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Interview with George Corbin

Part of the Shenandoah National Park Oral History Collection, SdArch SNP-033  
(SC# 4030)

Interview conducted at Nicholson Hollow, Madison County, Virginia  
By Unknown Interviewer on April 29, 1969

Transcribed by Victoria M. Edwards, October, 2009  
Updated by Mary M. Darrrough, January, 2010

Key

[PL:] Interviewer, Paul Lee (of the National Park Service)  
[EG:] Interviewer, Edward Garvey  
[GC:] Interviewee, George Corbin  
[MH:] Interviewee, Mary Hudson (former postmaster)  
[UM:] Unknown Male  
[UF:] Unknown Female

[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

There is an older gentleman who sounds very much like Mr. Corbin who speaks with him at times. Around 00:25:45 there is a background exchange where this man responds to being called "Carter." All speakers not identified by name are given the identifiers "UM" and "UF." At times, there may be more than one unidentified male or female speaker, but it is difficult to say who is who.

Total interview length: 01:05:46 min.

[Begin audio file, 00:00:01]

PL: The following is an interview with George Corbin, on a hike through Nicholson Hollow. On this hike, Mr. Corbin will be pointing out some of the old home sites and giving an account of the life in the Hollow. During the interview, I will number each home site. These numbers will correspond to numbers on an enlarged section of the 1930 topographical map. Parts of this interview will be conducted by Mr. Edward Garvey of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club.

[00:00:34, the tape makes a very quick break and renews with a good deal of background noise, apparently the sounds of walking and moving outdoors.]

GC: This one's Mr. Pollock's [unintelligible].1

UM: Yeah, liked to have killed him! (chuckle)

GC: Because, Pollock was up [unintelligible].

UM: Huh?

GC: We never did know where Fletcher come from. He'd visit my father.2 He wouldn't take nothing, carried his gun and his buckle on him all the time. (chuckle)

EG: Well his wife did, too, didn't she?

GC: Yeah. (laughter) Nobody never did know where he'd come from.

UM: Nor where he went.

GC: No, that's right.

UM: Some said he'd get his wife to hold a gun on 'em while he'd beat 'em, wouldn't he?

GC: That's what they said. I know it was true about Pollock, he come across Kin (??) Mountain and thought Pollock was a spy taking pictures, [unintelligible] he took him and he smashed him [unintelligible] for good. (laughter) They never [unintelligible] him or his book, he added a lot there, a lot of stuff. (laughter)

UM: Well, you have to make it, you know—

GC: Yeah.

UM: Yourself.

GC: And the pathway, from the top to the cabin.

[00:01:45, loud MH for a few seconds before resuming with continued MH of walking combined with wind.]

GC: [unintelligible] just lived over in, what they called Corbin Hollow.

PL: Right.

GC: And he lost his first wife and he come down in here for some reason, and he met my mother and married her.

PL: She was a Nicholson, though, wasn't she? 3

GC: She was a Nicholson. She was Old Man Aaron Nicholson's daughter. One they call the King of the Blue Ridge, got pictures in the book. (chuckle)

PL: Got a beautiful home there, too.

GC: Yeah.

PL: But, so he just married—what sort of Nicholsons was this [unintelligible]?

GC: She was my mother, was Old Man Aaron Nicholson's daughter. They called him the King of the Blue Ridge, claimed everything in here one day. (chuckle)

PL: Right here, yeah.

GC: From my cabin here to Nethers, is originally called it Nicholson Hollow.

PL: Are they most of your own—

GC: We MH all Nicholsons.

PL: We can't figure it out, he knows of a preacher would go up there, you say all the houses were MH. I was thinking, you came up, two months ago, we came up from Meadows, we took a side track right in the hollow and I don't know who had the place, but there was no Model T, rusting away around the place.

GC: Oh. That was way down below the cabin.

PL: Yeah.

GC: Yeah, that was way down.

PL: They still deliver from down that road?

GC: Yeah, they was buying when you lived there in far on down, within a mile of Nethers. You could lift that Model T.

PL: Well, parts of it there, the car itself is gone, but like, there was a radiator and a fender.

GC: I see.

PL: And it was very obvious one had been there.

[00:03:28, audio clears up slightly after this point.]

GC: MH the old chestnut trees. Me and my first wife--MH We chopped one tree and got a sack of chestnuts, bushel of them, sixty pound. But I lived with my father then, I never did go them with her, she never lived long, my first wife--right out in back of that rock somewhere--and we got that chestnut so at four o'clock the next morning, I'd put them on my back, walk this two miles and down the other side three and five through the valley to Luray. Got there and weighed them, they weighed plum sixty pound. They give me twelve dollars for them. It was the early e'en and I got, hauled the groceries I could tote back and had money left.

EG: Yeah, well, twelve dollars was good money then.

GC: Yeah. Big money.

EG: This was an old chestnut area, then?

[00:04:21, someone close to the microphone speaks indecipherably while ED and GC speak]

EG: Different prices, huh?

GC: He tried for five years to catch me.

EG: Well, I'm sure of that.

GC: And so, one day I sent this crippled fellow--my father was making apple brandy, being late in the fall, out of them Milam apples. So, we double like tonight, the cripple man, and I say, "John, I'll go back and go distilling and you go to Luray and get some more charred kegs, we put it in charred kegs, you know. So I went back and fired up and about nine or ten o'clock, why I heard horse's feet. I think to myself, well, it's somebody who knows me coming here to stay with me, so I watch when he stepped over the fence, saw him down on the deep hollow, I seen, I know [unintelligible]. Old Charlie Deer from Rappahannock, he was the Revenue officer, but I didn't know the other. I threw the keg down and aimed to jump across the creek and I jumped in the cold water up to here--

EG: Up to where?

GC: And then he hollered to halt, he was close to me as that tree, and I kept running, he got to shooting and shot bark off the tree close to me as this. (laughter) I just said, "See, if you keep shooting, I'll just keep running." (laughter) 'Cause if they caught you then, you got a year in Atlanta, Georgia penitentiary.

UM: What is that?

GC: Tried to catch us making liquor.

UM: Where was you making liquor?

GC: Right across from, down below where I lived, where you're going. And it went on down, you've heard of Jimmy Nethers haven't you?

UM: Oh yeah.

GC: So Jimmy Nethers bet her against liquor. We had it, layered stark (??) with whiskey.

UM: Well, that's kind of like Nicholson, isn't it?

GC: Pete and Paul Nicholson to say, they tried to catch me every way. So, these revenuers got out and they all [unintelligible], "Well, did you have any luck?" "Oh, we destroyed a seventy-five-gallon still and apple puff (??) enough to make a 102 gallons of brandy." "And you caught nobody?" "No. See, it was reported to us that a crippled man was running it," well my partner was crippled. But see, if he's a cripple man, I'd hate to see one that wasn't crippled run. (laughter) And if I'd hadn't a sent him to Luray, they'd a gotten him. He couldn't have got away, but I got away from 'em. Well, be a week before I have another one up in the mountain above this cabin, a running. I never did stop. I stopped myself. Oh, I-4

PL: How did you get the, replace all of the pots and the tubes that you needed?

GC: Oh, no trouble to get it, go anywhere then and buy a copper still and cut the-I went to Slate Mills and got my other one and toted it up in the night. Clear up in Slate Mills and that's way below--

PL: What did you get there?

GC: Huh?

PL: What did you get there?

GC: Another copper still.

PL: Oh, yeah.

GC: Yeah. [unintelligible] was in Slate Mills. He was a big bootlegger in Slate Mills, you know Josh Head? (??) Yeah, know Josh, did you know Dr. Cranes? He'd buy it off me, yeah. Dr. Walker-

UM: The old man died here a year or so ago, y'know.

GC: Well, that's the brother, to the old-

UM: Yeah, that's his son, to the old man you're talking about.

GC: That's right. He used to practice in West Virginia.

UM: He died. Uh-huh, and his son is practicing in Culpeper now.

GC: Yeah, that's young Dr. Cranes.

UM: Uh-huh.

GC: And Walter, he was a son of Oscar Cranes, he's dead, he'd buy down some-

PL: He bought your booze?

GC: Huh?

PL: He bought your booze?

GC: Oh, what he wanted. Then I got so much of it ahead of, a man and his wife come from Washington one day and left a car down at the church, that's as far as they get and ate

dinner with me, say, "Mr. Corbin, you don't care if me and my wife see it made, do you?" I took 'em on, remember I had my brother stilling for me that day, they looked, "Well, see, I want this run." Well, I say, "You can get it." Twenty, no, twenty gallons or forty. Twenty, I believe. It was twenty, what I made. And see, I furnished the car for you to bring it to Falls Church and I drove right, well it was just getting dark when I went through Nethers. Pete and Paul Revenue Officers sitting on the porch. I threw my hand up, I don't, they thought I was just a going somewhere on a trip in this Model T. And I pulled in Georgetown about one o'clock and pulled into Frank Norville's (??) garage, he paid me for it and he took it out on the--oh it was hot, I was out on the Potomac and I slept on his boat that night. (laughter) He married a girl from Culpeper, Frank Norville did. Yeah, I hauled it right, and I just said, well, if I kept it up, I would be caught, and I quit myself.

PL: How much did you get paid for a gallon there, George?

GC: Oh, I got twelve, fifteen dollars.

PL: A gallon?

GC: Yeah. Mr. Pollock would buy it off me, up here at Skyland. Yeah.

EG: That was a lot of money.

GC: Yeah, then.

UM: That's Depression money, too, that was in the Depression.

GC: I could have--but you never can see as far ahead as you can behind. (laughter) That was five year it was and no danger to make it. But I'd make a run lots of times and hide my outfit, go to West Virginia and cut or shuck corn until I take the notion to make more. And Perry Sisk (??) he never did stop, and he made a fortune, bought a farm in Madison County, course he's dead and his wife dead too, now. But I was just scared I'd be caught and I just made it when I got ready. (chuckle)

EG: How many did they catch?

GC: Huh?

EG: Did they catch anybody?

GC: Oh, caught--Pete and Paul made it theirselves, they knowed how to catch 'em, you see.

UM: You know, that's what I've often maintained, though, that's why the federal government hired Pete and Paul to start with.

GC: Why sure!

UM: They sold out their own people. Now Paul did, that's what they did.

GC: Now, do you--

UM: They could go up in here, Pete and Paul could come up in here but no stranger could come in here.

GC: But you remember Herman Melaney, (??) didn't you?

UM: Yeah, I heard of him.

GC: Well, he was a state trooper for a long time, then he stopped that and went on as a Virginia Prohibition officer, catch 'em, too. Though the other revenuers, when they was gonna make a raid, they'd notify him when they'd be at Nethers and then he'd notify me so

I could hide out. He wouldn't bother me, come to my house and get it, drink it. He wouldn't bother me.

UM: Well, now that's where Pete and Paul were different, they'd come to your house and get it and drink it and then turn you in. (laugh)

GC: I did never let 'em have it, they never did have a way to catch me.

UM: They did, sure enough?

GC: Yeah.

UM: But they thought that was all right, they--

GC: Had they done the same when they got their start out of moonshining. That's the dirt of it. (laughter) No harm in the way they acted [unintelligible].

PL: [Spoken directly into the microphone, drowning out the muffled sounds of more talking] His first wife was buried on Hannah Run. His second wife is buried right near the cabin and his third wife is buried in Luray.

[00:11:21, the tape distorts here very briefly]

UM: Is this the hill that Charlie was going up when he got bit by that rattlesnake?5

GC: Charlie Sisk?

UM: Uh-huh.

GC: That was another lie that was fixed up. He wasn't bit by no rattlesnake. Just to fill that book out. Oh hey.

UM: No, he didn't!

PL: Pollock put that in the book?

UM: Yeah!

GC: I know [unintelligible] with him that never did happen. Just, now this is what we call lost [unintelligible], I caught trout up this far and a little further but, that [unintelligible].

[00:11:56, there is mumbled, obscured comment, then the tape makes a sudden switch, as if turned off and then restarted later]

PL: Oh, you get your Model T went up there, then?

GC: Did in my Model T. Haul it right out of there. Leave this cabin at one or two o'clock and get out before dark.

PL: Yeah, but you have to carry this stuff to the T, you had to go two miles down--

GC: Yeah, down to where the church used to be, Hannah's Run.

UM: [distant] Bet that was some kind of good, that blackberry brandy.

GC: Oh, it was, nice [unintelligible]. (laughter)

PL: [directly into the microphone] Mr. Corbin used to take his brandy, he was selling, it to Charleston, West Virginia.

GC: Never seen so many turnips in your life. The growed in there that big. Yessir.

EG: This is mostly turnips you're growing here, huh?

GC: Oh, grewed everything, grewed corn and--

EG: This doesn't look like very good soil, though, George.

GC: That right there will grow anything.

UM: That cabbage really grew in here, didn't it?

GC: Can grow cabbage in here and the head would probably weight eight and ten pounds.

UM: I know cabbage that likes mountain air. Like cool nights, don't they?

GC: Yeah. Right in here to the cabin.

PL: Is Aaron Nicholson buried in this cemetery over here?

GC: No, he's buried at Wolftown, he moved out.

PL: Oh.

GC: [unintelligible] two of his sons, Uncle Gust (??) and Uncle Russ and his wife, Preacher Nicholson. My second wife, she's buried over there. [There is a brief gap in the recording] She's buried in the cemetery at Luray.<sup>6</sup>

PL: Aaron Nicholson's two sons and George's second wife are buried in the cemetery on the cut off trail. We're now at Corbin Cabin.

GC: My brother-in-law built that one over there.

UM: That's a log house with shingles all around. That house is in good shape. I have to wonder why the trail took, wonder why they don't fix that one up.

PL: Who did you say lived there?

GC: My brother-in-law, Albert Nicholson. Married my sister, he's dead but she lives at, round here in Madison.<sup>7</sup>

PL: When he lived in the house up about a quarter of a mile.

GC: [unintelligible] My uncle, Russ Nicholson.

PL: Number 2.

EG: You say you built this--when was this cabin built?

GC: I couldn't, I never kept no \* long.

EG: Did you built it yourself?

GC: Built it myself.

UM: Is this the map he's talking about?

EG: What, after you got married, or when?

GC: Yeah, after I built it after my first wife, we lived with my father out there, his house was right there, they tore that down. And I--

[there is a lot of background talking that seems to have cut GC off, or at least



distracted him from continuing]

PL: When he mentions this, or somewhere, I'll give a number on the list and then we'll put it on the map. [the background conversation continues]

EG: Well, you lived with your father where?

GC: With my first wife, his house right out there, they tore it down.

EG: I see, and then you married again, huh?

GC: Yeah.

EG: And that's when you built this cabin?

GC: That's when I built this.

UM: You know, Pollock, the way he wrote about the Corbins and the Nicholsons and comparing 'em you know, the hollow, I says you know the ironic thing about that was, when I go up to the head of Nicholson Hollow, what should I see standing but a Corbin Cabin. (laugh)

GC: That's right.

UM: He talk about how they lived in squalor, you know, and all that stuff.

GC: Oh, he made it ten times worse than it was, Mr. Pollock did, and told things about Charlie Sisk that wasn't so and just to fill his book up.

UM: Good old Charlie had to have worked on him, then.

GC: He give Charlie what, what had Charlie's picture, Charlie built in Mrs. Pollock's stone house, it's on Skyland now.

PL: Now this lean to was built later, wasn't it?

GC: Huh? Yeah, that's when Mr. Lassiter, the superintendent of the park, see, you can stay on, I toted lumber from the drive down on my back, fixing that and got that started, built up like it is, hadn't finished it and then--

PL: And that's when they moved you out.

GC: Said I had to move. And they, Appalachian Trail Club finished it.

PL: Oh, they finished it.

GC: Yeah, I built it. Well, I'm sure glad they left it standing.

UM: [lots of talking over one another for a moment] Why did the park turn it over to the Appalachian Trail--

GC: Well, the Appalachian Trail people come here when I lived here and camped down on the river, that's, I get my drinking water down there.

UM: You just got it right out of the river?

GC: Yeah, no purer water on Earth than that. And they'd stay sometimes two and three days and didn't leave, lots of time they'd give all the stuff they had left, and be grub enough to last me a week. (laughter)

PL: Did you have any privies back here, or did you--

UM: How do you mean?

GC: Toilets.

PL: Toilets.

GC: No, had to run, built outside, built another one up there.

PL: You built them up there, then.

GC: Yeah. But you know, a fella told me something that amazed me, and it's so often that you major in something and you don't realize a lot of things happen in your sciences. And he says that drinking out of mountain stream's a lot more dangerous than drinking out of a stream in low country. He says—

PL: Why is that?

GC: If you go out here and take a dump on the side of this hill here, and a hard rain comes and wash it right down in there, in the stream. But in the flat country it won't do it, it's got to soak through the ground and—

PL: Oh, and by the time that stream gets through kicking it around and everything—

GC: Well yeah, but I mean if it's sloping is, the chances are—they had a lot of typhoid fever in these mountains.

PL: Did they?

GC: Damn right.

PL: Lot of people get sick?

GC: Not too many and—

UM: Didn't they have typhoid fever in here?

GC: One time. I was living with my father when I had typhoid—

UM: They had a lot of—

GC: They said I caught it from a spring on the top of the Blue Ridge where my sister lived, she had it same time. But I never did get it no more. The doctor gave—you don't have to have it—he give me typhoid shots.

UM: Yeah, but I mean, there's a lot of, they had a lot of it down around Harland (??) and—

GC: Had it at Nethers, killed a lot of the Weakleys (??).

UM: Well, I said typhoid was rampaging but you never hear of it now, you got shots to prevent it.

GC: Yeah, just like you have a cold.

UM: That's right.

PL: Yeah, what did people think about the park moving 'em out, at first?

GC: Well, just like I think, it was a low-down dirty trick. They lied so, said they wanted to move you out, you'd sign up and wouldn't give 'em no trouble. And if any man in it would have knowed what he knows now, he'd have been in it [unintelligible]. They'd have thundered the Commonwealth would have ever put it back (??) but they come around

with all this fancy stuff. See, if you signed up, they'll build roads in here and make a ranger of you, you'll have work, everything until they got a deed to it.

PL: Did they pay you for any of these houses?

GC: Stoled it.

PL: They didn't pay you anything?

GC: What you reckon they paid for the house, and a whole lot of land here, I could get how many acres, and I borrowed \$500 of Lee Judd to finish this house and when they paid off, I got \$500 for everything I had and I went and give that to Mr. Judd. Well he said, "You've had such terrible luck, it doesn't seem right, I won't charge you no interest."

PL: Who was Mr. Judd, the banker here?

GC: No, he run a store here at Morningstar. I'd go from here to over there to get my groceries, tote 'em up that mountain, when I didn't go to Nethers. [unintelligible] outside there clapping, and then lots of times before dark, the whippoorwills would come and light on it and they'd holler, "whippoorwill." I ain't heard no whippoorwills since I been to Falls Church. (chuckle)

PL: Is that what attracted them, do you know?

GC: Yeah, yeah. You won't hear 'em now, you know it's less gain in here, I mean-Ain't as much in here as was-

GC: Oh no!

GC: Recognized area, any time you could take a gun, go kill me a mess of gray squirrels and I'd never seen nothing. You see pheasants anytime?

UM: No, you don't see 'em.

GC: I don't see nothing. They don't have anything to live on, when a place goes wild, there's nothing for 'em to live on. I maintain that unless the park does plant out seed beds to keep this stuff alive, they gonna just migrate on down to the--

UM: Just a quarter after twelve.

UM: Made good time.

GC: Good time, yeah.

PL: Did the Dodson boys cause much trouble down in this area?

UM: The Dodsons boat (??) here?

GC: No, never did cause me any.

PL: Did you know a Hunter Dodson?8

GC: Yes, indeed.

PL: He works for the park now.

GC: Oh, do he? Nice boy, he's Rob Dodson's boy.

PL: Was he a relation to the two that got arrested or the fella that got arrested in Pollock's book or?

UM: Oh, that was about that killing.

GC: Yeah. Phinnel Corbin9 [several speakers talking at once] They're near relation. And Schuyler--no that wasn't his name. He had him arrested and I heard he went away--claimed he tried to rape one of the girls riding around in the trails when Pollock was running the place. I just forget his name, he left, but he was an awful mean, you said, he was good to me, and he went away somewhere and somebody killed him.

UM: Well, this, who was it, that Corbin that killed the Dodson boy? Was that--?

GC: Oh, that was Clark and he's Hunter's--I don't know whether he's Hunter's daddy or not. They're near kin if he's not. Well, that was my uncle killed Clark. Yeah, he'd come down in here, well, he'd tried me that morning, my first cousin Izer (??) Nicholson and Oscar Nicholson and Clark want to gather the whiskey, I wouldn't do it, it was on Sunday and I know he's a hunting trouble, but I went on down and another fellow down here let 'em have a gallon. Well, about sundown, Izer come, my first cousin, I seen something had happened, I said, "Izer, late in getting back?" "Yeah, a terrible thing happened." I said, "What that?" "See, your uncle killed Clark." I said, "For what?" He said, "Clark was throwing rocks in the house and climb up on the fence and pulled his shirt out and told him he didn't have the nerve to shoot him." Emptied this double-barreled shotgun on him, my father sold to him, it was a brand new one and he laid off and then until the next day, three o'clock, Izer when the doctor come, held the inquest. And he married my first cousin, Edne, (??) she used to work at Skyland.

[00:23:24, tape makes a quiet change here as if turned off and picked up again later, there are also sounds of women in the background before and after the break]

EG: There's a Corbin that lives over at Etlan now.

GC: There's a Corbin at Etlan?

EG: There's a Corbin at Etlan, yeah. He and his son live there, they have two houses, you know, one next to the other.

GC: I guess it's been so long since I--

EG: Well, Mr. Hoskins told me about them. And I went down and paid a call on them. And when I got to the gas station there, they didn't know whether they lived there or not, they said he was in jail. And I went down there anyhow and found his house, and there he was, all right. A little bit--didn't see too well, I think something happened to his eyes, he's losing his--but I'll find out, because I've got a picture of him, too, and I'll let you take a look at that and you'll be able to identify him.

[00:24:19, tape makes a quiet change as if switched again]

GC: --Phinnel Corbin's cabin, they built Phinnel Corbin's--

UM: Back there in Corbin's Hollow.

UM: In Corbin's Hollows.

GC: They didn't build him no cabin.

UM: They didn't, that's more of Pollock's stuff, then.

GC: They got him in the--Pollock built him nothing.

UM: Pollock built-- (chuckle)

GC: They got him, he got him in such a shape and sent him away to some home and he died way away from here. He got helpless. They showed us a picture of him sitting on this porch here, that was Uncle Henry, when they was throwing the rocks in on the porch. Uncle Henry was in the Army, he told me--Colt come right there and tried to--had six men

and in the inquest, Uncle Henry told them that the rocks thrown in on the porch just the same as was in the Army, he was in the Army. Uncle Henry. Him and Uncle Luke, my two uncles, they was in that fight where it was on Bull Run, when the two armies met there. Uncle Henry, he got a ball cut out of a piece of his skull that didn't kill him, he lived, died of old age.

[00:25:26, MH]

GC: No, Pollock would put in the book just anything that come in his head, because he hoped people would read a lot of-

PL: How are the book's Corbins related to you?

GC: I married his daughter, from my first wife, she's one buried down the hollow.

PL: What was her name?

GC: Mildred.

PL: Mildred.

EG: Did you bring your lunch down, Carter?

UM: Yeah, I got me some.

EG: Okay, bring it out here, table's all set.

UM: I didn't bring enough-

MH

PL: Little black bears. You didn't have any problem with bears, did you, on your way here? [tape sounds sped up slightly; speakers sound as if they are eating while talking]

EG: These are the bears that come up from--drift up from Smokey Mountain area.

GC: Over in Covington (??).

EG: Yeah. They're not native to this area.

[00:26:08, tape makes another change, sounds of walking indoors begin]

GC: Outside.

UM: Uh-huh. (belch)

PL: So, it is pretty much just like it was, then?

GC: Yeah.

PL: You did build a pretty big kitchen, didn't you?

GC: Yeah. The other day, my youngest son, what he don't know, his daughter was born in here. Dr. Ross come clear from Criglersville here. Got here at eleven o'clock and the boy wasn't born until five, and then you had to take him and he [unintelligible] right here with me.

PL: Is this the stove that you-

GC: No, indeed. I moved. No, I set my stove out and wouldn't move it, 'cause they said that having it in the house over there like you want to and somebody stoled it. No, the Appalachian Trail fixed that stove.

PL: How warm did the upstairs stay in the-

GC: All right.

PL: -winter time. Okay, then?

GC: Of course, you use more cover you know. Yes, I cut these logs way up in the mountain, we come down, line 'em and hewed 'em myself. Had a house raised and put the frame up in a day.

PL: Did you have all those people helping you?

GC: Yeah, they helped, yeah. Yeah. Sad to see, [unintelligible].

[00:28:08, there is a great deal of indecipherable talking, as they move around the house, walking and talking away from the microphone]

PL: Do you bring it up this road out here?

GC: Yeah, I [unintelligible] right this hollow road, good road. But since this flood come, I finally told the creek [unintelligible].

PL: [unintelligible] that quite a bit of it, yeah.

GC: Didn't I hear you say you wanted to go to the cemetery?

PL: Yeah, I'll come over there with you-

EG: How about these shingles, George, did you-rib these out yourself? (??) These shingles on the side?

PL: Real shingles.

GC: Oh yeah, yeah.

EG: Talking about these.

GC: Yes, indeed, I ribbed them out of a [unintelligible].

[00:28:50, tape stops again with a slight noise and resumes]

GC: -something to look for in smoke (??).

EG: George?

GC: Yeah?

EG: Do you think you can take these girls up to the cemetery?

GC: Who?

PL: Carolyn and Carter's wife. They'd like to see the cemetery.

GC: All right.

PL: And it's all cleaned out, we'd appreciate it.

[00:29:10, tape makes another quiet but distinct break]

GC: That's where my cousin-brother-in-law was buried. It's this one or that one. My second wife's buried there, I think.

PL: Hey.

UM: Look at this, Jack, you can't tell.

GC: Her name is Tibithy.10

PL: T-I-B-I. Say that again?

GC: Tibithy.

PL: B-I-T-H, that's what it is.

GC: Yeah, I thought that was her grave.

EG: And that was Aaron Nicholson's wife?

GC: Huh?

EG: That's your Aaron's wife?

GC: Old Man Aaron, my grandfather's wife, Old Man Aaron Nicholson.

EG: So that's your grandmother.

GC: Huh? Yeah.

EG: Aaron and Tibithy? Tibithy?

GC: Yeah. And he's buried at Wolftown.

EG: Yeah. And the only manufactured stone is that one over there.

PL: Yeah, but no name on it.

EG: No name on it.

PL: [speaking directly into the microphone] Talking about the only tombstone that has any writing on it. The only manufactured stone is the one of Bailey Nicholson.

EG: It's a matter of interest that in looking through that log book in the cabin, there were two couples here last fall, one from Paris, France, one from Brussels, Belgium, and they mention that they worked on the cemetery and erected that wood cross.

GC: Erected it over my granny's grave? Well, I hadn't even seen it.

EG: Yeah they did, the two couples, one from France and one from-

GC: No, I was thinking about them rocks.

UM: And they wrote it in the logs?

EG: There is a log book in the cabin.

GC: Well, them rocks is open (??). I hadn't noticed that.

UM: Me either. (laugh)

EG: Yeah, that was put up last fall, by this couple from France and one, and one from France and one from Belgium.

GC: Well, I declare.

PL: [speaking directly into the microphone] His second wife is buried just to the right of the gate as you enter the cemetery. Correction on numbering the cabins. Albert Nicholson's cabin is Number 2 and Russ Nicholson's is cabin Number 3.

UM: It's right here, isn't it?

EG: That's where your dad lived, George?

GC: Yeah.

EG: Whereabouts was the building?

GC: Right here where these rocks is at.

UM: What is your dad's given name?

GC: Madison Corbin.

UM: Madison Corbin.

GC: Corbin, uh-huh.

PL: [directly into the microphone] Cabin Number 5.

EG: It was up past Kemp Run, wasn't it?

GC: Yeah.

EG: Right up, right, is this—

GC: We just crossed—

EG: We crossed it already, it's back there.

GC: Yeah. Yeah.

EG: That's mighty hard to find.

GC: Oh yeah.

EG: I haven't found it yet.

PL: How much did the chestnut blight hurt the people here?

GC: Oh, hurt 'em a whole lot.

PL: [directly into the microphone] Spring located just below Mr. Corbin's father's house, cabin Number 5. This is Aaron Nicholson's?

GC: Yeah. Know how he spelled his name? We'd spell it out, Big A-little a-r-o-n, Aaron. (chuckle) Nicholson.

PL: Was he really, real strict in ruling here or was he pretty fair or?

GC: Oh, he was fair, yeah. He thought he owned all this land at one time, but come to find out what he actually owned, he owned five acres of real deeded land. And that was on that side of the creek. His five acres lay exactly in that shape. Also big. And all this on this side was real deeded land, was the Blickey (??) land, and that big mountain is Christidor's (??). Don't know who owns it now, but a preacher that we showed the grave, he used to look after the Christidors. He had it come clear to New York, once.



PL: What would he do to people that broke the law or so forth in his valley? In his hollow here?

GC: Done nothing, I never heard tell of nothing that he done.

PL: I know Pollock played him up as being the law and everything.

GC: Yeah, yeah. Pollock would have a few arrested, sometimes, and claimed he owned it, well, Pollock did own stock in down here that--but then, where you were going, running that away, Pollock did own 5,371 acres of deeded land.

UM: Who'd he buy it from?

GC: Don't know how he got it. (laughter) He had a deed for it, wrote on a sheep skin.

UM: Yeah, that's [unintelligible] I was telling you about, I believe it just as soon as I'm standing here that he stole it. Got it, swear I do. I think his father made a--

GC: Old Man Pollock, I think, made him the deed or some high official.

UM: Well the point is, Old--wouldn't have broke his neck trying to get to Madison to pay his taxes if he'd had a deed to it.

GC: Well the thirty-seventh--

UM: Not a good deed, you believe that? Huh? He wrote that in his own book about making it--

EG: Pollock, you mean?

UM: Pollock stole that land just as sure as I'm standing here, he stole it.

PL: Did they ever call him King Nicholson, huh?

GC: Huh?

PL: Did they call him King Nicholson?

GC: Yeah, King of the Blue Ridge, Pollock would call him that.

PL: Ah, but people around here didn't?

GC: These people, I was here when they come, there was three fellows that rode in here and come there and--that house is almost there--say, "Mr. Nicholson, could you tell me how much land you own here?" and he took a stick, "Well," he said, "I own it from that point clear out just as far as your eyes would let you see," took it all in, didn't own but five acres. (laugh) I remember that.

PL: [directly into the microphone] Aaron Nicholson's cabin is cabin Number 6. The mountain to the right above Aaron Nicholson's house was known as The Pinnacle.

EG: See, we were up to Aaron Nicholson's place, this was all cleared land on here, this was all cleared all along here, a little cleared area. And the next place I have is Number 7, which is a place on that side of river, I've got it marked down here. Now who lived there, Number 7, the next one on the other side of the river?

GC: On the left?

EG: Yeah.

PL: Sorta up on a hill.

GC: That must've been--there's two over there, one of them was Coover (??) Nicholson's place and the other one was East (??) Nicholson's, on back by-- 11

PL: This only shows one, this--

UM: Well, the, was there a little stream that ran down in between the two and they both sat on opposite sides?

GC: Yeah, yeah.

EG: Yeah, I've seen both of those.

GC: Yeah, that's right.

PL: I see, all right, that's up here--

UM: That one is whose, whose is that, Hoover?

GC: Huh?

ED & UM: Coover.

GC: Coover Nicholson.

EG: Coover Nicholson. All right, I've got it marked here and then we'll check on the way down.

[00:35:42, there seems to be a break here without much indication other than the abrupt change and a slight clipping of GC]

GC: --and that four months and you learn nine-nine.

PL: Why is that?

GC: I don't know.

PL: That smart teachers or smart children?

GC: Smart teacher, both, maybe, I don't know. (chuckle)

UM: I still--

GC: He was a teacher and he lived in Rappahannock, he'd walk five miles a night and morning.

PL: To get to school to teach it.

GC: Yeah.

PL: Where did the other kids--how many kids came from here?

GC: Oh, it was packed, all through here.

PL: All through here, all through the hollows?

UM: The Corbins come over, too, to this school, or?

GC: No, none but--no, there's none of the Corbins in this hollow. They went to another school.

UM: I thought maybe some of 'em might have come up--

PL: What other hollow went to this school, how about Weakley Hollow, did they go to that school?

GC: No, they had a lot of schools up there.

PL: They had their own?

GC: Yes, indeed.

PL: Well, what other kids--where did the other kids come from?

GC: All through here, there's people lived all through here, on both sides of the creek.

EG: Got the Hannah Run group, did they come there, too?

GC: Yeah, for Hannah Run, they would come to this school on the street about where you cross the creek.

PL: Yeah, see here's the river and that's the Hughes River, and George's up here at Number 1. There's the Hannah Run and they came to the same school with me.

UM: That's a long ways around there to Hannah Run..

GC: And this school is down here, was on the left over across the creek.

EG: Before you get to Hannah Run?

GC: Oh yes.

EG: Okay, you're sure, because I've never been able to find it.

UM: And now we can find where the school was.

EG: Yeah, and I want to mark that with my sign, too.

GC: Yeah.

PL: Where did the Corbins go to school?

GC: Oh, they had a school back up on the other side. Yeah.

[00:37:10, tape makes a sudden break]

PL: [directly into microphone] George was paid fifty cents a hundred for split rails.

EG: Because it was up in the hollow by itself, Paul remembers it, too.

PL: You mean this one over here is Cuver Nicholson, or the one--?

GC: No, indeed.

EG: No, there's another one--

PL: There's another one on back up here--

GC: That must be Cuver, you say there's one over here?

PL: There's one right straight across.

EG: Yeah, the storm chimney's still there, big apple tree. I don't know.

GC: That could be his son, Ease Nicholson.

PL: That's Number 7, then, I'll put it down as temporary. As Cuver's, C-U-V-E-R?

GC: Yeah.

PL: C-U-V-E-R--

UM: But this one on up here had a stream, if you went across, like right across here, the house would be sitting up a little higher than over there and there would be a stream, a little tiny stream, coming down to the left side of it.

EG: Yeah, yeah.

GC: That's right. That's the one I-Cuver Nicholson's place, and the one house to the right is where Ease Nicholson lived.

EG: There's two of 'em, we don't have that one there.

PL: Yeah, there is two of 'em and I don't think they're on that map.

EG: Don't think it's on the map either, uhn-uh.

PL: And then whose would this one be, then?

GC: Well, there's these two over here--

PL: No, no. These would be on back up, way up.

GC: That's got to be Cuver, then.

EG: Well, we missed one somewhere, tell you what, we'll just skip this one for the time being. Because there's another one down here a bit to the right and then maybe you'll get your bearings better.

GC: Yeah.

EG: Because there's a gate and so forth here at the right, just on the ways up.

GC: How far is far across the creek?

PL: Oh, we got a good ways for that.

EG: Oh, another three-quarters mile, yet. Another three-quarters of a mile.

GC: Well, that's the school house went across that, I know where the school house--

EG: Yeah, all right, we'll get squared away from there.

UM: How long's it been since you been through here?

GC: [unintelligible]

UM: Uh-huh. Well, it's surroundings, you haven't got the proper cues to tell you, that's the trouble.

GC: Uh-huh.

EG: Things have changed so much in thirty years. You know, in two years in downtown Washington, why, you put up two buildings, why--

UM: A few trees grow up in here would make a difference.

GC: Yeah.

[00:39:15, tape breaks and resumes]

PL: [directly into microphone] [unintelligible] to Number 8, was the house with the extra-large chimney. Houses 10 and 11 are further on down on the right hand side of the trail, there's a well-built spring house and a fairly large foundation further up the hill. Also in this area there's a remains of an old gear box and part of an old stove. Detroit Stove Works, #25. School house is located just across from the Hannah Run crossing. There are no remains. The large rock, just above the site of the school house, was once known as the Bear Den, and the kids used to hide up in that area.

[conversation has been going on during PL's description]

EG: Huh?

GC: Got [unintelligible]. He knows she was down here and had a good bridge on and crack about that thing (??) and he had a big chain. Well, he's a-crossing and the chain got out and he [unintelligible] got hooked and he's trying to get loose and it got off into the water and drowned there. Then they buried him right in this lot here at the school house.

UM: Well that's [unintelligible], yeah.

EG: George, do you want to tell-

PL: [directly into microphone] This was a bird dog that Mr. Corbin's sister had.

UM: Did you have many dances or social events or anything like that?

GC: No, uhn-uh, no indeed, not me.

UM: Where would you have 'em, if you did?

GC: I don't remember in them days having any.

UM: Huh. Was it your brother that was the preacher here?

GC: Yeah, brother Warren.

UM: What was his name?

GC: Warren Corbin.12

UM: How did the people around here take to Mr. Hoskins?

GC: How did they take for him?

UM: Mm-hmm.

GC: They all liked him. He treated me awful nice.

UM: Was this the post office that was right at the foot of Old Rag there?

GC: No, that was Old Rag Post Office.

UM: Oh, yeah.

GC: Don't know where [unintelligible] it was at, and this one, too. This one down here would go to Nethers, Virginia.

UM: Mm-hmm. Did you ever meet the Graveses very much?

GC: The Graveses from Syria?

UM: Yeah.

GC: Yes, indeed. Bob Graves used to be our sheriff, in Madison County.

UM: They pretty nice folks?

GC: Yeah, they nice folks.

PL: [directly into microphone] The church was located right at the junction of the Hannah Run trail.

GC: Wagon road left the church and went up to Hannah Run.

UM: Right, the wagon road is right over in there, I've walked down it before. It's right back over in here.

GC: Could've been down in here a little further, you can't tell.

UM: Who lived up Hannah Run, what families?

GC: Lot of different people.

UM: No particular-

GC: Charlie Sisk lived up there and Arnold Nicholson and Rast Nicholson, several families lived up there. 13

UM: Who would've been the first house, up here, would you remember that?

GC: Well, that've been Uncle Boot Corbin, he lived up there on the right.14

UM: Mm-hmm.

[00:42:46, sound change indicates another tape break]

PL: [directly into the microphone] There was a beaver dam and house located about a hundred yards below the junction of the Hot Short Mountain Trail. There are many fallen trees in the area--there's a house--and the last report of seeing the beaver was during the month of February. There are also two houses across the stream, about a hundred yards or so below the beaver dam. This would be on the right-hand side of the trail, across the stream as you're going downhill. George is unaware of the people who lived in this area. George has forgotten many of the families that lived in the hollow.

[00:43:28, tape seems to break again]

PL: We are now within a mile of Nethers. George is extremely tired now, he has to be helped along the trail and of course this has affected his memory. In most of the sites that we're passing now, George simply can't remember who lived there.

[00:43:45, tape breaks again momentarily]

UM: --man that you was telling me about that made such a study of the hollows here.

MH: Oh, the shelter up yonder is named after him.

UM: Burn (??), no?

MH: No, no, no. You know--you remember, Corbin.

GC: Who?

MH: The shelter up at Skyland is named after—

EG: Pollock?

MH: —this doctor, what?

EG: Pollock, you mean?

MH: No, he was head up there, but— I think it was Sheldon (??), wasn't it, Doctor Sheldon. And he took all the folks out of here and their youngsters to have their tonsils removed in his time. And he came back here, oh I guess fifteen years ago, with the guy who writes--used to write the, in the Post with The Ramblers (??). You remember that column? Head it off as Ramblers?

PL: Yeah, The Star.

MH: Yeah, oh, that's right, it was The Star. And he had a movie camera on the front of his car and they drove back around through here and took quite a few movies and he stopped to—Dr. Sheldon. He was wonderful, he did lots of things, I tell you. Well, he took all of the folks from up in the mountain and had their tonsils removed, the children.

PL: Where was he from?

MH: He was from Arlington or somewhere in there, yeah, somewhere in that section.

GC: Don't think you'd have a doctor that would [unintelligible].

MH: No, [unintelligible], don't have any [unintelligible] it, you go to the hospital now. (laughter)

UM: Well, now if you get sick you just die or—

MH: You're not supposed to get sick on weekends, no sir.

GC: No boy.

PL: Or Wednesdays.

GC: Wednesday afternoons, too.

MH: That's right, Wednesday afternoons, you're out of it.

GC: Wednesday night, either.

MH: Doctor Sneed still sparable (??), but.

GC: He'd go, used to, but.

MH: But he's—

UM: He's overworked, so he can't go.

MH: Yeah, that's right. His son was with him a while. He went down Georgetown University, psychiatrist.

GC: Was Sneed's son a doctor?

MH: Yeah. He said—

GC: [unintelligible] the commonwealth.

UM: Yeah, that's his brother.

GC: That's right.

UM: He's judge, now.

GC: Yeah, I believe he is.

MH: That's right, he is a judge now. That's right. He goes over in to Warrenton and [unintelligible] now all the time.

GC: Yeah, the district judge of something now, big show.

MH: We have a place for sale, you know, if you want it.

GC: Whose is it?

MH: Have you been up the mountain?

GC: Yeah, I-

MH: Well, how'd you pass the sign, and the notice up here and didn't see it?

GC: I tell you, we done walked so much, we blind. We didn't see nothing. (laughter)

[lots of people talking at once, indecipherable]

GC: I was huddled down in the back, he's got a whole kind of living quarters in there and-

MH: Her husband, let's see about three weeks ago, on Sunday morning, lives in Tipp Nethers' house.

GC: Oh, is that for sale?

MH: No, the Hard Tack (??), uh-huh.

UM: Who's this?

MH: It was a fellow Grave from Palmyra.

UM: Palmyra, Virginia?

MH: Mm-hmm.

UM: That's my county.

MH: Well, he was from there.

UM: That's its county seat, of Fluvanna.

MH: Yeah. That's where he is. He died of a heart attack.

UM: The places up here bring so much money, though, great day almighty.

MH: Yeah, that's right. Captain Cokely (??) the one that owns that one right back across the bridge, he sold-

[00:46:58-00:47:14, tape breaks before audio is discernable again; there is faint



mumbling before ]

MH: [unintelligible] had to have a helicopter to get to it and that was four hundred an acre.

UM: Four hundred dollars an acre?

MH: Four hundred dollars an acre.

(whistle)

MH: And I tell you, it joins the park and it's back in there, and you don't get to it, only walk or maybe some day a jeep, I don't know.

GC: Mr. Metzinger (??) was telling me, somebody owns all this land west of June Nethers' own.

MH: Heh! Pettie and I was asking you if you knew.

GC: Oh, oh-

MH: Now his people originally were from this county. Culpeper and Rappahannock.

UM: P-E-T-T-I-Double T?

MH: P-E-T-T-I-E. And-

GC: Oh, him, yeah, uh-huh.

MH: All his people's right down here where you know Brown Miller lived, that shop with rocks on it.

GC: Dillard Pettie all them [unintelligible]-

MH: All of those [unintelligible]. Red Hutchin's wife, Pearl. His mom. She was hitched tight in (??) with him.

UM: Red, [unintelligible] living?

GC: Yeah, I talked to the girl, see his daughter's in Luray.

MH: Where you living now?

UM: Fall's Church.

MH: What'd you go up down there for?

UM: Just liked it down there, and got work down there.

MH: How'd you like it down there after being up here?

[00:48:29-00:48:41, tape breaks to silence]

GC: I wouldn't go back up there where I was for nothing.

MH: Well, I wouldn't live down there for nothing, either (laughter) I have a job [unintelligible] and I have a son in Maryland and I don't [unintelligible] [her words are obscured by laughter and more talking]

GC: -Fairfax County.

MH: What?

GC: Falls Church in Fairfax County.

MH: I know, I have—

UM: Same difference.

MH: Same difference, I know and plenty of people around in there, too. And I never would have thought you'd've done that. (laughter)

PL: He's a traitor, then, huh?

MH: That's exactly what he is. (laughter) Made all your money up here and then left.

GC: He made it all down yonder.

PL: Oh boy.

MH: Well I tell you, we have more people out of state around for neighbors now than we do--

GC: Yeah.

UM: Not many neighbors anymore, is it?

MH: No, it's not. And more all the time, too.

EG: When did you say that mill stopped working, 1940? Or was it before then?

MH: It was after '40, I think, right along in there somewhere.

UM: Got any paper? I'm gonna have to write, I'm gonna write down these books that y'all talking about, I gotta get—

EG: I got a card right here--

PL: Here's a paper.

GC: I been talking and walking all day and I haven't done anything. Thank you.

MH: Reach around behind there and you can get you a book.

GC: Oh yeah.

MH: I have some books around here tell you something, but if I could find 'em, I don't know where they are right now.

UM: If you're ever home, I want to catch you at home sometime so we can find 'em.

MH: I hope to be around here this summer some, far as I know.

UM: I got a book, was telling all of 'em about it this morning about it, it's on Robert E. Lee. And I have such a great deal of admiration for the author by not taking any credit for what he done. (laugh) He says that when he went out researching, he found out that Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman had already been there. (laughter) Yeah, so with that—

MH: Where are you, where do you live?

EG: Falls Church, I live pretty close to George—

GC: Now the book you was talking about, what was the name of it?

MH: I-

PL: That hollow book?

GC: Yeah-

MH: Maybar (??) Miller lives down there, my daughter lives over at-

PL: I tell you what you might do on that book-

MH: Rockingham County.

PL: The park has a copy of that book.

GC: They have?

PL: In their library at Big Meadows, at that visitor's center.

MH: I tell you the truth, Mr. White, I have around here somewhere, I couldn't tell you where they are now, but if I come across one day, I'll stand 'em up here and let you look at 'em.

UM: Appreciate it.

MH: I have 'em all, but I tell you the truth I don't know where they are.

GC: Uh-huh. What's yours, now?

PL: That's the same one. That Hollow book is by Sherman and Henry. That's Al's brother, Tom Henry.

MH: Let me have your name, you write it there, and if I find something, I'll stack 'em in-

UM: Here, I got another sheet, here.

MH: somebody have 'em. I have 'em, but honestly I don't know where they are.

GC: This Mr. Garvey over here is the one that is really the correspondent. I think if we find out anything, we'll let him know and then he can let you know. (chuckle)

MH: Well, if I find the books I'll let you--

UM: Yeah. Library at Big Meadows. This other one is at the library at Madison, isn't it?

MH: Yeah.

UM: Now what do you call that?

MH: Now I tell you, I don't know whether you'll find it there or not, but, it's in Madison County. But Claude Yowell is the guy who, fellow to write to get a copy of that, because it's not--now, if many people want it, I don't think they had it there.15

UM: That's written by Claude Yowell?

MH: Yes, Madison, Virginia, he's well known. You won't have any trouble. And he would get one for you. But, I tell you, it's been so many people--mine went to Wisconsin, I've about three months getting it back, it went all the way around there and back.

UM: That's the best way in the world to lose a book is loan it, isn't it?

MH: I tell you I got it back three months later.

[MH and UM speak over each other for a moment, MH indecipherable]

UM: I got one that I loaned out last-last August I loaned out the Gone Are The Days and the Diary of William Byrd and The Customs and Things in Old Virginia.<sup>16</sup> I loaned those three out last August and I haven't gotten 'em back yet.

PL: Do you know who you loaned them to?

UM: Yeah.

[multiple people speak at once, indecipherable]

PL: How do you spell Mr. Yowell's last name?

MH: Y-O-W-E-L-L. Claude, C-L-A-U-D-E, Madison, Virginia.

UM: Now, let's see, your name is Lee, what Lee?

PL: Paul Lee.

MH: He's right there at that corner.

PL: It's on that letter that you got--

GC: Yeah. Uh-huh.

[multiple people speaking at once, indecipherable]

EG: Yeah, I got Allen's name and address on it and--

GC: Everybody here.

PL: Except, not Hanoon.

GC: What, Hammond?

PL: H-A-N-O-O-N. Ed.

UM: Ed Hanoon.

PL: It's--

MH: I had the post office--I'd deliver chickens on a Sunday to Mr. Albert Nicholson. [unintelligible] But I tell you the truth, they had that skillet, iron skillet, all hanging on the walls and their safes had windows panes in 'em, but I tell you the honest truth, you couldn't see if there was any glass in 'em, they were so clean. Now I'm telling you any stories. And the same way with everything in that house, and that skillet--mine looked terrible too 'em, they was burned off, cleaned off and looked just like they had shellac on 'em. And in the, and then with [unintelligible]. And he had a room, a rock--he made stonemason. And he had something like a cellar, his washing tub and old wash pot and everything was just as clean as clean could be. I tell you.

EG: You deliver stuff up in the mountains there? On a Sunday, chickens?

MH: Yeah, then they didn't come down and get 'em on a Saturday and I had to, as the post office--well, I didn't have to, but I didn't want to see 'em--either do that or feed 'em, and I certainly didn't want to feed 'em. (laugh)

EG: Did you take a wagon up there, Ms. Hudson or--

MH: No, I had a Model A.

EG: You went all the way up to George's place in a Model A?

MH: Oh yeah, went on up in the mountain, didn't we?

GC: No.

MH: That wasn't that bad.

EG: The road was pretty good, then?

GC: A Model T—

MH: I used to go when, they was putting a pipeline or trying one out or something at Stone Land (??), before all this building up of these fancy things, y'know. I used to drive up through here and take my little children, I didn't have but six. And drive up there in a Model A and go all the way to the top and go to Stone Land, it was pretty Stone Land then. Everything was natural. Well, some of those cabins now, where Mr. Byrd had and another two around that, originals, they are pretty, yeah. But that's the way when I used to go up through here, what is it, fourteen miles?

GC: Yeah, you could go up to Old Rag.

MH: Up by Butler's Store.

GC: That's right.

UM: Lot of that road that we've been over today that seems so rough has been washed out and nothing done to 'em, I reckon that's why it looks impossible now, you know.

MH: I don't think anybody goes up there but the rangers, and very seldom they go, anymore. That Hunter Dodson, he does more of that than anybody else. We have some scratch—

GC: [unintelligible] Rob Dodson's boy.

MH: Yes, he was the—Robert is the one that Monroe raised.

GC: Well, Monroe raised one of 'em.

MH: Charlie, he's at Walter Reed about two weeks ago to operate and he helps real bad (??).

UM: How are the two boys getting along up here, that lost their mother? Do you [unintelligible]?

MH: I saw 'em today, one had a [unintelligible] candy, the other had a whiskey bottle. (laugh) They doing all right.

UM: [unintelligible]

MH: Yeah, they do all right.

GC: Drink it like water.

UM: I was telling him, I started to get him for a guide to go through and never got—

MH: They're wonderful if you catch 'em dry. Oh, Lord.

UM: Yeah, but they've done pickled their brain, you know, so that they—

MH: They're perfect in the mountain.

PL: You know what I'm just thinking, I bet she could fill in the names of those farms on the way up there.

UM: You might know those places up there.

EG: We had a map showing all the dwellings as they existed back around 1930.

MH: Well I used to know, certainly sure, but I don't know--

UM: He's lost his land lots--

GC: That one house, I couldn't figure out that one chimney to save my life, so close to the road.

UM: Right at the road.

GC: I said I bet Charlie Dodson would know who lived in it.

MH: Sure, because they travel just like they did forty years ago.

PL: Well, may get Charlie one of these times, I guess we--

MH: He would, he would, either one of those boys would be wonderful, but I expect [unintelligible] but I think Charlie had two operations on his eyes, I don't think he--

GC: He just talked about it all the time, they just crazy about it.

MH: They'd be wonderful. They know all up in there. Their mother did.

UM: That guy tells about some bunch went up there and a couple got lost and they got worried about 'em up on top of Old Rag. And he went up there in the night and found 'em. (chuckle)

MH: Well we have plenty of that, it hadn't been just but--

UM: I saw in the paper, did you help to rescue them?

MH: I was helping. I helped them. I certainly did.

PL: What was this?

MH: They got lost up on the mountain, one of Byrd's shelters.

EG: Recently?

MH: Two girls--yeah. And we found 'em, the fellow went to 'em, and he had his hunting dogs, which he shouldn't have had 'em in the park, but the case like that, we're all glad he did. They could have gotten away from him and gone up in there just as well. And they trode up on those two little girls laying asleep. So I went around to the gate around up on the other side, where you go up to the Butler Store--you know they have the cutest little building over there now, it's a octagon shape, it's green, all you look for is for little green men to come out of it. (laughter) Honest, that's the way you see it, I did, honest, when I'm driving around here. Now, that's right over the mountain from where you go up this road, comes down to Syria, Virginia.

UM: That, is that on--?

MH: That's the gate up on the other side, that's like--

UM: Is that on the Gardenville Turnpike?

PL: Oh, I see.

UM: What they call the Gardenville Turnpike?

MH: I don't know, we call it the Rag.

UM: That's the road going across the mountain.

MH: It goes up to Weakley Hollow.

PL: Yeah.

UM: How about the Dark Hollow?

MH: That goes around to Syria.

UM: Yeah. That's right.

MH: Yeah, but that's on the [unintelligible] Road and we were on the Robertson Road.

UM: Oh, I see, uh-huh.

MH: And you go up to the gate on the other side, it's much further up to that gate than it is to this one, now. And this little building is sitting over, in fact, I thought it was a big rock with moss on it, before I got there, and it was sitting over, and there's the nicest spring right under it and they built a rock wall about as high as that bookcase, and this little building was put on top of it in an octagon shape, green. Like out of [unintelligible]. And then it's a ladder put up aside of that and they went up and put a little flue, and a little stove in it, and has a little platform like a porch out from it, that you can put a couple lounges on it, lounging chairs. And the way the door comes in, that comes in octagon. It comes in this way with a hook on each one and down this way with a hook on each one. But when we got in the car and looked, where my daughter--well, she and I, which it was a good distance up in there, and we went up in a good sized car which we shouldn't have, and she says, "Look over there," and I say, "Well, I didn't know that was over there," so we over and of course we opened it and looked in it and it was like a highway bed and a little bitty stove with a box of gravels under it and just about enough room for one person and an iron pot and-

EG: Was it a private home or something?

MH: No, they, somebody built it that would come in there weekends. But it was cute, but all you looked for was little green men. (laugh)

UM: Let's, well, Ms. Hudson, I'm glad you had the time to, at least put up with us for a few minutes.

[sounds of the recorder and people moving for a few moments]

MH: Well, I wasn't doing anything, that's for certainly sure. I don't think the baseball game--that made me sick, the Senators.

GC: Did the Senators lose?

EG: Lost again?

MH: [unintelligible] home run, had all of one by the ninth inning.

UM: They won last night.

MH: Two to one.

UM: Beat Baltimore last night, and that was something.

MH: I know, but Howard made a home run today first thing and went on up to the ninth inning and two to one.

EG: In favor of Baltimore?

MH: Yes.

UM: Well at least they give them a good game.

MH: It was a wonderful game.

[multiple people talking and white noise over the recorder make speech indecipherable]

MH: [unintelligible] I'm going to turn it off. (laughter)

UM: Where are you [unintelligible]?

MH: Huh? [unintelligible] 2-2-7-4-0.

UM: So that's better [unintelligible]--

MH: It is, honest. What, did you want to write it down?

[very dim speech and obscured for a few moments, indecipherable]

EG: [unintelligible] on the front seat there and get him squared away. [unintelligible], four hours on back [unintelligible].

MH: I put right on [unintelligible] to call.

PL: Oh, all right, yeah, that'd be a good idea. Well thank you, Ms. Hudson.

EG: It was nice meeting you, ma'am.

MH: Same to you. Anything else that I, I'll get all my books together and ya'll stop in and [unintelligible].

PL: Good, all right, we'd love to. Thank you.

[sounds of walking and outdoors]

PL: Oh! You know something, I think [unintelligible] got kinda groggy sitting there.

UM: (chuckle)

EG: [unintelligible]. Hey, Jeremy?

UM: Yeah?

PL: Just saying, I got a little groggy there, I think I'll sleep well tonight, I'll probably--

EG: Yeah, I kinda like [unintelligible].

PL: This neighborhood, reasonably heavy they have sections by church. Yeah, I know, we'll all get together.

EG: Yeah.



PL: And I don't even know what's at our house, there's all those times tonight.

EG: Oh, right.

PL: [unintelligible] move you out, anyway.

EG: Yeah, I'll worry about it early, anyway. And I think Paul wants to get, Paul, Lee wants to get back to-

GC: Well, that turned out to be better than I expected. I had no idea that she'd be there.

PL: Yeah.

EG: You want to get back here at, get Allan back here, and you can sit this down here, because--

[sounds of conversation drowned out by a loud droning, most likely a vehicle]

EG: His car is there, and then you can get in the back.

PL: [unintelligible]

GC: [unintelligible]

PL: No, it's just ice.

GC: Support this whole [unintelligible]. Some of 'em would get a bottle of gas and stick a bottle of gas around in and use propane. [unintelligible]

PL: [unintelligible]

EG: You can ride two, here.

GC: [unintelligible] me.

PL: We got two more to get in here?

EG: No, just one.

[the droning dims somewhat, they seem to be on the road]

EG: [unintelligible].

GC: I don't think much [unintelligible]

PL: What was her name?

EG: Mary Hudson.

PL: Okay. And she was the postmaster here at [unintelligible]?

EG: Yeah.

UM: Put that on there.

PL: Okay, I think I got a pretty good interview, there.

[1:05:08, tape turns off and turns on again indicating change in time/location]

PL: Mr. Corbin, it was a pleasure being with you today.

GC: [unintelligible] felt better than I did, I enjoyed it though, too.

[there are two conversations going on at once]

EG: Well, you felt pretty good down in the cabin, didn't you?

GC: Oh yeah. Yeah. Well, come around and see me-

UM: Okay, I hope to, and come back up and, come on up here to the new Visitor's Center they got at Big Meadows, sometime.

GC: Yeah, I'll do that.

UM: Yeah, they've got pictures of Fennel Corbin in there-

PL: When's your anniversary [unintelligible]?

UM: And some of the other facts that they got out of the house.

GC: [unintelligible], these people want to come up here [unintelligible] come up with me.

EG: Good, well come on up.

PL: [unintelligible], my mind's going on--

[End audio file, 01:05:46 min.]

#### End of Interview

1 George Freeman Pollock, 1869-1949, owner of Skyland resort and a major advocate for the establishment of Shenandoah National Park.

2 James Madison Corbin, known as "Madison", 1857-1927

3 Mollie Nicholson, 1867-1927

4 This story is repeated by George Corbin in his other interview, SNP 032 (pg. 9). Also repeated and clarified by Allan Tanner in the interview with Robert Corbin, SNP034 (pgs. 64-65).

5 George Corbin also references Charlie Sisk in his other interview (SNP-032, pgs. 20-21).

6 Augustine Nicholson, 1858- , John Russell "Russ" Nicholson, 1861-1935, his wife, Elizabeth "Betty" Corbin Nicholson, 1870-1932. Several Nicholson men were itinerant preachers. An online obituary for George Corbin names his three wives as: Mildred Corbin, Bertie Nicholson, d. 1924, and Beulah Nicholson, who died in 1950. The 1930 census records a George and Eula Corbin living in Madison County, and a Eula Corbin, 1911-1950 is buried in the same cemetery as George Corbin in Luray. The obituary misspelled Corbin's mother's name, Mollie, as "Millie", so it is possible that they also misspelled Eula. (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~vapage2/knightingd/pnc1970-1979.htm>)

7 Albert Aylor Nicholson, 1896-1953, Mamie Corbin Nicholson, 1900-1983

8 Hunter C. Dodson, 1910-1996, the interviewee for SNP-043

9 Phinnel Corbin, 1867-1945, sometimes spelled "Finnell"

10 Tabitha Nicholson, 1832-1894

11 Probably refers to Vancouver Nicholson, b. 1844, and his son, Ease Nicholson, b. 1868. (Mother: Virinda Nicholson, b.1842)

12 Warren Corbin, b. 1879, son of James Madison Corbin and his first wife, Sarah Gordon.

13 Arnold Nicholson, 1878-1932, and his brother, William Erastus "Rast" Nicholson, 1875-1952

14 Probably Ambrose Booton Corbin, 1845-1922, brother of James Madison Corbin

15 Claude Yowell is the author of A History of Madison County, Virginia, most likely the work being referenced here.

16 The first title is associated with four distinct authors and works, but given the speaker's affection for Dr. Freeman's biography of Lee, the correct author is probably Harnett T. Kane, whose work is a reminiscence of Southern life. The last title is not a proper book title.

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George Corbin, 04/20/1969

SdArch SNP-033

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