here where his father and both his grandparents are buried. He informs us that all of the stones are just native stones similar to the Corbin cemetery further up. And we'll need to check later, when the leaves are off, to see which house site it is, but I think, and in checking with his references, it probably would be House Site 11.

Site 13 is not a house site, but rather the ford across the Hughes River, which goes up to Corbin Mountain. This is the road Mr. Corbin said that he took when he hauled tan bark and that was the road that they lived up. Now if you follow this road on the map, it goes up and there are three house sites within the fairly high up on Corbin Mountain, and it must be one of these three sites, perhaps one of those that is lower down, that would be the site that he lived at. And if you trace these trails on down, you have to go quite a ways before you get to any other home site and when you get to those home sites, it seems like it would have been much simpler to have gone out on Weakley Hollow rather than come over to Nicholson Hollow and come out that way hauling tan bark. So I tend to favor the site furthest down as the site where Mr. Robert Corbin lived until he was about twenty four years old.

The two women that we met just outside of the park boundary on the way back referred to the home site of Mr. William Abbot Woodard. This would probably be Site 14 or 15, with preference going to Site 14, the Honey Spring being just across the stream from this home site. It's hard to tell. They said about half a mile from the boundary. If it was less than half a mile, then 15 would probably be right. Fifteen appears to be on the right side of the stream.

[2:50:44, tape breaks]

Going back now, a couple of these house sites are not really properly located on the topographic map. So the Jim Polk Nicholson house, Site Number 7, it must be this particular house as no other house is shown here, unless of course some of these homes were not being inhabited or not existing at the time the map was done. But the Jim Polk Nicholson house is right along the road, it appears, or right along the trail and certainly not located on the side of the stream that the map shows it. So this is not the proper location, but the house site itself is located very, very close to the existing trail now. And House Site 8 also, it's located on the right side of the road and stream, but it maybe should be a little bit closer to the road itself. Now, as they say, the trail--the existing trail may leave the road in certain places and thus account for this, but I think it would not account for House Site Number 7, so either this is a different home, perhaps that of Chris Nicholson or it is indeed the Jim Polk Nicholson house and simply located wrong on the map.

End of commentary.

[End audio file, 02:52:21 min.]

End of Interview

1 Middle name is probably Bruce. This person is also referred to as Coon on RootsWeb. There also appears to be some confusion as to whether this person is Robert Corbin's grandfather or father on pg. 11 of this transcript; at the end of this interview, pg. 98, PL confirms that Bruce "Coon" Corbin is RC's grandfather. Another online genealogy site lists Robert Corbin's father as William Jordan Corbin (1875-1922), his grandfather as Bruce Corbin, (d.1911), and a brother, William Bruce Corbin (1903-1994) (<http://majorgenealogy.tribalpages.com/tribe/browse?userid=majorgenealogy&view=0&pid=13361&rand=850417509>)

2 Many of the older mountain people interviewed often referred to Nicholson Hollow and members of the Nicholson family as "Nichols" or "Nicholson", interchangeably, as Mr. Corbin does here.

3 William Bruce Corbin and Coon Corbin appear to be the same person, however there is confusion on his exact relation to Robert Corbin; refer back to pg. 2 of this transcript.

4 John Russell Nicholson, 1861-1935

5 Fennel is a nickname for Phinnel Corbin.

6 Hazel Mountain.

7 The children of James Robert Nicholson named here are Roosevelt, Walter, James Daniel "Dan", Neda and Hattie. (<http://majorgenealogy.tribalpages.com/tribe/browse?userid=majorgenealogy&view=0&pid=2494&rand=890572186>)

8 This story is originally told in both interviews with George Corbin, SNP032 (pg. 9) and SNP033 (pgs. 4-5). Originals are a little confusing, the clarification here is helpful.

9 Civilian Conservation Corps.

10 Creeks.

11 An online genealogy site identifies him as Albert Aylor Nicholson

12 John T. Nicholson, 1894-, Ernest A. Nicholson, 1897-

<http://majorgenealogy.tribalpages.com/tribe/browse?userid=majorgenealogy&view=0&pid=2289&rand=809129799>

13 Russ Nicholson and Elizabeth Corbin had seven children, including William Buddy, 1900-1909, Robert Hilton, 1908- , Bell, 1909- and Polly Ann, 1910-

Robert Corbin, 09/11/1976

SdArch SNP-034

15